



مستشفى رويال حياة  
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# Elections revive Kuwait's democratic dynamism



## THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

Snap general elections called for Tuesday, 6 June came about following the resignation of the previous government headed by Prime Minister Ahmad Nawaf Al Ahmad Al Sabah in January. Additionally, in mid-March, the Constitutional Court in a separate ruling nullified the snap elections that were held in September 2022, and reinstated the parliament elected in 2020.

The court's verdict was based on discrepancies it found in the decree dissolving parliament in August 2022. Accordingly, the government led by Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al Nawaf Al Sabah once again took up office in



early April. The cabinet has continued in a caretaker capacity following an Amiri decree in mid-April that dissolved the reinstated parliament, and called for fresh elections to be held in two months time, as mandated by the constitution.

The respect for judicial rulings and commitment to democratic and constitutional processes that paved the way for general elections on Tuesday, is indicative of the robustness of democracy, and adherence to the will of the people, in the country. The fact that the general elections will also be the third such ballot exercise in as many years, is also suggestive of how much more Kuwait needs to go and grow as a democratic nation.

As we await election results to assess the parliamentary lineup to a new term of the National Assembly, and the government gives final form to the 44th cabinet in Kuwait's parliamentary history, we look at the evolution of democracy in Kuwait.

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## The Times Kuwait and Royale Hayat Hospital organize An Empowering Talk on Women

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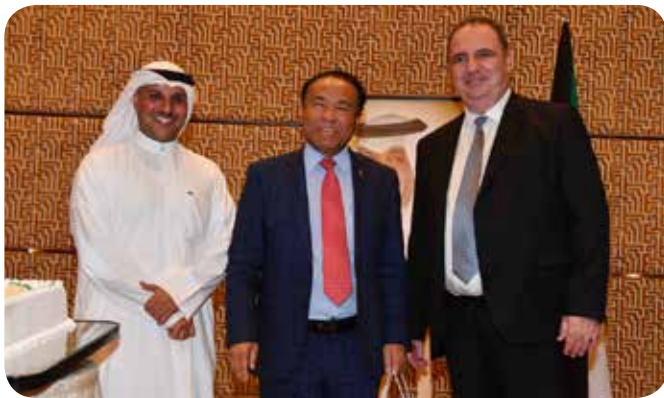


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# Embassy of Azerbaijan celebrates Independence Day



**E**mbassy of Azerbaijan hosted a reception on 28 May at the Salwa Sabah Al-Ahmad Hall to commemorate the country's 105th Independence Day. Deputy Foreign Minister Mansour Al-Otaibi, who was the chief guest on the occasion, said that both countries had mutual aspiration to fortify their relations across various domains.

In his address on the occasion

Ambassador of Azerbaijan, H.E. Emil Karimov, highlighted that a new era in bilateral relations between Azerbaijan and Kuwait was initiated following the official visit of President Ilham Aliyev to Kuwait in 2009. Over the years, the two countries have fostered close ties, particularly in sectors such as agriculture, light industry, and education.

Ambassador Karimov also noted that

there was significant potential for growth in the tourism sector, with more than 22,000 Kuwaiti tourists visiting Azerbaijan last year. He explained that travel time between the two countries had been reduced considerably following the launch of direct flights by Azerbaijan Airlines, Kuwait Airways, and Jazeera Airway.

Given this seamless connectivity and convenience, he called on all Kuwaitis to

visit Azerbaijan and experience its rich offerings firsthand.

The ambassador also emphasized the strong and collaborative partnership between Azerbaijan and Kuwait and the joint efforts undertaken within the framework of international organizations, including the United Nations, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and OPEC+.

## People in Kuwait shop on average 18 times per month

**C**runching the data on spending in Kuwait during the first five months of the year reveals that on average a person in Kuwait shops 18 times per month and spends on average KD45 on online and direct purchases. The figures for the first three months of

2023 also show that people in Kuwait, both citizens and residents, together spend a total of KD11.45 billion on 253 million purchases and ATM withdrawals. The purchases include KD163.79 million on direct purchases and payment through points of sale (PoS) machines, for an average of 12 purchases per person.

In addition, people spent KD67.76 million on online purchases for an average of five online purchases per person, and withdrew KD21.42 million through ATMs for an average of two cash withdrawals per month.

## Indian classical dance enthralls audience



**A**mesmerizing display of grace, skill, and artistic brilliance was staged on 19 May by the young artistes of Nritta Dhyana as they presented the Indian classical dance, Bharatanatyam. The cultural evening held under the title of 'Natya Arohana' was staged at the American International School in Ma'an. The renowned dance academy, Nritta Dhyana, which was established 36 years ago, has been instrumental in promoting and preserving Indian classical dance forms in Kuwait.

The Chief Guest for the evening was the Indian Ambassador, H.E. Dr. Adarsh Swaika, who commended the academy for its dedication to promoting Indian culture and fostering artistic excellence. Other esteemed guests who graced the event, included Sheikh Fatima Mubarak Al Sabah and Sheikh Intisar Salem Al Ali Al Sabah.

The event was wholly conceptualized, directed and choreographed by the Artistic Director Kalakshetra Guru Arundhati Singha John, and Jazeera Airways, the official travel partner of the event, had flown in the musicians and performers specifically for the evening's program.

The event showcased the incredible talent of the academy's students in performing the intricate steps of the classical dance, Bharatanatyam. The audience were spellbound by the synchronized movements, precise footwork, and expressive storytelling, as the dance drama unfolded on stage. The students portrayed their roles with such conviction and emotional depth that the audience was completely immersed in the story, witnessing the unfolding of a tale filled with love, devotion, and triumph over adversity.

The authenticity of the performance was further enhanced by the exquisite costumes and realistic props. Every detail was meticulously crafted to transport the viewers to another era. The vibrant colors, intricate designs, and traditional embellishments added a

touch of grandeur to the already captivating performances.

In addition to the Bharatanatyam recitals, the audience was treated to an innovative new dance form called Kalbha, created by the artistic director Singha John. The fusion of traditional elements with contemporary movements was a true testament to the academy's commitment to pushing the boundaries of artistic expression.



A special guest artist, Girish Madhu, renowned in the field of Bharatanatyam, captivated the audience with his stellar performance. Hailing from the prestigious Kalakshetra Foundation in Chennai, his mastery over the dance form left an indelible impression on all those present.

Adding to the charm of the evening, the younger tots of the academy performed together on stage for the first time. Their innocence, enthusiasm, and budding talent were a delight to behold, leaving the audience in awe of their potential.

The event was a testament to the academy's professionalism and attention to detail. The stage decoration, reminiscent of an ancient temple, transported the audience to another world. Every aspect of the event was flawlessly managed, creating an ambiance that was both enchanting and immersive.



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# Ambassador Muharimi publishes book on history of Kuwait in Croatian language

## The first ever publication on Kuwait in Croatian language

### Staff Report

A comprehensive and well researched book on Kuwait has just been published by the Croatian Ambassador H.E. Amir Muharimi in his native Croatian language.

The book, which took more than four years to complete, is an amazing and excellent composition of Kuwait's history that beautifully narrates the country's past and the present. The meticulous work and attention to detail by Ambassador Muharimi is evident when one glances through the chapters and topics of the book.

The 337 page book has around 30 chapters that Ambassador Muharimi painstakingly researched from almost 362 sources and 561 references.



Speaking to The Times Kuwait, Ambassador Muharimi said the book is a result of his love for Kuwait, and also because he wanted to introduce Kuwait to the Croatian people. "I wanted to explain this small beautiful country, its wise and balanced actions and policies, and its friendly and hospitable people to Croatians," he pointed out.

Ambassador Muharimi who is a seasoned diplomat said that when he was posted to Kuwait he could not find enough information about Kuwait in the public domain. Croatian people knew little about Kuwait and hence his quest for understanding Kuwait began.

"Once I began reading about Kuwait my interest and curiosity grew," he said, and revealed that the first book on Kuwait led to many more books and the thread of connections became even more interesting. "I had to understand Kuwait well before I began writing about it," he said, adding that the quest for information became deeper and stronger as did his efforts.

Using open sources, visits to Kuwait University Library, Kuwait Research and Studies Centre, and meeting people became part of Ambassador Muharimi's daily routine in addition to his role as ambassador to this country.

The efforts and hard work fructified last week when the first copy of the book arrived in Kuwait from his home country, printed and published in paperback format. The book on Kuwait is the third by the Ambassador who has written two others books during his posting in Turkey and India, both of which deal with foreign policies of those countries.

The book on Kuwait has many relevant and noteworthy chapters that gives the reader a real understanding of Kuwait, its formation, growth and transformation to what it is today. It also has many historical facts that gives readers a clear timeline and understanding of the evolution and progress that Kuwait has made over the ages. The book also has chapters on the Souq Al Manakh crash and on the structure of Kuwait society.

Ambassador Muharimi's background as a sociologist also contributed in shaping the books narration in terms of insights and ability to weave a connection to social change and causes. He also has some great observations on how transformations occurred in Kuwait society up to the present day.

Understanding Kuwaiti society and way of life was a huge challenge for somebody not very familiar with the region. His efforts and persistence have prevailed with the publication of the book. "I used every opportunity in my talks with educated and wise people to try to understand the society," Ambassador Muharimi said, while adding that he credits several people for their invaluable contribution to his cause.

Initially the Ambassador set out to have a publication that would help Croatian speaking people to understand Kuwait but the book has gone much further than that. It has become a very useful source of history and knowledge in one publication.

"I do not have any hesitation if anyone would like to translate the book into any languages, including Arabic or English, so that knowledge can be shared," he quips.

"It was a very fulfilling task to study Kuwait, a small country



surrounded by great powers and different cultures in the region," noted the ambassador, while stressing that "despite the difficulty of life in Kuwait in the beginning years, the rule began in a democratic way which led to the selection of the Al-Sabah family to lead Kuwait."

He praised the unique cultural diversity in Kuwait and added that "perhaps the most telling evidence of this is the culture of Diwaniya, which is considered one of the most prominent platforms for opinion and thought in Kuwait, and it is one of the most unique traditions with its doors open to all without exception."

Ambassador Muharimi also praised Croatian-Kuwaiti relations as strong and excellent, and said that "over a period of time these ties have developed at all levels and in various fields of cooperation." He also noted that the two friendly countries have close cooperation in international forums, and identical views on a number of regional and international issues.

