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Kuwait Promoting Rights of Women and Girls

By Reaven D'Souza
Executive Managing Editor

Advancing human rights is the vital precursor to developing peaceful, stable, resilient, inclusive and sustainable societies, as it fosters equality and justice for all, and helps address root causes of conflicts and crises. In particular, upholding the human rights of women and girls empowers and gives them a voice in matters that affect their lives and livelihoods, and provides essential safeguards against discrimination, violence, and abuse. By championing human rights, states can ensure that every individual's life is valued, respected and protected.

Last week the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women and Girls, Reem Al-Salem, conducted an official visit to Kuwait to lend her support and suggest recommendations to enhance Kuwait's efforts in protecting the rights of women and girls. The visit, from 2-9 September, was part of ongoing efforts by Kuwait to further advance human rights in the country through engaging in cooperation with international organizations, working groups of United Nations mandate holders on human rights, and



Special Rapporteurs. During her eight-day trip to Kuwait, the UN Special Rapporteur visited several governorates and met with government representatives, representatives of international organizations, civil society organizations, academics, and a number of women victims of violence and abuse. As part of her visit, Al-

Salem also met with Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah, and discussed various national initiatives focused on developing social services for women, in line with Kuwait's commitments to supporting women's rights.

Al-Salem also met with Assistant Foreign

Minister for Human Rights Affairs Sheikha Jawaher Ibrahim Al-Duaij Al-Sabah, and was briefed on Kuwait's tireless efforts to support and empower women across various sectors. Sheikha Jawaher Al-Sabah highlighted the achievements of Kuwaiti women in various sectors that are on par with their male counterparts, most notably in the diplomatic corps, security and police sectors, the judiciary, public prosecution, sports sector, and youth support.

She also stressed that Kuwait, based on its development vision New Kuwait 2035 and its membership in the Human Rights Council for the period 2024-2026, is continuing to build bridges of cooperation with the UN and its various bodies, including the Human Rights Council, as part of its commitment to strengthening the human rights situation.

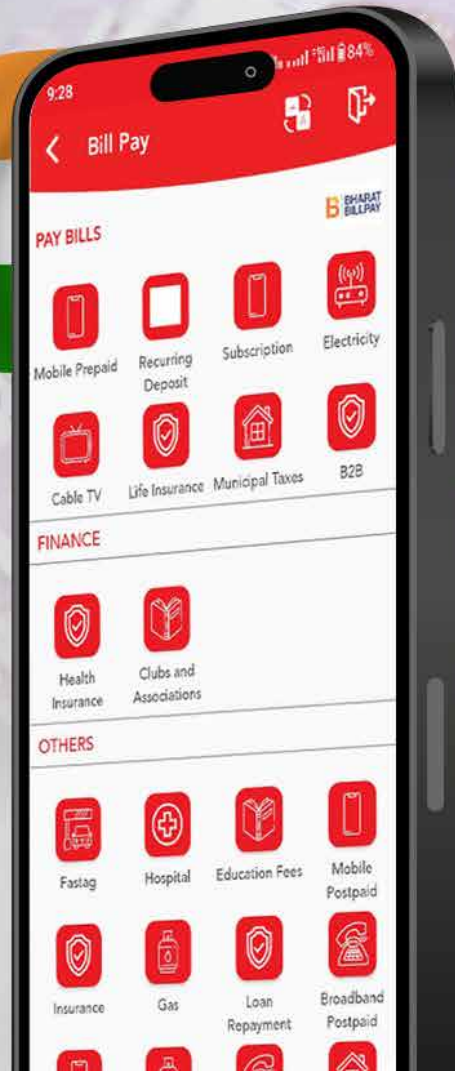
Additionally, the visiting UN rapporteur met with Deputy Director General of the General Department of Investigations at Kuwait's Ministry of Interior (Mol), Reem Al-Mousa, to discuss ways to enhance Kuwait's legal framework for protecting women and girls from all forms of violence, safeguard human dignity, and ensure the protection of their rights in line with relevant international conventions.

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Mexico, Kuwait mark 50 years of diplomatic friendship

Mexico celebrates its Independence Day on 16 September with vibrant “Cry of Independence” festivities, while this year also marks a milestone as President Claudia Sheinbaum — the first woman to lead Mexico — presented her government report highlighting record foreign investment, poverty reduction, new hospitals and housing projects. As Mexico and Kuwait commemorate 50 years of diplomatic ties, both nations look to deepen trade and cooperation across multiple sectors.

By H.E. Eduardo Peña Haller
Ambassador of Mexico

Independence Day of Mexico is celebrated on 16 September in Mexico and in all parts of the world where Mexican citizens reside. In Mexico the full month of September is considered the month of ‘La Patria’ (homeland). Therefore on the night of 15 September the so-called ‘Cry of Independence’ takes place,



With regard to trade links between the two countries it is important to mention that they have been increasing every year. Currently Mexico exports to Kuwait: cars, trucks, auto parts, industrial products, canned foods, soft drinks, avocados, chilies, green tomatillos, strawberries, raspberries, raspberries, etc.

which commemorates the beginning of the armed struggle against Spain in 1810, led by priest Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla that allowed Mexico to become an independent

country. It is therefore very usual for every Mexican household to celebrate these dates with joy and patriotism, organizing a Mexican fiesta, where family and friends taste delicious typical dishes and enjoy traditional and modern music.

Also on 1 September of each year, the president of Mexico presents to the Federal Congress a report on the progress made by his government during the past year. It is important to stress that for the first time in the history of Mexico, a woman, Dr. Claudia Scheinbaum, handed in her government report as President of Mexico.

As for the bilateral sphere, the president noted in her report that in the face of the new tariff reality in the world, Mexico has managed to maintain the lowest average level of tariffs globally. She also pointed out that new strategies have been implemented to diversify the markets of Mexican exports. Hence a memorandum of understanding has been signed with Brazil and the Trade Agreement with the European Union (EU) has been updated. Also this September the Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney has been invited to visit Mexico.

In the economic and social fields, President Scheinbaum’s report notes that foreign direct investment hit a historic high in the first half of the year, with more than US\$36 billion, highlighting the advances in technological innovation achieved, mentioning the production of an electric mini car Olínia, the design of semiconductors, weather observation and civil protection satellites, as well as the development and production of state-of-the-art drones.

With regard to security President Scheinbaum noted that Mexico continues to face risks and threats to its national security from both outside and inside the country but that thanks to the coordination of federal and state security authorities, a 25.8 percent reduction in homicide has been achieved since September of last year.

She also highlighted the historic reduction in poverty levels in the country, as she reported that between 2018 and 2024 more than 13 million people ceased to

be poor, thanks to the federal government investing nearly one trillion pesos in social programs and pensions for more than 30 million people nationwide. Now 82 percent of Mexican households receive a direct budget through social welfare programs.

On hospital infrastructure, President Sheinbaum pointed out that construction of 31 hospitals was completed and another 20 were started. In terms of housing, the report highlights the start of construction of 200,000 houses for Mexican families earning between one and two minimum wages.

In education, the federal government is implementing a new baccalaureate model and spaces for students at that educational level have been expanded, so that, during September alone, 38,000 new places will be added. The Universidad Rosario Castellanos was also created, which already has 77,000 students.

Regarding Kuwait-Mexico relationship, it is important to note that 50 years have passed since both nations decided to establish diplomatic relations. In the year 1975, the then President of Mexico Luis Echeverría Álvarez paid a four-day state visit to Kuwait, where his host was the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Salim Al-Sabah. Another very significant fact for the bilateral relationship constituted the two official visits to Mexico in 2010 by the then Prime Minister of Kuwait, Sheikh Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, that turned out to be fundamental for Kuwait to open its embassy in Mexico, in 2011 and for the Mexican Embassy in Kuwait in 2012. It is also important to remember that in 2016 President Enrique Peña Nieto officially visited Kuwait.

With regard to trade links between the two countries it is important to mention that they have been increasing every year. Currently Mexico exports to Kuwait: cars, trucks, auto parts, industrial products, canned foods, soft drinks, avocados, chilies, green tomatillos, strawberries, raspberries, raspberries, etc.

Finally I would like to leave note of Mexico’s gratitude to His Highness Sheikh



Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Khalid Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, the Crown Prince, His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, the Prime Minister, the Government of Kuwait and all Kuwaiti and Mexican nationals residing in this beautiful country, who day by day show us their kindness and deference.

Long live Kuwait!
Long live Mexico!

Delay in registering newborns could incur heavy penalties

Council of Ministers has submitted to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah a draft decree-law amending certain provisions of Law No. 21 of 2015 on the rights of the child.

The draft notes that, after reviewing the Constitution, the Amiri Order issued on 10 May, 2024 concerning the Kuwaiti Nationality Law and its amendments, and laws regulating the registration of births and deaths, and on child rights, and based on the proposal of the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior and the approval of the Council of Ministers, the following decree-law has been issued:

Article One: Two new articles, numbered (17 bis) and (81 bis), shall be added to Law No. 21 of 2015 as follows:

Article (17 bis): Every Kuwaiti father or legal guardian must apply to register the newborn under the father’s nationality file, attaching the necessary documents, within 60 days of birth.

Article (81 bis): Anyone who violates Article (17 bis) shall be subject to a fine of not less than KD2,000 and not more than KD3,000. A settlement may be accepted after the expiry of the period referred to in Article (17 bis) by paying KD100 plus KD5 for each day of delay, provided the total does not exceed KD 2,000. The settlement is to be paid to the competent authority at the Ministry of Interior, and once settled, the criminal case and all its effects shall be terminated.

The explanatory memorandum for the draft law amending certain provisions of Law No. 21



of 2015 regarding the rights of the child stated the following: The State has guaranteed the rights of the child under Law No. 21 of 2015 by providing all necessary legal and social protections.

Out of the State’s commitment to safeguarding these rights—particularly the preservation of national identity—and in light of the negligence of some guardians in obtaining official documents for the child, specifically the failure to add the child to the father’s nationality file, it became necessary to introduce legislation obligating the legal guardian to register the newborn in the nationality file, as set forth in Article (17 bis). Article (81 bis) further establishes a punitive penalty for anyone who violates this obligation.

Overcoming challenges through hard work, persistence, patriotism

*In our ongoing series on 'Women in Diplomacy' we spoke recently with the **First-Secretary at the Embassy of Tunisia, Wafa Chawachi**, on her desire to join the diplomatic services of her country, overcoming challenges as a female diplomat, and how social influences impact her work.*

The Times Kuwait Report

What interested you to join the diplomatic field?

