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Six Travel Trends in 2026 and Where to Go...

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Strategic Development Drive to Continue in 2026

The Times Kuwait Report

Start of a new year heralds a fresh beginning, symbolizing the universal message of hope, happiness, and a chance to reset. As the calendar flips from a year gone by to a new one, it urges reflection on mistakes made and lessons learned, and inspires resilience and adaptiveness to challenges. The core theme that a new year brings is to let go of past burdens and move forward with a mindset grounded in clarity, courage, and conviction to achieve one's goals and visions.

This new year vision is also embodied in Kuwait's plans to continue driving its ongoing development strategy through 2026. Despite global challenges, the year gone by marked an inflection point in the country's march towards achieving its ambitious Vision 2035 national



development plan. Several measures initiated by the government over the previous year indicate

a resolute intent to move ahead from years of discussions and planning to the actual execution

of policies and projects. Since his historic address to the National Assembly on 20 December 2023, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah has guided the country with a clear vision and profound wisdom along a path of prudent reforms, comprehensive development, and national solidarity, while consolidating security and stability.

His Highness has set a high priority on safeguarding national identity, promoting justice and equal opportunities, and building a state governed by strong institutions. Under his sagacious leadership, Kuwait has pursued a balanced and principled diplomatic approach based on prudence, respect for international law, and peaceful resolution of disputes, as well as strengthened relations with states that enhanced the country's global status.

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Artificial Intelligence and Journalism A Necessary Partnership or an Existential Threat?

The most serious challenge, however, lies not in job losses, but in the erosion of credibility itself. With the development of deepfake technologies, the image, once considered irrefutable evidence, has become a constant source of doubt. Fabricated videos have infiltrated coverage of international conflicts, confusing both the public and institutions, to the point where verification has become a daily, arduous task, not a professional luxury.

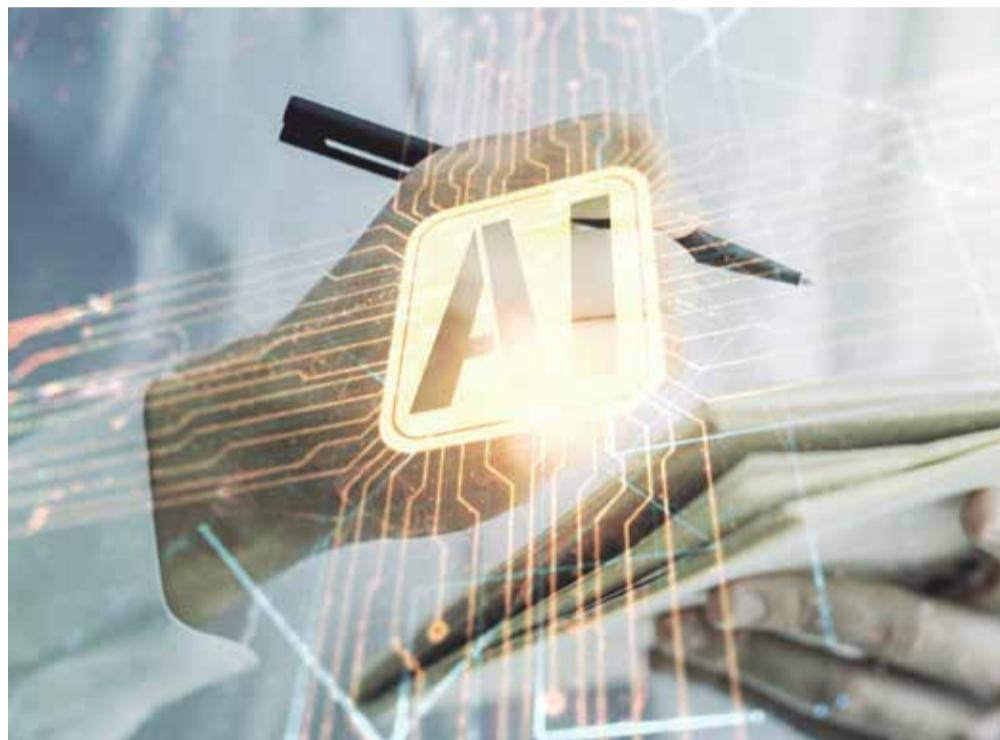


By Sheikha Suhaila Al-Sabah
Managing Editor

Amidst the technological acceleration that is reshaping the world at an unprecedented pace, journalism stands at a crucial crossroads, where anxiety mingles with hope, and existential questions intertwine with new possibilities. The debate surrounding artificial intelligence is no longer an intellectual luxury or a postponed future discussion; it has become a daily reality knocking on the doors of newsrooms, raising the fundamental question once again: Are we witnessing the decline of journalism as we have known it, or the birth of a more complex and profound role for the journalist in an era where information proliferates and truth diminishes?

The digital transformations, which accelerated remarkably after the COVID-19 pandemic, have exposed the fragility of many media models that relied on speed and reach as substitutes for analysis and knowledge. Established institutions have been forced to downsize their staff and close entire departments, replacing in-depth reporting with fleeting content whose success is measured by the number of clicks, not by its impact on public awareness. However, major crises, from complex wars to pivotal political decisions, quickly exposed the flaws in this model. These platforms found themselves unable to explain events and were forced to turn to seasoned journalists and experts capable of reading between the lines and connecting events to their historical and social context.

This return was not accidental, but rather a confirmation of a long-standing truth that some have ignored: the stories that endure in readers' memories are those connected to their lives and concerns, written with awareness, knowledge, and serious research—not those born and dying in the chaos of digital overflow. Technology, no matter how advanced, has yet to replace the human sense capable of capturing subtle details and understanding the



contradictions of reality.

Conversely, it is undeniable that artificial intelligence is reshaping the landscape of journalism from within. Functions that were once considered essential pillars of newsrooms, such as proofreading, translation, and writing short news items, are now threatened with extinction by tools that perform these tasks in moments and at virtually no cost. However, this transformation does not signify the end of journalism itself, but rather the end of the journalist who merely hands over raw material to the machine. Value now lies with those who understand the logic of algorithms, are adept at manipulating them, and are aware of data biases and limitations. Newsrooms are gradually becoming spaces for monitoring automated production, where the journalist becomes akin to an algorithmic inspector, reviewing not only the text but also its generation process and its hidden criteria.

The most serious challenge, however, lies not in job losses, but in the erosion of credibility itself. With the development of deepfake technologies, the image, once considered irrefutable evidence, has become a constant source of doubt. Fabricated videos have infiltrated coverage of international conflicts, confusing both the public and institutions, to the point where verification has become

a daily, arduous task, not a professional luxury. The situation is further complicated by platform algorithms and search engines that trap individuals within information bubbles, reinforcing their existing beliefs and shutting them out of alternative viewpoints. In the same place, at the same moment, two people might experience entirely different realities because the algorithm has determined this based on browsing history and pre-existing biases.

With this fragmentation, an event is no longer a unified whole, but rather scattered fragments consumed in isolation from its roots. New generations of journalists are drawn to rapid data and immediate results, at the expense of accumulated journalistic memory. This creates a dangerous narrative gap that empties stories of their depth and transforms journalism into a soulless, instantaneous recording.

These problems are exacerbated by a clear legislative and ethical vacuum. While developed countries have rushed to adapt artificial intelligence within strict legal frameworks that protect intellectual property, enforce transparency, and consciously integrate these technologies into education and media, the Arab world remains hesitant, oscillating between fear and indifference. The absence of clear regulations opens the door

to chaotic use, weakens the protection of journalists and authors, and leaves institutions vulnerable to the unchecked copying of their content.

Faced with this reality, numerous scenarios exist, but the common thread running through them all is that the future will not be black and white. It could be a conscious partnership where humans and machines share roles, with journalists crafting context and meaning while algorithms handle processing and technical support, resulting in improved quality and faster reporting. Or it could be a drift toward repetitive, automated content, stripping journalism of its oversight and investigative functions and dissolving cultural diversity into a single, stereotypical mold. Or, and most dangerously, a sharp knowledge divide could emerge, creating an elite capable of producing profound knowledge, contrasted with a vast audience fed superficial, biased content, thus deepening societal rifts.

Amidst all these transformations, the human journalist remains the last line of defense for meaning and truth. An abundance of information does not equate to an abundance of knowledge; in fact, it can be quite the opposite. Real-world experience proves that stories that truly make a difference are still written by those who understand context, grasp the complexities of politics, society, and culture, and possess the courage to question before rushing to publish. Artificial intelligence is not inherently an enemy, but it is an incredibly powerful tool. It can either be managed with sound governance, thereby enhancing media efficiency and opening new narrative horizons, or it can be left unchecked, eroding credibility and emptying knowledge of its meaning. Herein lies the convergence of the responsibilities of legislators, academics, and media institutions: to forge a new social contract that places humanity at its core, with technology serving rather than controlling.

Ultimately, the essence of journalism has not changed, as some might imagine; rather, its tools and spheres of operation have. The future is not built on a conflict between humans and machines, but on a smart partnership that recognizes the limitations of each. At this crossroads, it will be determined whether the media is on the cusp of a genuine digital renaissance, or an era of widespread noise and pre-packaged content, devoid of the spirit, depth, and credibility that have always given journalism its meaning and purpose.

KHRA, PACI launch new services on Sahel app

Kuwait Human Rights Association (KHRA) has launched its first electronic service through the government's Sahel application, introducing the 'Submit a Complaint' feature as part of efforts to enhance accessibility and digital transformation.

