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# Government manifesto stresses sustainable social welfare



## THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

Economic diversification and implementing social and economic reforms to ensure long-term sustainability of the welfare state and well-being of citizens, are core pillars in the government's work agenda presented to parliament last week. Tabling the manifesto in the National Assembly on 6 February, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Shareeda Al-Mousherji said that improving the standard of living of citizens is a main item in the work plan.

A day earlier, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem, while discussing elements of the work-plan with editors-in-chief of local dailies, had also reiterated the government's commitment to promote economic diversification and implement reforms required to sustain and preserve the country's welfare state.



Elucidating the government's work program to media chiefs, the prime minister stated that the government was "entering a new era, one marked by an overflowing of determination,

optimism and national responsibility". He added that the executive would exert all efforts to enhance constructive cooperation with the legislative wing, and redouble efforts in the

service of the country to embody the hopes and aspirations of citizens."

Stressing on the need for urgent reforms, the premier added that delay in implementing much-needed economic, financial, and administrative reforms will only exacerbate the situation and make it all the more difficult to address in future. This, he warned, could have severe and painful impact on the economy, as well as on sustaining the welfare state, and in providing for the prosperity of citizens.

Turning to specifics of the work agenda, the premier explained that the government manifesto is anchored in provisions of Article 20 of the Constitution that calls for the national economy to be based on social justice, and founded on fair cooperation between public and private activities, with the aim of developing the economy, increasing productivity, improving the standard of living, and achieving prosperity for citizens, all within the limits of the law.

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## The Enclave Of Sophistication & Unparalleled Creativity

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# Spanish cities attract increasing number of visitors from Kuwait



**A**mbassador of Spain H.E. Miguel Moro Aguilar highlighted the robust bilateral relations with Kuwait in various fields, especially in tourism, with Spanish cities attracting a record number of visitors from Kuwait.

The ambassador was speaking to journalists on the sidelines of a reception held at his residence on the occasion of the visit to Kuwait by Princess Beatriz de Orleans, the honorary president of the Spain Luxury Foundation, and Angeles Munoz, the mayor of Marbella, the luxury resort city in southern Spain.

Highlighting the increasing interest of Kuwaiti citizens and tourism companies

in ideal tourist destinations in Spain, such as Madrid, Barcelona, and Malaga, Ambassador Aguilar noted that last summer more than 150,000 visitors from Kuwait traveled to Spain.

The Spanish envoy attributed the increase in visits to the rise in the number of direct flights from Kuwait to several major Spanish destinations, as well as the European Union's newly introduced Cascading visa system for Kuwaiti citizens, which contributed to increasing the number of tourists to European Union nations in general and Spain in particular.

Speaking on the occasion, the Mayor of Marbella, asserted that her city stands as

a beacon of tourism in Southern Europe, serving as the ultimate destination for tourism visits, second home purchases, and investments. She stressed that the partnership with Kuwait further solidifies Marbella's global leadership in excellence. She highlighted that "Marbella's ties with Kuwait trace back to the early eighties, when Kuwaiti investors exploring the Spanish economy for the first time found Marbella to be an ideal destination for vacations, second homes, and business ventures." She noted that this alliance has grown over the years."

Underscoring that "the Kuwaiti enthusiasm for Marbella is palpable

in the tourist influx to our city and the keen interest of investors in purchasing properties here, the mayor added, "Marbella feels very close to Kuwait due to the many commonalities we share, and we have a lot to contribute, and we will continue to work on the line of cooperation that we have opened for a long time."

Addressing Kuwaitis directly he mayor noted that 90 percent of Kuwaiti tourists opt for Marbella in Spain, which highlights our progress as a city, and affirms that we are on the right path, and that together, we'll forge ahead, always welcoming you with open arms in Marbella, your home away from home."



## LuLu Hypermarket awards prizes to winners of grand promotion



**L**uLu Hypermarket, the undisputed retail heavyweight in the region, held its much-awaited prize distribution ceremony for the "LuLu One-Year Free Shopping Promotion" at its Alrai outlet on 3 February.

The exciting promotion, which ran from 25 October to 31 December 2023 at all outlets of LuLu Hypermarket in Kuwait, offered shoppers the chance to win amazing prizes with every KD5 worth of purchase made through any LuLu outlet in the country.

The 'one-year free shopping' promotion included the opportunity for 10 winners to shop for products worth a total of KD1,500, totally free over a one-year period. In addition, 100 lucky winners earned the right to shop for KD100 worth of goods for free. The awards ceremony saw 110 lucky winners walk away with prizes worth a total of KD25,000.

The official draw to pick the winners of the promotion was conducted in a fair and transparent manner on 30 January 2024, at the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, in the presence of ministry officials and representatives of LuLu Hypermarket.

The prize distribution ceremony witnessed top officials from LuLu Hypermarket presenting the prizes to the winners in front of a large crowd of shoppers and well-wishers. All the winners conveyed their heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to LuLu Hypermarket for the incredible opportunity to enjoy a year of free shopping.

The event was a resounding success, showcasing LuLu Hypermarket's commitment to providing its valued customers with exciting promotions and an exceptional shopping experience throughout the year.



## Al Muzaini Exchange Company opens its newest branch in Hadiya-Coop

**T**he number one money exchange company in Kuwait, Al-Muzaini Exchange Company recently opened its newest branch in Kuwait in Hadiya Co-op on Feb 1, 2024. This opening was extremely significant and the rapid expansion reflects the company's endeavor to always be near its customers. It also reinforces the company's commitment to providing the highest quality of financial services such as money transfers, foreign currency exchange and bill payments with convenience, comfort and safety and at the most competitive prices, seven days a week.

The General Manager of Al Muzaini Exchange Company, Mr. Hugh Fernandes and the company's department managers and various senior personnel inaugurated the new branch in Hadiya Co-op and Mr. Fernandes stated: "We take great pride in strengthening our leading position in the local market and always place focus in ensuring that we provide

the best financial services experience to our customers in order to meet all their money transfer needs. We always want to stay true to our mission; to always be near to our customers and to add to their convenience."

In addition to its strong network of branches, Al Muzaini application provides simple and safe financial solutions and offers a variety of features to its customers. Customers can also use Al Muzaini self-service kiosks placed at strategic locations to perform transactions.

Customers can also participate in Al Muzaini's new Transfer and Win Campaign. Transfer your money through Al Muzaini and use any of Al Muzaini Exchange services for a chance to win incredible prizes up to \$30,000. Daily, weekly and monthly prizes are up for grabs with the grand prize being \$10,000. The campaign lasts from December 26, 2023 to February 29, 2024.



# Australia, Kuwait to celebrate 50 years of diplomatic relations

*Australian Ambassador H.E. Melissa Kelly*

By Reaven D'Souza  
Executive Managing Editor

Australian Ambassador H.E. Melissa Kelly lauded the long and cherished relations between Australia and Kuwait, and reiterated her country's commitment to the food and defense security of Kuwait.

The ambassador was speaking at a press conference arranged at her residence to commemorate 50 years of diplomatic relations with Kuwait. She noted that although diplomatic relations began only in 1974, ties between the two countries on the people-to-people level began much earlier.

She pointed out that in 1991, Australia was a member of the coalition forces that helped drive out the invading Iraqi forces and liberate Kuwait. "The visit to Australia in 1992 by the late Amir

run throughout 2024. The campaign will highlight the diversity and depth of relations between the two countries and include among others Australian support in the liberation of Kuwait, the innovative spirit of Australians such as Alan Villiers, who documented his travels in Kuwait in the late 1930s that presents a window into the pre-oil era in Kuwait.

The stories will also narrate the beginnings of the wheat trade in 1966 that laid the foundation for agricultural cooperation, as well modern innovative partnerships that look towards a more sustainable future. The campaign will be a reflection of the past, while serving as an inspiration for the future, said Ambassador Kelly.

In addition to celebrating the past and the individuals who contributed to it, the ambassador stated that efforts will be made to plan for the next fifty years. This includes discussions on ensuring Kuwait's food security, enhancing bilateral investments, and aligning education cooperation in line with Kuwait's economic vision, as well as ways in which Australia and Kuwait could cooperate and coordinate to strengthen international systems amidst current challenges.

“Ambassador Kelly revealed that the significant historical and diplomatic events over the past 50 years of bilateral ties will be commemorated on the embassy's social media platforms through the '50 years, 50 stories' campaign that will run throughout 2024.”

On Australia's phased cessation of live sheep exports by sea, the envoy clarified that the gradual cessation will not begin before mid-2025, and moreover, an independent committee has been tasked to provide guidance to the government on the details of the phased cessation, in consultations with Kuwait to ensure its food security.

Highlighting significant Kuwaiti investments currently in Australia, especially in the field of green energy, amounting to approximately 13 billion Australian dollars, the ambassador voiced optimism for further investments that align with the capabilities of both friendly countries.

On the diplomatic front, she expressed her hope that the current year would witness exchange visits by several high-level officials, including at the ministerial level, and that the two sides would hold the joint committee meeting in 2024, although no



dates have been slated for these meetings and visits.

Regarding security and military cooperation, the Australian envoy said: "Australia has been militarily present in the region since 1990, and since that time we have set up a military base here and work with our Kuwaiti partners to ensure the safety and security of the region."

Regarding Australia's stance on the situation in Gaza, Kelly emphasized the need for a political solution to the catastrophic crisis, expressing grave concern about the humanitarian situation and civilian casualties in Gaza. She mentioned Australia's support for a two-state solution and its strong support for the Palestinians' desire to establish their own state.



Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah was a pivotal event in bilateral relations, as it marked the first visit to Australia by a Kuwaiti ruler, and helped further consolidate relations between the two sides in various fields."

Ambassador Kelly revealed that the significant historical and diplomatic events over the past 50 years of bilateral ties will be commemorated on the embassy's social media platforms through the '50 years, 50 stories' campaign that will

An advertisement for The Times Kuwait magazine. It features a background of a newspaper page with the word "TIMES" in large red letters. Overlaid on this is a laptop screen showing an email inbox with a blue envelope icon and a red exclamation mark. A blue banner with white text reads "TIMES LATEST ISSUE". Below the banner, the text "To receive your FREE Pdf copy every week directly to your inbox, send an email to subscribethetimes@gmail.com" is displayed in a mix of red and blue. At the bottom, it says "For latest News Updates please visit www.timeskuwait.com" in red.



# MoI revives issuing family, commercial, tourist visas

In line with the government's plan to stimulate the economic, commercial, and tourism landscape in the country while taking into consideration the social aspects, the Ministry of Interior (MoI), acting under instructions of Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Acting Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef, has decided to issue entry visas for following purposes, in accordance with conditions and regulations.

**Entry visa - Family visit:** This is granted to the father, mother, wife and children of applicants, provided that the salary of the breadwinner is not less than KD400. To obtain a visit entry visa for any other relatives, the salary of the breadwinner should not be less than KD800.