“

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# US, Kuwait relations remain exceptional

Describing relations between the United States and Kuwait as exceptional, the Chargé d'Affaires at the US Embassy in Kuwait, James Holtsnider said, "We have a very strong relationship with the Kuwaiti people and with the Kuwaiti leadership, and we are also working to consolidate our relations with the Kuwaiti military partners through multifaceted exercises. We also carry out exercises with our Canadian, British, Italian, Egyptian and many other partners who today share our mission to keep the region safe."

He was speaking during a ceremony held at Camp Arifjan to mark US Memorial Day, which is held each year on the last Monday in May to commemorate those who sacrificed their lives for the sake of serving their country. The day honors and mourns the US military personnel who died while serving in the United States Armed Forces worldwide.

The US Army has lost more than 7,000 soldiers since the events of 11 September 2001, said Mr. Holtsnider, adding "Since the liberation of Kuwait in 1991, we have lost nearly 300 members of the coalition in the region, and we are still losing soldiers in various wars around the world. It is a great



honor to be here today," he said, "to join my partners in Kuwait and my fellow military and diplomats from a number of coalition countries working with us here in the region, to honor those who lost their lives serving their country."

Elaborating on the Memorial Day event, the US Chargé d'Affaires explained, "Today, we honor all those who lost their lives while serving, especially this last generation that was lost during Operation Iraqi Liberation, Operation Enduring Freedom, and the Global War on Terror. Let us never forget that our nation has paid a heavy price for the freedoms we enjoy, as the number of



Americans killed in all conflicts since the American Revolution has reached more than 1.3 million people.

"When we gather around the world on Memorial Day, we honor the bravery and sacrifices of our fallen soldiers in defense of our way of life. We remember not only our fallen sailors, airmen and marines, but also the more than 1.4 million active-duty men and women who are now in action all over the world."

"Today, we come together to honor the memory of the sacrifices made by these individuals. And, we are doing this in partnership with our closest ally, Kuwait,

and with our other allies, and we continue to work closely with them on all aspects of our military partnership," Holtsnider said.

He concluded by saying that conflicts occur all over the world and service personnel pay the ultimate price with their lives. But the price is also paid by their loved ones, parents, children, siblings, and spouses, and Remembrance Day gives us pause and time to focus and with grieving gratitude, remember those who died in service from the Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marines, Navy and Space Forces."

For his part, the commander of the region's support group and the supervisor of al-Qaeda's operations in Buehring and Arifjan, Colonel Martin Wolgemut, said that "In 1991 during the Gulf War, 219 American soldiers were killed along with more than 400 Kuwaiti soldiers and more than a thousand civilians." Noting that the United States and its allies in the coalition are here together to continue to defend Kuwait, he pointed to the presence of more than 12,000 American soldiers, spread across Camp Arifjan, Ali Al-Salem Air Base, Kuwait Naval Base, Bureij Camp and Shuaiba Port who were there to defend Kuwait.



## Alexandra Graves captivates audiences at JACC with her performance

Renowned Greek Singer Alexandra Graves gave a captivating performance on Wednesday May 24 at the Jaber Al Ahmed Cultural Centre (JACC) to a very enthusiastic audience of music aficionados.

Performing for the first time in Kuwait, her programme titled Melodies of the World, enthralled and entertained with some very impressive and melodious songs from her wide repertoire of music in different languages.



She gave the audiences a glimpse of her music mastery by singing some numbers from her hit album Latin Songbook 3 "El Amor es Vida" (Love is Life) the Latin CD that was released during the pandemic which became a massive hit and voted as the Best Album of 2021.

Known for her classical musical appeal that is admired by global audiences, Alexandra's background in music is both impressive and miraculous after recovering from a paralyzed left vocal cord.

Passionate, vivacious and bursting with life, Alexandra spoke to The Times Kuwait in an exclusive

interview before the programme explaining that all the songs she sings are related her visits to different parts of the world. Truly a global singer she has embraced songs from China to Lebanon, Spanish to French her repertoire is an envious collection of musical masterpieces.

"Globalisation is not just of the economy but also of music," Alexandra quipped as she says people are her inspiration and her happiness and enjoyment. She is a living example of cultural exchanges a truly global citizen. Alexandra was raised in Germany while being born with Greek roots. When she was 19 years old she was struck with a severe medical condition, wherein her left vocal cord was paralyzed, and this compromised her ability to sing. This was despairing for young Alexandra who had planned to start her singing studies that year itself. While in order to heal she had to stop straining her vocal cord, in simpler terms she stopped talking for 1.5 years.

Later on, she moved to London and commenced her singing studies in classical repertoire, from where her remarkable journey in the world of classical music surpassed musical boundaries.

The talented musical artist encompasses the true spirit of being a 'Explorer of cultures and music' her musical projects resonate with her experiences that reflect on conquering the horizon of the mind and spirit. She loves travelling that helps her discover new cultures which she implements in her musical textures while also embracing her own roots.

Alexandra has been travelling the world to perform musical projects and concerts, which has successfully represented her Greek roots with the blend of her international repertoire. While on the road she created diverse music that represents almost 12 countries and 7 languages.

Bringing this diversity to Kuwait, Alexandra Graves performance at the Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Cultural Centre on 24 May, with her acclaimed concert 'Melodies of the World' is bound to create ripples of musical ecstasy. The concert is held by the Contemporary Art Platform and under the patronage of the Ambassador of Greece H.E. Konstantinos Piperigos.

The are supported by local sponsors Action Hotels and Four Points Hotel.

## Talks on Schengen visa exemption still in progress

Italian Ambassador H.E. Carlo Balducci, said the negotiations to exempt Kuwaitis from the Schengen visa are proceeding well but need more time to finalize the negotiations between the European Union and Kuwait. He expressed his optimism on the success of the ongoing talks and said he expected Kuwaitis to be exempted from the Schengen visa requirements by next year.

On a related note, the ambassador pointed out that the Italian embassy in Kuwait issues between 250 and 300 visas to Italy daily, and this is a large number for any embassy in Kuwait. Noting that the time to issue a visa to Italy is around 24 hours from the submission of a visa application, he added that the speed of visa issuance was the fastest among Italian embassies operating around the world.



Indicating the convenience of travel between the two countries, the ambassador disclosed that international airlines plan to operate four flights per week to both Milan and Rome this summer. He added that at the moment there are no plans to operate direct flights from Kuwait to Italy by any Italian airline, but talks are ongoing to operate direct flights via an Italian licensed low-cost airline in a few weeks time.



## IWG delegation visits KDD

A delegation from the International Women's Group (IWG), headed by Ghada Ashawky, president of the Group paid a visit to the Kuwaiti Danish Dairy (KDD) Company in Sabhan. Members were warmly received by Bahia Ezzat Jaafar, Deputy Chairman, Deputy CEO and Chief Financial Officer of the company, and a tour of the facilities was organized by Emad Mousallam Khader, quality control manager, and Kim Bach manufacturing general manager.

During the tour, members were impressed on knowing that KDD was a pioneer in the dairy industry in Kuwait, as well as being among the longest established manufacturers and distributors of food and beverage in the Arabian Gulf. The company was established in 1962 with the aim of bringing a modern dairy industry to the country with support from Denmark.

The members were shown the process of manufacturing, from start to finish until distribution, with the utmost priority always being placed on excellent quality products and their health and safety impact.

At the end of the visit, Mrs. Shawky on behalf of the IWG presented an honorary shield to express her gratitude for the informative visit.



# Biometric fingerprint project gathers pace

Within the first ten days of the Ministry of Interior launching its biometric fingerprint project, more than 100,000 people are reported to have had their fingerprints imprinted.

Elaborating on the project, Director of the General Department of Criminal Evidence, Major General Eid Al-Owaihian, said the biometric fingerprint project was a dream of the Ministry of Interior, and it is now being achieved on the ground. He noted that the project will contribute to setting up a database for everyone who lives in Kuwait and is 18 years old and

above; whether citizens or residents. While the previous decimal fingerprint system was limited in its scope and accuracy, the new biometric fingerprint will allow the authorities to detail all the information about an individual and help verify the identity of a person.

In addition to those visiting the specially designated centers, biometric fingerprints are also taken of everyone entering the country through its borders. The authorities expect the pace of fingerprinting to increase in the coming period, as more centers are opened for this purpose, and to complete

the entire project within a year.

Al-Owaihian said that besides the four centers currently dedicated to taking fingerprints, more centers will be opened so as to provide the opportunity for the largest possible number of people to take fingerprints. He disclosed that it was possible to make an online appointment for taking fingerprints through the government's 'Meta' program or the website of the Ministry of Interior. He added that the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Talal Al-Khaled and the Undersecretary of the Ministry,



Lieutenant General Anwar Al-Barjas, had directed that all capabilities should be harnessed to overcome obstacles and complete the project on time.



## Joyalukkas Exchange Celebrates 10-Year Anniversary in Kuwait with the Inauguration of a New Headquarters

Kuwait - May 30, 2023 - Joyalukkas Exchange, a leading player in the financial services sector, announced its 10th-anniversary celebrations in Kuwait. As part of this remarkable milestone, the company inaugurated its new headquarters in the heart of Kuwait City.

The celebration commenced with a welcome speech by Mr. Abdul Azeez, Assistant General Manager of Joyalukkas Exchange. Following the welcome speech, the inauguration ceremony of the new headquarters was led by Mr. Joy Alukkas, Chairman of Joyalukkas Group. The new facility stands as a testament to Joyalukkas Exchange's relentless commitment to enhancing service offerings and meeting the diverse needs of its valued customers in Kuwait.

The event proceedings were presented by Mr. Antony Jos, Managing Director of Joyalukkas Exchange, whose stewardship has been instrumental in driving the company's success.

Mr. Antony Jos stated on this momentous occasion, "Today, as we celebrate a decade of dedication and trust, we also welcome a new chapter in our journey. We were reflecting on the company's decade-long journey in Kuwait and its vision for the future. Our new headquarters symbolizes our commitment to continuous growth, and more importantly, it embodies our promise to serve our customers better. Each milestone we achieve is a steppingstone to new beginnings, and each beginning sets the stage for us to create more milestones. Here's to celebrating past achievements and embracing future opportunities."

