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# Kuwait reshapes security landscape, zero-tolerance for violations



## THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

Under the wise leadership and guidance of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Kuwait has been reshaping its security landscape, with emphasis on protecting public interests, equality before the law and zero-tolerance towards law violations.

Spearheading this security transformation is First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahed Al-Yousef Al-Sabah, who has managed in a remarkably short span of time to not only curb security violations and restore order in Kuwait, but also revive public confidence in the strength and integrity of state institutions. In particular, the Interior Ministry has exerted all efforts to enhance public trust in its functioning



through transparency, fairness, and accountability, while ensuring that its policies serve the best interests of the nation and people.

As Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahed has combined strategic vision with decisive action, steering the country through one of its most challenging security landscapes with unwavering determination. By confronting entrenched criminal networks, dismantling sophisticated forgery rings, and launching wide-ranging reforms, Under the sagacious guidance of the country's leadership, he has proven himself a guardian of Kuwait's national integrity. As a statesman whose resolve has set a new benchmark in governance and law enforcement, he has emerged as a highly respected, dynamic, and resolute leader in Kuwait. Since assuming office, Sheikh Fahed has led an unprecedented and sustained campaign to restore law and order, and national integrity.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



## Kuwait tightens noose in fight against illegal residents, violators of traffic laws, drug and alcohol traffickers

The Ministry of Interior has intensified nationwide security campaigns aimed at enforcing the rule of law and curbing violations across Kuwait, with operations targeting traffic offenses, residency and labor law breaches, narcotics possession, visa fraud, real estate violations, and public safety concerns.

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# Kuwait tightens noose in fight against illegal residents, violators of traffic laws, drug and alcohol traffickers



- Intensified security campaigns across Kuwait have led to widespread arrests of violators of traffic, residency and labor laws; substance abuse, visa fraud, and encroachments on state property reflecting a comprehensive approach to restoring public order.
- As authorities continue to pursue offenders, ranging from citizenship forgers to illegal workers to those involved in unsafe practices, the government is committed to upholding legal and regulatory standards across all sectors.

## The Times Kuwait Report

Ministry of Interior has in recent months been launching a series of sustained security campaigns across the country to curb violations of law and order. The security clampdown has netted thousands law violators, including, among others, those involved in breaches of traffic law, infringements of residency and labor law, possession and use of illegal substances, committing visa fraud, and engaged in state property encroachments.

Last week, the regular cabinet meeting examined progress on the crackdown on law-and-order violations in the country. In particular, the cabinet was informed by First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Al-Sabah, on the ongoing security operations against rampant real-estate violations in the two suburbs of Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh and Khaitan.

Sheikh Fahad said that the intensified security campaigns are meant to uphold the law and crack down on widespread real estate and commercial violations in these two areas. The interior minister stressed that despite challenges, the state security entities would do their utmost to push forward the crackdown so as to restore order and enforce the rule of law.

In one of the worst public health tragedies, a wave of alcohol poisoning shocked the nation and sparked urgent calls for vigilance when 23 people -- all believed to be Asians -- died after consuming methanol-contaminated alcoholic beverage. This is in addition to 160 victims who were rushed to the intensive care units of local hospitals and health, with many requiring mechanical ventilation and emergency kidney dialysis due to severe organ damage caused by methanol toxicity.

Those who were arrested for consuming the spurious alcohol and were hospitalized are awaiting deportation after to their home countries and will be blacklisted, with no possibility of returning back to Kuwait. A security source noted 71 expatriates, including the four main suspects involved in the manufacture of the illegal alcohol, have so far been referred to the Public Prosecution.

During interrogation the suspects had admitted to the charges filed against them for involvement in the production and distribution of methanol, a toxic substance that led to the death of 23 people who consumed it. The Public Prosecution will reportedly determine the classification of charges, with murder charges likely to be slapped against several of the primary suspects.

Over the past week alone, the ongoing security drive against law violations had led to the arrest of scores of people involved in reckless driving and other traffic infringements, as well as those involved in residence and labor law violations, and those apprehended for using or being in possession of illegal substances. The General Traffic Department has reaffirmed its dedication to enhancing road safety, public security, and law enforcement, urging all motorists to respect traffic rules and cooperate with officers in the interest of protecting lives and property.

Media reports citing interior ministry sources say that the last month traffic campaign has so far issued more than 32,000 traffic citations for various infractions, ranging from speeding and signal violations to driving without proper documents. In addition, 28 juveniles were detained for driving without licenses, highlighting prevailing concerns about lack of parental supervision and growing incidents of unsafe, underage driving. The enforcement measures extended beyond traffic violations, with security personnel impounding 10 vehicles for serious breaches, and apprehending 106 expatriates with expired residency permits, 34 individuals without identification papers, and 38 persons wanted in connection with legal cases. The officers also impounded 64 vehicles that were either reported stolen or listed as wanted by the judiciary. The campaigns also uncovered drug-related crimes, with two individuals referred to the Drug Control Directorate after possessing narcotics.

Meanwhile, the Municipality has issued a firm warning to vehicle owners against leaving or abandoning their cars in public spaces. The authority emphasized that such actions are considered clear violations of municipal regulations and will not be tolerated. The Municipality added that offenders will face a fine of KD100, in addition to the vehicle owners being charged for towing and transporting the abandoned vehicle to the Municipality garage, as well as pay daily storage fees until the vehicle is retrieved.

On a related note, in a nationwide security campaign last week, security personnel from the General Department of Residence Affairs arrested 258 violators of residence and labor laws, as well as several people who had arrest warrants issued against them for various reasons, including absconding and overstaying visa permit durations. The Interior Ministry said it is committed to pursuing violators of the Residence and Labor Law, cracking down on illegal workers, and targeting those who undermine public order.



For their part, personnel from the Inspection Department of the Public Authority of Manpower (PAM), in cooperation with the Residence Affairs Investigations Department of the Ministry of Interior, arrested 168 workers for violating labor and residency laws. According to PAM, among those arrested are 130 domestic workers and 38 private sector employees for committing what PAM called legal breaches.

In the meantime, during an extensive inspection campaign that was part of ongoing efforts to safeguard public safety and ensure strict adherence to fire prevention standards, the Kuwait Fire Force administratively shut down 61 industrial facilities and shops, and issued warnings to 97 others in Shuwaikh Industrial Area 2, for non-compliance with the safety requirements of the fire force. The campaign was organized in coordination with several government bodies, including the Ministry of Commerce, the Public Authority for Industry, and Kuwait Municipality.

On the visa forgery front, vigilant interior ministry border security personnel at the Abdali border crossing thwarted attempts by unidentified individuals to enter the country using forged residency documents of other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states.. The attempts to enter Kuwait were made following the launch of new visa policies that facilitate visa-on-arrival at all Kuwait border posts for those holding a GCC residency permit.

Upon investigation, those arrested admitted that they had paid money to middlemen and offices in a neighboring country to get the forged documents.

The authorities stressed that obtaining an electronic visa does not grant automatic entry into Kuwait. Every traveler is subject to strict screening upon arrival, with documents

thoroughly examined to confirm the validity of their Gulf residency permits. High-level biometric fingerprinting has also helped detect deportees trying to re-enter under different passports or visas.

In another case of visa forgery, the Criminal Court sentenced a Syrian man, his father, and a Kuwaiti citizen to seven years in prison for forging Kuwaiti citizenship.

The court also ordered the Syrian to pay a fine of 58,000 dinars, after investigations carried out by the Nationality Investigation Department, revealed that he had received 'undue salaries' from Kuwait Airways while pretending to be a Kuwaiti. The case began with the arrest of the first accused, who admitted during interrogation that his false identity dated back to 2002, when he was 11 years old.

According to his testimony, his father had arranged a meeting in Umm Al-Hayman with the Kuwaiti accomplice. Following that meeting, his father told him his name and date of birth would be changed and instructed him to memorize the fabricated details while erasing all traces of his original identity.

His father then took him to a hospital for medical tests under his new identity. After obtaining a forged civil ID, he was forced to repeat his primary schooling, eventually finishing high school before joining the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training.

His confession further revealed that his father had paid 15,000 dinars to secure the fraudulent Kuwaiti identity. Investigations showed that the Kuwaiti citizen involved had registered the Syrian as his 'son' by presenting false information and a forged foreign birth certificate. Authorities confirmed the deception when they discovered that the photo in the Public Authority for Civil Information's records matched the photo on the fake Kuwaiti civil ID, conclusively proving the fraud.

The ministry and its security and safety operations have the full and unstinted support of the higher leadership. During a meeting with senior Interior Ministry officers last week, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yousef Al-Sabah emphasized the Kuwaiti leadership's keen interest in the ministry's work and its commitment to provide all support to personnel in undertaking their duties.

He also conveyed the leadership's appreciation of their ongoing efforts to maintain security and stability in the country, and expressed his personal appreciation to all employees of the Ministry, praising their dedication and devotion to their national duty and to the safety and security of Kuwait.



# Leading with authenticity, building relations on trust, empathy

*In a sequel to our series on 'Honoring Women Reshaping World Diplomacy', The Times Kuwait spoke this week with Ambassador of Indonesia H.E. Lena Maryana on the influential impact that women diplomats bring to international discussions and in peace efforts, and how diplomacy is stronger when it reflects the full spectrum of society.*

## The Times Kuwait Report

### What inspired you to pursue a career in diplomacy?

My journey into diplomacy was not a traditional one. I came from the world of legislation and public service, serving several terms in the Indonesian Parliament. But the essence is the same; serving the people and representing Indonesia's



### woman in diplomacy, and how did you overcome them?

Being both a woman and a non-career diplomat presented unique challenges. There were moments when my credibility was questioned—not because of my capability, but because I did not come from a traditional diplomatic track. I overcame that through dedication, preparedness, and by leading with authenticity. I reminded myself that diplomacy is ultimately about trust, empathy, and effectiveness—not about titles or seniority.

### How do you think gender influences diplomatic styles or approaches?

Women often approach diplomacy with empathy, collaboration, and emotional intelligence. These qualities are incredibly powerful—especially in times of tension or uncertainty. I have seen how a soft tone can open hard conversations, and how inclusive leadership fosters long-term partnerships. Gender is not a limitation—it's a strength that offers unique tools for peacebuilding.

### Can you share a moment when you felt you made a meaningful impact through your diplomatic work?

One meaningful moment was when I engaged directly with the Indonesian diaspora in Kuwait ensuring their concerns were heard and acted upon. Creating access to education, legal protection, and psychological support for them reminded me that diplomacy extends far beyond formal receptions and negotiations. Sometimes, the real impact happens in quiet rooms filled with genuine human concern.

### What leadership qualities do you believe are essential for success in this field?

Integrity, resilience, cultural fluency, and clear communication. As a leader, especially in a diplomatic post, you must listen more than you speak, but when you speak—speak with clarity and purpose. I also believe in leading with compassion. Diplomacy is not just about agreements—it's about relationships. And relationships thrive on respect.