## Other terms and conditions that apply for a family visit visa are:

- Provide a round-trip ticket on the airlines of the national airlines (national carrier).
- A written undertaking not to demand the conversion of such visits into residency in the country.
- A pledge to abide by the duration of the visit.



- The treatment of the visitor will be in private hospitals and health centers and treatment will not be allowed in government hospitals.

- In the event that the visitor violates the period of stay prescribed for him, each of the (visitor - sponsor) will be listed by the General Directorate of Residency Affairs Investigation with the security control system, where

the violator is followed up by the General Directorate of Residency Affairs Investigation and the legal procedures followed for violators of the Foreigners' Residence Law are applied.

**Entry visa - Commercial visit:** This visa is issued at the request of a Kuwaiti company or institution and granted to persons holding

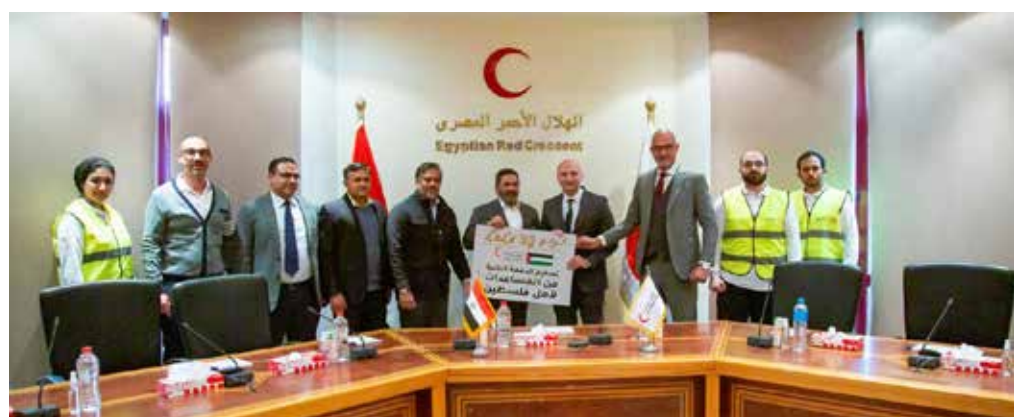
university or technical qualifications aligned with the company's activity and the nature of its work.

**Entry visa - Tourism visit:** For people belonging to (53) countries, visa is granted at either the port of entry directly upon arrival in the country, or through the electronic visa, which is available via ministry of interior website: <http://moi.gov.kw>.

## Other tourism visitors allowed entry to Kuwait include:

- Residents of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries: Tourism entry visa is issued to persons who are engaged in professions specified in Ministerial Resolution No. (2008/2030) and its amendments, and in accordance with the controls and requirements specified in the aforementioned ministerial decision.

- Tourism entry visa through hotels and companies: This is issued only through hotels and companies that have an automatic link with the General Administration of Accommodation Affairs system, and in accordance with the requirements followed for this.



## UAE's Lulu Group continues sending relief aid to Gaza

Abu Dhabi based Lulu Group has again lent a compassionate hand to the people of Gaza with much needed aid and relief materials. The second batch of aid, consisting of 50 tons of food products, hygiene products and other essentials were handed over to the Egypt Red Crescent authorities in Cairo on Monday.

The relief materials were received by Dr. Rami El-Nasser, Chief Executive Officer of the Egypt Red Crescent from Lulu Egypt Marketing Manager Hatim Said along with Juzer Rupawala, Lulu Egypt & Bahrain Director, Huzefa Qureshi,

Regional Director and other officials.

Red Crescent aims to deliver the relief materials to the people of Gaza at the earliest, said Dr. Rami El-Nasser. He welcomed Lulu's helping hand and expressed gratitude to Yusuff Ali MA and the Lulu Group for the continued support to the people of Palestine.

This is the second time Lulu is providing much needed help to the Palestine People undergoing hardship in current situation.

In December, it provided 50 tons of relief materials to Gaza through Egypt Red Crescent.

## World Bank offers expertise in support of Vision 2035

In an interview last week with state media, the Resident Representative of the World Bank in Kuwait, Ziad Nakat said that the Bank stood ready to offer its expertise and experience in support of Kuwait's Vision 2035, New Kuwait Development Plan.

As the World Bank representative, I am keen to provide proposals that boost development in the Kuwaiti public and private sectors, as well as bolster ties with Kuwait, said Mr. Nakat. He added that the Bank's proposals for development include investing in human capital, bolstering governance, developing public administration, improving services, and reinforcing sustainable development of infrastructure.

The World Bank representative affirmed that the Bank would seek strong partnership with Kuwait to transform the country into an international hub for commerce and financing in line with Vision 2035. He pointed out that the Bank's vast global experience throughout the decades has enabled it to offer sound advice and consultancy services that are tailor-made to each country's needs. He added that any entity in Kuwait could seek



knowledge collaboration with the World Bank in line with agreements signed between the Bank and Kuwait.

The World Bank, which was founded in 1944, provides development consultancy services through its international experts, as well as solutions and crisis management in response to regional and international challenges. It also offers loans to countries to battle poverty and achieve development. Kuwait, which has been a member of the bank since 1961, is eager to boost cooperation between the two sides on all possible levels.

## EU envoys laud TRMIA role in enhancing cultural ties



Ambassadors from member states of the European Union (EU) headed by H.E. Anne Koistinen, the European Union (EU) ambassador to Kuwait, paid a visit last week to the Tareq Rajab Museum of Islamic Arts (TRMIA) in Jabriya. During the visit, they were briefed by Dr. Ziad Rajab on the museum's rich history and its significant role in enhancing

Kuwait's cultural and Islamic heritage.

Highlighting the role of the museum in enhancing cultural ties between the EU and Kuwait, and serving as a bridge between people of the two regions, Ambassador Koistinen stated: "The Tareq Rajab Museum offered EU member state ambassadors a unique opportunity to delve into shared



cultural elements that have influenced the histories of both the European Union and Kuwait. Our common history and heritage are a solid foundation for cooperation and understanding."

She added that the visit reflects the EU's dedication to fostering cultural exchange and cooperation with Kuwait, while also preserving

their mutual cultural heritage.

For his part, Dr. Rajab said the abundant shared history between Kuwait and Europe spanned style, design, and symbolism across various mediums such as ceramics, textiles, glass, metalwork, and jewelry. He expressed his family's profound delight in welcoming the EU ambassadors to the museum.





# PAI launches 'Made in Kuwait' campaign



## Cuba expresses interest to provide medical support to Kuwait

In a media interview last week, Cuban Ambassador H.E. Jose Sanchez, expressed his country's strong commitment to collaborate with Kuwait in the field of health and medicine.

Pointing to Cuba's large pool of highly qualified medical professionals, including doctors, nurses, and technicians, Ambassador Sanchez said they stood ready to support Kuwait in all medical fields. He noted Cuba's successful collaborations in Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the Emirates, and expressed eagerness to extend similar support to Kuwait upon the government's request.

He indicated that communications in this regard were ongoing at the diplomatic level with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kuwait, and the Ministry of Health (MoH) which was responsible for health cooperation. The Cuban envoy revealed that currently, a memorandum of understanding for health care services was awaiting the Ministry of Health's response.

The ambassador also underscored Cuba's expertise in medical technology, particularly in producing vital medicines, including treatments for diabetes. He expressed confidence in replicating the Cuban medical success achieved in Europe, Latin America, and Asia by introducing Cuban medicines to Kuwait.

Regarding a previous initiative in 2018, where Cuban nurses introduced effective diabetes medication at the Dasman Institute, the ambassador explained that despite its positive outcomes, the medicine was unfortunately not approved for use in Kuwait.

On a different note, Ambassador Sanchez extended an invitation to Kuwaiti investors to explore the possibilities of investing in Cuba's vast potential in various sectors such as tourism, agriculture, biotechnology, and mining. He emphasized Cuba's abundance of resources, including large quantities of copper, gold, and untapped oil reserves.

Expressing satisfaction with the increasing number of Kuwaiti tourists visiting Cuba, the envoy revealed that 170 visas were issued in January alone, marking a 60 percent rise from the previous year. He shared positive feedback from Kuwaiti cigar enthusiasts who praised the cleanliness, safety, and affordability of Cuba. Lamenting the lack of direct flights between Havana and Kuwait City, the ambassador noted that alternative routes were available through Istanbul, Madrid, Paris, or Amsterdam.

In conclusion the ambassador expressed his appreciation for Kuwait and its friendly people, and added that he considered Kuwait his second home. He emphasized the openness of the Cuban embassy to all Kuwaitis, encouraging them to view it as a welcoming space for everyone.

Public Authority for Industry (PAI) announced last week the launch of a nationwide campaign under the slogan 'Made in Kuwait', to promote awareness of local products and encourage their purchase by citizens, residents and visitors.

The campaign, which will run until 22 February, involves the participation of over 70 Kuwaiti factories and manufacturing units that aim to foster a sense of national pride in locally-made goods.

"The 'Made in Kuwait' campaign highlights the importance and quality of our national industrial products," said Acting Director-General of PAI, Mohammed Al-Adwani. He added, "We encourage consumers to support local industries by purchasing their needs from the wide range of high-quality, locally-made products available."

The campaign will feature promotional exhibitions at three locations across Kuwait: Avenues Mall (4-8 February), Capital Mall (11-14 February), and at various schools across the country (5-22 February). The PAI will also collaborate with the Ministry of Education to reach students in over 30 schools, providing them with information about the campaign and its goals.

To further engage consumers, the campaign will include the distribution of gifts and samples of national



products, allowing participants to experience the quality of local goods first-hand. The 'Made in Kuwait' campaign is part of the PAI's strategic plan for 2035, which aims to promote the development and growth of the Kuwaiti industrial sector.

Al-Adwani expressed his appreciation to all parties involved in the campaign, including the Ministry of Education, shopping malls, Kuwaiti factories, and PAI staff, for their contributions to the success of the ongoing initiative.

## Ministry of Interior decries social media reports



The Ministry of Interior in press release said it had taken all precautionary and legal measures when a house was raided, rubbishing news reports circulated in some social media showing securitymen entering a house.

The local Arabic daily quoting Interior Ministry sources said "all

necessary legal measures in the seizure process were taken."

The Interior Ministry has called on everyone to be careful when publishing news saying and added, news must be confirmed from MOI's official sources before publishing.

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# Russian Ambassador discusses international relations at RR



Reconnaissance Research (RR), one of Kuwait leading independent think tanks, hosted the Russian Ambassador H.E. Vladimir Zheltov, in a high-powered panel discussion last week that helped shed light on the Russian Federation's positions on several major regional and international issues.

Ambassador Zheltov explained the fundamental differences between the historical and contemporary roles of major powers in the region, with a particular focus on the differences between the American and British approach versus the Russian stances.