The event was graced by an esteemed group of attendees from the Joyalukkas Group, including Justin Sunny, the General Manager of International Operations, accompanied by Dileep, the Marketing Manager of International Operations.

The Regional Manager of Joyalukkas Jewelry in Kuwait, Vinod, also joined the delegation. The group was further represented by Joyalukkas Exchange's General Manager, Asharaf Ali Jalaluddeen, along with Area Managers, Marketing Managers, and Business Development Officers from the Exchange group. Moreover, the event was also attended by a host of personnel from Joyalukkas Exchange's head office, all adding to the prestige and significance of the occasion.

The event was attended by our business partners, other prominent business personalities, and senior officials from various money exchange companies in Kuwait. Awards were presented to employees who have completed ten years of service, and certificates were given to recognize outstanding performers during the year 2022.

With its sustained commitment to delivering outstanding services, Joyalukkas Exchange continues to redefine industry standards while maintaining a firm focus on its mission to offer the highest level of customer satisfaction.

The event was held on May 30, 2023, Tuesday, at 11:00 AM at Joyalukkas Exchange, Jawharat Al Khaleej Building, Fahad Al Salem Street, Kuwait City. It was open to the public.



## EU Ambassador to Kuwait to arrive in June

Chargé d'Affaires of the European Union Mission in Kuwait, Gediminas Varanavicius, announced that the European Union's ambassador-designate to Kuwait, Anne Koestinen, will arrive in the country in June to assume her duties in the country.

In a media statement Mr. Varanavicius said that Koestinen is the first woman to hold the position of the European Union's ambassador to Kuwait, indicating that she is looking forward to learning more about Kuwait and its people, and will cooperate with our Kuwaiti partners to strengthen our bilateral relationship, in the context of the strategic partnership between the European Union and the Gulf states, especially with regard to major issues such as strengthening ties between our peoples, trade and investment affairs, humanitarian aid, as well as security affairs, climate action, and other files of common interest.



Ambassador designate Koestinen, a Finnish national, is a seasoned diplomat with twenty years of experience working for the European Commission and the European Union's external action body, and has held several positions in Europe and the Middle East, including Head of Political Affairs at the European Union Delegation to the United Nations in Geneva, and Head of the Political and Media Affairs Department at the European Union Delegation to Egypt.

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## Thought for the week

“It is often the small steps, not the giant leaps, that bring about the most lasting change.

- Queen Elizabeth II

## Developing regional digital economy to spark innovation, jobs

In a recent media interview, Fady Kassatly, who heads the Digital, Technology, and Innovation business within the advisory practice of KPMG Lower Gulf spoke about how organizations around the world are racing to adapt and thrive in a digital landscape defined by rapid technological advancements and digital disruption.

With his wealth of experience and expertise, Kassatly is among the leading figures in the world of technology-driven strategies. He began by pointing out that governments in the Middle East have been investing heavily in digital infrastructure, with initiatives such as Dubai's USD\$6 billion Smart City project and Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 representing the region's direction.



These government-level initiatives aim to create an environment that fosters innovation and supports the growth of the tech industry. Moreover, besides the large regional investments from global powerhouses such as Microsoft, Google, Amazon, Oracle, SAP, and others, the Middle East also continues to be a thriving tech start-up ecosystem.

An additional aspect that the Middle East will likely look towards is the increase in investors willing to take risks and establish a presence in the region. However, in this regard it is important for governments to create regulatory frameworks for companies to feel supported and protected as they undertake developments around new technologies in the region.

Despite the growth of the tech ecosystem, the region still faces a shortage of skilled talent, particularly in digital transformation initiatives. This has made it difficult for companies to find the right talent to fill the gaps within

their niche services. Talent is the one variable that all organizations should continue to focus on.

Selecting staff with an appetite for innovation, trying new things, learning, and evolving will always be a winning strategy. The one thing that tech companies cannot afford is to simply stop investing in innovation and progress. This will be the worst decision that could lead to the demise of some companies.

Elaborating on emerging technologies that are making an impact on the Middle East tech landscape, Kassatly noted that Generative AI is one of the most notable and transformational technologies that have emerged recently. This area is rapidly evolving, and new breakthroughs and applications are literally being released every week. This needs to be looked at both optimistically and with a bit of caution in terms of its governance and ethical usage.

Nevertheless, it can be stated with some level of confidence that this technology will impact businesses in more than one way, and it has the potential to literally change existing business models, people's job descriptions, and open new business opportunities.

Quantum computing is also another area of technology that is expected to transform many industries. By analyzing enormous amounts of data, variables, and outcomes, quantum computers will be a game changer for businesses by improving efficiencies and lowering costs. Our research shows that by 2030, the global quantum computing market will grow to \$50 billion.

Regionally, in 2021, Abu Dhabi announced that it was building its own quantum computer, the first of its kind in the UAE, to help process information at a much faster speed. The computer project, which aims to produce its first simple quantum chips by late summer, is part of a larger UAE plan to develop a "whole stack" of quantum technology.

Stressing on the need to continue developing the digital economy in the region, Kassatly pointed out that the benefits of this will be felt within the region in a multitude of ways. This will help create: an increase in investments into the region, the creation of jobs, an increase in the relocation of global talent to the region, improved efficiency and return on investments for many organizations that leverage new technologies, improved access to global markets for regional players, improved customer experiences across all industries and improved environmental benefits with the rise of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) tech solutions.

## DDI organizes course on Diabetic Foot Complications

Dasman Diabetes Institute (DDI), recently held a specialized three-day course on the Prevention and Management of Diabetic Foot Complications, in collaboration and coordination with the Primary Health Care Department at the Ministry of Health. The course was held at the Institute and attended by healthcare professionals.

Trainees learned to assess and treat the feet of those who suffer from diabetes using evidence-based assessment and treatment methods, aimed at reduction of diabetic foot ulceration and amputation. The program was organized and delivered by Chief Podiatrist, Kay Scarsbrook Khan, Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Ebba Al Ozairi, Consultant Neurologist from DDI, Dr. Abdullah Al Ajmi, and Podiatrists Alice Cusworth, and Andrew Gilmour. Foot problems are a major cause of morbidity in people with diabetes. Countries in the MENA region have among the highest rates of diabetes prevalence in the world. It was estimated in 2019 that there were approximately 55 million adults living with diabetes in the MENA region, this is expected to more than double by 2045.

Despite the high prevalence of diabetes in the MENA region, many of the countries in the region



lack adequate foot care provision, foot screening, and self-care education programs. The course provided participants with the knowledge and skills to assess the foot in people with diabetes, screen and categorize an individual's risk of foot ulceration, and provide appropriate education advocating self-care and ulcer prevention.

It also aimed to increase knowledge and skills in the assessment and treatment of common foot problems and diabetic foot complications, in line with current international guidelines.

## RECIPE

### Sago Pearl Pilaf



Delicious sago pearl or 'sabudana' as it is known in India and elsewhere, is a healthy vegan and gluten-free breakfast recipe that can be prepared quickly, especially in the morning, when everyone is in a hurry to reach school or office in time.

However, it is not restricted to breakfast and can be enjoyed at any other time of the day. In India, it is a popular food usually eaten after a day of religious fasting or on other occasions. Apart from its satiety aspects, sago pilaf is also a easy snacking option at any time of the day.

**Soaking time:** 5-6 hours or overnight

**Total cooking time:** 15-20 minutes

Serving : 2

#### Ingredients:

- 1 cup sago pearl
- 1 boiled potato peeled and cubed
- ½ tsp ginger crushed
- 2 green chilies finely chopped
- 8-10 curry leaves
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 1 tsp. lime juice
- 2 tbsp roasted crushed peanuts
- 1 tsp sesame seeds
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- ¼ tsp fennel seeds
- ¼ tsp black pepper powder
- Rock salt powder, as per taste
- 3 tbsp cooking oil
- Chopped coriander leaves for garnishing

#### Instructions:

- Wash and soak sago pearl overnight or for six hours in ¾ cup water
- Heat oil in a pan, add cumin, fennel seeds, curry leaves and stir till it crackles
- Add finely chopped green chilies, cubed potatoes and sesame seeds
- Stir and saute for 2-3 minutes
- Add soaked sago pearls, salt, sugar, black pepper powder and roasted crushed peanuts and give the mixture a quick stir to mix well
- Cover and cook for 5-7 minutes on low flame until the pearls become translucent
- Keep stirring occasionally
- Add lime juice and mix well
- Garnish with chopped coriander leaves
- Serve hot with yogurt on the side or squeeze lemon juice over it
- Sago pilaf can be stored in an airtight container for 2-3 days
- Reheat it until warm before serving.



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)



# Peru seeks to develop agricultural ties with Kuwait



In an address to the media last week, on the sidelines of a luncheon he hosted at the embassy premises, Ambassador of Peru, H.E. Carlos Velasco said that he was looking forward to Peru sharing its agricultural expertise with Kuwait to help develop agriculture and enhance food security in Kuwait. He noted that he hoped to meet with the relevant Kuwaiti officials in the near future to present his country's agricultural expertise and experience.

He added, "We have earlier presented our observations and suggestions on developing agriculture in Kuwait to officials at the Agriculture and Fisheries Authority, and they in turn, expressed interest in what our country can provide in the form of technical assistance in the agricultural field."

"We hope to hold further meetings with these officials and to present a formal proposal and sign a cooperation agreement in this regard. Once

the agreement is initialized we can bring specialized technicians in the agricultural field from Peru to help develop appropriate crops in Kuwait and contribute to the country's food security.

On another note, the ambassador remarked that trade exchange between his country and Kuwait has not yet risen to the desired level, despite the availability of Peruvian food products in the Kuwait markets. He expressed his hope to improve the level of this type of exchange between the two countries to contribute to achieving

food security.

He also revealed that his country's government had submitted a proposal to the Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs to exempt Kuwaitis from entry visas to his country. He hoped that this proposal would be approved soon and that it would encourage more Kuwaitis to visit Peru. Pointing out that around 200 visas were issued last year by the embassy, the ambassador said he hoped to increase this number this summer, and urged Kuwaitis to visit his country, which, he said, has several attractions for tourists from Kuwait.

Noting that currently the visa issuance period is between two to three days for Kuwaitis who hold an American or Schengen visa, the ambassador added, "Kuwaiti tourists are welcome in my country, and are considered high-level tourists." He also indicated that there was a proposal to start operations of direct flights between the two countries.

