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When Women Win, the World Wins

Although laws on the books imply that women enjoy roughly two-thirds the rights of men, countries on average have established less than 40 percent of the systems needed for full implementation.

By Indermit Gill and Tea Trumbic

In May 1988, Alejandra Arévalo became the first female geologist to enter an underground mine in Chile. In doing so, she defied a popular myth: that a woman brings bad luck by venturing into a mine. She also broke the law. At the time, Chilean women were forbidden to work in underground mining or in any other job that "exceeded their strength or put at risk their physical or moral condition." Arévalo's defiance helped spark a revolution. By 1993, the restrictions on women in mining had been abolished; and by 2022, women represented 15 percent of the Chilean mining workforce, a threefold increase since 2007.

Equally substantial progress has occurred worldwide over the past half-century. Globally, women's legal rights have improved by about two-thirds, on average, since 1970. Major reforms have dismantled a wide array of barriers that women face at all stages of their working lives, but especially in the workplace



and in parenthood. Yet as the world marks this year's International Women's Day, it is clear that there is still a huge global gender gap.

In fact, the latest data show that the gap is much wider than previously thought. When legal differences regarding protections against violence and access to childcare are considered, women enjoy just two-thirds of the legal rights that men do, not 77 percent, as was previously

believed. The World Bank's latest Women, Business and the Law report finds that no country, not even the wealthiest ones, grants women the same legal rights as men.

The greatest deficiency involves safety: women enjoy barely one-third of the necessary legal protections against domestic violence, sexual harassment, and femicide. Inadequate access to childcare services is another hindrance.

Only 62 economies — fewer than one-third of the world's countries — have established quality standards governing childcare services. As a result, women across 128 economies may have to think twice about going to work while they have children in their care.

Moreover, the gender gap is wider than laws on the books might suggest. For the first time, Women, Business and the Law compared progress in legal reforms with actual outcomes for women in 190 economies, finding a surprising delay in implementation.

Although laws on the books imply that women enjoy roughly two-thirds the rights of men, countries on average have established less than 40 percent of the systems needed for full implementation. For example, 98 economies have enacted legislation mandating equal pay for women for work of equal value; but only 35 economies — fewer than one out of every five — have adopted pay-transparency measures or enforcement mechanisms to address the pay gap.

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French ambassador launches Francophonie month



THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

French Ambassador H.E. Claire Le Flécher launched the 'Francophonie Month 2024'. In the country, while noting that celebrations, which will continue until 20 March, was an occasion to commemorate Francophonie in Kuwait.

The event, organized by the French embassy in collaboration with the French Institute in Kuwait at the Marina Hotel, was held in the presence of senior diplomats of Francophone

countries, and a large gathering of French language lovers in the country.

Ambassador Le Flécher noted that the French language holds significant importance in the country and has been taught in public secondary schools since the 1960s. She also revealed that Kuwait has expressed its desire to join the International Organization of Francophonie, and it is expected that the official application for membership will be submitted soon. She thanked His Highness Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, Honorary Chairman of

the Council for the Promotion of Francophonie in Kuwait (CPFK), for his invaluable and continuous support in promoting Francophonie in Kuwait over the years.

The French envoy highlighted that the mission of the International Organization of Francophonie was to promote the French language along with common values such as democracy, peace, women's and children's rights, education, and the freedom to exchange knowledge. She added that the year 2024 will be particularly enriching for the French-speaking

world, as the next Francophonie summit is scheduled to open this year on 4 October, in the new International City of the French Language, established in Villers-Cotteret, France. This location is entirely dedicated to the French language and French-speaking cultures, having been inaugurated on 30 October of 2023 by President Emmanuel Macron.

"Moreover, in 2024, France will also host the Olympics; these games, which will delight sports fans, will serve as a 'great and joyous moment' for the influence of Francophonie."

MoI reinstates work permits for Egyptians in government sector

Ministry of Interior's (MoI) General Administration of Residence Affairs convened a meeting with the Public Authority of Manpower (PAM), to discuss the resumption of work permits for Egyptian workers solely within the government sector and in line with Article 17 visa regulations.

Following the talks, officials from the ministry

and PAM are understood to have finalized the drafting of the law, which will be submitted to the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Acting Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef, for approval and subsequent presentation to the upcoming National Assembly.

As per the revised law, the government entities approved to hire Egyptian workers



include the Ministries of Education, Health, Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, as well as the Kuwait

Municipality, for roles such as teachers, doctors, nurses, imams of mosques, washers of the dead, and grave diggers.

The proposed law entails stringent measures including substantial financial penalties and severe administrative actions against individuals found guilty of sheltering expatriates, and resulting in the registration of an absenteeism case being filed against them.

Meanwhile, issuing of visit visas for the so-called 'prohibited nationalities' have resumed, with exceptions made for Iranians citing security concerns and Afghans, who lack representation through an embassy in Kuwait.



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Ukraine envoy praises Kuwait support

THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

Ukrainian Ambassador H.E. Dr. Oleksandr Balanutsa praised Kuwait's influential diplomacy, and honorable positions in strengthening Arab and regional solidarity to face challenges and achieve security and peace in the region, citing Kuwait's support for his country and providing humanitarian assistance to it.

Kalaam's KEMS Zajil Telecom Announces Strategic Partnership with Google to Enhance Cloud Offerings for Governments & Enterprises



KEMS Zajil Telecom, a subsidiary of Kalaam Group and a leading telecommunications provider, proudly announces its official recognition as a Google Partner, signifying a strategic move in establishing KEMS Zajil Telecom as a prominent Cloud provider in Kuwait. This initiative is particularly timely as Kuwait embraces Google Cloud for its nationwide digital transformation roadmap across governmental entities and key state-owned enterprises.

AbdulAziz El Shehabi, Head of Product Development at KEMS Zajil Telecom, provided insights into the partnership, underscoring the profound impact it holds for the company. He stated, "Drawing from a rich legacy that spans over three decades as a pioneer in Kuwait's internet and connectivity market, KEMS Zajil Telecom has consistently set the gold standard for excellence. Serving as the pioneering cloud provider in the GCC since 2011, KEMS Zajil Telecom has remained at the vanguard of technological innovation."



Mr. Yusuf Ahmad,
KEMS Zajil Telecom CEO



AbdulAziz El Shehabi,
Head of Product Development
at KEMS Zajil Telecom

El Shehabi highlighted the transformative nature of KEMS Zajil Telecom's partnership with Google Cloud. He noted, "This collaboration has propelled us into the role of a major Cloud Service Provider in Kuwait, fortifying our dedication to providing cutting-edge digital solutions. With Google Cloud's scalable infrastructure and advanced analytics, KEMS Zajil Telecom has elevated its product portfolio and enhanced its service offerings to offer its clients a seamless and powerful cloud experience by leveraging state-of-the-art technologies like artificial intelligence and machine learning, thus fostering innovation and efficiency in line with the Kuwait's commitment to digitalization. This Partnership with Google Cloud will not only enhance our technological capabilities but also position us as a key player in driving Kuwait's Digital Transformation agenda. As a partner, KEMS Zajil Telecom has the capability to consult, provide advice, and implement the necessary solutions for customers seeking to digitize their operations."

He further stated, "This partnership aligns with the surging demand for cloud solutions, a requirement voiced by enterprises, be they small or large. The focus is on addressing essential needs such as Security, Automatic Updates, Flexibility & Accessibility, Reliability & Availability, and Cost-saving & Efficiency."

Mr. Yusuf Ahmad, KEMS Zajil Telecom CEO, conveyed his enthusiasm for this partnership with Google Cloud, emphasizing its transformative impact. He stated, "The introduction of Google Cloud as a core product signifies our commitment to empowering clients with innovative, scalable, and turn-key solutions. This partnership not only showcases our dedication to leading in technological advancements but also aligns seamlessly with Kuwait's strategic initiatives for digital transformation that will enable the Government to leverage Google Cloud's technology & expertise in data analytics, cybersecurity, and artificial intelligence (AI) fulfilling its commitment in making digitization one of its top national priorities in the coming years. This digitization initiative will span across various industries, such as healthcare, education, disaster recovery, and smart living, which will contribute to realizing Kuwait's ambition to become a data-driven economy. As Kuwait takes significant steps in its digital transformation journey with Google Cloud, KEMS Zajil Telecom stands ready to lead the charge, providing cutting-edge solutions aligned with the nation's vision of a digitally empowered future."

For more information about KEMS Zajil Telecom's partnership with Google Cloud, please visit <https://cloud.google.com/find-a-partner/partner/zajil-telecom>

In statements to media representatives, Ambassador Balanutsa said, "We are grateful to Kuwait for its support for Ukrainians in the face of the harsh humanitarian conditions resulting from the ongoing Russian aggression. Despite the current challenges, we are doing our best to strengthen bilateral relations between our two countries, which were established 31 years ago, in all fields, especially in the economic field." He noted that the volume of trade exchange between the two countries reached about USD119 million in 2023.