He also expressed Russia's steadfast position in supporting the Palestinian cause

and criticized Western attempts to change the basic principles of peace in the Middle East, especially through the Abraham Accords, which he believes undermine the principle of establishing an independent Palestinian state.

Regarding Ukraine, the Ambassador expressed Russia's broader and more comprehensive view on the concept of Western intervention in the internal affairs of states, and the stirring of manageable chaos in an attempt to contain rising powers that are hostile to Western policies, which are aimed at

maintaining American dominance in the world and building a new multipolar world order.

Another focal point in the discussion included the race for global supremacy and the rising role of China and BRICS as new competing powers. The Russian ambassador emphasized that Russia, with its rich natural resources, is not in need of competing for energy resources in the Middle East, and is more keen on directing attention towards enhancing relations in the region, and in maintaining Russia's strong presence in areas of more

importance to Russia's strategic and security interests, specifically in its immediate external surroundings like Eastern Europe.

Founder and CEO of Reconnaissance Research, Abdulaziz Al-Anjeri, expressed his appreciation for the Ambassador's participation, stating: "Cooperation with the Russian side represents a valuable contribution that enhances our understanding of international dynamics and their impact on regional issues." He added: "We look forward to hosting more discussions that bring together Russian experts and officials to promote dialogue that serves the interests of peace and stability in the region."



## Indian Embassy discusses accreditation issues with KSE

A joint committee comprising members from the Indian Embassy and from the Kuwait Society of Engineers (KSE) held a collaborative meeting to discuss matters pertaining to the accreditation of engineering qualifications of Indian engineers working in Kuwait.

Held at the society's headquarters, the meeting was attended by Engineer Ali Mohseni, the committee's head, along with member Jalal Al-Fadhli, Ibrahim Samir from the association's professional accreditation center, and Anantha Abir, the second secretary for community and workers welfare from the embassy, along with several accredited embassy staff.

At the onset, Eng. Mohseni indicated that the meeting was convened in accordance with guidance, cooperation, and directives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and that it aimed to address and resolve issues encountered by engineers from the Indian

community in Kuwait.

He noted that the KSE was committed to streamlining procedures while adhering to the requirements for professional accreditation necessary for practicing the engineering profession." Eng Mohseni also underscored that the cases presented by the cultural team from the Indian Embassy were limited in number, and each case was discussed thoroughly, and addressed individually.

He affirmed the readiness of KSE to collaborate with Indian accreditation bodies to align with professional and academic frameworks. Additionally, efforts are underway to arrange accredited bodies in Kuwait to visit India and establish mutual understandings in accordance with the regulations set by the Engineering Qualifications Accreditation Committee of the Society.

## KFAS signs MoU with KAIST to develop digital capabilities

Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) entered into a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST) to promote scientific culture, foster digital capabilities within society, and advance education in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

The signing ceremony, which took place at KFAS headquarters in Kuwait City, was inked by the Director-General of KFAS, Dr. Amina Farhan, and the President of KAIST, Dr. Jaesoo Kim, in the presence of South Korean Ambassador H.E. Chung Byung-ha, and officials from both entities.

The collaboration aligns with the vision of KFAS to contribute to the development of digital capabilities in Kuwait, in particular in areas such as science and technology data, high-performance computing, artificial intelligence, the Internet of Things, cloud computing, data coding and analysis, robotics, cybersecurity, and digital transformation.

The MoU outlines the potential establishment of joint programs aimed at enhancing the digital skills of students and professionals across various sectors, as well as developing the capabilities of researchers in Kuwait. The agreement encourages both parties to engage target beneficiaries through the dissemination of scientific



and technological knowledge, including the organization of workshops, science, technology, and innovation programs, the development of online STEM education content, and other educational activities aimed at enhancing capabilities in these areas.

Last year, KAIST hosted a delegation from the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, comprising students and officials. During the visit, students participated in scientific events focusing on applications of artificial intelligence, machine learning, modeling and simulation in science and mathematics, as well as computer programming, supercomputer technologies, and GPT chat applications.

KAIST is a prestigious national research university located in Daejeon Science Area in the Korean city of Daejeon. The Institute was established by the Korean government in 1971 as the nation's first public, research-oriented science and engineering institution.

## Transitional committee takes charge of KCCI

Minister of Commerce and Industry, Abdullah Al-Joan announced the formation of a transitional committee to assume the full authority of the Board of Directors of the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), until the election of a new Board of Directors.

Heading this committee is Professor of Law Dr. Muhammad Al-Faili, alongside the Undersecretary of Commerce, Abdullah Al-Afasi; the current Undersecretary, Ziyad Al-Najem; the Acting Director of the Public Authority for Industry, Muhammad Al-Adwani; the Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor,



Salem Al-Rashidi and Khaled Al-Duwaikh, representing 'Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), as members.

The committee will take on all responsibilities of the Chamber's Board of Directors, including taking possession of the Chamber's headquarters and all relevant administrative and financial documents, until such time as elections to a new Board are held. Additionally, the committee will be responsible for formulating the draft executive regulations of the law, subject to the Minister's approval, and issuing the requisite decisions and regulations to facilitate its operations.





# Sri Lankan expats help build bonds of friendship with Kuwait

Ambassador of Sri Lanka H.E. Kandeepan Bala, reaffirmed that Kuwait boasts a vibrant community of over 130,000 Sri Lankan expatriates. Their contributions over the years have served as a dynamic force in nurturing the multifaceted relations between our two nations. This substantial presence of Sri Lankan citizens in Kuwait not only fosters a robust bond but also strengthens the enduring ties between our nations.

In his speech during the celebration of his country's National Day, attended by the Minister of Public Works and the Minister of State for Municipal Affairs, Dr Noura Al-Mishaan, he highlighted that intra-regional trade has recorded respectable growth over the years.

Additionally, he noted a doubling in the number of incoming tourists last year and a rise in the number of their workers. He emphasized, 'Most importantly, foreign remittances from Kuwait continue to grow.'

He stressed the enduring ties between Sri Lanka and the State of Kuwait, dating back to 1971. He also highlighted the historical connection, noting that traces of pearl divers in Kuwait can be traced back to prehistoric times in Sri Lanka.

## Kuwaiti Fund supports key infrastructure projects

He continued, "The Kuwaiti Fund continues to support essential infrastructure projects, driving our social and economic development. I thank the leadership and Kuwaiti government for their ongoing support and cooperation in strengthening our relations."

He emphasized the growing cultural collaboration facilitated by the National Council for Arts, Culture, and Letters, recognizing culture as a potent soft power tool. He underscored its pivotal role in fortifying diplomatic ties between the two nations over the years.

He extended his gratitude to His Highness the Emir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Dr Muhammad Al-Sabah, Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya, Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Al-Sabah, and ambassador Samih Johar Hayat, Assistant Secretary of State for Asian Affairs, for their support, assistance, and cooperation in strengthening our bilateral relations.

Speaking on the occasion, he expressed



profound appreciation and gratitude to the ancestors who made significant sacrifices in Sri Lanka's struggle for independence. He elaborated that the post-independence era of nation-building is fraught with conflicts and challenges, mirroring the experiences of numerous nations across Asia, Africa, and other parts of the world.

## Sri Lanka's strong commitment to international cooperation

He emphasized Sri Lanka's unwavering commitment to international cooperation, actively engaging in bilateral and multilateral endeavors to tackle pressing global issues including climate change, economic development, and peace and security. He underscored the nation's dedication to shared responsibilities, highlighting its recent assumption of leadership within the Indian Ocean Rim Association as a testament to this commitment.

"We have succeeded in diversifying the spread of migrant workers from traditional sectors to many sectors, including professional and skilled employment in Kuwait," the ambassador added.

Continuing his address, he elaborated, "I wish to shed light on Sri Lanka's journey towards recovery from the severe economic crisis we encountered in early 2022, a crisis that posed a grave threat to our nation's stability. We initiated crucial negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and other multilateral development banks, embarking on a comprehensive restructuring process aimed at achieving debt sustainability."

He highlighted that their independent and multi-aligned foreign policy played a vital role in surmounting these formidable challenges and garnering support from the



broader international community. "Ladies and gentlemen, 18 months later, the progress we

have achieved is truly remarkable."

## Sri Lanka's inflation rate

In September 2022, Sri Lanka's inflation rate, which stood at 70%, fell to less than 5%. The rupee stabilized and even appreciated by about 15% against the US dollar, while foreign remittances witnessed an annual growth of 60% in 2023.

He continued by stating that tourism witnessed an annual growth of 106% in 2023, and usable foreign exchange reserves, which amounted to \$20 million in April 2022, rose to \$4.5 billion in January 2024





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# Kuwait among fastest responders to Turkey's call for international aid

Her Excellency Tuba Nur Sonmez, the Turkish ambassador to Kuwait commendably highlighted Kuwait's swift and compassionate response to Turkey's urgent plea for international relief following the devastating earthquakes that struck Kahramanmaraş and caused significant loss of life across 11 provinces last year.

During her address at the earthquake photo exhibition commemorating the first anniversary of the February 6 disaster, she revealed that, on the day of the disaster, Kuwait promptly organized an air bridge to Turkey, as directed by the late Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad. This initiative swiftly allocated two military cargo planes for transporting search and rescue teams, medical staff, and supplies, facilitating a rapid and effective response to post-disaster needs.

She said, "The State of Kuwait's commitment shines through with an aid package of \$15 million earmarked for quake-hit regions. Additionally, the 'Kuwait Beside You' aid campaign, spearheaded by the Kuwaiti government, has rallied \$35 million in support. It's worth noting the significant contributions made by Kuwaiti citizens through various humanitarian organizations." She said, "We express heartfelt appreciation to the generous people of Kuwait and citizens from other countries residing here for their support on this difficult day."

She remarked, "Exactly one year ago, Turkey confronted one of its darkest days, witnessing one of the most devastating disasters in modern history. Earthquakes ravaged an expanse of about 70,000 square kilometers, surpassing four times the size of Kuwait, marking this event as one of the rarest disasters the world has experienced."

She further added that this major disaster claimed the lives of 53,000 people. Millions of our people have lost their homes and been forced to leave their areas. Historical components and valuable architectural works of our ancient cities were destroyed.

"May God have mercy on our citizens who lost their lives, and our condolences to their families. I wish patience and steadfastness to



our brothers who were affected in one way or another by the earthquake and are still trying to heal their wounds," she added.

She noted that despite a year elapsing since the disaster, the pain persists as if it were yesterday. Yet, as a unified Turkish nation, we've stood together from day one, exemplifying solidarity and resilience that has inspired the world.

She further emphasized that despite the vast extent of the disaster area and the widespread devastation, we united our efforts tirelessly.

Under the leadership of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, alongside all governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, and every individual in our cherished nation, we exerted our utmost to alleviate the plight



of our affected brothers and sisters.