My interest in the diplomatic line of work stems from the fact that it gives me the honor to represent my country in international and regional forums, protect its interests, defend the rights and interests of its citizens abroad, and project a positive image of the country in all fields.

represent Tunisia in the best manner.

What are some of the challenges you face as a female diplomat, and how do you overcome them?

It is quite challenging to meet the constant demands of this professional life, which requires you to be available at all times. However, you have to successfully overcome this through hard work, persistent determination, and a spirit of patriotism and love for your homeland.

How do you believe social influences affect the methods or approaches you use?

In my opinion, there are positive aspects to women engaged in diplomatic work, as they tend to be good in diplomatic dialogue and in interacting with other diplomats and officials in the host country, and to promote humanity in diplomatic work, while also supporting justice, equality, and humanity in social issues. They play a fundamental role in building bridges of communication and understanding between different peoples, leading to qualitative progress in this field.

Can you share an occasion where you felt that you had made a tangible impact through your diplomatic work?

I cannot single out a specific moment, but during my nearly eight years of work in the diplomatic field, I have been assigned various files and tasks, where I have made a positive contribution through my efforts

and perseverance.

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

Some of the essential qualities in the diplomatic field include, the ability to create a suitable work environment, a belief in team unity, prioritizing nationals over all other considerations, particularly in crisis management, and dealing effectively when challenges arise. Also important is the ability to adapt to any environment, the ability to deal with cultural differences and situations easily, build relationships, and accept different perspectives.

What advice do you have for young women who are interested in joining the diplomatic corps?

I would encourage them to join the diplomatic field if they are committed to representing their country to the best of their ability, and to providing a radiant image of their country in local and international forums.

How would you describe your tenure in Kuwait so far?

My first experience as a diplomat working in the Tunisia consulate abroad came with my appointment to the mission in Kuwait. During my tenure in this wonderful country I have had a unique experience with special character to it, which will remain firmly rooted and engraved in my memory. I was welcomed



by citizens wherever I went in Kuwait and respected by the officials. I would like to express my wholehearted thanks for the good treatment and hospitality of the sophisticated Kuwait people.

I will personally encourage more women to go into diplomacy. It provides unlimited benefits for your country and your home. It gives you a world perspective of issues and provides several ways to handle an issue at hand. The experience is immeasurable.

In this regard, I am extremely grateful to my country and its culture for providing me with this opportunity and I believe in my abilities to use this opportunity to



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Embassy of DPRK celebrates 77th founding anniversary

H.E. Ju Myong Chol, Chargé d'Affaires of the Embassy of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea in Kuwait, praised Kuwait's humanitarian policy, which he said is recognized worldwide, describing the country as a center of humanity.

The Times Kuwait Report

Embassy of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), hosted a celebration to mark the 77th anniversary of the founding of North Korea. The event was attended by Kuwait's Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs Saleh Al-Sarawi and Undersecretary of the Ministry of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Al-Mishaal.

Addressing the gathering, Chargé d'Affaires, Ju Myong Chol, stressed his country's commitment to enhancing bilateral relations with Kuwait across various fields. He also commended Kuwait's leading humanitarian role regionally and internationally, noting its recognition as a hub for humanitarian work. He added that organizing the anniversary celebrations in Kuwait reflects the strong ties between the two peoples and the shared commitment of both countries to advancing relations in support of mutual interests.

The Chargé d'Affaires also commended Kuwait's provision of loans through the Kuwait



Fund for Arab Economic Development to support his country, pointing specifically to the aid extended by Kuwait after it his country was struck by heavy rains and floods. "Kuwait's support was a source of strength during difficult times," he said.

He also expressed appreciation for Kuwait's efforts to achieve Vision 2035, aimed at boosting non-oil production, diversifying the economy, raising living standards, and supporting human and social development. He



added that his country is keen to develop and strengthen bilateral relations in various fields, pointing out that it has a strong and dynamic capacity to build friendly and cooperative ties with Kuwait.

The Chargé d'Affaires further commended Kuwait's active role in promoting joint Arab action and consolidating regional and international peace by upholding the principle of peaceful conflict resolution under the leadership 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.

He affirmed that North Korea will continue working to expand and strengthen bilateral relations at all levels, in the interest of both nations and their peoples.

The ceremony also featured a documentary film showcasing North Korea's natural landscapes, architecture, and infrastructure, which was well received by the audience.

OPEC+ to raise oil output from October, Kuwait to boost production

OPEC Plus members in an online meeting on 7 September agreed to raise production from October by 137,000 barrels per day, following its assessment of steady global economic outlook, healthy market fundamentals, and low oil inventories.

The eight participating countries of OPEC+ involved in the earlier voluntary reduction agreement, including Kuwait decided to implement the new production adjustment from October, in addition to the 1.65 million barrels per day additional voluntary adjustments announced in April 2023.



Commenting on the OPEC+ decision, Kuwait's Minister of Oil Tareq Al-Roumi reaffirmed the country's commitment to the collective approach of OPEC+ to enhance supply security and stabilize the global market. Accordingly, Kuwait will ramp up its oil production for October to 2.559 million barrels per day.

In a press statement issued by the Ministry of Oil, the Minister commended the meeting and confirmed that it was a continuation of the efforts made by the eight participating countries, aiming to enhance the stability of oil markets and support the balance of global supply and demand. The Kuwaiti delegation attending the OPEC+ video-conference meeting included the Governor of the State of Kuwait to OPEC, Muhammad Khuder Al-Shatti, and the national representative of the State of Kuwait to OPEC, Sheikh Abdullah Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah.

Al-Roumi added that Kuwait believes that

harmony, synchronization, and consensus are the fundamental pillars for maintaining the flexibility of production policies and ensuring global energy security. He emphasized that Kuwait's commitment reflects its responsibility in supporting global economic stability and market balance.

The minister stressed that the next phase is characterized by a continuation of a successful strategy based on enhancing consultations and ongoing assessment of market indicators to ensure flexibility in making any future decisions that would enhance supply security and market stability.

In a joint statement following their meeting, the OPEC+ group of eight participating countries said that based on the current low global oil inventories, "The 1.65 million barrels per day may be returned in part or in full subject to evolving market conditions and in a gradual manner. The countries will continue to closely monitor and assess market conditions."

The statement added that "in their continuous efforts to support market stability, they reaffirmed the importance of adopting a cautious approach and retaining full flexibility to pause or reverse the additional voluntary production adjustments, including the previously implemented voluntary adjustments of the 2.2 million barrels per day announced in November 2023."

The eight participating OPEC+ countries also noted that this measure will provide an opportunity for the participating countries to accelerate their compensation. They added that the decision reiterated their collective commitment to achieve full conformity with the Declaration of Cooperation, including the additional voluntary production adjustments that will be monitored by the Joint Ministerial Monitoring Committee (JMMC).

They also confirmed their intention to fully compensate for any overproduced volume from January 2024, and agreed to hold monthly meetings to review market conditions, conformity, and compensation, and meet next in October 2025.

India appoints new ambassador to Kuwait, incumbent to be envoy to Kenya



Dr. Adarsh Swaika



Ms. Paramita Tripathi

Incumbent Indian Ambassador to Kuwait, Dr. Adarsh Swaika, has been appointed as the next High Commissioner of India to Kenya and is expected to assume the role shortly, according to a press release issued on 10 September by India's Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi.

This appointment comes as part of India's strengthening diplomatic presence on the African continent, particularly in East Africa, where Kenya represents a strategic partner for India at the political, economic, and commercial levels.

The press release noted that Dr. Swaika, who currently serves as India's Ambassador to Kuwait, has worked to strengthen bilateral relations in various fields, most notably economic and trade cooperation, education, healthcare, and the welfare of the Indian community, which constitutes one of the largest expatriate communities in Kuwait.

Ambassador Swaika brings over two decades of diplomatic experience, having served in several Indian missions abroad, including in France, the United States, and Bangladesh, and has also held senior positions in the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi. He is known for his focus on investment, economic reforms, and international cooperation in the fields of energy and innovation. His move to Nairobi is expected

to strengthen India's relations with Kenya, particularly in light of the growing interest on both sides in expanding cooperation in the areas of renewable energy, agriculture, technological innovation, and maritime security.

The Indian Ministry of External Affairs also designated Paramita Tripathi as the next Ambassador of India to Kuwait. Currently serving as Joint Secretary in the External Affairs Ministry, she is expected to take up her new assignment shortly.

Ms. Tripathi, a career diplomat from the 2001 batch of the Indian Foreign Service, assumed the position of Deputy High Commissioner at the High Commission of India in Singapore on 2 December 2013. Since joining the Indian Foreign Service in 2001, she has served in a number of important roles.

At the Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi, she worked on the Pakistan and United Nations desks between 2005 and 2008, and later in the East Asia Division, focusing on Japan, China, and Korea. Her overseas assignments include postings in Brussels (2003-2005) and Tokyo (2008-2011).

Ms. Tripathi, who holds a Master's degree in Geography from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, is proficient in English, Hindi, and Bengali, with functional knowledge of French.

MoCI guidelines aim to thwart illegal activities in precious metals trade

The report guides professionals in complying with laws, warning that criminals exploit the sector for money laundering, moving and integrating illicit funds via weak oversight and complex supply chains.

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry's (MoCI) Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Guide for the Gold and Precious Metals Trading Sector 2025, aims to help professionals understand and comply with relevant laws and guidelines on trade in these commodities. The guide highlights that criminals often exploit the sector to store, move, and integrate illicit funds within legitimate frameworks, taking advantage of weak oversight, informal practices, and complex global supply chains.

The guide stresses that the high value and liquidity of precious metals and gemstones make them particularly attractive for concealing and transferring illicit funds, reinforcing the need for stringent compliance and monitoring measures in the sector.

The Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the global money laundering and terrorist financing watchdog, has recently identified the precious metals and gemstones trading sector as high-risk for money laundering, terrorist financing, and other threats to the global financial system. The sector's appeal to illegal actors stems from the high value of its products, their ease of transport, and their convertibility into cash.

According to FATF's National Risk Assessment of Kuwait, the precious metals and gemstones trading sector is classified as medium to high risk. Although cash transactions exceeding KD3,000 have been prohibited in Kuwait since 2016, the legal framework was further strengthened only in 2025 with a comprehensive ban on all cash transactions in this sector, regardless of value.

The new guide stresses that although the prohibition on cash transactions has significantly reduced cash-related risks, professionals in the sector need to remain vigilant and comply fully by refusing



any transaction involving cash, irrespective of its amount. This full prohibition should be incorporated into the sector's internal controls and procedures said th.

