



مستشفى رويال حياة  
ROYALE HAYAT HOSPITAL

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# Summer exodus and withered inbound tourism



## THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

The government, policy planners, the public, in fact, everyone you talk to, agrees that developing tourism is vital to Kuwait's economic growth and development. So why is it that we are still mired in an obsolete tourism ecosystem that no public entity wants to promote or take ownership of, and even fewer public want to visit. The exodus of people from Kuwait every summer is indicative of the withered tourism ecosystem that exists in the country.

The government admits that tourism supports its economic, financial and social priorities, including in diversifying the economy, encouraging greater private sector participation in the economy, and providing national youth with gainful employment opportunities. But



beyond acknowledging the importance of tourism there have been few, if any, attempts

by the authorities to rejuvenate this sector. Any interest by the government in developing

tourism usually arises only when international oil prices remain low for a sustained period, and consequently oil revenues shrink and economic travails loom. But, under a low revenue scenario, there is no funding available for any new tourism project to take off. And, the moment the trajectory of oil prices swings up, tourism development plans get shelved and languish there until the next economic downturn.

Following the global pandemic, there were reports once again that the government was keen to develop the tourism sector. For its part, the Touristic Enterprises Company (TEC), the government-entity in charge of promoting tourism in Kuwait, revealed that it planned to implement three major projects as part of plans to redevelop the country's hospitality, leisure and entertainment sector. Forget three projects, we would be happy if even one was realized.

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9 Apple AirPods**

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# Seven Kuwaitis in list of 100 most powerful Arabs in 2023



Muhammad Al-Osaimi



Muhammad Al-Shaya



Badr Nasser Al-Kharafi



Kutayba Alghanim



Wadha Al-Khatib



Tariq Sultan



Sheikha Al-Bahr

This year's list of '100 Most Powerful Arabs' includes the names of seven Kuwaitis from various sectors of the economy. The annual list, collated and published by the UAE-based Gulf Business magazine, honors Arab leaders who lead and shape growth in the region.

The list of the most powerful Kuwaiti personalities in the world of economy for the current year include the CEO of the Kuwait Stock Exchange Company, Muhammad Al-Osaimi; CEO of Al-Shaya Group, Muhammad Al-Shaya; Vice-Chairman and CEO of Zain Group, Badr Nasser Al-Kharafi and the CEO of Al-Ghanim Industries, Kutayba Al-Ghanim. This is in addition to Wadha Al-Khatib, the CEO of Kuwait National Petroleum Company; Tariq Sultan, CEO and Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of Agility and Sheikha Al-Bahr, Deputy CEO of the National Bank of Kuwait Group.

A look at each of these individuals feted as the most powerful Kuwaiti economic figures shows:

**Muhammad Al-Osaimi**, topped the list of the most powerful Kuwaiti personalities for the year 2023, as he came in 25th place in the Gulf Business index. Al-Osaimi, who joined the Kuwait Stock Exchange in 2015, played a prominent role in its growth and is responsible for enhancing the stock exchange's contribution to the national economy.

**Muhammad Al-Shaya** is in second place in Kuwait and 42nd on the index. Al-Shaya, who today leads the retail group that traces its origins to 1890, manages more than 70 outlets spread throughout the Middle East, North Africa and Europe. He also heads the Board of Directors of Mabanee Company, one of the largest real estate developers in Kuwait.

In third place is Kuwait and 43rd on the list, is Vice Chairman and CEO of Zain Group **Badr Nasser Al-Kharafi**, who oversees the group's operations in seven countries in the Middle East

and Africa. With about 20 years of industrial experience across the financial, banking, industrial and communications sectors, he manages more than 7,100 employees and serves 52 million customers.

In fourth place in Kuwait and 61st on the index is the CEO of Alghanim Industries Group, **Kutayba Alghanim**, who is credited with transforming the group from a family business into a privately owned company with a global workforce of over 14,000 employees and operations spanning the Middle East, India and Asia, in the automotive, retail and construction sectors.

In fifth place in Kuwait and 66th on the Arab index is **Wadha Al-Khatib**, CEO of the Kuwait National Petroleum Company, who has held this position since November 2022. She previously worked in the position of Executive Vice President of the Mina Abdullah Refinery, and transferred to the Kuwait National Petroleum

Company in 1978, a year after the refinery was acquired by Kuwait.

**Tariq Sultan** is in sixth place in Kuwait and 72nd on the most powerful Arabs list. He is the CEO and Vice Chairman of Agility, who was able to intelligently lead the company to grow and become one of the largest logistics companies in the Middle East and North Africa. He has managed the company for more than 25 years and increased its market capitalization from \$300 million to more than \$7 billion.

In seventh place and 79th on the list, is **Sheikha Al-Bahr**, Deputy CEO of the National Bank of Kuwait Group (NBK), who is considered a strong voice in the banking industry in the region. She has been working at NBK for 35 years, and is credited for her decisive role in shaping the group's strategic vision and making it the most valuable banking brand in Kuwait and among the top five regional banking brands.

## National Assembly elections slated for 6 June

The Cabinet meeting on 3 May approved a draft decree inviting voters to elect members of the National Assembly on Tuesday, 6 June, 2023, and submitted it to His Highness the Crown Prince for approval and endorsement.

The Council of Ministers decided to suspend work in all ministries, government



agencies, and public institutions on the day of the elections, considering it a day of rest. As for agencies with a special nature of work, their holidays are determined by their concerned authorities.

## Plans for Kuwait Railways back on track

Plans for Kuwait to join the pan-Gulf railway network received a fillip recently with the Public Authority for Roads and Land Transport (PART) floating a tender valued at KD1 million, for the study and detailed design work on the first phase of Kuwait's railway network. The deadline for submission of tender documents is 30 May.

The proposed 111km single-track line — extending from Nuwaiseeb, at the southern border of Kuwait with Saudi Arabia, to the industrial and urban area of Shaddadiyah in southwest Kuwait, is planned to be used by both passenger and freight trains.

The scope of consultancy services is divided into three phases, and includes study, critical review and updating of conceptual designs for the Kuwait Railway Project, including the passenger terminal and cargo yard, as well as the border facility with Saudi Arabia.

The consultancy services tender involves the completion of detailed engineering design, studies and technical documents required for bid submission. It also includes all documents required for the purchase of rolling stock, providing estimates of construction cost, operating and maintenance costs, industry readiness and technical risks.

Kuwait is the northern terminus of the planned Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) railways, and its 111km stretch represents approximately five percent of the total GCC network of over 2,100km, which is planned to extend across the six-nation bloc before eventually terminating at Duqm in the west of Oman.

In 2008, the Gulf States, through the GCC General Secretariat, conducted a feasibility study to develop a railway network across the Gulf States tentatively titled the GCC Railway. However, plans to develop the network ground



to a halt almost immediately due to geopolitical crises, including the global financial crisis of 2009, the Arab uprisings of 2011, the precipitous fall of oil prices in 2014, and the inter-Gulf crisis in 2017.

Other factors that led to derailment of the GCC Railway were the lack of common standards, a failure to create attractive public-private business partnership models, and the lack of political will and cooperation required to deliver a large multinational project was missing.

The Al-Ula declaration, signed in January 2021 by all six GCC countries and Egypt, put the GCC railway project back on track. Improvements in oil receipts and market fundamentals over the past year, as well as the institutional commitment to make GCC Railway a reality now appears to have received a fresh impetus from the leadership of the six-nation bloc.

On a related note, last week the Saudi Railways Company and the Saudi General Transportation Authority appointed the French company, Systra, to complete the feasibility study for a high-speed railway link between Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

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# Kuwait is a welcoming, secure and peaceful country

Ambassador of Togo H.E. Mohamed Saad OURO-SAMA



THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

Ambassador H.E. Mohamed Saad OURO-SAMA who next week completes nine years of representing his country in Kuwait is currently the Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps in Kuwait. When appointed as ambassador to this country in 2014, Ambassador Ouro-Sama was not only the first Togolese ambassador to Kuwait, but also the first such representative of his country in the entire Middle East.

A former Deputy Minister of Trade, Industry and Promotion of the Private Sector in his country, the affable Togolese ambassador has since his arrival been keen on promoting trade and investment between Togo and Kuwait. In a recent exclusive interview with The Times Kuwait Managing Editor Reaven D'souza, Ambassador Ouro-Sama stressed the growth in bilateral relations and investments between the countries over the year, especially with the opening of the Togolese embassy in Kuwait.

"Through the efforts of the embassy, and in coordination and cooperation with relevant ministries in Kuwait, especially the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) has contributed significantly towards the realization of several investments in Togo, particularly in infrastructure.

"Some of the infrastructure projects that have been completed through funding from KFAED include the construction of the Nangbeto dam; the asphaltting of the Atakpame Adagali road; The asphaltting of the Sokode Bassar road; the supply of drinking water to the populations of the Kara region and its surroundings; as well as the financing of micro-projects for vulnerable populations

through the Togolese FNFI (National Fund for Inclusive Finance)," said the ambassador.

Inviting more private investments in his country, the ambassador informed investors that over the last 10 years the Togolese government has made several improvements in infrastructure and policies aimed at making Togo a very attractive and suitable country for investors. "A few of these improvements are the new airport, roads, new free zone, improved harbor, the opening of a new industrial parc called the Parc Industrial of Adetikope (PIA), and the possibility for investors to open business in less than 24 hours," said the envoy.

Pointing to the signing of several memorandums of understanding between the two countries, the Togolese ambassador assured investors that Togo was a safe haven for their investments. "We have a convention on economic and technical cooperation between the two governments signed in 2014; and a memorandum of understanding signed in 2017 between the Al Babbain Cultural Foundation of Kuwait and the University of Kara in Togo. We are currently working on other memorandums such as memorandums on sport, cultural exchange, trade agreements and air services agreements."

Underscoring the country's relative strength in logistics and port facilities, the ambassador noted that Togo has one of the largest ports in Africa. He added, "Despite Togo being the fourth biggest port in Africa and the first in West Africa, trade with the Gulf countries in general, and with Kuwait in particular, has been marginal and constitutes an attractive opportunity for further exploration and development."

Turning to tourism in Togo and the country's potential to lure



visitors from Kuwait and the region, Ambassador Ouro-Sama said: "There are several nature reserves in the northern part of Togo that receive thousands of visitors each year. Some of them are the Fazao-Malakassa Parc, the Keran National Parc and the reserve of Aledjo, the reserve of Sarakawa, the reserve of Oti, the reserve of Mandouri and the classified forest of Abdoulaye.

"However, aside from other important tourism elements such as the exotic tropical weather, the beaches, the fauna, and flora, the

most important element in Togo's tourism is the welcoming nature of the Togolese people.

"You can see a reflection of this warmth among the relatively small Togolese community in Kuwait, who though they number only around 500 help spread the friendliness of our people. Since 2015, when the Togolese government decided to stop the exit of domestic workers to Kuwait, the number of workers in this field has diminished considerably. Today, most of the Togolese in Kuwait are employed in companies,"

explained the ambassador.