He stressed the importance of strengthening close economic relations and building strong partnerships between Ukrainian exporters and companies in Kuwait and the Middle East, referring to the virtual trade fair that was recently held to promote trade relations between Ukraine and Kuwait and open the door for more trade exchange as well as developing international cooperation and economic growth. While calling for the importance of taking decisive action against the Russian aggression, he stressed the need to strengthen military support and diplomatic isolation, including the seizure of Russian assets for Ukraine's recovery.

He pointed out that Russia remains committed to a long-term war of attrition, taking advantage of its vast resources, war fatigue, and nuclear intimidation tactics, with a large military presence of 470,000 troops stationed in Ukraine. He pointed out that the serious human rights violations in the Crimean Peninsula and other occupied territories, including



the detention of thousands of Ukrainian hostages, require concerted international efforts and legal clarity to address these violations.

The Ukrainian Foreign Ministry has launched a website entitled "Diplomacy in Times of War" that documents Ukrainian diplomacy in times of war during the period of the large-scale Russian aggression and provides a comprehensive review of the work of diplomats over the past two years to strengthen Ukraine and encourage international support. For our fighters and open new horizons for our country, companies and citizens in the world.

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Indian Heritage unlocks retail haven in Avenues Mall



Indian Heritage, renowned for its commitment to preserving India's rich heritage while seamlessly integrating it with Arabian culture, proudly announces the grand opening of its sixth store in the prestigious Avenues Mall, Kuwait.

The inauguration, held on March 8, 2024, was graced by the esteemed presence of ambassadors from Bhutan, Nepal, Uzbekistan, the Indian Embassy Counsellor (Commerce), the Malaysian Embassy Counsellor and the Colonel & United States Air Force of the Embassy of the United States of America. Alongside them were executives of Indian Heritage, distinguished guests, media personnel, as well as a large gathering of enthusiastic shoppers eager to explore the brand's newest offerings.

Indian Heritage has long been synonymous with meticulous attention to detail and a dedication to excellence and exceptional quality. Each piece in their collection, be it ready-to-wear attire, fabrics, jewelry, or handicrafts, reflects this commitment. Established in 2000 as a specialized Indian textile house, Indian Heritage has since evolved into a premier retail destination in Kuwait.

The newest addition to the Indian Heritage family at the Avenues Mall is a testament to the brand's unwavering dedication to providing customers with luxurious, high-quality products crafted from the finest materials. The store not only offers a diverse selection of designer and heritage products but also features a patio space where exclusive events can be hosted, further enhancing the customer experience.



With existing stores in Souk Safat, Magic Mall in Abu Halifa, Al Sama Mall in Egaila, and Al-Khiran Mall in Kuwait, as well as a presence in Bahrain, Indian Heritage continues to expand its footprint across the region, bringing its unique blend of Indian tradition and Arabian culture to an ever-growing audience.

"We are thrilled to announce the opening of our sixth store at the prestigious Avenues Mall," said a spokesperson for Indian Heritage. "This new location represents an exciting milestone for us as we continue to share our passion for Indian artistry with the people of Kuwait. We look forward to welcoming our customers to experience the essence of Indian craftsmanship and culture in this magnificent new space."

The Indian Heritage store at the Avenues Mall is now open to the public, offering a curated selection of exquisite products that celebrate the beauty and diversity of Indian craftsmanship.



Over nine million traffic violations in 2023, over-speeding tops the list

Marking the launch of the Unified Gulf Traffic Week last week, the General Directorate of Traffic (GTD) under the Ministry of Interior held a press conference on 29 February, to mark the launch of the annual Unified Gulf Traffic Week, which this year was held under the slogan 'Driving without a Phone'.

The media gathering, which was held in the presence of Acting Undersecretary of the Traffic and Operations Sector, Major General Yousef Al Khadda, was also attended by the Assistant Director for Technical Affairs, Brigadier General Muhammad Al-Adwani, Assistant Director for Planning and Research Affairs, Brigadier Saeed Al-Amiri, Assistant Director for Public Relations and Traffic Awareness, Brigadier Abdullah Al-Abdul Salam, and a number of senior traffic sector leaders.

In his presentation at the meeting, Director of the Traffic Awareness Department and Chairman

of the Traffic Week Activities Committee, Brigadier General Nawaf Al-Hayya, detailed some of the alarming traffic statistics for the year 2023. The figures showed that the number of registered violations reached 9,120,006, with the number of direct violations registered reaching 3,142,923 and indirect violation registrations totaling 5,977,083.

Giving a breakdown of violations, Al-Hayyan said that statistics reveal that over-speeding topped the list of violations at 4,294,446 and crossing a red light signal ranked second with 853,220 violations. Pointing out that the high number of these two violations is a dangerous indicator, he noted that these violations lead to loss of life, serious injuries and material losses. Citing health ministry data, he added that 40 percent of the death rate in Kuwait is the result of traffic accidents.

The GTD figures statistics also showed that the number of vehicles registered in Kuwait reached



2,546,798 and the number of private driving license holders were 1,951,203, which included 152,779 general licenses, 16,229 heavy-vehicle driving licenses, and 31,284 motorcycle licenses, of which 11,992 were delivery motorcycle licenses. The data also showed that 52 percent of the total driving licenses were issued to Kuwaitis, with the remaining being issued to non-Kuwaitis.

In addition, other violations registered in 2023 included, not wearing a seat belt (370,120); using a mobile phone while driving (185,816); annoying sounds arising from the vehicle exhaust (102,816); and poor condition of vehicle (49,038). Violations for inattentiveness while driving amounted to 21,897, reckless driving incidents were 8,540, and racing on a public road amounted to 892 violations. During the coming period, to form a traffic system in collecting violations between GCC countries, pointing out that the majority of traffic transactions are currently conducted electronically, as part of the Ministry of Interior's

plan to facilitate procedures for completing transactions for citizens and residents.

Reviewing the strategies employed by GTD to reduce violations and improve safety on Kuwait's roads, Al-Hayyan said that a security-camera network, including 255 fixed cameras and 18 mobile units, constantly monitored highways, byways and intersections in the country.

He also noted that a new network, which currently links Kuwait with the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, will soon be extended to include Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Oman to form an integrated Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) traffic network. The network would facilitate the collection of traffic violation fines from GCC citizens and residents, and allow better coordination between traffic departments in all six GCC states.

In his response to journalists' questions, Al-Hayyan said that the current traffic violations law is not suitable for the current age, because it was drawn up to reflect traffic conditions that existed several decades ago. He pointed out that over the years, traffic conditions and roads have changed remarkably, and the number of vehicles are constantly increasing, so it was important for the National Assembly to urgently approve the revised draft traffic law submitted in parliament.

Highlighting the GTD's new 'Rased' online mobile application, Al-Hayyan said that more than 650,000 violations were registered through the app since its launch in September 2023. He added that the app also made it easier for violators to receive full information about their traffic infraction and the penalties incurred.



LuLu Hypermarket offers shoppers a 'Taste of Vietnam'

LuLu Hypermarket Kuwait provided customers a singular experience with their most recent promotion, a 'Taste of Vietnam', which ran across all outlets of the hypermarket in Kuwait. The culinary celebration offered a unique opportunity for shoppers to explore decadent delights and the rich heritage of Vietnamese cuisine.



The event, which was launched on 5 March at the Jahra outlet of LuLu Hypermarket, was graced by the presence of the Ambassador of Vietnam, H.E. Thanh Tuan Ngu, who toured the outlet accompanied by ambassadors of Cambodia, Honduras, Laos, Serbia, Indonesia, and Thailand, & other diplomats as well as top officials of LuLu Hypermarket Kuwait.

A special ceremony was also held on the occasion to launch an outlet of Coffilia, the renowned Vietnamese cafe brand offering specialty coffees. The cafe was inaugurated by the Ambassador of Vietnam and the ambassadors touring the hypermarket with him, along with the Director of LuLu Hypermarket Kuwait.

Throughout the 'Taste of Vietnam' promotion, shoppers enjoyed a variety of offerings, attractive discounts and special deals on a wide selection of Vietnamese branded products, encompassing groceries, fresh fruits, and vegetables.

Dedicated food counters and free food sampling kiosks showcased authentic Vietnamese cuisine, allowing customers to savor exotic Vietnamese dishes and experience its sensational flavors firsthand. The atmosphere was permeated with the delicious aroma arising from traditional Vietnamese spices, with decorations and displays adding to the excitement of the event.

