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Tobacco Industry, Profiting from a Killer Product

THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

Statistics from the World Health Organization (WHO) presents a grim picture of the pernicious grip that tobacco use has on the physical health of people and the fiscal health of nations. According to latest WHO data, nearly eight million annual deaths — one person every four



seconds of the year — are attributed to tobacco-related diseases. An additional 1.3 million deaths occur due to second-hand exposure to tobacco smoke. The WHO figures also reveal that in 2020, around 22 percent of the global population —36.7 percent of men and 7.8 percent of women—used tobacco products.

Additionally, an estimated 37 million children aged 13-15 years worldwide use tobacco. The tobacco industry uses insidious strategies to make their harmful product appear innocuous and appealing to sustain young users and trap new ones. In many countries the rate of e-cigarette use by youngsters exceeds that of adults.

Tobacco use, including smoking, chewing tobacco, using snus, vaping, and other new forms of tobacco consumption, is a major risk factor for various chronic diseases, including cancer, lung disease, cardiovascular disease, and stroke. It is expected that over half of current tobacco users will die prematurely from a tobacco-related disease.

Tobacco use also leads to significant economic and social costs. The Union for International Cancer Control estimates that in 2022 the total economic cost of tobacco use was more than US\$1.7 trillion, including from health care costs for treating tobacco-related diseases, and from loss of productivity and human capital due to illnesses and deaths. A significant portion of this loss now occurs in developing countries that can ill-afford such costs.

In many developed countries, growing public sentiment against tobacco use, and stringent anti-tobacco policies by governments, has forced the tobacco industry to shift marketing and purveying of their products to developing countries, where rules and regulatory policies are often lax. Today, around 80 percent of the world's 1.3 billion tobacco users live in low- and middle-income countries (LMIC), where the burden of tobacco-related illnesses and deaths is the heaviest.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



Diwaniya Diplomacy

By Tareq Yusuf AlShumaimry

I was recently invited by Reconnaissance Research Centre to attend a seminar at one of Kuwait's traditional diwanis. The seminar involved participation of an Indian parliamentary delegation visiting Kuwait and Kuwaiti civil society organizations. The event's hosts, Founder and CEO of Reconnaissance Research Abdulaziz Al-Anjari, and the Indian Ambassador H.E. Dr. Adarsh Swaika took diplomacy to a new level through this unique engagement.

Parliamentary delegations play a pivotal role in strengthening diplomatic relations, enhancing security cooperation, and addressing common concerns between countries.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

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The Talent Engine

Unlocking Kuwait's Youth Potential for a Green and Digital Future



By Sarah Al Sabah
Special to The Times Kuwait

In a highly competitive and dynamic region, Kuwait stands at a critical juncture. With Vision 2035 outlining the roadmap to a diversified, innovation-led economy, one foundational question must be answered: Are we preparing our people to lead that future or merely to follow it?

The reality is sobering. While Kuwait boasts one of the youngest populations in the Gulf with 25 percent under the age of 25, our workforce remains under activated, under-skilled for the demands of the global green and digital economy. Moreover, we are currently disconnected from fast growing industries that are shaping tomorrow's world.

But what if Kuwait could turn this demographic challenge into its greatest competitive advantage?

Economic Zones as Engines of Talent, Not Just Trade: With the activation of Na'ayem and Nuwaiseeb economic zones under the public-private partnership (PPP) framework, Kuwait



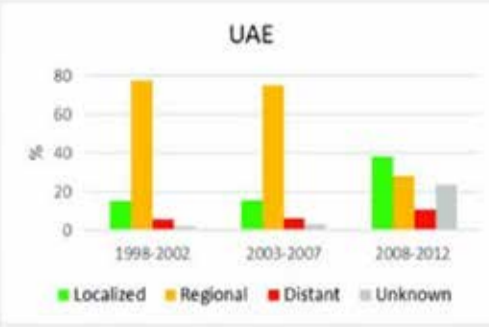
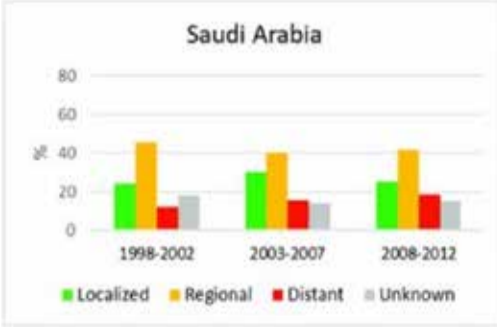
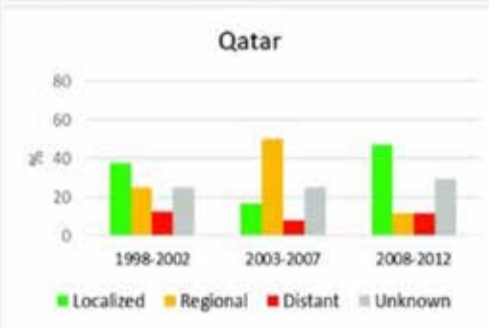
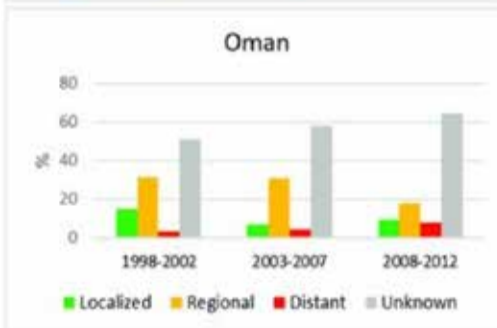
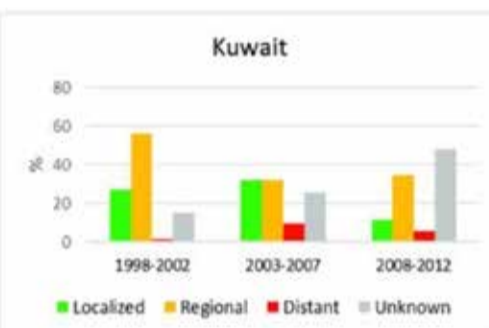
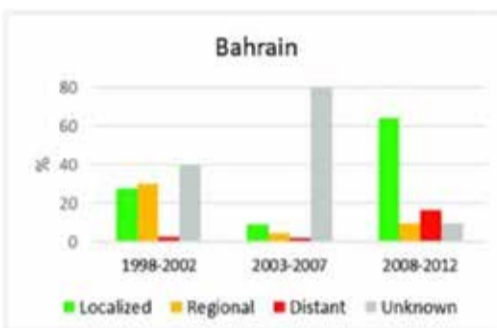
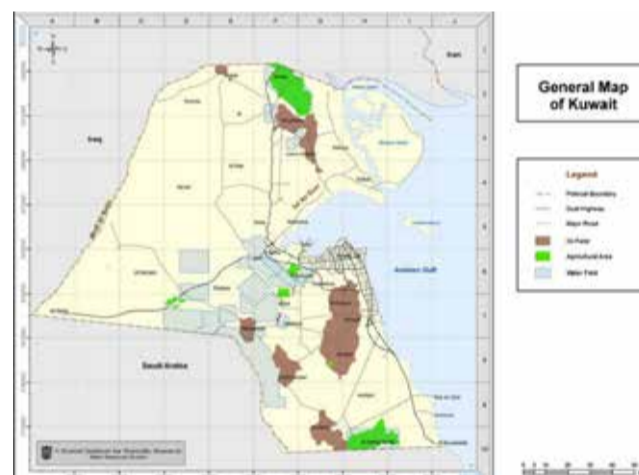
Kuwaitis learn, experiment, and lead in sectors like clean manufacturing, AI-driven logistics, energy transition technologies, and digital finance. This is an opportunity for the youth to co-create their environment and transform it into a dynamic future-ready economic ecosystem.

To do this, Kuwait must reimagine workforce development not as an isolated policy, but as a national strategy embedded within economic transformation.

A Vision for Kuwait's Talent Advantage: We propose the launch of the Kuwait Future Skills

management.

- Industry-integrated apprenticeships co-designed with international firms operating in the zones, allowing young Kuwaitis to 'learn by doing' alongside global experts.
- Micro-credentialing programs offered



has a generational opportunity to do more than build infrastructure. Kuwait can build human capital ecosystems embedded within these zones.

Imagine zones that are more than just houses for factories or warehouses. Imagine living laboratories of innovation, where young

Accelerator (KFSA), a nationally coordinated, zone-integrated initiative that merges:

- Technical academies and digital boot-camps within Na'ayem and Nuwaiseeb, focused on climate-tech, advanced manufacturing, renewable energy systems, AI, and digital supply chain

Why It Matters Now: Across the GCC, Saudi Arabia is investing heavily in digital skilling via programs like Future Skills; the UAE is training a generation of AI and coding experts through its Coders HQ initiative; and Qatar is expanding innovation-based education through initiatives like Qatar Foundation's Education City, bridging academia with future industries. These nations understand that the next oil is talent.

Kuwait must move faster. The goal is not just to catch up, but to leap ahead.

If we continue to rely on traditional education pipelines and outdated employment pathways, we risk building zones full of infrastructure, but empty of innovation.

Call to Action: The Ministry of Education, Ministry of Higher Education, KDIPA, and KAPP must work in collaboration with private sector champions to embed Kuwait Future Skills Accelerator (KFSA) programs within the economic zones from the planning stage.

Kuwaiti universities and technical institutes should be incentivized to create customized curriculums aligned with zone sectoral priorities, while private partners offer hands-on mentorship and job pathways. This is not just a program. Embedding KFSA programs is a national competitiveness strategy.

From Talent Gap to Talent Edge:

The green and digital transitions underway globally will reshape economies and power structures. Kuwait has the capital, the infrastructure, and now, with Vision 2035/40 and the PPP zone activations. Kuwait has the policy platform to succeed. The only missing piece is the activation of our people.

Let us move with purpose. Let us build the talent engine Kuwait needs and the world deserves.

Editor's Note: This op-ed explores how aligning Kuwait's Vision 2035 with environmental

leadership offers a strategic pathway for economic diversification, societal well-being, and global competitiveness. It emphasizes the critical role of Generation Z (Kuwait's largest youth cohort) in shaping a sustainable, digital, and diversified economy. By connecting infrastructure, governance, human capital, and global positioning with environmental innovation, the article provides a call to action for policymakers, private sector leaders, and citizens to build a Kuwait that is prosperous, resilient, and future-ready.

in partnership with global ed-tech platforms to allow flexible, stackable qualifications in emerging skills.

- Youth-led sustainability challenges and startup incubators to foster entrepreneurship and purpose-driven innovation.

This model would not only enhance employability, Kuwait Future Skills Accelerator (KFSA) would create value for Kuwait's economy by anchoring high-skill industries locally and exporting talent globally.



Kuwaiti Women

Smart, skilled, unstoppable in nation's transformation

'As Kuwait moves forward, the contributions of Kuwaiti women will continue to be a source of pride, a force for reform, a force to reckon. a foundation for national unity'



By Sheikha Suhaila Al-Saba
Managing Editor

On the occasion of Kuwaiti Women's Day, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah paid tribute to the vital role played by the Kuwaiti women in driving national development and representing the nation on the international stage.

In heartfelt remarks, His Highness emphasized that Kuwaiti women are not just participants but key partners in nation-building, and deserves full recognition, appreciation and continued empowerment.