## Gaza strip

She expressed optimism, stating that the dawn of brighter days is imminent. She said that action was taken quickly in response to our citizens who were trapped and screaming from under the rubble, "Is there anyone who can hear us?" during the earthquake disaster that struck our country, with attempts to reach them quickly and heal their wounds.

"Regrettably, amidst the devastation currently unfolding in Gaza, the Palestinian people find themselves abandoned to confront their fate alone. Basic aid supplies are not reaching Gaza's residents, who have nowhere to seek refuge from the Israeli terrorism unfolding before the eyes of the



world, an atrocity amounting to genocide."

"On this occasion, I pray to God to have mercy on our Palestinian brothers who lost their lives in the endless Israeli attacks, and I wish patience and steadfastness to all our brothers who are struggling to stand firm in Gaza, which has turned into a pile of rubble. Their pain is our pain. In Türkiye, we will continue to stand by them. Additionally, the steadfast support provided by the State of Kuwait and its people to Gaza and Palestine still represents hope for the people of Gaza."

"Of course, this pain will end one day. The winner is always known in the battle of truth and falsehood. The white days in which we will wake up to a bright morning are not far away," she added.

## Building a Kuwaiti village

The Turkish ambassador stated that support is still needed because millions of people have lost their homes. They had to relocate to other cities, including some here in Kuwait, as people from Hatay constitute the largest Turkish diaspora in Kuwait, with their families residing here. They have lost their jobs, their shops, and all their possessions. Therefore, continued assistance will be required for some time. Over the past year, there has been significant aid from numerous NGOs in Kuwait, and it is still ongoing. "As far as I know, there will be an exhibition of donated arts and crafts from those who wish to contribute to building a Kuwaiti village."



# Samsung announces pre-orders for Galaxy S24 Series in Kuwait

Samsung Gulf Electronics has announced that the new Galaxy S24 Series - Galaxy S24 Ultra, Galaxy S24+, and Galaxy S24 are now available for pre-order for customers across Kuwait until January 30, 2024.

The Galaxy S24 Series ushered in a transformative era for mobile devices, with AI enhancing every aspect of the user experience. From seamless communication through intelligent text and call translations to the Galaxy ProVisual Engine that expands creative possibilities to setting a new benchmark for mobile search, the Galaxy S24 Series, powered by Galaxy AI, is the premium, intelligent experience only Galaxy could create.

Fadi Abu Shamat, Head of the Mobile eXperience Division at Samsung Gulf Electronics, remarked, "The Galaxy S24 Series marks a significant leap in global connectivity and mobile innovation. With Galaxy AI at the forefront, we're excited to introduce the Galaxy S24 Series to Kuwait, offering Galaxy enthusiasts the chance to explore myriad unique opportunities enabled by Galaxy AI. Our exclusive pre-order promotions ensure easy access to these devices and provide exceptional value for those looking to upgrade."

To celebrate the milestone, Samsung has



announced special offers across Samsung.com, in Samsung stores, and at retail partners.

Kuwait customers who pre-order the new Galaxy S24 Series will benefit from a complimentary double storage upgrade, a 1-year Samsung Care+ support service covering accidental damage and repairs, and a free 45W travel adapter. Additionally, customers can take advantage of trade-in deals, with potential savings of up to KWD 311 on the Galaxy S24 Series.

The Galaxy S24 Ultra introduces a durable titanium frame, a first for Galaxy phones, delivering enhanced longevity. Its slimmer design ensures a more comfortable grip for on-the-go use. The Galaxy S24+ and S24 feature a sleek One-mass design, merging the rear cover and side frame for a more elegant look. Reflecting the hues of Earth's minerals, the Galaxy S24 Series offers a palette of sophisticated colors. The Galaxy S24 Ultra is available in Titanium Gray, Titanium Black, Titanium Violet, and Titanium Yellow, while the Galaxy S24+ and Galaxy S24 come in Onyx Black, Marble Gray, Cobalt Violet, and Amber Yellow. Each model also features exclusive online-only color options.



# Delegation explores tourism potential from Kuwait to Moscow

The flow of tourists from Kuwait to Moscow has been breaking records for the last couple of years. In a bid to capitalize on this growth in outbound tourism, as well as reach out to travel agencies in Kuwait, and further empower relations between Russia and Kuwait, a tourism promotion delegation from the Moscow City Tourism Committee visited Kuwait on 5 February.

The primary objective of the delegation, which comprised representatives from 19 leading companies in the tourism and hospitality sector, was to explore the development of tourism potential that exists between the two countries. During the visit, the delegation met with more than 180 representatives of 119 local companies, and conducted over 2,200 negotiations that aimed to explore and develop potential cooperation opportunities.

During the meeting, representatives from both sides discussed visa regime issues and payment methods in Moscow. The participants of the business mission also discussed the main



directions of tourism that may be of interest to Kuwaiti tourists, the most favorable weather conditions for traveling to Moscow, and several other significant matters that will help improve cooperation between Moscow and Kuwait in the field of tourism.

Head of the International Cooperation Department of Moscow Tourism Committee, Bulat Nurmukhanov, emphasized that the business mission to Kuwait signified Moscow's commitment to strengthening its relationship



with Middle Eastern countries and promoting tourism growth between both regions. He added that the delegation is optimistic about the prospective opportunities that may arise from these discussions and looks forward to fostering long-term partnerships with their counterparts in Kuwait.

"The Gulf countries remain one of the most prospective markets for inbound tourism to Moscow. Since March 2023, visitors from Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia

have been able to obtain visas without a tourist invitation, and via a hotel reservation. Currently, business tourism to Moscow is very popular among Kuwaitis, and these tourists are aware of the high level of hospitality, security, and services in Moscow, as well as the historical heritage of the city, which is carefully preserved. We hope to see more of these business visitors coming back with their families to enjoy the leisure and beauty of the Russian capital," said Mr. Nurmukhanov.

For her part, Elena Volkova, the representative of TSTours company, said that "Kuwaitis showed great interest in various picturesque attractions, including natural wonders, as well as in cities like Moscow and St. Petersburg. Many tourism companies strive to offer an authentic Russian winter experience with the true essence of cold. This will significantly impact decision-making and increase curiosity about our country. The existing e-visa policy is a significant and important step that allows us to expect an increase in the tourist flow from Kuwait to Moscow," said Ms. Volkova.



## Fadia Survive and Thrive marks 2024 World Cancer Day

World Cancer Day, spearheaded by the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) globally, endeavors to mobilize immediate action for enhancing cancer risk awareness, prevention, treatment, and care services for all individuals.

Fadia Survive and Thrive has been organizing World Cancer Day every year, with this year marking the final one in the UICC campaign "Close the Care Gap", which started in 2022. In 2022, Fadia Survive and Thrive initiated the Elderly Patients with Cancer initiative, with Dr Rania Azmi, the President of Fadia Association, presenting its pillars worldwide during a UICC livestream. This year, in 2024, the association organized World Cancer Day with a focus on the "Closing The Care Gap" campaign.

During the event held at Boulevard Park and Mall in Salmiya, the association's presidents signed two calls to action—one in Kuwait and one in Egypt—while advocating for global participation in the UICC's call to action. The international event featured various activities catering

to different stakeholders. Many cancer stakeholders, community partners, public figures, and VIP guests gathered at the Boulevard with Fadia Survive and Thrive to commemorate World Cancer Day 2024, continuing their efforts to raise awareness of cancer and promote its prevention, detection, and treatment.

The event drew participants and distinguished guests from over 15 countries, underscoring its global significance. Dr Azmi, President of Fadia Survive and Thrive, seized the moment to extend a warm welcome to individuals representing diverse backgrounds.

"World Cancer Day and any occasion dedicated to cancer prevention and awareness are pivotal in reshaping our approach to fighting cancer. I firmly believe that by uniting all stakeholders – from patients, caregivers, and advocacy groups to healthcare professionals and government bodies worldwide – we can create an unstoppable force for continuously improving the quality of life for every cancer patient, regardless of their circumstances," Dr Azmi said.

The event recognized many speakers and presented volunteers with certificates of appreciation for completing volunteer training and for being great ambassadors for awareness throughout World Cancer Day. The event concluded by thanking everyone for joining and believing in the importance of prevention in closing the care gap, referring to all participants today as 'ambassadors for prevention' within their own communities of work or friends.

## Kuwaiti official calls for assessing e. media content

A ranking Kuwaiti official on Saturday called for assessing content of the electronic media from a professional perspective with respect of false news and unreliable sources.

There is a need that experts examine the contents to ensure no breach of the norms, said Lafi Al-Subaiee, the assistant undersecretary of the press and publication at the Kuwaiti Ministry of Information. He was speaking to KUNA after chairing a ministry's delegation in a meeting of the Arab electronic media



committee, an affiliate of the Arab League, held in Jordan.

"The issue warrants commitment to non-deviation from the professional media work where there should be no room for subjectivity," he said, while calling for integration between the conventional and (the new) electronic media to ensure credibility.

He indicated that he and his peers during the meeting discussed role of the content producers vis a vis the speech of extremism, in addition to hazards posed by some electronic games that foment violence.



## Indonesians in Kuwait cast early votes in country's general elections

Embassy of Indonesia held a press conference last week, ahead of the country's general elections on 14 February, for which eligible Indonesian voters in Kuwait can cast their early votes on 9 February at the embassy premises.

Addressing media representatives, Ambassador of Indonesia H.E. Lena Mariana said that the transparent election process at the embassy will be monitored by representatives from the top five Indonesian political parties. She noted that out of the over 6,000 Indonesians residing in Kuwait, a total of 3,630 were eligible voters of whom 2,441 were female voters and 1,189 were male.

She also thanked the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for facilitating the elections and the Ministry of Interior and its security personnel for collaborating in organizing a smooth polling process.

Elaborating on the Indonesian elections, the ambassador said the general elections were being held to elect members to the National Parliament, as well as representatives to regional Representative Councils and Municipal Councils for a five-year term from 2024 to 2029. The President and Vice President-elect are set to be inaugurated on 20 October, 2024.

She added that the general elections adhere to principles of direct, public, free, secret, fair, and impartial voting. She noted that these single-day elections are globally recognized as the largest and most complex in electoral systems. The envoy pointed out that the total number of overseas voters numbered around 1,750,474, of whom 999,214 were female voters and 751,260 were male.

The ambassador announced that the voting process would start ahead of schedule, on 7 February, with the designated electoral committee visiting three locations across Kuwait to facilitate the voting process for 21 eligible voters, who are unable to attend the elections scheduled at the embassy on 9 February due to work commitments. These voters will cast their votes in 'mobile' ballot boxes under the supervision of the electoral committee.



# India ready to exchange refinery products with Kuwait

Pankaj Jain, Indian Ministry of Oil and Natural Gas representative, praised the enduring bonds shared between India, Kuwait, and the Gulf countries, which date back to a time before the discovery of oil and gas.