### What advice would you give to young women aspiring to join the foreign service?

Do not wait for validation—step forward. Your voice, your background, and your perspective matter. Be curious about the world, sharpen your language and negotiation skills, and build your confidence brick by brick. The world needs more women at the table—not just for gender balance, but because diplomacy is stronger when it reflects the full spectrum of society.

### How can diplomacy better reflect the diversity of the societies it represents?

It starts with inclusive recruitment, but it must go further—to real empowerment. Representation is not enough if diverse voices are not being heard or given leadership roles. We need more women ambassadors, more diplomats from underrepresented regions, and more pathways for non-traditional backgrounds. Diversity must not only be visible—it must be valued.

### How would you describe your tenure in Kuwait

A tenure driven by economic diplomacy, people-to-people connection, and real, lasting outcomes. Since my appointment in 2021, I have focused on strengthening Indonesia-Kuwait relations through strategic investment and cultural engagement.

In the economic and energy sectors, one of our proudest milestones has been facilitating KUFPEC's acquisition of two upstream oil blocks in Indonesia, followed by their commitment to invest up to Rp 155 trillion (USD 10 billion) in Aceh's oil and gas sector. This historic investment initiative, positions Kuwait as one of Indonesia's key partners in long-term energy cooperation.

We also launched a series of Indonesia-Kuwait Investment Forums, highlighting strategic sectors such as infrastructure, and sustainable tourism. These efforts reflect our commitment to turning diplomacy into development. In the labor sector, I continue to advocate for the welfare of over 6,000 Indonesians working



in Kuwait across the oil and gas sector, healthcare, hospitality, IT and education. We are currently preparing for a strategic recruitment of 1,000 Indonesian medical professionals; a move that strengthens our workforce presence in the Gulf.

What makes this tenure deeply personal is the cultural bridge I've built through Kuwait's Diwanis. These gatherings allowed me to connect with leaders, scholars, entrepreneurs, and prominent figures; sharing not only Indonesia's positions, but our values: wasatiyah (Islamic moderation), harmony, and friendship. In these spaces, diplomacy was not formal; it was human.

As a non-career diplomat with roots in politics and advocacy, I bring a people-centered approach to diplomacy; where partnerships are built not just between governments, but between communities, values, and futures. My mission in Kuwait has been clear: to serve, connect, and deliver lasting impact through both statecraft and sincerity.

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interests. When I was entrusted with the ambassadorial role, it became an opportunity to bring my experience in policy, negotiation, and advocacy to the international arena. I saw diplomacy as a platform to continue building bridges; this time, between nations.

What challenges have you faced as a

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## Celebrating World Humanitarian Day

# Mohammed Al-Shaya's Efforts Are a Model of Creativity and Giving



By Sheikha Suhaila Al-Sabah  
Managing Editor

On August 19 Kuwait celebrated the World Humanitarian Day, an occasion to renew the world's praise for its pioneering humanitarian stances, particularly the efforts of its charitable institutions, which have made giving an authentic characteristic of the nation. This celebration is led by Dr Mohammed Al-Shaya, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Al-Safa Charitable and Humanitarian Society.

This celebration witnesses growing international appreciation for Kuwait's leadership in the charitable field and the unique humanitarian initiatives achieved by its loyal citizens. This occasion provides an opportunity to highlight Kuwait's significant humanitarian achievements, which have contributed throughout its history to promoting sustainable development in communities, achieving stability in charitable work, improving human lives, and providing a decent living for needy groups around the world.

Kuwaiti charitable organizations, led by the Al-Safa Charitable and Humanitarian Society, have become prominent figures in humanitarian work, extending their generous hand to all those in need and implementing unique local and international projects that have elevated charitable work to the highest levels.

Kuwait has affirmed its worthiness to be a global humanitarian center, under

the wise leadership and generous Kuwaiti people, who are inherently charitable. This charitable organization provides support and assistance to those in need and afflicted, and its distinguished achievements are a living testament to the leadership and sustainability of Kuwaiti charitable work. This stems from a firm belief that humanitarian work is a noble mission that requires dedication and sincerity.

Since its independence, the state has been committed to providing humanitarian aid and supporting the vulnerable, to the point that humanitarian work has become a fundamental pillar of its national identity. Kuwait was officially honored as a Humanitarian Center in

Palestinian people under the scourge of occupation.

This requires protection and accountability mechanisms to ensure that aid reaches those in need safely and effectively, and that humanitarian work continues in the most difficult circumstances. In this context, the Al-Safa Charitable and Humanitarian Society, under the leadership of Dr. Mohammed Al-Shaya, continues to implement its sustainable development programs across various sectors, including orphan sponsorship projects, support for needy families, and the construction of mosques, educational, and health centers in several countries. These

charitable effort's success.

The Society organizes specialized workshops and training courses to raise the efficiency of its staff and develop their skills in managing humanitarian projects, in cooperation with local and international training institutions, and to implement global best practices in charitable and volunteer work. On the technical and digital front, the Society is keen to keep pace with modern developments to improve the efficiency of its operations and expand the scope of its humanitarian impact. It has invested in developing advanced digital platforms that facilitate the interaction of donors and beneficiaries with its programs and services, and provide transparent mechanisms for monitoring project implementation and measuring their impact.

This enhances trust between the Society and the community and achieves higher levels of transparency and accountability.

Under its wise leadership, the Society affirms its continued commitment to its noble humanitarian mission, working to expand its services to include new regions around the world in need of support and assistance, and strengthening Kuwait's position as a global center for humanitarian work by presenting distinguished models of giving and creativity in the service of humanity.

It also calls on the international community to redouble efforts to address contemporary humanitarian challenges and support initiatives aimed at building a more just and peaceful world. Kuwait's efforts, led by its charitable institutions and dedicated citizens, represent a global model of giving and humanitarian work. They reflect the message that goodness knows no boundaries and that humanity is the common denominator that unites peoples and creates hope in the most difficult circumstances. Kuwait remains a beacon of cultural and humanitarian radiance and a role model for giving for the good of all humanity.



September 2014, in international recognition of its exceptional efforts and continued commitment to just humanitarian causes. On this occasion, Kuwait commemorates the sacrifices of humanitarian aid providers around the world, emphasizing the importance of international community solidarity to enhance humanitarian sustainability and alleviate the burdens on those working in this field. This is particularly true in light of the increasing challenges, including the suffering of the

projects aim to achieve comprehensive development for the beneficiary communities and establish an advanced model of charitable work that focuses on long-term impact and sustainability, within a strategic vision that enhances the capabilities of local communities and empowers them to become self-reliant. The Society also pays special attention to the professional development and training of humanitarian workers, believing that the human element is the cornerstone of any



## LuLu Hypermarket celebrates 'India Utsav' with week-long festivities, exclusive offers

In a vibrant celebration of India's Independence Day, LuLu Hypermarket has launched its much-awaited "India Utsav" promotion, running from 13 August 2025 to 19 August 2025.

The grand inauguration took place on 13 August 2025 at the LuLu Hypermarket Al Rai outlet. The event was inaugurated by Kaizar T. Shakir, Chairman of IBPC, along with Kuldeep Singh Lambha, Senior Advisory Council Board Member of IBPC; S. K. Wadhawan, Advisory Board Member of IBPC; Yusuf Al Dafferi, Acting Director of Corporate Communications, Kuwait Airways; and Ajit Barot, Expert – Corporate Communications, Kuwait Airways, in the presence of LuLu Hypermarket's top Kuwait management and senior officials.

The opening ceremony was marked by a lively traditional



Indian welcome, complete with a music band performance, and a special rendition of an Indian patriotic group song that captured the spirit of the occasion. The celebrations also showcased a colorful array of Indian traditional cultural dances, including state-wise dance performances, captivating classical items, and other artistic presentations that reflected the rich cultural diversity of India. The shoppers can look forward to amazing discounts and offers on a wide array of Indian-branded products, including groceries, fresh and frozen foods, fruits and vegetables, meat, non-food items, health and beauty products, footwear, and fashion garments. A standout promotion is the 'Buy 2 Get 1 Free' offer on Indian sarees and churidars, appealing to lovers of ethnic wear.

Adding to the festivities, the event featured several competitions that brought together the community. The Indian Fancy Dress Competition saw participation from over 50 students, with prizes awarded to the top three winners and special consolation gifts for others. A Bollywood Singing Contest and an Indian Sweet-Making Competition were also held, with winners receiving valuable gift vouchers.



In a significant development, the celebration also marked the launch of a new long-term partnership between the Kuwait Airways and LuLu Hypermarket, offering exclusive travel benefits for LuLu Happiness Members. From 13 to 19 August 2025, members can enjoy a 12% discount on bookings via the Kuwait Airways website or mobile app using promo code LULU22, valid on routes between Kuwait and India. Additionally, members who register for the Oasis loyalty program will receive 1,000 welcome miles, with in-store bookings at LuLu Al Rai enjoying waived ticketing service charges.

The "India Utsav" is further enriched with special attractions, including traditional monument decorations, Indian ethnic wear handloom collections, and variety displays of organic Indian products. Visitors can explore new product launches such as fresh apricots from Ladakh, alongside sampling counters offering authentic Indian delicacies at dedicated food stalls.

With its cultural performances, irresistible promotions, and authentic Indian market atmosphere, LuLu's India Utsav has transformed the Al Rai outlet into a colorful hub of celebration, offering both a taste of India and unmatched shopping value.



# Suhail Star Heralds the End of Summer

*With extreme heat in Kuwait and all over the world this summer, a celestial event soon taking place in our southern skies is cause for celebration. Since ancient times the sighting of the star Canopus has been regarded as a sign that summer is coming to an end, and even today the star's appearance is a highly anticipated event.*

By Claudia Farkas Al Rashoud  
Special to The Time Kuwait

Known in Arabic as 'Suhail', it's the brightest star in the southern constellation of Alpha Carina, and the second brightest star in the sky after Sirius. According to Senior Meteorologist and Researcher Essa Ramadan, there has always been excitement in this part of the world when Suhail is spotted in the heavens over southern Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Oman around the 24th of August. "It always appears first over the southern Arabian Peninsula before it's seen here and this is simply due to the rotation of the earth," he says. He notes that it's not until after the fifth of September that the star can be seen in the southern skies of Kuwait, thirteen degrees above the horizon, about an hour or two before dawn.

Around this time of year, the inhabitants of Kuwait used to eagerly watch for the star in the night sky before sunrise, from their rooftops and out in the desert, believing that the appearance of Suhail was the cause for the change in weather. But Ramadan explains that Suhail is 310 light years distant from the Earth, and therefore actually has no effect on our temperatures.



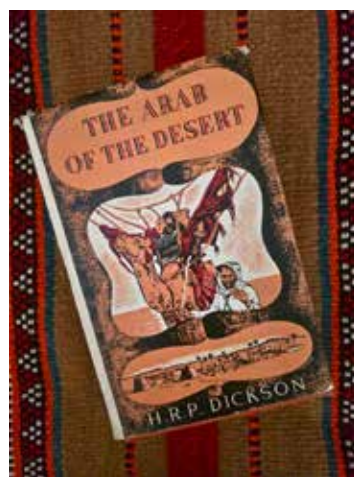
"The reason for the slightly cooler weather around the time the star is sighted is the beginning of the movement of low pressure from the Mediterranean. It is officially the start of autumn," he says.