In a message filled with pride and admiration, the Amir highlighted that Kuwaiti women have long stood as pillars of resilience and progress, their contributions deeply rooted in the nation's history. From playing heroic roles during the Iraqi invasion to standing shoulder-to-shoulder with men in all phases of national reconstruction, their journey has been one of perseverance, sacrifice, and unwavering dedication.



Today, Kuwaiti women are at the forefront of the national landscape, empowered by a supportive legislative framework and ambitious development goals. Having gained full political rights, they have risen to the challenge and with grace accepted leadership roles as ministers, parliamentarians, ambassadors, and executives, making their presence felt across the public and private institutions.

Despite facing entrenched social and cultural challenges, Kuwaiti women have overcome them with determination and excellence. Education has been their gateway, with women consistently excelling in academic achievement and

advancing in scientific and research fields, laying the groundwork for professional success across sectors.

Kuwaiti women have proven to be dynamic contributors to the national economy, leading successful entrepreneurial ventures and playing significant roles in both the local and global markets. In the fields of innovation and digital transformation, many have emerged as key players, shaping Kuwait's presence in the knowledge economy and proving their capacity to thrive in technological advancement.

On the international stage, Kuwaiti women have represented the nation as ambassadors with excellence and promoted the values of the nation, winning prestigious awards and holding influential positions in diplomacy, academia, and humanitarian efforts. Their participation has not only strengthened Kuwait's global image but deepened its international relationships.

Moreover, Kuwaiti women have been instrumental in volunteerism and social development, with women-led organizations actively promoting awareness, advocating for women's rights, and contributing to community welfare.

The state has supported this momentum with legislative measures that promote gender equity and encourage women's inclusion in decision-making positions in Parliament, ministries, and national institutions. The words of His Highness the Amir serve as a renewed national commitment to eliminating barriers and fostering an environment where women's aspirations can thrive.

Looking ahead, there is a strong call for increased female participation in scientific research, innovation, and policy-making, as well as for creating better work-life balance structures to support their dual roles in society and family.

In a rapidly transforming digital world, Kuwaiti women are presented with unprecedented opportunities. Digital platforms and e-governance initiatives now enable women to access education, training, and flexible work arrangements without the constraints of time or location. These changes must be accompanied by media efforts that highlight women's achievements and inspire future generations through positive role models.

Today, the Kuwaiti woman stands as a beacon of progress in the Gulf and Arab world—striking a unique balance between cultural heritage and global engagement. Her story is one of triumph, showing that tradition and progress can coexist, and even fuel one another.

His Highness the Amir concluded by affirming that Kuwaiti women



deserve trust, respect, and full partnership in shaping the nation's

future. He reminded the nation that true progress requires the full

strength of both men and women, and that Kuwaiti women—driven by knowledge, creativity, and a passion for change—are key to national advancement.

As Kuwait moves forward, the contributions of Kuwaiti women will continue to be a source of pride, a force for reform, and a foundation for national unity. Together, men and women will shape a prosperous and inclusive future, fueled by shared values and unbreakable determination.

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Reconnaissance Research hosts Indian Delegation for Strategic Dialogue



Reconnaissance Research, Kuwait's leading independent think tank, recently hosted a high-level Indian delegation led by BJP Vice President and Prime Minister's Special Envoy Bajjayant 'Jai' Panda. The Diwaniya-style gathering brought together senior Indian and Kuwaiti figures for strategic talks on counterterrorism, soft power diplomacy, and strengthening India-Kuwait relations.

THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

Reconnaissance Research, the leading independent think-tank based in Kuwait, recently hosted a high-level Indian delegation as part of its efforts to strengthen bilateral ties and promote strategic dialogue across the region.

The visiting delegation, led by Bajjayant 'Jai' Panda, Vice President of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Special Envoy of the Indian Prime Minister, was accompanied by senior parliamentarians, diplomats, and civil society representatives.

Discussions at the event focused on the evolving India-Kuwait relationship, soft power diplomacy, and India's comprehensive counterterrorism strategy under its 'New Normal'



Dr Hilal Al Sayer



Sheikh Hamad Al Sabah



Abdulaziz Al Anjari



Bajjayant Jay Panda

approach. The delegation also addressed the recent terrorist attack in Pahalgam, reaffirming India's firm stance of zero tolerance toward terrorism. The gathering, a closed-discussion, featured a Diwaniya-style engagement, co-hosted by Reconnaissance Research, which

brought together prominent Kuwaiti figures including former ministers, ambassadors, editors-in-chief, academics, and business leaders. Among the attendees were Sheikh Hamad Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah, Dr. Hilal Al-Sayer, Ambassador Abdullah Bishara and Ahmed Al-Jarallah.

Welcoming the guests, Founder and CEO of Reconnaissance Research, Abdulaziz Al-Anjari, highlighted the Centre's India affairs Unit established last year and its role in advancing high-level policy discussions with Indian counterparts. He emphasized the importance of sustained research-driven engagement in navigating regional and global challenges. The delegation delivered a comprehensive briefing on India's national security posture, followed by an open Q&A session. The Diwaniya setting enabled a very candid and meaningful exchange of views between Indian and Kuwaiti participants.

Established in 2019, Reconnaissance Research is dedicated to providing a platform for in-depth policy analysis, fostering bridges of cross-cultural dialogue, and supporting decision-makers through objective research and strategic insight.



Indian delegation concludes successful visit to Kuwait

THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

A high-level Indian parliamentary delegation headed by Member of Parliament Bajjayant Jay Panda and including senior parliamentarians and diplomats arrived in Kuwait last week to galvanize support for international cooperation in countering terrorism.

In a media briefing, Panda praised Kuwait's stance on counter terrorism and establishing peace, describing it as an example to be emulated for changing the world for the better. He added that Kuwait plays a significant, positive, and influential role, enjoys credibility, and seeks to promote peace in the region and the world.

He praised the results of the visit and the fruitful meetings, emphasizing that Kuwait and India have a long history of cooperation in various fields, especially in trade and economic sectors, which are witnessing significant growth. He added that India is very proud of this long-standing cooperation and friendship with Kuwait.

Commenting on the presence of the Indian expatriate community in Kuwait, he said that the Indian community, which is the largest in



Kuwait, enjoys great support, care, and attention from the Kuwaiti authorities. He further pointed out that the diverse and productive Indian community contributes to the development of the Kuwaiti economy. It is a peaceful community with no political affiliations, he noted.

Highlighting a common denominator between India and Kuwait and India, Panda said: "Both countries have suffered from terrorism and share an interest in cooperating in combating terrorism, in accordance with what was agreed upon at the Dushanbe Conference on Combating Terrorism, which Kuwait chaired.

He added: "We discussed with the Kuwaiti side initiatives to enhance security cooperation and combat terrorism, and we saw great interest from the Kuwaiti side in this area, which was discussed during the meeting of the joint committee that convened under the chairmanship of the foreign ministers of the two countries last year."

He praised Kuwait's position and its issuance of high-level statements condemning the attack on the Kashmir region. Underlining that India has no animosity toward the Pakistani people, he added: "We are ready to establish good relations with Pakistan if it changes its strategy

and adopts the principles of peace and respect." He emphasized that India has now adopted a new strategy to respond to terrorist threats directly, rather than waiting as we did in the past. He pointed out that India's new strategy is to respond firmly to any acts of terrorism and also impose economic sanctions on trade, shipping, waters, and visa issuance.

The parliamentary delegation which arrived in Kuwait on Sunday, concluded its visit on Tuesday. Panda noted that the delegation members were representatives from various Indian parties, including opposition parties, representing all regions of India and speaking different languages. This is democratic India, he quipped.. Kuwait is the delegation's second stop on a four-country diplomatic tour, which is part of India's broader engagement with its key international partners, including Kuwait, to enhance global cooperation in the fight against terrorism.

Regarding the Palestinian issue, he stated that India's position is clear and firm in supporting the two-state solution as the fundamental solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, and that India has allocated a budget for economic assistance to Gaza and the West Bank.



Turkish Cuisine Week celebrates culinary heritage, deepens cultural ties

THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

Turkish Embassy in collaboration with the Turkish Tourism Promotion and Development Agency (TGA), under the auspices of the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism organized a delightful event last week at the Marina Hotel Kuwait to celebrate the organizing of Turkish Cuisine Week in Kuwait.

In her remarks to the gathering, Ambassador of Turkey H.E. Tuba Nur Sönmez, emphasized the prominent status of Turkish cuisine on the global culinary stage, highlighting its rich history, health-conscious nature, and deep roots in sustainable practices.

The occasion was attended by Kuwait's Assistant Foreign Minister for European Affairs, Sadiq Marafi, along with members of the diplomatic corps, renowned chefs, culinary professionals, tourism companies, social media influencers, and members of the media.

Ambassador Sönmez further underscored the shared cultural values between Turkey and



Kuwait, particularly in the areas of hospitality and the appreciation of culinary arts. She expressed confidence that such events play a vital role in strengthening cultural ties and friendship between the two nations.

The event included a presentation on the historical evolution of Turkish food culture, its regional diversity, and traditional cooking

techniques, which provided guests with a comprehensive introduction to Turkey's gastronomic legacy. A special exhibition held on the occasion featured images and recipes from Turkish cuisine, giving visitors an immersive glimpse into the richness of Turkish culinary heritage.

The event was enlivened by a Turkish folk dance performance by students of the Turkish

School in Kuwait, which received enthusiastic applause from the audience. The evening concluded with an exciting raffle, where several lucky attendees won round-trip tickets to Turkey.

The celebration reflected not only the flavors of Turkish cuisine, but also its spirit—one that blends tradition, innovation, and the joy of sharing.

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New Decree-Law enacts landmark penal code reforms

Decree-Law No. 70 of 2025, published in the official gazette 'Al-Kuwait Al-Youm' last week, repeals two controversial provisions of its Penal Code that permitted leniency before the law for perpetrators of infanticide and kidnapping. The new decree-law abrogates Articles 159 and 182 of Law No. 16 of 1960, aligning national legislation with constitutional values and international human rights obligations.

The Ministry of Justice, which prepared the explanatory memorandum for the decree, emphasized that the move stems from Kuwait's commitment to uphold constitutional protections, particularly those safeguarding motherhood, childhood, and gender equality, as well as to align its laws in line with human rights principles and international conventions to which the state is a signatory.

Prior to its repeal last week, Article 159 allowed a reduced sentence for a mother who killed her newborn to avoid social shame.

The ministry highlighted several reasons for canceling this Article:

It conflicts with Article 9 of the Constitution, which declares that the family is the foundation of society and mandates the state to protect motherhood and childhood.

It contradicts Article 10, obligating the state to safeguard young people from all forms of exploitation and neglect.

It violates core Islamic values, notably verses from the Quran (Surat At-Takwir and Surat Al-Isra), which affirm the sanctity of life and condemn the killing of children.

It breaches international obligations, such as the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (ratified by Kuwait in 1991) and the Arab Charter on the Rights of the Child (ratified in 1993)—both of which stress the child's right to life and protection from violence.

The ministry stated that maintaining this article would constitute an unjustifiable legal exception that undermines a child's right to



life and contradicts Kuwait's legal and moral responsibilities.

Regarding Article 182, the ministry stated that prior to its withdrawal, the Article allowed a kidnapper to escape punishment by marrying the victim. The ministry explained that Article 182 was repealed because of the following:

It contradicts Article 29 of the Constitution, which guarantees equality before the law without discrimination based on gender, origin,

language, or religion.

It unfairly benefits the perpetrator, allowing him to avoid justice, while violating the victim's rights and dignity.

