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Tourism, a cornerstone of economic growth

THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

Everyone one talks to in Kuwait, the public, the politicians, and policymakers agree that developing tourism is vital to boost economic growth and development of the country. There is also a similar consensus among people in the country that tourism in Kuwait has a long way to go to rival the many natural and constructed tourist attractions available in the region, especially in neighboring Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states.

For its part, the government emphasizes that developing tourism has the potential to support its economic, financial and social priorities, including driving economic diversification, encouraging greater private sector participation in the economy, and providing national cadre with gainful employment opportunities. With



everyone in agreement that tourism is a vital sector, why has it remained mired in an obsolete ecosystem that is forever trying to catch-up with its regional peers?

One needs to look no further than the prevailing political instability to realize why investors and entrepreneurs have shied away from tourism investments in the country. Returns from initial investments in the tourism sector are usually spread over a decade or more; as such, sustained political stability is vital to attract both local and international tourism investments.

Coherent and consistent tourism programs and policies that are prioritized and supported by repeated governments in office are also critical to encourage investment in the tourism sector. Experts point to the persistent political instability and the absence of cogent tourism policies and strategies, as among the factors

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India, fastest growing global economy, hits milestone \$3.5 trillion mark

H. E. Dr. Adarsh Swaika, the Indian Ambassador to Kuwait, said India is the only major economy to sustain a growth rate exceeding 6 percent annually over the past decade, with a gross domestic product growth of 7.2 percent last year.

Indian Ambassador H.E. Dr. Adarsh Swaika, remarked that the foundation of Indian-Kuwaiti relations lies in trade and commerce, and emphasized its enduring relevance in modern times as both nations undergo transformation. India, being the fifth largest economy globally, and Kuwait, with its ambitious 2035 vision, face "the challenge of turning this foundation into an opportunity", said the Indian envoy, while adding that "we need to identify feasible links and conduct studies to maximize benefits."

Ambassador Swaika was elaborating on trade and finance between the two countries during the activities of the second edition of the India-Kuwait Investment Conference, organized by the Indian Embassy at the Four Seasons Hotel on 23 April.

In his address to the gathering, Ambassador Swaika noted that India, the fastest-growing major economy globally and the fifth largest economy, boasts a gross domestic product (GDP) of \$3.5 trillion. It is anticipated to become the third largest economy in the world by 2027-2028, hosting the largest working population globally, numbering 522 million people. India is the only major economy to sustain a growth rate exceeding 6 percent annually over the past decade, with a GDP growth of 7.2 percent last year.

Ambassador Swaika added that India has consistently attracted foreign direct investment (FDI), reflecting investors' confidence in the country's economic fundamentals and growth prospects. He explained that a national system for single-window clearance has been implemented at both the central and state government levels. Foreign direct investment flows during the past ten years amounted to \$596 billion, with annual foreign direct investment doubling within eight



years from \$35 billion to \$84 billion last year.

The ambassador explained that India offers a variety of investment opportunities in various sectors, including manufacturing, infrastructure, renewable energy, technology, healthcare, and agriculture. Initiatives such as 'Made in India' and 'Digital India' work to enhance the attractiveness of investment in India.

The Ambassador stated that the Productivity-Linked Investment Program, with financial incentives worth \$44 billion to boost domestic production in 14 priority sectors, is a major step in this regard. He noted that Apple's exports of 'Made in India' iPhones under the Production-Linked Incentive Plan system have doubled from \$5 billion to \$10 billion this year.

Ambassador Swaika stressed that India has emerged as a global hub for innovation and technology, boasting a thriving startup ecosystem and a skilled workforce. It is projected to become a trillion-dollar digital economy

by 2026 and currently hosts the world's third-largest startup ecosystem, with 80 new startups registered every day.

The Ambassador stated that none of this would have been possible without the pro-business reforms implemented by the Indian government. Over the past five years, India has jumped 79 places in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index. Initiatives such as Goods and Services Tax (GST), Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), among others, have streamlined processes and created a more favorable investment environment.

Saleh Al Sulami, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Federation of Investment Companies, highlighted the enduring and prosperous Kuwait-India relationship, emphasizing trust, mutual respect, and shared economic interests. He noted that this partnership, evolving beyond diplomacy, has fostered continuous cooperation and fruitful investments. India and Kuwait have a longstanding history of collaboration

across sectors such as energy, infrastructure, finance, and technology. Their strategic locations and vibrant economies complement each other, offering ample opportunities for investment and regional trade.

Al-Sulami added, "The value of bilateral trade between Kuwait and India amounted to about \$13.8 billion in the fiscal year 2022-23, reflecting a continuous upward trend over the past decade. India stands as one of Kuwait's largest trading partners, with main exports including petroleum products, chemicals, and machinery, while imports from India encompass textiles, medicines, and agricultural products."

He highlighted Kuwaiti investments in India surpass \$30 billion across sectors like infrastructure, communications, and renewable energy. Indian companies reciprocate with investments in Kuwait's construction, healthcare, and hospitality sectors, fostering cultural and personal connections alongside economic growth.

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Work transfers permitted after three years, or KD300 fee

• New rules allow worker transfer after three years or for a 300-dinar fee, subject to sponsor approval, enhancing private sector hiring flexibility without impacting domestic workers.

• While work permit issuance continues, there is ongoing assessment to regulate specific professions within the Kuwaiti labor market.

Director of the Public Relations and Media Department and official spokeswoman for the Public Authority for Manpower, Aseel Al-Mazyad, confirmed the enactment of a significant amendment to recruitment policies for private sector workers.

The new rules, effective from 1 June, allows workers to transfer after three years of service with a sponsor, or on paying a fee of KD300, subject to sponsor approval. Notably, these changes do not apply to domestic workers but are aimed at enhancing flexibility in private sector staffing.

The decision streamlines the recruitment process, eliminating previous activity-based rate structures. The new law will be in effect for one year, during which period it will undergo review by the authority's Board of Directors.

Al-Mazyad also mentioned the digitalization



efforts, with work permits now accessible through the authority's 'Ashal' app for business owners, are part of a broader strategy to integrate services into the government's 'Sahel' application. While work permit issuance continues, there is also ongoing assessment to regulate specific professions within the Kuwaiti labor market.

The authority disclosed that it will celebrate World Occupational Safety Day next Sunday, themed 'Towards a Safe Work Environment'. The event will feature a workshop covering seven topics, with participation from seven government agencies. Each agency will discuss its specialty at the authority's Occupational Safety Center throughout the full day, which includes discussions on inspection mechanisms and new procedures in occupational safety and security, along with safety methods.

Electricity crisis looms as summer approaches



Gradual increase in temperature as spring slowly cedes to summer is also reflected in a corresponding spike in the electrical load index. As we head to searing temperatures during the height of summer, the fear among top officials at the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy (MEW) is that this year could mark regular power outages as electricity consumption exceeds production.

The summer of 2024 could define how the ministry plans to tackle what it terms a 'three-year electricity production shortages crisis', due to lack of any projects slated for completion in the next three years. The crisis, expected to start in the summer of 2025 and extend until 2028, is predicted to worsen over the three-year period due to ongoing urban expansion and the several new residential areas coming up in Kuwait. In addition the obsolescence of production units currently in power generation stations and the high maintenance costs associated with them. Further exacerbate the crisis.

The electricity and water crunch that the ministry is currently facing is due in large measure to the ministry's own delays in proposing and pushing through approvals to implement several mega electricity and water production projects, including those prepared by the ministry, as well as projects through the Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects (KAPP).

Two fact-finding committees, commissioned by the ministry in the last year or so, have come up with several recommendations to tide over the current crisis. Among the suggestions are to introduce during peak summer, in particular if temperatures reach dangerously high levels, a planned power cut for farms, chalets, and businesses during peak hours between one and three in the afternoon."

Other recommendations include utilizing the Gulf interconnection network formed between the six Gulf Cooperation Council countries. While this can temporarily alleviate the expected electricity crisis, it cannot prevent it during the upcoming summer seasons, as a daily shortage of 1,000 megawatts is expected in summer 2025. However, due to technical limitations, including size of the interconnection lines, the ministry cannot borrow more than 600 megawatts daily from the Interconnection Authority.

Around 13,000 megawatts of electricity generating projects, both by the MEW and the KAPP are pending approval and implementation. These include KAPP projects such as the second and third phase of Al-Zour North Station project with a combined capacity of 2,700 MW; the first phase of Al-Khairan project with a capacity of 1,800 MW; and the 4,500 MW renewable energy project at Al-Shaqaya.

Among the pending projects by the MEW are the first phase of Nuwaiseeb station with an electricity generation capacity of 3,000 MW, and the fourth phase of the Subiya station with a capacity of 1,050 MW.

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TBY, KDIPA co-host the 'Kuwait Innovation Forum'

Staff Report

The Business Year (TBY), a prominent global media group offering insights into dynamic markets for 15 years, partnered with Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) to host 'The Kuwait Innovation Forum' and unveil 'The Business Year: Kuwait 2024', TBY's seventh annual publication covering the Kuwaiti economy.

KDIPA, an economic enabler in Kuwait, has been aiding businesses in adopting resilient, agile, and sustainable practices aligning with Vision 2035.

The event, held on April 23 at the Arraya Ballroom in Kuwait City, saw over 240 leaders from Kuwait's economy, including representatives from both private and public sectors. They convened to explore

the potential of technology and innovation to enhance Kuwait's business environment.

The opening remarks were delivered by the Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic and Investment Affairs, Dr. Anwar Ali Al-Mudhaf, followed by presentations from Khaled AlShamlan, CEO of Kuwait Finance House, and Waleed Al Khashti, Chief Corporate Affairs and Relations Officer at Zain Kuwait.

The event featured two panels. The first panel discussed Kuwait's development landscape, focusing on real estate, infrastructure, and innovation. It included Mazen Hawwa, Vice-Chairman and Group CEO of United Real Estate Co.; Dr. Ahmad Alshorbagy, Head of Projects and International Dispute Resolution at Al-Yaqout & Al-Fouzan Legal Group; and Abdullah Al Saleh, CEO of Sakan. The discussion was

moderated by Nasser Al Khreibut, DG for Planning and Design at PAHW.

The second panel focused on the digitalization landscape and featured Sheikh Ahmad Duaij Jaber Al Sabah, Chairman of the Kuwait Banking Association; David Rutter, CEO of R3; Faisal Alharoun, Managing Director-Kuwait at Tap Payments; and Dalal Alrayes, Co-Founder & CEO at Spare. Alex Kronic, Senior Consultant at Al Tijari, moderated the discussion.