Regarding health cooperation between the two sides, Ambassador Velasco said: "There is no cooperation between us in the health field, and there is no way to recruit medical and

nursing cadres, given that the law in our country does not allow us to do so."

Returning to his earlier remarks on food, Ambassador Velasco said. "Today Peru is known as the gastronomic capital of the Americas, a fact recognized by the fact that some of the best chefs in the world hail from Peru. Moreover, our national dishes are widely known internationally, even in the Gulf region and in other Middle Eastern countries. Our capital, Lima, is full of excellent restaurants that stand out in the world rankings of the fifty best on the planet."

## Peru embassy holds presentation on Peruvian gastronomy

Embassy of Peru organized an exclusive presentation of Peruvian gastronomy at a luncheon hosted by Peruvian Chef, Martin Velasco, at its premises on 30 May. Peruvian gastronomy, renowned worldwide for its diverse flavors, rich history, and vibrant culinary traditions, offers a wide range of dishes that showcase the country's geographical and cultural diversity.

During the luncheon special delicacies were prepared and served by Chef Velasco, a highly experienced and celebrated Peruvian chef, who holds a degree from the Denver School of Culinary Arts in the



USA. Chef Velasco demonstrated traditional cooking methods that have made Peru a top culinary destination in the world.

He wowed the guests with several delectable delicacies, including chicken, and fish dishes,



as well as an eclectic range of desserts that provided a memorable dining experience for the exclusive gathering of invited guests.

In his address on the occasion, Ambassador of Peru, H.E. Carlos Velasco, pointed out that Peru was

rightly known as the gastronomic capital of the Americas, a fact recognized by the best chefs in the world, and their national dishes are widely known internationally, even in the Gulf region and other Middle Eastern countries.

"We have 13 Peruvian restaurants in Dubai in the UAE, three in Doha, Qatar and one is going to open in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Hopefully, we will introduce Peruvian food in Kuwait," said the ambassador. He added that his country's capital, Lima, had several excellent restaurants, including three of the top 50 restaurants in the world.

## MoH revokes licenses of non-compliant health service providers

Ministry of Health (MoH) has been taking decisive action against private healthcare facilities found to be in violation of the Law Regulating the Pharmaceutical Profession 28/1996, as amended by Law 30/2016. The ministry's decisions were made following thorough investigations and recommendations from inspection committees, with the primary aim of ensuring the quality and safety of healthcare services provided to the public.

Last week, in accordance with the findings of the inspection committees and investigation reports, the ministry announced the closure and revocation of licenses of five private health centers, 40 medical clinics, and 20 pharmacies.

By revoking the licenses of the non-compliant facilities, the ministry aims to maintain the standards expected of private health establishments and safeguard the well-being of patients. A statement from the ministry noted that, as it continues efforts to maintain the integrity of the healthcare system, further actions will continue to be taken against any facility found to be non-compliant with the laws. The ministry said it remains dedicated to its mission of upholding the highest standards of care, professionalism, and patient safety throughout the private health sector.



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The Times Kuwait and Royale Hayat Hospital organize

# An Empowering Talk on Women

## Staff Report

The Royale Hayat Hospital provided the backdrop for an empowering talk on women's empowerment and gender equality, by two prominent visiting Indian women dignitaries on 27 May. The exclusive gathering at the event included several diplomats, as well as professionals and activists from diverse fields.

The talk by Dr. Fauzia Khan, a member of parliament from India and a leading women's issue activist, and Priyadarshni Rahul, a practicing supreme court lawyer and a young Indian women's leader, set the tone for a very intense and interactive discussion on issues currently faced by women everywhere.

The high-powered attendance saw Ambassadors of Canada, Indonesia and India and the Charge d'Affaires of Guyana, as well as members from diplomatic missions of France, Palestine, India, and the International Red Cross, engaging in the discussion and exchanging very interesting viewpoints on the subject.

Organized by The Times Kuwait and Royale Hayat Hospital, the event, had a very focused group of impressive and determined women meet and interact in sharing impactful ideas, knowledge and experiences on the rights of women to determine their choices and opportunities, as well as to positively influence the direction of social change.

Dr. Fauzia Khan in her address spoke largely on empowerment issues facing



H.E. Dr. Adarsh Swaika



Some of the Women participants.



Mr. Reaven D'Souza

women, and how education could be a great enabler in helping women overcome some of the obstacles that hinder their full development. Her brief but motivational message also provided the audience with some very interesting experiences from her illustrious career.

Dr. Khan has been a role model for women in India with a political background spanning over two decades; she is a dynamic leader who is committed to promoting gender-equality, education, and social justice.

Adding to the thoughts expressed by Dr. Khan, the next speaker, Mrs. Rahul went beyond just women's empowerment and elaborated on determination and a sense of self-worth that lead to women's success. Pointing to her own career as an example, she urged women to rise above and face challenges head on. Mrs. Rahul's advice to the gathering was not to fall for symbolic

gestures such as celebrating an annual International Women's Day or others, which do not help to really tackle the root of gender inequality and disempowerment of women.

Mrs. Rahul, who is also the Editor of PreSense, an ezine periodic publication, is currently the Chairman of Sansad Ratna Awards Committee, which honors top performing members of the Indian parliament. As the Founder President of Next Gen Political Leaders (NGPL) she brings together young leaders from all political parties in a bid to develop competitive leadership qualities in politics.

Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador of Indonesia, H.E. Lena Maryana, narrated the experience of Indonesian women and their participation in society. She briefed the audience with some of her own contributions to women's empowerment.

For her part, the Ambassador of Canada H.E. Aliya Mawani, who is active in promoting women's issues, spoke about gender-equality and participation. She pointed out that a lot still has to be done to achieve a balance between genders, but though things were slow to move forward, they were going in the right direction.

The Charge d'Affaires of Guyana, Neeru Dukhi, agreed with the various opinions put forward by speakers during the deliberations, and elaborated on her own experiences on gender issues.

In her message on the occasion, Chrystelle Schaegis, the cooperation attache from the French Embassy, spoke on women in diplomacy and how her country was achieving a balance like Canada in women diplomats. She also shared some interesting experiences with the guests.

In her remarks to the gathering, Rima Al Khaldi, vice president of International

Women's Group (IWG), and spouse of the Palestinian ambassador, spoke about the effective and liberated role of Palestinian women, and their immense contribution to the Palestinian cause, which was nothing short of heroic.

For her part, Vandana Swaika, spouse of the Indian Ambassador, shared her thoughts and pointed out the sacrifices that women make in their careers and their life, which sometimes impede their own growth as individuals.

Kate Roux, Head of Communications at the International Committee for Red Cross, also expressed her own experiences on women issues and how different countries implemented them.

Expressing his opinion on the discussions, Ambassador of India H.E. Dr. Adarsh Swaika felt that a change of mindset in women empowerment was among some of the important and necessary changes

that might help in gender equality.

The program was impressively moderated by Nita Bhatkar Chogle, who ably rotated the conversations and allowed all to participate in the lively discussions. The guests were exposed to some very impressive arguments from the speakers with rich exchanges of thoughts, ideas, opinions and experiences.

The interesting and interactive session, as well as the views expressed were appreciated for their diverse and profound thoughts, by the guests. The shared personal experiences and frank opinions expressed in a free and constructive atmosphere, made the event all the more effective and meaningful, with the guests remaining engrossed in some of the real life issues on empowerment discussed during the talks.

In concluding remarks, Managing Editor of The Times Kuwait, Reaven D'Souza, hoped that the forum provided an effective platform for sharing of ideas, thoughts and experiences, as well as in creating an impactful exchange. He thanked all the partners, supporters and participants, especially the Royale Hayat Hospital, who joined hands to make the event a truly memorable one.

Guests were treated to an entertaining and mesmerizing after-event performance by renowned illusionist Chirag Jethwaney. His mentalism and illusions had the guests in awe as he unwrapped and unveiled some amazing secrets and tricks to everyone's surprise.



Some of the participants at the event



Chirag Jethwaney's in action with his magical performance



Royale Hayat staff who provided premium hospitality



# Indian Embassy organizes seminar for Indian companies



**E**mbassy of India organized a training seminar for Indian companies titled 'Doing Business in Kuwait', in hybrid format on 30 May at the Embassy auditorium, with members of Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) joining the seminar online.

During the seminar, business consultants talked about registration, licensing, sponsorship, taxation and other legal matters of interest for doing business in Kuwait. The seminar was part of the Embassy's initiative to facilitate Indian enterprises to do business in Kuwait and further deepen India-Kuwait

trade and investment cooperation.

In his address on the occasion Ambassador of India H.E. Dr. Adarsh Swaika, urged Indian companies to look at Kuwait as a potential destination for expanding their businesses in the Gulf region, especially as Kuwait, under Vision 2035, is looking to attract foreign companies in many important sectors such as infrastructure, digital technology, healthcare and renewable energy.

The industry experts who addressed the business seminar included:

Manager, Tax & Regulatory Services, BDO Al Nisf & Partners, Ketan Puri, who gave an

in-depth presentation on different routes of establishing presence in Kuwait for an Indian company, and covering registration and taxation matters.

For their part, CEO & MD, Protiviti, Sanjiv Agarwal, and Head of International Division, Abdullah Kh. Al-Ayoub & Associates, Chetan Sharma, joined the seminar and answered questions from the participants. The CEO and Joint Managing Director, Jakson Group, Pankaj Tandon, then spoke online about his experience while heading the CII delegation that visited Kuwait recently.

The CEO and Founder of Helios

Consulting, Middle East, Alok Chugh, also spoke online about Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) and taxation issues, while Asma Shah, senior advocate at Rasma Legal, and Kashif Syed, partner, International Legal Group, joined the seminar online and explained employment, labor, succession and other legal matters.

First Secretary (Political & Commerce) at the Embassy of India, Smita Patil, who gave the welcome address, thanked the speakers. More than 200 participants from India and Kuwait attended the informative seminar, virtually and in-person.

## Kalaam Group Announces New CEO for Kuwait-acquired company KEMS-Zajil Telecom

**I**n April 2023, Kems-Zajil Telecom, which has been providing internet services in Kuwait since 1991, announced that its board of directors has appointed Engineer Waleed Al-Qallaf as CEO, effective March 2023. He will lead the next phase of the company's expansion in Kuwait. Al-Qallaf joined Kems-Zajil Telecom as CEO after completing his term as a full-time board member of the Kuwait Telecom and Information Technology Authority.



