



DIPLOMAT
*A friendship beyond
diplomacy: Dr. Swaika's
transformative tenure in Kuwait* **2**

WOMEN IN DIPLOMACY
*Diplomacy is
a Message
Beyond a Profession* **3**

LOCAL
*Kuwait-China Relations,
half a century of cooperation
and strategic partnership* **4**



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Sustainable Tourism Preserves, Promotes, Cultural Heritage

THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

Tourism is among the main drivers of the global economy, with the total economic output of the tourism industry contributing nearly 10 percent of the world's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2024, and accounting for one in ten jobs worldwide. Aside from its vital role in economic development, tourism spurs social progress and sustainable development, creates employment and business opportunities, and serves as a bridge fostering peace and cultural understanding between people across borders.

The potential benefits of positive tourism incidentally dovetails seamlessly with the goals of Kuwait's Vision 2035 development plan. The goals of Vision 2035, which aim to transform Kuwait into a financial, commercial and culture hub in the region. Includes, among others, diversifying the economy, promoting sustainable non-oil sector growth, encouraging greater private-sector participation in development, and generating employment opportunities for nationals.

However, the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the United Nations entity promoting responsible, sustainable, and inclusive tourism, warns that economic growth alone is not sufficient to help realize the full potential of tourism. Achieving the immense possibilities of tourism, including its myriad benefits to local communities, demands inclusive development, good governance, strategic planning, robust monitoring, and clearly defined priorities that align with long-term sustainability goals.

In line with the UN thinking, the government headed by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah has prioritized development of a positive tourism



sector in the country. As part of furthering this tourism-oriented approach, last August, Minister of Information and Culture, and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, announced the launch of an integrated and comprehensive online portal, 'Visit Kuwait', to streamline tourism-related activities.

Minister Al-Mutairi explained that the portal brings together the public and private sectors to develop tourism infrastructure, including entertainment, hospitality, and transportation facilities, and create opportunities for investment in tourism by local and international investors. Describing the initiative as a 'single-window' solution, the minister stated that the portal integrates all tourism-related information, activities, and services under one umbrella.

Reiterating Kuwait's keenness to develop the

tourism sector, Minister Al-Mutairi emphasized that tourism plays a significant role in promoting and preserving Kuwait's cultural heritage and identity. From the establishment of the trail-blazing, progressive Al-Arabi magazine in 1958, to today's cutting-edge cultural institutions that push the boundaries of arts and science, Kuwait's cultural identity has always been grounded in an avant-garde and experimental tradition that molded the perspectives of generations.

Today, cultural institutions continue to play a vital role in enlightening new generations, invigorating societies, promoting intellectual growth, and fostering pride in national heritage. Among the prominent public cultural institutions in the country are the National Library of Kuwait founded in 1923 and reestablished through an Amiri decree in 1994

to collect, preserve and document Kuwait's national heritage.

Meanwhile, the National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters (NCCAL), established in 1973, promotes creativity in various cultural fields, protects Kuwaiti antiquities, culture, and heritage, develops cultural infrastructure, and encourages investment in cultural tourism. Similarly, the Scientific Center, established in 2000, was set up to promote science and technology, and to foster a scientific mindset, especially among school children.

More recent additions to the cultural landscape of Kuwait include the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre that opened in 2016, considered as one of the foremost performing arts centers in the region, and the Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Centre inaugurated in 2018, which is recognized as the world's largest cultural project of its kind.

The multitude of cultural institutions and their success in energizing creative cultural initiatives and preserving national heritage, attest to the importance that Kuwait places on cultural development, and underscores the country's influential role in regional cultural developments. This civilizational and cultural significance of Kuwait in the Arab world led to Kuwait being named the Capital of Arab Culture in 2001 and being re-selected as the Capital of Arab Culture and Arab Media for 2025.

Following Kuwait's selection, Minister Al-Muthairi affirmed that the choice of Kuwait as the Arab cultural capital in 2025 is a continuation of the country's pioneering journey in cultural creativity. He added that the selection portrays Kuwait as a leader in the Arab cultural and media arenas, a model in fostering cultural dialogue between nations, and a significant cultural heritage destination in the region.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



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A friendship beyond diplomacy

Indian Ambassador's transformative tenure in Kuwait

By Reaven D'Souza
Executive Managing Editor

When Dr. Adarsh Swaika assumed office as India's Ambassador to Kuwait in October 2022, he stepped into a role defined by both promise and complexity. Over the past three years, the veteran Indian envoy has proven himself as an astute diplomat, committed to strengthening existing ties between India and Kuwait and broadening these relations into new areas to the mutual benefit of both nations and their people.

With over two decades in the Indian Foreign Service and a Ph.D. in Chemistry, he brought a rare blend of technical expertise, diplomatic experience, and developmental vision to his tenure in Kuwait. A patient, pragmatic, and result-oriented diplomat, Ambassador Swaika relies on sustained dialogue, goodwill and mutual cooperation in his approach to resolving issues.



In his recent farewell address to the Indian community, Ambassador Swaika praised their steadfastness, discipline and dedication to their nation and to the host country as well. He stated that their unwavering support to India was not only a source of national pride but also a vital pillar of the enduring India-Kuwait relationship.

His tenure in Kuwait coincided with a period of growing economic ties between India and Kuwait, the presence of over a million vibrant Indian diaspora in Kuwait, and amid the rapidly evolving geopolitical dynamics in the region.

One of Dr. Swaika's early achievements was in fostering a record growth in bilateral trade, which reached US\$13.8 billion in 2022-23. Although oil and gas imports from Kuwait, and food exports from India, have traditionally dominated bilateral trade, during his tenure Ambassador Swaika focused attention on diversifying economic engagement into sectors such as automobiles, textiles, ceramics, pharmaceuticals, automobile accessories, and in the services sector. His visionary

efforts expanded the scope of economic cooperation, laying the foundation for a more balanced partnership that is less dependent on hydrocarbons.

Under Dr. Swaika's guidance, political and institutional interactions between India and Kuwait were also significantly strengthened. After years of limited exchanges, consultations between the Indian and Kuwaiti foreign ministries were reenergized over the past three years.

The introduction of the E-Visa facility for Kuwaiti nationals under the leadership of the Indian Ambassador has been one of the most significant diplomatic achievements in recent years. This milestone has been widely welcomed across all sections of Kuwaiti society, as it has simplified travel procedures, strengthened people-to-people ties, and made business, tourism, and cultural exchanges more seamless than ever before. The initiative is being hailed as a practical deliverable that reflects the deep-rooted friendship and growing strategic partnership between India and Kuwait.

Marking 250 years of friendship, the Embassy organized a special exhibition that celebrated the long history of cultural and commercial exchanges between the two nations. The exhibition served as a reminder of the enduring legacy of mutual respect and cooperation, while also charting a vision for even closer collaboration in the years to come.

In addition to these diplomatic milestones, the Embassy has actively engaged with Kuwaiti society through a range of impactful initiatives. Mega events such as the International Day of Yoga (IDY) and the vibrant Bharat Mela have drawn thousands of participants, offering platforms to showcase India's heritage, wellness traditions, and cultural diversity. Community-driven activities including beach cleaning campaigns, tree plantation drives, and blood donation programs further highlight the Embassy's commitment to social responsibility and to contributing positively to the local community.

Together, these achievements reflect a dynamic and forward-looking Indian diplomacy in Kuwait, combining facilitation of travel and business with cultural celebration and community service. They underscore the Embassy's role not only as a diplomatic mission but also as an active partner in strengthening bonds of friendship and shared progress between India and Kuwait.

A historic highlight came in December 2024, when Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Kuwait—the first by an Indian premier in 43 years. The event was hailed for its efficient organization, its resounding success, garnering widespread applause both in Kuwait and India.

The Indian premier's visit elevated bilateral relations to a Strategic Partnership level, resulting in the creation of a Joint Cooperation Committee and seven new working groups covering trade and investment, education and skills development, defense and security, culture, consular affairs, and science and technology. By moving from ad hoc contacts to structured dialogue, the ambassador ensured a future-oriented and comprehensive partnership.

A soft-spoken diplomat, Dr. Swaika also placed a strong focus on the welfare of the Indian community in Kuwait. In April 2024, he inaugurated the Indian Consular Application Centre (ICAC) in Jahra, the fourth such facility in Kuwait, bringing consular, passport, and

visa services closer to residents in northern Kuwait. This initiative reduced travel burdens and enhanced accessibility for the large number of Indians living in and around Jahra Governorate, and helped to facilitate visa services for Kuwaitis in the area to visit India.

Labor and migration issues were key priorities that Dr. Swaika championed during his tenure, protecting the rights of Indian workers, promoting safe and legal migration, and ensuring fair treatment for Indian expatriates based on Kuwaiti law.

He supported the implementation of a bilateral memorandum of understanding (MoU) on domestic workers and facilitated legal recruitment channels, balancing compliance with worker dignity. These efforts were complemented by programs to develop skills and enhance employability, in partnership with private sector stakeholders.

Cultural diplomacy was another hallmark of his tenure. Dr. Swaika ardently promoted Indian arts, textiles, cuisine, and heritage, including exhibitions of Kashmiri textiles in collaboration with the Kuwaiti Sadu House, fostering mutual understanding and appreciation.

On multilateral platforms, he strengthened cooperation with Kuwait through the Financial Action Task Force and the International Solar Alliance, emphasizing shared priorities in financial transparency, renewable energy, and global stability.

Dr. Swaika also enhanced cooperation in bilateral defense and security. Indian naval ships—INS Tir, INS Sujata, and Coast Guard Ship Sarathi, visited Kuwait ports to strengthen navy-to-navy ties and boost maritime relations between the two countries.

His successes in enhancing consular services, promoting diaspora welfare, encouraging trade diversification, and advancing cultural, defense, and technological cooperation, as well as his achievements in establishing robust institutional frameworks and facilitating high-level visits, will go a long way to further boosting bilateral ties, and in laying a firm foundation for the next phase in relationship between India and Kuwait.

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Ambassador also paid a heartfelt farewell call on His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah. During the meeting, Ambassador Swaika conveyed the warm greetings of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and expressed his sincere appreciation for His Highness's steadfast guidance and support, which were instrumental in nurturing and strengthening bilateral relations. During the meeting, the Indian ambassador highlighted the long-standing cooperation between the two nations across trade, culture, and people-to-people ties.

The Indian diplomat's farewell call was not merely a diplomatic formality but a moment of reflection on the journey of collaboration, trust, and friendship between the two countries. As he bids farewell to Kuwait, Ambassador Swaika expressed hope that the strong bonds cultivated over his tenure will continue to grow under the guidance of the leadership of both countries.