One can certainly understand how in the days before electricity and air conditioning, a portent of cooler weather was a tremendously welcome sight. Just how much excitement the appearance of Suhail caused in old Kuwait is vividly described in

'The Arab of the Desert', an account of traditional bedouin life by British Political Agent Colonel H.R.P. Dickson.

First he describes the extreme August heat that comes with humidity, bringing the local population "to the end of their tether, incapable of standing much more... The Badawin in particular feel this damp heat which seems to penetrate their very bones, and brings out ailments of every description.

"The whole world now longs and prays for the rise of Suhail, that tantalizing twinkling star known to the West as Canopus, whose coming always brings relief. So powerful is this longing that after the 25th of August men get up hours before dawn to see if they can get a glimpse of that blessed constellation. At



long last comes hope, usually in the shape of a camel courier from Najd. He brings the news that ten days previously Suhail was seen in high Qasim. It must therefore be seen any moment now in Kuwait."

Expectation was elevated to a fever pitch as Dickson recalled. "Watch is redoubled and the keenest-eyed Rashaida hunters are set to search the southern skies about 3 a.m. at Jahra and Subaihiyah, for there it is less misty than at Kuwait. At long last the star appears. Like wild fire the news is rushed into Kuwait, and spread abroad among the Badawin. The cry is raised: 'Suhail has been seen, Suhail has been seen by so-and-so, thanks be to Allah the Merciful. Summer is at an end...'"

Despite such fanfare, the temperatures did not actually drop dramatically after the sighting of the star. The summer heat still tried the patience of the community for some time, as it does today, and although the ensuing improvement in the weather condition was very subtle, it still made everyone extremely happy.

Colonel Dickson described the mood of the day, "Great is the rejoicing, and the Arab, being properly brought up to the belief that immediate relief follows, actually begins to feel cooler, although the European perceives but little change. The Arab's conviction is that the inside of a man's body now gets cooler, so thirst is no longer painful, while water left out at night gets cool by dawn, whereas before it remained hot through the night."



Residents of modern Kuwait may notice that the water coming out of their taps and in their swimming pools is perceptively cooler after Suhail has appeared. As Essa Ramadan remarks, "After the sighting of Suhail there is a difference in the angle of the sun and the days become shorter."

Colonel Dickson quoted an old Kuwaiti saying, "Idha shahar al Suhail, talammas al tamar bil lail" which he translated as, "When Canopus first sparkles, the dates may be picked by night." Dickson explained that this means the dates are then all perfectly ripe for picking. In many other parts of the globe, Canopus also traditionally serves as a harvesting and planting guide and weather predictor.

So what kind of weather can Kuwait residents expect after this year's sighting of Suhail? According to Ramadan, conditions will improve gradually with the coming of the northwesterly winds in mid-September, when the early morning hours and evenings will be more comfortable. However, due to the long-term warming trend, temperatures are expected to remain above average until mid-November.

The meteorologist predicts this winter's rainfall will be moderate, with a chance for unexpected weather systems that could bring isolated cold spells or heavy rain. "During the past few years the problem has been with very intense, heavy rain within a short period of time, and this is a trend that's expected to continue," says Ramadan.

In the meantime, despite professional meteorologists and scientific methods of predicting the weather, the sighting of Suhail is still a topic of conversation in diwannias and among the older generation of Kuwait. A trusted sign that better days are ahead, we can take comfort in the appearance of a bright star that twinkles enticingly in the southern skies before dawn.



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## My phone is ruining my life



By Samira Jafar  
Exclusive to The Times Kuwait

This summer, I had the goal of “discovering myself” creatively, professionally, and personally, which has been the main theme of the past few years of my life. These were the ways in which I planned on doing this:

- Writing more
- Reading more
- Spending time with the people I love
- Experiencing new things
- Experiencing film and theater
- Traveling

Thankfully, I did all of the above. I am proud of all the things I've learned, written, read, and accomplished. But something in me still feels empty. In between all of these things, I found that I was spending a lot of time on my phone. It was out of pure boredom: being off of work will have that effect on you and being away from home leaves a desire to feel some level of connectivity to the people you left behind.

But what was first productive and collaborative quickly turned unsettling. I was learning a lot about people I knew, but I almost felt like I knew too much about them. Seeing travel, proposals, promotions, families, and other snippets of their lives, coupled with the ample amount of time I had on my hands, made me feel frozen in time. How could I be in such stillness when people around me were moving and hustling? I was always someone who felt majorly disconnected from people I was no longer in contact with; it's nothing personal, it's just that I quickly lose interest in the life of anyone who doesn't impact me. But when faced with all of their faces, I was forced to confront a world I had long compartmentalized.

Feelings of dissatisfaction quickly brewed within me. I'm part of the age group where people are either CEOs, parents, unemployed, or famous. It's so easy to compare: this person has something I don't. I have something they lack. Personhood becomes a scale, checks and balances. People are literally reduced to a few words and a caption that is no longer than a few emojis or a sentence at best. In between people I know from high school are pictures of the worst atrocities I've ever seen. Scrolling brings me so much dread and anxiety. And then I scroll to an article about how being chronically online contributes to lazy eye, and I become anxious about that, too, and spend more time squinting at my phone to assess the dangers.

Social media is an echo chamber of screamed advice

and complaints that interferes with my six goals, but with “experiencing new things” most significantly. On TikTok, people will warn you against XYZ. You'll open the comments and see older women warning younger women against XYZ. Sometimes it is possible to know too much. I get this warped fear that I'm not living my life correctly. Women are being told to get married or about how marriage is the worst thing ever. Stay at home wives will talk about how much better their lives are. We have become the consumers of too many cautionary tales and warnings. When I get overwhelmed, I feel the urge to do nothing.

I wonder why I compare myself to people I never know and will never be, and whose life circumstances vary so much to mine. I wonder why some people are in Greece and others are in refugee camps. I feel like I was never meant to know this much about people in my life, and then feel like maybe they need to know more about me, only why would they? I oscillate between thinking I'm horribly uncool and above being concerned about what people think. My self-esteem is either obnoxious or deplorable, depending on the day.

Social media is a side effect of wanting to be a successful author. Authors are all over Instagram and TikTok promoting their books and gaining readers. Don't get me wrong: I do love the connectivity of social media. It enabled me to start my book club, where I met 90+ lovely and educated women around Kuwait. It also allowed me to meet amazing people and share my work with them. But I wish I could shrug off the pressure of being online. I have this fear that abandoning an online presence would make me abandon every possibility for success in my field. Then I feel like I'm too much of a cliché, and like some of the best authors only have a mailbox and a radio and a flip phone with no SIM card and live in the woods. When I disconnect and focus on writing, I feel guilty for quite literally doing my job, because I feel like I'm not putting myself “out there” enough on social media. After all, isn't the job of a writer to make reels and go on Live?

Once again, social media succeeds at making me feel like I'm living life incorrectly. Taking a social media break makes me anxious about losing whatever readership I have and connection to what's “going on” around the world. It makes me want to read about the side effects of every decision before I make it instead of just living. And don't get me started on ChatGPT and how it has completely ruined social media and our ability to think critically. I watched a TikTok about a woman who was in love with her psychiatrist and had all her delusions about him validated by ChatGPT. I judged her, but then wondered if I was better for being a victim to the overwhelming power of technology, even when I thought it was stupid.

I'm writing all of this to say that I want to take a social media break. I don't know if Substack counts.

**Samira Jafar** is a poet and writer who reflects on life, culture, and becoming yourself. She teaches English at Kuwait University and is the author of two books: “Young” (2024) and “Bloom” (2025). In addition, Samira has a Substack blog where she writes weekly about strength and identity. The main message behind her writing is to be powerful and authentic, using words to express your true self. Follow her on Instagram @samirawritesstuff

## South African Diplomat Visits The Times Kuwait Office



Chargé d'Affaires at the Embassy of South Africa, Busisiwe Mpungose, paid a courtesy visit to The Times Kuwait office last week, where she was warmly received by Executive Managing Editor Reaven D'Souza.

During the meeting, Ms. Mpungose spoke about the strong and steadily growing ties between South Africa and Kuwait. She also emphasized the importance of the upcoming G20 Summit, which South Africa will host for the first time on African soil. The summit, set to take place in Johannesburg from 22–23 November, marks a historic milestone in the country's global diplomatic engagement.

The discussion also touched on several areas of mutual interest, including strengthening economic and trade relations between the two nations. The South African diplomat highlighted her country as a premier tourism destination, particularly, as it could appeal to Kuwait residents seeking cooler climates during the peak of summer.

Commending The Times Kuwait for its professionalism and quality journalism, Ms. Mpungose said the publication remains a valuable source of information for the diplomatic community and local readers alike. She also expressed her appreciation to The Times Kuwait team for their continued support of the South African Embassy's initiatives and for helping to promote and strengthen bilateral ties between South Africa and Kuwait.

## Traffic law amendment allows for partial tinting of vehicle windows

The official government gazette Kuwait Al-Youm published last week Decision 1398 of 2025, which permits motorists to tint part of their vehicle's window. The decision issued by the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef amends certain provisions of the executive regulations of the Traffic Law.



Under the new rules, vehicles are now permitted to have factory-specified tinted windows, and the use of colored foils is allowed as long as the tint does not exceed 50 percent.

All windows may be tinted except the front windshield, which must remain clear and compliant with Gulf road safety standards. The decision also strictly prohibits the installation of reflective glass or foils. This amendment aims to standardize vehicle tinting while ensuring driver visibility and road safety.

## Visitors to Kuwait not permitted to access public hospitals

Minister of Health, Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi, has issued a decision which says visitors to Kuwait cannot access healthcare services at public hospitals, specialist centers, and primary healthcare clinics.



The Ministry explained that the move is part of its strategy to safeguard the sustainability of the healthcare system, focusing resources on citizens and residents covered by health insurance. The decision seeks to preserve service quality, prevent system overload, and ensure that available capacities are directed to those most entitled to healthcare. According to the Ministry, this measure aligns with its broader healthcare vision aimed at achieving a balance between operational efficiency, rationalized service delivery, and patient satisfaction. By concentrating efforts on insured residents and citizens, the Ministry aims to maintain high-quality services and strengthen trust in Kuwait's healthcare network.



# Ahmadi Church gains status of a Minor Basilica, a regional first

*The Church of Our Lady of Arabia in Ahmadi has been elevated to the rank of Minor Basilica, the first in the Arabian Gulf to receive this distinguished title from the Holy See. The recognition honors its role as a spiritual center for Kuwait's Catholic community and highlights Kuwait's tradition of religious openness and interfaith coexistence.*



## The Times Kuwait Report

The Church of Our Lady of Arabia in Ahmadi, Kuwait, marked a historic milestone with its formal elevation to the rank of Minor Basilica, the first such canonical designation of its kind in the Arabian Peninsula.