Nizar Al-Saei, Chairman of the Board of Kalam Group, commented on the appointment, stating: "The Board of Directors is pleased to appoint Engineer Waleed Al-Qallaf as CEO of Kems-Zajil Telecom, who will lead the company and develop its performance to achieve the Board's strategy. Mr. Waleed is an experienced business leader with a rich history of developing sustainable, diversified, and profitable businesses. The Board of Directors believes that he is the right person to lead Kems-Zajil Telecom in driving digital transformation in Kuwait."

Veer Bassi, Kalaam Telecom Group CEO, added: "We are delighted to have Engineer Waleed Al-Qallaf with us and look forward to his leadership in transforming Kems-Zajil Telecom from an internet services provider to a digital solutions partner. Focusing on technology will contribute to the company's comprehensive transformation towards the technology field, with a strong emphasis

on supporting the institutional sector in Kuwait on their journey towards digital transformation and providing a personalized and flexible customer experience."

Eng. Waleed Al-Qallaf, CEO, KEMS-Zajil Telecom, said: "It is an honor for me to lead a wonderful group of employees for Kalaam-Zajil Telecom at this exciting time in the company's history. Kalaam-Zajil Telecom, which has now become part of the Kalaam Telecom Group, looks forward to establishing a strong presence in the business and government sectors and transitioning to becoming a partner for digital solutions by launching new solutions and services with innovative value propositions from communication services, data transfer, cloud computing solutions, information security, managed networks, information technology, data centers, internet of things, and big data. We are currently investing in upgrading our core network, adding relevant partnerships, enhancing service level agreements for customers, digitizing service delivery, and supporting customers to build an effective market to facilitate the digital customer journey."

Engineer Waleed Al-Qallaf added: "The company cannot succeed without successful employees, so we always look to develop our investments in our talented employees and bring new skills to our growing team."

The appointment of Engineer Waleed Al-Qallaf comes after working for more than 32 years in various fields related to the Telecom industry, and before joining the Telecom Regulatory Authority, he served as CEO of Qualitynet, based in Kuwait.

He is considered one of the pioneers in forming the Arab Internet Service Providers Association (ARISPA) and was one of the founders of the Middle East, North Africa, Gulf, and Iraq Operators Union to create a cable system that extends from the United Arab Emirates through the Gulf Cooperation Council, Iraq to Istanbul.

## Adeeb Ahamed of LuLu Financial Holdings appointed as Chair of FICCI Middle East Council

**A**deeb Ahamed, Managing Director of LuLu Financial Holdings, has been appointed as the Chair of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) Middle East Council.

Ahamed is a multifaceted entrepreneur with business interests in financial services and hospitality. His company LuLu Financial Holdings has a presence in 10 countries across the Middle East, Indian sub-continent and Asia-Pacific regions, with investments in India including the NBFC LuLu Finserv and cross-border payments company LuLu Forex spread across 40 cities, apart from luxury hospitality assets.

Ahamed has been engaged with industry bodies in India for several years and is a known face for his steadfast support in furthering the relationship between GCC countries and India. His expertise in various domains and vehement support for the startup ecosystem are well documented among the business community.

In his new role as Chair, Ahamed participated in the 6th meeting of the FICCI Middle East Council held in New Delhi on Wednesday. During the meeting, council members, including Shailesh Pathak, Secretary General of FICCI, Goutam Ghosh, Senior Director & Regional Head, Africa, Middle East, South Asia, and Deepti Pant, Joint Director and Head, Africa, Middle East, and South Asia, discussed the growing investment opportunities for businesses in both regions. They also touched upon key initiatives planned for the upcoming year and identified country-wise ambassadors from the business community.

### Delegation from Sharjah Chamber of Commerce and Industry welcomed

The summit welcomed a special delegation from the Sharjah Chamber of Commerce and Industry, headed by its Chairman, HE Abdallah Sultan Al Owais. Additionally, there was an interactive session featuring HE Satish Sivan, Joint Secretary of Development Partnership



at the Ministry of External Affairs, and the Indian Consul General Designate to Dubai. Furthermore, a presentation was conducted to highlight the opportunities in Oman's Oil & Gas sector.

As per data from the Indian Ministry of Commerce and Industry, bilateral trade between India and the GCC countries has achieved new heights in recent times, surpassing the \$150 billion mark. The GCC countries have emerged as a key destination for Indian exports, absorbing more than 10 per cent of India's total exports. Additionally, India's imports from the GCC account for over 18 per cent of the total import volume.

Established to promote trade and investment between India and the various GCC countries, the FICCI Middle East Council has emerged as a meaningful platform for discussions aimed at enhancing trade, fostering investment, and promoting cultural exchange.

In the last 12 months, the Council has held several events and discussions in association with government representatives and business chambers from UAE, Saudi Arabia, Oman and Bahrain to explore mutual synergies in diverse sectors.



# State spurs PPP projects to enhance non-oil revenues

The government has reportedly urged the Kuwait Authority for Partnership Project (KAPP) to push forward with public-private partnership projects to encourage greater private sector participation in construction and development projects, increase the state's non-oil revenues, and provide gainful employment to national youth.

In line with this executive directive, the Authority is said to be preparing a package of projects during the coming period for private sector investors, including the Khairan Power Generation and Water Desalination Plant project. The aim is to reduce the cost to the government of establishing, operating and maintaining the plants, as well as enhancing the reliability of power generation and water production capacities in Kuwait during the coming period.

The KAPP and other relevant government entities are also re-evaluating the operational status of real estate built on state land, with the aim of re-offering the management and

development of each property separately to investors in private sector, to increase competition and increase revenues from these state assets.

The re-evaluation was necessitated so as to ensure that revenues from state assets were in line with market prices. KAPP pointed out that the recent rise in inflation has left all state assets undervalued, as their valuation has remained unchanged over the past many years. The move is also part of the plan by the government to make revenues from its real estate properties a major contributor to non-oil revenues in the state budget.

The KAPP announced that it will work to issue a tender on the provision of consultancy services for the project of preparing a comprehensive study to evaluate the properties built on the state's real estate and study the best available investment alternatives. The scope of the tender will include evaluating the real estate, ensuring its structural integrity and safety, and incorporating



modern technological elements and systems in accordance with the best international practices.

Experts point out that the value of state assets witnessed a significant jump by the end of last fiscal year, reaching a little over KD47 billion — an increase of 187 percent compared to their value in fiscal year 2020-21, when it was evaluated at around KD16 billion. The state's assets include

all lands and buildings owned by government agencies, whether inside or outside the State of Kuwait.

KAPP has also invited companies and consortiums wishing to participate in a tender for the design, financing, construction, operation, maintenance and conversion of the Al-Khairan Phase I Integrated Water and Power Project (IWPP), which is an 1,800MW gas-fired power project, with a desalination capacity of 33 million imperial gallons (150 million liters) per day.

The project is expected to operate on a blend of liquefied natural gas (LNG) and high-pressure natural gas with gas oil as a backup fuel and is located next to the southern boundary of the Al-Zour South Power and Desalination Plant, and 100 kilometers south of Kuwait City.

The project will export its production to the country's electricity grid and water transmission network through a 25-year power conversion and water purchase contract with the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy (MEW).

## Filipino chefs impress ambassador with culinary creativity

By Ricky Laxa  
Staff Writer

A group of seven Filipino Chefs Patisserie called on the Philippine Ambassador H.E. Jose Cabrera III last week at the embassy and presented him with samples of their culinary creations. Present on the occasion were Philippine Labor Attaché Atty. Manuel Dimaano, Assistant Labor Attaché Cathy Duladul, Vice Consul Jordan Ysabel Morales and other officials of the Embassy.

Four Chef trainers, three chefs were present to showcase their

products. Among the Chef Trainers present were Lilybeth Osorio, Mhylla Ruanes, Jasmeen Akasha, and Jennifer Medina, while the chefs included Chefs Elevenson Arcangeles, Lorna Uri and Christine Sayo. Master Chefs Mariefe Torio and Jay Belleza also graced the occasion.

The presentation kicked off with the chefs identifying their products and explaining the ingredients in each of their hand-crafted delicacies, which included Blackout Chocolate Cake, Quiche Lorraine, Pecan Pie, Walnut Brownies and Caramel Bar, The Philippine delicacies presented

were Brazo de Mercedes, Pitchi Pitchi, Different flavored donuts with toppings and Ensaymada. The ambassador congratulated the group of chefs and expressed his gratitude for the delicacies, while adding, "We are so proud of these talented new chefs."

Masterclass Culinary and Lifestyle Workshops (formerly known as CEE Network Kuwait) launched its training programs in 2018 within the premises of Saveco in Kuwait. These workshops have produced nearly 600 graduates and about 30 chefs who are now engaged in businesses and establishments, some have secured



job placements outside Kuwait, such as in New Zealand, Australia, USA and Great Britain.

Workshops currently being offered are Breads and Pastries for Bakeries, Art of Cake Decorating, Art of

Chocolate Making, Filipino Delicacies Cooking Workshop, International Cuisines and Japanese Cuisines. For more information on the workshops: call: 55650296 (Whatsapp, Local and Viber).

## Talabat, Naematy, Farmers Federation collaborate to reduce food waste

In alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), particularly SDG 12.3, which aims to 'cut in half per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer level, and reduce food losses along production and supply chains by 2030, Talabat, the region's leading online food delivery company, launched an initiative in collaboration with Naematy, a local NGO, and



the Kuwait Farmers Federation, to reduce waste from local farms specifically related to vegetables and fruits.

As a part of this initiative, Talabat collects the surplus vegetables that would otherwise go unsold and delivers them to Naematy, which then distributes them to families in need in Kuwait. The initiative, which comes as a furtherance of Talabat's social responsibility, aims to raise awareness among the public about food wastage, promote waste recovery,

and foster a stronger sense of compassion and responsibility towards the underprivileged.

Commenting on the initiative, Abdullah Al-Mansour, head of communications at Talabat Kuwait said: "Through this partnership with Kuwait Farmers Federation and Naematy, we look forward to implementing sustainable practices and fostering a culture of responsible food consumption and waste reduction throughout the entire food value chain, supporting the country in its efforts to manage food resources more sustainably and reduce food wastage." Throughout its week-long duration, the initiative Talabat managed to prevent the disposal of nearly three tons of food waste. Considering the expenses associated with the production of this amount of food, including water and electricity used, each farm has the potential to save a significant sum of money each year.