The ambassador highlighted the long-



standing cooperation between the two nations across trade, culture, and people-to-people ties. He acknowledged the Kuwaiti premier's consistent encouragement, which, he said, helped bilateral relations flourish and provided a firm foundation for future collaboration. The discussions reiterated the shared commitment of India and Kuwait to continue advancing their strategic partnership with mutual respect and understanding.

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Dr. Swaika's tenure transformed India-Kuwait relations from sporadic engagement to a structured, multi-dimensional partnership. There were many areas of cooperation where Dr Swaika has left his indelible mark, from the first Hindi radio program on Kuwait radio network, to increasing flight connectivity between India and Kuwait, and to providing long-term visas for Kuwaitis.

Ambassador Swaika's next assignment as India's High-Commissioner to Kenya will be a new challenge that he will undoubtedly undertake successfully. Among the key issues that Ambassador Swaika will reportedly be called upon to address during his time in Kenya, would be increasing cooperation in healthcare, joint ventures in food security and cooperation in digital economy and climate change.

Dr. Adarsh Swaika who joined the Indian Foreign Service in 2002 has had previous postings in Moscow, Sofia, Beijing, and Dhaka. He has represented India at numerous UN and multilateral forums. Fluent in English, Hindi, and Russian, he has also served as Joint Secretary in various capacities in the Ministry of External Affairs, overseeing consular, Eurasian, and vigilance portfolios. He is married, with a son and a daughter.

As he prepares to bid goodbye to Kuwait, The Times Kuwait wishes him and his family the very best.

Diplomacy is a Message Beyond a Profession

Hend bent saad alshallash, Head of the Economic and Cultural Affairs Section at the Saudi Embassy

The Times Kuwait Report

In a world that is increasingly interconnected, diplomacy stands as a vital pillar of communication between peoples and states, serving as an effective tool for achieving stability and building bridges.

While historically dominated by men, women's presence in diplomacy has become more visible today, proving that diplomacy is not defined by gender, but

a meaningful impact in the diplomatic arena. Our guest in this week's 'Women in Diplomacy' is Hend bent saad alshallash, head of the Economic and Cultural Affairs Section at the Embassy of Saudi Arabia.

She spoke to The Times Kuwait about her career, the challenges she faced, and her vision of the role of Saudi women in diplomacy.

"I grew up following the career of Prince Saud Al-Faisal, may God have mercy on him, admiring his culture and determination in delivering his message. He was a role model who inspired me to realize that diplomacy is not just a profession, but a deep national and humanitarian mission. Over time, my conviction grew that I wanted to be part of this proud Saudi legacy," said Alshallash.

Speaking about the difficulties she encountered as a female diplomat, she said: "I cannot deny that the biggest challenge was the stereotype, since diplomacy has long been seen as a male-dominated field. But I managed to break that image by focusing on competence and achievement. Flexibility in dealing with different situations, along with hard and consistent work, are the real ways to overcome obstacles."

She noted that the strong presence of women in diplomacy has reshaped the field. "Diplomacy is no longer confined to traditional files such as security, alliances, and trade. It now extends to humanitarian and developmental issues like education, health, and humanitarian aid. With her human sensitivity, a woman can bring new dimensions to this work," she added.

Recalling defining moments in her career, Alshallash said: "One unforgettable

experience was representing the Kingdom at an international conference abroad, where I felt my country's voice was truly present and heard.

"Another significant moment was in Kuwait, where I organized the visit of a Saudi delegation specializing in promoting service exports. That visit resulted in important meetings with Kuwaiti government entities, and we continue to see its impact today in strengthening trade relations and exchanging expertise," she disclosed.

On the qualities she believes are essential for a successful diplomat, she said, "Effective communication and negotiation are crucial, but I firmly believe that cultural awareness is the most important foundation. A diplomat who understands and respects cultural differences can build trust faster and adapt more effectively to different negotiation environments."

For young Saudi women aspiring to enter the diplomatic field, she says, "Being a woman is a strength, not a weakness. Your human sensibility, flexibility, and communication skills give you a greater ability to enrich diplomacy and convey your country's message with depth and credibility."

On diplomacy's role in reflecting societal diversity, Al-Shlash went on to say, "Representing diversity enhances a nation's soft power. Saudi Arabia has set a living example by empowering women and youth. A prime example is the appointment of six women as heads of diplomatic missions abroad. This presence reflects the diversity of Saudi society and projects a positive,



influential image internationally."

Summing up her experiences in Kuwait, Alshallash said: "I would describe it as an 'effortless challenge'. Saudi-Kuwaiti relations are historic and deeply rooted, extending beyond governments to the heart of both peoples. This creates both an opportunity and a challenge for a diplomat to make a tangible difference. Thankfully, with the continuous support of our ambassador in Kuwait, I have been able to make a positive impact on the embassy's activities and further strengthen bilateral relations."

"I grew up following the career of Prince Saud Al-Faisal, may God have mercy on him, admiring his culture and determination in delivering his message. He was a role model who inspired me to realize that diplomacy is not just a profession, but a deep national and humanitarian mission. Over time, my conviction grew that I wanted to be part of this proud Saudi legacy."

by competence and the ability to convey a message.

Within this framework, our series 'Women in Diplomacy' continues to highlight inspiring women who have made



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Strategic Initiatives boost Kuwait-China partnership



The Times Kuwait Report

Embassy of China hosted a special ceremony last week to celebrate the 76th anniversary of the founding of the Republic of China. The event, which was attended by senior Kuwaiti officials, diplomats, and distinguished guests, highlighted the depth and strength of China-Kuwait political, economic, and cultural relations. The function also served as a platform to reaffirm mutual commitment to expanding cooperation across key sectors, while showcasing the growing friendship between the peoples of the two nations.

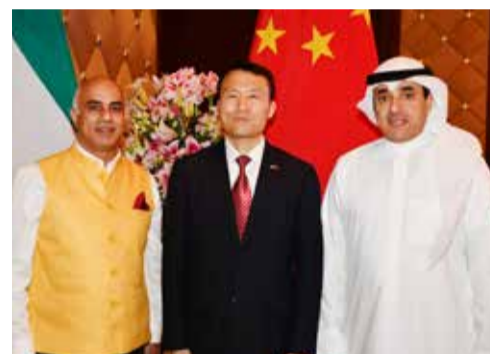
In his address to the gathering, Chargé d'Affaires at the Chinese Embassy, Liu Xiang, lauded the depth of the historic friendship between the two nations and expressed appreciation for Kuwait's support in strengthening bilateral cooperation. He recalled that Kuwait was the first Gulf country to establish diplomatic relations with China, a relationship that has since become a model of

fruitful and evolving partnership.

Chargé d'Affaires at the Chinese Embassy, also pointed out that bilateral cultural exchange has been gaining momentum, citing the establishment of the Kuwait-China Friendship Club and the upcoming inauguration of the Chinese Cultural Center in Kuwait next month, both of which will help deepen mutual understanding and people-to-people ties. He also reaffirmed China's commitment to supporting Kuwait's 'New Kuwait 2035' vision and working together to elevate the bilateral partnership to broader horizons for the benefit of both peoples.

For his part, the chief guest on the occasion, Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs, Ambassador Samih Hayat, affirmed that Kuwaiti-Chinese relations are experiencing a qualitative leap, driven by the agreements and memoranda of understanding signed between the two governments, which are now being directly implemented on the ground.

Ambassador Hayat underlined Kuwait's strong



commitment to advancing cooperation with Beijing. He noted that Kuwait, under the directives of its leadership, has taken proactive steps to ensure progress in this partnership, including the formation of a ministerial committee chaired by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and comprising six ministers tasked with overseeing the implementation of agreements with China.

He highlighted that the projects underway with China reflect the scale and ambition of bilateral cooperation, ranging from the completion of Mubarak Port to major renewable energy initiatives such as Abdaliyah and Shagaya, in addition to projects in sewage, waste management, housing, and workers' cities. He stressed that these ventures represent a unique model of direct government-to-government collaboration, setting a new precedent in Kuwait-China relations.

The Assistant Foreign Minister also emphasized China's role as Kuwait's largest trading partner for the past eight years, praising Beijing's wisdom and constructive contributions in international forums and the UN Security Council, particularly in maintaining regional stability and addressing global challenges such as climate change and international crises.

He added that the success of ongoing projects will pave the way for new initiatives, further strengthening ties between the two countries and advancing shared interests.

Kuwait-China Relations, half a century of cooperation and strategic partnership



By Tariq Yousef Al-Shumaimri
Editor-in-Chief, The Times Kuwait

In 1971, Kuwait became the first Gulf country to establish diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China, opening a new chapter in the region's foreign policy.

This historic step was not accidental, but rather the result of Kuwait's political vision to diversify its international partnerships, coupled with China's recognition of Kuwait's diplomatic and economic role in the Gulf.

Since then, the relations have evolved from political cooperation, economic and energy ties, to the declaration of a 'strategic partnership' in 2018. During the first two decades (1971-1990), Kuwait-China relations were primarily focused on diplomatic and political dimensions. Both countries exchanged support during international forums; Kuwait affirmed its commitment to the 'One China' principle, while Beijing supported Kuwait's independence and sovereignty. This stage was largely about building political trust, without major economic presence.

With China's economic rise in the 1990s and early 2000s, the economic dimension became central to this relationship. China's growing

energy needs made Kuwait a key supplier of crude oil and petroleum products. Conversely, China became a major source of Kuwait's imports, including manufactured goods, machinery, and electronics.

According to international trade data, Kuwait's imports from China accounted for around US\$7.4 billion in 2023, making Beijing one of Kuwait's most important trading partners. Kuwaiti exports to China remain primarily crude oil, with energy continuing to drive the economic relationship.

The year 2018 marked a turning point. During an official visit, leaders of both countries declared a 'strategic partnership' aimed at deepening cooperation in politics, economy, infrastructure, and culture. This announcement aligned with China's Belt and Road Initiative and Kuwait's Vision 2035, positioning Kuwait as a potential gateway for Chinese projects in the Gulf.

One of Kuwait's most ambitious development projects is Silk City (Madinat Al-Hareer), with a budget estimated in hundreds of billions of dollars. The project aims to transform northern Kuwait into a global financial and commercial hub, attracting significant Chinese interest. Major Chinese companies have expressed readiness to invest and participate in the construction and financing of the city, which is seen as a key link between Kuwait and the Belt and Road Initiative.

Another major project within the scope of Kuwait-China cooperation is the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port, which has seen official contracts signed with Chinese companies in recent years.



This strengthens Kuwait's role as a logistics hub in the Gulf and the Arabian Sea, supporting its vision to become a regional center for trade.