It undermines women's rights, encourages a culture of impunity, and conflicts with international agreements Kuwait has ratified to combat violence against women.

According to the ministry, continuing to apply this law would perpetuate legal discrimination and weaken criminal justice efforts to protect victims.

The issuance of this decree follows the Amiri Order of 10 May 2024, which authorized the government to enact laws through decrees. The law takes immediate effect upon its publication, and all ministers have been instructed to ensure its implementation.

This legal reform marks a progressive shift in Kuwait's criminal justice system, reinforcing the country's commitment to human rights, child protection, and gender equality.



Lulu Hypermarket Celebrates 24th Anniversary with Mega Sale Across Kuwait

Lulu Hypermarket, the region's leading retail chain, marks the 24th anniversary with a spectacular anniversary sale across all its stores in Kuwait with 50% off and unbeatable discounts on top brands and categories. The celebration kicked off on Wednesday, May 28, with Lulu's top management officially inaugurating the event with a ceremonial cake-cutting, drawing huge crowds of loyal customers and well-wishers.



As part of this milestone celebration, Lulu is offering flat 50% discounts on a wide selection of items across groceries (food and non-food), fresh fruits and vegetables, fish, meat, health and beauty products, mobiles, gadgets, wearables, and much more. The anniversary highlights include unbeatable offers across a wide range of products including mobiles, gadgets, wearables, and much more. Shoppers can enjoy a flat 50% off on selected brands and categories, along with daily deals on 24 exclusive products at unbelievable prices. The

event also features a special Fish Fiesta and Meat Festival, perfect for food lovers.

For footwear enthusiasts, the Big Brand Footwear Sale offers discounts ranging from 50% to 60%; Fashion shoppers can take advantage of a garment offer — spend 10 dinars on garments and get 50% off instantly. In addition, there are massive discounts of up to 70% on a variety of items, including electronics, IT accessories, home appliances, home linen, household items, luggage, toys, ladies' bags, eyewear, and much more.

Don't miss this limited-time shopping extravaganza packed with savings and surprises! The anniversary event not only highlights Lulu's retail strength but also reaffirms its commitment to providing high-value shopping experiences to its customers. The Management extends heartfelt thanks to the community for their ongoing support throughout the past two and a half decades.

"We are humbled and grateful for the trust our customers have placed in us over the years. This anniversary celebration is our tribute to them. We look forward to serving the community with even more dedication and innovation in the years ahead," said a senior Lulu official.

With its wide-ranging discounts and festive atmosphere, Lulu's 24th anniversary sale is expected to draw even larger crowds in the coming days. The offers are available for a limited time only at all Lulu Hypermarket branches across Kuwait.



BSK celebrates unprecedented academic success in international examinations



The British School of Kuwait (BSK) is celebrating an extraordinary wave of academic achievements, as its students have secured top marks and accolades in international examinations across a diverse range of subjects. This remarkable performance underscores the school's commitment to academic excellence and the dedication of its students and staff.

Leading the list of exceptional achievers from BSK is Luaidh Williams, whose outstanding performance earned him the highest marks in Kuwait in Physics (OxfordAQA International A-Level), Further Mathematics (Pearson Edexcel A-Level), and Mathematics (Pearson Edexcel A-Level). Williams's multi-subject success highlights the rigorous academic environment fostered at BSK.

Further demonstrating the breadth of talent within BSK, Omar Badr (Head Boy 2023/24) achieved the highest mark in Kuwait in Chemistry (Pearson Edexcel A-Level); Alifa Iqbal achieved the highest mark in Kuwait in Economics (Pearson Edexcel A-Level), while Angelica Mayahi achieved the highest mark in Kuwait in Art, Craft & Design (Pearson Edexcel A-Level), and Harshini Kamalakannan earned the highest mark in Kuwait in Fine Art (Pearson Edexcel A-Level), showcasing the diverse talents nurtured at BSK.

In Year 12 at AS Level, Farbod Farrokhi Derakhshandeh achieved the highest mark in the world in Chemistry (Pearson Edexcel AS-Level). This truly is an exceptional achievement and Farbod has proven himself repeatedly to be an outstanding student. Thenuwara Bandara achieved the highest mark in Kuwait in both Mathematics and Further Mathematics (Pearson Edexcel AS-Level) while Dison Wikeratne earned the highest mark in Kuwait in Physics (OxfordAQA IAS)

The success continued at the GCSE level, with numerous BSK students achieving 'Highest mark in Kuwait' awards. Ahmed Bakrash achieved the most coveted 'Highest mark in the world' award for Biology. He also achieved the highest mark

in Kuwait in Information and Communication Technology.

Khaled Alshawwaf was recognised for the 'Highest mark in Kuwait' in three subjects: English Language, English Literature and History, which is an incredible achievement. Emanuela Nistor achieved 'Highest mark in Kuwait' in both Geography and French. Darlin Thanasi also achieved two 'Highest marks in Kuwait' awards for GCSE Fine Art and GCSE Design Technology.



There were an additional nine students who achieved the 'Highest mark in Kuwait' accolade for a single subject: Zara Hasnain for IGCSE Business; Mohammed Ftayeh for IGCSE Computer Science; Abdalah Deebas and Amirah Ali for IGCSE Physics (from Pearson Edexcel and OxfordAQA respectively); Dana Abdelrahman for GCSE Fine Art; Maryam Abu Rouss for GCSE Music; Sebastian Jose Chaparro Brito for GCSE Spanish; Shreshtha Basu for IGCSE Economics and Akshita Sundeep Singh for GCSE Graphic Communication.

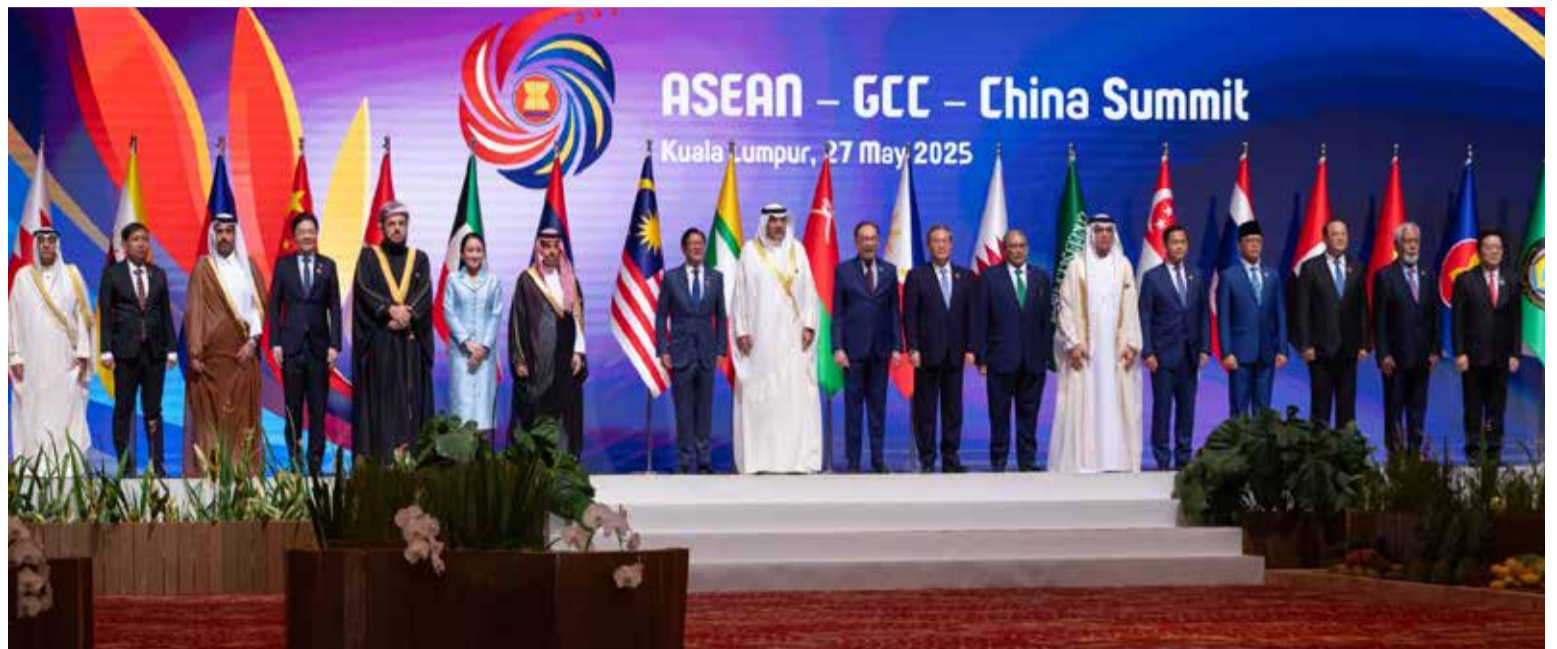
These outstanding results are a testament to the dedication of BSK's students, the unwavering support of their families, and the exceptional quality of education provided by the school. The achievements reflect BSK's commitment to fostering academic excellence and preparing students for success in a globalised world, solidifying its position as a leading educational institution in Kuwait.

Kuwaiti-Asian Strategic Partnership

Deepening Gulf-Asian Cooperation



By Tareq Yousef AlShumaimry
Former Secretary-General of the GCC Commercial Arbitration Center



Asia has emerged as a vital force in the new international order—economically, politically, and in terms of influence in the area of investment. It is against this background that the first-ever trilateral ASEAN-GCC-China Summit being held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia gains added significance. The opening session of the ASEAN-GCC-China Summit on 27 May urged the two blocs and China to deepen partnership through innovation, investment and closer people-to-people ties.

It is highly relevant that in this context, the State of Kuwait, along with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, is working to deepen its partnerships with major and emerging Asian nations as part of its strategic vision. This vision aims to diversify international relations, ensure economic security, and support sustainable development projects in line with the 'New Kuwait 2035' vision and the development plans of other GCC states.

Asia, especially East and South Asia, represents one of the largest markets for Kuwaiti oil exports. Countries such as China, India, South Korea, and Japan rely heavily on energy imports from the Arabian Gulf to meet their industrial needs. Beyond energy, Asian countries are increasingly becoming key investment and trade partners with Kuwait and the GCC, in sectors such as infrastructure, technology, healthcare, and education.

Kuwait's oil exports to Asia accounted for more than 85 percent of its total oil exports over the past decade, underscoring the deep interdependence between both sides.

The mutual economic integration and investments by Kuwait's sovereign wealth fund, led by the Kuwait Investment Authority, form a solid bridge for cooperation with major Asian economies. Kuwait has invested in strategic projects in China, India, and Indonesia in areas including infrastructure, clean energy, and technology. Political and Diplomatic Cooperation

On the political and diplomatic front, Kuwait continues to strengthen bilateral relations with Asian countries through high-level visits and the signing of economic and security cooperation agreements. Kuwait also benefits from its membership in regional institutions like the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD), an initiative launched in Kuwait in 2002, which bolsters its political presence as a bridge between the Gulf and Asia.

Kuwait has distinguished itself through energy diplomacy. Energy remains a central pillar of Kuwait-Asia relations, not only in oil exports but also in refining, petrochemicals, and the exchange of expertise in renewable energy, especially as Asia intensifies its interest in green transformation.

Kuwait seeks to deepen partnerships in the digital economy and green technology by attracting Asian investment into its Kuwait 2035 Vision projects and leveraging Asian expertise in smart city management and higher education.