The event was co-organized by The Business Year and KDIPA, with the support of Kuwait Finance House (KFH), Zain, United Real Estate Co., BIG – Beyout Investment Group, Sakan, Commercial Bank of Kuwait – Al-Tijari, Warba Bank, Tap Payments, Kuwait Banking Association (KBA), Al-Yaqout & Al-Fouzan Legal Group, M2R Group, Al Qabas, Al-Mulla Rental and Leasing, AmCham



Kuwait, and the German Business Council Kuwait and ITL World

The Business Year: Kuwait 2024 will be available on major business information platforms, including Bloomberg Terminal, Refinitiv Eikon, Dow Jones Factiva, and FactSet. It is also accessible on PressReader, Google Books, Issuu, and at thebusinessyear.com.

LuLu Hypermarket launches 22nd anniversary celebrations in Kuwait



LuLu Hypermarket, the retail major in the Region, marked its 22nd anniversary of operations in Kuwait with a mega celebration on 24 April at the AlRai outlet of the brand.

Top management of LuLu Hypermarket in Kuwait cut the ceremonial cake in the presence of a large gathering of shoppers and well-

wishers who had gathered to congratulate the brand for its more than two decades of successful operations in Kuwait.

The event also launched a week-long 'anniversary-sale' promotion that offers up to 70 percent discount on items across all categories in the hypermarket. A highlight of

the anniversary shopping extravaganza, which is slated to run from 24 – 30 April across all outlets in the country, is that 22 exclusive and amazing products from various categories are offered daily at incredible discounts.

In a statement on the occasion, top LuLu Kuwait management expressed their thanks to all their

patrons in the country for their continued love, trust, support and encouragement of the LuLu brand over the past 22 years. They also renewed their commitment to bring world-class products at the most competitive prices to customers in Kuwait, and to exert all efforts to further enhance their shopping experience at LuLu Hypermarket.

IBPC seminar unlocks investment opportunities for NRIs

The seminar focused on leveraging advantages for foreign investors and non-resident Indians, with a particular emphasis on the benefits tailored for NRIs in GIFT City.

The Indian Business and Professional Council (IBPC), under the patronage of the Embassy of India in Kuwait, organized a successful seminar, titled "Investment Opportunities for NRIs," at Radisson Blu Hotel.

The seminar was held in collaboration with esteemed partners including the International

Financial Services Centres Authority (IFSCA) – GIFT City, Invest India, Aequitas, CII, and NIIF.

tailored for NRIs in GIFT City. Mr. Kaizar T Shakir, Honorary Vice Chairman of IBPC Kuwait, warmly welcomed the audience, setting the stage for an informative and engaging session.

The event was graced by the esteemed presence of His Excellency Dr. Adarsh Swaika, the Indian Ambassador to Kuwait, who encouraged NRIs to seize this opportunity to become an integral part of India's growth story. Dr. Swaika emphasized the Government of India's ambitious 'One District One Product' (ODOP) initiative and urged attendees to explore the products showcased during the seminar.

The IBPC Executive Committee, led by Mr. Gurvinder Singh Lamba, Honorary Chairman, Mr. Soly Mathew, Honorary Secretary, Mr. Kaizar T Shakir, Honorary Vice Chairman, Mr. Suresh K P, Honorary Joint Secretary, and Mr. Sunit Arora, Honorary Treasurer, welcomed the Indian Ambassador with a flower bouquet at the event.



Mr. K. Rajaraman, Chairperson of IFSCA – GIFT City, introduced the diverse investment opportunities available for NRIs at Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City). He highlighted the exceptional progress India has made in recent years, citing significant reforms such as GST and transformative changes in the

banking sector that have propelled India onto a robust growth trajectory.



Mr. Rajaraman underscored that GIFT City provides an environment to become a global financial hub akin to Singapore and Hong Kong, making it an attractive destination for international investments.

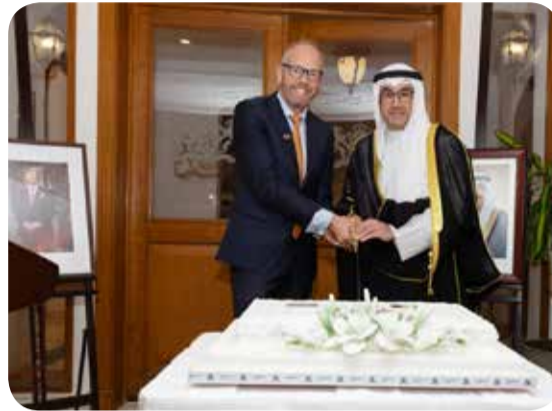
Mr. Pavan Shah, General Manager of IFSCA, delivered an insightful presentation on various seamless procedures, starting with simple bank deposits at GIFT City. He shed light on the competitive returns offered by all banks operating within GIFT City and elaborated on the various fund management services and portfolio management services (PMS) available in foreign currencies.

The seminar also included presentations from established institutions already situated at GIFT City, such as HDFC Life and Aequitas. Presentations were also given by Chief Executives of other companies like Bharat Freight Group, Just Rojgar Solutions, and ZR Renewable Energy. Representatives from these organizations outlined the diverse investment avenues and opportunities awaiting NRIs within their respective sectors.

The event attracted enthusiastic participation from the Indian business community and invited guests, most of whom were eager to explore the vast investment potential that India offers and to be part of India's progress.

Netherlands key economic partner for Kuwait in Europe

The Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for Europe, Ambassador Sadeq Marafi, praised the depth of Kuwaiti-Dutch ties, particularly in economic and commercial aspects, especially within the energy sector.



Staff Report

Ambassador Sadeq Marafi, the Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for Europe, praised the depth of Kuwaiti-Dutch relations, particularly in economic and commercial aspects, especially within the energy sector.

In a statement during its participation in the Dutch embassy's King's Day celebration, Marafi said, "As the two countries celebrate the 60th anniversary of their diplomatic relations, the Netherlands stands as a significant economic partner for Kuwait in Europe, hosting over 200 Kuwaiti gas stations."

On the issue of exempting Kuwaitis from the Schengen visa, Marafi stated, "The European Parliament will hold elections next June, and the competent committees will be formed to address recent incidents." On the other hand, he denied that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is in the process of reducing expenses regarding its embassy in Europe, stating, "There is no current trend towards

reduction, but there is an idea for the administration to expand." Emphasizing the continuous tours to European countries and meetings with the heads of European diplomatic missions accredited in Kuwait, Marafi confirmed the success of his visit to Turkey, describing the series of incidents he conducted there as "excellent."

"In 1750, the Netherlands was the most active European trading partner in the Gulf region and with Kuwait, where my predecessors and grandparents first became trading partners," said His Excellency Laurens Westhoff, Ambassador of the Netherlands to Kuwait.

Kuwait and the Netherlands share many principles, and as relatively small states with big and strong neighbors, our two countries adopt the principle of a rules-based international order. Kuwait and the Netherlands have often stood side by side in promoting and defending the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the inviolability of internationally recognized borders," the ambassador added.

The Dutch ambassador stated that during

these years, European integration has made the Netherlands a gateway to Europe. Countries such as Kuwait have chosen our country as an entry point to the European Union, a growing market with 450 million customers where goods and services move freely between borders, without paper procedures and tariffs.

"A 60-year celebration of relationships doesn't merely entail reflecting on the past. Issues like food security and climate change demand new partnerships. Therefore, we collaborate with research institutes such as the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research, the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, and Kuwait University to cultivate new branches for our

strong and promising relationship," Ambassador Westhoff said.

Royal Dutch Navy's vital role in Kuwait liberation

Also, returning to 1990/1991, Kuwait and the Netherlands stood side by side when the Royal Dutch Navy joined the International Coalition for the Liberation of Kuwait. They contributed four frigates, three mine hunters, and a supply ship operating in the Arabian Gulf. Nearly 2,000 Dutch naval forces participated, one of whom, Lt. Col. Peter de Groot, currently serves as the military attaché at our embassy," Westhoff added.



Filipino domestic workers receive certificates on Basic Baking Scholarship

By Ricky Laxa
Staff Writer

Masterclass Lifestyle Workshops organized a graduation ceremony for 30 Filipino domestic workers who were presented certificates for attending a one-day course on 'essential bread making', conducted by Masterclass.

The ceremony, which was held at The Walk Mall on 26 April, was attended by officials from the Embassy of the Philippines, and representatives of the sponsors and Masterclass, as well as the proud graduates. In a brief speech, the guest of honor at the event Assistant Labor Attaché of the Philippine Embassy the Hon. Cathy Duladul mentioned that the day course should be able to contribute knowledge and skill to everyone who attended the workshops.

"This can change for the better your future and help in your next jobs, maybe even helping you establish your own small businesses to start with," commented Duladul. She also provided added information to the services of the Migrant Workers Office in Kuwait and Overseas Workers Welfare Administration. "I urge each one of you to pursue what you have started and thank Masterclass Lifestyle Workshops for initiating this project" added Duladul.

Among the highlights of the event were the

processional graduation march by the recipients, and the awarding of certificates of appreciation to the State of Kuwait Lady Eagles Club and Ooredoo for sponsoring the series of classes. Masterchef Mariefe Torio for spearheading the classes, Chef Juanita Balmores for her generous contribution in providing essential ingredients, Kuwait's top Filipino blogger, Mr. Pot TV, for his assistance in disseminating news of the classes, and The Times Kuwait for being a media partner to the project.

A multi-award winning vocalist Renz Dioquino delivered an inspirational song 'Magsimula ka' (Start Now) encouraging each one to live their lives well and find success in what they do.

The one day scholarship program was initiated by the former Philippine Labor Attaché Honorable Nasser Mustafa, and Duladul, which has so far produced over 400 graduates. Some of the graduates have pursued the workshops and are now accomplished entrepreneurs in the Philippines and bakery owners. A testimonial speech was given by a graduate on how she earns from what she learned from a one day class and how it helps her in some ways. The event ended with snacks catered by Berry Blast.

Masterclass Lifestyles Workshops announced that registration for Batch 3 is now open, interested individuals may send messages to the whatsapp number 5565029.

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Bangladesh ambassador praises Kuwait's infrastructure funding

H. E. Major General Md Ashikuzzaman said, "We value the sincere support of the KFAED in establishing numerous infrastructure projects that have had a tremendous impact on our social and economic progress."