Despite these ambitions, many joint projects have faced delays and slowdowns, due to several factors, including among others:

- Kuwait's internal political dynamics, including its parliamentary system and lengthy debates over budgets and laws, which at times delayed implementation of major projects.
- Financing and management challenges for mega-projects like Silk City, requiring massive investments and lengthy negotiations over legal and financial frameworks.
- Kuwait's sensitive geopolitical position in the Gulf and its complex relations with Western powers and regional neighbors, prompting careful balancing in its ties with China to avoid conflicts of interest.
- Bureaucratic and legislative differences, including divergent labor systems and

investment laws, which slowed the execution of some contracts. Observers see the future of Kuwait-China relations hinging on three scenarios:

- **Positive scenario:** If Kuwait accelerates administrative reforms and facilitates foreign investment, it could open the door to a significant influx of Chinese capital, especially in infrastructure and energy projects.
- **Likely scenario:** Continued gradual cooperation at a steady pace, with China remaining a key trade partner, but slow progress on major projects due to local challenges.
- **Negative scenario:** Any political instability or global economic crisis could trigger further slowdowns or shift Chinese investment priorities elsewhere.

More than fifty years after their establishment, Kuwait-China relations now stand at the threshold of a new stage. The ambitions are vast—from Silk City to Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port, from oil trade to investments in technology and renewable energy.

Yet, the success of these ambitions depends on both sides—and particularly Kuwait's ability—to translate visions into tangible reality, by overcoming bureaucratic and legislative hurdles and creating an investment-friendly environment.

The future is promising, but it requires decisive action and swift execution to transform the Kuwait-China strategic partnership from lofty slogans into concrete achievements on the ground.

Finance ministry affirms strength of national economy

The Cabinet during its regular meeting last week was briefed on the state financial situation in fiscal year 2024-25 (FY2024-25) that ended on 31 March of this year. The meeting, headed by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, lauded the positive indicators which reflected the resilience of the national economy.

In his briefing to the Cabinet, Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy and Minister of Finance and Acting Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Dr. Sabeeh Al-Mukhaizeem, emphasized that the State's assets continue to exceed its liabilities, reflecting the strength of Kuwait's financial and economic position and enhancing investor confidence. He noted that the General Reserve Fund and the Future Generations Fund, both showed positive results compared to the same period in 2024.

In his presentation on the key features of the fiscal balance program and the ongoing economic and financial reforms aimed at enhancing financial stability and diversifying income sources, Minister Al-Mukhaizeem indicated that non-oil revenues are projected to grow significantly during the FY 2025-26, driven by a series of financial reforms currently being implemented, including the restructuring of government service fees and



upgrading public finance management.

He added a new package of economic reforms is in the offing to increase non-oil revenues, attract domestic and foreign investments and raise the contribution of the private sector to the state development and national economy. He further stressed that these reforms would pave the way for building a more sustainable and competitive economy in the medium and long term.

Minister Al-Mukhaizeem also briefed the Cabinet on the outcome of his meeting with Director of the International

Monetary Fund's Office in the Middle East and North Africa Francisco Parodi during his visit to Kuwait on 17 September. He pointed out that the IMF regional director had praised the economic recovery in Kuwait, supported by increased oil production and significant growth in non-oil sectors. Parodi also stated that inflation in Kuwait is on a downward trend, contributing to price stability, and that the banking system is stable and robust, thanks to the regulatory and supervisory policies of the Central Bank of Kuwait.

Furthermore, Al-Mukhaizeem informed the Cabinet about the outcome of his meeting on 22 September with a high-level delegation from the People's Republic of China, during which the two sides agreed upon the need to speed up the implementation of agreements signed earlier this year between China's State Power Investment Corporation (SPIC) and the Kuwait Investment Authority for the execution of Shagaya and Abdali energy projects, which are key pillars of Kuwait's renewable energy strategy.

Following the minister's presentation, the Cabinet underlined that these positive indicators confirmed the success of the State's policy of economic openness and its vision to transform Kuwait into an attractive financial and commercial hub, while sustaining job creation for future generations

MoH launches new initiative to bring healthcare to homes of children



Ministry of Health launched an innovative 'Home Healthcare' service last week that aims to bring healthcare to children at their homes. Speaking at the launch ceremony, Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi said that the new service represents a qualitative leap in the development of Kuwait's healthcare system, and that it is in line with the New Kuwait Vision 2035.

Stressing that protecting the health of citizens and ensuring their well-being remains the ministry's foremost priorities, Minister Al-Awadhi explained that this pioneering service goes beyond traditional treatment programs, introducing a fundamental shift in healthcare philosophy by delivering services directly to children in their homes. This allows children to remain in their familiar family environment while receiving comprehensive, high-quality medical care.

Dr. Al-Awadhi emphasized that the initiative not only enhances patient care but also alleviates pressure on hospitals, creating a practical model for integrating primary and community healthcare. He praised the dedication of medical, nursing, and administrative staff for making the initiative a success and highlighted the unwavering support of Kuwait's leadership, which recognizes health as the foundation of a productive and prosperous society.

The Ministry's official spokesperson, Dr. Abdullah Al-Sanad, said the new service is part of Kuwait's ongoing efforts to improve healthcare quality for citizens and residents. It also aligns with the National Development Plan's vision of ensuring 'health and well-being for all'.

He explained that the service targets children under 14 years of age, especially those with chronic and advanced illnesses, special needs, and palliative care requirements.

The multidisciplinary teams will consist of pediatricians, nurses, pharmacists, and specialized technicians capable of operating vital medical equipment such as respirators and heart machines. Eligible cases will be referred to hospitals, after which parents will be contacted and visits scheduled. He added that all health records will be documented and stored securely within the ministry's health data systems.

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Kuwait hosts celebration of 'European Day of Languages'

Bridges Cultural Exchange, Promotes diversity



"The European Day of Languages organized under the EU motto, "United in Diversity," highlights Europe's rich cultural heritage, the value of multilingualism, and the strong partnerships between Europe and Kuwait, particularly in education and cultural exchange.

The Times Kuwait Report

American University of Kuwait hosted a special celebration of the European Day of Languages, organized by the French Institute in collaboration with the European Union Delegation and the EU member states embassies, with wide participation from diplomats, students, and members of European communities.

The event offered Kuwaitis the chance to explore more than 11 European languages through short 30-minute lessons, in addition to tasting traditional dishes and desserts from various European countries.

The EU Ambassador H.E. Anne Koistinen, said the celebration of the European Day of Languages is a special occasion that embodies the EU identity and values, built on openness and diversity. She noted that the day highlights the EU's motto 'United in Diversity'.

The EU envoy said, "I am delighted to be with you today at this event celebrating European languages and affirming cultural diversity, which we consider a source of strength and enrichment. She pointed out, "The EU is a union of 27 countries, united not only by 24 official languages, but also by diverse cultures, beliefs, and lifestyles. Yet we all share the conviction that together we are stronger, more prosperous, and more peaceful."

She added the EU takes pride in its global partnerships, including with Kuwait, stressing that cooperation between the two sides is based on shared values and mutual respect.

The ambassador encouraged the participating students to use the occasion to learn more about Europe and the wide opportunities it offers, particularly in higher education, where European universities provide advanced learning environments and

diverse programs that open new horizons for Kuwaiti youth.

She concluded by emphasizing that the celebration embodies the EU's diversity—27 countries, 24 official languages—and its spirit in bringing people closer through learning new words and opening up to diverse cultures.

Soraya Salwar, Director of the French Institute and Cultural Counselor at the French Embassy, said languages are not just words, but culture, history, and a worldview. She stressed that learning languages enhances creativity, broadens thinking, and builds bridges between people.

She added, "We wanted to give Kuwaitis the opportunity to travel without traveling — by learning new words and discovering different cultures."

In his remarks on the occasion, Ambassador of Cyprus H.E. Andreas Panayiotou explained that his country participated by offering lessons in Greek, alongside a booth featuring traditional sweets prepared by his wife. He added, the participation of Cyprus highlighted the diversity of its European cultural identity.

Romanian Ambassador H.E. Mugurel Stănescu stressed that the event was an

opportunity to showcase the beauty of the Romanian language, with its Latin roots, as well as traditional sweets, affirming that the celebration reflects both EU diversity and unity.

Bulgarian Ambassador H.E. Dimitar Dimitrov noted that Bulgaria is always keen to participate in such events and added that this year's event was special for its "intensive language lessons" offering participants a quick grasp of Bulgarian basics, along with traditional sweets prepared by the Bulgarian community in Kuwait.

Cultural Affairs Officer at the German Embassy, Vera Gebed, said the mission offered German language lessons at the event, stressing that learning languages is not only practical but also a joyful cultural experience.

For his part, President of the Portuguese Business Council in Kuwait, Antonio Campos, said the participation reflected the importance of language as a tool of communication and cooperation, adding that the event was an opportunity to strengthen cultural solidarity.

Greek Ambassador H.E. Ioannis Plotas emphasized that the Greek language is not just a means of communication but also a window into the rich cultural heritage that laid the

foundations for European civilization.

Belgian Ambassador H.E. Christian Domes highlighted Belgium's pride in its linguistic diversity, with three official languages—French, Dutch, and German. He noted that the deputy ambassador's wife offered a Dutch lesson during the event, stressing that such celebrations spark Kuwaitis' curiosity and encourage them to discover languages beyond English.

Hungarian Ambassador H.E. András Szabó underlined that the European Day of Languages, marked annually on September 26, is an important occasion to promote linguistic diversity and encourage younger generations to learn new languages across Europe. He said: "This day reminds us of the power of languages to build bridges between people, foster mutual understanding, and preserve the rich cultural heritage of Europe."

He added that Hungarian, or Magyar, is the official language of his country and one of the EU's 24 official languages, spoken by more than 13 million people worldwide —reflecting its unique historical and cultural presence in Europe.



Higher oil prices, strong non-oil growth drive economic recovery

Kuwait's economy is recovering amid higher oil production and robust non-oil growth, said the International Monetary Fund (IMF), following a week-long visit to Kuwait in mid-September by a team from the Fund. This came following a visit by an International Monetary Fund (IMF) mission to Kuwait, led by IMF Mission Chief to Kuwait, Francisco Parodi, from 15–22 September.

In a statement issued at the conclusion of the visit, Mr. Parodi noted that inflation in Kuwait continues to moderate, but lower oil prices are weighing on the fiscal and external balances. Inflation is on a downward trend, with headline Consumer Price Index (CPI) dropping to 2.9 percent in 2024, and expectations that it could further decline in 2025.

Following a contraction in 2024, Kuwait's real GDP is projected to grow by 2.6 percent in 2025; This recovery is supported by a 2.4 percent rebound in oil sector output following the easing of OPEC+ production cuts, and a 2.7

percent rise in non-oil growth, underpinned by resilient private domestic demand.

Meanwhile, lower oil prices are pressurizing fiscal and external balances. Fiscal deficit is now set to widen to 7.8 percent of GDP in FY2025/26, while current account

surplus is expected to moderate to 26.5 percent of GDP.

Financial stability remains sound. Kuwaiti banks continue to maintain solid capital and liquidity positions, with low levels of non-performing loans. Credit to the non-financial private sector is projected to grow by 6.1 percent in 2025.