The guide outlines Anti-Money Laundering / Countering the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) controls, covering payment and transaction risks, such as unconventional or large cash payments, advance payments from unrelated third parties, and funds routed through high-risk sectors like real estate, automotive, construction, or tourism.

Dealers are required to evaluate inherent risks—those naturally present in their activities—before implementing internal controls. This includes assessing risks associated with products, services, customers, transactions, delivery channels, and geographical exposure to ensure effective risk management.

Customer due diligence (CDD) must be carried out before establishing any business relationship or conducting occasional transactions worth KD3,000 or more. This includes verifying the identity of the customer and beneficial owner, understanding the business relationship, and confirming the source of funds and wealth, particularly for high-value transactions. If CDD cannot be completed, the transaction must not proceed, and a suspicious transaction report (STR) should be considered.

ensuring vigilant implementation of CDD, verification of funds, and assessment of unusual transaction patterns. STRs must be promptly submitted to Kuwait's Financial Investigation Unit, maintaining strict confidentiality.

The guide outlines product and risk services in the sector. These include:

- High-value, easily transportable products such as gold bullion or polished diamonds, which can be easily moved and concealed.
- Gold, in particular, is a concern due to its global liquidity, uniform pricing, and use as an alternative currency. Scrap gold, gold dust, or riverine gold is often produced informally and poses high risks because

of the difficulty in assessing and monitoring it.

- Counterfeit or stolen goods, including synthetic diamonds marketed as natural or gold with falsified purity.
- Used jewelry sold in bulk, which can be difficult to trace, especially when transacted through pawn shops or informal dealers.
- Metal accounts, where metals such as gold are stored and traded similarly to cash or banking services, may be less risky when conducted in controlled environments. However, there remains potential for misuse, and these risks must be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

PAM to crack down on firms exploiting labor needs system

Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) confirmed that strict action will be taken against companies found to be exploiting the automated labor needs system. This follows revelation by the Ministry of Interior's Residence Affairs Investigations Department that it uncovered a network issuing licenses to companies in exchange for money by manipulating PAM's automated online system for estimating labor needs of companies.

PAM emphasized that if any company or employer is found to have obtained estimated labor through illegal means, leading to an unjustified increase in worker numbers, their file will be reviewed and legal measures enforced. It is noteworthy that PAM recently launched a fully automated service through its electronic portal (Ashel/Companies) to digitize the process of assessing labor needs for private sector firms. This step, they said, will largely eliminate opportunities for manipulation in estimating manpower requirements and ensure allocations match the actual activities of each company.

The sources said the authority aims, through this step, to improve institutional performance, enhance its ability to keep pace with rapid technological changes, support innovation, and achieve customer satisfaction. This move aligns with the state's vision of building an integrated digital society that supports sustainable development.

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Education Ministry launches strategic plans for 2025-26

The Ministry of Education has rolled out its 2025-2026 strategic plan, unveiling 10 new schools, AI-enhanced curricula, and a five-year academic calendar aimed at boosting attendance and instructional time. With 1,141 schools ready to serve over 520,000 students and nearly 132,000 staff, the plan aligns with Kuwait's Vision 2035 and introduces upgraded facilities, lighter school bags, and enriched cultural content to strengthen national identity.

Ministry of Education launched its 2025-2026 strategic plan on 11 September, which includes plans encompassing general preparations, new school openings, school canteens, the updated academic calendar, and the 'Baligh' program.

Acting Undersecretary Eng. Mohammad Al-Khaldi said during a presentation at the Government Communication Center that the plan aligns with Kuwait's Vision 2035 and adapts to evolving educational needs.

He noted that 1,141 schools are ready for the new academic year, including 950 public and 191 private schools, serving a total of

520,271 students. The number of teaching and administrative staff has reached 131,969.

Al-Khaldi announced the opening of 10 new schools, including seven in Al-Mutlaa, one in Ishbiliya, and two special education schools. Preparations included furnishing schools with 15,000 items, installing 900 computer lab devices, and deploying 1,400 student buses.

A comprehensive five-year academic calendar was introduced to improve attendance, maximize instructional days, and grant Ramadan's final week as leave for students and staff. For his part, Assistant Undersecretary for Educational Affairs Eng. Hamad Al-Hamad



confirmed the staffing of new schools with 800 teachers and 183 administrators, along with

1,380 staff transfers and 687 administrative appointments.

Coordination with the Ministry of Health ensured clinic operations in new schools. He added that AI has been introduced into computer science curricula for grades 10 and 11, and the ministry launched its 'Ma'a Hamad Chat' AI tool for students, teachers, and parents.

Meanwhile, Acting Director of Support Services Maryam Al-Enezi highlighted school health initiatives, updated textbooks, and lighter school bags. She also noted the inclusion of national and cultural content in new curricula to promote values and identity.

Kuwait holds workshop on GCC strategy to combat money laundering

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries are firmly committed to combating money laundering and terrorist financing, said Major General Ali Al-Adwani, the acting undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior, during the opening of a workshop in Kuwait to prepare the GCC strategy to combat money laundering.

The event, hosted in partnership with the United Nations Regional Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), was held under the patronage of First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef and attended by GCC Secretary-General Jassim Al-Budaiwi and Attorney General Saad Al-Safran, along with representatives from several government agencies.



Describing money laundering and financing terrorism as crimes that threaten societal security and stability and adversely affect national and regional economies, Al-Adwani said that hosting the workshop in Kuwait reflected the country's commitment to serving as a platform for dialogue and coordination among GCC states and international partners.

He pointed out that Kuwait attaches special importance to combating money laundering and terrorist financing. The government has developed legislative and regulatory frameworks, strengthened national institutions, and cooperated closely with international organizations to ensure compliance with global standards and the recommendations of international initiatives.

"We have made significant progress in developing legislation, regulatory systems, and regional and international cooperation in this field. The goal is to develop a comprehensive Gulf strategy focused on

prevention, detection, investigation, asset confiscation, training, and capacity building," explained Al-Adwani.

He added, "It is our collective responsibility, as governments and institutions, to work together to develop the Gulf strategy to combat money laundering, strengthen the financial justice system and protect our economies and societies from cross-border crimes."

Speaking on the occasion, GCC Secretary-General Al-Budaiwi expressed his gratitude to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for Kuwait hosting the forum and for the support provided to ensure the success of the Council's work. He also acknowledged the continued backing from the GCC leaders in all fields.

Al-Budaiwi said the workshop in Kuwait marks a significant milestone in the GCC's efforts to confront one of the most dangerous cross-border crimes, which threatens economic and financial security while impacting societal stability and the reputation of commercial and financial systems at regional and international levels.

He noted that adopting a joint GCC strategy will strengthen Gulf security cooperation, enhance coordination with international partners, and develop a more robust and effective system to combat complex financial crimes.

For his part, Judge Hatem Ali, the regional director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for the Gulf States, said the UNODC is honored to collaborate with the GCC General Secretariat, under the patronage of Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef, to develop the first unified Gulf policy and strategy to combat money laundering and terrorist financing.

He added, "No one should underestimate the risks facing the Gulf states, given their status as an economic and commercial hub, a tourist destination, and a center for global economic transactions seeking to benefit from the region's strong economy. These advantages also expose the Gulf to threats from organized criminal groups seeking to exploit the thriving economy, its extensive trade networks, and active financial institutions to launder funds obtained from illicit trafficking, including drugs, weapons, and human trafficking."

Development plan 2025-26 includes 141 projects, mainly infrastructure

A new government report on the progress of the 2025-2026 annual development plan, shows that 141 projects across nine programs were included in the plan, with total allocations of KD 1.3 billion. This marks a 6 percent rise compared to last year's plan, which covered 133 projects with KD1.1 billion in appropriations.

The quarterly follow-up report issued by the General Secretariat for Planning also shows that of the total projects 124 are ongoing and 17 are new projects. About 48.2 percent of these projects are still in the implementation phase, while 21 have yet to begin.

The report also confirmed that 28 projects are progressing in line with the schedule, while nearly 70 percent were behind by the end of the first quarter. Infrastructure-related projects represented the largest share of total projects, with 38 projects focused on building a cohesive foundation.

Spending on the new plan's projects reached 9.9 percent by the end of the first quarter, up 5.1 percent from the same period last year. Expenditure during the three months amounted to KD132.4 million, a 143 percent increase from the KD54.5 million spent in the corresponding period of the previous year.

The report showed 723 challenges facing agencies responsible for the projects in the 2025/2026 plan. These challenges are



grouped into five main categories and 29 subcategories. Approximately 87 percent of which have already been addressed.

Administrative challenges make up the largest share, at 43 percent, with delays in the documentation cycle for contractual procedures and slow approvals from regulatory bodies identified as the main obstacles.

Technical challenges accounted for 30.6 percent and are linked to delays caused by contractors, the implementing entity, or setbacks in delivering project phases and securing supplies.

Financial challenges, such as delays in allocating funds, represent 12.6 percent. Legislative challenges are the least significant, at 4.3 percent of the total.

KOC utilizes AI to improve operating capacity of oil sector

The launching by Kuwait Oil Company of its Artificial Intelligence Innovation Center (AIIC) represented a milestone in the process of digital transformation in the country's oil sector. The Center, supported by Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA), is meant to keep abreast of the world's latest technological trends through making use of AI and innovative technologies to reduce costs, ensure quality and speed up decision-making.

Under auspices and in the presence of Minister of Oil Tarek Suleiman Al-Roumi, AIIC was inaugurated on August 7, 2025, in collaboration with Microsoft, Halliburton Co, and Ghaia.ai, KOC's CEO Ahmad Jaber Al-Eidan said in statements to KUNA on Saturday.

The Center, supervised by KOC's division of

south and east Kuwait, opened a new chapter in digital transformation in Kuwait.

It is part of KOC's strategic partnership with Microsoft, one of five of the world's leading technology conglomerates, Halliburton - world's second-largest oil service provider, and Ghaia.ai, a leading developer of autonomous artificial intelligence systems (Agentic AI), he said.

Ghaia.ai, as strategic partner of Microsoft, is in charge of operating the AIIC on its G Agen platform. "G Agen, the fruit of cooperation between Microsoft, Halliburton and Ghaia.ai, deploys smart digital agents that think, act, and evolve - working for humans to unlock new levels of efficiency and innovation," Al-Eidan pointed out.