However, regional competition for Asian investment and shifting geopolitical dynamics—especially in the Strait of Hormuz and South China Sea—have delayed some of the anticipated investment flows between the two sides.

The Kuwait-Asia partnership remains an indispensable strategic choice for Kuwait as it aims to diversify its economy and enhance its global standing. The next phase requires a comprehensive vision based on active



diplomacy, updated investment legislation, and strategic use of the opportunities presented by Asia's rising economic and technological stature.

As Kuwait continues to assert its role as a bridge between the Gulf and Asia, it is essential to develop clear policies that maximize benefits and ensure the long-term sustainability of this relationship.

Kuwait has signed agreements with several Asian countries, including a comprehensive strategic partnership with China; Investment and scientific cooperation agreements with

India; Agreements in peaceful nuclear energy and technology with South Korea; and a Free Trade Agreement with Malaysia.

Kuwait is also committed to attracting Asian capital to implement 'Kuwait 2035' projects and to exchanging expertise in digital governance, smart cities, and technology localization through academic and industrial partnerships.

It is crucial for GCC countries to establish a unified investment framework to enhance legal transparency in partnership projects with Asia.

This includes creating permanent committees for Asia partnerships, composed of public and private sector representatives and boosting academic and research engagement in shaping technological cooperation and sustainable development.

In this regard it is noteworthy that speaking at the opening session of the trilateral ASEAN-GCC-China Summit, Malaysia's Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim—who co-chaired the meeting with His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, as current GCC chair, and China's Premier Li Qiang—

noted that the three groups together generate US\$24.87 trillion in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and represent 2.15 billion people.

Ibrahim added that the trade between ASEAN and the GCC reached \$130.7 billion, with bilateral foreign direct investment totaling \$300.2 billion, while China remains ASEAN's largest trading partner at roughly \$700 billion in trade and \$17.3 billion in direct investment.

He commended the GCC's role in global finance and energy, China's leadership in advanced technology, and ASEAN's record of peaceful integration, calling the summit an unprecedented platform for collective growth.

He highlighted that the theme of Malaysia's ASEAN chairmanship is inclusivity and sustainability, and pointed to historic links from the Silk Road to the Strait of Malacca. Meanwhile, Li urged a creation of a unified, integrated market across the three regions, arguing that their combined quarter share of global population and output could unlock new development momentum.

He announced completion of the upgraded China-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement (FTA) and pressed for swift conclusion of a China-GCC FTA, saying different stages of development should be turned into strengths through coordinated strategies.

Li backed Malaysia's initiative, 'Dialogue of Civilizations' and China's own Global Civilization Initiative, invoking Chinese President Xi Jinping's idea that collective action can achieve more than the sum of individual contributions with his saying, one + one + one is greater than three, a metaphor for synergy. The summit forms part of ASEAN's 46th summit and is the first meeting to gather the three blocs under a joint regional coordination framework.

Deepening ties with Asia should not be a temporary option but a long-term strategic direction for the GCC. With a holistic approach that considers economic, legal, and diplomatic dimensions, Kuwait and the Gulf states can cement their position as a cultural and economic bridge between the Gulf and Asia—building a model of cooperation based on mutual interests and respect.



Tareq Yousef AlShumaimry, served as Chairman of the Finance Committee and Chairman of the General Budget Committee of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague (PCA) and an observer in the Administrative Council of the Court and the Consular at International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the Embassy of the State of Kuwait in the Netherlands during this period from 2013 to 2020. Email: tareq@alshumaimry.com

US Embassy and ABCK commemorate Memorial Day with majestic tribute to sacrifice, friendship

'Our first duty is to remember their sacrifice, and our second is to live up to it — by keeping our country secure, strong, and worthy of their trust' – H.E. Karen Sasahara

THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

In a deeply moving and ceremonious observance, the United States Embassy in Kuwait, in collaboration with the American Business Council – Kuwait (ABCK), commemorated the Memorial Day last Monday evening with profound reverence and patriotic pride.

The event stood as a luminous testament to the ultimate sacrifices of American service members and the unshakable bond between the United States and the State of Kuwait.

In her heartfelt address, U.S. Ambassador to Kuwait H.W. Karen Sasahara paid a stirring tribute to the fallen heroes of the U.S. Armed Forces who paid the highest price in the defense of liberty and justice. "Our first duty is to remember their sacrifice, and our second is to live up to it — by keeping our country secure, strong, and worthy of their trust," she proclaimed with solemn conviction.

Her remarks invoked the historic camaraderie between the two nations, particularly their joint stand during the vital 1990 Gulf War, when American and Kuwaiti forces fought shoulder to shoulder to liberate Kuwait from occupation.

This defining moment, the Ambassador underscored, became the bedrock of a strategic alliance that continues to flourish through robust military cooperation, dynamic economic investment, and vibrant cultural exchange.



Ambassador Sasahara emphasized America's unwavering commitment to peace and stability in the Gulf, expressing admiration for Kuwait's steadfast leadership in hosting U.S. forces, fostering innovation, and championing educational and humanitarian collaboration.

She called upon both nations to let remembrance inspire action — urging stronger missile defense cooperation, expanded bilateral trade, and enriched youth exchanges to carry forward the torch of freedom.

The evening began with Gunnery Sergeant Victor Buendia ceremoniously posting the colors, followed by Colonel Matthew Johnson of the U.S. Air Force, who offered poignant

reflections on the enduring meaning of Memorial Day. His words echoed the shared resolve of both nations to uphold regional peace and collective security.

The highlight of the program was the screening of a powerful Iraq War documentary, offering firsthand narratives from American, coalition, and Kuwaiti perspectives. The film paid tribute to decades of shared sacrifice, mutual support, and unwavering brotherhood, especially among the service members stationed in Kuwait and throughout the broader region. The reception was graced by the presence of senior Kuwaiti dignitaries, U.S. Chief of Mission officials, and members of the

prestigious ABCK Founder's Club — a reflection of the broad and enduring tapestry of U.S.-Kuwait relations that encompasses defense, commerce, education, and culture.

This commemorative evening in Kuwait was not only a reflection of remembrance but also a powerful reaffirmation of a strategic and heartfelt alliance — a pledge that the sacrifices of the past shall forever illuminate the path toward a more peaceful, united, and free future.

Simultaneously, a delegation from the Kuwaiti Embassy in Washington took part in U.S. national commemorations, attending a solemn ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery, where former President Donald Trump paid homage to America's fallen heroes. "Their sacrifices were made not just for the past, but for today and tomorrow," he said, saluting their valor in moments of grave peril.

Memorial Day, observed annually on the last Monday of May, is the most sacred military holiday in the United States. The tradition dates back to May 30, 1868, when graves of fallen soldiers were adorned with flowers in what was originally known as Decoration Day.

Thousands gathered at Arlington Cemetery, and parades marched through Constitution Avenue in Washington, D.C., attended by top military leaders, political figures, and international delegations — including representatives from Kuwait.

Diwaniya Diplomacy

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The visit of the Indian parliamentary delegation to Kuwait on 26–27 May was a significant step in strengthening bilateral relations.

Similarly, Kuwait has actively participated in the past in sending parliamentary delegations abroad to promote its national interests and enhance international cooperation. Unlike traditional state diplomacy, parliamentary diplomacy allows for greater flexibility, informal dialogue, and direct interaction with foreign counterparts.

These delegations contribute to enhancing mutual understanding, fostering economic partnerships, and advancing cooperation. Whatever the delegation's agenda, the results were extremely positive. We saw the Indian parliamentary delegation open a new platform for dialogue, enabling discussion on key issues, trade and economic cooperation, and enhanced joint efforts to confront global threats. In addition, we also witnessed cultural and educational exchanges, strengthening ties between peoples through academic and cultural initiatives.

A common theme among the hosts was the need to foster this ongoing communication and trust, deepening cooperation in building long-term relationships. Diwanis are a wonderful tradition deeply rooted in Kuwaiti culture. They are informal social gatherings where people—traditionally men—come together to discuss a wide range of topics, from politics and business to sports and literature.

I was struck by the importance of holding such a meeting in a diwaniya, as it was unique and special for our guests and hosts. I congratulate Al-Anjari for providing the Indian guests with a taste of Kuwaiti hospitality and culture. These interactions and engagements with friendly countries that share similar views on global issues are essential tools in modern diplomacy, complementing traditional state-led negotiations.

By fostering dialogue, cooperation, and mutual understanding, these interactions contribute to global stability and progress. As international challenges become increasingly complex, the role of parliamentary diplomacy will continue to expand, shaping a model for international relations in the future. We look forward to hearing more perspectives and opinions from Al-Anjari and the Reconnaissance Research Center in the future.

Tareq Yousef AlShumaimry, served as Chairman of the Finance Committee and Chairman of the General Budget Committee of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague (PCA) and an observer in the Administrative Council of the Court and the Consular at International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the Embassy of the State of Kuwait in the Netherlands during this period from 2013 to 2020.
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UK, Kuwait set to deepen green energy ties

British Embassy held a high-profile reception last week to celebrate the growing partnership between the UK and Kuwait in the green-energy sector, and underscored the importance of UK-Kuwait trade, economic and technical collaboration over the past 250 years.

Held under the patronage of British Ambassador H.E. Belinda Lewis and Sheikh Ahmad Duaij Al-Sabah, Chairman of the Commercial Bank of Kuwait, the reception was attended by high-profile stakeholders in the green-energy sector.

A highlight of the reception was the official launch of Kuwait British Renewables (KBR), a newly formed joint venture between Green Power Technologies (GPT), a leading British sustainable energy firm, and Kuwait's General Control Group.

Addressing the gathering, Ambassador Lewis stated: "The United Kingdom and Kuwait have always enjoyed a close relationship built on shared values and strategic cooperation. Events like this reinforce our growing collaboration as both countries strive to meet climate goals, adopt clean technologies, and build knowledge-based economies. She pointed out that currently 49 percent of the UK's

electricity comes from renewable sources, and affirmed the UK's readiness to support Kuwait's energy transition journey, aligned with Vision 2035. The event showcased cutting-edge clean energy solutions, most notably the Power Box, developed by GPT.

The Power Box is a robust, scalable off-grid energy unit designed to deliver clean, reliable power in remote or infrastructure-challenged environments. Its launch in Kuwait signals a practical solution for diversifying energy sources and supporting environmental resilience in the region. KBR also aims to localize the production of smart metering systems and electric vehicle (EV) charging stations, aligning closely with Kuwait's national strategy for digital transformation and environmental sustainability.

In his comments on the occasion, Director of Green Power Technologies Christopher Maltby added: "We are proud to bring British innovation to Kuwait. The Power Box is a practical, scalable solution for clean, off-grid energy, and this launch marks the beginning of our long-term commitment to Kuwait's green transformation."

For his part, Director of Kuwait British Renewables Richard Clements outlined the company's mission, saying, "Our goal is to localize world-class energy solutions by manufacturing smart meters and EV infrastructure here in Kuwait. In partnership with GPT, KBR will also offer solar and battery storage systems for residential and commercial use. We are proud to contribute to a greener, digital Kuwait—built in Kuwait, for Kuwait."

This event marks a significant milestone in UK-Kuwait relations and demonstrates both countries' resolve to tackle the climate crisis through innovation, investment, and strategic cooperation.



Georgian Embassy celebrates National Day

THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

Embassy of Georgia in Kuwait hosted a reception to mark the country's National Day. The vibrant celebration was attended by Kuwait's Assistant Foreign Minister for European Affairs, Ambassador Sadeq Ma'arafi, along with senior government officials, members of the diplomatic corps, and distinguished guests.