The new service enables users to file human rights complaints directly via the KHRA services menu on the Sahel platform. Complainants can provide full details of their case and upload supporting documents electronically,

without the need to visit the premises of KHRA in-person.

The Association said the initiative aims to simplify procedures, strengthen communication with the public, and ensure efficient handling of complaints in line with modern digital service standards.

Meanwhile, the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) has announced the launch of a new electronic service 'Resident Cancellation' through the Sahel application, making it available to private housing property owners.



PACI said the introduction of the service reflects its ongoing efforts to expand

digital services and enhance the efficiency and accuracy of data updates across government systems. Under the new service, property owners can electronically remove individuals registered as residents at their property, should they wish to do so, after activating the pre-registration service for resident data.

The authority emphasized that the initiative aims to simplify procedures, improve data governance, and provide faster, more reliable services to users through secure digital platforms.

Six Travel Trends in 2026

and Where to Go...

Travel in 2026 is all about choosing trips that actually fit your life. From quick long-weekend escapes to deeper cultural journeys, Kuwait-based travelers are planning smarter—and closer to home.



Switch Off and Slow Down

Wellness is the new luxury. Destinations like Tbilisi, Almaty, Yerevan, and Colombo are perfect for a digital detox, offering green spaces, slower rhythms, spa culture, and time to truly unplug.

The Long-Weekend Escape

Short trips are in. With a three-day long weekend in January, nearby cities like Dubai, Doha, Bahrain, and Abu Dhabi make it easy to reset without using extra leave.



Travel for the Table

Food is the main event. Think street food hopping in Istanbul, café culture in Beirut, spice-filled feasts in Delhi and Mumbai, and seafood and curry trails in Colombo, Kochi, and Chennai.



Trips That Mean More

Travelers want connection, not just checklists. Explore local markets in Amman, step into history in Luxor and Cairo, or experience everyday life in Alexandria and Damascus.

Destination Dups

Crowds are out; clever alternatives are in. Baku offers culture and architecture without the congestion, while Tashkent and Almaty deliver rich history and great value.



Follow the Good Weather

Weather now sets the itinerary. Chase winter sun in Jeddah, Taif, and Riyadh, or enjoy cooler, walkable days in Istanbul, Tbilisi, and Baku.

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Youth unemployment on the rise, over 12,000 without jobs

Latest figures from the Central Statistical Bureau show that the total number of unemployed Kuwaitis and registered job seekers reached 12,163 by the end of the first half of this year. While the country's unemployment rate is a matter of concern, what is more concerning to policymakers is that a large number of those out of jobs are young citizens.

New data compiled from the Civil Service Commission and the Public Authority of Manpower indicates that individuals in their twenties form the overwhelming majority of unemployed across both the public and private sector applicant pools.

Figures from the Central Statistical Bureau reveal that 6,863 unemployed Kuwaitis are currently registered within the Civil Service Commission's employment systems, which handle applications for government-sector jobs. Of these, 3,503 are men, accounting for just over half of the total, while 3,360 are women.

The duration of unemployment varies, with 2,582 individuals having remained registered for a year or longer. Another 2,371 have been seeking employment for periods ranging between six and eleven months, while 1,910 have been on the rolls for less than five months.

Age distribution highlights a clear trend: approximately 61.6 percent of unemployed Kuwaitis registered with the Civil Service fall within the 20-29 age bracket, totaling 4,234

individuals. This underscores the scale of employment challenges facing new entrants to the labor market.

From a social perspective, unmarried Kuwaitis represent the largest share of the unemployed, accounting for 58.3 percent, or 4,002 individuals. Married job seekers number 2,011, while the remaining cases include 819 divorced individuals and 31 widowed citizens.

Gender patterns within marital status further illustrate disparities. Unmarried men dominate unemployment figures, totaling 2,435 compared to 1,567 unmarried women. Among married job seekers, however, women outnumber men, with 1,269 married women unemployed compared to 742 married men.

Educational attainment data points to a concentration of unemployment among degree holders. Among men, higher proportions are observed among those with university degrees, diplomas and intermediate qualifications. For women, unemployment is largely centered among university graduates and those with intermediate education.

In total, 2,481 unemployed Kuwaitis hold university degrees, alongside 817 diploma holders and 793 secondary school graduates. Female university graduates form the largest single category, numbering 1,552.

Separate figures from the Public Authority of Manpower, which manages employment applications for the private sector, show



that 5,300 Kuwaiti job seekers are currently registered. Women account for 52.6 percent of this group, totaling 2,787, compared to 2,513 men. Waiting times among private-sector job seekers remain relatively short, with 2,657 applicants registered for less than one month, while 2,643 have been seeking work for periods between one and five months.

Age concentration is even more pronounced

in the private-sector pool. Nearly 94.1 percent of registered job seekers fall within the 20-29 age group, totaling 4,987 individuals, further reinforcing the youth-heavy nature of unemployment in Kuwait.

Unmarried individuals again dominate this segment, representing 79.6 percent of private-sector job seekers, or 4,217 people, including 1,895 women.

Educational data shows that male job seekers in the private sector are primarily university graduates or diploma holders, while the majority of unemployed women possess university degrees. Overall, 2,948 job seekers hold university qualifications, alongside 1,501 diploma holders and 261 secondary school graduates.

The figures collectively highlight a pressing challenge for policymakers: aligning education outcomes with labor market needs and expanding meaningful employment opportunities for young Kuwaitis as they transition from education into the workforce.

Border customs foil bid to smuggle out subsidized food items

Investigators from the Ministry of Interior's (MoI) Criminal Investigation Department have conducted a raid at an undisclosed location and uncovered a warehouse used to illegally store subsidized food supplies and smuggle them out of the country.

In a statement, the ministry said the operation to raid the warehouse came after customs officials at the Al-Salmi border-crossing referred a case to the ministry, following the interception of a vehicle attempting to leave the country with

quantities of subsidized food supplies hidden in a professional manner.

After completing the necessary security procedures, a specialized task force was formed, leading to the discovery of a warehouse operated by Egyptians. The warehouse was found to contain large quantities of subsidized food supplies prepared for smuggling and sale outside Kuwait. The ministry confirmed that all legal measures have been taken against the suspects, and emphasized that it will not tolerate any attempts to exploit government subsidies or tamper with state resources. It affirmed the continuation of security and monitoring campaigns to apprehend violators and confront anyone involved in such illegal activities, urging the public to cooperate and report any suspicious practices.

MoI begins enforcing new residency violation fines

Under the updated residency law, which came into effect on 23 December, failure to register a newborn within the legally defined period can result in a fine of up to KD2,000, emphasizing the government's commitment to accurate and timely registration of residents and dependents.



Ministry of Interior (MoI) has confirmed the enforcement of significant fines under the new residency law, which includes penalties for failing to register newborns and obtain residence permits on time. Under the updated residency law, which came into effect on 23 December, failure to register a newborn within the legally defined period can result in a fine of up to KD2,000, emphasizing the government's commitment to accurate and timely registration of residents and dependents.

The ministry's executive regulations under Article 9, state foreigners entering Kuwait on visas for various purposes, including government, private sector employment, family reunification, study, temporary contracts,

commerce, or medical treatment, are required to secure a residence permit within the legally specified period.

Failure to do so triggers fines as follows: KD 2 per day for each day of delay during the first month; KD4 per day for each day after the first month, with maximum total fine not to exceed KD1,200. For domestic workers who enter Kuwait with an entry visa but do not complete their residency formalities, the fines are similar, though the maximum applicable fine is KD600.

These measures are part of the Ministry's broader initiative to strengthen governance, transparency, and accountability, ensuring that residency regulations are fully observed and administrative processes remain effective.



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Geopark reveals Kuwait's geological, cultural heritage

Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi inaugurated on 1 January, Geopark Kuwait, a project that marks a major step in promoting the country's geological, historical, and cultural heritage, while also promoting cultural and educational tourism.

Geopark Kuwait, located to the north of Kuwait Bay, is a national initiative overseen by the Ministry of Information and implemented by Kuwait Oil Company in partnership with the Kuwait Society for Earth Sciences and the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters.

Speaking to state media outlets, Minister Al-Mutairi said the project reflects the political leadership's focus on national initiatives and the Ministry of Information's strategy of collaboration with civil society, government institutions, and the private sector.

He noted that the Geopark contributes to providing comprehensive information about the land and its human occupation, confirming the geological, historical and cultural significance of the land and its educational aspect, as well as its potential to revitalize the tourism sector. The minister emphasized the value of institutional partnerships,



noting, "Our partnership with Kuwait Oil Company contributed to the implementation of this project in record time, and today we are giving all institutions the opportunity to join hands with us and contribute to developing the project from one stage to the next."

The project, which is currently in a trial operation phase, will open for public visits from 7 January. Visitors can make bookings from 4 January through the 'Visit Kuwait' platform. During this period, guests will also have the opportunity to provide suggestions and feedback to further develop the site.

The minister added, "We are working to strengthen the unification of efforts, and all government

agencies are present, including the Ministry of Interior, the Fire Force, the Ministry of Health, and Kuwait Municipality.

The Ministry of Public Works has also implemented many infrastructure works for this project, which has transformed from a geological area only into an

integrated tourist area." It aims to consolidate Kuwait's position as a global tourist destination in geology, archaeology, and natural and human heritage, functioning as an open museum that reflects the country's historical and geological depth.

Located in a region of significant historical and environmental value,

the Geopark is linked to archaeological sites dating back to ancient civilizations of the Arabian Gulf, giving the project a rich historical and cultural dimension.