Legislative reforms aim at comprehensive development

Kuwait is implementing the largest legislative reform plan in its history, with over 25 percent of laws already under review to align with Vision 2035. The sweeping changes — from digital transformation of legal services to overhauls of family, disability and judicial laws — aim to boost governance, transparency and social protection, while attracting foreign investment and reducing reliance on oil

The Times Kuwait Report

The government has over the past year been initiating a series of strategic legislative reforms aimed at comprehensive economic, social and political development of the country.

Announcing the launch of the largest legislative development plan in Kuwait's history, Minister of Justice Nasser Al-Sumait, during his address at an open meeting of the Kuwait Bar Association in August, stressed that the political leadership has green-lighted the undertaking of a comprehensive review of the legislative system.

The package of laws approved by the Kuwaiti government over the past year marked the beginning of a methodical reformation of the state's legal framework to achieve Kuwait Vision 2035, and to align with international laws and agreements.

Currently, legislative reviews are nearing the completion of 25 percent of the laws. Upcoming legislative amendments aim to create an integrated framework for sustainable development progress. Based on a set of fundamental principles, the amendments focus on enhancing governance and transparency, ensuring integration and consistency of legislation, keeping pace with digital transformation, promoting values of integrity and anti-corruption.

The new laws, alongside full-scale development, have produced positive economic outcomes, reflected in improved national economic indicators and optimistic growth forecasts. Notably, foreign direct investment inflows increased by 20 percent last year. In this regard, global rating agency, Fitch Ratings, recently stated that it expects Kuwait's new key legislations will enhance the growth and diversification of the banking sector, support economic expansion, and reinforce government spending on major projects.

Citing progress in reforms, particularly in diversifying financial revenues, rationalizing expenditures and reducing reliance on oil, Fitch said these measures would further support the government's budget and financial flexibility. In particular, the report highlighted

the implementation of a minimum top-up tax on multinational companies as of January, in accordance with Law 157 of 2024. Kuwait also affirmed in its speech at the Human Rights Council in Geneva last May that the country was undergoing a comprehensive review of all 983 laws currently in force.

One of the most notable practical applications of legislative reform is the new traffic law, which came into effect in April. Official statistics from the General Traffic Department show a significant decrease in traffic-related deaths and violations, underscoring the positive societal impact of these reforms.



The reforms included bills amending parts of Penal Code, parts of Code of Criminal Procedure and parts of the Civil and Commercial Procedure Law, and amending Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) and financial disclosure regulations, amending the law establishing the Administrative Disputes Circuit in the Court of First Instance and new laws regarding real estate developers and amendments to the Companies Law.

Currently, around nine committees are reviewing a set of laws, including those related to economic courts, rental systems, real estate owners' associations, criminal laws and procedures, labor law, and civil and commercial law. This is happening in parallel with ongoing coordination among various ministries and

relevant entities to amend other legislations.

Within this framework, Kuwait is preparing to make a qualitative leap in family and social legislation by amending laws concerning personal status, domestic violence, juvenile justice and child protection. These changes aim to address issues identified in the practical application of existing laws and to form a legislative shield that protects families, protects women from violence and ensures justice.

The initial draft of the expected amendments to the 1984 Personal Status Law targets more than 120 articles, proposes the addition of 20 new articles, and the cancellation of 15 articles,

has been referred to the Fatwa and Legislation Department, represents the gateway to the largest judicial system reform in Kuwait. This is part of an integrated legislative path aimed at balancing the protection of rights and freedoms with the requirements of deterrence and justice.

Furthermore, First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Al-Sabah, in a recent meeting with the editors-in-chief of daily newspapers, revealed that the new nationality law is in its final review stage and will soon be referred to the Cabinet committee in preparation for approval.

He also indicated that a new narcotics law is expected to be out soon in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice. This law is part of a comprehensive strategy to tackle the drug issue and to eliminate its sources domestically and internationally.

The new law regulating the legal profession, currently being prepared in cooperation with the Kuwait Bar Association, will mark a major advancement in organizing the legal field, providing regulatory and protective measures for the profession.

The government's legislative amendments seek to adopt digital transformation, particularly regarding the Power of Attorney Law and the Electronic Transactions Law, where all powers of attorney and documentation, including those related to personal status and real estate, will be transitioned to electronic formats.

A specialized committee has also prepared necessary amendments to the Expert Management Law at the Ministry of Justice, which includes electronic notifications and document submission. These are currently under review by the Fatwa and Legislation Department. In this regard, it is noteworthy that the Ministry of Justice is working with international tech companies such as Google and Microsoft on digital transformation, aiming to deliver advanced, integrated e-services.

The statement noted that previous reviews resulted in a series of legal reforms, including amendments to the Nationality Law and Penal Code, expanded powers for the Anti-Corruption Authority, and greater judicial authority in prosecuting corruption crimes, along with enhanced protection of public funds.



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Healthcare services in Kuwait augmented by AI interventions

Kuwait's Ministry of Health is spearheading a nationwide transformation by embedding artificial intelligence into hospitals, research and training — from robotic surgeries at Jaber Al-Ahmad Hospital to AI-driven drug discovery and precision diagnostics — positioning AI as a partner to doctors to deliver faster, safer and more personalized care.

As artificial intelligence (AI) rapidly expands worldwide across sectors, Kuwait Ministry of Health has moved to apply it in diagnosis, treatment and training of medical personnel to keep pace with advanced developments and deliver top-tier medical and health services.

The Ministry has drawn plans to integrate AI tools in hospitals to improve the speed and accuracy of diagnostics, support clinical care, enhance health research and drug development, and streamline administrative operations.

Key initiatives launched in hospitals span various specialties, particularly medical imaging, surgery and scientific research, after AI proved it contributed to reducing medical errors and easing surgical procedures in less time than conventional operations while delivering more precise outcomes. Among these efforts, Jaber Al-Ahmad Hospital employs AI in surgery and endoscopy, including ICG blood-flow technology and robotic systems, across general surgery, urology, obstetrics and gynecology.

The Ministry recently chaired a GCC workshop, "Innovation and AI in Healthcare," focusing on deploying technology and AI to develop health systems, improve service quality and strengthen Gulf cooperation. Kuwait is also keen to leverage AI applications to respond to patient inquiries,



An AI generated picture depicting the AI role in assisting physicians by analyzing medical records

explain test results, discuss prescriptions and help direct patients to the appropriate specialty.

In parallel, Kuwait's healthcare is undergoing a major transformation, with AI reshaping delivery in medicine, diagnostics and treatment.

AI has moved from theory to a practical tool that changes healthcare's contours, from highprecision early diagnosis and faster drug discovery to personalized therapies tailored to each patient. This transformation is rooted in "augmented intelligence," positioning AI as

a partner to the physician, not a replacement, handling routine tasks and big-data analysis while doctors and researchers focus on clinical decision-making and human interaction.

Reflecting this integration are research efforts at Dasman Diabetes Institute, advances in dentistry, and contributions of nuclear medicine to improve image quality and develop targeted "theranostics," alongside data quality and protection strategies that make care more precise and efficient.

Dr. Anwar Mohammad, a researcher at the Department of Translational Research at the Dasman Diabetes Institute, told KUNA that AI has become pivotal in advancing medical and research sciences, achieving a qualitative leap in predicting protein structures and DNA/RNA interactions thanks to tools such as AlphaFold, opening avenues to accelerate drug discovery by precisely identifying therapeutic targets and understanding disease mechanisms at the molecular level. He added that AI shortened time and effort in drug discovery and genomics by analyzing vast biological datasets more accurately than traditional methods and mapping gene interactions critical to understanding chronic diseases such as diabetes.

He said challenges include the need for high-quality, diverse data, the difficulty of interpreting complex models and linking them to clinical practice, and ethical considerations including patient-data privacy, algorithmic bias, and slow regulatory frameworks. He emphasized that the future lies in integrating AI with human expertise to reinforce critical thinking and humane patient communication.

Other key challenges include implementation costs and specialized training needs, that call for a revamp of academic curricula to prepare AI-enabled physicians of the future.

Kuwait Promoting Rights of Women and Girls

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Following these meetings, Al-Salem praised Kuwait's progress on women's rights, recognizing the country's advancements as a testament to its commitment to upholding justice, human dignity, and international cooperation on related issues. She acknowledged the significant strides made by Kuwait in supporting women's rights and tackling gender-based violence. Concluding her visit to Kuwait, Al-Salem held a meeting with local media representatives, at the UN House on 9 September.

During the meeting, the special rapporteur praised Kuwait's pioneering humanitarian leadership, and commended the remarkable progress the country has made in advancing the rights of women and girls. In particular, she emphasized Kuwait's efforts to promote gender equality in line with its commitment to the fundamental principles of human rights, and to its Vision 2035 development plan.

In this regard, Al-Salem highlighted the legal and institutional frameworks adopted, and reforms introduced, by Kuwait to prevent and combat violence against women and girls. She noted that these include the adoption of the Domestic Violence Law of 2020, the 2025 Penal Code reform, which eliminated leniency in so-called 'honor crimes', and the recent reform of the Personal Status Law, which raised the minimum age of marriage to 18 for both sexes.

Offering her support and expertise in the field of human rights to enhance Kuwait's efforts on safeguarding the rights of women and girls, the special rapporteur encouraged the government to build on this progress achieved so far, by implementing further reforms aimed at combating all forms of violence against women and girls, including sexual harassment and digital violence.

On the matter of ongoing revisions to the Personal Status Law, Al-Salem said there were a few elements in the current personal status law, such as in relation to marriage and divorce,

where women and men are still not considered equal. She added, "I understand that some of the personal status laws are based on religious laws, but I have no doubt that the country is very invested in amending its laws to be in line with its human rights commitments and international standards".

Al-Salem listed many initiatives introduced by Kuwait with regard to women's rights that are having a positive impact. These included, among others: Ensuring women and men receive equal pay for work; achieving significant progress in eliminating violence against women; enacting the Domestic Violence Law, which is considered an important shift in the legal field; reforming the penal code to treat honor crimes as murders; and raising the marriage age to 18 years for both sexes.

Al-Salem also pointed to the plight of domestic workers and migrant women, who continue to remain highly vulnerable despite protections accorded to them under the Domestic Workers Law of 2015. While welcoming the recent measures introduced by the government, which allow for temporary sector transfers, she noted that the impact from these measures remain limited in view of lax enforcement and limited oversight of work conditions.

"Laws are only as good as they are implemented, so while it is great to see that progress is being made in designing new laws and amending existing ones, the critical thing is the progress being made in implementing these laws, and putting in place better mechanisms to implement them. I know that this will take a bit of time, but if the political will is there, then we are already halfway through," said Al-Salem.