Elaborating on his country's recent celebration of Independence Day, Ambassador Ouro-Sama stated: It has been 63 years since my country Togo became an independent and sovereign country.

This has given the Togolese more freedom to expand economically and expand its international and diplomatic relations. It is always a joy and patriotic duty to remember and celebrate this event that brought sovereignty to Togo and its population. More than six decades of independence also provides us the maturity to make our beautiful country the gold of humanity as it is called.

In answer to the question of the challenges he faced as Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps in Kuwait, the ambassador replied: "I am honored to have become the Dean of the African diplomatic group. Like I always say, it is a task that picks you whether you are prepared for it or not. In addition to working tirelessly in representing my country and my work on enhancing diplomatic relations between Togo and Kuwait, now I must make myself available to represent the African community, and work together with my fellow African ambassadors to give a better image of the African continent in Kuwait."

On his thoughts over his nine years in Kuwait, the ambassador was full of praise for this country, "Kuwait is a very welcoming, secure, and peaceful country. I would like to seize the occasion to thank the Amir of Kuwait, the Crown Prince, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, and all members of the government for all the dispositions they have implemented to make us feel at home and to facilitate our work here in Kuwait. Equally, I would like to thank the Kuwait people for their kindness and friendship."



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# Schengen style visa for GCC countries

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries are looking to launch a 'Schengen-style' visa for tourists — which is expected to boost revenues and footfall for all countries in the six-nation bloc.

Speaking during this year's Arabian Travel Market (ATM), which was held from 1 to 4 May in Dubai, the Minister of Tourism in Bahrain, Fatima Al Sairafi, said discussions have been taking place at the ministerial level among GCC nations on how to achieve a unified single visa.

"We see that happening very soon because we see people flying from abroad to Europe usually spending their time in several countries rather than in one country. We really saw the value this can bring not to each

country but to all of us," Al Sairafi said during a panel discussion titled 'The Future of Travel for the GCC' held on the sidelines of the ATM.

She also added that Bahrain has benefited from co-promoting the country along with the UAE, and Saudi Arabia.

"We targeted 8.3 million tourists for 2022 but achieved 9.9 million visitors because we co-promoted Bahrain along with the UAE and other GCC markets. When we co-promoted as a unified destination through 100-plus tour operators, the footfall increased and the diversity of nationalities of tourists also increased," she said.

For his part, Abdullah Al Saleh, undersecretary at the Ministry of Economy in UAE, said all GCC countries believe that the tour-



ism sector is vital for the growth of their economies. He added, "On the demand side,

GCC countries believe that if they provide a good experience for visitors, especially long-distance visitors coming to this region, instead of visiting one country, they will want to maximize their visit by traveling to more than one country in the region. The visitors will be happier by visiting several countries without restrictions.

Fahd Hamidaddin, CEO of Saudi Tourism Authority, said that these days, travelers do not think in terms of a country but a region. "I believe travelers of tomorrow will look for multiple stops, routes, and regions," he said, adding that Saudi Arabia greatly benefited from the 2022 FIFA World Cup held in Qatar and this reflects that joint offerings can be promoted and benefit all.

## ACI - Kuwait chapter to hold awards function

The Kuwait chapter of American Concrete Institute (ACI) has announced that its Annual Awards function will be held on 9 May at Palms Hotel and Spa, with Minister of Public Works, Dr. Amani Bu-Qammaz, patronizing the event as guest of honor.



ACI-Kuwait Chapter is a non-profit professional organization, affiliated to American Concrete Institute International of USA. The Chapter's essential objective is to develop and share technical knowledge and information for improving the quality of concrete and related construction practices in Kuwait. This is done through technical seminars, training courses, conferences, publications, webinars

and other informative activities.

The President of ACI-Kuwait Chapter, Aziz Mamuji, said that two prestigious awards shall be bestowed during this year's function. The Award of Excellence for the Year 2022 will be presented to the developer of a local project of outstanding merit, in terms of its design, engineering quality and use of concrete technology. The design and engineering consultants, general contractor and main concrete supplier will also be recognized. The Award of Achievement 2022 will be presented to an individual in recognition of his or her life-long contribution to the engineering profession and to development in Kuwait.

Mr. Mamuji noted that these awards, which the Chapter has been giving since 2001, are highly respected and appreciated in Kuwait's engineering and construction fraternity.

He also expressed appreciation that Dr. Amani Bu-Qammaz will grace the function; as this clearly reflects her interest in the engineering profession, and her desire to promote construction standards and quality of construction in Kuwait.

The Awards Function will be held in the Nassima Ballroom at The Palms Beach Hotel and Spa, starting at 7.30 pm.

## LuLu Hypermarket showcases South African products



LuLu Hypermarket Kuwait participated in celebrations to mark the South African National Day on 2 May, at the Salwa Sabah Al Ahmad Ballroom in Marina Hotel.

The event, organized by the South African Embassy, also witnessed an exhibition that showcased various South African products available in Kuwait. LuLu Hypermarket attended the exhibition and highlighted its range of imported South African products. LuLu Hypermarket, with its own procurement product sourcing center in South Africa, is able to import more than 1,000 South African products from over 100 brands. These products include groceries, fresh produce, and many other items.

Speaking on the occasion, Director of LuLu Hypermarket Kuwait, Mohamed Haris, conveyed his best wishes to the South African Ambassador H.E. Dr. Manelisi Genge on the National Day, and said: "We are honored to be a part of the South African National Day celebrations in Kuwait. At LuLu Hypermarket, we are committed to providing our customers with high-quality products from around the world. Our procurement product sourcing center in South Africa allows us to import a wide range of South African products, which are popular with our customers in Kuwait."

The participation of LuLu Hypermarket in the event was well-received by attendees, who appreciated the opportunity to learn more about South African products available in

Kuwait. The participation of Lulu Hypermarket Kuwait in the South African National Day celebrations highlights the growing cultural and economic ties between South Africa and Kuwait. With its extensive range of imported South African products, LuLu Hypermarket Kuwait is playing an important role in promoting trade and commerce between the two countries.



## Joint force to fight marine piracy in Kuwaiti waters

In the wake of repeated incidents of piracy and looting of Kuwaiti fishing vessels operating in the country's territorial waters, the ministries of defense and interior, have initiated the formation of a joint marine security force comprising of units from Kuwait Navy and the Interior Ministry's General Administration of the

Coast Guard to protect Kuwaiti vessels operating in its waters.

During a meeting last week at the Mohammed Al-Ahmad Naval Base, the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Acting Minister of Defense Sheikh Talal Al-Khalid is said to have discussed with leaders of the Navy and the Coast Guard the issue of piracy, and the need for protecting Kuwaiti vessels through a joint task force. The joint force will consist of patrol boats and ships, in addition to civil patrols affiliated with the Maritime Security Department, and others affiliated with the Maritime Force Intelligence unit. The patrols will work around the clock, and will deal firmly with any targets that penetrate the country's territorial waters to carry out piracy and plundering operations.

Kuwaiti fishermen have often complained of being subjected to attacks and looting by pirates inside Kuwait's territorial waters, the last of which happened last week, causing injury to one fisherman.

## National population growth rate on a steady decline

Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) indicators show that the rate of growth of citizens has been on a decline over the past two decades. The growth rate, which was 0.04 percent in 1990 fell to 0.035 percent in 1995, dropped further to 0.033 percent in 2000 and 0.029 percent by 2005 and in 2010 it reached 0.026, before recording its lowest decrease so far in 2020 at 0.022 percent.

The PACI figures also revealed that there has

been a steady decline in the average number of individuals in a Kuwaiti family. The rate, which was 6.44 in 1995, fell to 5.24 in 2000, 5.02 in 2005, 4.93 in 2010, 4.77 in 2015, and 4.60 in 2020.

In another indicator issued by PACI, it was found that the Indian community represents 20.39 percent of the non-Kuwaiti population, as their numbers jumped from 181,832 people in 1990 to 965,744 in 2022.

In a statement, the Public Relations Depart-



ment of PACI said that the new update to its population index contains two new indicators that aim to keep pace with the requirements of its web visitors and update its data. The first new indicator is the growth rate of the Kuwaiti population according to different years, while the other was on the rate of increase of non-Kuwaitis over the years, with the possibility of identifying specific nationalities to display the evolution of their numbers.



# Millions prepare to travel out in summer

Around six million passengers are expected to transit Kuwait International Airport (KIA) over the summer, with over half this number expected to depart and another three million expected to arrive in the country between May and September.

Director of the Air Transport Department at the Directorate-General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) Abdullah Al-Rajhi, said the airport is fully geared to meet this summer rush. He noted that airlines had been granted approval to use terminals T1, T2, and T3, depending on the volume and flow of their passengers.

Al-Rajhi also revealed that based on reservations made so far, the most preferred destinations for the upcoming summer season appear to be Mykonos, Athens, Budapest, Al-Jouf, Moscow, Larnaca,

Belgrade, Tirana, Dushanbe, Aleppo and Taif.

Accordingly, and in line with plans to expand the operational network of national carriers, Kuwait Airways is to operate flights to Mykonos, Athens, Budapest and Taif, while Jazeera Airways will fly to Al-Jouf, Moscow, Larnaca, Belgrade, Tirana and Dushanbe. In addition, Kuwait Airways is set to sign a codeshare agreement with international airlines, which is expected to further contribute to diversification and expansion of its operational network.

Turning to the issue of ticket frauds through applications and websites during the summer travel season, Al-Rajhi said: "There are circulars in this regard, and we periodically disclose these procedures, and travelers must verify the sites authorized by us and the presence of the approval number registered on the website."

He disclosed that inspection teams monitor the local air transport market, to ensure compliance with the civil aviation laws and regulations and that anyone found selling or marketing travel tickets without a license faces imprisonment for no more than three months and a fine not exceeding KD500, or one of the two penalties.

He further disclosed that among the violations noticed by inspection teams and based on complaints by travelers was the sale of tickets by unregulated vendors using a licensed travel office as a front. Adding that there was also a lack of professionalism among some employees in travel and tourism offices, he said that the DGCA is in the process of resolving these issues completely.

Reaffirming that the capacity of KIA will soon return to what it was before the



Corona pandemic, Al-Rajhi noted that in 2019 the number of passengers transiting KIA was over 5.5 million, while in 2022 the numbers climbed back to more than 11 million passengers, which indicated that the number of passengers will soon return. As for 2022, their number reached 11.2 million passengers.

## Jazeera Airways announces profit for Q1-2023

Jazeera Airways has achieved a net profit of KD2.3 million for the first-quarter (Q1) of 2023. Total revenue for the quarter reached KD48.3 million, up 35.2 percent, while operating profit was at KD3.6 million. Passenger traffic rose by 56.6 percent to 1.1 million in this quarter and load factor reached 82.1 percent, an increase of 6.9 percent compared to Q1-2022.