The IMF highlighted Kuwait's vulnerability to oil market volatility but noted balanced risks overall. The mission also acknowledged progress on structural reforms, including the extension of the 15 percent corporate income tax to large multinationals and the approval of a new Public Debt Law.

The IMF urged faster reform implementation to diversify the economy, enhance competitiveness, and support non-oil sector growth. The mission also expressed appreciation to Kuwaiti authorities for their cooperation and reaffirmed its commitment to continued dialogue.





Embassy of Viet Nam celebrates 80th anniversary of National Day

"Bilateral trade between Viet Nam and Kuwait reached 7.3\$ billion in 2024, positioning Viet Nam as Kuwait's leading trading partner in Southeast Asia."

By Ricky Laxa
Staff Writer

On 2 September, the Embassy of Viet Nam held a reception to commemorate the 80th anniversary of Viet Nam's National Day. The occasion not only highlighted Viet Nam's independence but also its remarkable journey of growth and development. The occasion was graced by Deputy Foreign Minister of Kuwait, Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and the Deputy Foreign Minister of Viet Nam, Minh Hang Nguyen.

In his brief remarks on the occasion, Ambassador of Viet Nam, H.E. Nguyen Duc Thang noted that his country has made significant strides in its economic landscape. The country boasts a GDP ranking of 32nd globally, sustaining an impressive annual growth rate of 6-7 percent in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

He added that the Vietnamese government has set ambitious targets, looking to exceed 8 percent growth this year. With over US\$800 billion in total trade and more than \$500 billion in foreign direct investment (FDI), Viet Nam has established itself as a critical player on both the regional and global economic stage. The nation is now engaged in 17 free trade agreements and over 500 trade deals, solidifying its role as a hub for international commerce.

Viet Nam's commitment to sustainable development is equally noteworthy. It has achieved numerous UN Millennium Development Goals and remains steadfast in its promises regarding green growth and climate action, aspiring for net-zero emissions by 2050. This progressive approach is reflected in the country's burgeoning tourism sector, with projections of welcoming 25 million visitors by 2025, up from 19 million in 2024.

This year also marks the 50th anniversary

of diplomatic relations between Viet Nam and Kuwait. In light of this milestone, the Vietnamese ambassador expressed profound gratitude to the leadership of Kuwait, as well as to ministries, agencies, and the people of Kuwait, acknowledging their unwavering support throughout various developments over the years. This celebration was not just a reflection of history, but a bridge to a promising future characterized by mutual respect and collaboration.

The leadership in both countries has fostered relations that encompass various fields, enhancing bilateral cooperation significantly. In 2024, bilateral trade reached an impressive \$7.3 billion, positioning Vietnam as Kuwait's primary trading partner in South East Asia.

The trade landscape has diversified, with non-petroleum products such as seafood, textiles, and electronics leading the way. Notably, Kuwait has invested approximately \$4

billion into the Nghi Son Refinery joint venture in Viet Nam, which has seen remarkable profitability compared to other plants.

Cultural, educational, and tourism exchanges between the two nations are on the rise, with local-level partnerships thriving, evident in collaborations between Ahmadi Governorate and Ho Chi Minh City, and Farwaniya Governorate and Thanh Hoa Province.

Both nations are committed to the 'Era of Rising', as Viet Nam continues to pursue higher development objectives. The partnership with Kuwait serves as a crucial bridge between Southeast Asia and the Gulf, aiming to foster greater peace, stability, and prosperity in both regions.

As Viet Nam celebrates its 80th National Day, it remains an enduring testament to the nation's resilience, ambition, and the fruitful cooperation it enjoys with countries like Kuwait, paving the way for a brighter, shared future.

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Peru and Kuwait celebrate half century of diplomatic relations

'To mark the historic occasion, Peru issues a commemorative postage stamp as a symbolic gesture and tangible reminder of the countries' dedication to maintaining strong diplomatic ties.'



The Times Kuwait Report

Peru and Kuwait celebrated fifty years of diplomatic relations, a milestone that reflects a long-standing friendship built on mutual respect, shared values, and fruitful cooperation. Over the past five decades, the two countries have collaborated across multiple fields, including trade, culture, and international diplomacy, overcoming geographical distance to forge strong ties.

In his remarks on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Peru and Kuwait, Ambassador of Peru H.E. Carlos Enrique Tomas Jimenez, highlighted the significance of this year's milestone, and described the occasion as a cherished moment that underscores what can be achieved when countries overcome geographical distances to foster meaningful cooperation and friendship.

He added that to mark the historic occasion, Peru issued a commemorative postage stamp, which serves not merely as a symbolic gesture but as a tangible reminder of the country's dedication to maintaining strong diplomatic ties.

Reflecting on the origins of the bilateral relationship, Ambassador Jimenez noted that in 1975, despite the vast distance separating the two nations, Peru and Kuwait made the deliberate choice to establish formal diplomatic

relations, grounded in a shared recognition of common values, aligned principles, and a mutual vision for the future well-being of their peoples. He emphasized that the foundation of this partnership was built on the ideals of cooperation, respect, and the aspiration to contribute positively to global progress.

He further elaborated that the relationship between the two countries has grown steadily over the years, encompassing multiple areas of collaboration including trade, culture, and international diplomacy. The ambassador stressed that these efforts reflect a deeper commitment to building bridges of understanding and trust, demonstrating that distance and geography are no barriers to meaningful partnership.

Concluding his remarks, Ambassador Jimenez underscored that Peru and Kuwait

continue to walk this path of collaboration with renewed determination. He highlighted that the milestone serves as an encouragement to further strengthen bilateral relations, ensuring that the partnership remains vibrant, forward-looking, and mutually beneficial for both nations in the decades to come.

The event was attended by ambassadors of Latin American countries accredited to Kuwait and other dignitaries, where Assistant Foreign Minister for American Affairs, Nawaf Al-Ahmad, who was the chief guest, praised the relations between Kuwait and Peru, describing them as historic, strong, and friendly.

Recalling key events and milestones that have marked the friendship of both peoples over the past fifty years, Al-Ahmad said: "Foremost among them was Peru's courageous support for Kuwait's

just cause during the brutal Iraqi invasion, and the subsequent cooperation and coordination in international forums, especially during Peru's non-permanent membership in the UN Security Council in 2018 and 2019.

"Our strong and solid bilateral relations span many fields of mutual cooperation, including trade, investment, culture, and energy. This gives strong momentum to continue supporting and advancing our shared commitment to further enhance cooperation for the benefit of both nations.

Congratulating Peru on the successful issuance of the joint commemorative postage stamp with Kuwait, Al-Ahmad said: "What we see in this design is not just a stamp, but a symbol of deeper meaning—where Kuwait's Red Palace meets Peru's Real Felipe Fortress in an image that reflects the convergence of two histories and civilizations despite the geographic distance."

He added: "This stamp immortalizes a new chapter of cooperation and friendship," reaffirming the commitment of both countries to continue building bridges of understanding and joint work for the good of their peoples.

Al-Ahmad concluded: "I am confident that our bilateral relations will continue in the future with the same constructive spirit that has characterized them over the past five decades, serving the interests of both countries and their peoples."



IBPC Kuwait attends ICC Global Business Summit in Mumbai

The Indian Business and Professional Council (IBPC) Kuwait joined global leaders at the Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) Global Business Summit, held on 18th and 19th September in Mumbai, commemorating ICC's centennial as India's oldest chamber, founded in 1925 in Kolkata.

A highlight of the summit was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the ICC and IBPC Kuwait. The agreement was formalized by Abhyudaya Jindal, President of ICC and Managing Director of Jindal Stainless, and Kaizar T. Shakir, Hon. Chairman of IBPC along with Suresh K. P., Hon Secretary of IBPC and Sunil Arora, Hon. Joint Secretary of IBPC Kuwait.

The MoU establishes a framework for closer cooperation in trade promotion, investment facilitation, technology exchange, consultancy services, and joint business delegations. It also envisions exhibitions, buyer-seller meets, seminars, and workshops designed to deepen economic and professional ties between India and Kuwait.

The IBPC Kuwait delegation of over 20 members actively engaged with prominent business consortiums and leaders, including Saqer Y. Alrashoud, Chairman of the Cleaning

Companies Association Kuwait, and Abdul Rahman Alhouti, Attorney & Managing Partner of Dar Al Muhamma, Kuwait, who also attended the Summit.

Reflecting its vision that India's future rests with young business leaders, the IBPC Executive Committee met with several next-generation visionaries during the conference. These included Ameya Prabhu, Chairperson of Aarna Holdings; Ms. Adwaita Nair, CEO of Nykaa Fashion; Parth

Jindal, Managing Director of JSW Cement & JSW Paints; and Joy Kotak, Co-Head of Kotak 811. All warmly accepted IBPC's invitation to visit Kuwait for the upcoming industry-specific conferences, a move that highlights Kuwait's role as a dynamic hub for trade and cultural exchange.

The IBPC Kuwait delegation emphasized the broader significance of the summit, saying, "Following the historic visit of India's Honorable Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, to Kuwait

in December 2024, our nations have forged transformative bilateral agreements that continue to strengthen trade, commerce, cultural exchange, and people-to-people connections."

Chairman of IBPC Kuwait, went on to say, "This agreement reflects our shared vision to build stronger economic bridges between India and Kuwait. By fostering dialogue and business linkages, we aim to empower entrepreneurs and investors to explore high-growth sectors and create sustainable partnerships."

Echoing this sentiment, Jindal added, "India and Kuwait share strong economic and cultural bonds. This MoU is a vital step toward deepening our partnership, connecting businesses, and unlocking opportunities in trade, investment, and innovation." The ICC's centenary summit was supported by the Ministry of External Affairs, the Ministry of Commerce, and the state governments of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Haryana, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh.

The active participation of IBPC Kuwait in this historic event reaffirmed its mission to foster partnerships, dialogue, and progress. This role continues to inspire pride among its members, the Indian diaspora, and Kuwaiti business partners alike.



GCC tops Global South in providing humanitarian support

Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Jassim Al-Budaiwi, said the GCC countries collectively are the fourth-largest donor of humanitarian and relief aid worldwide, contributing US\$14 billion in assistance between 2020 and 2025.

Speaking at the Doha Forum for Peace and Development, held on the sidelines of the 80th UN General Assembly, Al-Budaiwi stressed that peace and development are inseparable, saying the absence of one

undermines the other. He highlighted that in 2024 alone, GCC countries contributed over \$3 billion, ranking first among Global South donors according to data from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA).