Mohammed Al Muzaini, founder of Naematy commented: "We at Naematy, are dedicated to safeguarding food, preventing waste and providing food for the needy by promoting responsible food consumption to prevent serious environmental, economic and social consequences". He then added: "We established this partnership with Talabat almost a year and a half ago by together collecting food baskets and distributing them to underprivileged families, completely free of charge".

Abdullah Al Dammak member at the Kuwait Farmers Federation added, "We recognize the vital role community partnerships play in the success of any initiative, especially when it comes to raising awareness about food wastage. With that said, together with Talabat,

we established a system to collect excess vegetables from our farmers that were then delivered to Naematy to be distributed among

families in need". He then added: "Within only one week of the collaboration, we were able to save up to three tons of product wasted."

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# Kuwait, India hold multilateral consultations

**K**uwait and India conducted UN/multilateral consultations in Kuwait City on 1 June, aimed at fostering closer cooperation between the two nations at the United Nations and other multilateral organizations.

Leading the Kuwaiti delegation was Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for International Organizations, Abdulaziz Saud Mohammad Al-Jarallah, and the Indian side was headed by Joint Secretary UN-Political Division at the Indian Ministry of External Affairs, Prakash Gupta, along with Indian Ambassador H.E. Dr. Adarsh Swaika.

This marked the first-ever multilateral consultation between Kuwait and India, and the discussion provided a significant platform to strengthen their collaboration



and engagement on various issues within the UN and other international organizations.

The consultation facilitated constructive exchange of ideas and perspectives on matters of mutual interest in multilateral forums, including cooperation within the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the Group of 77 (G-77).

The dignitaries also explored avenues for enhanced collaboration on global challenges, such as climate change, sustainable development, peacekeeping, and international security.

Both sides expressed their satisfaction and reaffirmed their commitment to continuing the dialogue and cooperation in the future.

## Elections revive Kuwait's democratic dynamism

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

We examine both the dynamism of democracy and its distortions by some quarters, which have prevented Kuwait from keeping up with the rapid pace of global and regional developments, and achieving its full potential.

Given the constraints and challenges that shackle democratic aspirations in the immediate region and the wider Arab world, the perseverance of democracy, with all its warts and wrinkles, for more than six decades in Kuwait is an achievement on its own. In a world where democratic traditions are facing a backlash from geopolitical influences, the vibrancy and resilience of democracy in Kuwait certainly deserves acknowledgement and appreciation by all.

Kuwait's adherence to representative democracy, an elected parliament, and, in theory, a division of powers between different arms of government, as well as general elections every four years, if not earlier due to political exigencies, is a win for democracy worldwide. While the frequent elections could be construed by some people as a weakness of democracy, it could also charitably be interpreted as indicative of the dynamism of democracy in the country.

In this regard, it needs to be pointed out that democracy is not an alien concept implanted in Kuwait; the principles of discussion and reaching consensus on issues were evident among people as far back as the early 18th century, when several tribes coalesced into the nation that became Kuwait. In 1718, people in Kuwait deliberated among themselves and chose one among them, Sheikh Sabah I bin Jaber Al Sabah, to be their ruler and lead the newly founded nation forward.

The genesis of a Western concept of democracy with all its underpinnings in Kuwait, came about much later, following the country's independence in 1961, when the then Amir, Sheikh Abdullah Al Salem Al Sabah, decided to choose a democratic and constitutional path of governance for the newly independent nation. However, Kuwait's mode of democracy was unique in that it was based largely on local circumstances and regional influences, but also intertwined within it elements of Western democracy.

In December 1961, Sheikh Abdullah called for elections to be held to a Constituent Assembly to draft a constitution for Kuwait. Subsequently, on 11 November 1962, the constitution was promulgated as Law Number 1. Although articles of the constitution have been suspended twice, it is noteworthy that the document has not been amended in the past six decades and continues to constitute the basic tenet governing political life in Kuwait.

The constitution ensures the law applies equally to all people, and in the parliamentary context, it does not differentiate between elected legislators and appointed executives. The constitution also assigns a division of powers between the three arms of the government —

the executive, the legislative and the judiciary — setting specific rights and responsibilities to the three entities.

The concept of equality and separation of powers under the constitution also introduces limitations on the powers wielded by each arm of the government, and in the functioning of the National Assembly. These restrictions encourage cooperation and collaboration between the executive and legislative in parliament, and compels both sides to find pragmatic solutions in order to better the lives of citizens and move the country forward on a path of progress and development.

In the event that the two sides cannot resolve their differences through debates, discussions and votes, the constitution also provides provisions for either resignation of cabinet or dissolution of parliament. As per Article 107 of the Kuwait constitution, the National Assembly can be dissolved by an Amiri decree, but elections for the new Assembly must be held within a period not exceeding two months from the date of the dissolution.

The dissolutions and dissonance in parliament witnessed in recent years are not the outcome of any shortcomings in the constitution, but rather in its interpretation by some legislators and in their understanding of democracy, based on Western concepts of this ideal. These lawmakers not only fail to adhere to both the letter and spirit of the constitution, but also fail to acknowledge that the democracy as practiced in Kuwait is different from Western concepts of it. The constitution, and the democracy built on the foundation of this document, were crafted by the forefathers of this country specifically for Kuwait and based on the unique socio-political milieu prevailing in the land, as well as taking into consideration local cohesion and regional influences. The implementation of Western concepts of democracy, as championed by legislators who demand sweeping political and parliamentary reforms, is a notion that if implanted in its entirety could threaten constitutional equilibrium and prove dire for Kuwait. Experts point out that democracy in Kuwait is based on two pillars: the people, as represented by legislators in parliament, and the country's traditional political system built on a historical consensus. The two pillars must exist in harmony and equanimity, with each fulfilling its distinct roles and responsibilities, but without infringing on each other's role, or attempting to impose its will on the other.

Clearly the executive and legislative arms of government need to put aside their differences and narrow vested interests and learn to work collaboratively for the good of the country and all of its people. In the meantime, even if there are no winds of change expected to blow in following Tuesday's elections, wisps of change could waft in; especially given the government's commitment to rejuvenate long dormant projects and policies.

Plans are reportedly underway to revive the tourism sector, increase employment

opportunities for youth in the private sector, encourage local investments in Public-Private Partnerships, attract foreign investments, and inject capital into development of much-needed infrastructure projects. The government has already reiterated its intention to rejuvenate the Vision 2035 New Kuwait development plan that had been languishing of late.

The authorities are also pushing through the country's digital transformation in a big way, with several global IT companies making their entry into the country in recent months, and expressing their interest to engage in developing Kuwait's digital ecosystem. Minister of State for Communication and Information Technology, Mazen Al-Nahedh was recently quoted as saying that his ministry is forming a high-level committee to draw a national roadmap for overseeing the digital transformation of the country, and devising a digitalization master plan.

As part of the plan, the ministry is seeking the adoption of smart digital technologies that could innovate public services, drive the economy, and improve quality of life, while increasing operational efficiency and performance of key sectors. The digitalization of government services could also go a long way to ameliorating many of the challenges facing the country's annual development plan, said the minister.

For his part, the Secretary-General of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development, Dr. Khaled Mahdi, addressing a forum in Kuwait, announced that in order to build a supportive environment for 'New Kuwait 2035' work was underway to transition the country to a knowledge economy that enhances competitiveness and diversifies economic bases.

On another front, and with the aim of developing the state's non-oil revenues, creating job opportunities for national youth, and encouraging greater private sector participation in construction and development projects, the government has given the green light to the

Kuwait Authority for Partnership Project (KAPP), to launch a package of projects for private sector investors to participate.

These proactive measures notwithstanding, the persistent standoffs in parliament between the government and some lawmakers, and its spillover into public life has led to discord and generated anxiety in society. This social dissonance has led to many among the public growing weary of democracy, or at least the version of democracy as practiced in Kuwait.

In October 2022, while inaugurating the first session of the 17th legislative term of the National Assembly, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Meshal Al Ahmad Al Sabah had urged the executive and legislative members to open a new chapter in their relations and to work together with a focus on the country's development and well-being of its citizens. Unfortunately, this advice went unheeded; the consensus that appeared to prevail in parliament at the start proved to be short-lived. In January 2023 the government tendered its resignation following yet another standoff with parliament.

With several of the same former lawmakers filing nominations and many of them expected to retain their seats, the makeup of the new parliament after the general elections on Tuesday may not be all that different from the one that was recently dissolved. The government for its part is likely to front the same cabinet, which is currently in a caretaker capacity, with only a few token changes in ministerial faces and portfolios to be expected.

Given the likely status quo in representatives and ministers, no major change can be expected in the functioning of parliament, or in implementing new laws and policies. We sincerely hope that we are wrong in our assessment, and that the new parliament sworn in after elections will cooperate and collaborate with the government to ensure Kuwait's sustainable progress on all fronts, and to enhance the lives of all its people.

### Kuwaiti students studying in UK attest to deep-rooted ties

**A**mbassador of the United Kingdom H.E. Belinda Lewis affirmed that the number of Kuwaiti students studying in Britain is evidence of the deep-rooted cultural ties between the two countries that have been passed through generations. Ambassador Lewis stated that the number of Kuwaiti students studying on scholarship in the UK during the academic year 2022-23 is 7,014, while there are a further 1,500 self-funded students who are pursuing their studies in the UK.

She added that the quality of education in the UK is excellent and the prestigious colleges and universities are among the oldest and best in the world in terms of education imparted. Another



aspect of the increasing number of students choosing the UK for their higher education is the convenient connectivity with several airlines flying between the two countries, and Kuwait Airways alone operating 14 weekly flights to London's Heathrow Airport.

She urged students to visit the UK Visa Application Center in Kuwait directly in the event of any inquiries regarding their visa, and added that the electronic travel permit scheduled to be implemented next February will not be applicable to students who intend to study in British universities.



EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

# On How Much Work is Enough



**Anne-Marie Slaughter and Autumn McDonald**

Anne-Marie Slaughter, a former director of policy planning in the US State Department, is CEO of the think tank New America, Professor Emerita of Politics and International Affairs at Princeton University, and the author of *Renewal: From Crisis to Transformation in Our Lives, Work, and Politics*.