Announcing the results, Chairman of Jazeera Airways, Marwan Boodai, said: "The year 2023 has started off on a positive note for Jazeera Airways. Despite fuel prices putting pressure on margins for the first quarter, a continued focus on operating costs enabled us to deliver profits in line with our aggressive growth targets and on the track to be a fantastic year. Load factor in this quarter reached 82.1%, the highest ever for Jazeera in any quarter, especially for Q1 which is typically not the strongest. This demonstrates the strength of our business model and sound validation from our customers."



A statement from the airline reviewing operations in the first-quarter of 2023 showed that the airline launched direct flights in February from Kuwait to Moscow, the first airline to fly the route. In March, the airline also started flying to Samarkand, its third destination in Uzbekistan following Tashkent and Namangan. New destinations have been announced for Q2 including Larnaca, Belgrade, and Tirana. In addition, the airline also announced the resumption of its flights to Prague and Sarajevo, in the summer months.

Over the next few months of this financial year, Jazeera will welcome four additional aircraft into its fleet, said the statement, and adding that, following an 'Approved Training Organization' certification from the Kuwait's Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) last year, Jazeera Airways placed an order for an Airbus simulator. Expected to be delivered by the end of 2023, this simulator will enable in-house pilot training and monitoring to ensure the highest levels of safety for both crew and passengers.

The airline also intends to collaborate with a European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) approved training organization to launch our own Multi-Pilot License (MPL) program.

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## Thought “ for the week

Learn as if you will  
live forever, live like you  
will die tomorrow.

— Mahatma Gandhi

# Sweet Potatoes ARE NOT Potatoes

Ask Mira : Eating Right to Live Happy & Healthy



**S**weet potatoes are not potatoes. They are actually a completely different vegetable than regular potatoes.

It is true that they share a common potato name and that both of them have their place in a healthy diet, but these two foods offer different tastes and unique nutritional benefits.

Sweet potatoes are loaded with nutrients and have an impressive array of antioxidants. Sweet potatoes are also higher in fiber and they have a lower glycemic index which is important for diabetics and carbohydrate watchers.

**Some of the health benefits of sweet potatoes include that they are:**

- Very rich in Vitamin A (in the form of beta-carotene) and Vitamin C which are two powerful antioxidants that work in the body to remove chemicals that damage cells.
- They are good for stomach ulcers and flatulence and colon problems.
- They come loaded with potassium and so is a good remedy for people with high blood pressure.
- Because of its high fiber content, it fights against constipation and colon cancer
- They are a good food for people involved in heavy muscular work, and a great meal for athletes, since it is high in essential vitamins and minerals.
- Since it helps stabilize blood sugar levels and is considered as a medium glycemic index food, they are an excellent food for diabetic patients.

**Let us go a bit deeper and compare the content of ingredients of the two potatoes:**

- One medium size raw white potato with skin provides: 220

calories, 5g protein, 51g carbohydrates, 20mg calcium, 115mg phosphorus, 2.8mg iron, 16mg sodium, 844mg potassium, 4g fiber, 0.22mg thiamin, 0.07mg riboflavin, 3.3mg niacin, and 16mg of vitamin C.

- In contrast, one medium size raw sweet potato with skin provides: 208 calories, 3.5g protein, 38g carbohydrates, 56mg calcium, 110mg phosphorus, 1mg iron, 20mg sodium, 693mg potassium, 5g fiber, 14mg thiamin, 0.13mg riboflavin, 1.2mg niacin, and 49mg of vitamin C.
- One difference not discussed above is that the glycemic index is quite different at 85 (high) for white potato and 54 (medium) for sweet potato, which, as discussed earlier, makes it perfect for diabetic people.
- Boiled or cooked, enjoy sweet potatoes the way you like.

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Mira is a go-to source for nutrition and wellness and has joined The Times Kuwait team in a new weekly column discussing nutrition and answering queries. You can send in your questions to [infotimeskuwait@gmail.com](mailto:infotimeskuwait@gmail.com)

## RECIPE

# Cheesecake Qatayef

A Middle-Eastern pancake



**Q**atayef is a staple dessert in the Middle East especially during the holy month of Ramadan. Basically, this is the Middle Eastern version of pancakes, stuffed with lots of tasty fillings. Qatayef, also known as Atayef, are usually prepared by street vendors in the streets of Jordan, Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, Morocco, and Egypt. They are also sold in bakeries nowadays, but some people still prefer to prepare them at home.

**Total Time:** 1 hour  
**Serving:** 15 pieces

### Ingredients:

#### For pancake:

- 1, 1/2 cup all purpose flour
- 1 tsp Instant yeast
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 1/2 tsp baking powder
- 2 tbsp semolina
- A pinch of salt.
- 1, 1/2 cups of warm milk or water
- Oil for deep frying.
- For sugar syrup:
- 1, 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 cup water
- 1 tbsp honey
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp. Rose water
- 1 inch cinnamon stick

#### For filling:

- 3/4 cup labneh (Hung curd)
- 1/4 cup cream cheese
- 1/4 cup powdered sugar
- 1/4 tsp vanilla essence

### Instructions:

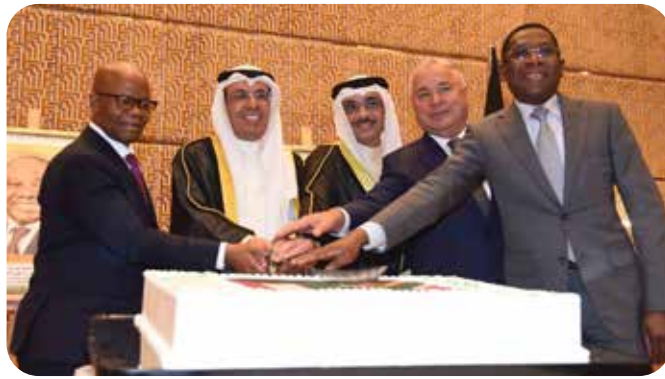
- To make the pancakes:
- In a deep bowl, combine all dry ingredients, add milk and mix well
- The batter consistency should be thinner than that for pancakes but not lumpy
- Cover and let the batter rest for 20 minutes
- Heat a griddle and scoop about 2 tbsp of the batter on to it
- Cook until the batter has no bubbles
- Do not flip them, when done transfer to a plate and cover with a towel
- Continue until you finish all the batter
- To stuff the qatayef place each piece on your palm
- Add about 1 tbsp of your favorite filling in the middle, while ensuring not to overfill
- Fold it into a half moon shape
- Pinch the edges to close the filled pancake
- Set aside and cover with a clean towel until you are done with the rest of the dough
- Then deep fry them in batches until the edges are a golden color
- Remove from the oil and set them over paper towels to drain excess oil
- To make sugar syrup:
- In a saucepan combine sugar and water
- Bring to a boil on medium flame
- Stir occasionally, and simmer for about 16 minutes on low flame
- Add the lemon juice and cinnamon stick
- Give a quick stir and simmer for a further 2 minutes
- Turn off the flame and add rose water and stir well
- Set aside to cool completely
- Once the qatayefs are drained of oil, soak them in the sugar syrup for a few seconds before serving garnished with pistachio and rose petals.



Chef Chhaya Thakker

Indian Chef Chhaya Thakker, who has a huge following online on WhatsApp and YouTube will be sharing her favorite recipes and cooking tips with readers of The Times Kuwait. For feedback, you can write to [editortimeskuwait@gmail.com](mailto:editortimeskuwait@gmail.com)





## South African Embassy celebrates Freedom Day

South African Ambassador, H.E. Dr. Manelisi Genge, speaking at an event held to mark his country's Freedom Day, emphasized the strong and friendly diplomatic relations between his country and Kuwait that are anchored on the three pillars of political, economic and cultural. He also noted that trade relations between the two countries have shown a steady increase over the years, with significant opportunities for further growth in various sectors of their economies.

Kuwait's Minister of Education and Higher Education and Research, Hamad Abdulwahab Al-Amhar Al-Duwaihi, who was the guest of honor on the occasion, along with several heads of diplomatic missions also attended the event.

Ambassador Dr. Genge added that Kuwait and South Africa have signed an agreement to establish a joint Commission for Cooperation (JCC), which is expected to hold its first meeting in South Africa in 2023. The two countries have also signed a number of bilateral agreements and memoranda of understanding, along with negotiations that are underway in the fields of agriculture, education, and tourism.

He reiterated that Kuwait has become an important market for high-quality South African food products, including fresh fruits and vegetables, chilled meats, juices, spices, dairy products, grains, and more. He added that these



products are now available in LuLu Hypermarket, cooperative societies, and other retail outlets in Kuwait.

The ambassador revealed that some of South Africa's most important exports to Kuwait include live animals, animal products, fresh fruits and vegetables, plant products, and mineral products. Recently, South African authorities completed the Guidelines for the Exportation of Live Animals by Sea to North of the Equator to create a favorable environment for exporting livestock to Kuwait and the Gulf Cooperation Council region.

On the tourism front, the ambassador noted that South Africa is always ready to welcome Kuwaitis and expatriate travelers, to experience its renowned tourist destinations and countless experiences. He added that South Africa's

unique weather, well-established infrastructure, friendly people make it one of the rewarding touristic destinations in the world.

Turning to investments, the South African top representative in Kuwait noted that his country is one of the most promising emerging markets due to its highly developed first-world economic infrastructure, which attracts foreign

investors. Our country is an investment destination with untapped potential; and through our unique business value proposition, we believe in our aptitude to attract increased levels of investment.

A number of Kuwaiti investors have invested in the tourism, hospitality and real estate sectors of our economy. South Africa offers foreign investors opportunities in the agriculture/agro-processing, mining, manufacturing, services, energy, infrastructure development and tourism sectors, amongst others, said the envoy.

Expressing his optimism in continuous development of bilateral relations between the two friendly countries, Ambassador Dr. Genge concluded by stating, "Our work ahead is premised on growing trade between our two countries, increased cooperation across various fields, enhanced people to people relations and multilateral cooperation."

## Al Muzaini Exchange announces Eideyah prize winner



Al Muzaini Exchange Company, the number one Exchange company in Kuwait announced the winner of their \$10,000 Eideyah Prize in an event held at its branch in Jahra on 20 April. The winner, Meshal Awwad Alfidhli was extremely happy upon receiving the prize and expressed his joy towards Al Muzaini for rewarding their customers by conducting exciting and rewarding campaigns throughout the year.

Alfidhli has been using Al Muzaini Exchange for several years for the purpose of performing fast, safe and secure money transfers and obtaining foreign currency for his travels at extremely competitive rates. The winner said, "I trust Al Muzaini for my money transfers and foreign exchange, they are really great and the staff is extremely helpful. I recommend Al Muzaini Exchange to every customer that needs to send money quickly and reliably. I have used their branches to perform my transfers and have recently tried the app and found it to be convenient and efficient. Thank you, Al Muzaini, for this wonderful prize."

Al Muzaini provides the highest levels of quality financial services such as money transfers and foreign currency exchange, comfortably and safely at the best prices.