Al-Budaiwi also cited major humanitarian initiatives, including Saudi Arabia's King Salman Center which donated \$25 million to the World Food Program for Yemen, the UAE's \$828 million aid package for Gaza, and Kuwait's hosting of the 2018 Iraq



Reconstruction Conference. He further pointed to the GCC's role in diplomacy and

mediation, including efforts in the Russia-Ukraine crisis, ceasefire initiatives in Gaza, US-Iran dialogue, Sudan conflict resolution, and regional reconciliation with Syria.

Al-Budaiwi praised Qatar's organization of the forum, underscoring the importance of dialogue, pluralism, and humanitarian engagement in addressing today's transnational challenges. He affirmed the GCC's vision to remain a hub for trade, culture, and dialogue while serving humanity through practical solutions.

LuLu World Food Festival introduces global flavors to Kuwait



LuLu Hypermarket has launched its much-anticipated two-week World Food Festival, which kicked off on September 24, across all Lulu outlets in Kuwait. The festive curtain-raiser took place on September 24 at Lulu Hypermarket Al Rai, with South Indian film star Aneswara Rajan adding a touch of glamour to the occasion in the presence of Lulu Kuwait's top management and representatives from the event sponsors to mark the beginning of the celebrations.

Later in the day, the festival spirit and the excitement spread to Lulu Fahaheel, where a special event featuring the inauguration of the biggest burger was held in the presence of Lulu management and senior officials from Seara, one of the key sponsors.

The festival brings shoppers an exceptional chance to enjoy exclusive deals and discounts on everything from daily groceries, farm-fresh fruits and vegetables, and high-quality meat

and seafood, to chilled and frozen delights, dairy products, home appliances, and must-have kitchen essentials. To make the festival even more exciting, Lulu has lined up a series of interactive competitions and contests designed for all age groups.

At the Al Rai outlet, children can showcase their creativity in a lively burger-making competition; while aspiring chefs can take

part in the 'Make Your Signature Dish' contest. Winners walked away with valuable prizes, and the children who participated in the Burger Competition have received their consolation prizes. Across other Lulu branches, a variety of unique activities and competitions continue to keep the festive spirit alive throughout the two-week celebration

Adding flavor to the festival, Lulu is presenting

themed highlights such as Global Foodie (World Cuisines), Healthy Eats (Salads, Cheese & Olives), Meet a Meat, Go Fish, The Best Bake, Snack Time, Biryani World, Desi Dhaba, Cake & Cookies, Naadan Thattukada, Arabian Delights & More. Among the festival's most anticipated attractions is the Global Cuisine Food Street, where visitors can embark on a culinary journey and savor flavors from every corner of the world. Adding to the experience, specially curated counters featuring aromatic coffees, premium dried fruits, and a rich selection of nuts will be showcased across all outlets, making the food festival a true feast for the senses.

The festival is made possible with the support of several renowned sponsors. With its blend of food promotions, entertainment, and global flavors, Lulu's World Food Festival promises a memorable shopping and dining experience for families and food enthusiasts across Kuwait.



NHRC launches safety campaign targeting delivery drivers

National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) concluded its occupational safety campaign for home-delivery motorcycle drivers, which aimed to raise awareness on the rights of drivers and to ensure their safety at work.

The event, held under the patronage and attendance of Minister Plenipotentiary Anas Al-Shaheen, who also heads the Commission's tripartite committee, marked the second consecutive year that the campaign was being held in cooperation with the General Traffic Department of the Ministry of Interior and the Occupational Health Sector of the Ministry of Health.

In his address to the gathering Al-Shaheen praised the campaign calling it a model of cooperation between national institutions and the private sector, highlighting the role of Jahez Company in supporting the initiative. He stressed that such efforts reflect Kuwait's firm commitment to the rights of laborers and to providing a safe and fair working environment that protects the dignity of workers.

The campaign, which reached around 40,000 drivers, led to greater awareness among drivers



on the need to comply with safety measures and stronger company engagement to the recommendations made during the safety campaign.

Jahez supported the initiative by offering valuable awards, including cars, motorcycles, and cash prizes, as motivation for drivers to follow safety procedures.

Speaking on the occasion, Operations Director at Jahez, Nasser Al-Qatami emphasized that protecting rights of drivers and their safety is essential to the delivery sector's success and affirmed the company's commitment to future partnerships in promoting human rights.

Shagaya and Abdaliya projects drive Kuwait's clean energy strategy

Minister of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy, Finance, and State for Economic Affairs and Investment, Dr. Subaih Al-Mukhaizeem, highlighted that the Shagaya and Abdaliya renewable energy projects are central to Kuwait's clean energy strategy, welcoming Chinese investment and expertise and expressing hope for expanded cooperation across multiple sectors, Al Jarida newspaper reported.

The minister's remarks came during a reception held for a high-level Chinese delegation, headed by First Deputy Governor of Shanghai Province Zhang Jingang, and including Vice Chairman of the State Power Investment Corporation (SPIC) Tamin Haibin.

The meeting was attended by Undersecretary of the Ministry Dr. Adel Al-Zamil, Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs for Asian Affairs Ambassador Samih Johar Hayat, and several senior Ministry officials.

In his speech, Minister Al-Mukhaizeem emphasized that the meeting builds on His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's visit to Beijing in 2023



and the comprehensive cooperation agenda established with President Xi Jinping.

He highlighted the significant progress in bilateral relations, notably the signing of the technical arrangements agreement in March 2025 and the framework agreement for joint project development with SPIC and the Kuwait Investment Authority in July 2025. These agreements detail technical aspects for joint cooperation in renewable energy, in line with Kuwaiti leadership's directives to accelerate major development projects with Beijing.

Minister Al-Mukhaizeem expressed Kuwait's appreciation for the Chinese delegation and Ambassador Hayat, stressing that the visit reinforces friendship and advances the strategic partnership between the two countries, laying the groundwork for further collaboration across energy, investment, and development initiatives.

There is No Such Thing as Inevitable

“Every doctrine of inevitability carries a weaponized virus of moral nihilism programmed to target human agency and delete resistance and creativity from the text of human possibility.” — Shoshana Zuboff



By **Nada Faris**
Special to The Times Kuwait

Advocates of unregulated AI usage often tell me that these services are “inevitable.” They say, “Look at history. This is progress. We can’t stop it. It’s the future.”

I just finished reading a book that tackles the subject of human progress and its impact on our lives. In *Human Race: 10 Centuries of Change on Earth*, Ian Mortimer highlights the three most pivotal transformations in each century from the eleventh to the twentieth. In retrospect, these evolutions seem inevitable. The truth, rather, is that each moment provides people with choices, and the accumulation of their decisions finally tips the scale of change in one direction or another.

For example, today it is inconceivable for us to imagine a life that isn’t governed by our watches, but before the popularization of clocks in the fifteenth century, humans related to time differently: they talked about the crowing of the crow; or when the shadow of the sun cast its mass on a particular monument; or even after singing a recognizable song 12 times. For a large part of human history, time was relative. Yet, neither the invention of the clock nor the popularization of its uses was inevitable. In fact, the secularization and standardization of time directly confronted humans’ core beliefs about the creation of the world and humanity’s place within it, for people used to relate to duration as only a gift from God. Everything was deemed as sacred from the division of the day into light and dark, or the week into times of rest and times of work, and so on.

But the popularization of clocks made it possible to universalize our perceptions of time and our experiences within it. Hence, one small



invention helped to rewrite what it means to be human and catalyze our understanding of humanity in profane terms, which became the building block for more secular transformations in the future.

Our adoption of AI technology will undergo a similarly major transformation of human perception and experiences, and it will forcibly unravel centuries-old ideas and beliefs that we’ve treated as untouchable for most of human history. However, neither the trajectory nor the speed of this transformation is “inevitable,” because nothing ever is. All our individual choices, whether conscious or unconscious, reinforce belief systems that positively impact some of us while negatively impacting others. There are, in other words, no entirely “good” choices, only those that align with our values at a particular stage in the cycle of our human evolution.

So, instead of apathetically conceding that AI is a technology of our human future, it might be more beneficial for us to ask who gains and who loses from today’s unfettered technology. Perhaps, more importantly, we can actively lend our voices and effort toward regulating this technology and revising the place of middle—and lower-class humans in

the digital World to Come.

Because, unlike the clock, AI is not a unit of standardization that merely challenges our relationship to our ancient mythologies. To stay with this metaphor, I’d say that AI is Moloch, a suprahuman entity demanding boundless sacrifices. Earlier this year, the former CEO of Google spoke to the American Congress about AI’s demands for electricity. Eric Schmidt claimed that AI-powered companies are currently consuming about 3% of America’s electricity, yet by 2030, AI supercomputers will have consumed 99% of all of America’s current power grids. And rather than discussing the importance of pacing this technology, regulations to ensure safe usage, or even revising the value of human lives and their relationship to needed resources, he demanded that Congress provide AI companies with “energy in all forms. Renewable, non-renewable, whatever. It needs to be there. And it needs to be there quickly.”

If American lawmakers concede and prioritize AI’s leviathan demands over human beings’ essential needs, it is not because this outcome was inevitable. Tech billionaires know this; thus, they lobby, they speak to Congress, and some even resort to illegal means just to power their voracious machines. The Guardian, for example,

broke a news story about how Elon Musk is using illegal generators to supercharge xAI that houses Grok (Twitter or X’s artificial language model).

Tech billionaires know that nothing is inevitable, and if they want to actualize their vision for The World to Come (a world that rewrites what it means to be human and redraws the map of the world) then they will need to keep applying constant pressure on lawmakers and distracting the voting public with shiny new toys (like here, try taking a selfie and transforming it into Ghibli style art! Ooh! Shiny!). Meanwhile, they are siphoning necessary resources, changing laws, laying off droves of people without any consideration as to how they would make a living or provide for their families, and speeding up the rate of their technological innovations despite all the warning signs pointing to human and ecological disasters. They’re doing all this in a world that is seeing more deaths from combat, more legal dispossession, more refugees, and climate crises.

In *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for A Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*, Shoshana Zuboff writes, “Every doctrine of inevitability carries a weaponized virus of moral nihilism programmed to target human agency and delete resistance and creativity from the text of human possibility. Inevitability rhetoric is a cunning fraud designed to render us helpless and passive in the face of implacable forces that are and must always be indifferent to the merely human.”

AI tycoons know where to invest their effort. What about us? Are the stakes clear enough to spur us into collective action and protect the world for our children?

*Nada Faris is a writer and literary translator. Her latest work is a translation of Bothayna Al-Essa’s novel *Lost in Mecca*, which was shortlisted for The 2024 Saif Ghobash Banipal Prize for Arabic Literary Translation and named a notable translation by “World Literature Today.” Website: www.nadafaris.com Instagram: @thenadafaris*

EXCLUSIVE TO THE TIMES KUWAIT

When Governments Put a Price on Everything



Katharina Pistor

Professor of Comparative Law at Columbia Law School, and the author of *The Code of Capital: How the Law Creates Wealth and Inequality*

US President Donald Trump recently announced that professional work visas (H-1Bs) for the United States will now cost sponsoring institutions \$100,000. This is not a fee; it is the price that any company or university that wants to hire a foreigner must pay. Visas have become transactions, and so, too, has naturalization: the White House is selling ‘Trump gold cards’ that grant a quick path to permanent residency, and eventual citizenship, for \$1 million.