She added, "Moreover, despite the substantial legal progress made, it remains imperative to review and amend the current institutional architecture for preventing and responding to discrimination and violence in order to effectively address gaps in implementation and enforcement. In this regard, priority must be given to continuing to focus on survivors of violence.

"Survivor-focused services are important to create better conditions for them to come forward and seek justice, protection, and support. This can be achieved by strengthening the partnership between authorities and civil society. Al-Salem also pointed out that some non-Kuwaiti women and girls residing in the country illegally or unlawfully may face continued challenges in accessing services, assistance, protection, and justice," noted the special rapporteur.



Executive Managing Editor Reaven D'Souza with Reem Al Salem

Al-Salem also expressed her hope that the legal frameworks for addressing digital violence against women and girls will be improved, given that, as women, they are particularly vulnerable to online harm. She also revealed a recommendation to establish an independent entity on women's issues, a specific department within the Ministry of Social Affairs, or a higher council for women under the Cabinet."

Commending Kuwait's openness to engaging with human rights mechanisms, Al-Salem said

that the doors to Kuwaiti officials were wide open to her during the visit. She also highlighted the excellent cooperation provided by the Kuwaiti government, particularly the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and emphasized that Kuwait's openness and transparency are worthy of emulation by other states.

Praising the solidarity and humanity of Kuwait at a time when funding for humanitarian work is declining worldwide. Al-Salem pointed out that her visit coincides with the 11th anniversary of the United Nations' designation of Kuwait as an international humanitarian center. She also explained that although her visit had been planned since the end of 2023, other priorities had delayed her visit.

Turning to the mechanism of work of special rapporteurs, she explained that Special Rapporteurs are independent experts in the field of human rights appointed by the United Nations Human Rights Council. These experts are collectively referred to as 'Special Rapporteurs of the Human Rights Council'. They work on a voluntary basis; they are not UN employees and do not receive remuneration for their work."

She added that while the UN Human Rights Office serves as the secretariat for the Special Rapporteurs, these experts work in their personal capacity, independent of any government or organization, including the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nations.

Elaborating on the report to be drafted following her visit to Kuwait, Al-Salem stated that she would submit her full report on her visit to the UN Human Rights Council in June 2026, and that the report will also be public, so that everyone in Kuwait can read and use it, "For example, Civil Society Organizations can use the report to convince the authorities that the recommendations are objective, impartial, relevant, and productive as they are made by independent experts, and that it would be to Kuwait's benefit to implement the recommendation."

A Wedding in Muscat

By Fajr Sabah
Special to The Times Kuwait

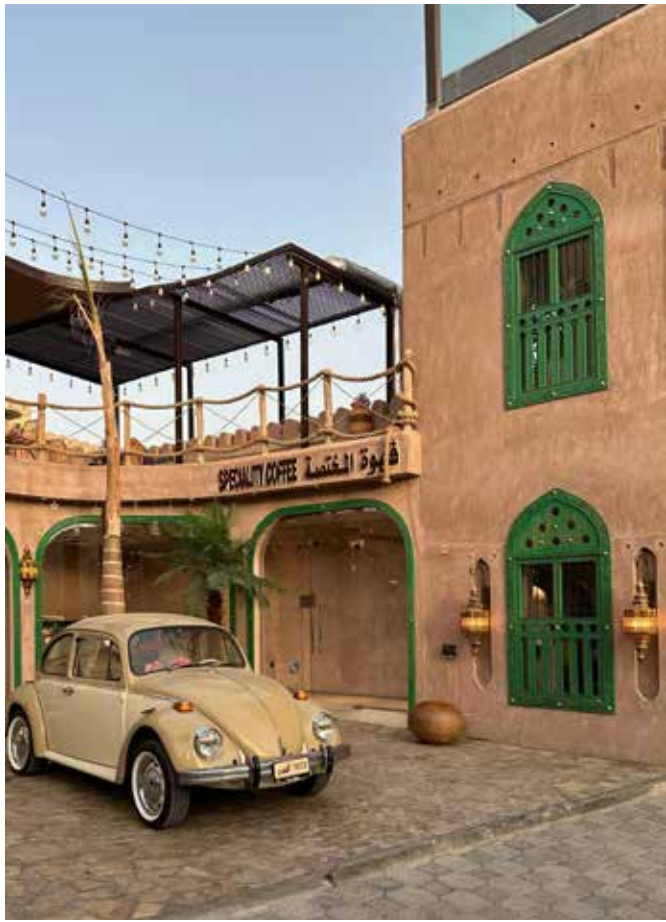
In general, attending occasions and, in particular, sharing in moments of joy is a tradition we are accustomed to in our Gulf and Arab societies. Whether the reason is love, the joy of sharing happiness, or a social duty—especially if it involves close family or neighbors. But attending an occasion farther away, in both blood and place, is not only an act of love, but also a beautiful experience that is worth the effort.

Here I recall my first experience attending my close friend's wedding abroad—in Oman, specifically in Muscat. I wanted to immerse myself in the details of Oman, a country that has always felt close to my heart, to discover more of its customs on such occasions, and to share in every detail—from the very idea of traveling for the sake of attending, to the joy of being part of an Omani wedding with its beautiful and familiar traditions.



Despite the differences in many customs, the spirit remained the same: joy and love. I asked about all the details—the place, the time, the proper attire, even the preparations. And so, with love in my heart and great anticipation, I flew to Muscat. I found Oman truly a land of kindness, brotherhood, and warmth.

By chance, I met friends from Bahrain and Qatar, whose business and conference schedules coincided with the date of my friend's wedding. I joined them, prepared for the celebration, accompanied the bride, and walked her to the stage. The feelings



were profound—joy and love so deep it felt like I was celebrating the wedding of a sister, not just a friend.

I was surprised that all her relatives and friends already knew about "the friend from Kuwait" who would come to share in the happiness. They welcomed me with such warmth. And fate allowed me to walk with the bride to her seat of honor—it filled my heart with happiness at every step until she was crowned as a bride.

The wedding ended, but my joy in Oman did not. That was only the beginning.

Omani friends competed to show me their country, eager for me to discover it through them and through their generosity.

The journey extended beyond the hotel, the beauty salons, and the wedding hall. They invited me into their hobbies at workshops and human development centers in Muscat. They treated me to traditional Omani foods.

They took me on a trip to Nizwa, where I enjoyed its cultural and historical atmosphere, exploring museums, heritage sites, nature, and ancient landmarks—a blend of past and present. Accompanied by a wonderful Omani friend, I concluded the trip



with a warm, luxurious dinner at Al-Wahat Club.

The trip to Oman was a journey that combined duty and love, tourism and discovery, past and modernity—like every visit I have made to Oman. And once again, it was a trip overflowing with the love and generosity of the Omani people, and of everyone you meet on their land.



TBY and AmCham Kuwait Renew Strategic Partnership

The Business Year (TBY) and the American Chamber of Commerce in Kuwait (AmCham Kuwait) announced the official renewal of their long-standing strategic partnership. The collaboration reflects the enduring relationship between the two organizations and underscores both Kuwait's ongoing economic transformation and TBY's expanding presence in the country.

Under the renewed agreement, AmCham Kuwait will continue its role as a key partner in the development of The Business Year: Kuwait 2026, the latest edition in TBY's in-depth annual economic publication series.

The 2026 edition marks a particularly important milestone, the 10-year anniversary of TBY's operations in Kuwait. It will highlight the country's transformation across sectors over the past decade, its dynamic economic landscape, ongoing restructuring initiatives, and its increasingly influential role on both the regional and global stage.

TBY's Country Manager in Kuwait, Agustina Dal Fabbro, emphasized

the significance of this year's edition: "With The Business Year: Kuwait 2026 edition, which also marks 10 years of The Business Year in the country we aim to showcase the country's evolving business

environment and the leaders shaping its future economy. Partnering with AmCham ensures that we are able to draw from one of the most credible and engaged business communities in the country.



"This enduring partnership has contributed significantly to the impact and depth of TBY's Kuwait coverage. The 2025 edition was the most comprehensive to date, featuring over 160 interviews and the introduction of high-level roundtable discussions that enriched public-private dialogue. The continued support of AmCham Kuwait has been instrumental in reaching such milestones."

Reflecting on the importance of the collaboration, Chairman of AmCham Kuwait, Pete Swift, stated: "In this, our 40th year, we are happy to continue to collaborate with The Business Year on advocating on behalf of the American business community and bilateral trade between Kuwait and the US. We look forward to continuing to work together to provide solutions and opportunities to the business community."

The continued partnership between TBY and AmCham Kuwait not only celebrates a decade of collaboration but also sets the stage for continued joint efforts to support economic dialogue, business innovation, and investment in Kuwait.

EXCLUSIVE TO THE TIMES KUWAIT

America Could Lead the Next Era of Digital Innovation

**Gene Burrus***A competition law attorney.*

Two operating systems, Apple iOS and Google Android, dominate the mobile app ecosystem, and over the last decade, a worldwide consensus has emerged on two issues. First, these platforms have amassed significant, persistent market power with which to extract monopoly rents from consumers and business users, and they frequently act anti-competitively and abusively to protect it. Second, traditional enforcement under existing abuse-of-dominance and monopolization statutes has been too slow and too uncertain to deter these mega firms, which command resources and power exceeding those of many countries and governments.

While traditional enforcement of existing competition laws has produced some significant cases in the United States, Europe, Brazil, and elsewhere, there have also been new legislative efforts. Laws have been passed, or are being considered, in various jurisdictions around the world, each with the goal of reining in the power and abuses of Big Tech.

Even in the US, there was bipartisan support for the Open App Markets Act in 2022. That year, the bill made significant progress in Congress, passing the Senate Judiciary Committee with a 20-2 favorable vote. But, owing to the Senate leadership's priorities, it was never given a floor vote, and now the need for such legislation is even more apparent. American consumers and businesses continue to suffer from the exploitative conduct of the digital gatekeepers, which extract excessive rents and fees, crush competing businesses and business models, and wield undue influence (sometimes through outright denial of access) over new apps and technologies.

Ensuring open competition is crucial if existing and aspiring independent developers and innovators are to build their businesses, create jobs, and benefit consumers. The



“Would companies like Apple and Google have thrived if Microsoft had been allowed to extract 30 percent of their revenues or unfairly compete with their products on PCs? Or would they have gone the way of Netscape?”

countries that get this right, and that do so quickly, will become the next big destinations for investments in digital innovation.