Speaking on the occasion, Al Muzaini General Manager Hugh Fernandes congratulated the winner of the \$10,000 Eideyah prize and stated, "We are pleased to conduct our Mega Promotion Campaign 2023 and offer our customers the chance to win incredible prizes. We are also always looking forward to presenting the best offers and conducting more promotional campaigns in the future to thank our valued customers for their loyalty and the trust that they place in us."

You can now transfer money through Al Muzaini for a chance to win a BMW X3 2023 and incredible prizes worth over \$130,000. Send money through any of the Al Muzaini branches, self-service kiosks, online or their mobile app and use any of their services for a chance to win every day. Transferring through their app multiplies your chances of winning. The campaign lasts from 23 March to 11 June.

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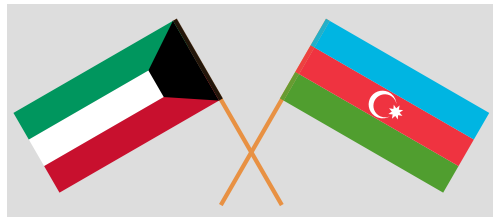
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# Azerbaijan, Kuwait share strong historical, cultural ties

The people and states of Azerbaijan and Kuwait are closely connected by historical, cultural and religious ties, noted a statement issued by the Embassy of Azerbaijan on the occasion of the celebrations to mark the 100th birth anniversary of Heydar Aliyev, the national leader of Azerbaijan.

After Azerbaijan restored its independence in 1991, the first international organization it became a member of was the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.



Diplomatic relations between Azerbaijan and Kuwait were established in 1994. Since then more than 20 intergovernmental agreements have been signed between the two countries.

Azerbaijan and Kuwait also cooperate closely both on a bilateral basis and within the framework of organizations such as the UN, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and OPEC+.

On 10 May 2023, the 100th anniversary of

the birth of Heydar Aliyev, the national leader of the Azerbaijani people, and the founder of the independent state of Azerbaijan, who laid the foundation of relations between the states of Azerbaijan and Kuwait, will be commemorated. On 18 October 1991, following the fall of the former USSR, Azerbaijan regained its independence. However, in the first years of our independence, there was a severe socio-economic crisis, chaos and anarchy in the republic. The country was on the verge of a civil war. On top of that, 20 percent of our land was occupied.

It was during this difficult period that Heydar Aliyev returned to power in 1993 and led independent Azerbaijan for 10 years, while laying the foundation for independent Azerbaijan's development and many successes. Above all, he prevented violence and a civil war, created stability in the country and took serious measures to improve the welfare of the population.

He reshaped Azerbaijan's foreign policy from the first days and rebuilt it on the basis of the country's strategic interests. A ceasefire between Armenia and Azerbaijan was reached in May 1994 as a result of negotiations conducted with the efforts of the OSCE and other mediators. Active cooperative relations were established with international organizations such as the UN, the OSCE, NATO, the Council of Europe, the Islamic Conference Organization, and the



President of Azerbaijan  
Ilham Aliyev

Islamic Development Bank.

Today, Heydar Aliyev's statehood course is successfully continued by his son and President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev. During an official visit to Kuwait in 2009, President Aliyev met with the then Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jabir al-Sabah. Since then, bilateral relations have entered a new phase with

the further development of ties in the fields of economy, trade, tourism, investment.

It is very gratifying that the relations between our countries are continuing to develop positively. Inter-parliamentary relations are intensive. Additionally, the Intergovernmental Joint Commission is active.

The number of Kuwaiti tourists visiting Azerbaijan is increasing every year. This is related to the implementation of an easy visa regime for Kuwaiti citizens, as well as the implementation of direct flights between Baku and Kuwait by Jazeera Airways, Kuwait Airways and Azerbaijan Airlines.

Next year will mark the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Azerbaijan and Kuwait. We believe that the sincere friendly relations of the country's leaders will help us to further expand our relations and achieve new achievements in the near future.

President Aliyev is successfully continuing the political course of his father and national leader Heydar Aliyev. As long as there is an independent state of Azerbaijan and the people of Azerbaijan, Heydar Aliyev will live in their hearts.

The leaders of the countries have played a significant role in the development of relations between our friendly countries.

## Summer exodus and withered inbound tourism

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Kuwait's relatively weak tourism ecosystem is spotlighted in the latest World Economic Forum's biennial Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index (TTCI). While the TTCI is not indicative of a country's attractiveness as a tourism destination, it assesses factors in a country that make it attractive to develop business in the travel and tourism industry.

A look at the TTCI 2021 report, with a focus on rankings of the six states that make up the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) bloc, reveals the truly decrepit state of travel and tourism sector in Kuwait. The United Arab Emirates took the pole position in the region with a rank of 25 in the global index. This was followed by Saudi Arabia at 33, and Qatar in 43 — while the ranking for Oman was not available in 2021, its position in the 2019 index placed it right next to Qatar. Bahrain came in at 57, and Kuwait, no surprise, trailed the GCC states at rank 85.

Kuwait was also the only country among its GCC counterparts to fall below the global average, dropping by a dismal 11 percent from the TTCI mean. Kuwait's poor ranking is not unexpected; the country has consistently neglected developing tourism infrastructure, and has very little by way of natural or man-made attractions to lure international travelers. It neither has iconic attractions from antiquity, nor the modern glitz and glamor of entertainment and recreational facilities offered by many other countries in the region.

Even the few tourism attractions that Kuwait has, such as Failaka Island, the Al-Subiyah excavations, or the inland salt marshes and nature reserves, the country is unable to brand properly and market effectively. Many citizens and residents, having experienced the entertainment facilities and recreational activities available elsewhere in the region and abroad, often find the limited leisure choices available in Kuwait archaic.

A quick weekend trip to the UAE, or increasingly to Saudi Arabia, or any of the other Gulf states offers better leisure and entertainment opportunities than in Kuwait. No wonder then humongous crowds gather at the airport to exit Kuwait over extended weekends, and during the summer travel season, when millions make

a beeline out of Kuwait. Outbound tourism from Kuwait has become an almost unwavering annual ritual for most families in Kuwait, with some making two or more leisure trips abroad each year.

Developing and promoting appealing tourism venues and activities inside Kuwait could hold back at least a few of these million travelers each year and motivate them to spend money on leisure pursuits in this country. And, the money that citizens and residents spend on travel and tourism is no trifling amount either. According to data issued by the Central Bank of Kuwait, local spending on travel witnessed a record jump during the first nine months of 2022, reaching KD3.14 billion, a growth of 97.5 percent compared to the same period in 2021.

Available statistics from the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) also show that more than 4.6 million passengers from Kuwait traveled abroad in 2019. Not only do people from Kuwait travel more, they also spend appreciably more at their destinations. In 2019, outbound travelers from Kuwait spent in excess of KD 4.8 billion on international travel and tourism, ranking the country 24th globally in terms of expenditure on international tourism.

Absence of suitable entertainment outlets in Kuwait, the puritanical approach taken by some influential quarters to tourism, and the government's lackluster interest in developing this sector has discouraged inbound tourism to the country. Kuwait's insipid approach and neglect of inbound tourism is evident in that until recently tourism was relegated to a small division of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. It has since been moved to an even smaller section at the Ministry of Information.

According to the UNWTO, travel and tourism is one of the world's biggest economic activities, driving the creation of wealth, employment and development. Growth in this sector offers increases to GDP and helps diversify economic activities. A large percentage of the money spent by tourists goes to local businesses and individuals who reinject a significant portion of this back into the economy creating a multiplier effect that benefits everyone.

In addition, tourism revenues allow a country to diversify its source of income. Diversifying economic activities so as to wean itself off its

over dependence on oil revenues has been a key economic goal of Kuwait. But, in order for tourism to become a steady and sustainable stream of income, and consistently attract international travelers, the country needs to get several things right.

For starters, tourism needs to be placed under an independent ministry, board or self-financing public entity, and designated as a full-fledged industry guided by its own laws and regulations. In addition, the authorities have to provide adequate funding to develop a robust tourism infrastructure that meets the needs of tourists, including developing interesting cultural events, appealing entertainment venues and activities, as well as business and leisure attractions.

Kuwait will also have to attract local and international investments into the travel and tourism sector, and encourage private sector involvement by allocating sufficient land and licenses for entertainment and recreational projects. There is also the potential for the country to designate Kuwait's offshore islands for development and management by specialized local and international companies, with adequate legal and ethical restraints in place.

Equally important, the country has to improve its openness to international visitors, ease the currently restrictive policies that detract visitors, and enhance visit-visa procedures, including e-visas for all foreigners, not just those from a few select countries. This would encourage inbound tourism from a wider international audience and bring in more tourism dollars from everywhere.

Interestingly, in recent weeks, there have been hints of genuine interest in developing and promoting tourism in policy circles. Earlier this year, the Assistant Undersecretary for the Tourism Sector at the Ministry of Information, Saud Al-Khaldi held discussions with the visiting Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization, Zurab Pololikashvili, and the Director of the Regional Department for the Middle East of the UNWTO, Basma Al-Maiman, on enhancing tourism in Kuwait.

The two sides discussed using the expertise and experience of the organizations to reorganize and advance the tourism sector in Kuwait, as well as qualify and train national cadres in the field of tourism and hospitality. Attracting tourism investment, as well as benefiting from programs

offered by the organizations, were also discussed during the talks. In a related major revelation, the Minister of Tourism in Bahrain, Fatima Al Sairafi, while speaking at a panel discussion during the Arabian Travel Market (ATM) held in Dubai last week, stated that discussions were being held at the ministerial level among the GCC states to launch a 'Schengen-style' visa for tourists. This visa would allow international travelers to travel across all six GCC states with a single visit visa to any one state.

Adding that this is likely to happen very soon, Al Sairafi said, "We see people flying to Europe on a Schengen-visa usually spend their time in several countries rather than in one country. We really saw the value this can bring not to each country in the GCC but to all of us." If adopted as planned, this move would be a game-changer for tourism in the region, boosting revenues and footfall for all countries in the six-nation bloc.

In another indication of a whiff of change, Kuwait is said to be reviving plans to join the pan-Gulf railway network by building its domestic rail sector. The Public Authority for Roads and Land Transport (PART) recently floated a tender valued at KD1 million, for the study and detailed design work on the first phase of Kuwait's rail network, with the deadline for submission set for 30 May. Kuwait is the northern terminus of the planned GCC Rail network that will span over 2,100km.

When eventually completed the GCC Railway is expected to link the six GCC states and extend from north of Kuwait to the west of Oman, with the potential, in future, to extend further to Iraq in the north and Yemen in the south. Developing the GCC Railway network and the introduction of a Schengen-style visa for entry and exit from the six-nation bloc could do wonders to develop and energize travel and tourism in the GCC, and particularly in Kuwait.

Given the consensus among everyone on the importance of developing tourism and its economically vital nature, it is disconcerting that governments in the past have generally neglected this sector. While a contentious parliament and ensuing political instability have been blamed for the current status of tourism in the country, one can always hope that a new government and parliament, formed after the upcoming elections, will provide tourism sector with the attention and boost it sorely deserves.