Staff Report

His Excellency Major General Md Ashikuzzaman, Bangladesh's Ambassador to the country, has conveyed his nation's appreciation to Kuwait for its consistent support, notably through the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED), in funding several infrastructure projects in Bangladesh.

During a reception at the Bangladesh embassy commemorating the nation's National Day, its 54th independence anniversary, and 50 years of diplomatic ties with Kuwait, Ambassador Ashikuzzaman emphasized the strong and enduring friendship and cooperation shared between the two countries.



military cooperation between Bangladesh and Kuwait. "After the liberation of Kuwait, the Bangladeshi military unit BMC served here under the command of the Kuwaiti Armed Forces in a project called Operation Kuwait Bonargathan (OKP)," he explained.

Currently, approximately 5,000 Bangladeshi Armed Forces personnel are deployed alongside Kuwaiti forces, a testament to the trust and confidence that His Highness the Amir has placed in Bangladesh.

Ambassador Ashikuzzaman underscored Bangladesh's position as the second-largest economy in South Asia and its projected status as one of the world's top 20 economies by 2038. He attributed this growth to the country's ability to attract substantial foreign investments, macroeconomic stability, robust remittance inflows, and its Vision 2041 development strategy.

In line with Vision 2041, the Bangladeshi government has established 100 Special Economic Zones (SEZs) to attract potential investors. Ambassador Ashikuzzaman extended an invitation to Kuwait, as a development partner, and other friendly nations to invest in these SEZs and share the benefits of mutual growth and prosperity.

The ambassador also highlighted Bangladesh's position as the leading contributor of peacekeeping forces under the UN blue helmet, a role it has held since 2020.

Despite its dense population, Bangladesh has provided generous shelter to millions of Rohingya refugees and forcibly displaced Myanmar nationals. He expressed gratitude to the Kuwaiti government, the UNHCR, and other organizations for their continuous support in this humanitarian effort.

Condemning Israel's recent actions in Palestine, Ambassador Ashikuzzaman called for an immediate end to the Israeli atrocities.

"We sincerely appreciate the support of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the leadership and people of Kuwait for their continued assistance to us and our citizens in Kuwait over the past five decades," Ambassador Ashikuzzaman stated.

The ambassador emphasized the significant impact of KFAED's infrastructure projects on Bangladesh's socio-economic development. "We value the sincere support of the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development in establishing numerous infrastructure projects that have had a tremendous impact on our social and economic progress," he added.

Ambassador Ashikuzzaman reaffirmed Bangladesh's commitment to further enhancing bilateral cooperation with Kuwait in all domains. He proposed exploring new areas of collaboration, including food security, healthcare, climate change, renewable energy, green technology, information and communication technology, and digital transformation.

The ambassador highlighted the exceptional

City Hypermarket hosts Loyac Initiative For Eid Clothing & Toys



As is customary for every Eid, City Hypermarket carried out the Eid Clothing & Toys initiative in collaboration with Loyac in their Shuwaikh branch, located in Manara Mall. The initiative comprises of an evening at City Hypermarket, hosting the 75 children with shopping for Eid clothing, enjoying an Iftar meal together, and celebrating with a fun-packed evening at Cosmo Kids entertainment area.

The initiative, started in 2021, has been a regular one as part of City Hypermarket's social responsibility commitment, especially at a time where families should be enjoying these joyous occasions together, without having to worry about how to provide for Eid with their children and loved ones. It also goes hand-in-hand with Loyac's commitment of supporting the community.

Speaking on this, City Hypermarket Deputy CEO Nasser Alghanim said, "Our mission of supporting the youth in Kuwait is made possible through the efforts from the esteemed Loyac organization, and we are committed to always being an active player in the community. We believe it is our responsibility and every Kuwaiti company's responsibility to ensure that the younger generations get all the support possible to get the right foundation for their future."

To note, this is just one of the ways in which City Hypermarket has collaborated with Loyac in support of the community and continues to do so. Another noteworthy initiative is City

Hypermarket's participation with Loyac's Summer internship, where young adults starting out their careers have had an opportunity to work at City Hypermarket's various stores and the Head Office to gain practical and professional experience as a foundation for their future careers.

LOYAC is a non-profit organization established in Kuwait in 2002 with an aim of empowering youth to become impactful leaders in society. Empowering the youth through unique opportunities to evolve into highly effective leaders. Enlightened youth for peace and prosperity.

Established in 1999, City Hypermarket Company in Kuwait is one of the leading hypermarket groups in Kuwait, which was previously known as City Center, and the name was changed to keep pace with the developments witnessed by its branches and expansion in the Gulf with the opening of its first branch in the State of Qatar. Over the years, it have been known for its core ideology: customer service with a wide range of high-quality products at competitive prices. It has continued to evolve over the decades to meet customer demands by constantly introducing new and innovative concepts and simplifying the shopping experience across all its branches. City Hypermarket's flagship store – located in Salmiya – spans over 25,000 square meters, making it one of the largest supermarkets in the entire region.

Kuwait Radio launches first-ever Hindi program

The first-ever Hindi radio broadcast has started in Kuwait, the Indian Embassy in Kuwait said on Monday. The Indian Embassy in Kuwait lauded Kuwait's Ministry of Information for starting a Hindi Programme on Kuwait Radio on FM 93.3 and AM 96.3 every Sunday.

The Indian Embassy in Kuwait noted that this step taken will further strengthen the ties between the two nations.

In a post on X, the Indian Embassy in Kuwait stated, "Start of first ever Hindi Radio broadcast in Kuwait! Embassy of India expresses appreciation to MOI for starting a Hindi programme on Kuwait Radio on FM 93.3 and AM 96.3 on every Sunday (8.30-9 pm) starting 21 April 2024, a step that will further strengthen India-Kuwait."

The Indian community with a strength of around 1 million is the largest expatriate community in Kuwait and is regarded as the community of first preference among the expatriate communities, according to Indian Embassy in Kuwait.

Professionals like engineers, doctors, chartered accountants, scientists, software experts, management consultants, architects; technicians and nurses; retail traders and businessmen reside in Kuwait.

The Indian Business Community in Kuwait has carved a niche in the Kuwaiti market in retail and distributorship. Notably, India and Kuwait enjoy traditionally friendly relations, which are rooted in history and have stood



the test of time, according to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

India has been a natural trading partner of Kuwait, and until 1961, the Indian rupee was the legal tender in Kuwait. The year 2021-22 marked the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

On April 17, the Indian ambassador to Kuwait, Adarsh Swaika, called on the Kuwait Deputy Prime Minister, Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah, and lauded his expatriate-friendly measures instituted during his tenure and apprised him of developments in the Indian community.

"Amb Adarsh Swaika called on the Dy PM & Minister of Defence and Acting Minister of Interior H.E. Sheikh Fahad Yousef Saud Al-Sabah. Amb thanked the Dy PM for the expatriate-friendly measures instituted during his tenure & apprised him of developments related to the Indian community," the Indian Embassy in Kuwait posted on X.



Direct flights to Belgium a priority

Belgium to celebrate 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations with Kuwait



His Excellency Christian Domes, Belgian Ambassador to Kuwait, stated that opening a direct flight route is a priority for the next stage, citing its positive impact on both popular and economic relations.

Staff Report

Belgian Ambassador H.E. Christian Domes revealed that the embassy is working to organize a series of events to commemorate the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries. In a statement to media personnel during the Francophone Diwanayah hosted at his residence last week, Ambassador Domes characterized Kuwaiti-Belgian relations as friendly and excellent, while expressing his mission to further develop them into broader horizons.

Elaborating on the anniversary celebrations, the ambassador noted that the 60th anniversary marks a significant milestone in our bilateral relations, and we have planned several events over the months to commemorate the occasion. One such event will be held on 28 April at the

Kuwait National University library. Additionally, a Kuwaiti researcher and academic has designed a brochure detailing the history of bilateral relations since their establishment.

The Ambassador added, "A reception will also be organized on 30 April to mark the 60th anniversary of the establishment of relations. Additionally, a number of Belgian artists will be invited to perform concerts in Kuwait at the end of May, as part of the efforts to bridge Eastern and Western music."

Ambassador Domes expressed his desire to arrange several high-level mutual visits. However, the current circumstances in his country, including the European Union elections in mid-June coinciding with federal elections, have kept senior state officials occupied with election duties. Despite this, the desire for mutual visits remains.

The ambassador explained that "the round of political consultations between the two countries, held last June, was successful." He described his country as a favorite tourist destination worldwide due to its central location in Europe, facilitating travel via high-speed trains throughout the continent, and its rich cultural and artistic diversity. The Belgian envoy also mentioned the challenge of accurately determining the number of Kuwaiti visitors to his country annually due to the absence of direct flights. He emphasized that opening a direct flight route is a priority for the next stage, citing its positive impact on both popular and economic relations.

He revealed that the consular section at the embassy issued about 3,000 visas last year, explaining that the number of visas does not reflect the real number of Kuwaiti tourists visiting his country, as most of them hold long-

term 'Schengen' visas from other embassies.

Regarding security cooperation between the two countries, he stated, "We have distinguished cooperation with Kuwait on the security level. We also have distinguished cooperation through NATO as a founding country of the alliance, and this cooperation enhances our monitoring of situations in the Red Sea and the Arabian Gulf."

He pointed out that the volume of trade exchange between the two countries during 2022 amounted to about 600 million euros in imports and exports, highlighting the potential to further increase trade rates given the potential that both countries enjoy.

Regarding the occasion, he praised Diwanayah as a unique aspect of Kuwaiti culture. He expressed his happiness at hosting Francophone friends from Kuwait and French speakers to exchange ideas, values, openness, and pluralism.

Italian Embassy organizes 'Made in Italy' Day at 360 Mall

Italian Ambassador H.E. Lorenzo Morini, stated that "Italian fashion, cars, jewelry, and furniture are highly appreciated by Kuwaitis, and Italian design holds a unique and cherished position in Kuwait." Ambassador Morini made these comments while inaugurating the Italian shoe design exhibition at the '360 Mall', which coincided with the 'Made in Italy' day.



Speaking in the presence of a large gathering of foreign ambassadors and diplomats accredited to Kuwait, as well as a sizable audience of citizens, particularly fans of Italian shoes, the Italian envoy noted the excellence of Italian industry and craftsmanship. Describing them as 'amazing works of art,' the Italian ambassador stated: "I am convinced that through this exhibition, we will enhance the allure of distinguished Italian products and thereby contribute to strengthening economic and cultural relations between Italy and Kuwait."