The initiative also seeks to develop ecotourism and geological tourism as a promising economic sector, helping diversify national income, protect natural and geological heritage, preserve biodiversity, and raise community awareness of earth and environmental sciences through education, interactive experiences, and research.

The first phase of the Geopark covers 20 square kilometers, while the second phase will expand the area to over 1,000 square kilometers. The project features a wide range of facilities, including geological and heritage activities, cafes, restaurants, craft shops, and a star-gazing platform, making it a unique desert-themed tourist destination in Kuwait.

KAPP to re-tender 23 public projects on state-owned land

Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects (KAPP) has floated a public tender to appoint a consultant for the re-tendering of 23 major projects situated on state-owned land, as part of a coordinated effort with the Ministry of Finance.

In a statement, the Authority said the tender seeks to attract specialized consulting firms and consortia from Kuwait, the region, and international markets. Interested parties are invited to submit separate technical and financial proposals to deliver advisory services that include drafting feasibility studies and preparing tender documentation for the projects.

The project portfolio spans a wide range of strategic commercial, service, and infrastructure assets. Among them are the Fahheel waterfront (Al Kout), Phase Five of the Marina Mall waterfront, two construction waste recycling plants, and a slaughterhouse project. The list also includes prominent retail and service hubs such as the International Center, United Market, Al-Maseel Market, Grand Market, Al-Watya Market, Kuwait Market, Plage 11 (Kuwait Magic), and Al-Mubarakiya Market.

Additional projects cover slaughterhouses in Farwaniya, Jahra, and Ahmadi, the National Market, the International Golf Club, Safat Market, Al-Manakh Market, International Amara real estate, as well as food markets in Jleeb, Jahra (Al-Khaima Mall), and the central vegetable and fruit market in Sulaibiya.

The Authority explained that the successful consultant will be tasked with producing technical, economic, environmental, and legal feasibility studies, preparing and managing tender documents, assessing submitted bids, and overseeing all technical, financial, legal, and environmental aspects through to financial close.

The broader goal of appointing a consultant is to raise operational efficiency, expand private-sector participation, improve service standards, strengthen revenue streams, and support long-term economic growth.

The tender process, which opened on 4 January, has a submission deadline of 5 March. Tender documents are available for purchase at KD1,000, a non-refundable fee, while the initial bid bond is set at KD20,000. Offers must remain valid for 90 days from the closing date.

Eligibility requirements include a minimum of 10-year experience in delivering integrated feasibility studies, tender documents, and partnership contracts for comparable projects at the local, regional, or international level. Bidders must also operate through licensed offices in their respective jurisdictions and be registered with the Central Agency for Public Tenders.

The Authority noted that contracting will follow a public practice procedure under Article 17 of the Public Tenders Law, using a two-envelope system—technical and financial—with no alternative bids permitted. The tender will be treated as a single, indivisible package, and proposals will be assessed using a points-based evaluation system.



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'Cars & Coffee' celebrates American automotive legacy

Classic and modern American cars take center stage at Embassy community gathering; event combines automobiles, culture, and community engagement in Kuwait



The Times Kuwait Report

Embassy of the United States hosted a lively Cars & Coffee event, bringing together classic and modern American automobiles, coffee culture, and a passionate community of car enthusiasts. The event, which comes as part of preparations to launch year-long celebrations marking the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States, was held in the US Embassy premises on 26 December.

Speaking during the event, Chargé d'Affaires at the United States Embassy in Kuwait, Steven Butler, said that the 'Cars & Coffee' event represents a unique occasion that brings together a passion for distinctive automobiles and coffee culture, while also serving as a platform to strengthen community engagement.

He further noted that innovation in the American automotive industry has a long history of inspiring people around the world. He expressed pride in showcasing this rich legacy through the modern and classic vehicles on display. Butler added that he had the opportunity to view the participating cars, praising the high standard and remarkable diversity of the exhibits, which reflected the participants' passion and attention to detail. During the event, awards were announced for 'Best New Car' and 'Best Classic Car'. Butler congratulated the winners and thanked the partners, exhibitors, and volunteers who contributed to the success of the event, emphasizing that their efforts and creativity played a key role in turning the idea into reality.

In closing, Butler thanked attendees for



their participation, expressing hope that such events would help promote dialogue and social cohesion. He wished everyone an enjoyable time in an atmosphere that combines automobiles, friendly discussions, and a strong sense of community. For his part, US Embassy spokesperson Stuart Turner said

that the 'Cars & Coffee' event organized by the embassy is a celebration of American culture, aimed at highlighting innovation and creativity in American products, particularly in the automotive sector. He explained that the event brought together classic and modern American cars, reflecting the history and technological



evolution of the U.S. automotive industry.

The open and festive atmosphere also featured food trucks and free activities for children, taking advantage of the mild weather and encouraging cultural interaction. Turner noted that the event was also organized as a substitute for the postponed US Independence Day celebration, which is usually held in November and has been rescheduled to the spring. This, he said, reflects the embassy's commitment to hosting an occasion that celebrates American culture and engages friends and the local community in a welcoming setting.

Turner added that the event serves as a prelude to the upcoming Independence Day celebrations and an introduction to several major events expected in the United States in the coming period, including the FIFA World Cup. He expressed hope that such activities would enhance interest and engagement among both American and Kuwaiti audiences.

Turner also spoke about the origins of the 'Cars & Coffee' concept, explaining that it began in California as a weekend morning gathering for car enthusiasts to share their interest in automobiles while enjoying coffee. He pointed out the presence of the 'Cars & Coffee Kuwait' group, which organizes regular meetups, and expressed the embassy's interest in future cooperation with the group, particularly given the strong local interest in classic and rare American cars.

Turner concluded by noting with a full calendar of activities planned throughout 2026, this event marks only the beginning of a year-long global celebration, inviting the public to take part in upcoming events as the United States marks 250 years.

Kuwait unveils strategic vision to develop national media system

Ministry of Information has a clear strategic vision to develop the national media system and enhance the quality of content, as well as to organize major media events, said Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi.

The remarks came in a press statement issued by the Ministry of Information following a meeting chaired by Minister Al-Mutairi with senior ministry officials to review the final preparations for the closing ceremony of the Kuwait Grand Media Award (Shiraa).

The meeting also discussed arrangements for the media event accompanying the French Super Cup match, which the ministry will organize ahead of the game, in addition to preparations for the visual presentation of Kuwait Television's Ramadan programming schedule.

Minister Al-Mutairi noted that the ministry's efforts are guided by a comprehensive strategy designed to reflect Kuwait's cultural image and keep pace with rapid developments in the media sector. He emphasized that effective integration between planning and

implementation represents a fundamental pillar of the ministry's work during the current phase.

He stressed that the Shiraa Award is one of the ministry's key national media initiatives, reflecting its commitment to supporting excellence and creativity in the media field and motivating professional competencies. He added that the award's closing ceremony represents the culmination of high-quality professional efforts and demonstrates



the level of professionalism achieved in organizing major media events.

The minister explained that organizing the media event accompanying the French Super Cup aligns with the ministry's direction to strengthen media coverage of major sporting events and to deliver visual content that highlights the capabilities of national institutions in organizing events according to the highest standards.

The ministry reaffirmed its commitment to developing Ramadan television content in terms of concept, substance, and presentation, in line with audience expectations, while reinforcing national media identity and employing modern technologies in production and broadcasting.

Minister Al-Mutairi praised the efforts of the ministry's leadership and working teams, underscoring the importance of continued teamwork and enhanced coordination among different sectors to present an integrated media image that reflects the status of the State of Kuwait and its media and cultural role at both regional and international levels.

Zero-tolerance to law-violations, Kuwait deports tens of thousands

Kuwait has deported 39,487 expatriates over the past year, in a sweeping law enforcement against threats to public interest and drug-related offences, including the use or possession of narcotics and psychotropic substances, to breaches of residency and other governing laws.

The mounting number of deportees reflect the government's zero-tolerance towards law violations and underscores the state's determination to apply the law firmly and without exception. Security authorities explained that all deportation decisions were

issued only after the full completion of legal procedures, stressing that no measures were taken arbitrarily.

The operations formed part of continuous, coordinated security campaigns carried out by multiple security departments in collaboration with concerned government bodies, aimed at tracking down violators and ensuring accountability for unlawful conduct.

Some of the deported individuals included heads of families, as such, their dependents whose residency permits are linked to the head of the family, had to leave the country once the



deportation orders were carried out. Each case was reviewed on its own merits, based on the family's legal residency status.

Ministry of Interior sources revealed that the security apparatuses remain active and uncompromising, warning that any misuse of residency privileges or disregard for national laws will be met with decisive action. The sources also emphasized that Kuwait continues to welcome all residents who respect its legal framework and societal values, making clear that compliance, not leniency, is the cornerstone of stability and security.

Kuwait's SWF exceeds a trillion dollars, new investments in AI and digital sectors

According to the latest annual report by Global SWF, the global leader in monitoring and reporting on sovereign wealth funds and public pension funds around the world, the total assets of Kuwait's sovereign wealth fund rose by about \$22 billion in 2025, reaching \$1.002 trillion, placing it sixth globally among sovereign wealth funds in terms of assets under management.

The report further noted that over the past five years, the country's sovereign wealth fund, managed by state-owned Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA), has invested approximately US\$9 billion in artificial intelligence (AI) and other digital sectors. Of this amount, \$6 billion was directed toward digital investments, while \$3 billion went into artificial intelligence.