The opportunities available to those who restore meaningful competition will be immense. This is not just speculation. Decades ago, it was Silicon Valley that championed antitrust enforcement against Microsoft, which effectively controlled access to the internet at the time. The US Department of Justice took the lead, and thanks to its effective enforcement, the tech companies that we now know as

household names were able to flourish. Would companies like Apple and Google have thrived, or even survived, if Microsoft had been allowed to extract 30 percent of their revenues or unfairly compete with their products on PCs? Or would they have gone the way of Netscape?

We face a similar situation today, only now it is Apple and Google who control the platforms—mobile devices—where consumers increasingly (and in many cases, exclusively) access internet services and information. Whether we can unleash a new wave of independent innovation,

investment, and business growth to rival that of the last 20 years will depend on whether we can address the problem of market power.

The opportunity for American developers, businesses, and consumers cannot be understated. Just as Silicon Valley saw massive growth in the early 2000s thanks to US antitrust leadership against Microsoft, the countries that lead in this decade will be where innovative businesses are drawn to invest and grow. The alternative is indefinite control of our digital lives by two of the largest and most powerful companies in human history, not for the sake of innovation and entrepreneurship, but simply to protect their financial interests.

As the rest of the world acts, it is important that the US take a leadership role, rather than deferring to others and awaiting the uncertain vagaries of piecemeal litigation that might take a decade to work itself out.

That means passing new legislation to ensure that all businesses can compete and succeed or fail on the merits of their offerings, rather than because they happen to be aligned with the current gatekeepers' financial interests. Although litigation ultimately worked 25 years ago (with Apple and Google being the biggest beneficiaries), it came too late for many companies that tried to compete in the 1990s.

The Open App Markets Act would ensure that American consumers can benefit from lower prices and innovations from all corners of the digital economy. It would prevent mobile gatekeepers from unfairly leveraging their power over mobile devices to pick winners and losers, and to demand extractive fees from everyone doing business on the mobile internet. It would ensure that these mobile ecosystems are platforms for all innovators and entrepreneurs, not just those aligned with the current behemoths' financial interests. And it would do so in a time frame that would benefit today's companies and consumers, rather than those that might be around a decade from now.

Many may not even realize what they are missing, given how dominant the two mobile gatekeepers have become. But America (and the world) has a choice: unleash the next wave of business growth, or become a vassal of digital gatekeepers whose highest priority is safeguarding their rents.

World's largest asset manager, BlackRock, to open office in Kuwait

Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) confirmed on 8 September that multinational investment company, BlackRock, has received the necessary regulatory approvals and commercial licenses to begin operations in Kuwait.

In a media statement praising BlackRock's initiative to open an office in Kuwait, KDIPA Director General Sheikh Dr. Meshaal Al-Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah said that this reflected the company's confidence in the country's economic development. He affirmed that Kuwait is committed to attracting value-added direct investments, with a strong focus on developing national competencies, which contribute to strengthening long-term partnerships and ensuring future sustainability based on knowledge.

In his remarks on the occasion, BlackRock Chairman and CEO, Larry Fink,

said, "Our decades-long partnership with Kuwait represents one of our most valued global relationships. We look forward

to expanding this partnership with a physical presence, helping to further build the country's financial ecosystem



and develop local talent."

BlackRock's Kuwait Office will focus on deepening collaboration with clients, supporting Kuwait's Vision 2035 objectives, and building upon the firm's work in advancing the development of the Middle East's capital markets. BlackRock has appointed Ali Al-Qadhi, a Kuwaiti national who joined BlackRock in 2023, as Country Head for Kuwait, in addition to his continued responsibilities as the Head of Kuwait and Qatar Client Business.

BlackRock's presence in Kuwait makes it the first global asset manager to set up a physical presence in the country. Founded in 1988, BlackRock is the world's largest asset manager, with US\$12.5 trillion in assets under management in 2025. The New York-headquartered US firm has 70 offices in 30 countries, and clients in 100 countries worldwide.



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EXCLUSIVE TO THE TIMES KUWAIT

Fighting Poverty Must Not Stop



Akinwumi A. Adesina, Ilan Goldfajn

Akinwumi A. Adesina is a former president of the African Development Bank Group. Ilan Goldfajn is President of the Inter-American Development Bank Group.

Faced with a slowing global economy and rising debts, many developing-country governments may be tempted to scale back anti-poverty programs. That would be a grave mistake. Combating poverty is not just a moral imperative; it is also crucial for economic stability, conflict prevention, and long-term development.

Recent research supports the economic case for reducing poverty, showing that a ten-percentage-point decrease in poverty rates can raise per capita growth by up to 1.2 percent annually. For countries like the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Paraguay, that would mean an increase of 25 percent or more in annual per capita growth.

Moreover, the experience of countries across Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean demonstrates that meaningful poverty reduction can be achieved even under severe budget constraints. To this end, governments must focus on three key areas.

The first is energy. Expanding access to affordable electricity is essential for manufacturing and agriculture, and thus for the sustainable growth required to reduce poverty. A major step forward in this regard is Mission 300, a groundbreaking initiative led by the World Bank and the African Development Bank (AfDB) that aims to provide electricity to 300 million Africans by 2030. The second priority is investing in human capital. Studies have consistently shown that investments in early childhood programs, quality education, and accessible health care generate high returns. In Jamaica, for example, early interventions increased mid-career incomes by 37 percent, according to a 2021 study. Similarly, a 2024 World Food Program study found that school nutrition programs can produce up to US\$9 in cross-sector benefits for every dollar of investment. Notably, Kenya's



Home-Grown School Feeding Program, which links education, nutrition, and local agriculture, has boosted school attendance, improved health outcomes, and enhanced students' long-term earnings potential.

Lastly, investing in large-scale cross-

border infrastructure can accelerate economic integration, create job opportunities, and sharply reduce poverty.

While these strategies are cost-effective, scaling them up requires increased financing

their existing SDRs voluntarily to developing countries through the AfDB and the IDB, whose triple-A credit ratings and proven track records uniquely enable them to maximize the impact of these additional resources. The impact can be transformative, because each dollar equivalent of SDRs the AfDB and the IDB receives counts as quasi-equity, enabling them to multiply its value by 3-8 times, according to our estimates. So, by leveraging SDRs, we could deploy low-interest loans, guarantees, and blended-finance instruments that attract private investment in infrastructure, greentech, and agriculture.

In Latin America, the IDB estimates that channeling \$1 billion in SDRs could unlock \$7-8 billion in development funds—enough to provide school meals to ten million children, health-care services to 1.3 million women and children, and direct cash transfers to four million households for a year—advancing efforts to eliminate extreme poverty by 2030.

In line with this approach, the IDB has already joined the Global Alliance Against Hunger and Poverty, committing up to \$25 billion to support policies and government-led anti-poverty and food-security initiatives that leverage innovative tools such as reallocated SDRs.

Even modest SDR reallocations could deliver outsized returns, especially in Africa. Redirecting just \$1.5 billion in SDRs to the AfDB could generate \$10 billion in development financing. If invested in agriculture, these resources could double the productivity of 16 million farmers, increase food production by 40 million tons, and lift 80 million people out of poverty by 2030, according to AfDB estimates.

An additional \$4.5 billion could be directed toward regional infrastructure, including the 1,300-kilometer (807-mile) Lobito Corridor. This EU-backed project to modernize the railway linking Angola to landlocked, mineral-rich regions in Zambia and the DRC will cut shipping times between the Atlantic and Asia by at least 10 days, unlocking billions of dollars in copper and cobalt exports and supporting infrastructure investment.

With sufficient political will and international cooperation, SDRs could become a powerful tool for multilateral development banks to expand development finance. By lending just a fraction of their SDRs through the innovative model pioneered by the AfDB and the IDB, countries can facilitate transformative investments while preserving the value of their international reserves and enabling participating central banks to deliver higher returns.

“

In 2024, the IMF allowed countries to reallocate their SDRs voluntarily to developing countries through the AfDB and the IDB, whose triple-A credit ratings and proven track records enable them to maximize the impact of these resources.

”

border infrastructure can accelerate economic integration, create job opportunities, and sharply reduce poverty.

The \$15.6 billion Abidjan-Lagos Super-Corridor, which connects five West African countries with a combined population of 330 million, will cover 75 percent of the volume of West Africa by 2030. Similar projects include a proposed \$531 million corridor linking the DRC,

at a time when public budgets around the world are under growing strain. A hybrid capital instrument based on the International Monetary Fund's Special Drawing Rights (SDRs, the IMF's reserve asset), developed by the AfDB and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), offers a promising solution.

In 2024, the IMF allowed countries to use this innovative financial tool to reallocate

OFWs prove their commitment to personal, professional growth

By Ricky Laxa
Staff Writer

In a remarkable celebration of dedication and achievement, 83 Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) in Kuwait successfully passed the Philippines' Special Professional Licensure Examinations. This significant milestone was commemorated on the evening of 3 September with the 11th ceremonial oath-taking hosted by the Kuwait Chapter of the Philippine Professional Organization, at the prestigious Crown Plaza Hotel. The event was graced by distinguished officials from the Embassy of the Philippines, led by the Ambassador of the Philippines H.E. Jose Cabrera III.

The new professional license holders represented a diverse array of professions, showcasing the versatility and talent of Filipino workers. Among those who earned their licenses were midwives, respiratory and physical therapists, nurses, electrical,

mechanical, electronics, and civil engineers, architects, teachers, and psychologists. During the ceremony, representatives from each academic sector delivered speeches, sharing their personal journeys and the significance of their achievements. These heartfelt addresses resonated with the audience and served as an inspiration not only to fellow OFWs but also to the younger generation envisioning careers



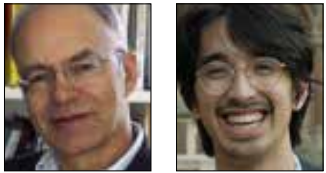
abroad. Their stories reflected the sacrifices and hard work invested in their education—sacrifices made in the hopes of securing a better future for both themselves and their families.

Among the event's highlights was the solemn oath-taking administered by the Philippine Ambassador, Labor Attaché and Consuls. The organizing committee also took the opportunity to recognize the critical support provided by Kuwaiti employers in promoting the continuing education of their household workers. As a token of appreciation for the support received, plaques of recognition were presented to various

sponsors and embassy officials.

The successful licensure of these 83 individuals stands as a testament to the resilience and determination of Filipino workers in Kuwait. It demonstrates their unwavering commitment to personal and professional growth despite the challenges that may arise while living and working overseas. The achievements of these overseas workers are a shining example of excellence, perseverance, and the indomitable spirit of Filipinos. They inspire not only their peers but also future generations to pursue their dreams, reminding everyone that with hard work and dedication, success is within reach.