He continued, "In fact, design teaches us to open ourselves to innovation, without fear and without bias. Innovation depends on the freedom and courage to take risks and explore new paths, and at the same time, it is built on the ability to combine tradition, creativity, beauty, and achievement."

He added, "It is no coincidence that design is the cornerstone of the Made in Italy concept because design permeates the terrain of Italian culture, art, thought, and social life. In other words, the success of 'Made in Italy' depends largely on the wisdom of craftsmanship, the spirit of experimentation, and everything, on the beauty and emotion applied to the objects of our daily lives."

Emphasizing that "Italy is a country with few



natural resources," Ambassador Morini pointed out that "culture and creativity are the primary sources of prosperity for the Italian people." He noted that "the Italian creative industry is currently a driving force, producing an economic value exceeding 50 billion euros annually. This figure is continuously increasing, thanks to

the passion and loyalty of foreign customers, including the Kuwaiti public."

He concluded, "I am convinced that through this exhibition, we will provide a new luster to this passion for premium Italian products, thus contributing to strengthening economic and cultural relations between Italy and Kuwait."

MoI sets time schedules for processing visa violations

Ministry of Interior (MoI) has announced new reception times for residency law violators, starting 21 April. The new timings are intended to facilitate their departure or status amendment in the country.

In a statement issued last week, the MoI explained that the reception will occur in two periods. The morning period, during

official working hours, will receive those wishing to amend their residency status in the country by visiting the Department of Residence Affairs in their respective governorates.

The evening period, from 3 pm to 8 pm, will receive violators who wish to leave the country and have new passports or travel documents. They will be registered in the computer system at

the Residency Affairs Departments of Mubarak Al-Kabeer and Farwaniya Governorates.

The ministry clarified that violators wishing to leave the country and possessing valid passports, registered in the Ministry of Interior systems, do not need to be reviewed by the administration.

France remains top choice for Kuwaiti travelers

H.E. Claire Le Flécher, French Ambassador in Kuwait highlighted that France's popularity among Kuwaiti travelers underscores our enduring friendship and vibrant economic and cultural exchanges.

Staff Report

In a press conference held at the embassy premises last week, Ambassador of France H.E. Claire Le Flécher reaffirmed France's status as a top choice for Kuwaiti travelers. "This reflects the enduring friendship between our nations and showcases the vibrant economic and cultural exchanges we share, as evidenced by the significant number of Kuwaitis who opt for France as their holiday destination.

She highlighted that the consular section received about 41,000 visa applications in 2022 and approximately 42,000 visa applications in 2023. The ambassador pointed out that the embassy's consular team processes about 150 application files daily, a number that can reach 300 files during the summer months. As of the first three months of 2024, nearly 8,000 applications have already been received.

The ambassador mentioned that on 8 September last year, the European Commission adopted a decision to implement the 'Cascade Visa', a significant step towards facilitating travel for Kuwaiti citizens to Europe. This visa is exclusively for Kuwaiti citizens traveling for short-term tourism purposes. Applicants of other nationalities must apply for a visa for each stay in France.

The ambassador confirmed that upon their first application for a short-term tourist visa, Kuwaiti citizens receive a multiple-entry visa valid for five years. She explained that applicants must complete visa procedures at the embassy of the Schengen country where they plan to spend most of their initial period of stay. After the first trip, subsequent stays can occur in any Schengen country, with each stay not exceeding 90 days out of 180 days. For each trip, the visa holder must carry proof of residence, an insurance certificate covering the stay's duration, proof of means of subsistence, and a copy of the return flight ticket.

Ambassador Le Flécher clarified that visas cannot have a validity exceeding the remaining validity of the passport. She explained that to qualify for a five-year visa, the passport must have more than five years remaining, otherwise,



- **The French embassy in Kuwait received 41,000 visa applications in 2022 and 42,000 in 2023. Their team processes up to 300 files daily, reaching 8,000 applications in early 2024.**
- **Kuwaitis receive a five-year multiple-entry visa on their first tourist visa application. About 95% of their visa applications are approved yearly.**

the visa duration will be adjusted to match the passport's validity. This results in a multiple-entry visa ranging from six months to four years, timed to expire three months before the passport's expiration date.

The ambassador mentioned that approximately 95 percent of visa applications from Kuwaiti citizens are approved annually. Most rejections are due to issues within the application itself. She urged applicants to ensure that their application files include all necessary documents and accurate information. Additionally, personal presence at the Capago office is mandatory, as applicants' photographs and fingerprints must be taken on-site.

Ambassador Le Flécher stated that France will host the 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games during the upcoming tourist season. Visa applications for France are expected to significantly

increase worldwide, leading to potential delays in visa issuance. The ambassador advised applicants to consider that about six weeks are required to process the visa, in addition to potential waiting times for appointments of up to three weeks depending on the period. In general, applicants should initiate the process at least nine weeks before their planned departure date.

The ambassador emphasized the importance of adhering to the designated visa submission dates via the Capago website. The new online system prohibits name changes, thus preventing the practice of selling appointments by certain tourist offices and delegates. The system now only permits adjustments to the appointment date within 48 hours after full fee payment.

Ambassador Le Flécher has identified exceptional cases where visa applications can be submitted without an appointment, such

as students applying for study visas after filing an application with the French Cultural Center (Campus France), and for urgent medical cases. This provision is substantiated by military files as well. The ambassador explained that if a Schengen visa expires while in France, the individual must contact the Kuwaiti embassy in Paris. He noted that the French embassy in Kuwait is not responsible for travel delays or overstaying residency, which may complicate future visa applications.

Ambassador Le Flécher emphasized that the VIP service is not tied to the visa processing time but rather aims to facilitate the visa application submission date. Regarding service-related requests, she clarified that the procedures remain unchanged. She indicated that individuals wishing to accompany their employees during summer vacations must apply for a visa. This process requires submitting all documents related to employment contracts and proof of salary payment. It is important to note that the visas granted are not companion visas.

The standard visa fees include the consular fee of 80 euros for a short-stay visa, which is equivalent to KD27, and the Capago office service fee of 24 euros, making the total cost of the visa 104 euros. For children between six and 12 years old, the short-term visa fee is 40 euros, equivalent to KD13.545, while children under six years old are exempt from paying visa fees.

For long-term visas exceeding three months, the fees amount to KD33.525. However, for nationals of select countries like Albania, Azerbaijan, Bosnia, Georgia, Ukraine, Russia, Serbia, Montenegro, Armenia, Macedonia, Moldova, and Montenegro, the fees are reduced to KD11.850.

Transit visa fees, valid for five days, are estimated at KD27.090 and the fees for a student visa amount to KD16.939.

Capago office offers optional extra services that enhance convenience during the application process but do not affect the visa issuance time. They include door-to-door delivery through Aramex and an SMS notification service when the passport is ready for collection.

Kuwait Saudi Rail project to commence by year end



Kuwait is accelerating the pace of the railway project that aims to link the country to the Saudi capital Riyadh. With consensus on both sides on various aspects of the project, including on financial, economic, technical, and legal matters, the project is expected to commence work by the end of the year, or latest by early next year.

Nearly 80 percent of the financial, economic, technical, and legal studies have reportedly already been completed, and all components of the project, including necessary plans and initial contracts are expected to be ready by mid-March.

According to the agreement between the two countries, the railway link project between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia is distinct from the railway project of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, which when completed will cover all six GCC countries, starting in Kuwait in the north to Oman in the south.

The State Audit Bureau of Kuwait has agreed to study the financial, economic, and technical feasibility of the project, which when completed will cover the distance of nearly 700 km from Kuwait to Riyadh within 150 minutes.

Grand Shopping Festival at Grand Hyper

Grand Hyper, the retail giant with forty-one branches across Kuwait, is thrilled to announce the launch of its mega promotion, the Grand Shopping Festival. This exciting event promises an array of prizes, adding extra joy to the shopping experience for all participants.

The Grand Shopping Festival offers an impressive lineup of prizes, which include:

Haval Jolino Cars: Three fortunate winners will have the chance to drive home in their own brand-new Haval Jolino car, adding a touch of luxury to their lives.

iPhone 15 Pro Max: Ten lucky individuals will be the proud owners of the latest iPhone 15 Pro Max, showcasing Grand Hyper's commitment to providing cutting-edge technology to its customers.

Gift vouchers worth KD50: Two hundred lucky shoppers who spend five dinars or more at Grand Hyper's branches will receive a KD50 gift voucher, allowing them to indulge in further shopping delights.

The Grand Shopping Festival is our way of giving back to our loyal customers and expressing our gratitude for their continued support. We are excited to offer these



incredible prizes and create memorable experiences for our shoppers. To participate in the Grand Shopping Festival and stand a chance to win these exclusive prizes, shoppers simply need to make a purchase of five dinars or more at any Grand Hyper branches.

For more information and updates on the Grand Shopping Festival, please visit Grand Hyper's <https://kuwait.grandhyper.com/> or follow them on social media

EU ambassador awards Chaillot Prize to KSHR



• **The Kuwaiti Society for Human Rights has undertaken the responsibility of defending and promoting human rights in the country through concerted efforts at both government and community levels**

• **The EU awards the Chaillot Prize annually for actions, campaigns, projects, and lifetime achievements that promote human rights awareness and advocacy in the GCC region**

Her Excellency Anne Koistinen, Ambassador of the European Union (EU) to the State of Kuwait, presented the 2023 Chaillot Prize for the Promotion of Human Rights in the GCC region to the Kuwaiti Society for Human Rights (KSHR).

The EU awards the Chaillot Prize annually for actions, campaigns, projects, and lifetime achievements that promote human rights awareness and advocacy in the GCC region. The prize is named after the Palais de Chaillot in Paris, where the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 10, 1948.

In her speech during the ceremony held at the EU residence in Kuwait, Ambassador Koistinen said, "I am honored to present the Chaillot Prize for the Promotion of Human

Rights in the GCC Region to the Kuwait Society for Human Rights for their unwavering dedication over the years to promoting and advancing human rights in Kuwait. I would like to highlight, in particular, their work in supporting and advocating for migrant workers' rights in Kuwait and raising awareness about their labor rights. Engagement with civil society in Kuwait is a very important part of the EU delegation's work; therefore, I am looking forward to continuing our long-standing cooperation with the Kuwait Society for Human Rights."