Global SWF noted that Kuwait's investments form part of a broader Gulf-led investment surge, spearheaded by Abu Dhabi's Mubadala Investment Company, which injected \$12.9 billion, followed by the Qatar Investment Authority with investments totaling \$4 billion.

It highlighted that Gulf sovereign wealth funds accounted for 63 percent of global sovereign spending on artificial intelligence between 2020 and 2025, amounting to around \$21.2 billion, bringing total Gulf investments in the sector to \$13.4 billion. This growth has been driven largely by direct investments led by funds in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Qatar.

Beyond artificial intelligence, the report emphasized the Gulf's growing dominance in the wider digital investment space, including digital infrastructure and data centers. Global



sovereign spending in this field reached \$107.6 billion, with Gulf funds capturing approximately \$41.9 billion, or 39 percent of the total.

Global SWF said sovereign wealth funds worldwide are entering a new phase of qualitative growth, with total global assets under management reaching a historic \$15 trillion. When combined with public pension funds and central bank assets, the figure rises to \$60 trillion, with expectations that it could reach \$80 trillion by 2030, reflecting the expanding role of sovereign investors in global markets.

Despite a decline in the number of individual transactions, Gulf funds—mirroring global trends—have shifted toward fewer but larger deals. The average value of a single investment climbed to around \$500 million, signaling a strategic focus on major transactions, investment platforms and long-term partnerships.

This trend has been fueled by ambitious strategies targeting advanced technology

sectors and supported by a strong recovery in global financial markets. These developments underscore the growing financial and geopolitical influence of Gulf sovereign wealth funds, which have emerged as key drivers of global digital innovation, moving decisively away from traditional investment sectors toward value-added opportunities.

Global SWF data confirmed that the Middle East has become a central hub of the emerging digital economy, with the seven largest Gulf sovereign wealth funds accounting for 43 percent of total government-invested capital worldwide, equivalent to a record \$126 billion.

Geographically, the United States maintained its lead with \$13.2 trillion in sovereign assets under management, followed by China with \$8.2 trillion and the UAE with \$2.9 trillion. The US also remained the top destination for foreign direct investment, attracting about \$131.8 billion in 2025, nearly double the previous year's level. Conversely, sovereign investment flows into China declined sharply to \$4.3 billion in 2025 from \$10.3 billion in 2024, reflecting a strategic reorientation toward Western markets and emerging technologies.

The report concluded that sovereign wealth fund participation—either directly or through venture capital arms—has accelerated the maturity of the region's technology ecosystem. By providing long-term, patient capital, these funds have enabled startups to scale regionally and globally while attracting international expertise and foreign investment, reinforcing the Gulf's position as a magnet for innovation and capital.

Nazaha refers Public Works officials to Prosecution on corruption charges

Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) has referred a supervisor and several other individuals from the Ministry of Public Works to the Public Prosecution on allegations of forgery, embezzlement, and facilitating the misappropriation of public funds.

Nazaha emphasized its ongoing commitment to thorough investigations, evidence collection, and follow-up on all credible reports of corruption, ensuring that each case meets the required legal standards before referral.

The Authority also highlighted the vital role of whistleblowers, noting that information provided by citizens and employees is essential to uncovering corruption, while stressing that all whistleblowers are guaranteed full protection and confidentiality under Kuwaiti law and executive regulations.

The referral reflects Kuwait's broader strategy to strengthen transparency and governance across government agencies and reinforces the country's commitment to safeguarding public resources against misuse. Nazaha reaffirmed that it will continue to pursue all actionable cases and support judicial authorities in holding violators accountable.

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JANUARY

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1 New Year's Day **16** Isra and Miraj

18 Public Sector Holiday

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25 National Day **26** Liberation Day

 **Ramadan 2026** begins on Wednesday, 18 February and ends on Thursday, 19 March.
Dates may vary*

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26 Arafat Day

27 Eid Al-Adha

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16 Islamic New Year

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Direct flights turn Armenia into Kuwait's next must-visit destination



From Yerevan to Gyumri, Armenia steps into the spotlight as a safe, nearby culturally rich destination

The Times Kuwait Report

As travel horizons widen for Kuwaiti explorers, Armenia is reasserting itself as a standout destination, blending dramatic landscapes with one of the world's oldest living civilizations. The journey has become even more accessible following Jazeera Airways' launch of direct flights to Yerevan, turning the so-called "Jewel of the South Caucasus" into an easy and appealing getaway just two hours away.

The growing interest is already evident. In just four months, around 5,000 passengers have traveled on the direct Kuwait-Yerevan route, a figure that reflects rising demand and a renewed curiosity about Armenia's culture, safety, and natural charm. This increased connectivity is also opening doors to broader tourism flows and deeper economic ties between the two countries, placing Armenia firmly on the regional travel map as a safe, refined, and welcoming destination.

Jazeera Airways Chief Executive Barathan Pasupathi announced that the airline began operating direct flights between Kuwait and Yerevan on July 8, adding a new destination to its network at competitive fares.

Speaking to the media during visit to Armenia, he said the airline currently operates three flights a week, offering travelers flexibility and

convenience. Pasupathi noted that Armenia appeals to a wide range of travelers thanks to its rich heritage, striking scenery, and year-round tourism potential. He highlighted that the country ranked among the top 10 safest nations globally in 2024, according to the Numbeo index, making it particularly attractive for families and summer holidaymakers.

He added that the short flight duration makes Armenia ideal for long weekends, and expressed pride in Jazeera Airways being the only carrier offering a direct connection between Kuwait and Armenia. The experience, he said, is further enhanced by visa-free entry for Kuwaiti citizens, simplifying travel and encouraging repeat visits.

From Armenia's perspective, the new air link represents more than tourism growth. Levon Petrosyan, Director of the Middle East Department at the Armenian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said the country's location at the crossroads of Europe and Asia gives it a unique cultural and historical depth, supported by a long-standing tradition of hospitality.

Petrosyan said Armenia's abundance of historical landmarks and archaeological sites, combined with festivals and cultural events throughout the year, has transformed it into a vibrant, all-season destination. Its proximity to Kuwait, he added, makes it one of the closest

European travel options, especially with visa exemptions in place for Kuwaiti visitors and residents.

Petrosyan also pointed to recent advances in infrastructure, ecotourism, wellness tourism, and culinary experiences, offering visitors a diverse range of activities. Armenia's consistent ranking among the world's safest countries, he said, reflects a strong commitment to visitor security and quality of life.

Beyond travel, Petrosyan said Armenia is ready to expand economic cooperation amid positive shifts in the South Caucasus. He highlighted the "Crossroads of Peace" initiative and the complementary TRIPP project as key platforms for boosting regional connectivity and unlocking new trade and investment opportunities.

He stressed that Armenia welcomes Kuwaiti investment, offering a stable and transparent business environment supported by economic growth, skilled talent, advanced technology, and investor-friendly regulations. Promising sectors include information technology, renewable energy, agriculture, real estate, hospitality, and manufacturing, all underpinned by a focus on good governance and international partnerships.

Armenia's second-largest city, Gyumri, offers visitors a deeply authentic experience shaped by history, craftsmanship, and local flavor.

One of its most famous stops is "Punchek Muntchek" Café, celebrated nationwide for its fried pastry known locally as ponchik. With its crisp exterior and soft filling—traditionally vanilla cream, or Nutella in modern variations—the café has become so iconic that visitors travel hours just to taste what many call the best ponchik in Armenia.

Gyumri also preserves a rare Soviet-era barbershop that has been operating for more than six decades. From the furniture to the tools, everything remains unchanged, turning a routine haircut into a journey back in time. Some barbers have worked there for over 50 years, keeping the craft and atmosphere alive.

Another defining landmark is the Cathedral of Our Lady, locally known as Estfedtsatin. Built in the 19th century from black tuff stone, the church is a striking example of Armenian architecture.

It is also known as the "Seven Wounds" Cathedral, named after a revered icon depicting the Seven Sorrows of Mary, making it one of Gyumri's most significant spiritual sites.

Locally, Armenians refer to their country as "Hayastan", derived from Hay (Armenian) and stan (land), meaning "Land of the Armenians." The name Armenia, used internationally, traces its roots to ancient Greek sources, whose pronunciation helped shape the name recognized today.

Visa-free entry propel surge in Kuwaiti tourism to Uzbekistan

The Times Kuwait Report

Ibrahim Aliyev, advisor at the Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan, said that the launch of direct and regular Jazeera Airways flights between Kuwait and several Uzbek cities has played a decisive role in boosting Kuwaiti travel to Uzbekistan and strengthening tourism links between the two countries.

Aliyev noted that improved air connectivity has transformed Uzbekistan into a convenient and easily accessible destination for Kuwaiti travelers, removing previous barriers linked to distance and transit. He explained that this development has directly contributed to a noticeable rise in visitor numbers from Kuwait.

Speaking at a press conference highlighting Uzbekistan's diverse tourism offerings, Aliyev said tourism operators in both countries are currently working on tailor-made travel packages designed specifically for Kuwaiti tourists.

These efforts coincide with Jazeera Airways operating four weekly flights to Tashkent and Namangan, a move that has helped double the number of visitors from Kuwait this year.

Aliyev emphasized that Uzbekistan views tourism as more than an economic activity, describing it as a cultural bridge that introduces visitors to the country's ancient heritage, rich traditions, and national identity.



He added that the meeting also served as a platform to review the tourism sector's performance in 2025, with participation from representatives of travel and tourism companies.