The 'Taste of Vietnam' promotion proved to be an appetizing journey, leaving a tantalizing taste and a lasting impression on customers. LuLu Hypermarket remains committed to fostering cultural understanding and providing shoppers with one-of-a-kind enriching experiences.





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Inspiring inclusion and celebrating achievements

International Women's Day (IWD), observed annually on March 8, is a global celebration of women's achievements and a call to action for gender equality. It serves as a powerful reminder of the progress made and the work that remains to be done.

In collaboration with:



The Times Kuwait features five women from Kuwait published in KPMG Kuwait's report Global Female Leaders Outlook 2023–24. These Female Leaders who are Shaping Resilience in a Polycrisis share their amazing stories of challenges and success.

The report finds that despite shouldering increased responsibilities, Global Female Leaders remained optimistic about corporate expansion, societal progress, gender parity, and their own professional aspirations. This resilience in the face of a



volatile economic and social backdrop sends a positive message.

The opinions and insights of the Global Female Leaders presented in the report reflected their confidence in future prospects and the importance of equality in ongoing transformation endeavors and emphasize that diversity is not just a buzzword that companies are trying to catch on.

The KPMG report also underlines that despite advancements in promoting diversity, inclusion, and legal structures, considerable hurdles remain. Numerous women still encounter bias, often

switch jobs to progress in their careers, are underrepresented in leadership roles, and navigate male-centric networks within organizations.

Overcoming these hurdles is crucial to unleashing the complete potential of equal participation. The report illuminates evolving trends that Global Female Leaders are driving within their companies. They are adjusting digitalization strategies, with a greater focus on employee development rather than technology investments, and they are strengthening

cybersecurity measures.

This ability to respond to external changes through internal adjustments indicates a promising enhancement of organizational resilience. Global Female Leaders underline that certain personal qualities are gaining prominence, particularly adaptability and foresight.

The fast-paced advancement of technology, evolving stakeholder demands, compliance requirements, and market disruptions, such as those triggered by geopolitical factors,

emphasize the importance of quick response and operational flexibility, while keeping strategic, long-term objectives in mind.

These qualities resonate strongly with the Global Female Leaders KPMG spoke to, enabling them to proactively assume leadership roles despite the complexities of the current polycrisis.

KPMG Kuwait hopes that the Global Female Leaders Outlook 2023–24 will offer fresh perspectives and help foster a deeper recognition of the female leaders' ability to navigate challenges with resilience and agility.



Mai AlOwaish,
Chief Data & Innovation Officer, Gulf Bank

Our report finds that there is a lot of skepticism around women in technology. How did you overcome that?

With only 20 percent of engineering degrees awarded to women, being an engineer made me realize that women need to challenge some stereotypes in the workplace and deliver a social impact on their profession.

Going into technology, I was aware that it is a big challenge. However, I have enjoyed every step of it because having that awareness helped me see beyond bias and misconceptions.

Instead of fearing doubts and fighting skepticism, I strived to be original and show my true commitment and passion for technology — my mind was set that I was going to break stereotypes.

As women in technology, we might be outnumbered, but we can lead, we can inspire, and we can contribute at the highest level. Instead of being intimidated by my male counterparts, I reached out to them, learned from everyone around me, and went further to collaborate and network. Our male counterparts will mentor and support us when we defeat stereotypes and work together, not compete against each other.

How do you ensure that your digital transformation initiatives align with your organization's overall strategic goals and values?

Digital transformation initiatives touch every person, system, and process in the organization.

Communication is key when it comes to making an impact and driving change cultures that align with strategic goals. As women, we are naturally great communicators.

I capitalized on that ability to connect with stakeholders across the organization to ensure buy-in from everyone at all levels, as well as listened to them to align the digital transformation initiatives with their input. This interaction was an integral part of the digital and data literacy programs that we ran organization-wide, spanning all employees from juniors and new hires to top-level executives.

Throughout these sessions that spanned over three months, I managed to hear from the organization's top leaders and frontlines to synchronize the digital

transformation agenda with the goals and values of our business and operational teams.

Companies are investing heavily on the technological aspects of digitization. What is the key to inspire young female leaders and employees to embrace new technologies?

Whenever we are asking people to embrace new practices or technologies, there are two factors enabling adoption: the why and the motivation.

First, "the why" ensures that they understand the impact and the case for adopting something new. Second, which is especially important for young talent, is showing them "what's in it for them?", i.e., how their knowledge, experience and career will be impacted when they adopt digitization. I experienced this firsthand while rolling out our data-driven initiatives, asking analysts to digitize and automate their reporting practices. My philosophy was "people, then technology".

The technology and digitization rollouts came after we demonstrated to the analysts how the new practices will improve their daily operations, impact the bottom line of the organization, enable them to become better analysts, and future proof their career.

They felt empowered and better connected to the organization's overall success. Moreover, once we developed this group as digitization leaders, they became champions of change, and will soon mentor and inspire the next generations.

What is your advice to young female leaders seeking a career in technology?

First, love what you do. What you do for a living doesn't have to be the norm for your gender, age, or profile overall. If you have a passion for what you do, you will excel no matter what. Second, keep learning. Continuing education gives you a competitive edge in the market, especially in this rapidly changing tech industry.

The options are now endless when it comes to learning new skills or achieving certifications as there are different learning mediums that fit any schedule and lifestyle. Last, when you're performing your job, do it to the best of your abilities, but always think bigger.

Ask yourself how you can bring even greater value to your company or tech industry and what else you can do, even if it's not part of your current responsibilities. If you're thinking about growing your career, be proactive about your development and the newer, bigger things you can take on.

Mai AlOwaish is the Chief Data & Innovation Officer at Gulf Bank. She is a seasoned information systems and data analytics expert with 20 years of experience between Kuwait and the United States where she spearheaded a variety of data analytics and e-commerce initiatives and enabled digital transformation and innovation for financial institutions, retailers, and airlines, among other domains.

Mai is a published author, speaker, and an award winner. Her thought pieces have been featured in the Harvard Business Review, the Applied Marketing Analytics journal and the Analytics Interpreted book. Mai is a former Board member of the Digital Analytics Association (DAA) and the recipient of the DAA President's Awards. Mai was also a featured presenter on Google Summits and The Economist events.



Dr. Fai Ben Salamah
Founder, Cyfay Company
for Cybersecurity services, Kuwait

When you started your career, women in cybersecurity were not common. Talk to us about your journey as a woman in this sector.

My journey into the realm of cybersecurity began in 2019 after I completed my master's degree in information technology from Kuwait University (2017). Back then, a lot of us, were unaware of cybersecurity's scope.

It was during this time that I met my advisor, seeking approval for my proposed PhD topic (May 2019).

Initially, I was focusing on the darker aspects of social media, aiming to explore how organizations could utilize these platforms to safeguard their reputation and avert potential crises. At the time, I had already authored three publications on this topic. However, during our discussion, my advisor suggested shifting towards a deeper exploration of cybersecurity.

Taking her guidance to heart, I redirected my research efforts towards cybersecurity (May 2019). Since then, I have produced a total of seven research papers, with four of them specifically dedicated to various aspects of cybersecurity.

This pivot marked the beginning of a new chapter in my academic and professional journey, one that continues to evolve as I delve deeper into the intricacies of cybersecurity research and its practical implications.

Our report found that six out of ten women do not aspire to take up a pioneering role in digital transformation. What could be the reason for this reservation?

Well, I can say there are many apparent reasons for this fact:

- Women may not feel confident or eager to take on leadership roles in the digital transformation space due to past encounters with bias/discrimination in the workplace.
- Traditional gender roles may still be enforced by cultural and societal standards, which discourages women from assuming leading roles in the digital transition in favor of other career pathways or responsibilities.
- In some regions, women might not have the access to quality education, especially in Science,

Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields, which can hinder their ability to pursue careers in digital transformation.

- The need for more visible female leaders in technology and digital transformation might be contributing towards a lack of aspiration among women in the region to pursue such roles.
- Conversely, some women might prioritize having adequate work-life balance over pursuing and accepting challenging leadership positions in the digital transition space, which may call for long hours and high stress levels.

What is your advice to young female leaders seeking a career in technology?