The event served as a testament to the enduring friendship and growing cooperation between the two nations, especially as they commemorate 33 years of diplomatic relations and prepare for a new chapter of high-level engagement and strategic partnership.

In his address to the gathering, Ambassador of Georgia H.E. Noshervan Lomtadze, affirmed that Kuwait is a key international partner for Georgia, and that relations between the two countries are based on strong, multi-dimensional friendship and cooperation.

"It has been a year since I arrived in this beautiful country, Kuwait, which I consider the jewel of the Gulf. I have found nothing but warm hospitality and kindness from the Kuwaiti people, which has



made me feel as if I am in my second home," said the ambassador.

He highlighted his meeting with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad, which he described as a motivating force for enhancing bilateral partnership. He also expressed his deep appreciation to His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled for his continuous support of Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

He further expressed gratitude to His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah, and described the meeting between prime ministers of both nations last February as excellent. He also



commended the active role played by Kuwait's Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah Al-Yahya in strengthening bilateral cooperation, especially following his productive meeting with his Georgian counterpart, which revitalized relations with a new agenda.

In conclusion, the Georgian ambassador thanked the government and people of Kuwait, affirming his country's aspiration to enhance bilateral partnership in tourism, culture, and education, and invited Kuwaiti businesspeople and citizens to explore investment opportunities in Georgia in the hospitality, real estate, and

agriculture sectors.

He also expressed his appreciation to Assistant Foreign Minister Ambassador Sadeq Ma'arafi for his gracious attendance and thanked all attendees for participating in the celebration of Georgia's National Day.

Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador Ma'arafi praised the deep-rooted relationship between Kuwait and Georgia, and described them as distinguished and solid. He further noted, "This year we celebrate 33 years since the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two countries — a distinguished relationship we are keen to develop in all fields." He also revealed that arrangements were currently underway to organize high-level reciprocal visits before the year-end.

He affirmed that efforts are being made to sign a number of cooperation agreements during the upcoming visits, noting that bilateral relations are witnessing increasing growth, especially in the tourism sector, where Georgia has recently recorded a notable rise in the number of Kuwaiti tourists, supported by the availability of direct flights between the two countries.



Al-Babtain Auto launches region's first automated Wash by TotalEnergies

AlBabtain Auto and TotalEnergies Marketing Middle East announced the opening of the upgraded Quartz Auto Services center in the Jahra industrial area, featuring the region's first-ever fully automated Wash by TotalEnergies.

Wash by TotalEnergies, a proven car wash success in European and global markets, delivers a top-notch premium and fast vehicle care experience. Utilizing the latest European technology, the wash is fully automated and offers options of soft anti-scratch foam brushes or touchless high-pressure cleaning.

The process is completed in 5 to 7 minutes, depending on the selected service level: Special, Deluxe, and Premium. All three categories include car polishing using premium Lotus polish. The center is staffed by qualified professionals, specifically trained to operate the sophisticated machinery and ensure exceptional customer experience.

Beyond performance, the new center proudly emphasizes environmental responsibility. The eco-conscious wash system utilizes a water recycling system which allows for up to 80% of the water to be recycled. In addition, all cleaning and shining products used are 100% biodegradable, supporting a sustainable and responsible service model. AlBabtain Auto's General Manager Muneer Mamnoon, said: "We are thrilled to

launch GCC's first Wash by TotalEnergies in Kuwait and celebrate this success along with our partner, by introducing one of the most advanced car wash machines that deliver eco-friendly, top-tier car wash solutions! Adding this new service to our center will elevate the level of service and customer satisfaction. We invite Jahra residents to come and experience this outstanding service."

"AlBabtain Auto is our first partner for this regional project, given our 17-year track record of collaboration and shared vision for quality and innovation. With this new state-of-the-art Wash facility housed in our Quartz Auto Services center, drivers can enjoy a full and comprehensive top-quality car servicing experience in a single visit, including engine oil change using our high-performance Quartz lubricants," said Thomas Vigneron, Managing Director of TotalEnergies Marketing Middle East. Located in Jahra's key industrial zone, the center is designed to serve a broad base of customers with unmatched quality, efficiency and professionalism that meets international standards. Operating hours are 8:00 AM to 10:00 PM (Saturday–Thursday) and 3:00 PM to 8:00 PM on Fridays.

Customers may visit directly or book appointments via WhatsApp or by calling AlBabtain Auto's hotline at 1822500.

TBY announces new project: 'The Business Year: Kuwait 2026'

The Business Year (TBY), the leading global media group providing strategic economic intelligence, announced the beginning of its latest project, 'The Business Year: Kuwait 2026'. This special edition marks a significant milestone for TBY, as it celebrates the tenth year of operations in Kuwait.

In collaboration with the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) and the Kuwait Banking Association (KBA), The Business Year: Kuwait 2026 will offer a comprehensive reflection on Kuwait's remarkable journey of transformation over the past decade. The edition will spotlight the country's ongoing restructuring efforts, highlighting its ambitious economic diversification, legislative reforms, and strategic investments that have strengthened its regional and global influence.

The Business Year: Kuwait 2026 is poised to become an essential reference for decision-makers and investors, offering exclusive interviews with Kuwait's most prominent leaders, including high-level government officials, industry pioneers, and innovative entrepreneurs. The publication will also explore emerging trends in technology, sustainability, finance, and energy, while assessing Kuwait's resilience and adaptability in an evolving global landscape.

Country Manager of The Business Year in Kuwait, Agustina Dal Fabbro, shared her excitement about this milestone project: "Kuwait's journey over the past ten years is a testament to its resilience, vision, and capacity for growth. With The Business Year: Kuwait 2026, we aim to capture not only the country's achievements but also the dynamism that continues to drive its transformation. We look forward to collaborating with KDIPA and KBA to highlight Kuwait's evolving story."

The beginning of The Business Year: Kuwait 2026 project underscores TBY's dedication to delivering high-quality, forward-looking insights into the key drivers of Kuwait's development. The publication is scheduled for release in early 2026.



Swiss-Kuwaiti consultations lead to MoU on bilateral partnership

Reflects deep-rooted friendship and mutual understanding shared by both nations - H.E. Dr Tiziano Palmelli

THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

Ambassador of Switzerland H.E. Dr Tiziano Palmelli said the recent round of bilateral political consultations held with Kuwait last week in Bern, Switzerland reflected the deep-rooted friendship and mutual understanding shared by the two nations.

Ambassador Palmelli described the talks as reaffirming "the strength of our excellent relations and showcases the convergence of our views, particularly on important issues such as the role of women in promoting peace and security, and the need to uphold international humanitarian law, especially concerning missing persons in conflict and post-conflict situations".

He emphasized that the memorandum

of understanding (MoU) signed during the consultations marks an important step toward establishing a broader development partnership between the two countries across multiple fields, including the economy, healthcare, and tourism. He added the momentum for strengthening cooperation comes in the lead-up to the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two nations, set to be commemorated in 2026.

He disclosed, the seventh round of political consultations was led by a high-level Kuwaiti delegation headed by Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Jarrah Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. On the Swiss side, Monika Kirgöz, a senior official involved in the talks, described the consultations as a "fruitful opportunity" to strengthen bilateral cooperation.



She noted that the discussions covered a broad spectrum of regional and international topics, including, enhancing economic collaboration, advancing gender equality and

supporting peace and security initiatives.

A key highlight of the visit was the signing of a new MoU between the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). The agreement aims to promote development and technical cooperation in low-income and developing countries, coordinate humanitarian response efforts during crises and natural disasters, facilitate the exchange of expertise and knowledge, and launch joint projects in critical areas such as food security, climate change, poverty reduction, and sustainable development. The strategic agreement underscores the commitment of both countries to work together on global challenges and contribute meaningfully to international development goals.

Chinese ambassador ends a successful tenure in Kuwait

From the very first day I arrived in Kuwait, I felt the love and friendship of its people. I will never forget my diplomatic life here, nor the deep and beautiful impressions it has left on me — Ambassador Zhang Jianwei



As he prepares to depart Kuwait in early June, Ambassador of China H.E. Zhang Jianwei praised the strength and progress of Kuwaiti-Chinese relations. He described his three-year tenure in the country as a n unforgettable chapter in his career and deeply rewarding experience, as the posting in Kuwait was his first as an ambassador.

Speaking during a press conference held on the sidelines of a cultural event at the Chinese Cultural Center, Ambassador Jianwei expressed heartfelt gratitude to Kuwait's leadership and people, emphasizing the warmth and friendship he encountered throughout his time in the country.

He also highlighted the significant strides made in bilateral relations during his tenure, crediting the guidance of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Chinese President Xi Jinping for elevating strategic cooperation.

Pointing to the launch of several infrastructure projects being undertaken by Chinese companies, the ambassador stated: "Our relations have witnessed remarkable development and notable achievements,

particularly through the implementation of agreements signed during His Highness the Amir's recent visit to China."

Expressing optimism about the future of bilateral partnership, he said, "There are promising projects already underway, and I am confident the embassy will continue to build on this momentum and deepen cooperation with Kuwait."

Zhang offered his sincere thanks to the Kuwaiti leadership, including His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, as well as the Kuwaiti government and people, and his colleagues for their unwavering support throughout his mission.

He also expressed special appreciation to Kuwait's media community, acknowledging their vital role in strengthening cultural and diplomatic ties between the two nations.

He concluded by noting, "I leave Kuwait with great affection for its people and culture, and I especially enjoyed visiting diwanis and will always cherish the Kuwaiti people's appreciation for Chinese culture and their enthusiasm for travel to China."



Youth, Unity, and Victory: ALSAYER fuels laser run debut in Kuwait

ALSAYER Group is proud to have supported and sponsored the 2025 West Asian Laser Run Championship, held at Sheikh Ali Sabah Al-Salem Stadium in Al-Nasr Sports Club, Kuwait. The event concluded with great success for the host nation, as Kuwait won 7 medals across various age categories.

This inaugural West Asian Laser Run Championship was the first official competition of its kind in Kuwait, held under the esteemed patronage of His Excellency Mr. Abdulrahman Badah Al-Mutairi, Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs.

His generous support played a vital role in making this championship a landmark moment for the region's modern pentathlon movement. Organized by the West Asian Modern Pentathlon Confederation (WAMPC) in partnership with the Kuwait Modern Pentathlon Federation, the championship brought together 66 athletes male and female from seven countries: Saudi Arabia, UAE, Lebanon, Syria, Bahrain, Iraq, and Kuwait. Across the event, 11 competitions were held, and 33 medals were awarded to the top performers.

The event was driven by the dedication of over 30 young volunteers, including founding members of the club and federation, demonstrating the strong leadership and community commitment of Kuwait's youth.

Guest attendees included WAMPC President Hussein Al-Abdulwahab, Vice President Nasser Al-Waleed, and ALSAYER Group delegates: Ibrahim Al Fouzan, Senior Business Director and Vice Chairman of Sustainability Committee, Abdulaziz Ashur Said Kiradoh, Group Chief Financial Officer, Nehad Al-Haj Ali, Group Manager, Corporate Excellence and the Corporate Excellence Team.

"At ALSAYER Group, we believe in the power of sport to shape future leaders and build bridges across cultures," said Nehad Al-Haj Ali, Group Manager, Corporate Excellence at ALSAYER Group.

"Supporting initiatives like the West Asian Laser Run Championship reflects our long-standing commitment to youth development, community engagement, and national pride. We are honored to play a part in empowering young athletes on their journey to excellence."