He pointed out that the past year witnessed major reforms in the tourism sector, including the launch of new projects, improvements in service standards, and an expansion of international partnerships. These achievements, he said, were the result of sustained efforts by professionals and specialists working across the industry.

Aliyev revealed that Uzbekistan welcomed more than 11 million international tourists in 2025, marking a historic record at an average of

nearly one million visitors per month, positioning the country among the region's and the world's leading tourist destinations.

He added that the introduction of 30-day visa-free entry for GCC citizens, including Kuwaitis, effective June 1, 2025, has significantly accelerated tourist arrivals from the Gulf and opened wider prospects for joint tourism initiatives.

According to Aliyev, tourism cooperation with Kuwait enjoys special strategic focus, with several initiatives already launched to deepen cultural ties and activate tourism exchange programs. These steps, he said, are expected to

further increase visitor flows between the two countries in the coming period.

He noted that around 1,000 Kuwaiti tourists visited Uzbekistan last year, double the figure recorded the previous year, reflecting growing interest among Kuwaitis in Uzbekistan as an emerging and distinctive travel destination.

Aliyev concluded by stressing that the combined impact of direct flights, visa facilitation, and diverse tourism experiences is strengthening tourism flows from Kuwait, improving service quality, and laying the foundation for a sustainable and long-term tourism partnership between the two countries.

A Country and a World Out of Balance



Richard Haass

President Emeritus of the Council on Foreign Relations, is a senior counselor at Centerview Partners, Distinguished University Scholar at New York University, and the author of the weekly Substack newsletter Home & Away.

Writing about 2025 from an American perspective is both easy and difficult. It is easy because there is so much to choose from. And it is difficult for the same reason.

On the domestic front, even a short list would include: the longest-ever government shutdown; the national debt surpassing \$38 trillion; persistent inflation, along with increased joblessness and inequality amid accelerating, AI-fueled economic growth; growing political violence; efforts to seal the southern border to illegal immigration coupled with mass deportations; the deployment of national guard troops to Los Angeles and several other American cities; attacks on universities and on programs meant to promote diversity; the imposition of massive import tariffs; reductions in public-sector employment, including the US Agency for International Development; and considerable defunding of scientific research.

Foreign-policy developments were no less momentous. The United States joined Israel in launching armed attacks on Iranian nuclear facilities, setting its weapons program back years. A US diplomatic push did not achieve peace in Gaza, but it did bring about the release of the Israeli hostages and thousands of Palestinian prisoners, and an uneasy, incomplete ceasefire. Another diplomatic push to end the war between Russia and Ukraine has also failed so far to deliver peace but has succeeded in aligning the US with Russia and further distancing it from Europe.

Closer to home, a large US military presence was assembled off Venezuela and more than 20 boats allegedly carrying drugs were attacked, and oil exports partly blockaded, to pressure



EXCLUSIVE TO THE TIMES KUWAIT

the government there to cede power. The sovereignty of Canada, Greenland, Panama, and Colombia was threatened by President Donald Trump at one time or another. The US withdrew from the World Health Organization and from global efforts to combat climate change. At the same time, it promoted fossil-fuel production and cut spending on wind and solar power. Efforts designed to promote democracy and human rights in other countries were largely terminated.

The consequence? Significant power imbalances emerged both at home and abroad in 2025. At home, the first year of the second Trump presidency stood out for its excessive assertion of executive primacy. Trump signed hundreds of executive orders and thousands of pardons, fired public officials meant to exercise independent judgment, pressured others to bend to his will, and pursued legal retribution against perceived political enemies. The sudden bulldozing of the East Wing of the White House to make way for a large ballroom, and the abrupt renaming of the Kennedy Center, were emblematic of Trump's rejection of decorum along with due process and oversight.

What stood out just as much as Trump's assertion of power was congressional Republicans' unwillingness to provide a check on the president, and the deference shown to him by the Supreme Court. Not since Franklin Delano

Roosevelt has any president accumulated such a degree of control, but unlike FDR, who could point to the Great Depression and World War II as justifications for his actions, Trump inherited no emergency. He simply did things; and others acquiesced. Trump's unconstrained presidency is at odds with the American political tradition. Central to American government and democracy is the notion of checks and balances—that the three branches of the federal government are meant to govern jointly and ensure that no single branch dominates. This has failed utterly: Trump acts, and few react.

Abroad, Trump gave unprecedented focus to the Western Hemisphere—best understood as an extension of homeland security, a domain where concerns over drugs, immigration, and commerce intersect—and on promoting commercial interests everywhere. This strategy meant distancing the US from allies and friends in Europe and Asia and cozying up to Russia and China. As a result, the balance of power shifted in favor of countries that, until recently, had been seen as actual or potential adversaries.

Looking ahead, how the Supreme Court rules on Trump's assertion of emergency powers to justify his prolific use of tariffs, his signature economic policy, will prove informative. Equally revealing will be whether congressional Republicans demonstrate increasing willingness

to distance themselves from Trump, which could happen if they believed he was becoming a political liability.

Even more important will be the November 2026 midterm elections. History suggests that given Trump's low approval rating, the party out of power, the Democrats in this case, will pick up seats, gaining control of at least the House of Representatives. With that would come the ability not just to frustrate legislation sought by the White House but to investigate the administration. Trump is eager to avoid that outcome. The question is not simply whether Democrats will prevail in a free and fair election but whether the elections will be free and fair—an unexpected test of American democracy just months after it turns 250.

Overseas, Trump's emphasis on the Western Hemisphere and on ousting Nicolás Maduro's regime in Venezuela means less attention will be devoted to Europe and Asia, and fewer assets devoted to balancing Russia and China. This outcome will be even more pronounced if Trump doubles down on the use of military force against Venezuela to achieve his aims.

This, of course, raises the question of what the US is prepared to do vis-à-vis Russia and China. There is no sign the Trump administration will provide Ukraine with the military, economic, and diplomatic support it needs to convince Russian President Vladimir Putin that time is not on his side and that more war will not yield more results. But that is precisely what maintaining a balance of power and deterring further Russian aggression in Europe requires.

Similarly, there are doubts about Trump's willingness to stand by America's friends and allies in the Asia-Pacific, in particular Taiwan. His planned trip to China in the spring of 2026 could show whether his desire to reduce America's trade imbalance takes precedence over maintaining the balance of power in a region critical to the world's future. Systems out of balance tend to evolve either in the direction of further imbalance or toward a new or restored equilibrium. What Trump is willing and able to do will go a long way toward determining this evolution—and with it, the history of this era. As such, 2026 promises to be a pivotal year for the US and the world.

Strategic Development Drive to Continue in 2026

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Media reports affirm that amiri directives have stressed responsible oversight, objective accountability, and firm legal action against misuse of public resources, all within the framework of the Constitution and the law. These directives have also emphasized improving government efficiency, modernizing systems and legislation, appointing qualified leadership, expanding digital transformation, and ensuring transparency and accountability.

Considering the importance of the economy, His Highness has prioritized development of economic and investment sectors, to achieve sustainability, improve the business environment, attract foreign investment, deepen international partnerships, and attract major global companies seen as drivers of economic growth. His Highness has also consistently called on the government to expedite major strategic projects, ensure transparency in its workings, and enhance infrastructure in various domains.

In line with the amiri directives, the Cabinet headed by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, ramped up its efforts and measures, adopting scores of decrees and amendments to address national issues. Based on well-planned and coherent development strategies, the government has been driving the execution of policies and implementation of long-delayed vital projects crucial to realizing Vision 2035.

State media indicates that Cabinet decrees and legislative amendments issued in 2025 aim to usher in a fresh phase of radical and structural reforms, ensure sustainable economic transformation, augment developmental openness, improve workforce productivity, and broaden the scope

of strategic partnerships with friendly nations to bolster economic growth and strengthen Kuwait's influence on the global stage. On the economic front, the Cabinet adopted new decree laws and amendments to existing economic laws, including the financing and liquidity decree-law, the bankruptcy law, and a digital trade decree-law. The digital law provides a legal framework to integrate and regulate this sector, creating equilibrium between economic freedom and regulatory control. The Cabinet also approved social and humanitarian laws, and amended the public assistance and children's rights laws.

Furthermore, the cabinet approved the 2025-2026 annual development plan involving nine programs, 134 projects, 36 targeted policies and 38 legislative requirements, in addition to the 2025-2026 draft state budget that includes 90 new projects. Latest figures released by the General Secretariat for Planning show that government spending on development projects recorded a significant increase during the first nine months of fiscal 2025-2026, reaching KD602 million, surpassing the total expenditure of the entire previous fiscal years 2024-25 and 2023-24.

Based on current performance and implementation schedules, development spending by the end of the 2025-2026 fiscal year is expected to reach unprecedented levels, surpassing all previous records since the launch of the development plan. A major thrust in infrastructure development came with Kuwait and China recently signing an engineering, procurement and construction contract for the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port project on Bubiyan Island.

The recent surge in development spending reflects the government's keenness to treat capital expenditure as a key driver of economic growth. The strategy also aims to strengthen the role of the

private sector as a core partner in development, expand its contribution to the national economy, and enhance its absorption of young national talent, while reducing dependence on oil revenues.

Experts believe that the accelerated pace of spending also highlights a reorientation of fiscal priorities toward long-term projects with lasting economic and social impact. These approaches are expected to support fiscal sustainability, particularly with the anticipated implementation of new tax legislation that will boost non-oil revenues and enhance budget resilience, improve public services, stimulate economic activity and create productive job opportunities for citizens.