This distinguished designation, conferred by the Holy See, recognizes the church's spiritual, pastoral, and historical significance as a center of devotion for Kuwait's vibrant Catholic community, particularly among migrant workers.

The honor reflects not only the deep ties between Kuwait, a haven for religious tolerance, and the Vatican but also the nation's longstanding tradition of religious openness and coexistence, uniting Christians and Muslims alike in respect for the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Elaborating on the historic occasion, the Apostolic Nuncio, H.E. Archbishop Eugene M. Nugent speaking to The Times Kuwait said: "The Catholic community in Kuwait is preparing to celebrate a milestone of historic importance following the elevation of The Church of Our Lady of Arabia to the dignity of a Minor Basilica, the first church in the Arabian Peninsula to receive this title. The decree, issued by the Holy See on 28 June, 2025, has been warmly welcomed by the faithful and clergy alike.

"This decision reflects the deep and longstanding bonds between the State of Kuwait and the Holy See. For decades, Kuwait has been a place of welcome for people of many nations and religions, and the Catholic community has flourished here under the protection and hospitality of the State. The recognition of Our Lady of Arabia as a Minor Basilica is seen not only as an honor for the Church but also as a tribute to Kuwait's openness and its role as a bridge of dialogue in the region."

He added that conferring this distinction reflects the special pastoral care that Pope Leo XIV, attributes to the Church in Kuwait and for its people, both citizens and residents.

"His decision highlights the significance of this parish as a spiritual home for thousands of Catholics across the country, many of them migrant workers who find strength and consolation in their faith," said the archbishop.

He went on to say: "Here I would like to quote what Apostolic Vicar of Northern Arabia, Bishop Aldo Berardi, said: 'This title is a gift for all of us. It reminds us that the Church in Kuwait is not isolated but deeply connected to the universal Church. It is also a recognition of the generosity and openness of Kuwait, a country that has made space for people of all

faiths to live and worship in peace."

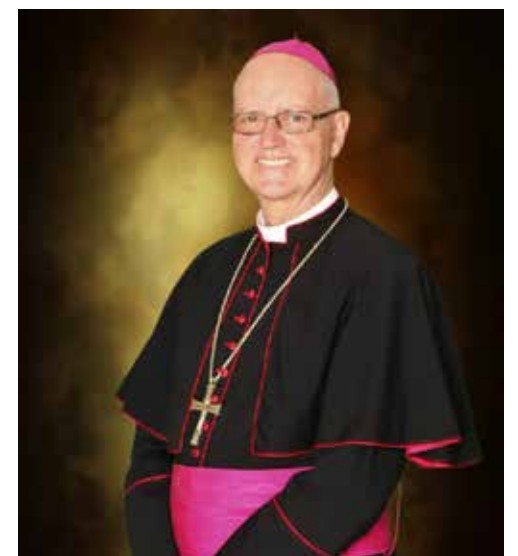
Archbishop Nugent, who represents the Holy See in Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar, went on to reveal that the new Basilica hopes to deepen its mission, particularly in nurturing the next generation of the faithful. "Events like the Jubilee of Youth remind the Church how important it is to give younger Catholics a sense of belonging and mission.

Plans are being made to strengthen youth engagement through pilgrimages and retreats, formation in leadership and service, cultural and artistic initiatives, charitable

projects, and digital evangelization.

"I would like to stress that the future of the Church in Kuwait rests in the hands of our youth. The Basilica must be a home for them—a place where they find strength in prayer, joy in friendship, and the courage to serve, as Christ has taught us."

“The new Basilica of Our Lady of Arabia stands as a beacon of faith and unity, house of prayer open to all, a center of formation for the young, and a sign of harmony.”



He went on to add, "The new Basilica of Our Lady of Arabia stands as a beacon of faith and unity, house of prayer open to all, a center of formation for the young, and a sign of harmony with Muslim brothers and sisters who also honor the Blessed Virgin Mary."

Founded in 1948 by Carmelites and built with support from the Kuwait Oil Company, the church houses the revered statue of Our Lady of Arabia, blessed by Pope Pius XII and crowned in 2011 on behalf of Pope Benedict XVI.

"May Our Lady of Arabia continue to watch over Kuwait, the Gulf, and all its people, and may this new chapter strengthen the bonds of friendship between Kuwait and the Vatican, while reaffirming the Holy Father's closeness to the faithful of this land," said Archbishop Nugent.



# Major projects underway to increase water, electricity production

**H**igher Committee for Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects (KAPP) recently approved the tender for the Al-Khairan Integrated Power and Water Project (IWPP), which is expected to be floated soon by the Authority. When commissioned and fully operationalized the Al-Khairan IWPP is projected to generate 1,800 megawatts of electricity and produce 33 million imperial gallons of desalinated water per day and contribute to Kuwait's growing need for water and electricity.

The government has been prioritizing and accelerating the pace of awarding tenders and

projects that seek to improve and expand the country's infrastructure, in particular utility projects to keep up with increasing demand for water and power from a rising population, and new urban and industrial developments.

According to the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy (MEWRE), Kuwait is moving forward with five major projects to add nearly 7,000 megawatts of power and 213 million gallons of water per day. Media reports citing ministry sources indicate that some of these projects have already been signed, others are in the tendering stage, and a third group



has reached the bid-opening phase.

The Al-Khairan project is projected to be executed in two phases—the first will include the installation of power generation turbines and water distilleries, while the second will complete the combined cycle phase, using steam to produce additional electricity. The project is planned to comply with strict

environmental standards, reducing emissions to levels below international limits.

Major energy and water projects in various stages of implementation include:

**North Al-Zour-Phases 2 and 3:** To produce 2,700 MW of electricity and 120 million imperial gallons of desalinated water. The work order for this project has already been signed.

**Al-Khairan – Phase 1:** To generate 1,800 MW of electricity and 33 million imperial gallons of desalinated water. The launch of tender documents for this project is imminent.

**Al-Shagaya-Phase 3:** To produce 1,600 MW of electricity, which has been tendered. Al-Subiya-Phase 4: To generate 900 MW of electricity, for which the tenders are in the opening stage.

**Al-Doha:** To produce 60 million gallons of desalinated water, which is still in the tendering stage.

## LuLu Retail reports H1 revenue of US\$4.1 billion, up 5.9% YoY



- Posts a 9.1% rise in H1 net profit to \$127.0 million, reflecting strong operational performance.
- Declares interim dividend of \$98.4 million.
- The jump was supported by growth in private label and ecommerce sales, and as per plans, to open 20 new stores in 2025

**L**ulu Retail has announced its H1 2025 financial results, delivering a solid 9.1% year-on-year increase in net profit to \$127.0 million. Revenues rose to \$4.1 billion (up 5.9% YoY), and like-for-like sales increased by 3.8%, driven by robust performance across key categories. In Q2 2025, the company reported revenues of \$2.0 billion, up 4.6% YoY with a strong sales growth. This performance was bolstered by continued growth in private label and the e-commerce category. Private label grew 3.5% YoY, accounting for 29.7% of retail revenue, while e-commerce

strong volume and category growth

• **EBITDA:** \$418 million (up 7.0% YoY); Q2 2025: \$204 million (up 7.6% YoY). Margins improved by 28 basis points in Q2.

• **Net Profit:** \$127 million (up 9.1% YoY), with a net margin of 3.1%

• **Private Label Growth:** Up 3.5% YoY in Q2, accounting for 29.7% of retail revenue

• **E-commerce:** Q2 sales up 43.4% YoY to \$108 million (5.6% of retail revenue); 45.4% increase in customer count YoY

• **Loyalty Program:** The Happiness loyalty program added 1 million new members during the quarter, bringing total membership to 7.3 million.

• **Store Expansion:**\* Seven new stores opened in H1 plus 4 more in July, taking the total to 259; full-year target of 20 new stores remains on track

• **Growth Strategy:** Private label and e-commerce continue to play pivotal roles in Lulu's growth approach

"Our steady and resilient H1 2025 performance is a testament to our well-established growth pillars, enabling record sales and margin improvements. We expect our growth momentum to persist as we focus on expanding our store network, launching new outlets, enhancing operational efficiency, and unlocking further potential through private label and e-commerce offerings," said Saifee Rupawala, CEO of Lulu Retail.

### Regional Performance

• **UAE (largest market):** Q2 revenue up 9.4% YoY, driven by continued high demand for fresh food and supported by Lulu's omnichannel strategy

• **Saudi Arabia (KSA):** Revenue grew 3.8% YoY, aided by strong electrical goods sales and new store openings

• **Kuwait:** Revenue up 4.9% YoY; consistent positive performance

### Key Highlights – H1 2025

• **Revenue:** \$4.1 billion (up 5.9% YoY), driven by

## Philippines hikes minimum wage for household workers overseas

**G**overnment of the Philippines has increased the minimum monthly wage for overseas domestic workers by US\$100, raising it from \$400 to \$500.

The authorities have also mandated that foreign employers must provide safe, habitable housing with proper ventilation, sanitation and lighting, as well as provide for annual medical checkups of their workers.

Domestic workers specialist Bassam Al-Shammari explained that the increase reflects global inflation, rising living costs, and growing demand for Filipino labor worldwide. In Kuwait, the new wage policy will translate into an approximate increase



of KD30 for domestic workers, though the overall financial impact on employers is considered limited.



## Intense efforts underway to extradite fugitives, recover stolen funds

**G**overnment-level discussions and coordination with security apparatuses in friendly countries are said to be underway to extradite Kuwaiti citizens who have been convicted by courts for various criminal offenses, including misappropriation of public funds.

The extradition procedures, which are in line with international conventions and reciprocal cooperation agreements with other states, aim to extradite fugitives living in other countries and to recover stolen funds stashed in banks and in real-estate holdings abroad.

Once the wanted person has been located at a residence in a foreign country, the extradition procedures begin with submitting an official extradition request through diplomatic channels. The request is then judicially reviewed

by the competent court in the country involved through coordination between Kuwait's Public Prosecution and its counterpart abroad until a ruling permits extradition.

The extradition procedures are based on the United Nations Convention against Corruption, the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and the principle of reciprocity.

The procedures for recovering embezzled funds include verifying through investigations that funds were transferred abroad; providing a judicial assistance request via diplomatic channels; supporting the request with evidence and documents proving Kuwait's right to recovery and a decision by the foreign authority to accept or reject the request under its laws.



maintained its momentum with sales up 43.4% YoY to \$108 million, representing 5.6% of retail revenue. Gross profit increased 6.5% YoY to \$468 million. EBITDA grew 7.6% YoY to \$204 million.

Declares interim dividend of \$98.4 million (3.5 fils per share). Lulu Retail has declared an interim dividend of \$98.4 million (3.5 fils per share), corresponding to a payout ratio of 78% of H1 2025 distributable profits—consistent with the IPO dividend policy.