A Meaningful Last Gift for All Sentient Beings



Peter Singer, Benjamin L. Sievers

Peter Singer is Visiting Professor at the Centre for Biomedical Ethics at the National University of Singapore and Emeritus Professor of Bioethics at Princeton University. Benjamin L. Sievers is a doctoral student in immunology at the University of Cambridge and the National Institutes of Health.

At the University of California, San Diego (UCSD), a program called Last Gift offers terminally ill patients the opportunity to help create more effective treatments. Their special circumstances transform the usual risk-benefit calculus of joining a clinical study of an untested drug. Researchers can ask them to consider consenting to being research participants in ways that they would not ask healthier people with long life expectancies, and terminally ill patients may choose to give that consent when others would be less likely to do so.

The leading United States research agencies, the Food and Drug Administration and the National Institutes of Health, have recently issued strong statements about moving away from testing drugs on animals. The results from such tests, they now acknowledge, do not translate well into findings relevant to humans. Terminally ill patients can offer their own bodies to contribute to this growing effort to make drug testing more human-relevant, generating data on how people, rather than

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Terminally ill patients in the study are infected with HIV. They do not just donate their bodies for research to be conducted after their death; they participate in invasive procedures while alive, including biopsies, spinal taps, and blood draws.

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beagles or mice, respond to new treatments, while also reducing the suffering currently inflicted on laboratory animals.

Before launching Last Gift, researchers at UCSD surveyed nearly 500 people about end-of-life medical research. More than half said they would be willing to give up four weeks of their life to participate in research even if they had only six months to live.

Over a third said that if they had a terminal illness, they would agree to being exposed to pathogens, such as streptococcus bacteria, hepatitis C virus, and malaria, to help develop new treatments and vaccines. A desire to 'give back' was also expressed by individuals



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receiving hospice care. For many, the idea of contributing to science brought a deeper sense of meaning to their lives.

Currently, the Last Gift program is focused on understanding where HIV hides. Participants in this study are infected with HIV as well as being terminally ill. They do not just donate their bodies for research to be conducted after their death; they also participate in invasive procedures while still alive, including biopsies, spinal taps, and blood draws.

Davey Smith, the lead investigator for the Last Gift study at UCSD, says, "It is incredible how much our study participants want to give of their time, energy, and literal body to science. They are pushing hard for us to do more, faster." For the next phase of the program, Smith and colleagues are developing ethically and scientifically sound approaches to testing treatments and vaccines in Last Gift participants. Smith understands the great advantage that testing drugs in humans has over testing drugs in non-human animals: "Our physiology is just different," he says, "Thousands of drugs found promising in animals have failed in humans."

The research does not need to be in an area related to the participant's illness. For example, a person with advanced cancer might volunteer for a trial of a vaccine for an infectious viral disease. The trial will involve deliberate exposure to the virus, to test whether the vaccine offers protection.

It is not difficult to imagine a program that offers people with limited life expectancy a choice of ongoing research projects that they can participate in, thus leaving it up to participants to decide which diseases or medical conditions matter most to them. Offering that choice restores agency to people near the end of life and actively integrates them into a broader human effort to improve human health. In May 2023, Richard Scolyer, an Australian melanoma specialist, was diagnosed with glioblastoma, an aggressive brain tumor. Patients with glioblastoma typically have a limited lifespan.

Scolyer, who had played a key role in driving the astonishing recent improvements in survival rates for patients with advanced melanoma, chose to become 'patient zero' in an experimental immunotherapy trial, using a treatment proven in melanoma but never before tested in glioblastoma. "The data that we've generated," he said, "I know it's changing the field, and if I die tomorrow with that, I'm very proud." One does not have to be a researcher to make an important difference

to medical research. Many patients could contribute to the development of safer drugs for curing human diseases while helping to reduce the use of animals in research. Productive medical research partnerships

with the dying can save human lives, and at the same time add meaning to the last days of terminally ill patients. Initiatives like Last Gift have the potential to benefit all sentient beings—humans and animals.



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Globalization Is Dead, but Planetarization Has Yet to Be Born



By Bertrand Badré

Former managing director of the World Bank, is Chair of the Project Syndicate Advisory Board, CEO and Founder of Blue like an Orange Sustainable Capital, and the author of Can Finance Save the World? (Berrett-Koehler, 2018).

In November 1985, during their first summit in Geneva, US President Ronald Reagan and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev slipped away from the official proceedings to speak privately. Only years later did we learn what they discussed. Gorbachev told the broadcaster Charlie Rose that Reagan had asked him a startling question: "What would you do if the United States were suddenly attacked by someone from outer space? Would you help us?" Gorbachev replied, "No doubt about it," to which Reagan responded: "We, too." Although the two superpowers were locked in a nuclear arms race and staring each other down across Europe, they could still imagine uniting against a common existential threat.

Four decades later, humanity finds itself locked in another arms race. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute reports that global defense spending reached a record \$2.7 trillion in 2024 – an inflation-adjusted increase of 9.4% over the previous year. After nine consecutive years of such spending increases, this surge is unprecedented since the end of the Cold War, with little indication that it will slow. Dozens of countries are expanding their militaries, and more governments are making long-term commitments to boost their defense budgets.

The reasons are many, and some are understandable. In addition to Russia's war in Ukraine, there are rising tensions in East Asia and the Middle East, as well as vulnerabilities in

cyberspace and space. But more fundamentally, this escalation reflects the collapse of globalization as we knew it – meaning a rules-based order anchored in multilateralism, open trade, and international cooperation.

It is easy to forget how different the mood was just a decade ago. In 2015 – the high-water mark for the most recent wave of globalization – world leaders delivered three landmark agreements: the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on development financing, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and the Paris climate agreement. Chinese President Xi Jinping and US President Barack Obama shook hands in Washington, signaling – at least to many observers – that a new era of sustainable, inclusive, and resilient globalization was at hand.

But the resulting optimism proved short-lived. Within a few years, trade wars, nationalist

change, ecosystem collapse, and widening social inequalities endanger us all. They have been thoroughly documented, their consequences are already visible, and strategies to confront them have been elaborated in countless policy documents and experts' reports. Yet they are perpetually treated as secondary to the immediate fear of aggression by one's neighbors or rivals.

Future historians – if the profession still exists – will wonder why, in the mid-2020s, Homo sapiens poured unprecedented resources into preparing to fight each other, while neglecting collective action against obvious planetary threats. The sums involved are staggering. The nearly \$3 trillion devoted annually to defense could cover a significant portion of the investments needed to decarbonize our economies, adapt to climate change, and preserve biodiversity.

“Today, AI and other breakthroughs may likewise transform society. But if history is any guide, military applications will outpace civilian uses. As ever, we should “follow the money”: defense budgets dwarf climate investments. The danger is not that the technology will fail, but that it will be harnessed first for conflict, not collective survival.”

and nativist politics, and geopolitical rivalries had undermined the previous consensus. Today, tariffs, subsidies, industrial policies, refugee crises, and the new arms race all attest to a world where cooperation has lost its luster. As the French historian Arnaud Orain argues, the “end of history” thesis has given way to a world once again conceived as finite – as a pie to be divided, rather than expanded. According to this mindset, what's mine is mine, and what's yours is negotiable.

But the existential threats that inspired Reagan's thought experiment are still here, and they are more pressing than ever. Climate

Instead of extending the cooperative logic of globalization to planetary survival, we are re-engineering it with walls, tariffs, and weapons. Call it “barbed-wire globalization.” Humanity will remain interdependent, but relations will be managed not with common institutions but through spheres of influence. Meanwhile, the planet will recede from political consciousness.

As Sophocles warned, “Evil can sometimes seem good to the one whose mind the gods are leading to ruin.” It is mad to obsess over relative geopolitical power while ignoring the absolute reality of planetary boundaries. If there is to be any hope, we must invent something new:

not globalization, but “planetarization” – the recognition that preserving our fragile world is the precondition for everything else. Upcoming gatherings, such as the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP30) in Belém, Brazil, offer opportunities to advance such a perspective, even after this year's disappointing negotiations to address plastics in our oceans. But the window is closing. Some will argue that the picture is not so bleak, because humanity is living through an extraordinary period of scientific and technological innovation. Given the progress in artificial intelligence, biotechnology, renewable energy, and advanced materials, why not place our trust in human ingenuity to see us through?

The counterargument is sobering. A century ago, revolutionary discoveries in physics, chemistry, and medicine also promised a golden future, ultimately leading to what the French called the “30 glorious years” after World War II. But before getting there, the world endured a devastating depression, fascism, and a global war waged with those new technologies. The Manhattan Project produced nuclear weapons before the energy contained within the atom had been put to civilian use; the science that gave us modern fertilizer also created chemical weapons.

Today, AI and other breakthroughs may likewise transform society. But if history is any guide, military applications will outpace civilian uses. As ever, we should “follow the money”: defense budgets dwarf climate investments. The danger is not that the technology will fail, but that it will be harnessed first for conflict, not collective survival.

Unlike earlier historical turning points, this one offers no second chances. Resources are finite, the carbon budget is shrinking fast, and planetary boundaries are strained. The choice is stark: Globalization can be reorganized into a militarized array of political blocs, where resources are consumed by trade wars, culture wars, and real wars, or we can embrace “planetarization” and start pursuing str

AI tool uses facial image to predict biological age, cancer survival

The metaphor 'eyes are windows to the soul' is often used to imply that a person's true emotional state is revealed through the eyes. Scientists have now taken this line of thought a step ahead and state, facial images can accurately reflect the biological age of a person, as well as the chances of survival in cancer patients.

A person's biological age estimates the functional and physiological age of the body, and is in contrast with 'chronological age', which is the time since birth.

Researchers at Mass General Brigham Hospital in the United States have announced that they have developed a deep-learning, artificial intelligence (AI) algorithm called 'FaceAge' that uses the photo of a person's face to predict biological age and survival outcomes for patients with cancer.

The investigators found that patients with cancer, on average, had a higher FaceAge than those without, and appeared about five years older than their chronological age. Older FaceAge predictions were associated with worse overall survival outcomes across multiple cancer types. They also found that FaceAge outperformed clinicians in predicting short-term life expectancies of patients receiving palliative radiotherapy for cancer.

The use of AI to estimate a person's

biological age from an image of the face could become clinically meaningful in future. The study demonstrated that even a simple selfie contains important information that could help to inform clinical decision-making and care plans for patients and clinicians.