On the law and order side, the government introduced wide-ranging amendments, including to the penal code, provisions of the Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) Law, and to laws on registration and electronic transactions. The Cabinet also approved vital anti-crime legislations, including on fighting drugs and psychotropic substances and trans-border crimes, while also strengthening international judicial cooperation.

The decree laws and amendments adopted throughout 2025 reflect a growing strategic orientation towards promotion of national identity and citizenship. In this regard, the Cabinet adopted a range of recommendations from the high-level citizenship committee, while also reviewing and addressing humanitarian aspects arising from revoked citizenship.

In particular, the Cabinet reiterated its commitment to follow up on files related to people who had acquired citizenship under the category of special services, and to foreign women who had married Kuwaitis whose citizenship had been revoked. Additionally, the Cabinet asked the Central Bank of Kuwait to instruct all banking institutions in Kuwait to maintain existing accounts

and facilitate opening of new ones, for those with revoked citizenship under the above categories.

In foreign affairs, Kuwait reinforced its international influence by inking dozens of agreements and memoranda of understanding during 2025. These bilateral and multilateral documents indicated the country's growing ambition to widen its network of strategic partnerships with friendly countries, and strengthen international openness as a core pillar to support its national development plans.

On the regional front, Kuwait, which held the rotating Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) presidency in 2025, worked towards reaching breakthroughs in joint Gulf action, advancing GCC integration, strengthening regional security, and boosting the Council's status at regional and international levels. The GCC under Kuwait's presidency also participated in the GCC-Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit and the trilateral GCC-ASEAN-China Summit, held in Kuala Lumpur on May 27, as part of efforts to strengthen Gulf-Asian cooperation. Additionally, as the GCC chair in 2025, Kuwait hosted on 6 October the 29th GCC-EU Joint Council and Ministerial Meeting, along with the Dialogue and Security Conference between the two sides on 5-6 October. These meetings aimed to advance strategic partnership in various fields. Kuwait ended 2025 with the hand-over of the Gulf Cooperation Council presidency to the Kingdom of Bahrain. Throughout the year gone by, the government accelerated execution of mega development projects in infrastructure and utilities, introduced financial and economic reforms, empowered human resources, improved logistical services, while simultaneously enhancing governance and efficiency of government performance. These positive initiatives are set to continue and drive the country forward in 2026.

Villa Rosa Kempinski Nairobi

a City-Hotel Designed for Balance

By Nourah Khan
Travel Writer
The Times Kuwait

In a fast-paced city like Nairobi, choosing the right place to stay becomes an essential part of the journey rather than a purely practical decision. A hotel does not simply provide a place to sleep; it shapes the rhythm of the days and influences how one experiences the city. My stay in a city-view suite at Villa Rosa Kempinski Nairobi was not merely a luxury hotel experience, but a carefully curated stay that balanced comfort, privacy, and ease within a dynamic and ever-moving capital.



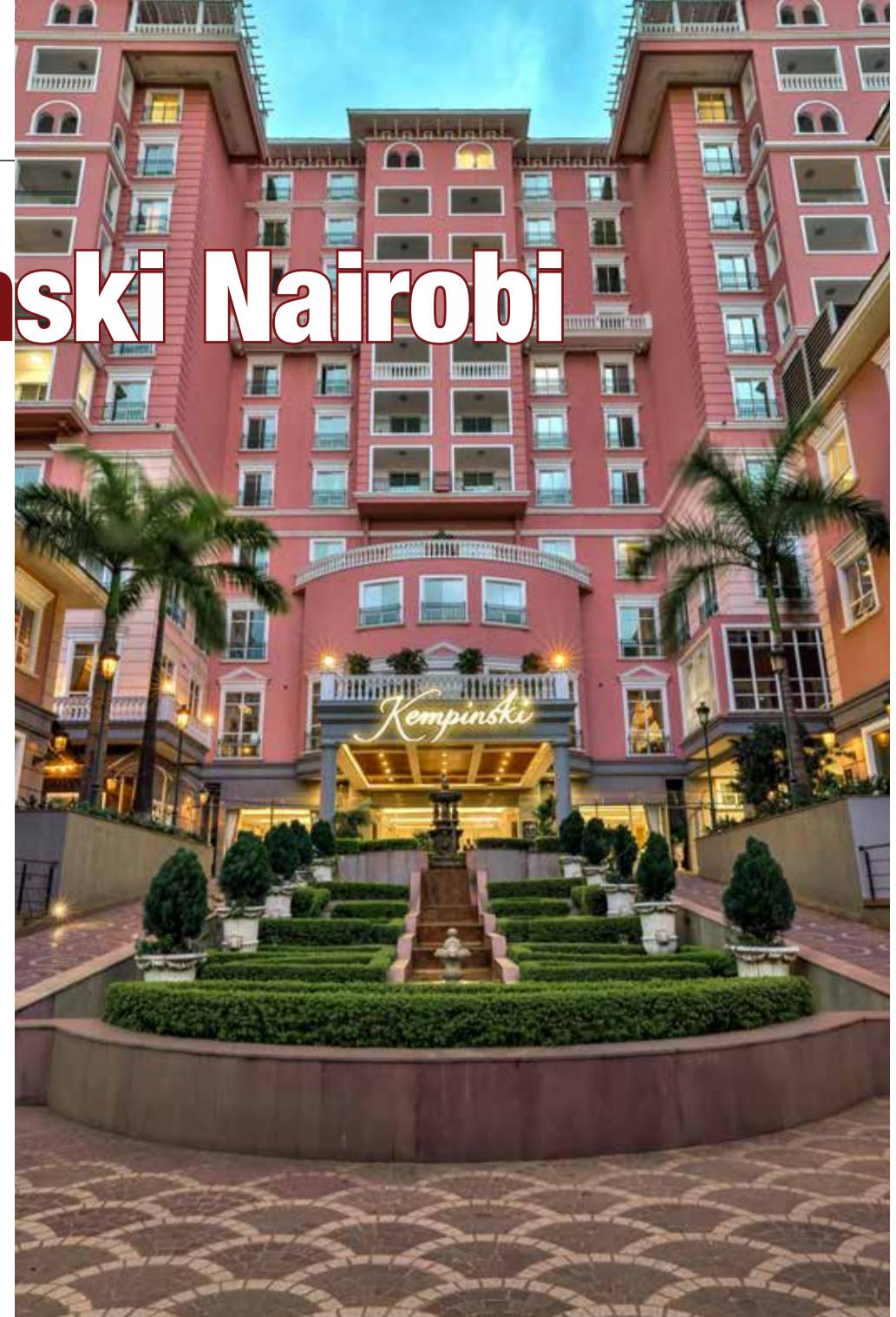
Located in the western part of Nairobi, the hotel enjoys a strategic position close to the central business district, making it particularly suitable for business travelers and those who value convenient mobility without being immersed in the congestion of the city center. This location offers flexibility during the day, while allowing guests to return in the evening to a calmer, more composed environment—



close to the heart of the city, yet pleasantly removed from its intensity.

The suite itself played a central role in shaping the experience. Its generous space, practical layout, and open city view reflect a form of understated luxury well suited to an urban setting. One of the most distinctive features of the suite was the spacious private balcony, which felt like a true extension of the room rather than a decorative addition. It quickly became part of my daily routine—a quiet place to start the morning with a cup of coffee, observing the city as it gradually came to life. A simple moment, yet one that perfectly captured the sense of comfort and privacy I value when traveling.

What stands out during a stay at Villa Rosa Kempinski is the feeling of stability and ease, even over a short visit. The hotel does not make guests feel transient; instead, it offers a sense



of calm and continuity that allows one to slow down when needed, or remain productive and engaged with the city. This balance is precisely what defines a successful city hotel—one that adapts to the guest's pace rather than imposing its own.

For me, luxury travel is not about excess or display, but about thoughtful choices. It is about staying in a place that works for you: a comfortable room, seamless service, moments of quiet, and a location that supports movement without draining energy. Villa Rosa Kempinski embodies this philosophy, offering an experience that feels fluid and well-considered, particularly for travelers who combine work and leisure or seek a more measured approach to city travel.

Dining is an integral part of the stay, both in terms of quality and variety. The hotel houses several restaurants and lounges, allowing guests to enjoy diverse culinary experiences without leaving the property. Café Villa Rosa is a relaxed option for breakfast and lunch, while K Lounge offers an elegant setting for afternoon tea. For dinner, Lucca presents Italian cuisine in a refined atmosphere, while 88 delivers a contemporary Pan-Asian experience that adds welcome variety. Tambourin introduces a modern Middle Eastern flair in a lounge-style setting, ideal for quieter evenings. Importantly for Muslim travelers, the hotel also provides halal dining options, making the overall experience more comfortable and accommodating.

The spa offers a much-needed pause within

the rhythm of a busy city. With a calm ambiance and comprehensive facilities, it provides a genuine opportunity to reset after full days of meetings or exploration. Having such a space within a city hotel adds meaningful value, reinforcing the idea of a stay that supports both body and mind.

Service at Villa Rosa Kempinski is discreet yet attentive—the kind that works smoothly in the background. Responsiveness, ease of communication, and a consistent focus on guest comfort contribute to an experience that feels effortless rather than staged.

Ultimately, Villa Rosa Kempinski Nairobi offers more than accommodation. It presents a refined interpretation of balanced luxury—one that allows guests to engage with Nairobi on their own terms. Whether visiting for business, exploration, or a combination of both, the hotel provides a calm and well-designed base, proving that the right city hotel can transform a trip from merely functional into genuinely enjoyable.