# Indian embassy celebrates Independence Day, highlights ties with Kuwait

## The Times Kuwait Report

**E**mbassy of India celebrated the 79th Independence Day of India on 15 August at its premises in the presence of over 3,000 members of the Indian community who attended the colorful celebrations.

The official program began with Ambassador of India H.E. Dr. Adarsh Swaika laying floral tributes at the 'Shilaphalakam' (plaque) honoring the sacrifices of Indian martyrs, and at the statue of Mahatma Gandhi, followed by hoisting of the national flag and the rendering of the national anthem.

Addressing the gathering Ambassador Swaika first read out the Hon'ble President

of India Smt Droupadi Murmu's address to the nation on the eve of the Independence Day. The President, in her address, listed the achievements of the country in the last 78 years, particularly the remarkable progress in various socio-economic sectors of India in recent years. She urged the citizens to work assiduously for the goal of a Developed country by 2047.

Ambassador also highlighted the points made by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi in his speech from the Red Fort on 15 August enumerating the success of the government in various spheres and outlined the various new measures to take the country towards the goal of a developed country. He emphasized on the success of 'Operation



Sindoor' launched to eliminate the threat of cross-border terrorism. He urged citizens to work towards a self-reliant India through the 'vocal for local' theme that encourages

indigenous production.

In his own remarks, Ambassador conveyed that India-Kuwait relations are at one of its best phases in contemporary times and attributed it to the successful outcomes of the visit of Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi to Kuwait in December 2024 and the continued support of the leadership of Kuwait for a strong India-Kuwait relations.

Ambassador Swaika thanked the community associations and the members of the community who have been instrumental in strengthening bilateral relations at a people-to-people level and promoting Indian culture in Kuwait. He re-assured the community that the Embassy remains a 'home away from home' for them.

## Coffee consumption surges, second highest in Gulf

**C**offee consumption in Kuwait continues to surge, with forecasts showing the market could expand from \$728 million in 2024 to more than \$953 million by 2030. Kuwaitis consumed about 10,000 tons of coffee in 2023, a figure expected to climb to 11,000 tons by 2028. Media reports indicate that the average Kuwaiti consumes 3.7 kilograms of roasted coffee annually, ranking second in the Gulf after Oman.



More than just places to buy coffee, cafes are fast becoming cultural and social icons. Local brands, often started by young entrepreneurs, focus on creating full experiences through design, social media presence, and storytelling. Many cafés have successfully shaped consumer culture, influencing fashion, language, and lifestyle trends in Kuwait.

The Netherlands, Switzerland, and the UK supply over half of Kuwait's roasted and decaffeinated coffee

imports, followed by Italy, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia. On the export side, 60 percent of Kuwait's coffee goes to the UAE, 19 percent to Qatar, and 9 percent to Saudi Arabia. While exports remain limited, Kuwait's coffee industry is expanding, with export prices averaging \$10,590 per ton in 2024.

By May 2025, Kuwait hosted over 1,115 cafés, with 73 percent independently owned, mostly by young Kuwaitis. Hawalli leads in café density with 332 outlets, followed by Ahmadi with 293.

Despite the rapid expansion, café owners face challenges such as market saturation, rising costs, shifting consumer tastes, weak digital presence, and sustainability pressures. Concepts like pet cafés and digital cafés highlight the sector's ongoing innovation.

## Court fines Kuwaiti woman 4,000 dinars for child neglect

**T**he Misdemeanor Court has fined a Kuwaiti woman 4,000 dinars (\$13,090) after a court found her guilty of child neglect — for leaving her children unattended while she travelled abroad for plastic surgery.

The Court based its ruling on testimonies from the children's grandmother, who revealed the mother had been absent from her children for several months. The grandmother's account was confirmed by the children's father (the woman's husband).

The son of the accused stated in

court that his mother abandoned him and his siblings and that he wished to live only with his father, according to news reports.

Child protection authorities supported these claims in their report. Attorney Abdul Mohsen Al Qattan, representing the grandmother as a civil plaintiff, demanded the maximum penalty and compensation, while the mother's lawyer sought acquittal.

The ruling was issued under Kuwait's Child Law No. 21/2015, which guarantees children the right to care and penalizes parental neglect.

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# Steep shrinkage in budget deficit

*Kuwait's government in July revealed that its budget deficit for the fiscal year 2024-2025 stands at around KD 1.056 billion — a significant improvement from the originally forecasted deficit of KD 6 billion.*

## The Times Kuwait Report

Kuwait's government in July revealed that its budget deficit for the fiscal year 2024-2025 stands at around KD 1.056 billion — a significant improvement from the originally forecasted deficit of KD 6 billion. This reduction raises important questions: Why did the deficit shrink so much, and what challenges remain? Dr Reyadh Faras, Economics Associate Professor at Kuwait University, breaks down the situation in an interview with KTV news channel's 'Nabd Al-Sharea'.

### What changed?

When setting the 2024-2025 budget, the government based its revenue estimates largely on oil prices of about \$70 per barrel. "The budget was set with an expectation that oil prices would be around \$70 per barrel, leading to total revenues of about KD 19 billion," Dr Faras explained.

However, oil prices stayed higher, roughly \$75 per barrel during much of the year, which boosted government revenues. "This helped increase government income," he said. On top of that, the Cabinet ordered most government agencies to reduce their budgets by approximately 20 percent. "Most government entities cut spending, and I believe this ultimately led to lowering the deficit," Dr Faras noted.

Adding to this effort, the Ministry of Finance announced last year a spending cap, a positive development given that, in previous years, government spending had no formal ceiling. "For example, the 2000 budget was about KD 4 billion, while in 2022-23 it reached approximately KD 28.5 billion. A kind of financial excess," Dr Faras said. He added that the 2024-25 budget adopted this spending ceiling, which hopefully will be maintained for the 2025-26 budget, as well. "If this ceiling is respected, I expect the deficit to be more

controlled, although fluctuations in oil revenues will likely continue."

Non-oil revenues also rose thanks to government moves such as increasing fees for public services, he said. Together, these factors cut the expected deficit from KD 6 billion to just over KD 1 billion.

### A rollercoaster budget

Kuwait's budget swings widely from year to year, mainly because of fluctuating oil prices and spending demands, explained Dr Faras.

During the COVID-19 crisis in 2020-2021, Kuwait faced its largest-ever deficit of KD 10.8 billion, which Dr Faras attributed to low oil prices and increased spending to manage the pandemic. The following year, 2022-2023, saw an unexpected surplus of KD 6.4 billion thanks to soaring oil prices. Then in 2023-2024, the deficit rose again to around KD 1.6 billion.

"For Kuwait and other oil-producing countries, we see this issue of fluctuations in revenues," he said. "This makes financial planning difficult for countries whose budgets rely heavily on one main resource, oil, whose price is sensitive to any economic or political events worldwide."

### Where Does the Money Go?

Salaries are by far the largest expense, accounting for roughly 60 percent of the budget, said Dr Faras. Next come subsidies, totaling about KD 4.5 billion, including: Electricity subsidies (over KD 1 billion), fuel subsidies, education scholarships (roughly KD 0.5 billion for study missions abroad), and social support programs. About 10 percent of the budget is allocated to capital spending on infrastructure projects and maintenance.

### Is there waste?

Dr Faras prefers to describe much government spending not as waste but as "inflation" of costs due to policy choices. For instance, hiring many citizens in government jobs is seen as job creation



rather than inefficiency. "Last year, 24,000 Kuwaitis were hired in government jobs. This is not waste but job creation to provide decent living," he said.

However, inefficiencies do exist, especially in subsidies. For example, electricity is heavily subsidized — the government covers about 95 percent of the cost, charging consumers only about 2 fils per kilowatt-hour, while the real cost is around 45 fils. This encourages excessive use and strains the budget.

"Does this mean the government should raise prices? No, it's about targeted support," he said. "There are different income groups: low, middle, and high income. Therefore, support should be directed by linking electricity prices to consumption levels."

### What needs to change?

Kuwait is on track to reduce dependence on oil revenues and diversify its economy.

Dr Faras highlights the government's plan to increase non-oil revenues from about 9 percent now to around 16.8 percent in coming years. "The government is aware non-oil revenues are low and has plans to raise them gradually," he said. Fostering public-private partnerships is also essential, he said.

"Increasing non-oil revenues solely by raising

fees and usufruct fees will only reach a limit because higher fees affect the private sector, which will pass costs to citizens—a scenario the government wants to avoid," said Dr Faras.

Kuwait has laws encouraging partnerships where the government contributes land while the private sector finances projects, creating new revenue streams and job opportunities without heavy government spending.

"For example, the North Zour power plant was built as a public-private partnership; the government did not pay a single dinar for construction or maintenance. The company is listed on the stock exchange and generates good returns," he said.

"We also have the Umm Al-Haiman water treatment plant, another recent project soon to be operational and also expected to be listed on the stock exchange, generating revenues for the public budget."

Tourism is another promising sector for diversification. "Kuwait needs an independent tourism authority with a clear strategy and marketing plan to promote Kuwait globally," said Dr Faras. "Kuwait should simplify entry procedures, increase hotel capacity, and host more sporting events to attract more visitors."

Dr Faras also stresses the urgent need for strategic planning. "Since 2020, Kuwait's development plan has not been approved, so government agencies operate without a clear roadmap," he said.

"I hope the government prioritizes approving a five-year development plan. The advantage of such a plan is that it sets quantitative goals for where you want to be."

Dr Faras said the development plan, together with Cabinet oversight and Kuwait Vision 2035, provides the roadmap to eliminate Kuwait's budget deficit.

## Kuwait reshapes security landscape, zero-tolerance for violations

### CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

A series of ongoing nationwide security crackdowns, has led to the revocation of tens of thousands of fraudulent citizenships, the deportation of thousands of visa violators, and engendered a renewed sense of security across the country. At the heart of these efforts is the campaign against forged Kuwaiti citizenships, regarded as one of the gravest threats to the nation's social and political fabric. For decades, networks of fraudsters exploited loopholes in documentation processes, and leveraged political influences, enabling individuals to illegally acquire citizenship and access the privileges reserved for genuine Kuwaitis.

Sheikh Fahed made it clear that this was not merely an administrative irregularity but a national security issue that demanded decisive action. He noted that previous governments attempted multiple times to form committees to amend nationality laws, but all efforts were blocked by successive National Assembly councils, which prevented this file from being addressed comprehensively, as it is now being done.

In a television interview earlier, Sheikh Fahed stressed that the Supreme Committee for Investigating Nationality, which he heads, has been assigned to rectify the flaws in the national identity, and that it is committed to handle the cases before it with "integrity, sincerity and dedication to Kuwait; being accountable before God, His Highness the Amir, and the Kuwaiti people, who are the true sons of this land."

Specialized security teams reviewing the citizenship file have now uncovered complex schemes involving falsified family records, forged birth certificates, and manipulated residency papers. These fraudulent networks often relied on intermediaries who profited by facilitating illegal acquisitions. Sheikh Fahed ordered that accountability extend not only to the forgers but also to those who benefited from the fraud, and

any collaborators within government institutions. Several ministry staff are already under investigation, a clear sign that the law applies equally to everyone and that no official is immune from scrutiny.