Autumn McDonald is a senior fellow at New America.



The COVID-19 pandemic might be officially over, but much like a railway switchyard, it has already diverted countless lives onto wildly different paths. Millions of individuals will never revert to their pre-pandemic work routines, compelling both employers and employees to establish new models that cater to their evolving needs. But amid the ongoing experiments with hybrid models, we find ourselves confronting a deeper question on how much work is enough work.

At least in developed countries, these post-pandemic shifts and experiments could trigger a labor-market revolution as profound as the changes in workplaces, schedules, and compensation that marked the transition from the agricultural age to the industrial era.

These changes can be viewed on two levels. At the macro level, the legally mandated eight-hour workday and 40-hour workweek are gradually giving way to a new equilibrium. This will likely be a long process, given that it took half a century of labor struggles, union action, and corporate experimentation to reduce daily working hours in the United States from 14 to eight and workweeks from seven days to five.

In 1914, the Ford Motor Company stunned its competitors by shortening the factory workday to eight hours while paying its workers a minimum wage of \$5 per day. Congress codified this innovative practice in 1938 through the Fair Labor Standards Act, creating what cultural historian Fred Turner calls the 'industrial-era social compact'. Similarly, recent experiments with a 32-hour workweek resulted in less fatigue, improved mental health, and enhanced life satisfaction. In fact, most participants say they will not revert to the old model.

At the micro level, millions of individuals have used the past three years to reevaluate the tradeoff between time and money. During the pandemic lockdowns, many workers adjusted to new working habits and relished the ability to pause, spend more time with their loved ones, or exercise and pursue leisure activities without the stress of commutes and

office environments. These experiences later contributed to the so-called Great Resignation and the increase in 'quiet quitting'.

So, when companies began to demand that workers return to the pre-pandemic status quo, the question, 'How much work is enough?' prompted another: 'Enough for what?' To earn a living? To meet our employers' productivity expectations? To support our pursuit of happiness, or perhaps to retire? The answers vary, depending on who asks and who responds. For millions of low-income workers, the answer is simple: 'Enough' means earning a living wage that enables them to support themselves and their families.

the field has expanded its focus to encompass unpaid work. This includes raising a family, making a home, and meeting the needs of those who cannot care for themselves. This care work, as activist Ai-jen Poo reminds us, is the "work that makes all other work possible." For many, this form of labor holds as much meaning as their formal employment, or even more.

Suppose we expand the question 'How much work is enough?' to encompass both paid and unpaid work. In that case, it becomes apparent that millions of people with caregiving responsibilities and paid jobs often find themselves working well beyond the conventional eight-hour workday. It should

the counterculture, and rejected what they saw as the conformist striving of their parents' generation, many Gen Z'ers are now questioning and rejecting 'hustle culture' as yet another toxic Silicon Valley export.

Gen Z'ers were raised during two tumultuous decades marked by the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the introduction of the smartphone and social media, the 2008 financial crisis, and the pandemic. Today, they face downward social mobility, democratic backsliding amid intensifying political polarization, and a looming climate catastrophe. Given this historical backdrop, it is natural for them to question their parents' habits and focus on maintaining their own mental and physical health.

Gen Z icons like Simone Biles and Naomi Osaka, who withdrew from major sporting events to protect their mental health, embody the drive, grit, and grind necessary to excel at the highest levels of their fields. But by rejecting the notion that their self-worth, particularly as trailblazing women of color, hinges on meeting others' expectations of them, they demonstrated a profound understanding that personal well-being should not be sacrificed for external validation. Their insistence that life must be about more than producing and winning is an act of defiance against capitalism itself.

Since the emergence of ChatGPT and its competitors, discussions about the future of work have revolved around the extent to which human labor will remain necessary. To be sure, the integration of generative artificial intelligence into the labor market will bring about significant disruption, rendering traditional industrial-era work and workplaces obsolete. But regardless of what lies ahead, we cannot address the questions of where and how long we work without first answering the fundamental question of why we work.

“ Just as many young people in the 1960s embraced the counterculture, and rejected what they saw as the conformist striving of their parents' generation, many in Gen Z are now rejecting 'hustle culture', as yet another toxic Silicon Valley export. ”

Among those privileged enough to be able to consider the tradeoffs between time and money, two groups of workers have, through their words and their actions, emerged as key players in the broader discussion about what constitutes an adequate amount of work.

The first group consists of caregivers, a sector still dominated by women but gradually attracting more men. In labor economics, 'work' traditionally refers to paid labor involving the production of goods and services in return for monetary compensation. But following the integration of women into the workforce (including the workforce of labor economists),

come as little surprise, then, that given the opportunity, many would opt to reduce their paid working hours in order to care for others. Given the social importance of care work, economic statistics and government benefit programs must recognize and account for this critical but unpaid form of labor.

Another significant group of workers asking, 'How much work is enough?' comprises young people, particularly younger Millennials and Gen Z workers, many of whom entered the workforce during the pandemic. Just as many young people in the 1960s 'turned on, tuned in, and dropped out,' embraced



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EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT



# Western Distraction from Climate Action



**Ali Rashid Al Nuaimi**

Member of the United Arab Emirates Federal National Council and Chairman of the Defense, Interior, and Foreign Affairs Committee at the Council.

It should be common knowledge by now that climate change is a complex problem with outsize consequences for the Global South. By 2030, most Small Island Developing States (SIDS) will lose up to 100 percent of their GDP to climate disasters. Similarly, Africa's 54 countries will suffer some of the worst consequences of a warming planet, even though they are least responsible for the crisis, contributing less than 4 percent of global greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions.

Rising temperatures are likewise threatening life in the Arab world, resulting in water scarcity in Jordan and extreme heat waves in the Gulf countries. The need for a great transformation at the regional, as well as the global, level was one of the main reasons why Egypt hosted last year's United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP27), and why the United Arab Emirates will host this year's meeting. In preparation for COP28, which will convene in Dubai in November and December, the UAE has committed to engaging in open and honest discussions with everyone to ensure that the conference is a success.

Building on its strategic decision to promote and invest in renewables, conservation, and climate technology, the UAE selected Sultan Al Jaber as the COP28 president-designate. The choice has received ample attention: in addition to being the chairman of Masdar — the world's first carbon-neutral city and home to the International Renewable Energy Agency

— and the minister of industry and advanced technology, Al Jaber is managing director and group CEO of Abu Dhabi National Oil Company.

Accelerating climate action, meeting the challenges of the energy transition, and maintaining the world's demand for oil must be addressed comprehensively. Recognizing this reality, the UAE has chosen as its official to oversee talks, someone who has extensive experience in renewable-energy projects, as a special envoy for climate change, and in positions responsible for reducing industrial emissions. Global warming is a complicated problem, and solving it calls for sophisticated

US President Joe Biden, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, and UN Secretary-General António Guterres urging the removal of Al Jaber as COP28 president-designate. Their demand was not based on any wrongdoing or a lack of commitment to the role, but rather was a means to score political points at the expense of a united global effort to tackle climate change and maintain economic growth.

Legislators should ensure the best possible outcomes for their constituents and their children, not embrace positions based on political biases without any effort at genuine engagement. Worse still, the US and European legislators

and adaptation, and China has developed the world's largest capacity to manufacture and deploy renewables. The two countries lead globally in solar and wind capacity and have deployed more than 40 percent of the world's new solar and wind capacity each year since 2017. Fossil-fuel consumption continues in China and India, as it does worldwide, but has been reduced from 96 percent to an average of 83 percent of the total across both countries. With nearly three billion people between them, China and India are among the largest and fastest-growing economies in the world; their needs cannot be ignored.

The same legislators lecturing sovereign states about how to navigate climate policy seem to forget that the US and Europe are responsible for the majority of historic emissions. Rather than interfering in decision-making by countries committed to climate action, they should be exerting pressure on their own governments to live up to their climate commitments. Currently, the US and Europe are expanding their own fossil-fuel infrastructure and failing to contribute substantially to internationally agreed funds to mitigate the effects of climate change. The United Kingdom has announced its first new coal mine in 30 years, while Germany has resurrected or extended the lives of at least 20 coal-fired power plants.

Any discussion about the energy transition requires nuance and a sincere commitment to joint action. But that is impossible when certain politicians are more committed to catchy soundbites and making a name for themselves. The world has largely agreed on the need to reduce GHG emissions. We cannot let a minority change the framing of the problem and, in the process, slow momentum. The climate crisis is real, as is the political drama that impedes tangible and practical solutions. We must avoid the trap of division and distraction if we want to address global warming before it is too late.

“

The US and European legislators are advocating international intervention in a sovereign decision — the latest in a long line of Western efforts to dictate to Global South governments for domestic political gain.

”

solutions requiring the expertise of specialists in a wide variety of fields.

A small but loud group of politicians in the United States and Europe, together with some activists, have questioned why an 'oil executive' is leading COP28. Many of these policymakers insist on reducing climate negotiations to a zero-sum game. By distracting people from the challenge of implementing realistic climate solutions and focusing instead on Al Jaber's appointment, they seem to view the fight against global warming as a political stick to wield, rather than a global imperative that requires close collaboration.

Last week, members of the US Congress and the European Parliament sent a letter to

are advocating international intervention in a sovereign decision — the latest in a long line of Western efforts to dictate to Global South governments for domestic political gain.

Moreover, the tendency to prescribe policy solutions to Global South countries — which are often the worst hit by climate change and have endured injustice after injustice, including colonialism and resource extraction — is widening the gap between approaches to global warming. Emerging economies like China and India must balance climate action with the need to provide economic opportunities for billions of people.

Nonetheless, both China and India have invested substantially in climate mitigation





# High temperatures increase CVD deaths in Kuwait

A new report shows that with average temperatures during summer increasing annually, people living in inherently hot regions of the world may be at particularly high risk of death from heat-related cardiovascular diseases (CVD).

The study suggests that when daily temperatures average over 43 degrees centigrade, the number of deaths from cardiovascular disease could double or triple. In their study published in 'Circulation', the premier journal of the American Heart Foundation, researchers note that these findings raise concerns that traditionally hot regions may be vulnerable to heat-related cardiovascular deaths.