Much else is now for sale. The ability to sell goods in the US is itself now for sale, subject to a price that varies by country and depends on Trump’s judgment about how deserving or unworthy that country is. Everywhere you look,



government actions are becoming transactions with a price tag. Columbia University, where I work, had to pay \$200 million just to reinstate already approved government research funding.

Similarly, the Trump administration denied big US law firms access to government buildings and clients unless they offered

hundreds of millions dollars’ worth of legal services for causes that Trump cares about. Running a research university is no longer a question of competing for government funding on the merits, and operating law firms is no longer a matter of offering independent professional services. Instead, these activities

are subject to presidential approval and one’s ability to pay the price he demands.

Pricing everything is not unique to the Trump administration. It is the logical result of seeing the state as a business enterprise. In a February 1981 executive order, President Ronald Reagan required all major regulations to undergo an impact assessment. ‘Major’ was defined as any regulation that would cost the economy \$100 million or more annually; significantly “increase costs or prices for consumers, individual industries, Federal, state, or local government agencies, or geographic regions”; or might adversely affect “competition, employment, investment, productivity, innovation, or the ability of US-based enterprises to compete with foreign-based enterprises in domestic or export markets.” In other words, the government would no longer govern for the people, but for business.

True, it is one thing to assess the cost of government regulation largely in monetary terms, and quite another matter to sell government services for a price. Still, the underlying logic is similar.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

Stylish Escape at Nikki Beach Marbella

By Nourah Khan
Travel Writer
The Times Kuwait

Nikki Beach is not just a beach club; it is a lifestyle. Since opening its first location in Miami in 1998, the brand has expanded across the globe to destinations such as Saint-Tropez, Ibiza, Dubai, Mallorca, and Marbella. Built on the philosophy of 'Celebration of Life', Nikki Beach blends music, dining, fashion, and hospitality into a seamless experience of relaxed luxury.

The concept itself was born out of love and memory. Founder Jack Penrod created Nikki Beach in Miami as a heartfelt tribute to his daughter Nicole, who passed away at a young age. What began as a single beachside venue in Miami has since transformed into a global lifestyle brand, with each location carrying the same essence: to celebrate life through

sunbeds, shaded by flowing white drapes, with the Mediterranean breeze setting the tone for pure relaxation. The vibe was sophisticated but never pretentious—international guests enjoying the sun, soft music playing in the background, and staff who anticipated needs before I even voiced them. The attention to detail impressed me: chilled water offered the moment I arrived, perfectly adjusted umbrellas for shade, and small gestures that made a big difference. It was luxury without excess, elegance with ease.



joy, connection, and meaningful moments.

On Spain's southern coast, Nikki Beach Marbella stands as one of the brand's most iconic destinations. Set on the golden sands of the Costa del Sol, this beachfront property perfectly captures the spirit of Marbella's vibrant yet refined lifestyle. The first impression is striking: crisp white cabanas, elegant wooden accents, a sparkling turquoise pool, and an atmosphere that feels both glamorous and serene. From the moment I entered, the service reflected true hospitality—professional, attentive, and delivered with a warm smile that instantly made me feel at home.

Spending the day here is a journey through comfort and style. I settled into a plush

Dining at Nikki Beach Marbella was one of the highlights of our visit. The menu reflects the region's Mediterranean bounty, featuring fresh seafood, vibrant salads, and globally inspired creations. My son truly enjoyed the variety of seafood dishes, from the classic Andalusian prawns pil-pil to beautifully presented sushi platters. As for myself, being vegetarian, I was delighted to find that the kitchen crafted a



selection of creative plant-based options just for me. Fresh heirloom tomato and burrata salad, colorful grilled vegetable platters, and a light quinoa salad bursting with flavor made my meal just as memorable. The balance between indulgence and lightness was perfect, proving that Nikki Beach Marbella caters gracefully to every palate.

After lunch, I took time to stroll around and explore the property further. The boutique



was an elegant extension of the Nikki Beach identity, filled with chic resort wear, statement accessories, and limited-edition collaborations with international designers. I left with thoughtful keepsakes—a stylish beach hat emblazoned with the Nikki Beach logo, a refined beach bag, and a few elegant accessories—that will always remind me of this day.

As the afternoon unfolded, the atmosphere subtly shifted. The music gained

a livelier rhythm, with a saxophonist joining the DJ near the pool. Groups of friends clapped along, while visitors captured photos in the club's most iconic white corners and décor. Yet the sophistication of the venue never faltered. I found myself smiling at the energy in the air—a blend of celebration and serenity. By late afternoon, the sun dipped lower, casting golden light across the Mediterranean. Reclining on my sunbed, I watched the horizon shimmer, and felt time slow down.

What makes Nikki Beach Marbella truly special is not just the setting or the food, but the feeling it creates. There is a soulful



quality here, a reminder to slow down and celebrate life's simple joys in a beautiful way. From poolside relaxation to gourmet dining and stylish shopping, everything is designed to elevate the experience without ever losing its sense of authenticity.

As the sun finally set, I felt deeply grateful for the day I had spent here. Nikki Beach Marbella is more than a destination—it is a philosophy of living well, wrapped in elegance and joy. For those seeking not just a beach escape but a lifestyle experience, this is where the art of living beautifully truly comes to life.

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

EXCLUSIVE TO THE TIMES KUWAIT

Violence Against Health Workers Must End



By Adaeze Oreh

Commissioner for Health in Rivers State, Nigeria, a Kofi Annan Global Health Leadership fellow, and an Aspen Global Innovators senior fellow.

This summer, a male patient at Specialist Hospital Damaturu in Nigeria's Yobe State physically assaulted a female health-care worker following a dispute over the provision of medical attention. Sadly, this is a relatively common experience for health-care workers in Nigeria, especially women. Surveys conducted in hospitals in Kaduna state and Abia state found that 64 percent and 88 percent of health workers, respectively, had experienced workplace violence. During my own first year of clinical practice in Nigeria, when I was just 24 years old, I was attacked by a parent in the children's ward where I worked.

Nigeria is not alone. Reports of violence against health-care workers have been on the rise over the last five years in a wide range of countries, including Australia, China, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Poland, Slovakia, Spain, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States. A 2019 study showed that 11 percent of nurses in Italy had endured physical violence at work in the previous year, and 4 percent were threatened with a firearm. About half of all nurses reported experiencing verbal aggression.

Such reporting tells only part of the story. The belief that violence is 'part of the job', together with the lack of protocols for handling attacks and the empathy of many in the health-care field, discourages reporting. When I was attacked in 2004—narrowly avoiding a severe head injury, thanks only to the swift intervention of another patient's relative—I eschewed legal prosecution out of sympathy for the perpetrator's family, which was, after all, grappling with a child's illness and subsequent death. It is likely that fewer than half of all victims of violence in health-care settings report the incidents.

With this in mind, the World Health Organization estimates that as many as 38 percent of health-care workers suffer some



“ Worker-protection laws must be enhanced. Institutions must implement zero-tolerance guidelines, with clear protocols for monitoring workplace safety, reporting and investigating incidents, and bringing legal action against offenders. ”

form of physical violence, perpetrated mostly by patients and visitors, at some point in their careers. This figure does not cover the verbal threats and intimidation many workers face as they carry out life-saving work, often under high-stress, low-resource conditions.

Several factors contribute to the violence. Health-care workers are often younger women. They must work both day and night shifts in environments that are accessible to the general public, including people who have consumed drugs or alcohol, and people suffering from psychiatric illnesses. Moreover, staff and resource shortages mean that health-care workers are often overworked, underpaid, and lack access to the tools they need to deliver quality or timely care. Long wait times increase stress and frustration among patients (and their relatives), who often expect miracles,

even when they present late for treatment. Add to that poor communication and weak workplace protections, and violence becomes a constant peril.

Risks to health-care workers are particularly acute in disaster, conflict, and other humanitarian settings, where they may also become the targets of political or communal violence. During the COVID-19 pandemic, social isolation, misinformation about the virus, and the 'dehumanization' of health-care workers—who were often viewed as resources, not people—contributed to a sharp uptick in violence.

As a result of these experiences, health-care workers often deal with anxiety, depression, job burnout, post-traumatic stress disorder, and other mental-health conditions. One study found that some 76 percent of psychiatric

nurses who suffered from workplace violence subsequently experienced depressive symptoms.

As health workers' well-being declines, so does the care that patients receive. Increased absenteeism and turnover compound the problem, especially as fewer people choose to enter the health-care field. At a time when the world is facing a shortage of health-care workers—projected to reach ten million by 2030—this poses a direct threat to public health.

Protecting health-care workers will require a variety of interventions. For starters, violence prevention and response should be integrated into workers' education and training. They should be taught communication strategies for de-escalating tense situations, and self-defense techniques to use if violence erupts. Team-based training can strengthen coordinated responses, enabling other workers to intervene when their colleagues are targeted.

Furthermore, the scope and enforcement of existing worker-protection laws must be enhanced. Institutions must implement zero-tolerance guidelines, with clear protocols for monitoring workplace safety, reporting and investigating incidents, and bringing legal action against offenders. The swift arrest and prosecution of perpetrators, as seen after the recent attack at Specialist Hospital Damaturu, can act as a deterrent. Hiring trained security personnel would also help, as would the implementation of reliable communication systems that enable workers to sound the alarm when their safety is threatened.

Meanwhile, a concerted effort must be made to address health-worker shortages, such as through task-shifting or -sharing, which entails the partial or complete redistribution of certain responsibilities to less qualified personnel, so that highly qualified workers can focus on tasks that require their expertise. Already, this approach has improved service delivery in a number of areas, including HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, hypertension, diabetes, mental health, eyecare, maternal and child health, sexual and reproductive health, and emergency care, in 23 Sub-Saharan African countries.

All people have a right to safety in their workplace. When we fail to uphold this right for health-care workers, we hurt not only them, but also the health of the public they serve.

Sustainable Tourism Preserves, Promotes Cultural Heritage

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Underlining Kuwait's credentials as a cultural heritage destination for tourists, Secretary-General of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL) Dr. Mohammed Al-Jassar recently stated that Kuwait aims to protect and preserve its heritage archeological sites and architecture, through innovative techniques and strategies. He added that the goal is to turn these destinations into sustainable cultural tourism destinations, enabling them to be registered on the World Heritage List, and find their place among leading global heritage sites.