For young female leaders seeking a career in technology, here are some pieces of advice:

- Have confidence in your abilities and believe that you deserve to be in the technology field. Don't let self-doubt hold you back from pursuing your goals.
- Invest in your education and continuously work on developing your technical skills. Stay updated with the latest trends and advancements in technology through courses, workshops, and self-learning.
- Find mentors, both male and female, who can offer guidance, advice, and support as you navigate your career in technology. Surround yourself with a supportive network of colleagues, friends, and mentors who believe in your potential.
- Challenge stereotypes and bias in the workplace. Advocate for yourself and other women in technology, and don't be afraid to speak up against discrimination or inequality.
- Network with professionals in the technology industry, attend industry events, join online communities, and participate in networking groups to expand your connections and opportunities.
- Don't be afraid to take on new challenges or opportunities, even if they seem daunting at first. Embrace failure as a learning experience and use it to grow and improve.
- Discover what areas of technology you are passionate about and pursue opportunities that align with your interests and strengths. Whether it's software development, data science, cybersecurity, or another field, find what excites you and pursue it wholeheartedly.
- Advocate for diversity and inclusion in the workplace and strive to create environments where everyone feels valued and respected regardless of their gender, race, or background.
- Remember to prioritize your well-being and maintain a healthy work-life balance. Don't hesitate to set boundaries and take time for self-care and relaxation outside of work.
- The path to leadership in technology may have obstacles and setbacks but stay resilient and persevere in pursuit of your goals. Keep pushing forward and don't let challenges deter you from achieving your dreams.

What challenges have you encountered in implementing digital transformation and how are you addressing them?

When I ventured into establishing my cybersecurity

company, Cyfay, back in 2022, I anticipated challenges, but the reality proved to be even more demanding than what I had anticipated. While my journey through studying cybersecurity was largely self-driven and manageable, transitioning to the realm of entrepreneurship presented a host of new obstacles. Building a reputable brand, assembling a capable team, and effectively promoting our services have been formidable undertakings that require immense effort and perseverance. However, despite the challenges, I find immense fulfillment in nurturing Cyfay — it feels like my own child and requires constant care and dedication to flourish. I've come to understand that success in entrepreneurship is a gradual process, one that demands both time and unwavering commitment. Despite the hurdles, I'm resolute in my determination to see Cyfay thrive, knowing that each challenge we overcome brings us a step closer to our vision of providing top-tier cybersecurity solutions to individuals and businesses alike.

In your experience, what lessons have you learned about leadership that are particularly relevant in navigating a crisis?

My journey into the world of cybersecurity has been anything but conventional. As a mother of three children, I made the bold decision to embark on a life-changing adventure: pursuing a PhD degree in cybersecurity in the United Kingdom. It was a leap of faith, filled with uncertainties and risks, but I was determined to pursue my passion for technology and make a meaningful contribution to the field.

One of the biggest challenges I faced was uprooting my children and relocating to a new country. It meant exposing my children to unfamiliar surroundings, new schools, and a different culture. Every day, I found myself praying for their smooth transition and adjustment, hoping that this leap of faith would ultimately lead to new opportunities and experiences for all of us.

Despite the initial apprehension, our journey has been one of growth, resilience, and unwavering determination. My children embraced their new environment with resilience and curiosity, making friends and adapting to their new schools with remarkable ease. Their courage and adaptability served as a source of inspiration for me, reaffirming my belief that taking risks and stepping out of our comfort zones is often the catalyst for personal and professional growth.

Ending up, choosing to pursue our dreams, despite the risks involved, is far better than living with the regret of not trying. Working towards our aspirations with unwavering belief is the true secret to success.

Dr. Fai is the Founder of Cyfay Company for Cybersecurity Services, a cyber security consultancy company that aims to help individuals and organizations protect their data and systems from cyber threats. She is also part of the National Cyber Security Center, Kuwait. She has a PhD in Cyber Security from the University of Plymouth, where she developed a system for increasing public awareness by addressing the human factors as the weakest link in cyber security. Her research has been published in several peer-reviewed journals and conferences.



Hanaa Hasan Taha,
Managing Director,
Chief Financial Officer, Kamco Invest

What strategies or practices are you employing to foster resilience within your team or organization during challenging times? How has it changed compared to when you started?

One of our biggest areas of focus is teamwork. We give each team member the opportunity to express their opinions. I feel, listening to their concerns and everything else they have to say empowers and encourages them to collaborate better to find solutions for our challenges and help achieve our organizational goals.

We also ensure that our goals and targets are clearly communicated to each team member and see to it that they are aware of their roles and informed of the challenges they may face. We believe having a clear vision and strategy is critical to achieving success, and recognizing our team members' achievements, increasing their accountability, granting them the authority, and providing them with timely feedback only makes things better.

During the COVID-19 crisis, we emphasized remote working, supported our team members emotionally and even helped address their health concerns. Incorporating flexible work hours also helped, allowing our team members to deliver in time even during crises situations.

One of the biggest changes that I see now compared to when I started is flexibility. I am more flexible with my team; not only do I empower them but also ensure that I delegate important tasks to them.

What difference are you seeing in women taking up finance or related fields as their first career choice in comparison to when you started?

There is a stark increase in the number of women who are choosing to pursue finance, or its related fields, as their first career. This rise can be credited to the various initiatives that are aimed at empowering women in the sector. The gender parity is also evident in many organizations — all of which is encouraging young women to become finance professionals and succeed at it.

What is your advice to new and existing female leaders who are finding it challenging to tackle long workdays, maintain work-life balance and deal with more such scenarios?

Female leaders should learn how they can delegate some of their responsibilities and identify top priorities at work and in their personal life better. This will help reduce their workload and maintain adequate work-life balance.

In addition, female leaders should explain the nature and demands of their work to their family members to gain their extended support.

It goes without saying that they need to manage their time effectively to accommodate hobbies and wellness-related activities and have the flexibility for any unprecedented events. Lastly, they should maintain a women-only network where they have the access to other female leaders for times when they may require their support.

What advice would you give to women who want to advance from a middle-management role to being in a female leader's position?

For women seeking to grow and climb the success ladder in their career, it is essential that they not only develop leadership skills but also embed a sense of responsibility and continuous learning in their approach.

They need to work hard, know their strengths and weaknesses, participate in decision-making committees, take up more challenges to gain necessary experience, and focus on expanding their network so they can keep building on their knowledge and skills.

While it is important to do all of the above, it is crucial they remember to celebrate their achievements and successes too.

What steps is Kamco taking to foster the culture of gender equality? Please share a few examples.

We are proud to have become members of the women's empowerment movement in Kuwait, a subject that we hold dearly close to our individual and corporate values at Kamco Invest. Committing to the Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) falls in line with our corporate culture and our strong belief in providing every individual the equal opportunity to excel within our organization, regardless of their gender.

Kamco Invest participated in the "Driving Women's Empowerment Forward: Women's Empowerment Principles (WEPs) and the Role of Business to Accelerate Equality in the Workplace" event which showcased Kuwait's developments around women empowerment and welcomed new members into the initiative.

Additionally, the Kamco Board includes two women: Sheikha Dana Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, Board Director, and Entisar Abdul Raheem Al-Suwaidi, Board Director. Our Executive Management also comprises two women, Nawal Mulla Hussain, Managing Director of Support Operations, and I, Hanaa Hasan Taha, Managing Director, Chief Financial Officer.

Ms. Hanaa Hasan Taha is the Managing Director, Chief Financial Officer, at Kamco Invest. She has 29 years of experience in finance, accounting, business analysis, budgeting and strategic planning, due diligence, and funds and portfolio accounting. Ms. Hanaa joined Kamco Invest in 2019 as Director of Financial Planning & Control and Accounting Operations, following the merger of Global Investment House and Kamco Invest, where she played a vital role to facilitate the merger transaction.

Prior to this, she was the Senior Vice President, Head of Finance and Treasury Department at Global Investment House, and worked at the Kuwait Financial Center before that. She has a Bachelor of Commerce in Accounting from Ain Shams University (Cairo, Egypt) and has served as a Board Member and Chairperson



Yasmeen Fouad Alsalem
 Director — Corporate
 Communications, CITRA

How did you navigate gender-specific challenges that female leaders often face in the professional world?

In pursuit of professional excellence, I have always been goal-oriented, patient, and ready to learn. Realizing the importance of guidance and support early, I do not hesitate to ask questions and seek clarification. So, whenever I need any advice, I always reach out to those who have walked the path before me — mentors who offer me clarification and/or encouragement.

Throughout my career, I understood that growth comes from continuous learning, so I attended various professional courses and training sessions. Each session is an opportunity to chip away at the self-doubt that often shadows us.

Moreover, my experience taught me the critical role of direct communication and negotiation. In a world where being heard can sometimes be challenging, I learned to assert my beliefs, even if it meant standing alone.

This assertiveness wasn't about confrontation but making my voice heard in crucial moments, ensuring that I wasn't overlooked or underestimated. My managers know my ambitions as I still seize every opportunity.

However, my story isn't just about professional milestones because I always strive to balance family, personal life, and work. I perfectly understand the value of prioritizing what truly matters.

What do you think are the main barriers preventing the widespread adoption of sustainable practices in Kuwait?