The highest temperature on earth in the last 76 years, of 54 degrees centigrade, was recorded in Kuwait in the summer of 2016. Peak summer temperatures have hovered around this record figure in subsequent years. In 2021, the average maximum temperature in Kuwait reached an all time high of 34.5 degrees centigrade.

Given the consistently high temperatures in Kuwait, researchers behind the new study examined the relationship between temperature and more than 15,000 cardiovascular-related deaths in the country. All death certificates in Kuwait from 2010 to



2016 that cited 'any cardiovascular cause' for death, among individuals ages 15 and older were reviewed in the study.

The study found that when the number of deaths on days when the average daily temperature was 34.5 degrees centigrade, was compared to the number of deaths when daily temperatures averaged around 43 degrees centigrade, there was:

- Overall, a 3-times greater risk of dying from any cardiovascular cause
- Men were more affected by the extreme temperatures, experiencing a 3.5 times higher death rate
- The death rate among women was nearly 2.5 higher;
- Working-age people (ages 15-64 years) had a death rate 3.8 times higher

- The death rate was just over 2-times higher for people 65 and older.

To examine the effects of temperature on its own, the investigators adjusted for other environmental factors such as air pollution and humidity. They found that higher temperatures affected both genders and all ages differently.

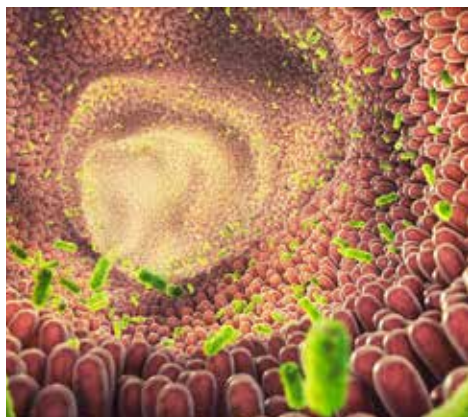
While cardiologists and other medical doctors have rightly focused on traditional risk factors, such as diet, blood pressure and tobacco use, climate change and subsequent higher average temperatures, especially in very hot regions of the world, may exacerbate the burden of cardiovascular mortality," said Barrak Alahmad, MD, MPH, PhD, who holds a medical degree from the University of Liverpool, United Kingdom, a Master of Public Health (MPH) from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, and a PhD in Population Health Sciences from the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health in the United States.

When core body temperature increases,

the human body tries to cool itself by shifting blood from the organs to underneath the skin. This shift causes the heart to pump more blood, putting it under significantly more stress. A collaborative group of cardiologists, environmental health specialists and epidemiologists hypothesized that increasing temperatures in hotter regions of the world could lead to increased CVD deaths due to extreme heat's effects on the body.

"The warming of our planet is not evenly distributed. Regions that are inherently hot, like Kuwait and the Arabian Peninsula, are witnessing soaring temperatures unlike ever before. We are sounding the alarm that populations in this part of the world could be at higher risk of dying from cardiovascular causes due to heat," said Alahmad. "Although we cannot conclude from this analysis, men and working-age people may have been at greater increased risk because of spending more time outside. We need to explore this relationship further and consider serious preventive strategies that could reduce the impact of rising temperatures on our health," he added.

The study was limited by only examining any cardiovascular cause of death, so it is not known whether any specific type of heart problem is more susceptible to the influence of extreme heat. Although the researchers found a strong association between extremely high temperatures and increased cardiovascular deaths, they acknowledged that further research would be needed to establish a true cause and effect relationship.



## Gut microbiota and human microbiome

Research studies have estimated that the number of microbial cells in the body outnumber our own cells by 10:1; while others put this at 1:1. No matter the ratio, there are between 10 trillion and 100 trillion microbial cells in a human body and that is certainly a lot of cells. These microbes, which belong to over 1,000 different species of microorganisms, are together referred to as the human microbiota or biome.

In most cases the relationship between the human host and the microbiota are symbiotic or mutually beneficial. The composition of the human biome can greatly vary between people and different parts of the body hosts different microbial communities. For example, the oral cavity, genital organs, skin, gastrointestinal system, and respiratory tract all contain many microbial cells but their type, numbers and functions will vary between locations.

The gastrointestinal (GI) or gut microbiota is a vast and complex collection of microorganisms that profoundly affects human health. These microbes assist in a range of bodily functions, including harvesting energy from digested food; protecting against pathogens; regulating immune function; strengthening biochemical barriers of the gut and intestine.

Any change in the microbiota levels and composition can affect the functioning of these microbes. Moreover, while most

gut bacteria are beneficial to the human host, there are also harmful bacteria that can enter the GI tract and cause infection. These infections include food poisoning and other GI diseases that result in diarrhea and vomiting.

Microorganisms are integral to human life and carry out various vital functions. Research suggests that potential disturbances to the microbial population have links to the onset of several medical conditions, including asthma, autistic spectrum disorder, cancer, celiac disease, diabetes, eczema, heart disease, malnutrition, multiple sclerosis, and obesity among others.

Besides absorbing energy from food, gut microbes are also essential to helping humans absorb nutrients. Gut bacteria help the body to break down complex molecules in meats and vegetables, for example, without the aid of gut bacteria, the body cannot digest plant cellulose. Gut microbes may also use their metabolic activities to influence food cravings and feelings of being full. The diversity of a person's diet affects the diversity of their gut.

Some research suggests that the body's first exposure to microbes may occur before birth. Without these early microbial guests, adaptive immunity would not exist. This vital defensive mechanism learns how to respond to microbes after encountering them. This allows for a quicker and more effective response to disease-causing organisms.

A person's gut microbiota develops from the first microbial exposure and typically reaches a full composition at 3-5 years. Disturbances to these early exposures can hamper the development of the microbiota.

A person's gut microbiota and brain constantly communicate with each other. The gut-brain axis primarily affects intestinal function. However, researchers have also observed links between the gut microbiota and psychological disorders, such as depression and ASD.

Research suggests that bacterial populations in the gastrointestinal system play a role in developing gut conditions, including inflammatory bowel diseases (IBD), such as Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. Low microbial diversity in the gut also has links to obesity and type 2 diabetes.





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EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

# Give Americans a Debt Brake



**R. James Breiding**

Author of *Swiss Made: The Untold Story Behind Switzerland's Success and Too Small to Fail: Why Some Small Nations Outperform Larger Ones and How They Are Reshaping the World.*

Since 1960, the United States has raised its debt ceiling 78 times – soon to be 79, if Congress approves the latest last-minute deal. On a wall in Manhattan, not far from Times Square, a billboard-size display has kept a running tally of the national debt amount.

Since its inauguration in 1989, the National Debt Clock has ticked inexorably higher, from \$2.7 trillion to more than \$31 trillion today. Never before has America or the world economy been so indebted. And since 2000, the stock of global debt has soared, from \$87 trillion to over \$300 trillion today – a rate nearly double the pace of world GDP growth.

Leaving aside the political theatrics, intrigue, and brinkmanship that nowadays accompany every increase in the US debt ceiling, can anything be done to stop, or even slow, the clock?

“

American taxpayers spend roughly 15 times more on interest payments than Swiss taxpayers. This allows the Swiss to invest in public goods and services, while grandchildren of American taxpayers will still be servicing the current debt.

”

At the turn of the century, Switzerland devised a solution called a “debt brake,” which obliges the federal government to balance its budgets over the course of an economic cycle. In response to mounting public debt and repeating deficits in the 1990s, a group of Swiss economists and politicians began advocating for a constitutional amendment to limit government spending and borrowing. In 2001, the Swiss government proposed the debt brake, voters approved it overwhelmingly in a referendum, and it became a part of the country's constitution.

The measure has yielded astonishing results. Since it was enacted, total government debt as a

share of GDP has declined from 30% to 20%. Over the same period, debt has ballooned to unprecedented levels in Britain (186%), Japan (227%), the US (123%), and elsewhere.

Switzerland's debt brake works because it has a simple and compelling goal: to limit the growth of public debt by preventing the government from spending money it doesn't have. Moreover, because it is enshrined in the Swiss constitution, it has a high level of political legitimacy and is difficult to repeal or amend. And providing a clear benchmark against which progress can be measured makes elected officials' more accountable to the citizens they represent and eliminates the temptation to run up debt to secure re-election while passing the burden of repayment to future generations.

At the same time, the debt brake is not a straitjacket. It includes automatic and countercyclical stabilizers, which allow for temporary deficits during periods of economic weakness, such as during the COVID-19 crisis, and encourages debt repayment during good times.

Today, Switzerland enjoys a AAA credit rating, which matters in a world of rising borrowing costs. At current levels of debt and interest rates, American taxpayers spend roughly 15 times more on interest payments than Swiss taxpayers. And while the Swiss thereby free up resources to invest in education, research, childcare, and other vital public goods and services, American taxpayers' grandchildren will have to service the debt without ever having seen the benefits.

Nobody would deny the importance of the intergenerational social contract: the elderly pass their traditions and wisdom to the young, who bring fresh perspectives, ideas, and technological advances. But there must be a fair deal for everyone. The German word for debt, *schuld*, is also the word for ‘guilt’ — a kind of moral synonym reminding us to keep our end of the bargain.

Admittedly, the US Constitution is far more difficult to change than its Swiss counterpart. But the US founders regarded the accumulation of public debt as a matter of fundamental importance. They recognized that excessive debt could burden future generations, threaten economic stability, and compromise national independence. They knew that excessive debt led to the downfall of the Roman Empire, the French monarchy, the Dutch Republic, and the Spanish Empire. The recipe was always the same: costly wars and extravagant spending.

America's founders, by contrast, believed in the importance of fiscal responsibility and advocated for limited government spending and the avoidance of excessive debt. Alexander Hamilton argued that the government should have the authority to borrow money under the strict condition that “the creation of debt should always be accompanied with the means of extinguishment.” And Thomas Jefferson believed that “to preserve [the people's] independence, we must not let our



rulers load us with perpetual debt.”

With that goal in mind, the US Constitution was designed with checks and balances to prevent abuses of power, including fiscal irresponsibility. While its framers assigned the power of the purse to

the legislative branch, their intent was to ensure oversight and control of spending.

The US Constitution has been amended only 27 times since 1787, whereas the Swiss constitution is amended regularly. But a rigorous

and challenging process implies greater legitimacy. This is what happened when 85% of Swiss citizens voted in favor of including a debt brake. American citizens deserve a chance to decide if they want something similar.



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