Failaka Island, home to one of Kuwait's oldest cultural heritages, traces its history back to the pre-Islamic era, and further back to the Hellenistic period in the third century BCE. Newer excavations and the unearthing of older artefacts and building foundations are pushing the date of the Island's occupancy to the much earlier Dilmun civilization, more than 4,000 years ago.

The announcement by NCCAL in March this year about the discovery on Failaka Island, of pottery remains from the early Islamic period more than 1,400 years, and an ancient water-well and foundations of a building that from the pre-Islamic era, buttresses Failaka's claim to antiquity. Additionally, last November, the

NCCAL confirmed that a joint Kuwaiti-Danish archeological team had discovered a nearly complete temple foundation from the Bronze Age Dilmun civilization in Failaka.

Despite ongoing archeological findings on Failaka Island, in August last year, the government reportedly conducted a comprehensive survey of the island and removed encroachments on state property. The move has been described as a precursor to implementing several development projects that aim to transform Failaka Island into an entertainment and tourism destination.

Attracting tourists to cultural and heritage destinations, while closely linked to social and

economic development of the region and prosperity of local communities, is also tied to several negative impacts. Experts, citing prior instances, warn that despite early economic advantages of tourism flows to heritage sites, such sites eventually become inundated by tourists and susceptible to negative consequences, including overcrowding, congestion, and even deterioration of the cultural sites due to excessive and uncontrolled tourism.

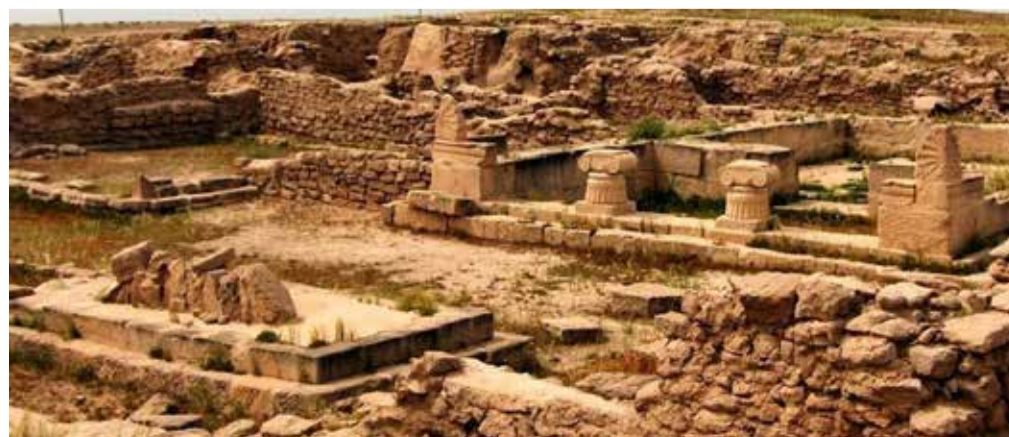
Demands of mass tourism also increases stress on local infrastructure, the costs for which are borne by the local communities, while price inflation for services and real estate in the region

often make these destinations inaccessible and unaffordable for many in the host community. Overtourism also significantly increases carbon emissions that undermine the environmental sustainability of heritage locations, and raises concerns on the viability of these ancient sites being safely passed on to future generations.

However, on the brighter side, implementing sustainable tourism practices have been found to substantially mitigate if not prevent the negative effects of mass tourism. But such positive practices would need buy-in and effective engagement from all stakeholders in the tourism sector.

This would entail sustained government oversight, integrated frameworks for regulating tourist traffic, and increased collaboration and sharing of resources, knowledge, and expertise between the public and private sectors, with involvement of local communities.

Through a positive and sustainable multi-stakeholder approach it is possible to reverse the process of heritage sites becoming a prey to volume tourism, and make them a value proposition benefitting tourists and local communities. These endeavors can transform the transactional engagement of mass tourism to a unique, personalized, and emotional experience for tourists locally, globally, and, for generations well into the future.



EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Turning the Tide Back Toward Peace in the Middle East



José Manuel Albares Bueno

Spain's Minister for Foreign Affairs, European Union, and Cooperation



The 2025 United Nations General Assembly opened with a major step toward implementing a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict: recognition of the State of Palestine. Recognition is not merely symbolic. It is a prerequisite to any eventual peace. Spain took this step in May 2024, alongside Ireland, Norway, and Slovenia, and now others, including Australia, Britain, Canada, and Portugal – are following suit.

But there is little to celebrate. The spiral of violence unleashed by the heinous terrorist attacks of October 7, 2023, continues unabated. In addition to daily massacres in Gaza and hostages still being held, instability is rising across the Middle East. Israel's unacceptable bombing of Qatar on September 9 is among the most serious challenges to international law and the United Nations Charter that the international community has seen.

Equally unacceptable is the annihilation of the Palestinian people and their legitimate aspirations to live in peace and security alongside their Israeli neighbors. This week in New York, we all have a collective responsibility to ensure that the latest aggravation of the conflict becomes a turning point. We must start to generate positive dynamics, making this a moment for action and for hope. That means stopping the war and standing up firmly for peace, justice, and dignity.

Since October 2023, Spain has been courageous and decisive in its response. We were very clear from the beginning that this was not just another crisis, and that we must pursue the solution that is widely accepted as the only way forward: two states, side by side. We called for an international conference on the matter, and it is now being held this week in New York. We also called for effective collective action, and this led to the launch of the Global Alliance for the Implementation of the Two-State Solution. And we maintained Euro-Arab dialogue through the Madrid+ Group, a forum to build political momentum for the conference this month.

Spain has also pursued three key objectives at the national level. We have joined the arms embargo to curtail the flow of weapons to Israel. We have imposed sanctions on those who violate human rights, breach international

law, and work against implementation of the two-state solution (such as through ongoing settlement activities). And we have maintained our support for the Palestinian people and the Palestinian Authority (PA), our partner for peace.

This week in New York, we will pursue every possible channel to create the conditions for a sustainable peace. We are also leveraging an important new instrument: the New York Declaration. Endorsed by the General Assembly

Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees ministerial meeting. We will continue to support UNRWA as the agency with the strongest presence on the ground, and as the one most capable of providing humanitarian assistance. At the same time, we will reject any proposal that does not comply with humanitarian principles.

Implementing the two-state solution requires keeping the PA afloat. It is already extremely fragile, since Israel's withholding of tax revenues

Saudi Arabia, Norway, and France, this initiative will mobilize additional financial support to shore up the PA's budget.

While in New York, we will continue to insist that the European Union has the capability, willingness, and responsibility to activate all means at its disposal in the pursuit of peace. Following recent announcements by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, we expect some progress, such as a suspension of the EU-Israel Association Agreement (in compliance with the International Court of Justice's July 2024 Advisory Opinion); additional sanctions on Hamas, violent Israeli settlers, and other spoilers of the two-state solution; and firm decisions on EU trade with Israel's West Bank settlements. The 2025 UNGA is not a finish line, but rather a point of departure for ultimately achieving a two-state solution. That objective will continue to guide us as we deploy all available political and diplomatic tools, with the new Global Alliance serving as the implementing body of the New York Declaration.

Against the daily catastrophe in Gaza, we can still find hope in what we have achieved over the last year. Many around the world are ready to mobilize for a future of peace. Spain will continue to invest itself in the two-state solution, working at the national, European, and multilateral levels, and availing ourselves of every diplomatic, economic, and security tool available.

“ The New York Declaration, endorsed by the General Assembly on 12 September, commits us to taking tangible, time-bound, and irreversible steps toward implementing the two-state solution ”

on 12 September, it commits us to taking tangible, time-bound, and irreversible steps toward implementing the two-state solution. Governments will be taking concrete actions to realize the vision of an independent, sovereign, viable, and democratic State of Palestine living in peace and security with Israel.

On the humanitarian front, we are co-chairing, together with Jordan and Brazil, the UN

has pushed it to the verge of financial collapse. Fortunately, a UN Ad Hoc Liaison Committee will give us the opportunity to work together with major donors and international organizations toward reinvigorating the PA's viability and institutional capacity. We will even go one step further, using this high-level international gathering to build support for the 'Emergency Coalition for Palestine'. Launched together with

When Governments Put a Price on Everything

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

In both cases, the state subordinates its own policies to the price mechanism; or, as Karl Polanyi famously put it, the entire society is subjected to the market principle. What's the problem, though? Business is supposed to be more efficient than the government.

One obvious problem is that paying for a government action is awfully close to corruption. Those who study the issue argue that in cases where government services are need- or merit-based, paying money to a government official amounts to a bribe. This problem can easily be avoided, however, if payment is sanctioned by law and goes into designated

state coffers; not into bureaucrats' pockets. But this description is too simple. Governments could simply declare that officials may charge money for their services, and 'corruption' would go away. The deeper question is whether government services should be allocated by price mechanisms at all. Does this practice not violate some fundamental principles of state-citizen relations?

Constitutional democracies, born of the Enlightenment, were founded on the idea of a social contract, whereby 'the people' bestow certain limited powers on the state in exchange for, at a minimum, protection against external and internal threats, or, more expansively, advancing their prosperity. But how much

security or prosperity citizens are entitled to, in what form and under what conditions, is a question of political contestation. If successful, such debates inevitably result in compromise. The state, so conceived, embodies the norms and ideas that determine the ends of government, not just its means.

If history is any guide, running the state as if it were the 'ultimate corporation', as Elon Musk put it while he still enjoyed Trump's favor, is not a good idea. During the age of colonialism, corporations were empowered to govern colonized people, as in the infamous cases of Britain's East India Company, which conquered and ruled much of India, and Belgian King Leopold II's Compagnie du Congo

Belge. These 'company states' were even more ruthless than traditional states in exploiting local people, disregarding their cultural and religious preferences, and pushing profitability beyond the limits of what people could bear. In India, this resulted in a rebellion that prompted the British Crown to take control over the subcontinent in 1857.

The enduring lesson is that there is no limit to greed. What has kept state power from subsuming society are checks and balances and bills of rights that tie the purpose of government to the interests of the people. This is the logic of public institutions, not private entities. If it breaks down, the ultimate corporation will dictate all.

Dry eyes, a common but rarely reported eye condition

Tears, usually associated with emotional displays, serve other important functions in the eye, including lubricating the eyes to maintain their moistness, protecting them from infections and irritants such as dust and dirt; and helping to focus light into the eye for better sight. Every time the eye blinks, the lacrimal glands located above the eyes secrete a thin layer of tears called a 'tear film' evenly across the clear outer layer of the eye, the cornea.

The tear film is a three-layered fluid that consists of an outermost lipid (oily) layer, a middle aqueous (watery) layer and an innermost mucin layer. The outer layer keeps tears from drying up too quickly and makes the surface of the eyes smooth; the watery middle layer, rich in proteins and electrolytes, keeps the eyes wet and nourishes the eye tissue. The inner mucin layer helps the tear film stick to the corneal surface.