For his part, President of the Board of Directors of the Kuwaiti Society for Human Rights, Khaled Al-Humaidi, said in his speech during the ceremony, "Being honored with

the Chaillot Prize for Human Rights is a great moral support for the Kuwaiti Society for Human Rights. This society has undertaken the responsibility of defending and promoting human rights in Kuwait through concerted efforts at both government and community levels.

"We are delighted that the Chaillot Prize was granted to us for our tireless efforts in protecting the rights of migrant workers in Kuwait through the 'Together Project,' aimed at raising awareness and safeguarding the rights of migrant workers in Kuwait. This project was implemented by the Kuwaiti Society for Human Rights in cooperation with the European Union Delegation in Kuwait, the Netherlands embassy, the Swiss Agency for Development

and Cooperation, and the US-Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI)."

For the EU, promoting and protecting human rights is at the heart of EU external policy, as they are among the EU's founding values of human dignity, freedom, and respect for human rights. Cooperation on human rights and engagement with civil society are integral parts of the relations between the European Union and all countries, including Kuwait.

The EU and Kuwait held their fourth Human Rights Dialogue in Brussels on 5 December 2023, during which the two sides exchanged views on the latest developments on both sides and reiterated their commitment to an open and constructive dialogue to jointly address human rights challenges and share best practices.

Tourism, a cornerstone of economic growth

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

responsible for the current dismal state of tourism in Kuwait. It is encouraging that the current government has indicated its support for reviving tourism, and especially its keenness to adopt the Gulf Strategy for Tourism. In February of this year, Minister of Information Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi — in his address to the eighth Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) ministerial meeting on Tourism in Doha, Qatar — stated that the Gulf Arab states have the potential to transform into tourism hotspots that could attract visitors from across the globe.

Al-Mutairi pointed out that a coordinated pan-GCC tourism strategy aimed at developing the region's tourism industry could help keep the number of tourist arrivals on an upward trajectory in the years ahead and benefit economies of the six-nation bloc. He went on to add that the tourism sector was a pivotal source of national income and that growth of this sector is a precursor to broader development of the economy and continued prosperity of the GCC states.

For his part, GCC Secretary-General Jassem Mohamed Albudaiwi, affirmed that the Council states had made significant progress in the tourism sector. In particular, he highlighted the decision by the GCC leadership at their 44th GCC Summit held in Qatar in December 2023 to approve a unified tourism visa scheme within GCC states. The unified visa will grant travelers entry to all six countries in the GCC block with a single visa.

The unified visa scheme, along with other policies in the broader Gulf Strategy for Tourism, which was adopted by the GCC tourism ministers at their meeting in Al-Ula, Saudi Arabia in November of 2022, is expected to boost the role of tourism as a driver of economic growth, and to create new investment opportunities in the tourism sector for the GCC as a whole, and for individual countries in the bloc.

The government's commitment to boost tourism and catalyze economic development in the country was underlined in early March, when the Ministry of Information hosted the first Tourism Communication Conference. In his

address to the gathering, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Information, Dr. Nasser Muhaisen, said that hosting the conference reiterates Kuwait's belief that communication among all tourism stakeholders is important to activate partnerships and exchange regional and international experiences.

For her part, the Regional Director for the Middle East at the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Basma Al-Maiman, expressed optimism about the future of tourism in the region, especially among GCC countries. Pointing out that "the tourism sector in Kuwait is not new and has, since the 1960s, attracted visitors from across the region due to its tremendous potential", she expressed confidence that tourism in Kuwait will witness steady growth in the coming years.

Al-Maiman added that her optimism stems from, "the strong government support for tourism, and the many initiatives, projects and proposals that support tourism-related work, as well as from the fact that tourism is an integral part of the New Kuwait 2035 development plan, which aims to transform Kuwait into a regional hub for commerce, finance and culture.

The government has also pursued other measures to enhance the tourism ecosystem. Early last year, Assistant Undersecretary for the Tourism Sector at the Ministry of Information, Saud Al-Khalidi met with the visiting Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization, Zurab Pololikashvili, in the presence of the regional director of UNWTO, Basma Al-Maiman,

During their meeting, Al-Khalidi expressed Kuwait's keenness to enhance cooperation with the UNWTO and discussed the use of the organization's advisory expertise and studies to reorganize the tourism sector in Kuwait. He also proposed the establishment of tourism exhibitions in Kuwait, under the umbrella of the organization, on tourism products that are distinctive to Kuwait.

Al-Khalidi also explored the possibility of qualifying and training national cadres in the field of tourism and hospitality, activating tourism investment, as well as benefiting from the programs offered by the organization.

The two sides also examined the possibility of classifying hotel establishments in Kuwait to meet the needs of guests, and adhere to latest global standards.

In other steps to invigorate the tourism sector, in particular to attract domestic tourism, the Council of Ministers assigned the National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters (NCCAL) to rehabilitate heritage and historical buildings in Kuwait.

Since then, the NCCAL has been expediting the implementation of plans and programs to revive heritage buildings and sites in the country.

As part of this initiative, in mid-March the NCCAL unveiled a plan to transform over 100 historical and heritage buildings, including 51 historical mosques, the oldest of which dates back to the second half of the 1880s, into tourist attractions. The Council said it would intensify efforts to preserve heritage mosques and restore them in accordance with architectural principles.

The NCCAL has so far initiated restoration and maintenance work to preserve several schools of historical significance, and transform them into museums and cultural centers. The Council is also undertaking efforts to restore the American Hospital, the Sadu House and the Red Palace, as well as Sheikh Khazal Palace and

the former National Museum.

While these measures are steps in the right direction, they are clearly not enough. To develop the tourism sector and attract global visitors, Kuwait will need to increase its international openness, invest more in tourism infrastructure and ground services, create an enabling environment, and enact policies that attract investments into the tourism sector.

Economists and tourism analysts note that promoting tourism helps boost a country's economic growth and development. It helps create employment and fosters entrepreneurship in various sectors such as hospitality, transportation, retail, and recreation; and supports small and micro industries that produce local products and services that cater to tourism.

Given the relative importance of tourism to the overall economic development of the country, and knowing that many of the economic, financial and social plans and priorities of the country could be supported by developing a stable tourism sector, the incoming government will hopefully initiate positive tourism policies that promote a stable and sustainable tourism industry in the country.

[Image courtesy: <https://www.tamdeen.com/news/>]

DGCA and ICAO aims to enhance security, navigation at KIA

Head of Kuwait Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) Sheikh Humoud Mubarak Humoud Al-Sabah discussed last week cooperation in aviation security and air navigation, at Kuwait International Airport (KIA), with the Regional Director of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) for the Middle East Mohammad Abu baker.

During the meeting, they discussed topics related to safety, aviation security, and air navigation, as well as the positive levels that Kuwait has reached by achieving safety

standards in all sectors in accordance with ICAO requirements, according to a press statement by DGCA.

Sheikh Humoud Al-Mubarak emphasized the rewarding cooperation between Kuwait and ICAO, and highlighted that an inspection will be carried out over four days by ICAO regarding safety, security and navigation at KIA. The inspection results will have a positive impact on Kuwait and help position it among the ranks of developed countries, whether in the region or the world.

Climbing the Harbour Bridge in Sydney

A Sky-High Adventure



By Hermoine Macura-Noble
Special to The Times Kuwait

When you think of Sydney, iconic landmarks like the Opera House and Bondi Beach often come to mind. However, there is another experience that offers breathtaking views of the city and its stunning harbor — climbing the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Climbing this engineering marvel is not just an adventure but a journey providing a unique perspective of Sydney and its surroundings.

The Sydney Harbour Bridge Climb is a guided tour that takes you to the summit of this iconic steel arch bridge. Suitable for people of all fitness levels, you do not need any climbing experience to participate. Before you begin, you will have a specially designed bridge climb suit, harness, and communication equipment.

The climb is a series of catwalks, ladders, and steps leading to the summit. Along the way, your knowledgeable guide will share fascinating stories and insights about the bridge's history and construction, as well as its cultural significance to the people of Sydney.

Reaching the summit of the Harbour Bridge is a truly exhilarating experience. From this vantage point, you will be treated to panoramic views of Sydney's skyline, the sparkling harbor, and famous landmarks like the Opera House and Luna Park. The view stretches as far as the eye can see, offering a unique perspective of the city from above.

"My wife and I return to do this climb every few years when we visit Sydney as this is the spot where I chose to propose to her and celebrate our love," explains Norwegian climber Lars Hansen.

There are several climb options available to suit your preferences and schedule. The classic BridgeClimb takes approximately 3.5 hours, including preparation and briefing time. For



those looking for a shorter experience, there is the BridgeClimb Express, which takes around 2.5 hours. Alternatively, you can opt for the BridgeClimb Sampler, a 1.5-hour climb that takes you halfway to the summit.

For the ultimate adventure, consider booking a climb during twilight or dawn. These extraordinary climbs offer the chance to witness Sydney's stunning sunrise or sunset from the Harbour Bridge, creating memories that will last a lifetime.

"Doing the Bridge climb was on my bucket list... the view once you reach the top of the bridge is unbelievable. I've seen loads of videos and pictures of it... You can't paint all those



beautiful colors seen from the top of the bridge. This view has to be seen, to be believed," gushes visitor Sarah Gulbrandi.

Safety is paramount when it comes to climbing the Sydney Harbour Bridge. All climbers are securely attached to a static line throughout the climb, ensuring a safe and controlled experience. Additionally, each climb is led by a trained and experienced guide who will provide guidance and support every step of the way.

Here are a few more exciting experiences to consider when visiting Sydney:

Sydney Opera House: No visit to Sydney is complete without a visit to the Sydney Opera House. This architectural masterpiece, designed by Danish architect Jørn Utzon, is one of the most iconic buildings in the world. Take a guided tour to learn about its history and design, or catch a performance to experience the magic of this cultural landmark.

Bondi Beach: Sydney's famous Bondi Beach is a hotspot for sunbathers, surfers, and beach lovers. Spend a day soaking up the sun, catching waves, or exploring the vibrant beachside cafes and shops. Enjoy the Bondi to Coogee coastal walk, offering stunning ocean views and secluded beaches.

The Rocks: Explore Sydney's historic heart at The Rocks, a charming precinct of cobblestone streets, colonial buildings, and lively markets. Discover the area's rich history on a guided walking tour, and sample local food and craft beer at one of the many restaurants and pubs.