During a meeting with Kuwaiti and Gulf media at the Indian Ministry of Oil and Natural Gas in New Delhi, Jain highlighted the potential for collaboration in oil exploration and expertise exchange. He also expressed India's willingness to engage in the exchange of refinery products with Kuwait, thereby ensuring mutual satisfaction of both parties' requirements.

In response to a question from The Times Kuwait, Jain affirmed, "We have been working in the field of oil refining in India for over 100 years, accumulating extensive experience. We would be more than happy to share this expertise with Kuwait."

Jain revealed plans for the India Energy



Summit in February, which will see participation from major Gulf and global oil companies, offering further opportunities

for collaboration, agreements, and contracts. He underscored the robustness of India's relations with Gulf countries, accentuating

the significance of reciprocal visits among top officials.

He highlighted the key role played by five Gulf countries as India's key trade partners in the oil and gas sector, contributing to over half of the bilateral trade. This encompassed diverse areas such as fertilizers, food products, organic industries, and services.

He further elaborated on India's collaboration with Gulf countries in the energy sector, particularly in crude oil, gas, and petrochemicals. The Gulf region serves as a significant source for the majority of India's oil and gas imports, fulfilling around 60% of its energy needs.

India ranks as the world's third-largest consumer of oil and gas, the fourth-largest consumer of natural gas, and the fourth-largest global refining hub. Additionally, it holds the fourth position globally as an automobile market.

## Government manifesto stresses sustainable social welfare

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

In line with this constitutional mandate, the government agenda aims to achieve a balance in the structure of the national economy by introducing necessary economic and administrative reforms that aim to wean the economy away from its overreliance on hydrocarbon revenues, reduce the role of public sector in economic activities, and encourage greater private sector participation.

In addition, the premier stressed on the need to rationalize the distribution of subsidies by

ensuring that its allocation is tailored to the capabilities and needs of recipients. He also noted the need to solve existing disparity in wages among public sector employees, and said, "The government's Strategic Alternative program aims to solve the problem of wage inequality fairly, and without prejudice to the rights of national employees."

The agenda also aims to expand investment opportunities to enable the private sector to create productive job opportunities and working conditions that attract young nationals; Pointing to the pivotal role played by small and

medium enterprises (SMEs) in helping countries overcome unemployment challenges, the premier said the government is keen to support the development of these enterprises.

He noted that with more than 300,000 young citizens expected to enter the labor market over the next decade, and with the public sector unable to absorb all this influx, it was crucial to involve the SMEs in addressing unemployment issues. Initiatives to optimize the management of economic resources so as to achieve sustainable economic growth, and to reinforce internal and external security, as well as food and cybersecurity, are other key elements in the work plan.

The government manifesto also identifies a series of targets to be achieved within the first 100 days in office, including rolling out a digital platform that streamlines the processes involved in obtaining company and trade licenses; amending the law to include housewives in the health insurance beneficiaries list; and curbing price hikes of essential commodities.

Other priorities include repricing certain government services; reevaluating rents for state properties; conducting a reassessment to determine those who deserve subsidies; preparing the draft law on corporate tax; and undertaking financial, economic and technical feasibility studies for the railway link between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

The action plan also specifies a series of draft legislations that will require prior parliamentary approval in order to introduce it during the 17th legislative term of the National Assembly. These include, among others, the draft law on establishing and developing the Northern Economic Zone; the draft law on public-sector wages (Strategic Alternative); draft law on amending residency of expatriates; and a draft law on establishing an independent entity for electricity and water.

By diversifying revenue resources, reducing reliance on oil revenues, decreasing the public sector's overbearing influence on the economy, increasing private sector participation, in particular by empowering SMEs, encouraging foreign direct investments (FDI), and fostering competitiveness locally and regionally, the government manifesto attempts to proactively address potential future challenges.

If implemented in its entirety, the work plan is expected to fortify the country's financial standing, enhance its international competitiveness, and offer significant opportunities for private sector involvement. But the manifesto also warns that unless corrective measures are urgently undertaken the current budget deficit of around KD3 billion is expected to rise to KD13 billion by 2033. And, while the oil price needed to balance the

budget this year is US\$78 a barrel, by 2033 this could increase to over \$100 a barrel.

A recent overarching analysis of Kuwait's economy by analysts at the World Bank found that a major obstacle hindering the country from realizing its full economic and social potential was a largely enervated public sector. The government sector, where productivity is a rarity, siphons-off nearly three-quarters of the annual budget outlays in the form of wages, bonuses, subsidies and transfers.

The humongous annual wage bill constrains the budget from allocating sufficient resources for more productive purposes, including for vital infrastructure projects. To its credit, the government has acknowledged that improving productivity and performance of the public sector are crucial to enable the sector to take stewardship of the economy and steer it more efficiently and efficaciously.

Interestingly, in 2022, Kuwait's General Secretariat for the Supreme Council for Planning and Development collaborated with the World Bank on an initiative to measure public sector capacity to support building a knowledge economy, and to formulate a Knowledge Index for the Public Sector (KIPS). The aim was to assess knowledge management (KM) practices in the public sector, and to identify the challenges in diversifying the oil-dependent economy to a knowledge-based one.

Results from the KIPS initiative indicated that although there are public entities, especially in financial and oil sectors which have adopted world-class KM practices, by and large knowledge management in the public sector remains non-existent. The index also revealed that women and youth are often neglected in the drive to improve KM, and women hold less favorable views on their working environment, training opportunities, and promotion prospects.

Additionally, the index showed that younger staff were both more tech-savvy than their older counterparts and willing to share their knowledge. Given that women constitute the majority of government employees, prioritizing a shift towards gender-equitable KM practices, empowering women's capabilities, and utilizing the skills and talent of youth, as well as involving both in decision-making processes could help create a more productive knowledge-based government ecosystem.

Introducing KM processes will still require concerted government engagement to set policies, priorities and to drive its implementation. Although the authorities concede the criticality of improving public sector performance, the fact that it has not been adequately addressed so far is a glaring omission that needs to be urgently resolved.

## MOH program presented to Parliament to be implemented within 100 days

The Minister of Health has identified priorities, including new construction and openings, attention to primary health care, and the digitization of health services as a priority.

Speaking during the launch of the annual diagnostic radiology conference, Thursday, about the latest developments in the field of diagnostic radiology, he told reporters that the government's work program regarding the ministry includes a plan to develop primary health care, which will take place under the supervision of the Assistant Undersecretary for Health Care Affairs, Dr. Nadia Al-Juma.



Minister of Health, Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi added that the program also includes opening new centers, extending working hours, training cadres, strengthening the infrastructure, and paying attention to national cadres, revealing that 79 ambulances will be received and operated soon, paying attention to the electronic file, archiving files, and activating digital programs as a comprehensive plan for the ministry.

Dr Al-Awadhi, stressed the keenness to implement the ministry's objectives contained in the government's work program that was presented to the National Assembly and will be implemented by the Ministry of Health within 100 days. In his opening speech at the conference,

he stated that the future vision of medical care provided in the field of diagnostic radiology in the country will expand to include the role and responsibilities of caregivers and work to confront challenges related to the safety and rights of patients.

He stressed taking advantage of the latest technologies and promising opportunities and harnessing them to serve patients, and ensuring that we continue working as a single team to perform the desired professional and humanitarian responsibilities.

He stated that the conference discusses many challenges, including artificial intelligence technology, with the aim of improving health services provided to obtain accuracy in diagnosis and thus accuracy in treatment, specifically for cancer and cardiovascular patients.

Minister Al-Awadhi pointed out that scientific conferences are an opportunity to exchange future visions to enhance scientific and professional cooperation between specialists in this field, indicating that the conference reflects the Ministry of Health's keenness and permanent commitment to keeping pace with the latest technologies and scientific developments in this specialty.

He pointed to the clear global interest in the latest and most advanced technologies in the field of diagnostic radiology, expressing great pride in the contribution of national cadres in many international scientific researches in the field of diagnostic radiology, which were published in many famous international journals.

For her part, the President of the Conference and Head of the Radiology Department at Al-Amiri Hospital, Dr. Asma Al-Failakawi, said the conference hosted an elite group of international experts and consultants in the field of diagnostic radiology, in addition to national expertise and competencies to raise the level of health services provided and raise the efficiency of medical staff.



EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

# Democratizing AI to benefit all



**Bertrand Badré and Charles Gorintin**

*Bertrand Badré, a former managing director of the World Bank, is CEO and Founder of Blue Like an Orange Sustainable Capital, and author of Can Finance Save the World?*

*Charles Gorintin, Co-Founder and Chief Technology Officer of Alan, is a non-executive co-founder of Mistral AI.*

The rapid advance of artificial intelligence evokes both wonder and dread. Many regard AI as an object of marvel and awe (a *Stupor Mundi*, to borrow a Latin phrase), while others believe it can be a benevolent savior (a *Salvator Mundi*). Regardless of whether AI is seen as miraculous or merely helpful, the question remains: How can we ensure that its benefits are available to everyone?

To answer this question, we need a nuanced understanding of AI. That means rejecting several simplistic narratives: functionalism, which says humans should adapt and augment themselves to keep up with technological progress; sensationalism, which depicts AI as an existential threat; cynicism, which seeks to exploit AI for profit; and fatalism, which implies a resigned acceptance of AI's inevitable rise.

What these scenarios overlook is that the future is still ours to shape. Adopting the *verum-factum* principle (knowing through making) is crucial to developing a more profound understanding of AI's capabilities and implications.

To prevent a minority from co-opting AI's transformative potential, it must be

democratized. Equitable access is the key to ensuring that the benefits of technological progress are broadly shared, and that AI serves as a unifying force, rather than exacerbating the divisions within our fragile societies.

The potential benefits are enormous. In the 1990s, Joseph Stiglitz observed that "a child anywhere in the world who has access to the internet has access to more knowledge than a child in the best schools of the industrial countries did a quarter-century ago." By democratizing access to AI, we can empower today's children to engage with humanity's brightest minds in a way that caters to their individual needs.

But achieving this depends on how we shape the narrative surrounding AI's adoption and future impact. Instead of making lofty promises like "AI will solve world hunger," we should focus on its ability to bring about incremental yet meaningful improvements in people's daily lives.

In this regard, the technology's rapidly expanding capabilities and declining costs create new opportunities for smaller-scale models and enable individual users to

and outperforms its predecessor. Remarkably, it was developed by a company of just 18 people.

And this is just the beginning. AI is currently experiencing its own version of Moore's law, setting the stage for rapid uptake, akin to the diffusion of telephones and televisions. This accelerated process calls for a shift in focus toward developing practical applications and mitigating risks, rather than fixating on reducing costs.