Nourah Khan, a travel influencer and content creator, is a Kuwaiti national, holds a degree in law from Kuwait University and has worked as a journalist prior to taking up a position in the government. In 2018 she started blogging on travel and visited more than 57 countries since. She has more than 105k followers on her blog post @nourajtraveller is well appreciated for content and travel information. Nourah writes exclusively for The Times Kuwait on her travel visits.



Curating Conscious Styles for Newest Family Members



By Hermoine Macura-Noble
Special to The Times Kuwait

When the newborn baby brand, Little Ones Arabia was founded, it did not begin as a business idea, it began as a mother's search. Struggling to find beautifully curated, high-quality, practical baby products in soothing Scandinavian-inspired designs, the brand's founder discovered a Danish label that changed everything. "It made me realize I could bring such products not only to my own family, but to the region," explains Founder Kristina Sarksyan. That passion evolved into a distribution company and online boutique for Gulf parents seeking essentials that are functional, stylish, and built to last.

Today, Little Ones Arabia stands out through one defining philosophy: thoughtful curation. Each item is chosen with purpose—tested for safety, durability, and comfort, while



fabrics, soft palettes, and minimalist silhouettes that suit warmer climates; prioritizing comfort while still looking refined.

Alongside Little Ones Arabia's curated labels, regional favorites such as Babyshop and Mumzworld are also catering to the demand by offering unique babywear collections as well as handmade items reflecting this shift toward quality, practicality, and timeless design. Neutral tones, organic cotton, and thoughtful detailing are replacing overly bright, disposable fast-fashion items, signaling a growing awareness of sustainability and long-term value.

Safety remains the foundation of Little Ones Arabia. The company works only with trusted European brands that comply with international standards. Many products are tested at home first, with feedback shared directly with suppliers whenever improvements are needed.

Cultural values also shape the brand. In Arab households, generosity and celebration are central, and Little Ones Arabia designs many of its hampers for milestone moments such as newborn welcomes, gender reveals, birthdays, and holidays, often presented in warm, neutral tones that feel both elegant and familiar.

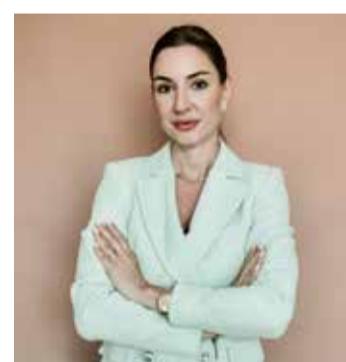
Sustainability plays an equally important role. From organic cotton and eco-friendly fibers to backpacks and diaper bags created from recycled plastic bottles, parents are encouraged to choose better while wasting less. Even the packaging is designed for reuse, easily repurposed for nursery storage.

Sarksyan notes that many new parents focus on how things look

and overlook practicality. Her advice: create an essentials checklist and stick to it. Must-haves include breathable muslin swaddles, high-quality sleepsuits with gentle seams, and a lightweight diaper bag with organized compartments. Above all, she reminds parents that nothing matters more than "the strongest, most comforting love of parents and family."

Despite the competitive marketplace, loyalty continues to grow. "Every message from a happy family feels like a milestone," she says. Looking ahead, Little Ones Arabia is expanding its offerings with new European brands, including the Dutch label Jollein, while developing a growing corporate gifting division across the UAE.

For Sarksyan, the message remains simple: slow down and savor the journey. "Parenthood can feel overwhelming. Cherish those early moments and choose the right products; they truly make the journey easier." For Little Ones Arabia, beauty, safety, and intentional care go hand in hand, creating a gentler, more meaningful start for newborns across the region.



Kristina Sarksyan
Founder, Little Ones Arabia

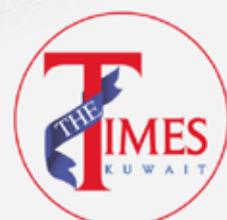
Hermoine Macura-Noble

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



maintaining an aesthetic that blends seamlessly into calm, modern homes. "Parents trust us because everything is tested, practical and sustainable," says Sarksyan. Carefully curated gift hampers, designed with new mothers in mind, have become one of the company's signature offerings.

Across the Gulf, newborn fashion is evolving toward understated elegance. Parents are increasingly drawn to breathable natural



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Thought for the week

“Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.

- Viktor Frankl
Austrian neurologist

Post Holidays: How to Reset Your Body Without Detox Diets

Ask Mira : Eating Right to Live Happy & Healthy



Happy New Year Everyone! After the holidays, it is very common to feel bloated, tired, or a bit 'off'. With all the rich meals, sweets, late nights, and celebrations, many people start January thinking they need a strict detox or a drastic diet to feel better again.

The good news? Your body does not need punishment, it needs care.

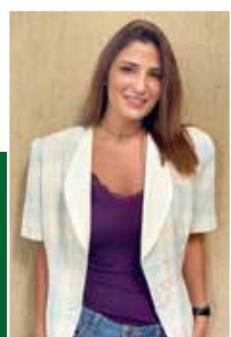
Your liver, kidneys, and digestive system are already doing an amazing job every day. What you are feeling after the holidays is not toxins, it is usually dehydration, excess salt and sugar, irregular meals, and disrupted sleep. A gentle reset is much more effective than extreme cleanses.

Start with hydration: Drinking more water helps reduce bloating and supports digestion. Adding potassium-rich foods like vegetables, legumes, yogurt, and bananas can also help your body rebalance fluids naturally. Herbal teas are a great bonus.

Balance your meals: Holiday eating often means more sugar and refined carbs, which increase cravings and give you a low energy. Aim for balanced meals that include protein, healthy fats, and fiber. This helps stabilize blood sugar, control appetite, and bring your energy back to normal.

Reduce inflammation gently: Instead of cutting out random food groups, shift toward nourishing choices:

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



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Create healthy habits, not restrictions

To subscribe to my diet programs,
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www.eatlikemira.com

RECIPE

Coconut-Jaggery Semolina Halwa



Jaggery Halwa, a traditional Indian dessert, is popular in many places in India. This recipe is for a traditional semolina halwa, which is very healthy. It is a perfect recipe if you are on a Keto diet and craving some good vegan food.

Total time: 30 min.

Ingredients

- 1 cup semolina
- 1/4 cup virgin coconut oil
- 3/4 cup chopped jaggery or Jaggery powder
- 1 cup coconut milk
- 1 cup water
- 1/4 cup grated fresh coconut
- 4-5 chopped dry apricots
- 1 tsp cardamom powder
- 1 tbsp dry ginger powder



Chef Chhaya Thakker

For garnishing

- Chopped almonds and pistachios
- Dry coconut shreds.

Directions

- In a deep pan, mix together jaggery, cardamom powder, dry ginger powder and water.
- Heat until the jaggery dissolves. Set aside.
- Heat coconut oil in a heavy bottom kadai or nonstick pan.
- Add in suji and grated coconut. Roast on a low flame until it attains a brownish color.
- Add in the jaggery water and coconut milk.
- Cook till all the milk and water has dried and the mixture starts to leave the sides of the pan.
- Turn off the flame.
- Garnish with chopped almonds-pistachio and dry coconut shreds.
- Serve hot or warm.



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



Medical breakthroughs in 2025 offer new hope for patients

On these pages, and in many medical news publications, the focus is often on preliminary studies and research that show medical discoveries or innovative medical techniques that proved successful in mice, or in laboratory conditions. These findings highlight the potential, but still unproven, benefits of the discoveries in treating human health conditions.

With 2025 now behind us, we turn this week to several medical breakthroughs in the year gone by that are positively changing people's lives right now. These advances also acknowledge the painstaking efforts and years of studies by scientists around the world that have made the new medical advancements possible. The impact that these treatments are now having on saving lives, also spotlights the importance of continuing to support biomedical research globally.

Personalized gene editing: Scientists recently saved a baby's life using personalized in vivo CRISPR gene therapy. A baby named KJ had a rare gene mutation that caused a deficiency in the CPS1 enzyme, which meant his liver could not convert ammonia into



urea, leading to dangerous levels of ammonia to build up in the body damaging his brain and liver. Researchers at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia in the US diagnosed him within days of birth, and spent six months designing and testing a personalized gene-editing therapy before fixing his deficiency with a CRISPR base editor that erased KJ's mutation and penciled in a correction. Now 18 months old, he recently took his first steps. With a new clinical trial in the works, this is an approach that could soon be available for more individuals with rare diseases.

Vaccine reduces dementia risk: Studies by scientists last year in multinational research institutes affiliated with multiple universities and centers, have offered tantalizing evidence that the shingles vaccine might prevent dementia. The vaccine targets the chicken pox virus varicella zoster, which can reawaken in

Technical challenges include reattaching a uniquely complex tangle of blood vessels and nerves. This year, urologic surgeons at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) became the first to successfully conduct a kidney and bladder transplant from a donor to a patient. The patient's urine drained well from the kidney to the new bladder, but doctors will need to continue to monitor him to see if the organ really functions like new. It could be a boon to the millions of people around the globe who experience some degree of bladder disease and dysfunction.

Protecting babies from RSV: Widespread availability of two preventative tools may be helping babies avoid severe cases of respiratory syncytial virus, or RSV. A maternal vaccine and an antibody for infants could be behind the drop in RSV hospitalizations scientists observed last winter. The effectiveness of such tools is good news for babies and their families, because the virus is the leading cause of infant hospitalization in the United States and can lead to nasty complications.