The results of the citizenship review, which was once considered an 'untouchable topic', have been historic. Since the launch of the review, approximately 50,000 citizenships have been revoked as of the start of August 2025. By the end of 2024, over 35,000 had been stripped of citizenship; by March 2025, the figure had risen to 42,000; and by August, it approached 50,000.

Earlier efforts between 2011 and 2024 had uncovered 10,000 dual nationality cases, but the current campaign dwarfs those in scale. The creation of a permanent committee dedicated to verifying family lineage, supported by modern forensic and digital tools, ensures that the integrity of Kuwaiti nationality is restored and preserved.

Beyond citizenship, Sheikh Fahed's ministry has confronted narcotics trafficking with equal determination. Since mid-2024, near-weekly raids have been conducted across all governorates. By the close of 2024, more than 1,800 drug traffickers and users were arrested, alongside seizures of hundreds of kilograms of hashish, crystal meth, and millions of Captagon pills.

A single bust at Shuwaikh port in February 2025 yielded 1.3 million narcotic pills and led to the dismantling of a regional smuggling network. By March, arrests had climbed above 2,500, and by August 2025 the tally exceeded 3,200, including dozens of high-profile traffickers and over 150 local distribution dens. With seizures amounting to multiple tons of narcotics, this is one of the largest and most sustained security campaigns in Kuwait's history. The interior ministry has also targeted visa trafficking, which exploited foreign workers and damaged Kuwait's reputation internationally. More than 500 visa traffickers have been arrested since Sheikh Fahed assumed office, thousands of fraudulent permits have been

canceled, and violators deported after due process. New verification systems now make it far harder to duplicate or falsify documents, protecting both the state and expatriates from exploitation.

Illegal alcohol production has likewise been a focus of the interior ministry. Security forces have shut down more than 150 clandestine local operations, many hidden inside private homes and remote warehouses. Raids typically netted between five to twenty suspects and thousands of liters of unsafe liquor. By early 2025, over 500 bootleggers and distributors had been arrested.

In April, a security sweep across Jahra, Farwaniya, and Ahmadi dismantled more than 30 factories manufacturing spurious alcohol and brought in 120 suspects. By August 2025, arrests exceeded 1,000, with tens of thousands of liters of contraband alcohol confiscated. Sheikh Fahed has emphasized that stamping out this trade is both a legal necessity and a public health imperative.

Maintaining order on Kuwait's roads has also been a hallmark of his tenure as interior minister. With traffic violations a chronic issue, the minister expanded patrols and introduced modern monitoring systems. In the past year, more than 500,000 violations were recorded and thousands of vehicles seized for dangerous conduct.

Drag racing and reckless driving that imperiled other road users have declined due to specialized enforcement and monitoring units, while drunk driving has been curbed through targeted weekend operations. Public awareness campaigns, combined with enforcement, have also improved pedestrian safety.

In parallel, large-scale inspection campaigns have tackled labor and residency violations. Thousands of violators have been apprehended over the months, including a single operation in Mutlaa that netted more than 160 workers. These initiatives, conducted in cooperation with the Ministry of Commerce and the Public Authority of Manpower, underline the ministry's comprehensive approach to law enforcement.

Kuwait's borders have also been reinforced through advanced monitoring and scanning technologies at ports and airports, enabling faster detection of concealed contraband. Regional and international cooperation, strengthened under Sheikh Fahed's direction, has enhanced intelligence-sharing and disrupted cross-border criminal activity.

Technology has become central to the ministry's vision. Biometric systems, digital case management, and smart applications now allow authorities to act more swiftly against forgeries, identify repeat offenders, and track suspicious patterns. Sheikh Fahed has balanced this modernization with a firm commitment to due process, ensuring that all arrests are made under judicial oversight and that human rights are respected.

The public response to these security operations has been overwhelmingly positive. Citizens and residents alike have expressed relief at the decline in crime, the safer environment on Kuwait's streets, and the visible results of law enforcement campaigns. Sheikh Fahed's hands-on leadership—marked by regular inspections, direct oversight, and personal accountability—has reinvigorated security institutions and restored public trust.

Looking ahead, the Interior Ministry plans to deepen these reforms through strategic security plans that involve deploying more surveillance systems, expanding cooperation with neighboring states, and continuing to dismantle organized crime networks. Officials stress that the successes achieved so far are only the foundation of a longer-term vision aimed at safeguarding Kuwait's future.

Under Sheikh Fahed Al-Yousef Al-Sabah's leadership, the Ministry of Interior has delivered not just a campaign of arrests and revocations, but a decisive restoration of order and credibility. In the eyes of many Kuwaitis and residents, this period marks a turning point where national integrity was reclaimed and the principle of law and order reasserted as the foundation of society.





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# BilAraby highlights Arab initiatives in sustainability, environmental protection

*"Do not underestimate the small ideas that come to mind. A simple idea can become a global educational movement." – Sumaiya Almainany*



As environmental and social challenges grow more urgent, Qatar Foundation's BilAraby initiative is spotlighting pioneering Arab contributions that merge innovation with sustainability. At its inaugural summit, BilAraby presented compelling stories from across the Arab world, emphasizing how local resources can be used in environmentally and socially responsible ways. BilAraby, launched in 2024, aims to empower and amplify the voices and ideas of Arabic speakers from across the world, and provide them with opportunities to create meaningful and innovative content.

The event saw thought leaders, creators, and innovators express their ideas and perspectives in Arabic while sharing experiences that not only celebrated their successes but also represented a call to action. Their stories show that sustainability can begin with small, everyday actions: planting a tree, recycling waste, or supporting education with available resources. This spirit set the tone for the summit, serving as a reminder that change often begins at home.

Engineer Razan Zuayter's journey into agriculture began not simply as an academic pursuit but as a personal mission. After losing her savings during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1981, she moved to Amman with her husband empty-handed. In 2000, she launched Green Resistance with the slogan 'They uproot a tree, we plant ten', which evolved into the Arab Group for the Protection of Nature in 2003.

Without foreign funding, the initiative has planted 3.25 million fruit trees, aiding 47,000 farmers who, in turn, support over 250,000 people. These efforts not only combat food insecurity and climate change but also help protect land from confiscation. Amid Gaza's ongoing agricultural devastation, Zuayter launched the Reviving Gaza Farms campaign. Despite severe restrictions on importing basic seeds, her campaign has replanted approximately 247 acres of farmland, benefitted 500 farmers and produced 5 million kilograms of vegetables.

Egyptian innovator Timur El Hadidi brought a different vision of sustainability, one grounded in innate engineering. Celebrating local heritage and environmental sustainability, Timur built his home in Nubia entirely from recycled waste. "The journey began by building a small house using plastic bottles filled with sand as an alternative to traditional stones," he explained. Timur developed his designs drawing inspiration from the sun, moon, trees, and wind. "The trees determined the path of the walls," he said, noting how he preserved every tree in its original place.

His house, constructed over four years, used 180 truckloads of concrete rubble, thousands of empty bottles, tons of recycled wood, and used car tires. Around 80 percent of the materials were recycled. "Sustainability was my compass," he said.

Timur sees concrete rubble, even from war-torn places like Gaza, not as waste but as a

seed of hope for reconstruction and rewriting history. He concluded: "The boldest ideas can be born from a pile of rubble."

Palestinian innovator Amer Darwich turned childhood curiosity into a practical invention. "Who among us has not made a paper ship or an airplane?" he asked, recalling how he modified toys as a child, converting a toy car into a boat. "I took the electric motor out of the car, made some modifications to it, and added it to the small boat I had carved out of vegetable crates," Amer recounts about those experiments that sparked his interest in technology and design.

After studying economics and working as an excavator operator, a hand injury forced Amer to pivot. Unable to drive, he developed Blue Drive 48, a smartphone-controlled system for operating heavy machinery, built from salvaged car parts and a programmable board. He hopes the technology would create new opportunities for people with special needs and lay the groundwork for broader applications in the future.

Amer's innovations stem from necessity as much as personal passion. With wildfires on the rise, he created the Pulse Fire Fighter 48, a solar-powered, remote-controlled fire extinguisher capable of administering first aid. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he designed the Corona Fighter 48, a wireless charger and sterilizer, and the Full Body Sanitizer System 48. He also created Green Cool Land 48, an eco-friendly cooling system, and Tree City 48, which

generates clean energy from tree movements.

Why "48"? It is a reference to the 1948 Nakba. "It is an attempt to turn tragedy into hope and progress," Amer explained. He ended with a clear message: "Necessity is the mother of invention, not the mother of imports. Our country has all the natural and human resources it needs. Why don't we manufacture, innovate, and invent what we need? So our ships and planes don't remain paper."

Kuwaiti activist Sumaiya Almainany believes that real change starts with small steps. As a student, she wrote an article urging classmates to donate just two dinars a month to fight illiteracy, eventually raising over two million Kuwaiti dinars. Backed by one of Kuwait's largest charities, the project has expanded to include field visits, enabling volunteers to see the impact of their donations first-hand. Educational programs have reached underserved areas in China, Nigeria, Sudan, Gaza, Indonesia, India, and Kyrgyzstan.

The initiative also created mobile schools for remote villages and distributed copies of the Holy Quran as part of its literacy efforts, inspired by the fact that the first word revealed in the Quran was "Read," she said. To date, over 30,000 students in 14 countries have benefited from 25 projects launched under the Two Dinars initiative.

Sumaiya concluded with a message of hope: "Do not underestimate the small ideas that come to mind. A simple idea can become a global educational movement."

## WAMD extends period to refund erroneous fund transfers

Wireless Application for Mobile Devices (WAMD), which allows bank customers in Kuwait to instantly transfer funds between local banks with just a phone number, has been gaining popularity since its launch for its convenience, speed and security.

The WAMD platform has now been updated to extend the refund period for erroneous fund transfers from one day to seven days. The move reflects ongoing



efforts to safeguard customers and boost trust in digital banking.

Under the new system, recipients of mistakenly transferred funds, or customers who wish to recall the transfer, can now complete the process conveniently and securely over a seven day period through online banking apps and digital channels.

The update provides greater flexibility in managing financial transactions and reduces stress on customers at a time when reliance on instant transfers is rapidly increasing.

This initiative aligns with the Central Bank of Kuwait's drive to strengthen the digital infrastructure of the banking sector, while ensuring the highest levels of security, transparency, and customer protection. By giving customers more time to correct transfer errors, banks hope to reinforce confidence in e-banking services and encourage broader adoption of digital transactions as a safe and reliable option for everyday financial needs.



# Peninsula Beijing

## A Royal Stay in the Chinese capital

By Nourah Khan  
Travel Writer  
The Times Kuwait

During my trip to the Chinese capital in June, I had the pleasure of spending three nights at the iconic Peninsula Beijing. The experience was a perfect blend of refined luxury and a prime location that made exploring this historic city incredibly



convenient. From the moment I arrived, I sensed this would be a truly exceptional stay—from the warm welcome and personalized service to the impressive details of my Premier King Suite, which exceeded all expectations.