Sydney Tower Eye: Head to the Sydney Tower Eye for panoramic views of Sydney and its surrounds. Located in the heart of the city, this iconic tower offers 360-degree views from its observation deck and a thrilling 'Skywalk' experience for those feeling adventurous.

Breakfast with the Koalas: Wake up with some of the notable residents at Wild Life Sydney Zoo in Darling Harbour and enjoy a Koala breakfast tour, which is suitable for all ages and includes a hot buffet-style breakfast

on their Koala Rooftop, amongst the company of the koala colony.

The experience includes a 45-minute zoo keeper-led guided tour of the zoo, finishing up with an unforgettable breakfast experience surrounded by a true Australian icon – the Koala. Wild Life Sydney Zoo prides itself on the animal encounters that allow visitors an up close and personal experience with animals that is hard to forget. Whether that be with Princess, the Southern Cassowary, or one of the



beautiful Koalas, guests leave educated on the species, the memory of sharing the same space as the individual animals, and the main goal of the zoo — to help protect the species that call the zoo home.

"A typical day for us at the zoo is ensuring all of the animals in our care thrive. Their welfare is our priority, and this is provided through the provision of nutritional food, allowing the animals to explore their habitat and display agency, training and conditioning of the animals, educating guests, and sharing the passion we have for our work and animals to our guests," concludes Chloe Richards, Display Supervisor, Wild Life Sydney Zoo.

Hermoine Macura-Noble

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



EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

History Already Tells Us the Future of AI



Daron Acemoglu and Simon Johnson

Daron Acemoglu, Institute Professor of Economics at MIT, is a co-author (with Simon Johnson) of Power and Progress: Our Thousand-Year Struggle Over Technology and Prosperity

Simon Johnson, a former chief economist at the International Monetary Fund, is a professor at the MIT Sloan School of Management.

Artificial intelligence and the threat that it poses to good jobs would seem to be an entirely new problem. But we can find useful ideas about how to respond in the work of David Ricardo, a founder of modern economics who observed the British Industrial Revolution firsthand. The evolution of his thinking, including some points that he missed, holds many helpful lessons for us today.

Private-sector tech leaders promise us a brighter future of less stress at work, fewer boring meetings, more leisure time, and perhaps even a universal basic income. But should we believe them? Many people may simply lose what they regarded as a good job — forcing them to find work at a lower wage. After all, algorithms are already taking over tasks that currently require people's time and attention.

In his seminal 1817 work, *On the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation*, Ricardo took a positive view of the machinery that had already transformed the spinning of cotton. Following the conventional wisdom of the time, he famously told the House of Commons that "machinery did not lessen the demand for labor."

Since the 1770s, the automation of spinning had reduced the price of spun cotton and increased demand for the complementary task of weaving spun cotton into finished cloth. And since almost all weaving was done by hand prior to the 1810s, this explosion in demand helped turn cotton handweaving into a high-paying artisanal job employing several hundred thousand British men (including many



displaced, pre-industrial spinners). This early, positive experience with automation likely informed Ricardo's initially optimistic view.

But the development of large-scale machinery did not stop with spinning. Soon, steam-powered looms were being deployed in cotton-weaving factories. No longer would artisanal 'hand weavers' be making good money working five days per week from their own cottages. Instead, they would struggle to feed their families while working much longer hours under strict discipline in factories.

As anxiety and protests spread across northern England, Ricardo changed his mind. In the third edition of his influential book, published in 1821, he added a new chapter, 'On Machinery,' where he hit the nail on the head: "If machinery could do all the work that labor now does, there would be no demand for labor." The same concern applies today. Algorithms' takeover of tasks previously performed by workers will not be good news for displaced workers unless they can find well-paid new tasks.

Most of the struggling handweaving artisans during the 1810s and 1820s did not go to work in the new weaving factories, because the machine looms did not need many workers.

Whereas the automation of spinning had created opportunities for more people to work as weavers, the automation of weaving did not create compensatory labor demand in other sectors. The British economy overall did not create enough other well-paying new jobs, at least not until railways took off in the 1830s. With few other options, hundreds of thousands of hand weavers remained in the occupation, even as wages fell by more than half.

Another key problem, albeit not one that Ricardo himself dwelled upon, was that working in harsh factory conditions — becoming a small cog in the employer-controlled 'satanic mills' of the early 1800s — was unappealing to handloom weavers.

Many artisanal weavers had operated as independent businesspeople and entrepreneurs who bought spun cotton and then sold their woven products on the market. Obviously, they were not enthusiastic about submitting to longer hours, more discipline, less autonomy, and typically lower wages (at least compared to the heyday of handloom weaving). In testimony collected by various Royal Commissions, weavers spoke bitterly about their refusal to accept such working conditions, or about how horrible their lives

became when they were forced (by the lack of other options) into such jobs.

Today's generative AI has huge potential and has already chalked up some impressive achievements, including in scientific research. It could well be used to help workers become more informed, more productive, more independent, and more versatile. Unfortunately, the tech industry seems to have other uses in mind. As we explain in 'Power and Progress', the big companies developing and deploying AI overwhelmingly favor automation (replacing people) over augmentation (making people more productive).

That means we face the risk of excessive automation: many workers will be displaced, and those who remain employed will be subjected to increasingly demeaning forms of surveillance and control. The principle of "automate first and ask questions later" requires — and thus further encourages — the collection of massive amounts of information in the workplace and across all parts of society, calling into question how much privacy will remain.

Such a future is not inevitable. Regulation of data collection would help protect privacy, and stronger workplace rules could prevent the worst aspects of AI-based surveillance. But the more fundamental task, Ricardo would remind us, is to change the overall narrative about AI. Arguably, the most important lesson from his life and work is that machines are not necessarily good or bad. Whether they destroy or create jobs depends on how we deploy them, and on who makes those choices. In Ricardo's time, a small cadre of factory owners decided, and those decisions centered on automation and squeezing workers as hard as possible.

Today, a even smaller cadre of tech leaders seem to be taking the same path. But focusing on creating new opportunities, new tasks for humans, and respect for all individuals would ensure much better outcomes. It is still possible to have pro-worker AI, but only if we can change the direction of innovation in the tech industry and introduce new regulations and institutions.

As in Ricardo's day, it would be naive to trust in the benevolence of business and tech leaders. It took major political reforms to create genuine democracy, to legalize trade unions, and to change the direction of technological progress in Britain during the Industrial Revolution. The same basic challenge confronts us today.

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EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT



AI Holds the Key to Resilient Cities



Justina Nixon-Saintil

Vice President and Chief Impact Officer at IBM.

The cities that some 4.4 billion people call home are increasingly at risk of catastrophic climate-driven events. Rising sea levels and flooding threaten coastal megacities like New York City and Jakarta, and extreme heat waves, like those that afflict cities across South Asia and the Middle East each year, are projected to become more frequent and severe.

While our built environments and infrastructure are being tested by unpredictable weather and changing populations, many urban communities are facing heightened climate-related health and economic risks. Dangers such as air pollution and natural disasters can be especially acute in developing countries, where they threaten to drive more people into poverty.

At the same time, cities contribute disproportionately to the broader challenges we face today. Cities already account for an estimated 70 percent of global carbon dioxide emissions and 78 percent of energy consumption, and these figures could grow in an urbanizing world. According to UN-Habitat, the share of people living in urban areas is expected to increase to 68 percent by 2050.

Clearly, cities will play a central role in how the world addresses climate change. One factor that could give cities much-needed support and unlock opportunities for building greater

resilience is artificial intelligence. If developed and deployed responsibly and ethically, AI could potentially accelerate urban climate solutions, enable science-based and sustainable development, and deliver innovation at an unprecedented pace, allowing us to put the most vulnerable communities first.

But the first step is to improve our understanding of AI's many potential applications as a tool for resilient cities. For example, the challenge of handling vast amounts of data is a major obstacle to modeling future climate scenarios accurately and making informed planning decisions. Fortunately, through the power of AI, foundation models and geospatial analytics could help us visualize our cities in a new way.

“ Research shows that while 69 percent of cities are already exploring or testing the uses of generative AI, only 2 percent are implementing it. Access to technology and skills to use it effectively are major obstacles to implementation. ”

Consider the metropolitan areas facing severe and changing weather patterns. With real-time and historical climate data and AI-powered predictive capabilities, governments could introduce new tools for disaster response and readiness. Everyone, from ordinary citizens to those tasked with protecting and maintaining critical infrastructure, could be better informed and prepared. AI also has the potential to help

make city operations more sustainable at every level, thus reducing cities' outside emissions and environmental impact. Intelligent software applications could integrate AI to analyze buildings' energy usage, water consumption, and waste management, providing insights that allow communities and organizations to make more responsible decisions about sustainability.

Moreover, with the addition of connected devices to drive in-depth data collection, safety measures such as urban infrastructure maintenance could be more effective and efficient than ever before. Think of all the bridges and roadways threatened by unprecedented weather events. When combined with AI, the uses of data extend far beyond basic monitoring and reporting.

Nor will AI's urban applications stop there. The technology has the potential to optimize public transportation and traffic planning to achieve more sustainable urban transit. It could help to identify the best locations for expanding much-needed green space, while also preserving urban biodiversity and natural resources.

Governments, public-service providers, and nonprofits alike have growing opportunities

to access and explore AI tools, such as through requests for proposals and pro-bono programs, like those offered by IBM. However, recent research shows that while 69 percent of cities are already exploring or testing the uses of generative AI, only 2 percent are implementing it. As IBM's Chief Impact Officer, I know that access to technology and the skills required to use it effectively can be major obstacles to implementation. The need for greater access becomes all the more urgent when one considers the unequal distribution of climate-driven threats. Within our cities, problems like air pollution and a lack of access to clean energy disproportionately affect the poorest and most vulnerable residents. These are the communities that have the most to gain from AI.

We all have a responsibility to make AI solutions support vulnerable populations. That means providing equal access to climate tools, supporting training in AI and related skills, and creating programs designed to respond to the specific needs of historically marginalized urban populations. Upskilling, especially, will play a key role in accelerating vulnerable communities' adoption of climate-mitigation and adaptation tools. The private sector can do its part by forming partnerships with public agencies and working closely with organizations that are already engaged in supporting vulnerable communities.

By embracing AI and putting it to work in the fight against climate change, we can help make our cities safer, more adaptable, and more sustainable. The technology to give people the tools to anticipate, address, and recover from climate-driven events is here. But it is up to all of us — communities, governments, and companies — to put it to the best possible use.