The rise of AI is a double-edged sword. The technology could be a powerful equalizer or a source of division, depending on how it is deployed and who controls it. Like previous technological revolutions, it promises to create new employment opportunities while simultaneously threatening to displace existing jobs. A recent report by the International Monetary Fund underscores this point, warning that AI could lead to a growing divide between tech-savvy individuals, well-positioned to reap the economic benefits of innovation, and those who risk falling behind.

But our understanding of these technologies must reflect their complexities and the power of human ingenuity. By developing and promoting

At the same time, it is worth noting that AI will most likely increase the overall consumer surplus by lowering the costs associated with certain services. To ensure that these benefits reach the majority of people, a two-fold strategy is necessary: enabling individuals to harness this value locally while redistributing the overall gains to those unable to access them.

Hence, enhancing the accessibility of AI is both feasible and critical. To leverage these technologies to tackle pressing social problems, it is crucial to identify specific areas where AI can make a substantial difference, such as health care, education, environmental sustainability, and governance. But setting the right priorities and implementing technological solutions requires a concerted effort. The concept of AI for good should be integrated into the strategies of development institutions and multilateral organizations.

But first, the global conversation about AI must shift from "wow" to "what" and "how." It is time to move away from mere fascination with the emerging technology to identifying the challenges it can address and devising strategies for its integration into the educational and social systems of developed and developing countries alike. Preparing society for an AI-augmented future requires more than just technological innovation; it calls for establishing ethical frameworks, updating policymaking, and promoting AI literacy across communities.

As we navigate the *Stupor Mundi* phase of AI, captivated by its seemingly magical capabilities, we must never lose sight of the fact that the impact of technology depends on how we use it. The choices we make today will determine whether AI benefits and enriches a select few or evolves into a powerful force for positive social change. To realize the promise of *Salvator Mundi*, we must harness these emerging technologies to forge a better, more inclusive future for all.

“

By developing AI systems that significantly improve essential services, especially in underserved regions, and reduce existing inequalities, we could ensure that their benefits are widely deployed and broadly shared.

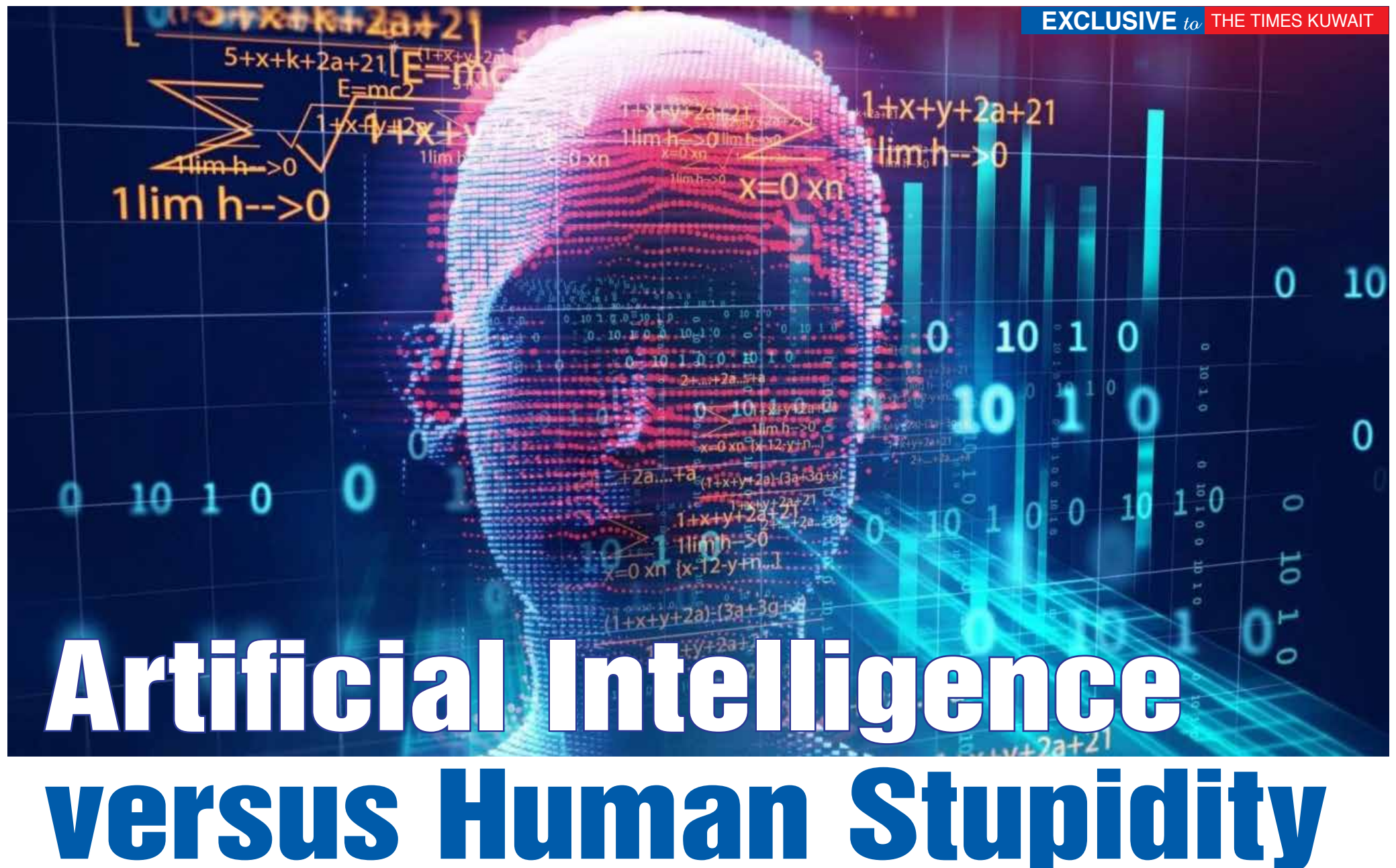
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personalize AI solutions, mirroring the internet's freewheeling, creative early days. Just two years ago, for example, the leading open-source AI model was Meta's OPT-175B. Today, a leading open-source model, Mistral 7B, is 40 times smaller, at least 40 times cheaper to operate,

AI systems that significantly improve essential services, especially in underserved regions, we could ensure that their benefits are broadly shared. To achieve this, AI technologies must be deployed with the explicit objective of reducing existing inequalities.



EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT



# Artificial Intelligence versus Human Stupidity

**Nouriel Roubini**

*Professor Emeritus of Economics at New York University's Stern School of Business and Chief Economist and Co-Founder of Atlas Capital Team, he is the author of Megathreats: Ten Dangerous Trends That Imperil Our Future, and How to Survive Them.*

Since returning from this year's World Economic Forum meeting in Davos, I have been asked repeatedly for my biggest takeaways. Among the most widely discussed issues this year was artificial intelligence — especially generative AI (GenAI). With the recent adoption of large language models (like the one powering ChatGPT), there is much hope, and hype, about what AI could do for productivity and economic growth in the future.

To address this question, we must bear in mind that our world is dominated far more by human stupidity than by AI. The proliferation of megathreats confirms that our politics are too dysfunctional, and our policies too misguided, to address even the most serious and obvious risks to our future. These include climate change, which will have huge economic costs; failed states, which will make waves of climate refugees even larger; and recurrent, virulent pandemics that could be even more economically damaging than COVID-19.

Making matters worse, dangerous geopolitical rivalries are evolving into new cold wars, such as between the United States and China, and into potentially explosive hot wars, like those in Ukraine and the Middle East. Around the world, rising income and wealth inequality,

partly driven by hyper-globalization and labor-saving technologies, have triggered a backlash against liberal democracy, creating opportunities for populist, autocratic, and violent political movements.

Unsustainable levels of private and public debt threaten to precipitate debt and financial crises, and we may yet see a return of inflation and stagflationary negative aggregate supply shocks. The broader trend globally is toward protectionism, de-globalization, decoupling, and de-dollarization.

Moreover, the same brave new AI technologies that could contribute to growth and human welfare also have great destructive potential. They are already being used to push disinformation, deep-fakes, and election manipulation into hyperdrive, as well as raising fears about permanent technological

conventional wisdom, which is often based on a rear-window view of global and macroeconomic developments.

Hence, when I warned, at the WEF's 2006 meeting, that a global financial crisis was coming, I was dismissed as a doomster. And when I predicted, in 2007, that many eurozone member states would soon face sovereign debt problems, I was verbally browbeaten by Italy's finance minister. In 2016, when everyone asked me if the Chinese stock-market crash augured a hard landing that would cause a repeat of the global financial crisis, I argued, correctly, that China would have a bumpy but managed landing. Between 2019 and 2021, the faddish topic at Davos was the crypto bubble that went bust starting in 2022. Then the focus shifted to clean and green hydrogen, another fad that is already fading.

“The WEF zeitgeist is usually a counter-indicator of where the world is really heading. Global leaders present there usually represent conventional wisdom, which is based on a rear-window view of global and macroeconomic developments.”

unemployment and even starker inequality. The rise of autonomous weapons and AI-augmented cyber-warfare is equally ominous.

Blinded by the dazzle of AI, Davos attendees did not focus on most of these megathreats. This came as no surprise. The WEF zeitgeist is, in my experience, a counter-indicator of where the world is really heading. Policymakers and business leaders are there to flog their books and spew platitudes. They represent the

multitask the way we do. Or consider what AI will do for biotech, medicine, and ultimately human health and lifespans. No less intriguing are the developments in quantum computing, which will eventually merge with AI to produce advanced cryptography and cybersecurity applications.

The same long-term perspective also should be applied to climate debates. It is becoming increasingly likely that the problem will not be resolved with renewable energy, which is growing too slowly to make a significant difference, or expensive technologies like carbon capture and sequestration and green hydrogen. Instead, we may see a fusion energy revolution, provided that a commercial reactor can be built in the next 15 years. This abundant source of cheap, clean energy, combined with inexpensive desalination and agro-tech, would allow us to feed the ten billion people who will be living on the planet by the end of this century.

Similarly, the revolution in financial services will not be centered around decentralized blockchains or cryptocurrencies. Rather, it will feature the kind of AI-enabled centralized fintech that is already improving payment systems, lending and credit allocation, insurance underwriting, and asset management. Materials science will lead to a revolution in new components, 3D-printing manufacturing, nanotechnologies, and synthetic biology. Space exploration and exploitation will help us save the planet and find ways to create extra-planetary modes of living.

These and many other technologies could change the world for the better, but only if we can manage their negative side effects, and only if they are used to resolve all the megathreats we face. One hopes that artificial intelligence someday will overcome human stupidity. But it will never get the chance if we destroy ourselves first.