As a company deeply committed to supporting youth and sports development in



the region, ALSAYER Group is proud to have contributed to the success of this event.

We extend our sincere appreciation to all participating athletes, organizers, volunteers, and esteemed guests whose presence and efforts made this championship a true celebration of sporting excellence. Together, we move forward building a stronger, more connected sporting future for our youth, both regionally and internationally.

Vietnam Embassy celebrates historic agreement with Kuwait

THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

Embassy of Vietnam last week marked the 30th anniversary of the landmark trade agreement signed between Vietnam and Kuwait, by the commerce ministers of both countries, on 3 May 1995.

A celebratory function held to mark the milestone agreement was attended by the Director of the Department of International Organizations at Kuwait's Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Abdulmohsen Al-Attar, along with a number of Kuwaiti officials, representatives of Vietnamese companies operating in Kuwait and the Middle East, as well as ambassadors of ASEAN countries in Kuwait and representatives of ASEAN companies.

In his address to the gathering, Ambassador of Vietnam H.E. Nguyen Duc Thang emphasized that the 30th anniversary of the agreement coincides with preparations to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in January 2026, which gave the occasion special significance and offered an opportunity to evaluate and expand the horizons of bilateral cooperation.

Ambassador Thang noted that despite regional and international challenges such as geographic distance, global economic fluctuations, international conflicts, and climate change, both countries possessed



broad potential to enhance economic cooperation in multiple fields and explore potential for free trade agreements.

"Among the areas where the two countries could further strengthen cooperation were the oil and gas sector within the framework of green energy strategies, food security, digital transformation, artificial intelligence, infrastructure development, regional aviation, and halal tourism," said the envoy. He explained that Vietnam is one of the largest importers of Kuwaiti crude oil, which accounts for 95 percent of total exports from Kuwait to Vietnam. He noted that this partnership serves the economies of both countries and particularly contributes to strengthening energy security in Vietnam.

He also revealed that Kuwait is the largest Gulf investor in Vietnam, especially through its partnership in the

Nghi Son Refinery and Petrochemical Complex, which is being developed by Kuwait Petroleum International (KPI). He expressed optimism about attracting more investments from the Middle East, including Kuwait, to the Vietnamese market in the near future.

Ambassador Thang further stated that according to data from the Vietnamese Customs Department,

trade volume between the two countries rose from US\$350 million in 2005 to \$7.33 billion in 2024. He added that imports from Kuwait made up the vast majority (\$7.2 billion), while Vietnamese exports remain relatively low (\$75 million), calling for efforts to reduce the trade gap and enhance Vietnamese exports to the Kuwaiti market.

For his part, Al-Attar affirmed that the trade agreement signed between Kuwait and Vietnam in 1995 marked a milestone in the economic relations between the two countries, he clarified that it laid down a legal framework that enhances the free flow of goods, services, and investments, and is based on the principles of the World Trade Organization.

Kuwait committed to multilateral efforts in regional, global security

Kuwait was the first Gulf country to join NATO's Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) in 2004, alongside the UAE, Bahrain, and Qatar

THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

Kuwait was the first Gulf country to join NATO's Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) in 2004, along with the UAE, Bahrain, and Qatar, reaffirming its pioneering role in promoting regional security cooperation. This also reflects Kuwait's commitment to multilateral efforts in strengthening both regional and global security, said Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister for Organizational Affairs and Minister Plenipotentiary Mohammed Al-Ameeri.

Al-Ameeri was speaking during a reception hosted by Ambassador of Bulgaria H.E. Dimitar Dimitrov, in honor of a visiting delegation from the NATO Centre of Excellence for Crisis Management and Disaster Response. The event was attended by Undersecretary of the Ministry of Defense Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Al-Mishaal, as well as a number of ambassadors and accredited diplomats in Kuwait.

Al-Ameeri emphasized that Kuwait's NATO Regional Center not only trains national cadres but also serves participants from GCC countries involved in the initiative, in addition to representatives from the Gulf Cooperation Council's General Secretariat.

He noted that a recent training program—organized in collaboration with the Bulgarian team—marked the first joint effort in the field of crisis management, involving around 30 trainees from Kuwait's Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Interior, the National Guard, and the General Fire Force, along with participants from Saudi Arabia and Oman.

Al-Ameeri added that the program is part of a broader annual work plan launched last year, with activities slated to continue through December.

He praised Kuwait's growing cooperation with NATO training institutions in Europe, emphasizing the value of such collaborations in advancing regional security priorities.

For his part, Ambassador Dimitrov lauded Kuwait's leadership in regional security initiatives, particularly through its hosting of the NATO Regional Center. He described the center as a symbol of Kuwait's firm commitment to fostering deeper NATO-GCC relations. He further pointed out that the

eight intensive training courses have been held since the beginning of 2025, with crisis management being one of the most in-demand topics.

Beck emphasized that training topics are selected in coordination with partner countries and praised the Bulgarian ambassador's initiative for launching this new chapter of cooperation. She expressed optimism about expanding this type of training throughout the year.

Director of the NATO Centre of Excellence for Crisis Management



recently launched course, organized by the Bulgarian-Hungarian Center of Excellence, marks a significant milestone in this partnership, and that preparations for the course began last year, coinciding with 20th anniversary of Kuwait's accession to the ICI.

Ambassador Dimitrov also expressed gratitude for the support provided by various Kuwaiti institutions, which enabled the inclusion of the Sofia Training Center in the regional program.

In her remarks on the occasion, Head of the NATO Office at the Regional Cooperation Center, Nora Elise Beck, underscored the center's growing reputation as a strategic cooperation hub. She noted that

and Disaster Response, Colonel Orlin Nikolov, stressed the importance of enhancing collective capacities to address cross-border and unconventional threats.

He highlighted the Mobile Training and Education Teams (METTs) initiative as a key tool that integrates theoretical and practical training within partner countries. Nikolov praised Kuwait's efforts in humanitarian diplomacy and civil preparedness, calling Kuwait a "natural partner" whose strategic goals align with those of the center. He added that through this cooperation regional resilience can be strengthened and best practices shared.

Preparations underway to prevent power outages in summer

Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy (MEWRE) is completing its annual maintenance program of power and water production facilities in preparation for high-demand during the summer season.

Sources at the ministry said that the Doha East Power Plant, which was under maintenance, due to a malfunction last summer, is now back in service. The ministry is now completing maintenance work on all remaining units, and it is expected that all remaining units, with the exception of two, rejoin the power grid by the end of this week.

Despite soaring temperatures, the ministry said that it currently has no plans to plan power outages, and that a strategy is being readied to manage electricity consumption during peak summer months.

The plan includes three core proposals aimed at avoiding load strain and ensuring uninterrupted service has been sent to the Civil Service Bureau for approval and implementation. These include:



Delaying the Start of Evening Shifts in government entities to avoid overlapping with peak electricity usage hours, typically from 12 in the afternoon to 5pm.

Suspending the Flexible Work Schedule during the summer to reduce energy loads

from partially occupied government buildings.

Ending the Academic Year Immediately after results are released for all school levels—an initiative that would significantly reduce traffic and electricity demand caused by educational institutions.

The proposals are said to be under review and may require Cabinet approval before implementation, stressing that regulating the operation times of government offices is essential, particularly since it is inefficient to keep buildings fully air-conditioned and lit when only a few employees are present. The ministry aims to apply these measures to avoid the need for scheduled outages and maintain a stable power supply throughout the hot season.

Azerbaijan Embassy marks country's Independence Day

H.E. Emil Karimov underscores the importance of May 28 as a symbol of Azerbaijan's enduring commitment to independence, democracy, and sovereignty



THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

The Embassy of Azerbaijan hosted a reception at the Crowne Plaza Hotel last week to mark the anniversary of a defining moment in Azerbaijan's history — the establishment of the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic on 28 May 1918, the first democratic republic in the Islamic world.

The reception was attended by Deputy Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Sabah, along with heads of diplomatic missions accredited to Kuwait and a host of prominent political and social figures.

In his address on the occasion, Ambassador of Azerbaijan H.E. Emil Karimov emphasized the profound national pride associated with this historic occasion, and underscored the importance of 28 May as a symbol of Azerbaijan's enduring commitment to independence, democracy, and sovereignty.

Ambassador Karimov also reflected on the nation's journey, noting that Azerbaijan restored its full independence on 18 October,

1991, following decades of occupation. He highlighted the vital role of national leader Heydar Aliyev, who, after being elected president in 1993, laid the groundwork for a modern, stable, and forward-looking Azerbaijani state.

The celebration served not only as a tribute to Azerbaijan's past but also as a reaffirmation of its aspirations for continued development and cooperation with friendly nations like Kuwait.



On bilateral relations, Ambassador Karimov noted the remarkable progress in relations over the past two years, marked by high-level visits, most notably the historic visit of then Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah to Baku to participate in the COP29 climate conference last year. During the visit, His Highness met with the Azerbaijani president, paving the way for deeper cooperation between the two nations.

He further praised the recent visit of

Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov, who co-chaired the third joint committee with his Kuwaiti counterpart, Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya, and also met with His Highness the Crown Prince.

The ambassador also spoke about the strong bonds between the two peoples, particularly in the fields of agriculture, tourism, and education.

He noted that over 31,000 Kuwaiti tourists visited Azerbaijan last year, attracted by its natural beauty and advanced services. He also pointed to the availability of direct flights connecting the two countries through AZAL, Kuwait Airways, and Jazeera Airways.

The ambassador extended an open invitation to the audience to visit Azerbaijan, reaffirming the country's warm welcome to its Kuwaiti brothers and its aspirations to strengthen trade exchange, particularly in food industries, light manufacturing, and agriculture. He concluded by noting that Azerbaijan today continues its path of development and progress under the leadership of President Ilham Aliyev.

Tobacco Industry, Profiting from a Killer Product

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The latest edition of the Tobacco Atlas—a joint anti-tobacco initiative of Vital Strategies, a leading international public health organization, and the Tobaccconomics team at the John Hopkins University—shows that although the prevalence of smoking is decreasing globally, the total number of smokers remains high due to population growth, as well as continued tactics by tobacco industry to trap new young users to make up for dead tobacco users.

In Kuwait, despite concerted efforts by the Ministry of Health and civil society organizations engaged in reducing prevalence of smoking, tobacco use continues to be a significant public health challenge. Latest data on smoking prevalence in Kuwait reveal that in 2022 prevalence of smoking among adults aged 15 years and older in the population was 22.7 percent (35.6% among men and 2.1% for women).

The figures also show that tobacco use among 10-14 years old in 2022 was 12.8 percent (17% for boys, and 8.5% for girls). In addition, diseases related to smoking or other forms of tobacco use, claimed the lives of 1,549 people, or 12.8 percent of all deaths reported in Kuwait in 2021. Mortality rate among male smokers was 16.1 percent, while among female smokers it was 4.3 percent.

Tobacco taxes are the most effective tobacco control intervention available to policy-makers; sadly they are the least implemented. A sufficiently large excise tax increase will raise the price of tobacco products thereby making them less affordable. This drives down consumption among users, discourages young people from

being initiated into smoking, and encourages smokers to quit. Unfortunately Kuwait has no excise duty on cigarettes.

Kuwait only levies an import duty of 100 percent on the cost, insurance, and freight (CIF) value of imported cigarettes, plus a specific import duty of KD8 per 1000 cigarettes, which has not increased over the last decade. Despite other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries increasing minimum import duties, and introducing excise duties on tobacco products, as part of the 2016 GCC agreement, Kuwait is yet to do so.