The scientists noted that knowing exactly how old someone is on the inside, compared to their chronological age really matters—individuals with FaceAges that are younger than their chronological ages do significantly better after cancer therapy. When patients walk into exam rooms, their appearance may give physicians clues about their overall health and vitality. Those intuitive assessments combined with a patient's chronological age, in addition to many other biological measures, may help determine the best course of treatment. However, like anyone, physicians may have biases about a person's age that may influence them, fueling a need for more objective, predictive measures to inform care decisions.

With that goal in mind, researchers at Mass General Brigham leveraged deep learning and facial recognition technologies to train FaceAge. The tool was trained on 58,851 photos of presumed healthy individuals from public datasets. The team tested the algorithm in a cohort of 6,196 cancer patients from two centers, using photographs routinely taken at



the start of radiotherapy treatment.

Results showed that cancer patients appear significantly older than those without cancer, and their FaceAge, on average, was about five years older than their chronological age. In the cancer patient cohort, older FaceAge was associated with worse survival outcomes, especially in individuals who appeared older than 85, even after adjusting for chronological age, sex, and cancer type.

Estimated survival time at the end of life is difficult to pin down but has important

treatment implications in cancer care. The team asked 10 clinicians and researchers to predict short-term life expectancy from 100 photos of patients receiving palliative radiotherapy. While there was a wide range in their performance, overall, the clinicians' predictions were only slightly better than a coin flip, even after they were given clinical context, such as the patient's chronological age and cancer status. Yet when clinicians were also provided with the patient's FaceAge information, their predictions improved significantly.

The investigators conceded that their study needed further research before the technology could be considered for use in a real-world clinical setting. The research team is currently testing this technology to predict diseases, general health status, and lifespan. Follow-up studies include expanding this work across different hospitals, looking at patients in different stages of cancer, tracking FaceAge estimates over time, and testing its accuracy against plastic surgery and makeup data sets.

Scientists are now increasingly considering different chronic diseases as primarily diseases of aging. The ability to accurately predict a person's aging trajectory from an image of their face has the potential to function as an early detection system that could save lives in a variety of medical conditions.

Junk food adverts increase calorie-intake in children

Advertising on media, whether using traditional sources such as newspapers, radio and television, or more contemporary ones such as websites and social media platforms, is an effective form of marketing products and services to customers. The success of advertisements comes from the subconscious impact they can have on our decision-making process when it comes to purchase choices.

An international team of researchers led by scientists at the University of Liverpool in the United Kingdom are now urging policymakers to urgently introduce advertising restrictions to protect the health of children. The call for advertising oversight came after new evidence from the team's studies affirmed that even brief exposure to junk food marketing, across TV, social media, radio, or billboards, leads to overeating in children.

The research found that exposure to junk food advertisements—in comparison to viewing non-food adverts—results in children and adolescents consuming significantly more calories during the day. A randomised crossover trial also showed that the extra calorie consumption came regardless of whether advertising was on traditional or contemporary media. Moreover, brand-only ads—where only logos of food brands were advertised and have no restrictions placed on their advertising—proved just as potent as enticing image-rich food ads.

For their study, the researchers tested the eating pattern of 7–15-year-olds when exposed to just 5 minutes of adverts for foods high in saturated fats, sugar, and/or salt (HFSS). The young participants were found to consume, on average, an extra 130 kilocalories per day following their exposure to the advertisements.



The research is timely given the overweight and obesity epidemic affecting children and adults worldwide.

The study also comes at a time when many countries around the world are considering implementing curbs on unhealthy food advertising to tackle rising childhood obesity levels. While the causes of obesity are complex and influenced by many factors, the study findings offer crucial novel information on the extent, nature, and impact of unhealthy food marketing via different types of media on young people's eating behavior.

The fact that even short exposure to marketing of HFSS foods can drive excess calorie consumption and potentially weight gain among children and adolescents is particularly concerning. Children are not only more susceptible to advertising, they also tend to scroll through and view scores of pages on their digital devices each day. The display of junk food ads can

influence their food choices and lead to eating habits that affect their lifelong health.

While the research highlighted the connections between product-based advertising of HFSS foods in audiovisual media and children's consumption of calories, little is known about the impact of other forms of media, including brand-only advertising such as logos, or audio only advertisements such as podcasts and radio, on shaping eating patterns. It is also unclear whether food advertising effects differ by individuals' sociodemographic characteristics and unequal health outcomes.

To explore this further, researchers conducted a randomised crossover trial to quantify the impact of HFSS food (vs non-food) advertisement exposure on children's immediate and later food intake, and to assess whether this was moderated by either advertisement content (brand-only vs. product), media type (audiovisual [e.g., TV] vs. visual [some social media posts] vs. audio [podcasts] vs. static [print, billboards]), or sociodemographic characteristics.

In total, 240 school-age volunteers between the ages of 7 and 15 in the UK participated in the study. On two different occasions, participants were exposed to five minutes of HFSS food and then non-food advertisements that were either brand-only or product-based through one of the four different media. Researchers then measured children's subsequent intake of snack and lunch foods and their height and weight to calculate their body mass index (BMI).

Home postcodes were also used to calculate area-level socioeconomic status (SES) using the 2019 English Index of Multiple Deprivation. The analysis found that following exposure to HFSS food ads, children consumed more snacks (+58.4 kcals), more lunch (+72.5 kcals), and more food

overall (snack and lunch combined, +130.90 kcals) than after exposure to non-food ads. Interestingly, advertisement content did not moderate this effect, such that brand-only ads were as effective as product ads in increasing intake.

While neither the type of media (i.e., audiovisual, visual, audio, static image) nor socioeconomic status moderated children's intake, the researchers found that for every standardised unit increase in BMI score (zBMI, adjusted for a child's age and sex), children consumed an additional 17 kcal overall. The study postulated that unhealthy food marketing leads to sustained increases in caloric intake in young people at a level sufficient to drive weight gain over time.

This study is the first to demonstrate that brand-only food ads, for which there is currently no restrictive advertising policy globally, increase children's food intake just as product-based advertising does. This new knowledge will hopefully lead to the enactment of broader restrictive food marketing policies that protect children's health and promote healthier eating patterns.

The cells in the eyeball survived the treatment, as the researchers carefully controlled the pH gradient. Additionally, in other experiments, the team demonstrated that their technique might be able to reverse some chemical-caused cloudiness to the cornea—a condition that is currently only treatable through a complete corneal transplant. Though this initial work is promising, the researchers admitted that there is still a long road between what they have achieved now and reaching clinical trials on humans. But they emphasized that their technique has the potential to become widely applicable, vastly cheaper, and even reversible,



Indus Group holds career counseling for students of IEAS



Indus Group, a pioneer and leading exhibition organizers in India, recently held a career counseling and guidance meet with students at Indian English Academy School (Don Bosco).

The event was aimed at providing advice and guidance to students on their future education choices. The event was attended by experienced career counselors who provided valuable insights to students on career opportunities, industry trends, and job market demands. The counselors also gave guidance on which courses and degrees would be most beneficial for students to pursue in order to achieve their career goals.

The career guidance team was warmly welcomed by the Principal Father James Tuscano (SDB), of Indian English Academy School (Don Bosco), who appreciated the initiative taken to provide the students with a first-hand insight on career options. The students were encouraged to ask questions and share their concerns with the counselors. The counselors provided personalized advice based on each student's

interests and aspirations. They also highlighted the importance of gaining practical experience and building a strong network in the industry.

Speaking about the event, Thiagrajan from the Indus Group said, "We are committed to providing students with the right guidance to help them make informed decisions about their future. The career counseling and interaction meet is just one of the many initiatives we take

to support the Indian education system."

Indus Group has been organizing exhibitions in India since 1995 and has organized over 120 exhibitions across the country. The group has also organized over 150 exhibitions in 20 countries, including 111 India Education Exhibitions across 20 countries/cities, making it a leading player in the exhibition organization industry. Indus Group's goals also include making India one of

the top destinations for education in the world by organizing events across 50+ countries and bringing 15,000 students to India, while bridging the gap between students and top universities and institutions worldwide. Their mission is to create awareness about emerging career opportunities, and empower students to make informed decisions about their future, as well as promote India as a destination for higher education.

Overall, the career counseling and interaction meet was a great success, with students leaving with a better understanding of the education and career opportunities available to them. Indus Group remains committed to supporting the Indian education system and helping students achieve their career goals.

Among the participating universities who were able to share valuable advice and knowledge to the children were senior faculty members from Christ University, RV University, Reva University, Woxsen University, Yenepoya University, Karpagam University and DC Group of Institutions.



SIMS students get informed career guidance from experts



Indus Group, a pioneer and leading organizer of educational exhibitions in India, recently conducted a career counseling and guidance session for students of the Indian Educational Association School (IEAS) at Salmiya Indian Model School (SIMS) last week.

The event aimed to provide students with informed guidance on their academic and career pathways. A team of experienced career counselors interacted with students, offering valuable insights into current industry trends, career prospects, and the evolving job market. They also advised students on choosing the right courses and degrees aligned with their interests and aspirations.

The Principal Sajitha Menon expressed gratitude to the General manager of Salmiya Indian Model School Sheikh Salem Abdullah Al Sabha for providing the platform. She also commended Indus Group's efforts to empower students with practical knowledge and real-world perspectives.

Students were encouraged to engage with

the counselors, ask questions, and express their career-related concerns. Each student received personalized advice, helping them better understand how to align their passions with viable career options. The session also emphasized the importance of hands-on experience and networking in building a successful career.

Speaking about the event, Mr. Thiagrajan from Indus Group stated, "We are dedicated to

guiding students in making informed decisions about their futures. This career counseling and interaction session is one of the many initiatives we undertake to support the Indian education ecosystem." Since its inception in 1995, Indus Group has organized more than 120 exhibitions across India and over 150 international events in 20 countries. Notably, it has hosted 111 India Education Exhibitions in cities across the globe. With a vision to position India as a top

global education destination, the group aims to organize events in over 50 countries and facilitate educational opportunities in India for more than 15,000 international students.

Their broader mission includes promoting education tourism, raising awareness about emerging careers, and empowering students to make thoughtful and strategic academic choices. The event concluded on a successful note, with students gaining clarity and confidence about their future paths. Indus Group reaffirmed its commitment to bridging the gap between aspiring students and top-tier educational institutions worldwide.

Prominent universities that participated in the session included senior faculty members from: Christ University, RV University, Reva University, Woxsen University, Yenepoya University, Karpagam University, DC Group of Institutions.

These representatives offered additional academic and career guidance, enriching the students' understanding of higher education opportunities in India.