## Turks in Kuwait cast their votes in National Assembly elections

**T**urks in Kuwait casted their votes in the National Assembly elections at the Turkish Embassy on Friday. The embassy welcomed dozens of Turkish voters who lined up early in the morning to cast their votes.

The Turkish Ambassador H.E. Tuba Nur Sönmez said that the high turnout of voters from the Turkish community in Kuwait shows the desire of all citizens to play a fundamental role in the democratic process. She also highlighted the importance of the Turkish community's



participation in elections, noting that the turnout of Turkish voters living abroad has increased significantly in recent years.

Sönmez said that there are around 171 polling stations for Turkish voters in 73 countries, including Kuwait, with more than 4,000 eligible voters in the country. She also thanked the Kuwaiti government, represented by the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for providing the necessary facilities to ensure the success of this democratic event.

## Mol to use advanced techniques to fight lethal crimes

**M**inistry of Interior (Mol) is reportedly planning to introduce advanced techniques and cutting-edge technology to reduce the increasing number of violent crimes being reported in recent times. First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Interior and Acting Minister of Defense Sheikh Talal Al-Khalid has called on senior security leaders to develop new sophisticated security plans and unconventional strategies to confront the phenomenon of violence and criminal behavior in society.

According to Mol statistics the country witnessed around 255 murders since 2012, or over two murders each month, most of which were over insignificant issues. Records also show that several factors were behind the recent spate in lethal crimes, including an increase in drug abuse among young people, the absence of oversight, family disintegration, the spread

and ease of obtaining knives and firearms, the negative impact of social networking sites, the absence of appropriate legal deterrents, and the recklessness of some young people.

Additionally the use of 'wasta' was found to be interfering with the implementation of law, with political and other influences being applied to suppress the registering of cases and preventing or reducing punishment for perpetrators of violent crimes.

Sources at Mol add that among the motivations that lead to many violent crimes were revenge and quarrels over personal or family disputes, financial causes, theft, drug disputes and mental illness, in addition to disputes and marital and family problems.

The ministry has undertaken a number of steps to deter the rise in violent crimes, including intensification of security presence and increase

in check points and patrols, especially in areas of high risk, as well as monitoring the behavior of those who have been recently released from prison, securing sites holding events and celebrations, raising the level of readiness to face emergency crises, raising awareness of the seriousness of crime and ways to report it among the public through advertisements, and seminars in schools and universities, and strengthening the role of community police to confront wrong behaviors. There is clearly a need for all concerned authorities to coordinate and investigate the

causes of these crimes and put an end to them and address their motives, as the increase in crime rates in Kuwait is a matter of surprise, especially as they are foreign and alien to Kuwaiti society, and indicate the influence of unregulated social media platforms that motivate these behaviors.

A related statistics by the Ministry of Justice showed that 976 cases of murder and self-assault are pending before the courts during the past 16 months, with 819 cases registered in 2022 and additional 157 cases registered during the first quarter of 2023.



## Kuwait gears up for general elections

**W**ith general elections to the National Assembly scheduled for 6 June, the concerned ministries have begun mobilizing resources to ensure smooth and fair polling in the country.

Last Thursday the Ministry of Interior announced, through the Director General of Legal Affairs, Brigadier General Salah Al-Shatti, that the door for candidacy to elect members of the National Assembly will open on 5 May and will remain open until the end of official working hours on 14 May.



Al-Shatti explained that the door of the Election Affairs Department headquarters located in Shuwaikh will remain open for 10 consecutive days, including holidays, from 7:00 in the morning until 1:30 in the afternoon to receive nominations from citizens wishing to contest the 2023 National Assembly elections.

He added that the Ministry of Interior, in coordination with the concerned state

authorities, has prepared an integrated plan to secure the process in the Department of Elections Affairs, and security teams have been allocated to maintain discipline and prevent any actions that would affect the process of receiving candidates and registering their applications.

Meanwhile, the Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Abdul Rahman Al-Mutairi, has issued a ministerial decision regarding the conditions and controls for media coverage during the entire process.

The decision also prohibits the publishing of anything that offends the electoral process or the candidates, and that the method of propaganda should not include anything in the form of bribe, whether gifts, money or promises thereof to win votes or lure citizens to abstain from voting.

For his part, Assistant Undersecretary for Press, Publishing and Publications at the Ministry of Information, Lafi Al-Subaie, said the ministry is keen to organize the process of media statements from candidates at the headquarters of the Elections Registration Department, noting that work is underway in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior to control the process.

Speaking during an inspection visit to the Elections Registration Department media center, Al-Subaie said that it was agreed with officials in the Interior Ministry that the organization within the headquarters of the media center falls within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Information in accordance with the media laws in this regard, and that the Ministry of Interior applies its laws to those who violate the organizational process outside the media center.

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# Kuwait conducts joint exercise with US forces at Camp Arifjan



Kuwaiti and United States defense forces, along with personnel from Kuwait's interior ministry and fire-force, conducted a security exercise that involved multiple potential threat scenarios. The first involved disarming and arresting a terrorist driving a car bomb, the second was the neutralizing of a car bomb at the gates of Camp Arifjan, and the third was the successful interception of a drone attack on the camp using a Patriot missile.

Speaking about the joint exercise, Commander of the Regional Support Group and supervisor of operations at Camp Buehring and Arifjan, Colonel Martin Wolgemuth, said the exercises were the result of extensive planning in cooperation with Kuwait's ministries of defense and interior, and the country's firefighting force.

He said that the Kuwaiti security forces demonstrated excellent performance during the exercises, providing valuable assistance to

the US forces. As part of the training, the two sides will continue to exchange reports on their performance to identify areas for improvement.

A special plan was also developed to facilitate joint training every three months, with a larger and more comprehensive exercise to be held annually. The training will focus on specific

scenarios such as drone attacks, bombings, or building assaults. The varied training scenarios reflect a clear plan to develop Kuwait's capabilities in responding to potential threats.

Stressing on the readiness of the US and Kuwait forces to thwart any attempts that threatened Kuwait's security, US Air Force Colonel Martin

Waligura praised the efficiency of the Kuwaiti troops, stating that they were "excellent" and had already requested more joint training exercises. He added that the Commander of the Kuwaiti Air Defense, Brigadier General Khaled Ali Al-Hafiz, had attended the training site and gained valuable insights on cooperation.

Under the Defense Cooperation Agreement between the US and Kuwait, there is a bilateral response to any emergency that occurs outside the base perimeter, with the two nations working together to handle the emergency. US and Kuwaiti security forces have conducted several joint training exercises at Camp Arifjan to improve their tactical and technical skills in responding to potential terrorist threats. The ongoing development of Camp Arifjan's facilities and infrastructure in the form of large-scale projects reflects that the US forces will remain in Kuwait for an extended period to strengthen regional security.



## Togolese Embassy celebrates country's Independence Day



Embassy of Togo held a ceremony to mark the country's 63rd anniversary of independence on 4 May. The function was graced by the representative from the ministry of foreign affairs in the presence of several members of the diplomatic corps and special invitees.

In his speech on the occasion, Togolese Ambassador H.E. Mohamed Saad Ouro commended the distinguished diplomatic

relations and cooperation between Togo and Kuwait, and highlighted the significant progress made in recent years. He noted that the celebration of Togo's independence was a symbol of the strong ties and cooperation between Kuwait and Togo, and an opportunity to strengthen these relations even further.

He also expressed his gratitude to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown

Prince Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for their support and facilitation of the Embassy's work.

Ambassador Ouro also thanked the Kuwaiti government and its people for their continued support of Togo and its citizens. Pointing out that there were around 500 Togolese nationals working in Kuwait, the envoy encouraged

Kuwaitis to visit Togo and invest in the country's many lucrative fields.

For his part, the chief guest congratulated Togo on the occasion of its Independence Day and praised the strong bilateral relations between Togo and Kuwait, along with the progress made in various areas of cooperation. He further expressed his wish for continued success and prosperity for the Togolese Republic.





# ARMENIA

## A timeless land of great beauty



By Nourah Khan  
Exclusive to  
The Times Kuwait

Armenia is one of the most beautiful countries in the Caucasus, characterized by its charming natural landscapes, distinctive tourist sites, and a history that spans eons. The moment you step into the country, you are engulfed by the friendliness of locals, which adds to the beauty of a trip to this enchanting country.

Armenia is not a very large country, and within a week you could be able to traverse the major tourist attractions in this place. The most appropriate time to visit Armenia and enjoy its beautiful

atmosphere and moderate temperatures are from April to June.

Whatever type of tourism you prefer, you will find what you need in Armenia. So if you are looking for a new destination for family tourism, or you want to spend your honeymoon in a magical place to create unforgettable memories, or perhaps you prefer nature hikes, exotic sports, heritage tourism, or just partying and other fun activities, you can do all of this and more in one country, Armenia.



In Armenia you can find different natural landscapes and a country that is steeped in culture and heritage with a history that extends back more than 3,500 years. Many cultural and historical monuments dot the country, and befittingly enough the country is often referred to as an 'Open Museum'.

But this does not mean that travelers who are seeking relaxation and enjoying nature will not find any such venues in the country; quite the opposite. Armenia is a country with outstanding natural beauty, which gives visitors all the ingredients for relaxation and unwinding.

As for prices, it is one of the countries that will not cost you much to travel and stay. The cost of living as a tourist is reasonable and appropriate, and of course cheaper than most places in Europe. So I think it is suitable for people who are on a limited budget.

A visit to any city or town in Armenia makes you feel quite comfortable, because you will notice that a large number of Armenians were born in Gulf countries and know a lot about our cultures, customs and character. On knowing that I am from Kuwait, I was warmly welcomed into homes of total strangers and plied with food and drink. And, speaking about food, Armenian food is quite similar to what we have here in Kuwait and the Gulf.

The most important thing I particularly noticed about Armenia is the high level of security that prevails across the country. I used to go out for walks alone in the streets at night without encountering any untoward incident.

Some of the amazing places I visited in Armenia include:

Yerevan, the capital of Armenia, is a city of contradictions where modern lifestyle trappings compete for space with the old. While few traces of the city's storied ancient history are visible today, much of the extant architecture is dominated by stolid Soviet-era buildings interspersed by numerous beautiful gardens, parks and other greenery. The city was once called



the Pink City based on the color of the stones that were used in building architectural artifacts and houses.

Another place to visit is the town of Dilijan, which teems with health resorts, and is also one of the places with an amazing natural beauty. Every corner and space appears embellished with green trees, colorful gardens and fountains. Located on the banks of the Aghstev River, Dilijan lies to the northeast of the capital Yerevan and enjoys a mild climate throughout the year.

The town's many health resorts and natural beauty, as well as entertainment places with exciting activities, attract a lot of tourists year round. And, while in Dilijan do not miss visiting the town's other major attractions, including the Old Town, Dilijan Museum, the famous healing mineral water fountains and the World War II Memorial.