AI Needs UN Oversight



Peter G. Kirchscläger

Professor of Ethics and Director of the Institute of Social Ethics ISE at the University of Lucerne, is a visiting professor at the ETH Zurich's AI Center.

Many scientists and tech leaders have sounded the alarm about artificial intelligence in recent years, issuing dire warnings not heard since the advent of the nuclear age. Elon Musk, for example, has said that "AI is far more dangerous than nukes," prompting him to ask an important question: "Why do we have no regulatory oversight? This is insane."

The late Stephen Hawking made a similar point: "Unless we learn how to prepare for, and avoid, the potential risks, AI could be the worst event in the history of our civilization. It brings dangers, like powerful autonomous weapons, or new ways for the few to oppress the many."

Given the potentially catastrophic consequences of unchecked AI, there is a clear need for international guardrails to ensure that this emerging technology — more accurately called data-based systems — serves the common good. Specifically, that means guaranteeing that human rights are upheld globally, including online.

To that end, governments should introduce regulations that promote data-based systems that seek to protect the powerless from the powerful by ensuring that human rights are respected, protected, implemented, and realized within such systems' entire life cycle, including design, development, production, distribution, and use.

“

The success of the IAEA has shown that we are capable of exercising caution and prohibiting the blind pursuit of technological advances when the future of humanity and the planet are at stake.

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Equally important, the United Nations must urgently establish an International Data-Based Systems Agency (IDA), a global AI watchdog that would promote safe, secure, sustainable, and peaceful uses of these technologies, ensure that they respect human rights, and foster cooperation in the field. It would also have regulatory authority to help determine market approval for AI products. Given the similarities between data-based systems and nuclear technologies, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) would be the best model for such an institution, not least because it is one of the few UN agencies with 'teeth'.

The success of the IAEA has shown that we are capable of exercising caution and



prohibiting the blind pursuit of technological advances when the future of humanity and the planet are at stake. After the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki revealed the devastating humanitarian consequences of nuclear war, research and development in the field of nuclear technology was curtailed to prevent even worse outcomes. This was made possible by an international regime, the IAEA, with strong enforcement mechanisms.

A growing number of experts from around the world have called for the establishment of an IDA and supported the creation of data-based systems founded on respect for human rights. The Elders, an independent group of global leaders founded by Nelson Mandela, have recognized the enormous risks of AI and the need for an international agency like the IAEA "to manage these powerful technologies within robust safety protocols" and to ensure that they are "used in ways consistent with international law and human-rights treaties." Consequently, they encourage countries to submit a request to the UN General Assembly for the International Law Commission to draft an international treaty establishing a new AI safety agency.

Among the influential supporters of a legally binding regulatory framework for AI is Sam Altman, the CEO of OpenAI, whose public release of ChatGPT in late 2022 kicked off the AI arms race. Last year, Altman called for an international authority that can, among other things, "inspect systems, require audits, test for compliance with safety standards, [and] place restrictions on degrees of deployment and levels of security." Even Pope Francis has emphasized the need to establish a multilateral institution that examines the ethical issues arising from AI and regulates its development and use by "a binding international treaty."

The UN, for its part, has highlighted the importance of promoting and protecting human rights in data-based systems. In July 2023, the Human Rights Council unanimously adopted a resolution on 'New and emerging digital technologies and human rights', which notes that these technologies "may lack adequate regulation" and stresses the need "for effective measures to prevent, mitigate, and remedy adverse human-rights impacts of such technologies." To that end, the resolution calls for establishing frameworks for impact assessments, for exercising due diligence, and for ensuring effective remedies and human oversight and legal accountability.

More recently, in March, the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution on "Seizing the opportunities of safe, secure

and trustworthy artificial-intelligence systems for sustainable development." This landmark resolution recognizes that "the same rights that people have offline must also be protected online, including throughout the lifecycle of artificial-intelligence systems."

Now that the international community has recognized the imperative of protecting human rights in data-based systems, the next step is obvious. The UN must now translate this global consensus into action by establishing an IDA.



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Credible. Insightful.
Accurate.
The right news,
right in time.

Thought for the week “ One of the penalties for refusing to participate in politics is that you end up being governed by your inferiors.

- Plato

Antioxidants Boomers

Ask Mira : Eating Right to Live Happy & Healthy



I always mention the word antioxidant in my articles, and a lot of people have since asked me to explain more about what are antioxidants.

So here you go:

Oxidative reaction: First we need to understand what an oxidative reaction is. High levels of blood cholesterol, high levels of blood sugar, high blood pressure, smoking, the surrounding pollution, and different types of radiation create in your body what is known as 'an oxidative reaction'.

Under the effects of this oxidative reaction, free radicals are generated in your body, which in turn will generate several harmful chemical reactions that lead to severe diseases like heart disease, arthritis, different types of cancer and even more elevated blood sugar and cholesterol levels.

Antioxidants: As everything in our body is balanced, here comes the role of antioxidants. In reality, the antioxidants are some body substances, which completely cut the chain of further oxidation of these free radicals.

An eating plan containing plenty of fruits and vegetables, whole grains and nuts can supply all the antioxidants your body needs. The major antioxidants include Vitamin C, various kinds of berries, dark chocolate, green tea, olive oil, red wine and many more.

Antioxidants are a booming market today with a wide variety of antioxidants available for everything from enhancing memory, immunity and athletic performance, as well as to treat various diseases. The list of such products is too long to reproduce here fully, but below is a list of the most popular antioxidants and their benefits.

Alpha lipoic acid: Found in broccoli, spinach, beef steak, liver, yeast.

Provides protection against neuropathy (disorder of the nerves that are connected to muscles, skin and internal organs), improves glucose blood level in diabetes, protects against heart diseases and cataracts (blurred vision)

Berries: Including, but not limited to, blueberries, cranberries, blackberries, raspberries, strawberries. Beneficial for Heart health, cancer protection, antiaging, diabetes prevention and urinary tract protection.

Citrus fruits and vegetables: Treats diseases of blood vessels and lymphatic system (which contains immune cells that protect the body against virus and bacteria).

Dark chocolate that contains cocoa flavonoids: Protects against hypertension, heart diseases and skin damage. Lowers stress and anxiety.

Olive oil (polyphenols): good for heart health, cancer protection, antimicrobial activity, lowers cholesterol and LDL levels.

Pomegranate: Recommended for heart and circulatory health, prevents cancer and hypertension

Grape and grape seed extracts, including red wine, because of the antioxidant 'resveratrol', which provides protection against cardiovascular diseases, against cancer and improve athletic performance.

Soy: Soy beans, soy milk, soy proteins and other soy products have been found helpful in treating menopausal symptoms, are good for bone health and protects against breast cancer.

Tea: Helps in the treatment of liver diseases, improves immunity function and weight loss.

Vitamin A: Found in carrot, tomato, spinach, sweet potato, mango, dried apricot, milk, egg yolk. Provides protection against heart diseases, against vision loss and promotes skin health.

Vitamin C: Found in orange, kiwi, pineapple, broccoli, pepper, parsley, cauliflower

Boosts immune system, improves skin health, and helps in iron absorption

Vitamin E: Abundant in nuts, almonds, peanut butter, walnuts, avocados, sunflower oil, egg yolks. Good for improving heart health, diabetes prevention, decreases LDL levels and increases HDL, and recommended for enhancing athletic performance.

These 12 antioxidants are crucial for your health. Start to include them daily in your eating habits, and keep away diseases and stress.

There is nothing better than having a good health and great performance.

Eat like Mira
Create healthy habits, not restrictions

To subscribe to my diet programs,
don't forget to log in to:
www.eatlikemira.com.



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

RECIPE

Vegetarian Egg Curry in Green Dressing



An extremely popular and innovative north Indian curry recipe the curry base carries the same texture as a typical palak paneer curry but the palak is substituted with aloo and paneer kofta. The koftas are prepared, assembled and shaped in such a way that it looks like an egg and hence they are named vegetarian eggless egg curry. It is high in fiber, 100 percent gluten-free and with a lot of iron and protein.

Total Time: 45 minutes

Serving: 4

Ingredients:

*For eggless egg preparation:

- 1 cup paneer, grated
- ¼ tsp salt
- 2 potato, boiled and grated
- 2 tbsp corn flour
- ½ tsp salt
- 1/2 cup grated Cheddar cheese
- Oil, for frying
- *For Gravy:
- 2 tbsp butter
- 1 tsp cumin
- ½ onion, finely chopped
- 1 tsp ginger garlic paste
- 2 green chilies
- Pinch of turmeric
- ½ tsp coriander powder
- ½ tsp cumin powder
- ½ tsp garam masala
- 1/3 tsp. mango powder
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 cup water
- 1 tsp kasuri methi
- 2 tbsp coriander, finely chopped

Instructions:

To make eggless egg:

- Place one cup grated Cheddar cheese in a bowl and form small yolk-sized cheese balls. Set aside
- In a separate large bowl, take two potatoes, ½ cup paneer, 2 tbsp corn flour and ½ tsp salt to form the white portion of the egg. Mix well making sure everything is well combined forming a dough
- Grease your hand with oil and pinch a ball sized mixture
- Roll and flatten slightly, place a small ball sized prepared yolk in the center
- Bring the sides of the dough together and prepare an egg shaped kofta
- Fry over hot oil on medium flame until it turns golden brown
- Drain off the egg shaped kofta and set aside
- To make gravy:
- Heat oil/butter in a pan, add finely chopped onion, ginger-garlic paste, green chili and saute until onions turn golden brown.
- Add washed and chopped spinach and saute till it turns soft. Turn off the flame
- Cool the sauteed items and then grind to a smooth paste. Set aside
- In a large kadai (wok) heat 2 tbsp oil/butter
- Add the spinach puree along with a pinch of turmeric, coriander powder, cumin powder, mango powder, garam masala and salt, and saute the mixture over low flame until the spicy aroma arises
- Add a little water and mix well to adjust the consistency
- Cook until everything is well combined
- Turn off the flame, add the fried eggless egg kofta to the spinach gravy
- Enjoy the vegetarian egg curry with bread, roti or rice.



Chef Chhaya Thakker

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

Lipid buildup in tissues can trigger age-related diseases

The researchers first identified the lipid using mouse tissues and then found similar results in human muscles. They then found that levels of this lipid could be reduced via exercise among postmenopausal women. The results point to another possible benefit of exercise and the need for more research regarding this lipid buildup.