A key issue is the lack of public awareness because many people in Kuwait aren't even aware of what sustainability means or why it's important. Even though there are talks about sustainability, we rarely see these plans put into action in the business world. This indicates that there is a need for a concrete strategy for sustainability in Kuwait.

Hence, we're looking at a challenge that goes beyond simple actions such as recycling. The real solution involves getting government, businesses, and community groups to work together.

Moreover, we must focus on the coming generations. By teaching kids in schools about sustainability — things like climate change and fair trade — and integrating sustainability practices within their studies, we're investing in

a sustainable future. Therefore, the education system plays a very important role in this transformation.

Thus, to make real progress, Kuwait needs laws that require businesses to include sustainability in their plans. We should change the culture to one that values sustainability. Overcoming these barriers requires clear action and strong laws.

What are the three biggest career success factors that aspiring female leaders must work on today?

In short, always keep learning, connect with others, believe in yourself, and stay true to who you are. There's always something new to learn. The world changes fast and keeping up with new skills keeps female leaders ahead and ready for whatever is next. However, you can't win the team game alone. That's when networking and knowing more people in your field can really help as it can open the doors to new opportunities.

Also, self-confidence is essential and so is recognizing and celebrating your achievements. Always remember to leverage the good things you've done to push away any doubts. Self-doubt delays progress, so you really need to believe in yourself, plan and remain focused until you achieve what you planned for. Plus, being honest and true to yourself makes you a leader people want to follow.

Our research finds that more top female managers believe that it is possible to grow in your career without changing organizations. What are your thoughts? What measures organizations can take to ensure a smooth career path for women?

In my view, it's absolutely possible for women to advance in their careers within the same organization. For companies to facilitate this, first, they need to ensure that promotions and leadership opportunities are awarded fairly, without gender bias. This includes providing support for maternity leave and offering flexible work options to accommodate different life stages, among other things.

Additionally, organizations should invest in targeted training and mentorship programs to develop women's leadership skills. But beyond policies and programs, it is essential to create a workplace culture that genuinely values and celebrates women's contributions. This helps women advance and benefits the organization by fostering diversity.

Can you share a few examples on how your organization is enabling gender equality?

CITRA is committed to development, fairness, and equality, and opportunities are open to everyone, regardless of gender. And it is strongly supported by our higher management, creating a culture where everyone has the chance to succeed.

Ms. Yasmeen Fouad AlSalem is the Director of Corporate Communications at CITRA Kuwait. She has more than 17 years of experience, spanning across business development, government affairs, and leadership. She holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from Kuwait University.



Karen Cruttenden
 Vice President,
 Victoria's Secret, Alshaya Group

The retail sector is often deemed as demanding in terms of innovation, work-life balance, and lifestyle. What would be your advice be for future generations of female talent to navigate this sector and succeed?

At the point of promotion to a field role, Retail becomes a lifestyle rather than a job. This is a factor I always discuss with any future leader in my team. Retail is a 24/7 job these days and requires commitment as well as passion.

Therefore, finding that work-life balance is crucial to success. But how one navigates that is up to the individual, as it's not a job with regular hours. Flexibility and adaptability are key skills to develop, along with the ability to say no. Most highly successful people in business say no more often than they say yes to additional projects/proposals.

Yet, women, in general, are not good at refusing gracefully. It's hard to get your head up and see where you are going if you are snowed under with tasks.

The retail landscape is always evolving in terms of innovation and technology. As a leader who manages multiple portfolios, how do you keep yourself up to date?

It's hard to stay ahead of the pack but I do try to stay endlessly curious. I always want to know what the other retailers are doing differently, which of them are new, and who is more exciting.

I find my nieces great sources of information and inspiration. Also, having a diverse team plays a big role in keeping us informed and relevant for our customers.

Every quarter, we review what our competitors are doing for the customers. Zara and Oysho, for example, have recently transformed their customer journey in their refitted stores. So, we have to keep our physical stores fresh and exciting, as more and more retailers are providing experiences in stores and pop-ups to carve out a reason for consumers to visit them rather than buy online.

When it comes to fostering a culture that embraces sustainable practices, how do you overcome resistance within your team and stakeholders?

I worked with Anita Roddick at The Body Shop in its prime where sustainable practices were created out of necessity and embedded

in the brand's DNA. This was totally inspirational. It's not hard to behave well with each other and take care of our planet if it comes from the top and is lived every day.

Since then, I have continued to lead by example. Running fun and educational activities to create awareness and including the resistors is a great way to gain support.

Recently, the VS team planted mangroves in Abu Dhabi and made care bags for blue collar workers in the UAE. Even the most resistant team members admitted they had fun and it felt good to do good outside the office.

I love challenging the status quo, bringing fresh thinking to opportunities. I also find engaging the millennials in my team to lead the thinking a great way to bring everyone together. Personally, I don't think you can force anyone to participate in something they are not interested in.

The resistance will only get more entrenched, so it's better to let those people see what good looks like and experience some fear of missing out. Stakeholders are not so hard to convince if they can see a business benefit.

What according to you is key for female leaders to advance their careers while striving to strike the right work-life balance?

I live with my husband and four cats, and finding the balance between work and your personal life is not easy. It requires a supportive spouse and a fair division of life's administrative responsibilities. It's also important to be truly present when you are at home and are available for important family matters and events.

Female leaders agree that taking a proactive approach to societal issues is key in shaping ESG strategy. How essential of a trait is it for existing and aspiring female leaders to develop?

I find that females are much more engaged in ESG issues than male leaders. We are naturally more involved in communities and addressing the issues that exist there. This is just one strand of business strategy though; it doesn't need to be separated. Values should be embedded in how the business conducts itself.

Ms. Karen Cruttenden joined Alshaya in 2012 as leader of the Victoria's Secret brand. She started her career 40 years ago as a Trainee Manager with McDonald's and has overcome numerous challenges faced by female leaders. She has more than 20 years of international retail experience in the United Kingdom, the Europe, Middle East, and Africa (EMEA) region, and in Asia. She has grown from being a Store Manager to Operations Director via various operational, international, and omni-channel roles and has spearheaded the 'silent revolution' in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), developing 100% female workforce including leadership, much before other retailers. She was also fortunate to work with and learn from extraordinary businesswomen such as Laura Ashley and Anita Roddick, Founder, The Body Shop.

When Women Win, the World Wins

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

That represents a colossal waste of human capital, and at precisely the moment when the world needs to marshal all its resources to escape the rising risk of economic stagnation. Today, fewer than one out of every two women participate in the labor force. By contrast, roughly three out of every four men do. Closing that gap could help double global economic growth in the coming decade. The evidence is clear: economies with higher Women, Business and the Law scores tend to have larger female labor-force participation rates, stronger female entrepreneurship, and more active female participation in political institutions. Gender equality, in short, is both a fundamental human right and a powerful engine of

economic development.

Again, it is not enough merely to pursue equality in the laws on the books. What we need are comprehensive sets of policies and institutions, as well as a transformation of cultural and social norms in many countries, to empower women to become successful workers, entrepreneurs, and leaders. That means stronger enforcement mechanisms to tackle workplace violence, practical provisions for childcare services, and easier access to health-care services for women who survive violence.

Such policies enable women to remain employed without suffering career setbacks, help close the gender wage gap, and reconfigure gender roles and attitudes related to workplace and household duties. And as more women rise to leadership positions,

they inspire new generations of girls to achieve their full potential. Positive outcomes take time to realize, but they do happen. As Claudia Goldin, the winner of the 2023 Nobel Prize in Economics, has observed, the 1960s surge in US women rising to high-level jobs did not happen by accident. It was the product of a slow but steady accretion of legal rights.

"Even if the laws didn't change women's earnings, it made their lives better and expanded their options," Goldin noted. "Workplaces became safer for them. They were no longer barred or excused from juries because of their presumed household responsibilities. They could not be fired when pregnant and could not be refused a job because they had children. They received better education and more resources, even as girls."

Leveling the playing field presents crucial economic opportunities, and not just for women. When half of humanity wins, the whole world wins.



Indermit Gill is Chief Economist and Senior Vice President for Development Economics at the World Bank.
Tea Trumbic leads the World Bank's Women, Business and the Law project.

'Taste of Canada' showcases country's premier food products



THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

Embassy of Canada in Kuwait, in collaboration with United Supply Food Services and Certified Angus Beef, successfully wrapped up its signature 'Taste of Canada' event on 4 March at Argan Al Bidaa Hotel and Resort. The event brought together executive chefs, food industry stakeholders, and representatives from top Kuwaiti companies to showcase premium Canadian beef.