And, no matter what, do not miss tasting Armenian cuisine, as it is considered the source kitchen for much of today's Middle-Eastern cuisines, with their slant towards poultry, meat and fish. Famous local dishes vary in taste between European and Eastern preferences, and there are also dishes that appeal to our Gulf tastes and flavors, especially ones such as the Armenian grilled fish.

Among the other beautiful cities that must be on your tourist schedule is the city of Jermuk. The city of Jermuk in Armenia is one of the most famous places for medical tourism, as it is characterized by its mineral waters and mild climate throughout the year. The city contains more than 40 thermal springs that people go to for treatment for various diseases and you also get to see the second largest waterfall in Armenia, with the Jermuk Waterfall cascading down from a height of over 70 meters.



Another interesting place that should be visited in Armenia is Lake Sevan, also known as the 'Jewel of the Caucasus'. It is one of the highest freshwater lakes in the world, located at an altitude of 1,900 meters above sea level. As a result of its height, the weather in Lake Sevan is moderate to cold even in the summer days, which makes it an important attraction for tourists, especially tourists coming from hot countries such as the Arab Gulf states. You can also enjoy camping or doing some water sports when you visit Lake Sevan in the summer, at very reasonable prices.

There is something else you should not miss when visiting Armenia, Mount Ararat mentioned in the Bible and associated with Noah's Ark. Although it is located on Turkish soil, Mount Ararat is one of the most majestic mountains in the world, which can be seen from the Armenian lands. Although it lies outside the borders of modern Armenia, the mountain is a national symbol of Armenia and has been considered a sacred place by Armenians for ages.

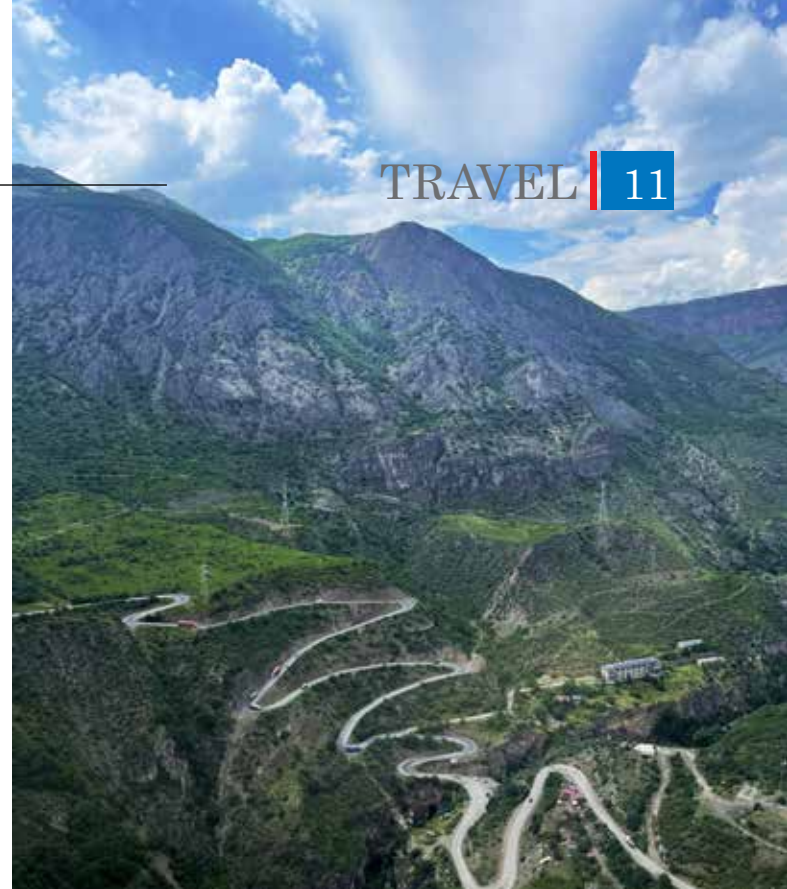
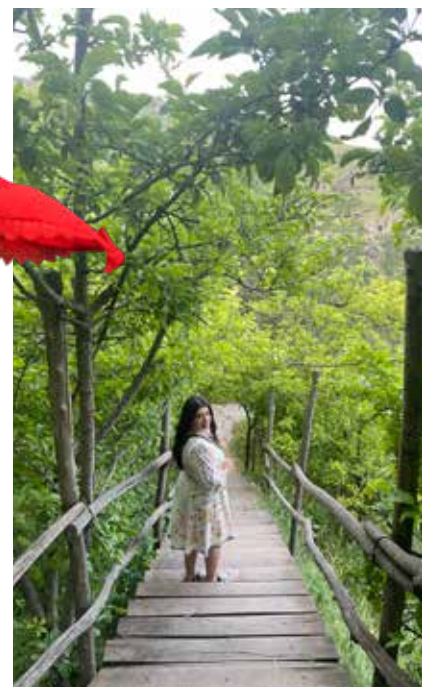
In Armenia, you will not have any difficulty in interacting with others, because English is the most common language after the Russian language, especially in the capital, Yerevan. But moving to the countryside, Russian is the most popular foreign language, and rarely you can come across Armenians who speak French, especially in shops, restaurants and hotels.

For my transportation throughout Armenia, I relied on a tour company and a tour guide. Modes of transportation in Armenia are of high quality, given the number of tourists who come to the country most of the year, with domestic transportation divided between the metro, buses, mini-buses and taxis.

I also recommend that you travel with a knowledgeable tour guide so that they can explain the stories, histories and traditions behind statues, buildings, and other attractions in the country.

I believe that the opening of direct flights between the two countries could be mutually beneficial. More visitors from Kuwait could travel easily to Armenia, and more Armenian fresh products could arrive in this country, not to mention the significant Armenian community in Kuwait who would also benefit from such direct flights.

**Noura Khan**, a travel influencer and content creator, is a Kuwaiti national, holds a degree in law from Kuwait University and has worked as a journalist prior to taking up a position in the government. In 2018 she started blogging on travel and visited more than 57 countries since. She has more than 54k followers on her blog post @nourajtraveller is well appreciated for content and travel information. Noura writes exclusively for The Times Kuwait on her travel visits.







# Finding Love In The Digital Age



**By Hermoine Macura-Noble**  
Special to The Times Kuwait

Finding love and getting married has become far easier but also more complex in today's digital world. On one hand, technology has made it easier to connect with people from across the world, giving us access to a wider pool of potential partners. On the other hand, the sheer volume of options available and the prevalence of online dating platforms has made it more difficult to navigate the dating landscape and find a meaningful connection.

One of the main advantages of technology is that it allows us to connect with people we might never have met otherwise. Dating apps like Tinder and Bumble have become increasingly popular in recent years, allowing us to swipe through potential matches and connect with people based on shared interests and values.



**Dubai Matchmaker  
Christiana Maxon**

with people from various backgrounds.

Gulf relationship alchemist also known as the Dubai Matchmaker; Christiana Maxon explains. "People are seeking meaningful connections with compatible partners. All of our clients are interested in meeting partners they intellectually and emotionally connect with. I have also seen an increase in clients looking for partners that have many accomplishments and successes they can celebrate alongside theirs."

The demand for matchmakers is growing in popularity for various reasons however the most popular reason is it makes finding a life partner much easier. "The personalized matchmaking service that our team offers is popular in the GCC because our clients are used to a lifestyle of outsourcing, and we take care of everything. We interview, verify, vet and present potential matches, plan, book, confirm dates, manage communication and feedback for our clients in order to expedite

the entire dating experience to find them success in their love life," adds Maxon.

Fresh-faced and full of enthusiasm, Maxon is a global answer to Sima Aunty from the Netflix series, Indian Matchmaker. With a success rate of 96 percent, she shares her favorite love story. "One of my first clients sought my services as he believed he would never find a partner due to being on the autism spectrum. I am happy to say that he is now engaged to the fifth woman I introduced him to!"

For those who are unfamiliar with the process: To sign up for matchmaking services, there is usually a screening call, a preliminary match session, contracts and then payments. After this, eligible and approved candidates start dating from the options presented from global databases and an elite matchmaking concierge to deliver results.

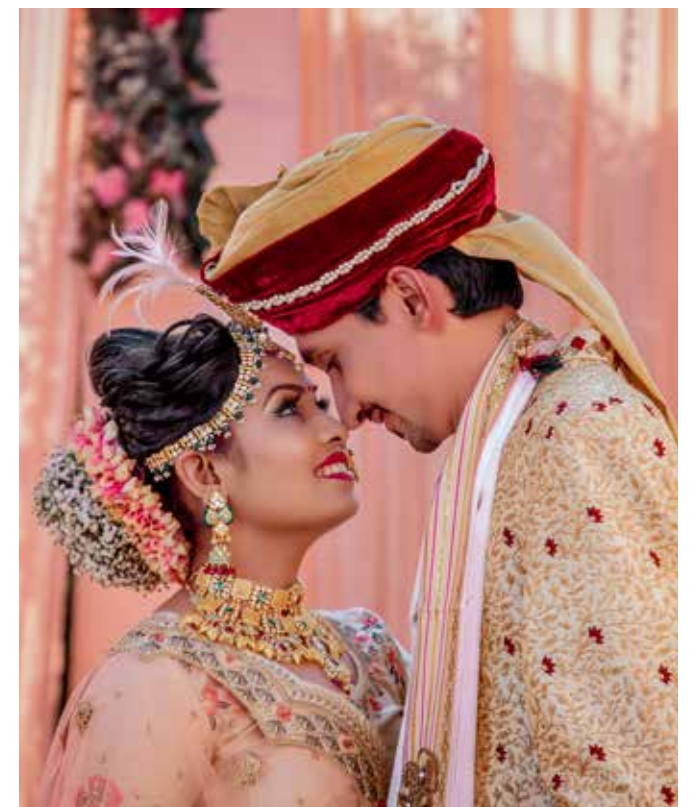
Other services Maxon offers include personal styling, a professional photo shoot, dentistry, coaching and rapid transformational therapy with experts as well as anything you need to feel and look your best. She also helps her clients deal with and define their reality. "Why are you single? Ask yourself this question and seriously reflect. If your answer is 'I don't know' you are obviously not ready to date. Your answer will help you

to realize patterns that maybe you didn't realize were taking place. The next thing to do is rate yourself... No, not on looks but rather on the qualities you possess, the achievements and accomplishments you hold, and your physical and mental health. Add on to that list what you bring to a relationship. Be honest," concludes Maxon.

So, whether you are ready to hire a matchmaker or just want to get out there and try your luck despite the challenges in our fast paced globalized world, relationship experts recommend beginning with these tips:

**Be authentic:** While it can be tempting to present a carefully curated version of yourself online, it is important to be honest. This means being true to yourself and your values and not pretending to be someone else. Authenticity has no competition.

**Be patient:** Finding love takes time, whether you are using dating apps or meeting people in person. Do not get discouraged if it takes a while to find the right person — remember that good things come to those who wait.



**Be open-minded:** When it comes to finding love, it is important to keep an open mind and be willing to try new things. Do not be too quick to dismiss someone just because they do not fit your preconceived notions of what a partner should be.