When it comes to AI, there is a very good chance that the technology will indeed change the world in the coming decades. But the WEF's focus on GenAI already seems misplaced, considering that the AI technologies and industries of the future will go far beyond these models. Consider, for example, the ongoing revolution in robotics and automation, which will soon lead to the development of robots with human-like features that can learn and





EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

# Strengthening Africa's Community Health Programs



Ellen Johnson Sirleaf and Jean Kaseya

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, a former president of Liberia, is Founder of Africa Frontline First and Co-Chair of the Independent Panel on Pandemic Preparedness and Response. Jean Kaseya is Director-General of the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



**M**ONROVIA/ADDIS ABABA – In 2017, African Union heads of state pledged to deploy two million community health workers (CHWs), recognizing their role in advancing health for all. Seven years on, as African leaders prepare to convene in Addis Ababa, we must reflect on our progress. By 2030, Africa will face a shortage of six million health workers, making CHWs a key component and a fast solution to bridging the continent's health needs. Developing resilient community health-worker programs across Africa has never been more urgent.

We have witnessed how disease outbreaks can plunge a country into darkness – and how the power of CHWs can help pull it back into the light. As Liberia's experience shows, CHWs need adequate resources and financial support to be effective. In the early 2010s, Liberia's efforts to offer primary health care in remote areas faced significant challenges. There was a shortage of health workers, and where CHWs were deployed, they were under-compensated and did not have the necessary equipment or training to deliver the essential care that was so desperately needed. As a result, different community health initiatives run in parallel by the government and other stakeholders failed

integrated primary health-care services. The results speak for themselves. Liberia's 4,000 CHWs now deliver nearly 50% of all reported malaria treatments for children under five and consistently provide access to health services, even during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Programs that take a similar approach have yielded positive results in other African countries. Since Ethiopia implemented its community-based Health Extension Program, which has deployed 40,000 community health workers, vaccination rates have tripled and child mortality has fallen dramatically. The experience of these and other countries shows that supporting CHWs and integrating them into national health systems can save lives and create livelihoods. It should serve as a guide for expanding community health services across the continent.

A resilient community health workforce is key to overcoming existing and future health challenges in Africa, which currently range from alarming maternal and infant mortality rates to a high burden of communicable diseases. Equally worrying is the escalating climate crisis, which has underscored the urgency of improving access to care and building health systems that can adapt to a changing environment. Increasing the number of CHWs, and ensuring that they have adequate resources, is one of the most cost-effective and sustainable ways to achieve these goals.

Unfortunately, a daunting \$4.4 billion annual funding gap, compounded by fragmented financial flows, continues to slow our progress toward a healthier, safer, and more prosperous Africa. The solution is to adopt a "one plan, one budget, one report" framework, like that used by Liberia and Ethiopia. With this approach, governments outline their strategies for national community health programs, and partners coordinate resources and technical expertise to reduce the bureaucratic burden.

To that end, the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and partners launched the first-ever continental coordination mechanism for community health in November 2023. Encouraging coordination among stakeholders will enable African countries to build effective and efficient CHW programs to tackle the challenges of high-burden communicable diseases such as HIV, tuberculosis, malaria, and non-communicable diseases, as well as to respond better to emergencies, including epidemics and climate shocks.

The Africa CDC remains firmly committed to strengthening the community health workforce, which dovetails with the New Public Health Order – the organization's health-security agenda – and the AU's initiative to deploy two million additional CHWs on the continent. As part of this effort, the Africa CDC has collaborated with Africa Frontline

First to mobilize the financing needed to professionalize CHWs. Last year's Reaching the Last Mile Forum in Dubai was a success on that front: 12 partners committed to accelerating support for professional CHWs. This announcement also included \$900 million from the Global Fund over the next three years, 74% of which is earmarked for Africa.

The private and public actors in Africa must take coordinated action. As heads of state convene for the AU Summit, we urge them

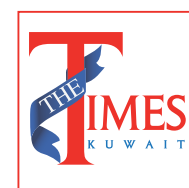
to make the development of an integrated professional community health workforce a top priority, with clear metrics of success to enable data and evidence to be shared with member states. This will foster a culture of continuous learning and standardization of CHW programs across Africa.

Community health is the key to a more prosperous, healthier Africa. We must seize the opportunity to train and deploy a robust corps of CHWs.

“A resilient community health workforce is key to overcoming existing and future health challenges in Africa, which currently range from alarming maternal and infant mortality rates to a high burden of communicable diseases”

to have a significant impact on patients – a common problem in many African countries.

In 2016, the Liberian government launched the National Community Health Assistant Program to address these issues and apply the lessons learned from the Ebola outbreak that began in 2014. With proper supervision, adequate salaries, and enough supplies to reach every household in their communities, CHWs were empowered to provide standardized,



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## California Roll

If you think sushi is hard to make, think again: Here is a step-by-step guide on how to make a California roll that anyone can make, even if you've never rolled sushi before.

### What's in a California Roll?

Most of the ingredients for California rolls are easy to find, but here are a few things that you might need to go to a Japanese or Asian market for.

**Imitation crabsticks:** Imitation crabsticks are white with a pink tint on the outside and are made out of fish. Look for them in the refrigerated aisle, usually near the tofu or miso. If you want to use real crab, use shredded crab meat, and you can use it as-is or stir in a bit of mayonnaise for creaminess if you like.

**Sushi rice:** Look for a short-grain white rice, usually labeled sushi rice. This kind of rice cooks up stickier than long-grain or basmati rice, so don't be tempted to substitute. For an extra boost of flavor, cook the rice with a piece of kombu (dried kelp) if you would like.

**Nori:** These are sheets of dried seaweed. Look for a dark-colored nori that is tightly grained — and the thicker, the better.

**Bamboo mat:** An inexpensive bamboo sushi rolling mat makes for easier sushi rolling. Can't find a mat? Fold a thick kitchen towel in half, then place a sheet of plastic wrap on top and use this to roll instead.

**The rest of the ingredients are easy find:** sesame seeds (get toasted if you can), ripe buttery avocado, cucumber, rice vinegar (don't get seasoned rice vinegar), soy sauce, and wasabi and pickled ginger for serving.

### Making Sushi Rice

The only cooking that needs to be done for California rolls is cooking the rice. Rinse away the extra surface starch, and cook either on the stovetop or in your rice cooker. While

it is cooking, make the rice seasoning by heating up some rice vinegar with salt and sugar. This version is a fairly mild one, so feel free to play around with the vinegar and sugar proportions the second time around. To help cool the rice down, fan it with a sheet of paper as you fold in the seasoning.

### Rolling California Rolls

Now comes the fun part: rolling! Make sure all the ingredients are prepped and ready to go/ Cut cucumber and avocado into pencil-thin strips, and unwrap the crabsticks. Tear the seaweed sheets in half, too — a full sheet will make a sushi roll that's too thick. Keep a bowl of water handy — damp hands keep the rice from sticking to them. Here is how to roll:

- Top the nori with rice and sesame seeds. Place an even layer of rice over a nori sheet, about 2/3 cup. Press it gently in with damp fingers. Sprinkle with some sesame seeds.
- Flip and press. Next, flip the whole thing over. Remember, the rice goes on the outside. Then, to get the rice to stick to the nori and not to the mat: fold the mat in half and press down gently to compact the rice a bit.
- Fill with crab, avocado, and cucumber. Place the crabsticks and cucumber across the middle of the nori. Top with the avocado.
- Roll up tight. Use the mat to roll the sushi up until the top and bottom meet. Press gently to compact and shape the roll until it's nice and round.
- Cut into 6 pieces. After all the sushi is rolled up, cut each one into 6 pieces. Use the sharpest knife you have, or use a serrated knife, which is great for cutting through the seaweed. Flip the pieces cut-side up to show off your beautiful rolling skills.

## Thought for the week

“To ask what causes poverty is like asking what causes cold. It is the absence of energy. Similarly, poverty is the absence of wealth. We should ask, 'what are the causes of wealth?'

- Madsen Pirie

British Researcher and Author

## Clearing misconceptions between caffeine and weight loss

Ask Mira: Eating Right to Live Happy & Healthy



Are you one of those who lost weight on caffeine? or maybe you think that it was the caffeine effect while you were trying to control your food quality and quantity. I personally never think of using drinks to control my appetite or to lose some weight, I always prefer the natural way which I am sure you all know: Eating a balanced diet plus exercise.

But, what is the direct relation between caffeine and weight loss? And why are a lot of fat-burning pills made out of caffeine?

I will start by saying that caffeine may slightly encourage weight loss or maybe prevent weight gain, but there is no proof that increased caffeine consumption can lead to permanent weight loss. When I mention caffeine, it doesn't mean only the coffee people drink, but also different beverages including caffeine like tea, energy drinks and cola, products containing cocoa or chocolate.

### What does coffee do?

- Caffeine stimulates thermogenesis: one of the ways your body generates heat and energy from digesting food.
- Thermogenesis is one basal metabolic rate reaction, which means the metabolism of your body at rest, when you are not exerting any effort. So it is a minimal reaction. And there is no evidence that long-term coffee consumption aids in weight loss.
- Caffeine also acts as a diuretic, which means it increases the amount of urine you excrete. So you end up losing the water more than the fat, which is why you tend to lose weight.
- Caffeine acts as a natural appetite suppressant:

Caffeine lovers, those who drink more than 3 cups of coffee a day, may end up eating less throughout the day. Caffeine gives a feeling of satiety, especially when it comes to smoking with caffeine consumption

- Coffee contains antioxidants, which fights against cancer problems, but too much caffeine might cause nervousness, insomnia, nausea and increased blood pressure. It contains 'cafestol' which increases blood cholesterol levels, so it is not recommended for people with issues with their cholesterol.

One final bit of advice is to not use any pills. It is dangerous in the long run.

Your best option is to intake two cups of coffee daily which is healthy due to their high antioxidant levels, but not more than this as caffeine will cause irritability, addiction and hypertension.

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# Gene-editing therapy to treat hereditary disorder

A single treatment using a breakthrough gene-editing therapy has transformed the lives of a group of people who were suffering from a debilitating hereditary disorder. The successful treatment using the CRISPR/Cas9 gene-editing mechanism offers hope for patients diagnosed with the same condition, as well as raises the possibility of leveraging similar techniques to provide treatments for other genetic disorders.

A genetic disorder is a health problem caused by one or more abnormalities in the genome — the entire genetic information of an organism that is encoded in the DNA in the form of nucleotide sequences. To clarify this further, the nucleotide is the basic building block of deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) and ribonucleic acid (RNA), and consists of a 5-carbon sugar molecule (either ribose in RNA or deoxyribose in DNA) attached to a phosphate group and a nitrogen-containing base. The sequence of nucleotides results in protein-coding genes, non-coding genes, and other functional regions in the genome.

Genetic disorders can arise due to a mutation in a single gene (monogenic) or multiple genes (polygenic) or by a chromosomal abnormality. The mutation responsible can occur spontaneously before embryonic development (a de novo mutation), or it can be inherited from either of the parents with a disorder, or from both parents who are carriers of a faulty gene. When the genetic disorder is



inherited from one or both parents, it is also referred to as a hereditary disease.