The event aimed to promote the superior quality of Canadian beef products to Kuwait by showcasing an array of prime cuts, including strip loin, marbled prime rib, short ribs, and briskets, prepared at live interactive cooking stations. Additionally, the event featured a

barbecue showcase by Chef Mario Aoun, Founder of BBQBros and Director of the World BBQ Association, as well as the contribution of renowned food authority and influencer, Anthony Rahayel, best known as NoGarlicNoOnions.

Speaking on the occasion, Canadian Ambassador H.E. Aliya Mawani stated, "We take pride in showcasing the finest Canadian beef to Kuwait through the 'Taste of Canada' beef promotion.

This event not only underscores the premium quality of Canadian products but also bolsters the economic and cultural bonds between Canada and Kuwait, and strategically positions Canada as a pivotal partner in fulfilling Kuwait's food security objectives. It's a celebration of Canada's robust agricultural heritage and our

mutual passion for exceptional cuisine."

For his part, Managing Director of United Supply Food Services, Kassem Atoui, declared, "As a leading food distribution company operating since 2008, specializing in sourcing quality halal beef, we're thrilled to announce our exclusive partnership in sourcing premium quality Canadian beef.

This initiative caters to the burgeoning interest and refined palate of Kuwait's culinary scene. Our goal is to deliver the ultimate dining experience to all our customers."

This initiative represents a significant milestone in promoting Canadian agri-food products in Kuwait, providing a platform for Kuwaiti consumers, restaurants, and businesses to experience the exceptional quality of

Canadian beef.

Following the 'Taste of Canada' event, Ambassador Mawani emphasized the certification of Canadian beef, highlighting its Angus certification meeting halal standards. She stressed the event's pivotal role in showcasing Canadian meat products' exceptional quality in Kuwait. She added, "We believe in the power of food to unite people and foster cultural exchange, opening doors to new opportunities."

The Canadian ambassador also announced the arrival of large shipments of Canadian meat via air freight, over the next couple of weeks.

The 'Taste of Canada' event series, launched in February 2023, aims to showcase Canada's culinary heritage and its top-quality beef and agri-food industry.



Egyptian embassy organizes exhibition on IWD

On the occasion of International Women's Day (IWD), which is commemorated each year on 8 March, the Egyptian Embassy in Kuwait, in collaboration with the Contemporary Art Platform (CAP) Kuwait, organized an art exhibition titled 'Women's Rights Day Through the Eyes of Egyptian Artists'. The exhibition, held at the CAP Gallery, showcased works by 35 Egyptian artists in Kuwait.

The exhibition was inaugurated by the Ambassador of Egypt, H.E. Osama Shaltout, in the presence of several ambassadors from Arab and foreign countries, members of diplomatic missions, representatives of the Egyptian community, and other communities. Ambassador Shaltout praised the exhibition, noting that it highlights the role of women in society as mothers, sisters, and wives

who bear the responsibility of nurturing an aware and educated generation in order to meet the needs of society. The exhibition came within the framework of the embassy's series of cultural and artistic activities that will be held throughout the year. The exhibition showcased the works of Egyptian artists that were displayed through 55 diverse paintings all linked to the singular concept

that women serve as mirrors of society, reflecting its progress, development, and sophistication.

"We celebrate Women's Day every year to convey a message of appreciation and respect through the words and lines featured in today's art exhibition, telling the world a part of their lives," Ambassador Shaltout remarked.

Masterclass resumes registration for one-day scholarship program

By Ricky Laxa
Staff Writer

Registration to a one-day scholarship program for Filipino household service workers continues amidst a huge flow of inquiries and bookings to reserve dates for classes. Masterclass Lifestyles Workshops hold classes every Friday from 2 to 5pm at its workshop studio to accommodate a three hour session program.

In a brief interview with The Times Kuwait, the Workshop's Director mentioned that the Friday classes since the scholarship program commenced has gathered 52 attendees and it hopes to achieve more than a hundred within ten sessions.

Members of the State of Kuwait Lady Eagles Club, who are cosponsors of the program, ensured that they are present to congratulate

the participants after each session every Friday.

President of the club Annie Centeno stated that the program is more than just a three hour class but a life changing experience for each of the participants. "We spoke to some of the participants after each class and heard very positive comments on the knowledge and experience they acquired from the program. It is heartwarming to hear them express their gratitude for coming up with such a project and hope that other workers will see the value of the classes" stated Centeno.

The program started six weeks back and each week has been attended by 7 participants in each class. Masterchef Marie Torio and Chef Ricky Laxa, spearhead the training program that teaches the essentials of baking breads for bakery sales. Popular types of bread are made during the classes with free ingredients provided to all participants.



Among the breads produced in the classes are Pan de Sal, Spanish Bread, Cinnamon Roll, Hotdog buns, Cheese Breads, Mini Pizzas, Doughnuts and among popular local delicacy; Zaatar Bread, which is well liked by employers who get to try the dough from the class.

Mobile communications firm Ooredoo, also ensured that each participant receives a complimentary sim card with load. The program is being held in collaboration with

the Migrant Workers Office and Overseas Workers Welfare Administration. Masterclass Lifestyle Workshops Studio is located at the basement of The Walk Mall in Salem Mubarak Street in Salmiya.

The workshop also offers, Art of cake decorating, Chocolate making, International cuisines, Japanese Cuisine, Filipino Gourmet Merienda and more. For more details, call: 55650296.

France's IFFJ plans to establish its first branch in Kuwait

THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

During a recent visit to Kuwait, Secretary-General of the International Federation of Francophone Journalists (IFFJ) and Editor-in-Chief of the Yerevan newspaper, Zara Nazarian, expressed her hope for the organization to establish its first branch in the Gulf region in Kuwait.

Founded in 1950 by two Canadian journalists, the IFFJ is a non-governmental organization. With nearly 50 branches in 50 countries, it stands as the oldest and largest organization of French-speaking journalists worldwide.

In a talk with local media, Ms. Nazarian expanded on the IFFJ and its work, stressing the significance of the two founding principles of the IFFJ — Freedom of expression and Freedom of the press. She noted that the organization also lends its support to the International Organization of La Francophonie, comprising 88 French-speaking countries.

She added that at present, the IFFJ has 2,000 members who renew their membership annually. The annual membership fee varies by region, ranging from 15 to 50 euros. The IFFJ accepts membership from any professional journalist employed by a media organization and receiving a monthly salary.

The IFFJ also receives funding through a partnership between the public and private sectors, with financial support from organizations such as the United Nations and UNESCO. Major corporations also sponsor the organization's events and activities. The IFFJ's periodic meetings serve as significant forums, gathering hundreds of journalists from around the world every two years.

As the first woman to lead the IFFJ in its 74-year history, Ms. Nazarian has played a pivotal role in furthering the cause of the organization. She was first elected in 2018 and re-elected in 2022. She will serve until 2025.

The IFFJ Secretary-General commended



the high level of press freedom in Kuwait, highlighting the fortunate working conditions for journalists in the country within a relatively free environment. For his part, Adnan Al-Rashid, President of the Kuwait Journalists Association and Deputy Editor-in-Chief of the Al-Anba newspaper, assured Ms. Nazarian that he would engage with the relevant authorities in Kuwait to explore the potential of establishing an IFFJ branch under the association's umbrella.

Turning to the ongoing crisis in Palestine, Ms. Nazarian mentioned that regarding the IFFJ's aid to journalists in Gaza, the organization is collaborating with its primary partner, the International Federation of Journalists, to unveil specific outcomes in the upcoming week. She added that the IFFJ and the International Federation of Journalists will introduce a special award for female journalists this year, named in honor of the late Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Akleh.



LuLu's Paws and Tails Carnival celebrates woofs, meows and green thumbs

LuLu Hypermarket's Qurain outlet recently hosted an awesome event for pet lovers and plant enthusiasts alike. The 'Paws and Tails Carnival', held from 28 February to 5 March, offered amazing discounts on pet food, accessories, and more.

The excitement began on 2 March with an inauguration ceremony officiated by LuLu's top management. The event featured a variety of furry friends, with over 100

cats and dogs participating in a special costume fashion show, captivating the audience with their adorable charm. The winners were presented with prizes and gift vouchers in their respective categories.

But the fun did not stop there. The carnival also hosted an exhibition showcasing a diverse range of animals, including flying parrots, small birds, reptiles, llamas, munchkin goats, snakes, ostriches, turtles, bunnies, meerkats, hedgehogs, and

owls. This unique menagerie delighted both young and old visitors alike. Pet food suppliers set up stalls, offering a bounty of samples for pet lovers.

Additionally, the event highlighted a 'Go Green Campaign', promoting eco-friendly plant life and garden accessories. Popular nurseries participated in the event, showcasing a variety of their plants and flowers.