And now, for several research breakthroughs that took place in 2025, we look at:

New genome sequencing: A research team at Swiss multinational healthcare company, Roche and Boston's Children's Hospital set a new world record for the fastest human genome sequencing and analysis. It took the team less than four hours to perform whole genome sequencing and analysis, using Roche's proprietary Sequencing by Expansion (SBX) workflow, which expands DNA molecules into larger structures called Xpandomers that are easier to read.

Gene sequencing has come a long way since the 1970s, when it took weeks to sequence a single gene; in the 2000s the time taken was reduced to six months for a whole genome, and even in the 2010s it took over three days. The new technique not only improves accuracy but also makes genome sequencing much more affordable.

STITCHR stitches DNA: Scientists at Mass General Brigham, and a leading integrated academic health system in Massachusetts in the US, have developed a new gene-editing tool, STITCHR, that uses an RNA system to replace entire genes. By inserting large pieces of DNA into genomes—the complete set of DNA instructions for an organism, organized into genes and chromosomes—the technique offers a practical and economically feasible innovative method that addresses limitations of current gene-editing technologies such as CRISPR, which is programmed to correct individual mutations.

The method is based on a highly active retrotransposon—a



segment of DNA that moves within a genome by being transcribed into RNA, then reverse-transcribed back into DNA, and inserted elsewhere—called R2Tg in zebra fish. The scientists then engineered the R2Tg into a programmable system that can insert edits up to 12.7 kilobases long, roughly the size of the average human gene, without errors.

AI makes novel enzymes: A deep learning model called RFdiffusion2, which incorporates principles from AI structure prediction models like AlphaFold2's underlying framework, is used to design novel enzymes. This innovative approach enables the creation of enzymes tailored for specific chemical reactions with high success rates. Scientists have for the first time created a 'multi-step enzyme' that has never before been seen in nature. been seen before in nature.

Enzymes are extremely specific proteins that can speed up reactions; they are widely used in industrial processes, pharmaceuticals, cooking, and consumer goods like laundry detergent. The new synthetic multi-step enzymes could further broaden their uses.

DNA vaccines in the offing: DNA vaccines have many of the benefits of mRNA vaccines, including being easy to produce, fast to update, and producing proteins that represent viral proteins closer to their natural form, in addition to being stable at higher temperatures. Until now, they have been hard to implement because cells tend to reject DNA entering them. But scientists have created DNA lipid nanoparticle formulations that can package and deliver the DNA vaccines, and tested them against influenza and COVID in mice and rabbits. These studies have provided foundational data on the safety, immunogenicity, and efficacy of DNA vaccines, paving the way for human clinical trials and even some veterinary product approvals in the near-future..



Discoverers of body's peacemakers win 2025 Nobel Prize in medicine: The peacemakers in the body are the regulatory T cells—a type of immune cell produced or processed by the thymus gland that calms the immune system after it has finished fighting infection or healing a wound. These special regulatory T cells (T-reg) also prevent the immune system from attacking the body. Failure of T cells leads to autoimmune disorders or damaging inflammation, as well as the ability of these cells to prevent rejection of the fetus during pregnancy.

The discovery of T cells and their functioning led to Shimon Sakaguchi, Mary Brunkow and Fred Ramsdell being awarded the 2025 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine. Shimon Sakaguchi of Osaka University in Japan first discovered these important cells in 1995. Mary Brunkow of the Institute for Systems Biology in Seattle in the US and Fred Ramsdell, a cofounder of Sonoma Biotherapeutics, a company based in San Francisco and Seattle, tracked down a mutation that caused a fatal autoimmune disease in male mouse pups in the 1990s.

Sakaguchi later discovered that this mutation disabled a gene important for T-reg development. Without the gene there were not enough T-reg to stop wayward immune cells from causing harm in the body. Mutations in the gene are also responsible for an autoimmune disease in people called IPEX, which is a rare, severe X-linked autoimmune disorder that results in the body attacking its own tissues, especially the gut, skin, and endocrine glands. It typically appears in infancy and is often fatal without aggressive treatment.

Scientists are now learning to harness T-reg to prevent rejection of transplanted organs and treat autoimmune disorders, food allergies, cancer and other conditions in which the immune system is overactive or directed against the wrong thing.



infected individuals to cause a blistering rash known as shingles, later in life. The vaccine was found to not only treat shingles, but also reduce the risk of developing dementia by about 20 percent. The vaccine's effect was even observed to slow the progression of dementia in those already living with the condition.

COVID vaccine boosts cancer therapy: mRNA-based COVID vaccines may come with a surprise side benefit: making some cancer therapies work better. Scientists found that vaccinated people with lung or skin cancer who were treated with immunotherapy for their cancer tended to live longer than their unvaccinated counterparts. The discovery comes as a surprise as COVID vaccines are not designed to target cancer yet somehow have anticancer powers. Researchers think the mRNA itself may jump-start the immune system, turbocharging the ability of immunotherapies to rally cancer-fighting cells.

Urinary bladder transplant: Less in the news than more celebrated transplants of organs such as the heart and lungs, urinary bladder transplants are no less crucial or complex to

A Decisive Year for Ocean Conservation



Peter Thomson
United Nations Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean.

While the ocean's health is perilously close to a tipping point, 2025 offered reasons for hope. In fact, over the next five years, we have an opportunity to pull back from the brink and ensure that the ocean continues to stabilize the climate, feed billions of people, and support the livelihoods of coastal communities. If we fail to seize this chance, the consequences will be dire for generations to come.

As a Fijian, I understand that the ocean's irreversible degradation is not an abstract concern. Pacific Islanders live with the reality of rising sea levels claiming more of our coastline every year and contaminating the aquifers we use for agriculture and drinking water. Warming waters supercharge tropical cyclones and destroy the coral reefs that provide food security and coastal protection.

But amid these challenges, and following years of incrementalism, international efforts to protect the ocean gained momentum in 2025, leading to some landmark decisions. Despite the strains being put on multilateralism, it is now widely acknowledged that the ocean's health is at the heart of global stability, climate resilience, and economic prosperity.

In June, we witnessed how powerful this recognition is at the third United Nations Ocean Conference cohosted by France and Costa Rica in Nice. Some 15,000 people, including more than 60 heads of government and 100 ministers, participated in UNOC3, which also welcomed nearly 100,000 visitors. Attendees were united in demanding expanded marine protection,



EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

increased efforts to mitigate ocean pollution, high seas regulation, and financial support for vulnerable coastal and island communities.

Another historic achievement was the ratification of the UN High Seas Treaty, which will enter into force in January 2026. For the first time, humanity has a framework for protecting biodiversity in marine areas beyond national jurisdictions, which is half of the planet's surface. Likewise, the World Trade Organization's Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies entered into force, prohibiting subsidies for illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing activities, which have long undermined sustainable fisheries management and threatened marine ecosystems.

Moreover, ocean-based climate action featured more prominently in many of the updated nationally determined contributions that countries were required to submit this year under the Paris climate agreement. Governments are now embracing the powerful climate solutions that the ocean offers, from offshore renewable energy to low-carbon shipping and mangrove restoration.

But policymakers are not the only ones seeking to harness the ocean's potential. In June, the world

moved significantly closer to a regenerative and sustainable blue economy at the Blue Economy and Finance Forum, a special meeting of UNOC3 held in Monaco. Understanding that healthy marine ecosystems underpin economic growth and resilience, private investors, public banks, and philanthropies committed to investing €8.7 billion (\$10.2 billion) in a sustainable blue economy by 2030. Across the Global South, innovative finance models have started to channel capital to coastal protection, community-led conservation, and nature-based infrastructure.

In addition to these initiatives, the international community spent more time this year engaging with Indigenous peoples, artisanal fishers, and local stewards who have long protected marine ecosystems but rarely received recognition or financial support. This is crucial, because ocean-based climate solutions that ignore frontline communities are destined to fail.

My home country, Fiji, has helped lead the charge. At the international level, Fiji cohosted the first UN Ocean Conference, in 2017, with Sweden, and has spearheaded global action ever since. For example, in early December, the seventh session of the UN Environment

Assembly adopted a Fiji-led resolution on safeguarding coral reefs. At home, Fiji has championed locally managed marine areas and promoted community stewardship, helping to shape best practices for both.

To ensure continued progress on ocean conservation and resilience, particularly in the lead-up to the fourth UN Ocean Conference, which will be held in South Korea in June 2028, co-hosted by South Korea and Chile, we must focus on three priorities.

First, governments must fully implement the High Seas Treaty. That means establishing marine protected areas (which will be essential to achieving the target set by the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework of conserving 30% of seas by 2030), funding capacity-building, and creating robust and science-led environmental-impact assessments.

Second, the WTO must take decisive action to enforce the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies. The world cannot afford another decade of industrial fleets over-fishing the ocean. Sustainable fisheries are possible with management strategies grounded in science and focused on small-scale fishers and coastal communities.

Third, more finance must be made available quickly. Philanthropists alone cannot fund the multi-trillion-dollar blue economy. Public and private actors must align on investments that regenerate natural systems, reduce climate risks, and empower local communities. The need is particularly urgent for island countries, where the potent combination of climate vulnerability and debt distress threatens to undermine long-term resilience. The ocean's decline is not inevitable. It is our choice whether to deliver a healthier, more abundant ocean for future generations. Doing so will require informed leadership and science-backed interventions rooted in equity. The tide turned for the better in 2025. To keep it moving in the right direction, our dedication to the ocean's resilience and regeneration must not falter in the new year.

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