Researchers from the University of Auckland, Amsterdam University Medical Center and Cambridge University, from New Zealand, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom respectively, used the cutting-edge CRISPR/Cas9 therapy to treat ten patients from across the three countries involved. All the patients participating in the study suffered from 'hereditary angioedema' (HAE), a rare but serious problem with the immune system.

HAE is an inherited genetic disorder characterized by severe, painful and unpredictable rapid swelling under the skin of the hands, feet, limbs, face, intestinal tract, larynx (voicebox), or trachea (windpipe). The sudden swelling that erupts can not only interfere with daily life, but can also prove fatal if the condition affects the body's breathing pathway. Globally, it is estimated one in 50,000 people have hereditary angioedema, however, because it is rare, it is often incorrectly diagnosed, and many patients end up receiving unnecessary treatments and invasive procedures.

HAE is caused by deficiency or improper function of the protein prekallikrein (PK). Deficiency in PK is caused by mutations in the nucleotide sequence that encodes for the KLKB1 gene, which provides the instructions for making prekallikrein. In its activated form in the blood, PK is known

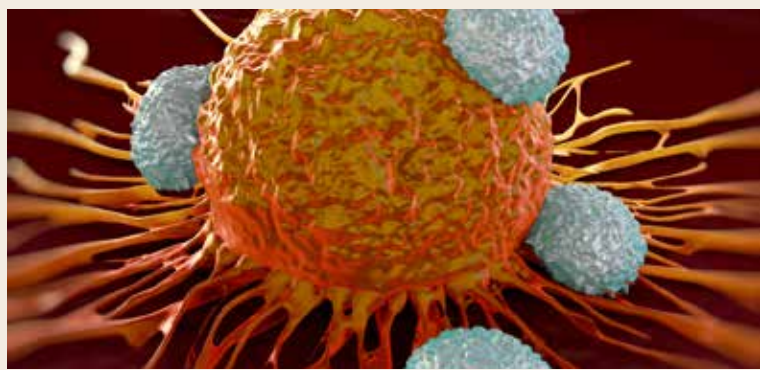
as plasma kallikrein, which plays a key role in a process called the intrinsic coagulation pathway, which in turn activates proteins that are needed later in the clotting process.

The KLKB1 gene mutations that cause prekallikrein deficiency reduce or eliminate functional plasma kallikrein, which has been identified with triggering acute attacks of HAE. The new gene-editing therapy, called NTLA-2002, utilizes in vivo CRISPR/Cas9 technology to target the nucleotide sequence that encodes for the KLKB1 gene. By editing this gene, the therapy improves the production of plasma kallikrein, effectively preventing angioedema (swelling) attacks. So far, the only approved CRISPR therapy, CASGEVY, used for treating sickle cell disease and beta thalassemia, is an ex vivo CRISPR therapy, where the cells are taken from the patient and edited outside of the body and then reinfused. In contrast, NTLA-2002 uses in vivo CRISPR therapy, where the targeted gene editing occurs directly within the body. The NTLA-2002 therapy is among the first successful uses of in vivo CRISPR therapy.

Clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats, or CRISPR/Cas9 for short, have transformed genome engineering techniques in recent years, and is poised to not only enable doctors to treat patients but also prevent many diseases. Basically, CRISPR technology involves targeting a specific section of DNA inside a cell that is causing a health problem. The technology has also been adapted to perform other functions, including turning genes on or off without altering their sequence. CRISPR technologies are now increasingly being used to develop treatment for a wide range of diseases, such as genetic disease, cardiovascular disease, cancer and autoimmune diseases.

An interim report on phase one of the NTLA-2002 therapy published recently noted that a single-dose treatment was found to provide a permanent cure for the participating hereditary angioedema patients. Based on the dose administered, the treatment was found to achieve on average up to 95 percent improvement in total plasma kallikrein protein.

## Elixir for youthfulness could lie within us



The mythical fountain of youth, which allegedly restores the youth of anyone who drinks or bathes in its waters, has eluded explorers for millennia. It now turns out that they were all along looking for the magical waters in the wrong places; a new study shows that the enigmatic anti-aging elixir could be right inside all of us.

Scientists at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory (CSHL), a private non-profit institution in the United States renowned for its research in molecular genetics, have shown that technically it was possible to reprogram the T-cells in the body to fight aging.

T-cells, also called T lymphocytes or thymocytes, are a type of white blood cells (WBC), which along with red blood cells and blood platelets are formed from stem cells in the bone marrow. The function of T-cells in the body include, among others, fighting infection and in helping fight cancer. Research by the scientists at CSHL now reveal that given the right conditions and under the right genetic modifications, T-cells can potentially attack another group of cells known as senescent cells. The senescent cells are considered to be responsible for many of the age-related diseases that people grapple with later in life.

Senescent cells stop replicating as we age and accumulate in our bodies resulting in harmful inflammation. While several drugs currently exist that can eliminate these cells, many must be taken repeatedly over time and cause unwanted side effects. As an alternative to these external medications, scientists behind the new study turned to an internal drug called CAR (chimeric antigen receptor) T cells.

They discovered that CAR T cells could be manipulated to eliminate senescent cells in mice with no tissue damage or toxicity. The mice ended up living healthier lives, with lower body weight, improved metabolism and glucose tolerance, and increased physical activity.

The scientists also found that when the manipulated CAR T cells were administered to aged mice, they appeared to rejuvenate, and when applied to young mice, they tended to age much slower. No other known therapy has been found to achieve similar results.

The major advantage of CAR T cells was the longevity of their activity; just one dose of these cells given to young mice conferred lifelong effects that protected the mice against conditions that commonly occur later in life, like obesity and diabetes. The T-cells were found to develop memory that persisted for very long periods, compared to the drugs currently available that need to be taken continuously.

The extended ability of CAR T cells to provide protection could potentially be a great advantage to chronic pathological conditions. Discovery of CAR T cells as a potential medical treatment is not new; they have been used to treat various blood cancers, following their approval by the US Federal Drug Administration (FDA) in 2017. However, the new discovery is the first to show that the medical potential of CAR T cells extends far beyond treating cancers.

The scientists are now reportedly investigating whether CAR T cells not only allow the mice to live healthier youthful lives but also whether it extends their lifespan. If so, then humanity will be one step closer to the elusive fountain of youth.

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EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

# Competitive Edge of Doing Good



**Peter Singer**

Professor of Bioethics at Princeton University, is Founder of the organization *The Life You Can Save*. He is the author of *Practical Ethics*, *The Life You Can Save*, *Animal Liberation Now*, and a co-author with Shih Chao-Hwei of *The Buddhist and the Ethicist*.

It seems counterintuitive, but in a capitalist economy, doing the most good can provide a competitive edge. I am not referring to businesses that donate a tiny percentage of their profits to charities or tell you that they are reducing greenhouse-gas emissions. I am talking about businesses that donate 100 percent of their profits, or close to it, to effective charities that do a lot of good.

Newman's Own, the American food company founded in 1982 by the actor Paul Newman and author A.E. Hotchner (both now deceased), is an early example of a business donating 100 percent of its profits to charity. The profits go to the Newman's Own Foundation, which to date has distributed over \$600 million to charities working for disadvantaged children. Hugh Jackman cites Newman's Own as an inspiration for his own charitable foundation, Laughing Man Coffee.

Perhaps the most prominent company operating along these lines today is Patagonia, the American outdoor-clothing company founded by Yvon Chouinard in 1973. Nearly 50 years later, when the company was valued at around \$3 billion, Chouinard gave it to a non-profit organization, ensuring that all its profits will be used to protect the environment and fight climate change. The arrangement commenced in September 2022. So far, profits amounting to \$71



million have been allocated for environmental initiatives that include stopping a proposed mine in Alaska and conserving land in South America, as well as for helping to elect pro-environment Democrats in the United States.

Chouinard's decision, supported by his wife and two adult children, to give away his company, is especially laudable because, to enable the non-profit organization to have the option of supporting political candidates, the family had to forego substantial tax benefits from their huge donation.

Wonderful as it is that Patagonia's profits will always support the protection of the environment, the company's success does not prove that doing the most good provides a business with a competitive advantage.

After all, although Patagonia is notable for many beneficial policies, including donating 1 percent of its total sales to environmental organizations and promoting the repair, exchange, and recycling of its clothing, these innovations largely came after the company was successful. Its initial success reflected, to a significant degree, the desirability

of the goods it was selling.

Now that it is clear that all of Patagonia's profits will go toward protecting the environment, will the company do even better? Vincent van der Holst, an online marketer, believes that it will. He argues that companies that donate their profits to good causes "grow faster, live longer, and are more profitable." Accordingly, he has created BOAS, a platform for selling vintage jeans that has pledged to donate 90 percent of its profits to effective charities saving the lives of children dying from preventable diseases in low-income countries. (Disclosure: I have invested €500, or \$537, in BOAS, with the expectation that the most significant return on my investment will be the knowledge that it has helped to save lives.)

BOAS is not yet earning enough to be cited as an example of a successful company that was founded for no other reason than to earn money for good causes. Humanitix, a ticketing agency founded by two Australians, Adam McCurdie and Joshua Ross, in 2016, is a better example of a business gaining a competitive edge by donating 100 percent of its profits to highly effective charities.

McCurdie and Ross went on a hiking trip

through Sri Lanka shortly after the end of that country's tragic civil war in 2009. The poverty and hardship they witnessed made them resolve to work together to help children who had been less fortunate than they had been.

McCurdie was an engineer, and Ross a financial analyst. How might they work together to do the most good? The unexpected answer was to start a ticketing agency. Like most people who buy tickets for events online, they disliked seeing the price of their tickets go up when the ticketing agency added its fee, aware that their purchases were increasing the profits for a faceless group of owners. Yet the convenience of booking tickets online means that for most event organizers, there is no feasible alternative to using an agency, and no basis for choosing one agency rather than another.

But what if there were a ticketing agency that did not make profits for its (presumably rich) owners, but was wholly owned by a charitable foundation, so that, by law, all its profits would go to a cause that almost everyone would endorse, like helping children in extreme poverty? Ticket purchasers would feel more positive about that agency than they do about other agencies, and some of their positive feelings would flow toward the event itself, and its organizers, who would have a reason to prefer that ticket agency over others.

That was McCurdie and Ross's theory, anyway. With support from the Atlassian Foundation and the government of New South Wales, they were able to test it. Humanitix has become the fastest-growing ticketing platform in Australia and New Zealand, and is now establishing itself in the United States. Despite the need to reinvest much of its profits to ensure future growth, Humanitix has already donated \$4 million to effective charities assisting children and is on track to donate an additional \$5 million in 2024.

The theory works for ticketing agencies. Doing the most good does provide a competitive edge. Further applications are waiting to be discovered.

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