To further tingle green thumbs, LuLu conducted two exciting contests, 'Best Garden 2024' and 'Best Balcony Garden 2024'. The winners from both these contests received

valuable gifts, gift vouchers, and hampers from LuLu Hypermarket.

LuLu's top management personally presented the prizes to the winners of the various contests, ensuring a memorable experience for all participants. Besides the winners, all contestants were presented with consolation prizes, making sure everyone went home with a smile, a woof and a meow.

The 'Paws and Tails Carnival' proved to be a resounding success, bringing together pet lovers, plant enthusiasts, and families for a weekend of fun, furry friends, blooming gardens, and the joy of responsible pet ownership.

AWL shines spotlight on women's achievements and contributions

On International Women's Day, 8 March, the American Women's League (AWL) inaugurated 'Women's History Month', bringing together American and Kuwaiti businesswomen, as well as influential decision-makers.

The event was graced by the presence of the Ambassador of the United States H.E. Karen Hideko Sasahara, and Kuwaiti media personality and producer Sheikha Abrar Al-Sabah, alongside over 100 women in Kuwait. AWL President, Elizabeth Ayala, delivered the opening remarks, emphasizing the significance of honoring women's accomplishments and their contributions to society.

For her part, Sheikha Abrar Al-Sabah discussed Kuwait's role in the media and entertainment

sector, sharing her personal journey as a member of the Kuwaiti royal family working in the production field. She commended the efforts of her grandfather, Sheikh Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah, in developing the media and entertainment sector during his tenure as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Information from 1962 to 1981. She expressed her dedication to continuing in his footsteps, stating: "Our vision is for Kuwait to regain its dominance in the media industry and become the main center for high-quality entertainment content in our region. Based on this vision, I founded Abbey's Productions and Barwa Productions."

Speaking about the misrepresentation of Arab women in global media, Sheikha Abrar said, "My



goal is to produce content that accurately portrays the Gulf States to a global audience, especially in terms of the portrayal of women in this region."

She also emphasized the challenges of working in this field as a woman and mother of four, as well

as the obstacles she faced in entrepreneurship during the pandemic. Sheikha Abrar praised the efforts of Gulf women who have recently revitalized the dynamics of this field in the Arab world.

In her address to the gathering, the US ambassador emphasized the significance of women's empowerment and their role in fostering cultural bridges. She lauded the active and influential role of women in supporting and nurturing communities worldwide. She also highlighted the several successes achieved by women locally and globally. In addition, the US envoy emphasized the importance of reflecting on past accomplishments and pointed out the significance of regularly reviewing our achievements as the primary motivation to progress further.



Bangladesh Embassy organizes 'Tourism Exhibition -2024'



The Embassy of Bangladesh organized a day-long 'Tourism Exhibition-2024' on 7 March at the Al-Shaheed Park (Phase Two) in Kuwait City. The exhibition was held as part of celebrations marking the fifty-year (Golden Jubilee) of diplomatic ties between Bangladesh and Kuwait.

Assistant Undersecretary for the Tourism Sector at the Ministry of Information of Kuwait, Osamah H. Almekhyal, graced the occasion as the chief guest. Among others attending the

event were ambassadors and members of the diplomatic corps in Kuwait, high-ranking government officials, tour operators from both Bangladesh and Kuwait, members of the Traveler Association of Kuwait, members of the Bangladeshi community in Kuwait, and representatives from the print and electronic media.

The daylong exhibition commenced with welcoming remarks from H.E. Major General (Retd.) MdAshikuzzaman, the ambassador of

Bangladesh. In his address to the gathering, the Bangladesh envoy focused on the tourism sector of his country and urged everyone to visit the Asian country at their convenience to experience the natural beauty and hospitality of the Bangladeshi people.

Throughout the exhibition, colorful posters, banners, and boards adorned with beautiful photographs, along with audio-visual presentations, were displayed to showcase various tourist attractions of

Bangladesh. Promotional brochures, books, flyers, and handicrafts were distributed to visitors. An enticing raffle draw was also organized during the exhibition, offering air tickets and hotel accommodations as prizes to lucky winners.

In celebration of the Golden Jubilee of Bangladesh-Kuwait relations, which falls in April 2024, the embassy of Bangladesh is planning to undertake various programs and events throughout 2024.



Lesotho Ambassador visits The Times Kuwait

Ambassador of Lesotho H.E. Boomo Sofonia visited The Times Kuwait office last week and met with Executive Managing Editor Reaven D'Souza and Marketing Director Wilson D'cunha.

Ambassador Sofonia held wide ranging discussions to promote tourism to Lesotho, as well as enhancing trade and investment.

A small, mountainous, landlocked country, Lesotho is surrounded by its much larger neighbor, South Africa. Often known as 'Kingdom in the Sky', Lesotho is packed with the most breathtaking mountain ranges. People say Lesotho dwells in the sky because it is the only country in the world which is entirely above 1,000 meters elevation.



Viet Nam Embassy in Kuwait holds tourism meeting with travel agencies

By Ricky Laxa
Staff Writer

The Embassy of Viet Nam in Kuwait held a tourism meet up with the travel agencies in Kuwait to provide more information on latest developments with Kuwait Airways flights to the country and easy visa access at the embassy. In addition to travel agencies present were social media influencers and journalists of the local newspapers held at Coffilia Vietnamese Coffee Shop in Mangaf.

In his welcome remarks, the Vietnamese envoy stated that he was overwhelmed with the interest of the attendees towards Viet Nam. He also added that visa application to Viet Nam is via only and that personal appearance to embassy is not necessary, the processing often last for three day but in most cases immediately

issued upon application. "I am also delighted to announce that the final stage agreement between Kuwait Airways and Vietnam Airlines is on its final stage and hopefully be implemented by the month of April this year" stated Vietnamese Envoy. Furthermore he announced that the shorter trips and transit hours will be shorter and flights to other destinations will be available at least two flights via Vietnam Airlines.

"Visiting Vietnam is worth your trip especially with our amazing weather and destinations ideal for everyone and the hospitality of our people is incomparable" added Ambassador.

Some of those present in the event were travel agency representatives from ITL World Travel Management, Fly World, Essra Bloushi, popular Kuwaiti Blogger and journalists from English and Arabic media.

Banks working hours during Ramadan

Deputy Secretary General of the Kuwait Banking Association, Sheikha Al-Issa, stated that the timing of receiving customers at local banks during the holy month of Ramadan will be from 10 am to 1:30 pm, based on the circular issued by the Central Bank of Kuwait in this regard.

Al-Issa added local banks will receive customers as follows:

- Main centers and branches operating

one shift from 10 am to 1:30 pm.

- Branches operating at Kuwait International Airport: 24/7, based on working hours determined by each bank at its discretion.
- Branches in commercial complexes — from 11:00 am to 3:30 pm except and from 8:00 pm to 11:30 pm Fridays.

She went on to say, "With the possibility of a slight discrepancy in the working hours of



commercial mall branches, determined by each bank at its discretion, in coordination with the management of the commercial mall in which the branch is located, customers can also complete their banking transactions easily, conveniently and securely through bank applications on smart phones, or via devices." The automated withdrawals and deposits, however, will be available in various regions of Kuwait.





By Hermoine Macura-Noble
Special to The Times Kuwait

London, known for its rich history and cultural diversity, has been a top destination for Gulf travelers seeking opulence and sophistication. As the demand for luxury accommodations continues to rise, an array of five-star hotels in the heart of the British capital caters to the discerning tastes of Gulf visitors.

The Athenaeum: This five-star hotel, located in the heart of London, effortlessly combines timeless elegance with modern comforts, creating an ambiance catering to business and leisure travelers. The property of choice for families and many Gulf travelers, the Mayfair art deco property also features serviced residences and cheerful kid-friendly additions.

Upon entering the hotel, guests are immediately struck by the sophisticated and welcoming atmosphere of the lobby and the contemporary design adorned with plush furnishings and exquisite artwork. The rooms boast tasteful decor, plush bedding, and state-of-the-art amenities. The expansive windows offered breathtaking views of Green Park, allowing natural light to flood the



room during the day. The thoughtful design of the room created a serene retreat in the midst of bustling London. One of the standout features of The Athenaeum is its commitment to sustainability. The hotel has implemented various eco-friendly initiatives, from energy-efficient lighting to locally sourced and organic products in their restaurants.

The Ritz London: Synonymous with timeless elegance, The Ritz stands as an iconic symbol of



luxury in the heart of Mayfair. Gulf travelers seeking a classic and refined experience will be immersed in lavish surroundings, with meticulously designed rooms and suites, personalized services, and gastronomic delights. The Ritz offers an exquisite blend of British tradition and contemporary comfort, making it a preferred choice for those desiring a truly opulent stay.