The Peninsula Beijing is nestled in the heart of Wangfujing, the city's most famous shopping and commercial district, just a five-minute walk from the main shopping street and key city landmarks. This enviable location places you right in the middle of Beijing's most vibrant offerings; with the majestic Forbidden City less than a kilometer away. I could easily stroll to its gates and admire its imperial grandeur, then return to the hotel for a restful evening.

One of the hotel's greatest perks is that you do not even need to leave the building to enjoy high-end shopping. The Peninsula Arcade, located on the second floor, ground floor, and basement 1, houses prestigious luxury boutiques such as Louis Vuitton, Chanel, and more. I found myself leisurely browsing these elegant shops just steps from my suite, an absolute treat for any fashion enthusiast.

Outside, just a short walk away, major shopping malls await. The Beijing APM (Sun Dong An Plaza) lies at the edge of Jin Yu Hutong and is one of the city's largest retail centers. The expansive Oriental Plaza is another nearby option, featuring dozens of international brands. With such variety at my doorstep, the hotel served as the perfect base for my shopping adventures. It is rare to find a property that combines the serenity of a five-star stay with such effortless access to world-

class retail.

I chose the Premier King Suite for my stay, and it felt more like a high-end apartment than a typical hotel room. Spacious, thoughtfully designed, and flooded with natural light, the suite offered an elegant balance of comfort and sophistication. I later learned that the hotel underwent a comprehensive renovation, converting all its rooms into suites—a bold move that certainly paid off. My suite provided a serene escape above the city, equipped with smart controls, plush furnishings, and an indulgent marble bathroom that made every moment feel indulgent.

The Peninsula Beijing offers a variety of



refined dining experiences, and I was fortunate to try several of them during my stay; each leaving a lasting impression.

Every morning began at The Lobby, located in the hotel's grand atrium. This elegant space reflects the timeless heritage of the Peninsula brand and is known for its generous breakfast selection and signature afternoon tea accompanied by live music.

I savored a mix of Asian and Western dishes during breakfast, but one of my favorite moments was returning in the afternoon for



the classic British tea service. Silver trays arrived with delicate finger sandwiches, freshly baked scones, and rich clotted cream; all set to the soothing sound of live piano music. It felt like a whimsical retreat from the city's bustle.

For a more traditional Chinese culinary experience, I dined at Huang Ting, the hotel's signature Cantonese restaurant. This venue is a work of art in itself. Inspired by noble homes of old Beijing, it features antique bricks, warm lighting, and intricate blue silk embroidery.

The menu celebrated Cantonese cuisine at its finest, from delicate dim sum to perfectly roasted Peking duck. Every dish was beautifully presented, and each bite felt like a flavorful journey into the heart of Chinese culinary heritage. Huang Ting truly combines authentic



atmosphere with culinary excellence and has rightfully earned its reputation as one of the top Cantonese restaurants in the city.

No culinary journey is complete without a sunset view, and mine culminated at the



brehtaking Yun Summer Lounge, the hotel's rooftop terrace on the 15th floor. On my final night, I arrived just before dusk, sipped a refreshing cocktail, and watched the Forbidden City's rooftops glow under the golden light. The view was mesmerizing—a panoramic scene of historic Beijing gently merging with the modern skyline. I could not resist capturing dozens of photos, each one a memory of the poetic beauty that unfolded before me. This rooftop evening was the perfect finale to my culinary and visual indulgence.

Choosing Beijing as a destination was no accident. It is a city where imperial history and contemporary culture coexist in stunning harmony. Staying at The Peninsula made exploring the city's top landmarks both effortless and enjoyable.

My first stop was the nearby Forbidden City, and thanks to the hotel's location, I arrived early enough to explore before the crowds. Wandering through its grand courtyards and intricate halls felt like stepping into a



different era; a vivid encounter with China's dynastic past.

I also set aside a full day for a private excursion to the Great Wall of China, organized with the help of the hotel's concierge. I chose the Mutianyu section, known for its lush scenery and relatively peaceful atmosphere. Climbing its stone steps and gazing out across the endless mountain ridges was both humbling and unforgettable.

After long days of sightseeing, I always looked forward to returning to the hotel's luxurious embrace. On my final evening, I took one last stroll through bustling Wangfujing Street. As neon signs lit up and the city came alive, I soaked in the dynamic energy that makes Beijing so captivating.

Looking back, Beijing exceeded my expectations with its beauty, culture, and diversity of experiences. My stay at The Peninsula Beijing elevated the entire journey, adding an extra layer of comfort, luxury, and sophistication. The hotel's central location, attentive service, and refined facilities make it an unmatched choice for travelers seeking both relaxation and adventure.

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



EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

# Winners, losers in US-EU Trade Deal



**Laura Tyson, George Papaconstantinou**

Laura Tyson, a former chair of the President's Council of Economic Advisers during the Clinton administration, is a professor at the Haas School of Business at the University of California, Berkeley, and a member of the Board of Advisers at Angeleno Group.

George Papaconstantinou, a former finance minister of Greece who negotiated the country's first bailout, is Professor of International Political Economy at the European University Institute and the co-author (with Jean Pisani-Ferry) of *New World New Rules: Global Cooperation in a World of Geopolitical Rivalries*



US President Donald Trump's 'reciprocal tariffs' have overturned the system of global trade. The vague, non-binding 'agreements' he has announced are an obfuscation. Each has been unilaterally imposed, leveraging America's economic and geopolitical power to extract concessions from trading partners. That is why the tariff rates vary both by country (sometimes reflecting political motives) and by sector (steel, autos and auto parts, and semiconductors).

The average US tariff rate now stands at 18.6 percent, the highest since the Smoot-Hawley tariff that crippled the global economy and contributed to the Great Depression. Gone are the principles of national treatment (treating foreign and domestic producers equally) and most favored nation (treating trading partners equally), the cornerstones of the postwar order that fostered trade, cross-border investment flows, and economic development around the world.

Gone, too, is American credibility. Trump is not to be trusted. He can change the tariff rates at any time, for any reason. His handshake agreements are not legally binding and cannot be monitored and enforced. Moreover, they may not survive court challenges. Trump is asserting that he, rather than Congress, has the authority to set tariffs in response to a 'national emergency'. But since there is no emergency, the US Supreme Court should deem the tariffs unconstitutional when it finally rules on the matter. Whether it will, however, is uncertain.

The recent US trade deal with the European Union, 'negotiated' in a peremptory meeting between Trump and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen – underscored one of Trump's ostensible goals: to achieve America's re-industrialization through protectionism for domestic producers and commitments by trading partners to invest in the United States. Hence, the tariffs are limited to trade in goods. While the US has consistently run a merchandise-trade deficit with the EU (\$183 billion in 2023), its services trade with the bloc has consistently been in surplus (\$127 billion in 2023).

The EU is also a major source of investment, production, and employment in the US. Before the handshake deal, EU companies had already invested more than \$2.4 trillion in the US economy, and cross-border investments between the US and the EU were valued at nearly \$5 trillion in 2023. Many EU business investments in the US are in the same sectors as EU exports to the US – biotech (pharmaceuticals), automobiles, aerospace, and chemicals. In 2023, European companies employed more than 3.4 million US workers.

But now, most imports of European goods will face a 15 percent tariff. Certain strategic items are exempted, and the tariff for steel and aluminum will be 50 percent (a policy at odds with Trump's re-industrialization goal, since it increases US manufacturing and construction costs). While the Europeans see the 15 percent rate as a ceiling, Trump sees it as a baseline.

Nor are the tariffs reciprocal: the EU agreed to eliminate its remaining low tariffs on most US industrial goods, while "improving" market access for some US agricultural and fishery products. Meanwhile, the EU will maintain its low tariffs on imports from other trading partners, in keeping with its most-favored-nation commitments. As part of the deal, the EU also agreed to purchase \$750 billion worth of US energy by 2028, and to mobilize \$600 billion in business investment in the US by 2029.

The investment commitment is not enforceable, since those decisions ultimately fall to European companies. Still, the \$600 billion target is reachable, considering that EU companies invested about \$605 billion in the US over the last three years. The energy commitment, however, is delusional. US companies would

struggle to supply \$250 billion in energy exports to the EU each year, given that their global energy exports totaled only \$165 billion in 2024. In any case, pursuing the \$250 billion target would disrupt energy-market dynamics globally.

Ultimately, the energy deal is sure to fail, as did the 2019-21 US-China energy deal. And over the longer term, Trump's anti-renewables policies will weaken US producers in those sectors, handing the future to China and other Asia-Pacific countries, which already account for 90 percent of the global manufacturing capacity in EV batteries and fuel cells, and for almost all solar panels.

So, who 'wins' in the US-EU agreement? Many see the EU as the clear loser, since the US clearly managed to use its hegemonic power to extract favorable terms. But this power rests on the strength of the US economy, which Trump's policies—unsustainable deficits, cuts to scientific research, attacks on central-bank independence, immigration restrictions, handouts to the fossil-fuel industry—are quickly subverting. Moreover, in the short run, the tariffs will raise prices for US consumers and increase costs for US producers (including foreign investors in the US), slowing the economy. The resulting disruption in global trade will raise prices and slow growth in the EU, too, but by considerably less.

The EU faced a choice. It could pursue a costly trade war or agree to "the best deal we could get under very difficult circumstances"—circumstances that included an implicit US threat to withdraw support from NATO. The EU can counter the negative effects of the tariffs by diversifying its trading partners and negotiating new trade agreements with them. US tariffs are already encouraging closer trading relations with likeminded developed countries like Australia, Canada, Japan, and South Korea. They may also lend momentum to trade talks between the EU and Latin America's Mercosur bloc, as well as with ASEAN 'connector' economies that are critical to global supply chains. And finally, by sabotaging transatlantic cooperation on China, Trump has

## Ukrainian Independence Day and The Path to Peace



**By Mykola Dzhidzhora**

Chargé d'Affaires of the Embassy of Ukraine to the State of Kuwait

On August 24, the Ukrainian people celebrate one of the most significant milestones in their history – the Independence Day of Ukraine. It is a symbol of statehood, a day of profound pride in national unity, and faith in a free, safe, and peaceful future.

Today, more than ever, the concept of independence has a global dimension. For over three years, Ukraine has been defending its land in the face of an armed aggression. Ukraine is not only defending itself, but also defending the international law including sovereignty, respect for borders, and the right to self-determination.

On this day, we would like to express our deep gratitude to the support extended to Ukraine by international partners in humanitarian, diplomatic, technical, and economic fields. We would like to avail of this opportunity to offer special thanks and gratitude to the friendly State of Kuwait for its consistent humanitarian support and for upholding Ukraine's territorial integrity in international organizations.

The Ukrainian people have endured since February 2022 immense challenges as a direct consequence of the war, the most important of which are the safety of its civilians and the protection of critical infrastructure including energy. Despite the fact that over 50% of Ukraine's energy capacity has been destroyed or damaged, Ukraine has managed to restore around 6 GW of capacity. The focus is now on renewable energy, energy storage systems, and mobile generation, which is a strategic response

to the weaponization of energy.