To address the tobacco epidemic, WHO Member States adopted the landmark WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) in 2003. Currently 183 countries, representing 90 percent of the global population, are Parties to this treaty. To support provisions in the FCTC aimed at lowering tobacco use, the WHO introduced in 2007 MPOWER, a practical, cost-effective initiative that states can use to reduce tobacco demand. It includes, among others, implementing prevention policies, enforcing bans on tobacco advertising, and raising tobacco taxes.

In recent years, increased push-back from the public against smoking and pressure from health authorities against tobacco use, has forced the tobacco industry to shift focus to new generation tobacco products, including heated tobacco products (HTPs), nicotine pouches and e-cigarettes that appeal to younger generations. The industry claims that their new products are less harmful and a 'risk reduction' alternative to tobacco smoking. Despite such claims, there is no such thing as a safe tobacco product.

Available evidence shows that HTPs,

e-cigarettes or pouches are not any less harmful than conventional tobacco products, as they all contain nicotine, a highly addictive substance. Moreover, many new tobacco products contain a variety of additional toxicants that are often at higher levels than in tobacco smoke. With newer tobacco products entering the market, Kuwait can further the fight against tobacco by levying a uniform and specific excise tax, adjusted to GDP growth, and accounting for at least 75 percent of the retail market price of tobacco products.



The tobacco industry uses every tactic in the book to conceal the dangers, and true economic and health costs, of its product. In addition the industry employs its massive heft to dilute or repeal restrictive regulations against tobacco products. For instance, it warns developing countries where the industry cultivates tobacco leaves that attempts to regulate their business would result in significant economic costs and impact the livelihoods of farmers and workers

employed in tobacco farming.

However, the truth of this claim is dubious at best. According to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) the nearly 4.2 million hectares of arable land worldwide under tobacco cultivation, yields a total of a little over seven million tonnes of tobacco annually. Replacing tobacco with more productive and health-beneficial crops such as peanuts, tomatoes, or pulses would be far more productive. Growing peanuts in the same area as tobacco would yield around 13.6 million tonnes per year, while growing tomatoes would produce 164 million tonnes.

The tobacco industry also markets its products aggressively to lower-income populations and youth. In some places the tobacco industry representatives are known to offer free cigarettes to children aged 13 to 15 to entice them into becoming life-long addicts to nicotine, so as to ensure the industry thrives well into the future. It is not surprising that in 2022, the total revenue of the six largest tobacco companies in the world was over US\$362 billion, which incidentally is higher than the Gross National Income (GNI) of many developing countries.

The tobacco industry makes and markets products that have together killed more than 100 million people in the 20th century alone—a figure far higher than the number of people killed in First and Second World Wars combined. In order to ensure the health, well-being and prosperity of current and future generations, people, communities, and nations need to collectively push back against the nefarious tobacco industry, its insidious marketing tactics, and its killer products.

Residency Affairs summons expats for violating family visa regulations

Residency Affairs Investigations Department at the Ministry of Interior recently summoned dozens of expatriates who brought their families to Kuwait in apparent violation of the ministerial decision regulating family joining visas (Article 22).

The ministerial decision, amended in July 2024, now allows expatriates to sponsor their wives and children on family visas only if their salary is no less than KD800, regardless of academic qualifications.

The KD800 salary threshold was set based on comprehensive studies, which established that this level of income allows a head of household to adequately support a family and maintain a decent standard of living in Kuwait. The new rule applies uniformly to all expatriates, regardless of nationality or educational background, so long as they meet the salary condition specified in the ministerial resolution.

The summoned expatriates had initially met

the salary requirement of KD800 by obtaining work permits with qualifying salaries. They used these permits to apply for family visas, which were then approved. However, many of these individuals later changed jobs or their working hours were reduced, which brought their actual salary below the KD800 threshold.

The authorities deemed this a circumvention of the law and issued a one-month grace period for the expatriates to either rectify their residency status by returning to jobs that fulfill the salary condition, or send their families back to their home countries. Each summoned individual was also required to sign a written pledge to comply with the legal conditions within the given timeframe.

The Interior Ministry uses the information provided by the automated digital link between government agencies to detect any manipulation or fraudulent data, including in residency permits and driving licenses issued by the General Traffic



Department affiliated to the Ministry of Interior.

Revised Article 29 says foreigners may obtain family residency (Article 22) if their monthly income is not less than KD800, calculated based on the profession tied to their current residency—exceptions apply to children under 5 years old born outside Kuwait to residents; individuals

already present or born inside Kuwait.

These cases may be exempted from the salary condition by the Director General of Residency Affairs.

On a related note, the General Traffic Department is said to be actively revoking driving licenses for expatriates who no longer meet the eligibility requirements they originally qualified under. For example, if an expatriate loses their job, or their salary drops below the mandated salary threshold, their license is automatically invalidated through the automated system.

Expatriates are urged to verify the status of their driving licenses via their Civil ID or the 'Sahel' app. The Interior Ministry warned that anyone caught driving with a revoked or invalid license will be considered as driving without a license and will face detention and referral to judicial authorities. Ignorance of the license's invalidity will not be accepted as a legal excuse.

ALSAYER Group envisions a future of integrated learning through Google Summit 2025



Kuwait witnessed a landmark moment in education as the Kuwait English School, under the umbrella of Sama Educational Company, hosted the first-ever Google Summit 2025 in the country.

This pioneering event united tech leaders, innovators & educators from across the Middle East and beyond, all with a shared mission: to champion the integration of cutting-edge technology into the educational landscape.

The summit featured dynamic contributions from Google Education experts, Google Champions, GEG Leaders, and international EdTech ambassadors, who demonstrated how Google for Education tools are reshaping learning environments and equipping educators with the tools to inspire tomorrow's thinkers and leaders. Over twenty leading schools from Kuwait participated in hands-on sessions that delved into AI in education, digital transformation & the innovative use of Google tools in classrooms.

These workshops aimed to empower educators to meet the expectations of today's tech-savvy students who are already engaging with AI, Augmented Reality, Robotics & immersive digital platforms.

Through a variety of practical and forward-thinking discussions, participants explored how technology can drive more engaging, personalized & adaptive learning experiences.

From reading development and study skill enhancement to one-on-one instructional support, digital tools are making learning more dynamic and enjoyable. As part of its ongoing commitment to education and digital inclusion, ALSAYER Group proudly supported this summit through its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program.

Eng. Nehad Al-Haj Ali, Group Manager of Corporate Excellence at ALSAYER Group, emphasized: "Our involvement in the Google Summit 2025 reflects ALSAYER's vision of creating meaningful impact in education through technology. We believe in empowering teachers with the skills and tools necessary to inspire the next generation of innovators. This initiative brings long-term value to ALSAYER Group and reaffirms our role as a partner in national development and community growth, fostering a culture of continuous learning, digital literacy & technological readiness for all."

ALSAYER has consistently supported STEM initiatives, coding programs, robotics competitions & career-readiness workshops to ensure students are well-prepared for the demands of a fast-evolving digital economy.

In a parallel effort, ALSAYER Car Rental joined the summit to promote advanced mobility solutions for educators and institutions, highlighting how smart transportation plays a role in supporting educational infrastructure.

Mr. Scott Paul McNicol, General Manager of Car Rental and Leasing at ALSAYER Group, shared his perspective saying, "Sponsoring and participating in events like the Google Summit allows us to engage directly with the education community and support their mobility and operational needs. It's not just about transportation, it's about enabling access, convenience & support for those who shape future generations."

ALSAYER Group reaffirms its commitment to innovation, social responsibility & the comprehensive advancement of Kuwait's knowledge driven economy fully aligned with Kuwait's national vision and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)."

Kuwait's water consumption hit an all-time high on 28 May

Kuwait's water consumption hit an all-time high last Wednesday, reaching 522 million imperial gallons, surpassing the previous record of 520 million gallons set on July 18, 2024. This spike, recorded on May 28, reflects growing demand amid the summer season.

In response, water production climbed to 539 million gallons, exceeding consumption by 17 million gallons—a development officials welcomed. Sources at the Ministry of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy stated that the boost in production was made possible by bringing several distillation units



back online after maintenance. This increase is expected to help replenish the strategic water reserve, which had reached dangerously low levels in recent weeks. In the midst of these domestic developments, Kuwait hosted the GCC Symposium on Desalination Sector Privatization, organized by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) General Secretariat.

The event brought together key stakeholders from both government and private sectors, alongside experts in water and energy.

The symposium supported the GCC's broader strategy to bolster water security, resource sustainability, and expand private sector participation in desalination infrastructure. Discussions centered on the experiences of GCC countries in privatizing desalination operations, identifying challenges, and seizing opportunities for regional integration and knowledge exchange.

MCAST delegation signs two MoUs with Kuwaiti universities

A delegation from the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST), led by Principal Mr. Stephen Vella, visited Kuwait on May 28 and 29 to sign two Memoranda of Understanding with esteemed higher education institutions — The Arab Open University and the Kuwait College of Science and Technology in the Doha District.

The agreements aim to foster academic collaboration through initiatives such as student and faculty exchange, joint research projects, and co-developed academic programs.

The diplomatic efforts that led to these agreements were facilitated by the Ambassador of Malta to the State of Kuwait, H.E. Professor Dr. George A. Said-Zammit,



The Maltese envoy said, "The signing of these agreements between MCAST and two respected Kuwaiti universities is yet another testament to the longstanding friendship between Malta and Kuwait."

"Today, over one hundred Kuwaiti students are pursuing their studies at the University of Malta. These new agreements will pave the way for broader opportunities for both Maltese and Kuwaiti students and educators to share knowledge and expertise across various disciplines, including engineering, business, and the maritime sector," he added.

For his part, Mr. Stephen Vella expressed his pride in this milestone, noting that it marks a new chapter in the college's journey since its establishment in 2001.

MCAST currently comprises seven institutes covering diverse academic areas, including Creative Arts, Engineering and Transport, Community Services, and Business Management and Commerce.

This initiative underscores the strong educational and diplomatic ties between Malta and Kuwait and highlights a mutual commitment to advancing academic cooperation and cultural exchange.

EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Europe's Prosperity and Security Depend on Climate Action



Connie Hedegaard, Anne Højer Simonsen, Christian Ibsen

Connie Hedegaard served as European Commissioner for Climate Action (2010-14), and as Denmark's Minister for the Environment (2004-07) and Minister for Climate and Energy (2007-09).

Anne Højer Simonsen is Senior Director and Head of Climate Policy at Danish Industry.

Christian Ibsen is CEO of CONCITO.



It has been more than a year since the European Commission proposed the next milestone in the European Union's transition toward climate neutrality: reducing greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions by 90% by 2040. But we are still waiting for the proposal to become law, raising concerns that the bloc is focused on more urgent priorities – namely, rebuilding defenses and reviving competitiveness.

In fact, building a clean economy would help address the EU's productivity, innovation, and security gaps. That is why, despite our varied backgrounds in industry, politics, and think tanks, we collectively urge European policymakers to commit to the ambitious domestic 2040 emissions-reduction target,

and to support strategic climate investments and initiatives that will boost Europe's energy security and competitiveness.

As the EU's Clean Industrial Deal has highlighted, climate action is a powerful economic driver that should be harnessed to strengthen Europe's competitiveness now and in the future. Without improved energy security, mobility options, and industrial resilience, the EU cannot hope to gain ground on the United States and China in the decades ahead.