The Dorchester: Nestled in the upscale neighborhood of Park Lane, The Dorchester is a beacon of sophistication. This legendary hotel boasts sumptuously decorated rooms and suites, each with the latest modern amenities. The Dorchester provides a haven of tranquility for Gulf travelers, complete with a spa offering exclusive treatments and Michelin-starred dining experiences. The hotel's attention to detail and commitment to unparalleled service ensure an indulgent retreat for discerning visitors.

The Shangri-La at The Shard: For Gulf travelers searching for a contemporary and breathtaking experience, The Shard offers unparalleled panoramic views of London's skyline. This luxury hotel is located within the iconic Shard building and provides tranquility amidst the vibrant city. With lavishly appointed rooms, a world-class spa, and Michelin-starred dining, The Shangri-La offers a modern and sophisticated escape for Gulf visitors seeking a unique blend of luxury and innovation.

The Bulgari Hotel London: Situated in the prestigious neighborhood of Knightsbridge, The Bulgari Hotel London is a fusion of Italian style and British luxury. Gulf travelers can revel in the hotel's

lavish suites adorned with exquisite furnishings and state-of-the-art technology. The spa, adorned with gold leaf mosaic details, and the tantalizing cuisine at the hotel's restaurant, Rivea, add to the allure of this opulent haven.

The Savoy: With a history dating back to 1889, The Savoy is a legendary hotel located on the banks of the River Thames. Renowned for its timeless glamour, Gulf travelers can bask in the hotel's Art Deco-inspired rooms and suites, each offering a blend of classic charm and modern sophistication. The Savoy's commitment to exceptional service and iconic status make it an ideal choice for Gulf visitors seeking a luxurious retreat in London.



The Sanderson: Nestled in the heart of London's vibrant West End, the Sanderson Hotel is an iconic testament to contemporary luxury and timeless elegance. With its avant-garde design and innovative spaces, the Sanderson has earned its reputation as a haven for those seeking a unique and sophisticated stay in the bustling city.

Upon entering the Sanderson, the lobby, adorned with eclectic furnishings and captivating art installations, immediately sets the tone for the hotel's distinctive character. The design, curated by renowned interior designer Philippe Starck, is a visual feast that stimulates the senses and creates a sense of anticipation for the experiences that lie within.

The Sanderson's courtyard garden is a hidden gem in the heart of London. A tranquil oasis away from the city's hustle and bustle, the garden features lush greenery, cascading fountains, and stylish seating areas. It is an ideal retreat for guests to unwind, enjoy a leisurely afternoon tea, or sip cocktails under the stars in the evening.

From iconic establishments steeped in history to modern marvels with breathtaking views, these hotels cater to the refined tastes of Gulf visitors, ensuring an unforgettable and lavish experience in the heart of one of the world's most vibrant cities.

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Kuwait Investment Outreach Event Celebrates 125 Years of UK-Kuwait Bilateral Relations

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Kuwait Investment Outreach — an event organized by the global media group, 'The Business Year' (TBY), the Kuwait Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA), and the UK Department for Business and Trade — marked 125 years of UK-Kuwait bilateral relations, and aimed to strengthen trade and investment ties. It was an occasion to celebrate historical trade success and shape future collaborations in the key areas of innovation and economic development. The gathering also sought to foster discussions on tech-driven economic strategies and partnerships that will benefit Kuwait and the UK going forward.

The event, which took place on 5 March at The Peninsula Hotel in London, was attended by over 120 top-tier government representatives and business leaders from both economies. Representatives of both the private and public sectors gathered to explore new avenues for investment, particularly in emerging sectors that promise mutual growth and prosperity.

Kuwait's Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs, Dr. Anwar Ali Al-Muthaf, delivered the opening



remarks outlining various channels for improvement, emphasizing the need for strategic investments and economic reforms. This was followed by the keynote speech by UK Prime Minister's Special Representative for Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict and Minister of State (Middle East, North Africa, South Asia, United Nations, and the Commonwealth) Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, who reflected on the UK's commitment to global peace and stability, enriching the dialogue on the future of Kuwait-UK bilateral relations.

Acting Group CEO of Kuwait Finance House (KFH), Abdulwahab Al Rushood, and Senior VP of Advisory and M&A at Kuwait Financial Centre (Markaz), Abdulrazzaq T. Razooqi, also delivered

insightful speeches at the event. Al Rushood focused on innovative banking solutions and their impact on economic growth, while Razooqi delved into strategic investment approaches and M&A trends shaping the region's financial landscape. Their expertise offered valuable perspectives on advancing Kuwait's financial sector.

During the event, there were also three panel discussions. The first addressed finance and investments, highlighting key investment opportunities and financial strategies. The second panel analyzed UK-Kuwait ties from a diplomatic perspective, while the third and final panel explored areas of Technological Advancement and Digital Innovation, shedding light on the critical role of technology in shaping future economic landscapes.

Panelists in the discussion included: Chairman of the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA) and Chairman of the Commercial Bank of Kuwait, Sheikh Ahmad Al Duaij Al Sabah; CEO, Kamco Invest, Faisal Sarkhou; Founder and Chairman, Naisbitt King Asset Management Limited, Alderman Alastair King; Co-Head, Global Origination, UK Export Finance, Joanna Mobed; Minister of State in the Department for Business and Trade, Lord Dominic Johnson; Assistant Deputy of Foreign Affairs and Minister for European Affairs, Sadiq Marafi M. Marafi; Kuwaiti Ambassador to UK, Bader Al-Awadi, UK's Ambassador to Kuwait, Belinda Lewis; CEO, KNet Esam Alkhesham; Co-CEO, BPX Digital Securities Exchange, Robert Barnes; CEO, R3, David Rutter; and Cyber Security Ambassador for UK Defense and Security Exports, Department for Business and Trade, Juliette Wilcox. These discussions aimed at forging pathways for collaborative growth and innovation.

The event was promoted by KDIPA and organized by TBY, with the support of KBA, KFH, Kamco Invest, Zain, and Kuwait Finance Center – Markaz.

The Kuwait Investment Outreach event in London concluded on a positive, forward-looking note, emphasizing the collaborative spirit and shared ambitions that define the Kuwait-UK partnership. The discussions and insights shared by esteemed speakers underscored a commitment to leveraging digital innovation and financial strategies for mutual growth, setting a dynamic roadmap for the future of bilateral economic relations.

Fast-mimicking diet helps reduce aging

A new study by researchers at the University of Southern California shows that a diet which mimics fasting can reverse biological age, on an average by two and half years, with adherents of the diet showing reduced signs of immune system aging, as well as insulin resistance and liver fat.

The study adds to increasing evidence supporting the beneficial effects of the fasting-mimicking diet (FMD). The FMD is a five-day-a-month diet high in unsaturated fats and low in overall calories, protein, and carbohydrates.



The diet is designed to mimic the effects of a water-only fast — drinking only water for 48 to 72 hours — while still providing necessary nutrients and making it much easier for people to complete the fast.

Fasting or restricting calories appears to induce 'autophagy', which is the body's process of clearing out old, damaged cells to make space for new ones. Autophagy is initiated when

cells are stressed or deprived of nutrients, or when cells naturally decrease in activity with age. In other words, autophagy plays a significant role in slowing aging. The new study is the first one to show that a food-based intervention, which does not require extensive dietary or other lifestyle changes, can make people biologically younger, based on both changes in risk factors for aging as well as diseases. While chronological age refers to how many years someone has lived, biological age is a measure of how well cells and tissues in the body are functioning.

Biological age is usually assessed by the damage suffered by various cells due to the impact of genetic, nutritional, lifestyle and comorbidity factors. For their study, the researchers analyzed the FMD's effects in two clinical trial populations, each with men and women between the ages of 18 and 70. The FMD consisted of plant-based soups, energy bars, energy drinks, chip snacks, and tea portioned out for five days, as well as a supplement providing high levels of minerals, vitamins, and essential fatty acids.

Patients who were randomized to the fasting-mimicking diet underwent 3-4 monthly cycles, adhering to the FMD for five days, then ate a normal diet for 25 days. Patients in the control groups were instructed to eat either a normal or Mediterranean-style diet. An analysis of blood samples from trial participants showed that patients in the FMD group had lower diabetes risk factors, including less insulin resistance and lower average blood sugar, as measured by HbA1c, the common test used to diagnose for prediabetes and diabetes. Magnetic resonance imaging also revealed a decrease in abdominal fat as well as fat within the liver, improvements associated with a reduced risk of metabolic syndrome. In addition, the FMD appeared to increase the lymphoid-to-myeloid ratio — an indicator of a more youthful immune system.



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- HBA1C
- Creatinine
- Urea
- Urine Microalbumin
- Internal Medicine & Diabetologist Consultation or GP Dr. Consultation

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- سكر تراكمي
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