Some changes in the body are inevitable as people get older. However, researchers are still trying to fully understand all the changes that happen and what they mean for the health of aging adults.

A new study found that a certain lipid (fat) starts to build up in muscle tissue with age and may trigger age-related diseases. The good news is that this lipid buildup can be reduced through daily exercise.

Researchers from several scientific research organizations in The Netherlands, led by researchers at Amsterdam University Medical College, who were behind the new study, noted that studying complex lipids may help with our understanding of age-related disease and overall longevity.

The researchers first identified the lipid using mouse tissues and then found similar results in human muscles. They then found that levels of this lipid could be reduced via exercise among postmenopausal women. The results point to another possible benefit of exercise and the need for more research regarding this lipid buildup.

For their study the researchers first examined ten different tissues in young and old mice to understand age-related differences in lipids. They found that more lipids began accumulating with age in most of the tissues they examined. The primary lipids they found were called Bis(monoacylglycerol)phosphate (BMP) — and is believed to play a role in glycosphingolipid degradation and cholesterol transport.

Next, researchers wanted to see if a similar BMP accumulation occurred in humans. They collected muscle biopsies from younger men and women between twenty and thirty years old and older men and women between sixty-five and eighty. While there were differences between the muscle tissue samples of men and women, researchers did find a buildup of BMPs



in older participants.

The lipid BMP, which the researchers found to accumulate with age, has in previous studies been shown to be a marker of disease or stress. Earlier research has implicated BMP accumulation in tissues with various diseases, including chronic kidney disease, diseases related to cholesterol accumulation and vascular diseases, and certain genetic metabolic disorders. It may turn out that BMP levels will serve as a reference marker for healthy aging but more work is required for this, said the researchers.

The researchers then explored whether exercise could influence BMP levels. For this portion of the study, researchers included 12 postmenopausal women between the ages of 45 and 70. These women were overweight and were doing less than three hours of exercise each week.

They conducted a randomized, cross-over intervention utilizing three different activity

regimens: a sitting regimen, which involved sitting for fourteen hours a day, an exercising regimen, which involved exercising for one hour each day, and a standing regimen, which involved standing for three hours each day and walking for two hours each day. The participants did each regimen for four days and had a muscle biopsy taken on the fifth day. The researchers found that even over the short intervention period, levels of BMP were lower following exercise intervention.

The researchers said that their next steps are to better understand why the accumulation of BMP occurs in the first place (is it due to more production of BMP, or that BMP can not be broken down?). They also aim to better understand if BMP buildup is a harmful change happening with age (causing disease) or a beneficial one (a protective response by the body in response to other age-related damages).

In a report on their observation of the study the researchers pointed to some of the

limitations of their study. In the first place, they only used male mice — there are differences in lipid metabolism between male and female mice. They also only used a small number of people for their biopsy collection and only looked at one tissue type, so future research could include even more information in this area.

Additionally, the exercise intervention only included women, so future research, including mixed groups, could be helpful. Moreover, exercise interventions also only lasted a short time, so it could not look at the long-term effects of exercise on BMP levels. The researchers also acknowledged that all lipids may increase in the body with age, but they suspect that BMP increases much more than other lipids.

Finally, researchers had limited data on the use of lipid-lowering medication, so future research could see how the use of these medications influences BMP levels.

The researchers further noted that more research is required to understand the increase of BMPs with age and whether this is helpful or harmful to the body.

Medical specialists reviewing the results of the study point to another potential reason for older adults to exercise regularly if possible. While it was still too early to make assumptions about the long-term effects of these lipids, the study brings forth an interesting finding regarding accumulation of certain lipids that occurs with aging, how this accumulation impacts the aging process, and how it can be reversed through exercises. No matter what the long-term impacts on lipids in tissues are, the study further underscores the importance of encouraging regular physical activity, especially as we age. Regular exercise maintains strong muscle which preserves mobility, improves cognitive function and sleep, and even has a positive impact on energy and mood.

Revolutionary molecular device could lead to targeted drug delivery

In a new breakthrough that could revolutionize medical and material engineering, scientists have developed a first-of-its-kind molecular device that controls the release of multiple small molecules using force.

Researchers from the University of Manchester have developed a first-of-its-kind molecular device that could potentially release multiple small molecules using force. The new device has the potential to trigger targeted release of molecules, which could significantly advance medical treatment and smart materials.

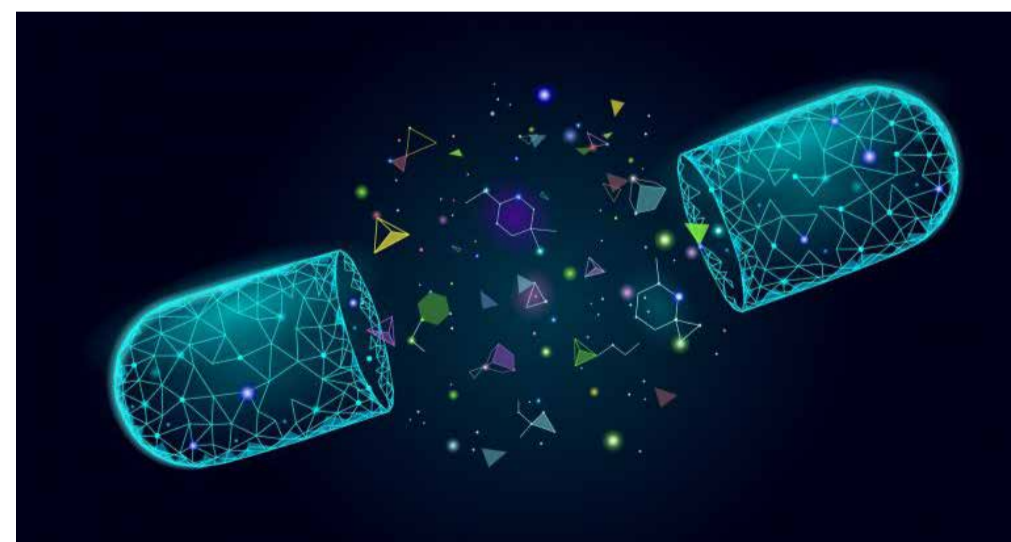
The discovery, which employs a novel technique, uses a type of interlocked molecules known as rotaxane. Under the influence of mechanical force — such as that observed at an injured or damaged site — this component triggers the release of functional molecules, like medicines or healing agents, to precisely target the area in need. For example, the site of

a tumor. It also holds promise for self-healing materials that can repair themselves in situ when damaged, prolonging the lifespan of these materials. For example, a scratch on a phone screen.

Explaining their discovery, the researchers said that “forces are ubiquitous in nature and play pivotal roles in various processes. Our aim was to exploit these forces for transformative applications, particularly in material durability and drug delivery. Although this is only a proof-of-concept design, we believe that our rotaxane-based approach holds immense potential with far reaching applications — we’re on the brink of some truly remarkable advancements in healthcare and technology.”

Traditionally, the controlled release of molecules with force has presented challenges in releasing more than one molecule at once, usually operating through a molecular ‘tug of war’ game where two polymers pull at either side to release a single molecule.

The new approach involves two polymer chains attached to a central ring-like structure that slide along an axle supporting the cargo, effectively releasing multiple cargo molecules in response to force application. The scientists



demonstrated the release of up to five molecules simultaneously with the possibility of releasing more, overcoming previous limitations.

The breakthrough marks the first time scientists have been able to demonstrate the ability to release more than one component, making it one of the most efficient release systems to date. The researchers also show versatility of the model by using different types of molecules, including drug compounds, fluorescent markers, catalyst and monomers, revealing the potential for a wealth of future applications.

Looking ahead, the researchers aim to delve deeper into self-healing applications, exploring whether two different types of molecules can be released at the same time. For example, the integration of monomers and catalysts could enable polymerization at the site of damage, creating an integrated self-healing system within materials.

They will also look to expand the sort of molecules that can be released. “We’ve barely scratched the surface of what this technology can achieve. The possibilities are limitless, and we’re excited to explore further”, said the researchers behind the new discovery.



KEMS Zajil Telecom and Microsoft showcase the latest AI innovations for business enablement into the digital future



KEMS Zajil Telecom, a subsidiary of Kalaam Group, and a digital solutions provider in Kuwait, partnered with Microsoft to host an exclusive event unveiling the latest advancements in artificial intelligence (AI) and the Modern Data Platform. The event, held at The Palms Beach Hotel, brought together governments delegates, Kuwait's enterprise leaders across various industries and tech enthusiasts eager to explore the future transformative power of AI technologies for their businesses.

With a shared commitment to business growth and innovation, KEMS Zajil Telecom and Microsoft showcased a range of AI solutions designed to drive efficiency productivity across various industries. Attendees had the opportunity to witness firsthand how AI-powered tools and applications are reshaping traditional business models and unlocking new possibilities to



enhance decision-making capabilities. From predictive analytics to intelligent automation, attendees gained a deeper understanding of how AI can be leveraged to stay ahead in today's rapidly evolving digital landscape & addressing existing pain-points of businesses.

One of the highlights of the event was the demonstration of the Modern Data Platform, which serves as the foundation for harnessing the power of AI and driving digital transformation. By integrating data-driven insights into every aspect of their operations, organizations can gain a competitive edge and deliver superior customer experiences.



"We are thrilled to partner with Microsoft to showcase the latest AI innovations and demonstrate our ongoing commitment to spearheading our digital solutions portfolio in the market," said Mr. Yusuf Ahmed, CEO at KEMS Zajil Telecom. "As leaders in the industry, we recognize the transformative potential of AI technologies and remain dedicated to empowering organizations to thrive in the digital age."

"The future of business is undoubtedly tied to AI as today's event has clearly demonstrated," said Alaeddine Karim, Country Manager of Microsoft Kuwait.

"We are pleased to collaborate with KEMS Zajil Telecom to showcase the potential of Microsoft's latest AI solutions and the Modern Data Platform to transform businesses across Kuwait and help them unlock new levels of efficiency, productivity, and success. Our association aligns perfectly with our mission to empower organizations with the tools and resources they require to drive innovation and accelerate their digital transformation efforts."

KEMS Zajil Telecom adopts a consultative approach tailored to meet the needs of SMEs, government organizations, and larger enterprises, offering bespoke solutions. This approach has established KEMS Zajil Telecom as the preferred partner for both SMEs and enterprises alike.

For more information about KEMS Zajil Telecom and its range of digital solutions, visit www.kems.net