The EU has already committed significant funds to secure energy supplies and modernize industry, but major obstacles remain, which Mario Draghi warned about in his 2024 report on the future of European competitiveness. To overcome these challenges, the bloc must refine its investment priorities, provide a predictable legislative framework, and send clear signals to private investors, reinforcing trust in its low-carbon path. The first step is to implement existing climate legislation, such as the Fit for 55 package.

Relying on homegrown clean-energy sources rather than expensive and volatile fossil-fuel imports will enhance the EU's security, energy independence, and economic stability, with governments, businesses, and households benefiting from lower costs. According to the Commission's 2040 impact assessment, the bloc can save €160 billion (\$179 billion) per year by electrifying its economy and halving its energy imports by 2040. To put this in perspective, the EU's annual investment in grid upgrades and renewables would increase by around €40 billion and €30 billion, respectively.

A new report from the OECD and the United Nations Development Programme emphasizes that in addition to being an environmental necessity, ambitious climate action offers economic gains. Recent research supports the argument, concluding that previous economic models have underestimated the impact of global warming. A 4° Celsius temperature rise would leave the average person 40% poorer, significantly higher than previous estimates. Even a 2°C increase would mean a 16% drop in global GDP per capita. These findings highlight the urgent need for climate action to avoid severe economic fallout.

The huge risks from global warming will only increase, while our ability to contain them will diminish with every year of inaction. Of course, policymakers have made similar calls to arms before, with skeptics blaming lofty decarbonization targets for the challenges currently facing the bloc, and imploring policymakers to lower their ambitions in the name of competitiveness. But the EU's strategic vulnerabilities stem from its failure to pursue

sufficiently ambitious goals.

Achieving the 2040 target is necessary because it is a crucial milestone defining the trajectory of Europe's climate efforts until mid-century. It will also help clarify our commitments under the 2015 Paris climate agreement. The EU has yet to submit an updated Nationally Determined Contribution, including a 2035 emissions-reduction target, even though the formal deadline for doing so has passed. The bloc's NDC should follow a linear trajectory from 2030 to 2040, ensuring that Europe remains a global leader in combating climate change.

At a time when other major economies, including the US, have wavered in their climate commitments, Europe should remain dedicated to the green transition and work toward a


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successful outcome at this year's United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP30) in Belém, Brazil. Amid today's geopolitical turmoil, the stakes are high for the EU, which can show its support for the rules-based international system through climate action – an approach that serves its own and others' interests.

By committing to bold climate policies and, most importantly, effective implementation, the EU can address its economic challenges and risky dependencies, while also securing its position as a global leader in sustainable development. If Europe does not set global benchmarks, it is far from clear who will take up the mantle – certainly not the US under its current leadership. The proposed 2040 target thus offers an opportunity that Europe must seize to ensure its future competitiveness, prosperity, and security.




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Identifying Health Risks of Forever Chemicals

Thousands of tiny roundworms wriggling around in petri-dish may sound gross, but they are helping scientists uncover the risks to human health posed by 'forever chemicals'—the ubiquitous man-made chemicals used in everyday products ranging from cookware and candy covers to cleaning products, stain-resistant fabrics, and personal care items.

PFAS consist of chains of carbon and fluorine atoms linked together to form one of the strongest chemical bonds known. Products made from PFAS are therefore very durable, but also on the flip-side nearly impossible to degrade and a major environmental hazard. The use of PFAS is so widespread that these chemicals have even turned up in the blood of polar bears that live isolated in the northern polar regions and in the middle of oceans, deserts and mountain tops.

Researchers at Duke University in the United States are feeding *Caenorhabditis elegans* (*C. elegans*)—a free-living, compost-feeding transparent nematode (roundworm) around 1mm in size that lives in temperate soil environments—a soupy meal laced with per- and poly-fluoroalkyl (PFAS) substances, often referred to as 'forever chemicals' due to the longevity in the environment. Some PFAS such as PFOA and PFOS are persistent in the environment, including in our food, drinking water, air, and can accumulate in living tissues causing health risks.

The study is a chemical safety test to uncover the risks to our overall health from PFAS, a chemical compound that has been used in industry and consumer goods since the 1940s because of their ability to resist grease, oil, water and heat. PFAS are almost impossible to avoid in today's world; among their many uses are they help keep food from sticking to our pots and pans; make outdoor gear water-resistant; protect our furniture and textiles from stains. They are in our takeout containers, rain gear, carpets, paint, even dental floss and makeup.

There have been reports of these chemicals being knowingly discharged into waterways by chemical manufacturers, due to lax monitoring



or collusion with authorities, that have left communities downstream with tainted drinking water for decades. Aside from willful release, these chemicals can end up in our waterways from something as innocuous as the fire-suppressant foam used to extinguish fires.

These chemicals exist in more than 14,000 forms. While several have been linked to health problems, such as cancer, lower birth weight and liver damage, the vast majority have never been tested. The potential health effects from exposure are therefore unknown. By feeding *C. elegans* with PFAS broth, researchers at Duke University are now seeking to close this knowledge gap.

In their recent study, the researchers exposed *C. elegans* worms to different doses

of 13 PFAS chemicals, and then measured the effects of the chemicals on their growth. When they compared the PFAS-treated worms to worms that were not exposed to these chemicals, they found that all of the chemicals they tested stunted the worms' growth.

The study also revealed that some PFAS took a toll at much lower doses than others, highlighting that toxicity from these chemicals were not uniform. The most toxic chemical, PFOSA—found in fabric protectors and stain repellents used in clothing and furnishing material—was a thousand times more toxic than the least toxic chemical, PFBA, used in analytical and synthetic chemistry in laboratories, as well as previously on photographic films.

Additionally, the study showed that not every worm strain responded in the same way to the chemicals. Some strains suffered adverse effects at lower doses of certain chemicals than others, suggesting differences in sensitivity that are rooted in their genes. This was the first evidence that genetic variation contributes to susceptibility to PFAS toxicity.

The choice of worms for the study was due to their small size and rapid development that allowed the researchers to study the effects of diverse chemicals on large numbers of them in a relatively short time. Although the tests and outcomes were conducted and measured on worms, many disease-causing genes in humans have counterparts in *C. elegans*. Moreover, while humans and worms are very different, they have been shown to mirror many of the same metabolic and developmental pathways.

C. elegans is a well-studied model organism that shares many genetic and biological similarities with humans. Its simplicity and ease of manipulation make it a valuable tool for investigating the effects of environmental toxins like PFAS. Traditional toxicity testing in animals such as mice and rabbits can take over a year to complete; whereas similar experiments in *C. elegans* take less than a week.

In their study, the researchers leveraged the natural genetic diversity within *C. elegans* populations to determine how different gene combinations affect sensitivity to PFAS. By comparing the responses of different worm strains to PFAS exposure, researchers can potentially identify genes that are associated with increased or decreased susceptibility to toxicity.

The genes identified in *C. elegans* could have counterparts in humans, suggesting that certain genetic variations may predispose individuals to greater or lesser health risks from PFAS exposure. The research at Duke University could pave the way for identifying individuals who may be more susceptible to PFAS toxicity and developing strategies for early detection and prevention, as well as pinpoint untested PFAS with the most potential for harm and flag them for future study.

Wearable tech to detect heart attack

Cardiovascular diseases (CVD), a broad term that refers to diseases of the heart and blood vessels, is the leading cause of death globally accounting for 18 million deaths in 2019 and representing 32 percent of all deaths worldwide. Data from the World Health Organization (WHO) show that over 85 percent of the global deaths due to cardiovascular diseases each year are attributed to heart attacks and strokes, and that one-third of these deaths occur prematurely in people under 70 years of age.

Cardiovascular diseases include coronary heart disease, cerebrovascular disease, rheumatic heart disease and other conditions. A heart attack, also known as a myocardial infarction, occurs when the blood supply to the heart muscle is blocked, causing damage or death to heart tissue. A stroke, on the other hand, refers to the situation where blood supply to the brain is blocked causing damage to brain tissue. Time is critical when it comes to detecting and treating heart attacks.

Identifying those at highest risk of CVDs and ensuring they receive appropriate treatment as quickly as possible can prevent

premature deaths. A new technology developed by researchers at the University of Mississippi in the United States could improve heart attack detection methods by speeding up the process without sacrificing accuracy. Compared to traditional methods, the new technology is twice as fast while still being highly accurate.

The focus of the researchers was not only to increase performance in detecting heart attacks, but also targeted the design aspect to make the device lightweight, easy to use, and affordable so that it could be utilized by more people in their homes or at workplaces.

The researchers used artificial intelligence and advanced mathematics to design a chip that can analyze electrocardiograms (ECGs)—graphs that measure the heart's electrical signals—and detect a heart attack in real-time. The new technology is lightweight and energy efficient enough to be embedded in wearable devices while still being 92.4 percent accurate—far higher than many current methods.

The focus on overall architecture ensured that the neural networks and software behind the new device were all designed in-house by the research team researchers. This level of optimized integration allows the researchers to adapt the technology to run on a wearable device or a standalone equipment.

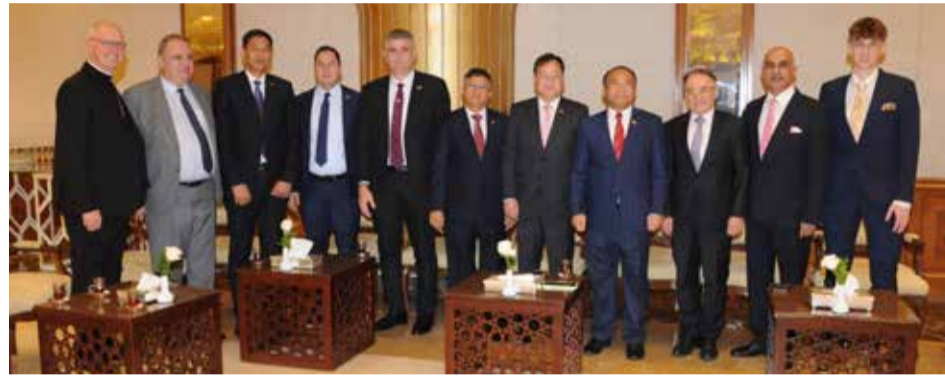
Current methods of heart attack detection often must happen in a medical facility. A patient experiencing chest pain or who suspects they are having a heart attack must first go through an



electrocardiogram or blood tests to diagnose their condition. All of that takes time that a patient might not have. If a wearable device such as a watch or a phone can cut down on diagnosis time, patients could get faster treatment.

The researchers are now continuing to fine-tune and develop the technology, while also exploring other healthcare applications for these devices, including seizures or dementia. The scientists said that while the detection of a disease or condition depends on the disease itself, they were concentrating on finding faster, more efficient ways of detecting the disease.





Khalid Abdullah Muhammad Al-Qaoud held a grand wedding reception at the iconic St. Regis Sheraton Hotel in downtown Kuwait City for his daughter, (niece of Tareq Yousef Al-Shumaimry), who married Khalid in a setting of elegance and

distinction, on May 25. The joyous occasion was graced by the presence of of ambassadors of several countries affiliated to Kuwait, distinguished dignitaries, esteemed family friends and well-wishers. Amidst refined décor, and cherished traditions, the

event honored a union built on love, legacy, and shared hopes for the future. A night to remember, marking the beginning of a journey for the newly-weds surrounded by warmth, prestige, and the blessings of the Almighty God and near and dear ones.



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