On August 15, important negotiations were held in Washington between the Ukrainian President along with some European leaders and President Trump. Security guarantees were at the center of the talks – a key issue that marks a possible starting point towards ending the war. A great deal of attention was also devoted to the return of Ukrainian children, the release of prisoners of war and the return of unlawfully held civilians. Since the start of the war, over 6,400 Ukrainians have been freed, mostly through official exchanges. According to the UN, 95% of those held were subjected to torture – an unacceptable violation of human rights.

Despite the hardships, Ukraine remains one of the world's key contributors to global food security, supplying agricultural products to more than 100 countries that feed over 400 million people. The Ukrainian maritime corridor ensures the continuous export of agricultural goods to 53 countries across four continents – Asia, Africa, Europe, and Latin America – despite ongoing attacks on port infrastructure, grain storage facilities, and merchant vessels. These threats risk triggering food crises in countries dependent on Ukrainian grain. On November 26, 2022, President Zelensky launched the humanitarian initiative "Grain from Ukraine." As of mid-2025, the program's funding reached USD 364 million. To date, 307,000 tonnes of agricultural goods have been delivered to 15 countries in Africa and the Middle East including Syria, Palestine, Sudan, Somalia and Yemen. In December 2024, Ukraine launched the "Food from Ukraine" program specifically for Syria. Already, 3,950 tonnes of wheat flour have been delivered, and supplies continue.

Ukraine is not only fighting – it is planning. In energy, infrastructure, food security, and digitalization, Ukraine is actively seeking international partnerships.

In conclusion, Ukraine is not only a country that defends itself – it also defends a future that will be free, secure, humane, and just for the whole world.

“

The EU energy commitment, however, is delusional. US companies would struggle to supply \$250 billion in energy exports to the EU each year, given that their global energy exports totaled only \$165 billion in 2024.

”

given the EU an opening to fashion its own trade and investment agreements with the world's second-largest economy.

The EU has always been strengthened through crises. The necessary, second-best trade deal with the US should not undermine its main goal: achieving "open strategic autonomy" with an integrated defense industrial base, a differentiated trade profile that reflects its commitment to multilateralism, and policies to promote sustainable competitiveness and innovation, especially in high-tech industries where the EU lags both the US and China. If Europe succeeds, it will emerge as a major pro-democracy and pro-market leader in a multi-polar world.



# AI helps immune cells fight cancer, improve immunotherapy

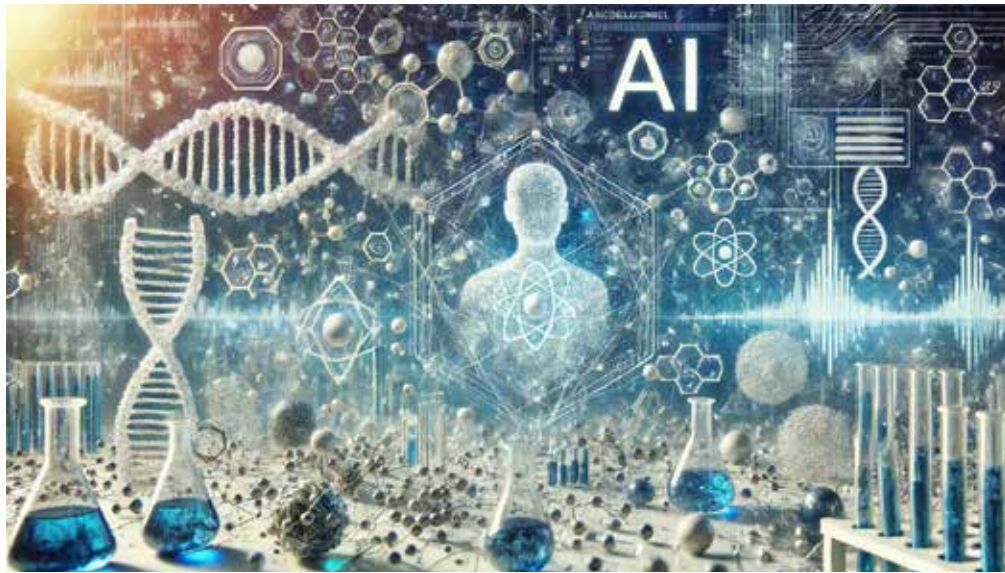
**P**recision medicine, which optimizes effectiveness and minimizes side-effects in medical treatments, is gathering pace with research studies and trials in this field increasingly gaining approval for use in clinical environments. The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly facilitating and accelerating research in this field.

In a further step towards large-scale personalized treatments, researchers used AI and other advanced technologies in data analysis to develop a unique cancer treatment. Scientists at the Technical University in Denmark, and the Scripps Research Institute in the United States, used AI tools to develop tailored protein components that help a patient's immune system to target specific cancer cells.

The innovative technique demonstrates for the first time the potential to rapidly design proteins that can redirect immune cells to target specific cancer cells. Based on the genetic and molecular profile of individual patients. Current methods for individual cancer treatment are based on finding so-called T-cell receptors in the immune system of a patient or donor that can be used for treatment.

T-cells are specialized white blood cells called lymphocytes that help the immune system to protect against infections or harmful diseases by fighting the antigens—toxins or foreign substances that invade a body and induce an immune response. T cells usually identify antigens through a protein complex located on their surface called T-cell receptors (TCR), which are responsible for recognizing peptides (protein fragments) known as peptide major histocompatibility complex (pMHC) molecules on the antigens.

However, utilizing the knowledge about T-cell functioning for therapies has been a slow and challenging process in the past, often because the variation in a patient's own T-cell receptors makes it challenging to create a personalized treatment. Using their unique AI platform the team behind the new study were



able to design molecular keys to target specific cancer cells without damaging surrounding healthy tissue within four to six weeks, from a process that earlier took years.

The researchers tested the strength of their AI platform on a well-known cancer target, NY-ESO-1 pMHC, which is found in a wide range of cancers. The team succeeded in designing a minibinder that bound tightly to the NY-ESO-1 pMHC molecules. When the designed protein was inserted into T cells, it created a unique new cell product, which the researchers named 'IMPAC-T' cells, that could effectively guide the T cells to kill cancer cells.

The scientists also applied the same research pipeline to design binders for another cancer target identified in a metastatic melanoma patient, successfully generating binders for this target as well. This showed that the method could also be used for tailored immunotherapy against novel cancer targets. In addition, the team used AI to monitor their minibinders and assess them in relation to pMHC molecules found on healthy cells. This enabled them to filter out minibinders that could cause

dangerous side effects, increasing the potential to develop a safe therapy

The new technique will reportedly take another five years before it would become ready for initial clinical trials in humans. Once the method is ready, the treatment process will be similar to cancer treatments used to treat lymphoma and leukemia.

Patients will first have their blood drawn to extract immune cells and modify them to carry the AI-designed minibinders. These enhanced immune cells are then returned to the patient, where they act like targeted missiles, precisely finding and eliminating cancer cells in the body.

On a related note, in another recent study scientists at the Eindhoven University of Technology (TU/e) in the Netherlands and at the University of Innsbruck in Austria, recently demonstrated that Machine Learning (ML)—a field of AI that focuses on enabling computer systems to learn from data without explicit programming—could be leveraged to predict when immunotherapy, which helps immune systems in the fight against cancer cells, will be most effective.

The body's immune system is very good at identifying and neutralizing harmful cells, including those that could develop into tumors or cancer in the future. But tumor cells can activate multiple ways to block or delay the ability of the immune system to respond, including by developing protein on their surface that can turn off the immune cells and effectively put them in sleep mode.

One type of immunotherapy involves immune checkpoint blockers (ICB), which are drugs that tell the immune cells to ignore the shutdown orders coming from cancer cells. The discovery of ICB has been revolutionary for cancer treatment, but while they have been successfully used to treat plenty of patients and different cancer types, only one-third of patients respond positively to the treatment. Scientists behind the new study aimed to figure out quickly which patients are most likely to respond to the treatment, and find out why other patients are not responding to ICB. Using machine-learning (ML), the team were able to predict how patients might respond to ICB, by identifying particular biomarkers in their tumor samples.

To find the right mechanisms that could serve as biomarkers to predict patients' response to ICB, the team searched the microenvironment of tumors using computational algorithms and datasets from previous clinical patient care, and used this data to robustly train their ML models.

Once the machine learning models were in place, the researchers then tested the accuracy of the model on different datasets where the actual response to ICB treatment was known. They found that overall, the machine learning model outperformed biomarkers currently used in clinical settings to assess ICB treatments. In clinical settings, this means that immunotherapy treatment with ICB can be personalized to a patient. Understanding and identifying the mechanisms that mediate ICB response can guide how best to combine ICB with other treatments to improve its clinical efficacy.

## Breath, an innovative ID that reveals physical, mental health

**Y**our breathing pattern is unique and can be used to identify individuals with 96.8 percent accuracy. These olfactory 'fingerprints' also offer insights into physical and mental health of people, say researchers behind the new study.

In mammals, the brain processes odor information during inhalation. This link between the brain and breathing led researchers at the Weizmann Institute of Science in Israel to surmise that since every brain is unique, each person's breathing pattern should also reflect this distinctiveness.

To test the idea, the team developed a lightweight wearable device that tracks nasal airflow continuously for 24 hours using soft tubes placed under the nostrils. Generally



breathing tests in sports, medicine or other environments usually last just one to 20 minutes, with the focus on evaluating lung function or diagnosing disease. But those brief snapshots are not sufficient to capture subtle patterns.

For their study, the scientists fitted 100 healthy young adults with the device and asked them to go about their daily lives. Using the collected data, the team were able to identify individuals using only their breathing patterns with high accuracy. This high-level accuracy remained consistent across multiple retests

conducted over a two-year period, rivaling the precision of some voice recognition technologies.

Moreover, the study found that these respiratory fingerprints correlated with a person's body mass index, sleep-wake cycle, levels of depression and anxiety, and even behavioral traits. For example, participants who scored relatively higher on anxiety questionnaires had shorter inhaleds and more variability in the pauses between breaths during sleep. The researchers also noted that

none of the participants met clinical diagnostic criteria for mental or behavioral conditions. The results suggest that long-term nasal airflow monitoring may serve as a window into physical and emotional well-being.

People intuitively assume that how depressed or anxious they are changes the way they breathe. But the researchers postulate that it could be the other way around—the way you breathe could make you anxious or depressed. Just by changing the way you breathe could help ameliorate those conditions.

The device used for the tests still faces real-world challenges. A tube The researchers now aim to design a more discreet and comfortable version for everyday use, as the model they used for their tests faced real-world challenges. For instance, having a tube that runs under the nose is often associated with illness and may deter adoption. The device also does not account for mouth breathing and can slip out of place when sleeping.

The scientists are also now investigating whether people can mimic healthy breathing patterns to improve their mental and emotional states, in a bid to go beyond diagnostics to treatments for related conditions.





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