**Take it offline:** While chatting online can be a great way to get to know someone, it is important to take the relationship offline as soon as possible. Meeting in person can help you determine whether there is a real connection between you and your potential partner.

## Hermoine Macura-Noble

*The first Australian English speaking News Anchor in the Middle East. She is also the Author of Faces of the Middle East and Founder of US-based 501c3 charity - The House of Rest which helps to ease the suffering of victims of war. For more from our Contributing Editor, you can follow her on Instagram, @hello\_hermoine*





# Dilemmas of Deterrence

EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT



**Joseph S. Nye**

*A professor at Harvard University and a former US assistant secretary of defense, is the author, most recently, of Do Morals Matter? Presidents and Foreign Policy from FDR to Trump.*

**W**e live in a world where geopolitical stability relies largely on deterrence. But how can we prove that deterrence works?

Consider the ongoing war in Europe. Beginning in December 2021, US President Joe Biden warned Russian President Vladimir Putin that Russia would face severe new sanctions if he invaded Ukraine, to no avail. Then, when the United States and its European allies thwarted Russia's plans by providing arms to Ukraine, Putin brandished the nuclear option. But Western aid continued unabated.

Did deterrence fail or succeed? Answering this question poses a challenge because it requires assessing what would have occurred absent the threat. It is hard to prove a negative. If I put a sign on my front door saying, 'No Elephants', and there are no elephants in my house, did I deter them? It depends on the likelihood of literate elephants entering in the first place.

The Ukraine war demonstrates how risk reduction is not always an either/or choice, but often a matter of degree. Perhaps Putin, counting on a flimsy Western alliance, believed the sanctions would fail. But he has so far refrained from striking supply lines in NATO countries. And while the West, for its part, has continued to arm Ukraine despite Putin's nuclear saber-rattling, it has been reluctant to provide longer-range missile systems or modern warplanes.

Credibility is essential for deterrence to work: threatening a maximum response to defend a minor interest strains credulity. This is particularly true when a nuclear power promises to extend its umbrella to defend a distant country. During the Cold War, the US and the USSR credibly extended their nuclear deterrence to Western and Eastern Europe, respectively. While some analysts were skeptical that the US would risk New York to defend the isolated enclave of West Berlin, the threat worked, partly because of the American troops stationed there. While the so-called Berlin Brigade was too small to defend against a Soviet invasion, it ensured that a nuclear strike on the city would result in American casualties. (At the same time, US forces in Europe, both nuclear and conventional, were not a credible deterrent for Soviet military intervention in Hungary in 1956 or Czechoslovakia in 1968.)

This history is relevant to the current situation in Korea, where North Korea has

planning, similar to US engagement with NATO allies during the Cold War.

The credibility of US-extended deterrence in this instance, much like in the Berlin example, is reinforced by the presence of 28,500 US troops in South Korea. The two countries are locked in a 'community of fate' because North Korea cannot attack South Korea without killing Americans. Forward bases in Japan offer the same guarantee. That is why former US President Donald Trump's frequent musings about the withdrawal of troops from places like Japan and South Korea were so damaging.

Trump's presidency also highlighted the ineffectiveness of nuclear intimidation and bribes. When North Korea successfully tested an intercontinental ballistic missile in 2017, Trump threatened "fire and fury like the world has never seen," to no effect. Next, he tried direct diplomacy. After meeting with North Korean dictator Kim Jong-un in 2018 — a long-sought foreign-policy goal for the North — he brashly

between the US and China, they did not see eye to eye on Taiwan's status. Ultimately, the two sides designed a formula to postpone the matter: the US would recognize 'one China', the People's Republic on the mainland, but only acknowledge that people on both sides of the Taiwan Strait were Chinese. The US provided weapons to Taiwan in accordance with the Taiwan Relations Act but did not recognize it as a sovereign country.

For many years, the US refused to say whether it would defend Taiwan. When I visited Beijing as a Pentagon official in the Clinton administration, my hosts asked if our countries would go to war over Taiwan. I replied that no one could know, noting that even though Secretary of State Dean Acheson failed to include South Korea in America's defense perimeter in his 12 January 1950 speech, the US entered the Korean War only six months later. Relying on what the deterrence theorist Thomas Schelling called 'the threat that leaves something to chance', I warned the Chinese against testing us.

What some call a policy of 'strategic ambiguity' might better be described as 'double deterrence', designed not only to prevent China from using force against the island but also to dissuade Taiwan from declaring de jure independence. Now some analysts worry that this strategy is eroding as China's military might grows and US lawmakers visit Taiwan in greater numbers. On four separate occasions, Biden has stated that the US would defend Taiwan, only for the White House to follow up each time with a statement reaffirming adherence to the 'one China' policy. In this context, steering a path that avoids projecting weakness or provoking escalation will be decisive for avoiding all-out war.

History reminds us that assessing a deterrent's success can be difficult. There are some factors, like credibility, that are crucial to achieving the desired outcomes. But as dilemmas of deterrence continue to evolve and multiply, studying the strategy's limits is equally important for finding an approach that works.

**“** Does deterrence fail or succeed? It is hard to prove a negative. If I put up a sign on my front door, 'No Elephants', and no elephants enter my house, did I deter them? It depends on the likelihood of literate elephants entering in the first place. **”**

nuclear weapons and South Korea remains bound by the Non-Proliferation Treaty. One recent poll found that more than 70 percent of South Koreans were in favor of their country developing its own nuclear arsenal. Instead, when South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol met with Biden in April, they agreed that the US would station a nuclear-armed submarine near the Korean Peninsula and deepen consultations with South Korea on nuclear and strategic

predicted the swift demise of the country's nuclear-arms program. To no one's surprise, North Korea did not disarm. As Kim sees it, his reputation and the fate of his family dynasty depend on nuclear weapons.

The case of Taiwan, which China regards as its territory, shows how changing circumstances can test tried-and-true deterrence strategies. When President Richard Nixon and Chairman Mao Zedong met in 1972 to restore relations



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EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

# Can Germany's Economy Avoid a China Shock?

**Dalia Marin**

*Professor of International Economics at the School of Management of the Technical University of Munich, is a research fellow at the Centre for Economic Policy Research and a non-resident fellow at Bruegel.*

The German and American automobile executives attending this year's Shanghai motor show may have expected to take a victory lap following their three-year pandemic-related absence. Instead, Western manufacturers were met with a harsh reality: dozens of new Chinese-made electric vehicles are coming for their market share.

Over the past few years, the rise of EVs has propelled the Chinese auto industry to global prominence. China's auto exports already overtook Germany's in 2022, following a 54 percent increase, and the country is projected to surpass Japan to become the world's largest car exporter this year.

The shift was evident in Shanghai, where Chinese consumers ignored the offerings from BMW, Volkswagen, and Mercedes in favor of new models from Chinese manufacturers BYD and Nio. Compared to the new Chinese cars, with their cutting-edge batteries and sensors, the German-made EVs seemed almost outmoded. For decades, German engineers perfected the internal combustion engine; now, the EV revolution is threatening to render all their technological know-how obsolete.

Given that the auto sector accounts for 4 percent of German employment, the country could be facing a 'China shock' comparable to the one that the United States and other high-income countries experienced in the

early 2000s. Following China's entry into the World Trade Organization in 2001, Western manufacturers faced fierce competition from Chinese firms, beginning with low-value-added products such as textiles, furniture, and clothing but then in more sophisticated industries like computers and electronics.

Between 2000 and 2010, Chinese-made goods' share of total US imports increased by 25 percentage points, contributing to the deindustrialization of the Rust Belt and transforming America's economy and politics. Contrary to what trade economists predicted, the contraction of import-competing sectors

cars from China but exported only 1.7 million. A similar trend is apparent in the machine tools sector, where China's exports have surpassed Germany's.

The irony is that China's rapid industrialization was facilitated by massive imports of German machinery, particularly cars and machine tools, which are crucial to the German economy. Over the past three decades, Germany trained a generation of Chinese workers through joint ventures with Chinese companies. These technology transfers were mandated by China as a prerequisite to accessing its market. But now that China has become an industrial

imported from low-wage countries like Turkey and Greece, resulting in job losses in those countries rather than in Germany. Similarly, the expansion of production networks to ex-communist Central and Eastern Europe enabled German firms to boost productivity and reduce costs. For years, Germany benefited from China's economic boom, as Chinese demand for high-quality German cars and machinery soared.

But as China continues to expand its economic influence, Germany may no longer be able to avoid the negative impact that other countries have experienced. While the reconstruction of Ukraine could give the German economy a boost similar to the one it experienced following the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1989, the war there must first end, which seems unlikely in the foreseeable future.

German policymakers could take several steps to avoid repeating America's painful deindustrialization process. They could seek to attract foreign direct investment from Chinese battery firms and Asian semiconductor manufacturers. Germany could also emulate China by forming joint ventures between domestic companies and Israeli artificial-intelligence startups. That would help Germany bridge the knowledge gap in AI technology, which will be crucial for autonomous cars, and enable German engineers to acquire the necessary skills to remain globally competitive.

Finally, Germany can and must take the lead in creating a European version of the US government's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency. By reverse engineering the Chinese approach to industrial policy and the US approach to innovation, Germany could boost economic dynamism at home and elsewhere in Europe, avoid the negative consequences of a China shock, and prepare its economy for the challenges of the twenty-first century.

“Germany trained Chinese workers through joint ventures with companies there as a prerequisite mandated by China to access its market. But now that China is an industrial powerhouse, it has outgrown the need for German assistance.”

was not offset by an increase in exports to China. Moreover, displaced workers could not easily find new employment, and those who did experienced reduced wages. The decline in manufacturing employment contributed to the increase in 'deaths of despair' and set the stage for Donald Trump's victory in the 2016 US presidential election, as the region most exposed to Chinese import competition underwent a rightward shift.

There are clear signs that Germany is already experiencing its own version of the China shock. Until last year, Germany was a net car exporter. Now, for the first time ever, it is importing more cars from China than it exports. From January to August 2022, Germany imported 1.8 million

powerhouse in its own right, it has outgrown the need for Germany's assistance.

China holds two significant advantages over Germany. First, at a time of technological disruption, past experience is irrelevant. China does not need to master the combustion engine to beat Germany in the EV market. Second, China's size enables it to scale up production, expedite the learning process, and reduce costs swiftly. This is how China became a global leader in lithium-ion batteries — and why it is now on the cusp of developing sodium-powered batteries.

In the past, several factors helped Germany avoid the China shock. Initially, Chinese imports competed with goods that Germany previously





# And now, a Harvard Diet

World of nutrition is littered with diets that promise to meet various health targets, including losing weight, gaining weight, attaining lean-body mass, or in general enjoying a longer healthier life. Many of these diets were at best fads that stole the limelight for a brief period before falling from favor. But some diets have endured the changing dietary fashions, including ones such as the Mediterranean Diet, the MyPlate Diet, and a few others, largely because they were proven to deliver better health outcomes, and help attain desired health goals.

The variety of diets and promises they offer may make you wonder what is the ideal eating plan to help you achieve the health goal you desire. Harvard University researchers have now stepped in to lend a hand in helping people choose a diet that meets their goals, especially if it involves living a longer healthier life.

The scientists studied people who followed one of four different dietary patterns: the Mediterranean Diet, the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (MyPlate), the Healthful Plant-Based Diet Index, and their own version, the Alternative Healthy Eating Index (AHEI), also known as the 'Harvard Diet'.

The researchers found that people who followed any of these diets were 20 percent less likely to die during the 36-year study. They also had lower rates of cancer,

respiratory disease, and cardiovascular disease. However, the Harvard Diet, which was developed specifically for the study, has garnered particular attention of nutritionists, dietitians and the public at large.

The Harvard Diet recommends a plate ratio of 50:25:25 of vegetables and fruits, whole grains, and proteins respectively. When selecting fruits and vegetables, the diet suggests aiming for color and variety, and remember that potatoes do not count as vegetables on the Healthy Eating Index, because of their negative impact on blood sugar.

For the whole grain portion, the AHEI recommends people go for intact grains, including whole wheat, barley, wheat berries, quinoa, oats, brown rice, and foods made with them, such as whole wheat pasta. Unrefined whole grains have a milder effect on blood sugar and insulin than white bread, white rice, and other refined grains.

On the protein side of your plate, look to include fish, poultry, beans, and nuts, all of which are healthy, versatile protein sources — they can be mixed into salads, and pair well with vegetables on a plate. The diet calls for limiting red meat, and avoiding processed meats such as bacon and sausage.

In addition, AHEI also allows you to use, in moderation, healthy plant oils such as olive, canola, soy, corn, sunflower and peanut oils among others. But remember that just because the label says 'low-fat' it

does not equate to 'healthy', and any oil with the partially hydrogenated label should be avoided as they contain unhealthy trans fats.

The main message of Harvard's Alternative Healthy Eating Index is to focus on diet quality. Skip the sugary drinks, limit milk and dairy products to one to two servings per day, and limit juice to a small glass per day. Also, remember to stay active in order to maintain weight control.

The Harvard diet also focuses on quality of food, and notes that the type of carbohydrate in the diet is more important than the amount of carbohydrate. This is because some sources of carbohydrate — like vegetables (other than potatoes), fruits, whole grains, and beans — are healthier than others.

The diet also does not set a maximum on the percentage of calories people should get each day from healthy sources of fat. This recommendation is counter to the low-fat message harped on for decades by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) through its MyPlate Diet, which it designed in 2011.

The Harvard Diet is almost identical to MyPlate, with both recommending that half your plate or meal serving should consist of fruits and vegetables, a quarter should be whole grains, and the last quarter should be made up of proteins. Where the two diets differ is that the Harvard Diet advises a smaller proportion of fruits relative to vegetables for the fruits and vegetables portion.

Another key difference between the two is in their fat and dairy recommendations. MyPlate recommends a serving of dairy with each meal. But the Harvard Diet suggests limiting milk/dairy beverages to 1-2 servings per day, and replacing dairy with non-sugary



beverages like water, coffee, or tea, due to the higher prevalence of lactose intolerance among the US population. Also, unlike MyPlate, the Harvard Diet advises moderate amounts of healthy fats — in the form of plant oils, such as olive, canola, soy, peanut, corn, and sunflower oils — but avoids trans fats.

Among the several benefits attributed to the Harvard Diet are lowering the risk of cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, high cholesterol, and hypertension. In addition, weight loss could also be an added benefit of this diet. These benefits occur largely because the diet is low in processed foods and saturated fats, both of which have been linked to an increased risk for these conditions.

Researchers behind the Harvard Diet say that rather than call it a 'Diet' — which in recent years has had a bad rap as people often associate diet as a fad for quick weight loss — it should be seen as an eating plan for leading a healthy life. More importantly, the Harvard Plan can be adopted regardless of your budget as it can be adapted to match the individual's unique situation.

## Science behind why chocolate tastes so good

Ever since the Spaniards brought home the cocoa beans from South America in the early 16th century, chocolates have been a delicacy the world over. The question of what exactly makes chocolates taste so irresistibly delicious has baffled scientists for years. Researchers at the University of Leeds in the United Kingdom now believe they have the answer to this age-old enigma.

Food scientists and technologists regularly use lubrication science — which provides mechanistic insights into how food actually feels in the mouth — to design food with better taste, texture or health benefits. Researchers at Leeds leveraged data from lubrication science to decode the physical process that takes place when a piece of chocolate is eaten.



Following analysis of each of the steps involved, as the solid chocolate bar undergoes transformation to a smooth emulsion in the mouth, the researchers concluded that the delectable chocolaty taste was the outcome of how chocolates are lubricated in the mouth. They noted that this lubrication comes from ingredients within the chocolate itself, or from saliva, or a combination of both processes.

The study found that when a piece of chocolate comes in contact with the tongue,

fats present on the chocolate surface form droplets in the mouth that provide a large part of the chocolate sensation. It is only in the next stage that solid cocoa particles inside the chocolate are released to provide the tactile sensation of chocolates. Fats that are present deeper inside the chocolate were found to play only a rather limited role in the taste sensation. In other words, whether a chocolate has 5 percent fat or 50 percent fat is less relevant than where this fat is located in the make-up of the chocolate.

Tests were conducted using a luxury brand of dark chocolate on an artificial 3D tongue-like surface that was designed at the University of Leeds. The researchers used analytical techniques from a field of engineering called tribology to conduct the study. Tribology is about how surfaces and fluids interact, the levels of friction between them and the role of lubrication: in this case, saliva or liquids from the chocolate. Those mechanisms are all happening in the mouth when chocolate is eaten.

The study concluded that when chocolate is in contact with the tongue, it releases a fatty film that coats the tongue and other surfaces in the mouth. It is this fatty film that makes the chocolate feel smooth throughout the entire time it is in the mouth. What this proves is that in order to receive the incredible chocolate sensation in the mouth, the fat layer needs to be on the outer layer of the chocolate, followed by an effective coating of the cocoa particles below the fat layer.

"We believe exquisite dark chocolate can be produced in a gradient-layered architecture with fat covering the surface of chocolates and the cocoa particles to offer the sought after self-indulging experience without adding too much fat inside the body of the chocolate," said the researchers.

They added that the physical techniques used in the study could be applied to the investigation of other foodstuffs that undergo a phase change, where a substance is transformed from a solid to a liquid, such as in ice-cream, margarine or cheese.



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# Wisdom of Germany's Nuclear Phase-Out



**Steffi Lemke**

*Germany's Federal Minister for the Environment and Nuclear Safety.*

**W**ith the shutdown of its last three nuclear power plants, Germany has completed its phase-out of nuclear power. As the minister responsible for nuclear safety in Germany, I believe that this was an excellent, indeed, visionary move. There are many important justifications, but five are especially compelling.

First, phasing out nuclear power makes Germany safer. No nuclear power plant in the world is so secure that a catastrophic accident can be ruled out. Such an accident could be caused by human error (as in Chernobyl in 1986) or a natural disaster (as in Fukushima, Japan, in 2011). It could be caused by a terrorist attack, plane crash, or simply an overlooked weakness in our safety strategies. Or, in the worst case, it could arise from a military attack, like those Russia has carried out in Ukraine.

Whatever the cause, an accident in a nuclear power plant can be catastrophic, causing devastation on a scale that no other form of energy generation could match. No insurance policy covers this risk, in Germany or anywhere else. The Environment Ministry, the country's highest nuclear-safety authority, has spent decades ensuring that power plants adhere to the highest standards. But no matter how hard we work, there is no absolute safety with nuclear power, which is why the phase-out is a relief for me.

A second reason to welcome Germany's nuclear-power phase-out is that we will no longer be producing highly radioactive nuclear



**EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT**

waste. Nuclear power has provided electricity for three generations, but its legacy of radioactive waste will be a burden for the next 30,000. How a technology with such long-lasting consequences could be classified as sustainable is a mystery to me.

In fact, despite the phase-out, the legacy of waste means that Germany still has a long road ahead on ensuring nuclear safety. There is currently no final repository to store spent fuel rods safely in operation anywhere in the world, and finding a site for one is hugely difficult and costly.

Third, despite what advocates claim, nuclear power is neither climate-friendly nor particularly reliable. Even if it contributes less to the climate crisis than coal or gas, it is clearly bad for the climate, not least because reactors must be cooled with large amounts of water. This puts significant pressure on local rivers, which are already under stress from climate change. France had to import considerable amounts of electricity from Germany last year, owing to technical problems with its reactors and a lack of sufficient water to cool them. In some cases, rivers became so overheated that water for

cooling reactors could be neither withdrawn nor discharged.

As temperatures rise and droughts proliferate, limitations on the use of river water for cooling nuclear reactors will intensify. We need a resilient energy supply that not only avoids contributing to climate change, but also can withstand the unavoidable effects of higher temperatures. In this sense, nuclear power is not fit for the future.

The fourth point worth highlighting is that nuclear power is not cheap, especially when one accounts for the costs of uranium extraction, waste management, and insurance. In the United States, 12 nuclear power plants were taken off the grid between 2009 and 2021, because they were not economically viable.

New nuclear projects are not worthwhile without significant government subsidies. The Flamanville-3 project in northern France is running 12 years behind schedule, and will cost well over €10 billion (\$11 billion) more than originally planned. The costs of nuclear power are also exploding in the United Kingdom and Finland. And if Europe wants to end its dependence on Russian energy imports, it will have to end imports of uranium and nuclear-fuel

elements as well.

The final reason to welcome the shutdown of Germany's remaining nuclear plants is that we simply do not need nuclear power. There are better alternatives. Solar and wind power are now much cheaper to generate. They are also safer, more sustainable, and more climate-friendly. With the right standards in place, they are also compatible with nature conservation.

This helps to explain why nuclear power's share of total global primary energy consumption has been falling since 2000, accounting for only 5 percent in 2019. In contrast, renewable energy has been on the rise for years. Production costs are falling, and installed capacity is growing, including in Germany since the current government took office.

Recognizing the critical importance of a safe and affordable energy supply, particularly for a country whose prosperity is also based on energy-intensive industries, from mechanical engineering to automobile manufacturing, German policymakers are making large-scale investments in renewable energy. We are also investing in green hydrogen, storage technologies, energy efficiency, and energy savings.

The expansion of renewable energy is undoubtedly challenging, and we must admit that we are not yet as far along as we would like. At the same time, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has forced us to return temporarily to coal and liquefied natural gas. But none of this amounts to a convincing argument in favor of keeping, let alone expanding, nuclear power.

Successive German governments, all of our country's democratic parties, and even the operators of the nuclear power plants agreed to phase out nuclear power, persuaded by the same compelling logic that drove countless citizens, farmers, winegrowers, and mayors to spend decades advocating for a phase-out. It would be truly irresponsible to turn our backs on this broad societal consensus.

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