Failure of the tear film to function effectively as intended can result in a condition referred to as Dry Eye Syndrome. In some people, the cause of dry eyes could arise from both insufficient and ineffective tear production. While oily film deposits produced in the eye could clog the tear ducts and prevent sufficient quantities of tear film reaching the cornea, weaknesses in any of the three layers of the tear film could lead to their ineffectiveness.

Among the many reasons that could cause tear film dysfunction are aging, hormone changes, increased tear evaporation, autoimmune diseases, certain medical conditions, medications, and vitamin A

deficiency. Some of the signs and symptoms of dry eyes, which usually affect both eyes, include a stinging, burning or scratchy sensation in the eyes; stringy mucus around the eyes, blurred vision, a feeling of something lodged in the eye, redness of eye, difficulty wearing contact lenses, watery eyes, sensitivity to light, and difficulty driving at night, among others.

Dry eyes are aggravated in arid air environments such as in desert areas, at high altitudes, on an airplane, an air-conditioned room, while riding on a bike or with the vehicle windows down, or when viewing digital screens for extended periods. Doctors recommend several precautions that people can take to avoid dry eyes; these include preventing air from blowing directly in the eyes while using hair dryers, heaters, air conditioners or fans; and using a humidifier indoors during the dry winter months.

Taking periodic breaks when engaged in extended periods of focused visual activity such as reading, working on computers, or watching digital screens; blinking the eyes repeatedly for a few seconds to help spread the tears evenly over the eye surface, and closing the eyes for a few minutes at a time to minimize tear evaporation, are also found to be helpful in minimizing the occurrence of dry eyes.

Although a common condition, until recently, it was unclear what proportion of the population suffered from dry eyes, with estimates ranging from 5-50 percent or more. A new study conducted by leading multinational supplier of eye lenses, Bausch + Lomb, and covering over



5,000 people across Europe, the United States, and Saudi Arabia found that 58 percent of the general population experience dry eyes, yet only less than 20 percent of those affected sought professional help.

The study also found that over a third of the people had experienced dry eye symptoms for more than five years before seeking professional help, 20 percent waited for over a year, and nearly 60 percent of dry eye sufferers waited at least four months before seeking professional healthcare help for their symptoms. Additionally, the study revealed that many people do not seek immediate medical help, as they consider dry

eyes as nothing very serious, or as an inevitable part of the aging process that had to be endured.

The study also examined patient-provider interactions, revealing significant variances between countries. For example, in France fewer than half of dry eye sufferers had follow-up visits planned by their healthcare provider, while in Saudi Arabia, the majority, 84 percent, were proactively followed up by their providers.

In the US study, 70 percent lacked knowledge of treatment options; 40 percent were unaware that untreated dry eyes can cause other eye problems and vision loss; and 25 percent visited an eye care provider only every two years or so.

Delay in seeking treatment for dry eyes is concerning, as it is progressive disease and early intervention can prevent a vicious cycle of inflammation. If left untreated, severe dry eyes may lead to eye inflammation, abrasion of the corneal surface, corneal ulcers, vision loss, and decreased quality of life. It is important to visit a health care provider if symptoms of dry eyes persist beyond a week or two; in early stages, treatments can be as simple as making certain lifestyle changes or using eyedrops regularly.

The study revealed the need to educate patients and the public on the causes, consequences and treatment options for dry eyes, as well as the importance of regular eye checks. In addition, it highlighted the importance of supporting healthcare professionals in distinguishing between different types of dry eye conditions and matching treatments appropriately. One person's 'dry eye' can be very different from that of another.

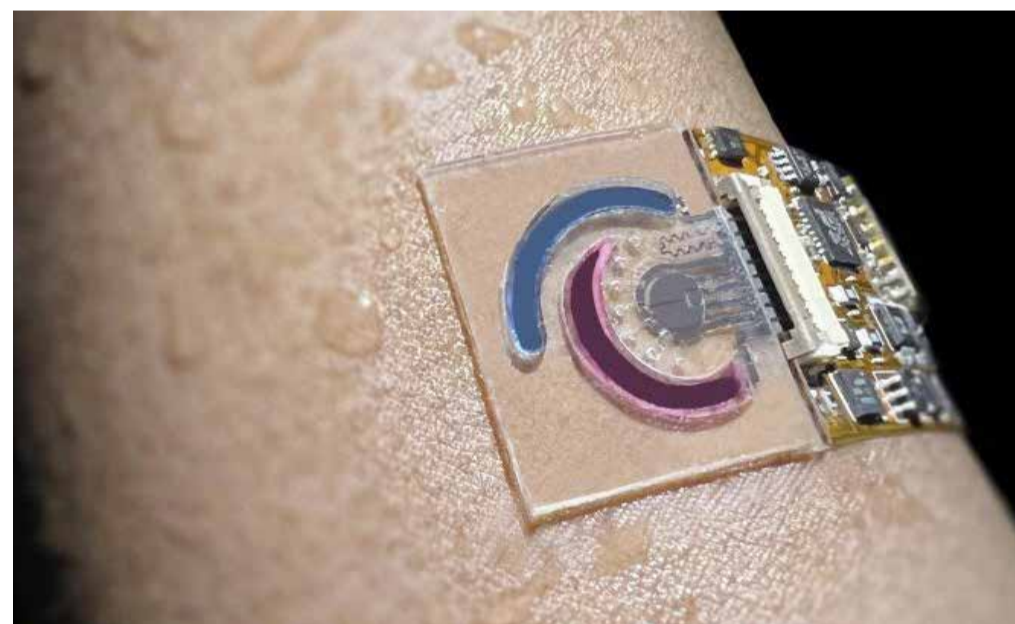
Sweat sensor help determine biological age

Everyone wants to stay healthy and active for as long as possible, but remaining energetic and agile as we age is determined to a large extent by our biological age.

In contrast to chronological age, which measures the period since birth, biological age reflects how fast a person's body is aging.

Resilience of the body to aging can be maintained to a significant extent by our lifestyle choices, including diet, exercise, stress and sleep. Healthy habits have a positive influence on our biological age, while harmful lifestyle choices could accelerate the body's aging process. While calculating the chronological age is a simple as counting the number of years since birth, assessing biological age is a more convoluted process and usually involves tests conducted in a clinical setting.

Biological age is found by examining the functional state of cells, tissues, and organs using biomarkers, including metabolic and epigenetic modifications, as well as physiological functions such as lung capacity, or grip strength. Metabolic markers measure how well the body processes food into energy using key markers such as



blood pressure, blood glucose, triglycerides, high-density lipoprotein cholesterol, and waist size. High levels of these markers can indicate metabolic syndrome, a cluster of conditions that increase risk of heart disease, stroke, and type 2 diabetes.

Epigenetic modifications are reversible chemical or structural changes to DNA and associated proteins that turn genes on or off, altering gene expression without changing the underlying DNA sequence. These changes are influenced by environmental factors and development, and are crucial for cellular

differentiation and function. Key epigenetic mechanisms include DNA methylation—where methyl groups are added to DNA—and histone modification that change the proteins (histones) around which DNA is wrapped affecting the structure of the chromatin,—proteins, RNA, DNA and other material that form the chromosome of organism.

Now researchers at ETH Zurich and Empa, and Hospital Basel in Switzerland, and at Caltech in the United States say they have studied a way to assess biological age through a more precise and simpler technique that determines how young

and resilient our body is. The project aims to determine biological age using new biomarkers in sweat measured through wearable sensors.

Aging is a lifelong process that affects us all. And yet, it is still a poorly understood biological phenomenon. Chronological age, measured in years of lifetime, provides only limited information on the physical condition or a person. Researchers have for long been trying to determine a person's actual biological age, including by analyzing various blood parameters, the so-called molecular biomarkers in the laboratory. Although complex and slow, this process is currently used to determine biological age.

The research team behind the newly launched project, AGE clock for RESilience in Sweat (AGE RESIST), funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF), the organisation mandated by the Swiss Federal Government to support scientific research has developed a convenient portable sensor for sweat analysis that measures new molecular biomarkers in sweat. The indicators are then combined with other physiological parameters to more precisely and quickly determine biological age.

Further developments in the AGE RESIST project could potentially help adapt medical treatments in a personalized, and consequently more effective manner, based on the resilience and biological age of a patient. Additionally, using this method could reduce side effects and risks, while delivering targeted, effective therapies that provide more beneficial health outcomes to the patient.





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UIS students get opportunity to interact with career counsellors



Indus Group, a pioneer and leading organizer of educational exhibitions in India, recently conducted a comprehensive career counseling and guidance session for the students of the United Indian School (UIS) in Jleeb Al Shuyoukh.

The session was designed to equip students with reliable information to make informed choices about their academic and professional futures.

A panel of seasoned career counselors engaged with the students, sharing valuable insights on emerging industry trends, the evolving job market, and future career prospects.

They also offered tailored advice on selecting courses and degrees that match the interests, abilities, and aspirations of the students.

The initiative was well received by the school leadership. The principal of UIS, Mr. Radhakrishnan C., expressed appreciation for Indus Group's efforts to empower students with practical knowledge and real-world perspectives.

He encouraged students to actively participate, ask questions, and seek clarity on their ambitions. The event emphasized not only academic alignment but also the importance of gaining hands-on experience, building professional

networks, and developing transferable skills.

Mr. S. Thiagarajan, Director, Indus Group, reaffirmed the organization's commitment to supporting young learners. He said, "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," he added.

Since its inception in 1995, he said, the Indus Group has established itself as a leading platform for educational engagement. The organization has hosted more than 120 exhibitions across

India and over 150 international events across 20 countries, including 111 India Education Exhibitions worldwide. With its vision to position India as a premier global education hub, Indus Group aspires to organize events in over 50 countries and to facilitate higher education in India for more than 15,000 international students.

The session also featured prominent universities and institutions such as Christ University, RV University, Reva University, Woxsen University, Yenepoya University, Karpagam University, and DC Group of Institutions.

Senior faculty members from these universities -- in addition to S Thiagarajan, Director, Indus Group

the panel included Dr Rajeev PV, Head - Admissions & Global Partnerships, DCSMAT Institutions; Sudhakara M R, Manager - International Admissions & Welfare, REVA University; Dr. K P Venkataswamy, Assistant professor, REVA University; Vinodh Reddy Katta, General Manager, Woxsen University; Dr. Bharat Kumar Assistant Professor, Biotechnology Karpagam Academy of Higher Education; Naseem Banu, Yenepoya; Dr. M Vignesh, Associate Professor, Faculty of Engineering, Karpagam University; Yasin Patel, Head Outreach, RV University; Raghunandan G, PhD, Associate Professor and Associate Dean, Christ University and Pritha Biswas, Associate Professor, Department of Professional Studies, Christ University -- engaged with the students, sharing their expertise and offering further academic and career guidance.

The event concluded successfully, leaving students better informed, more confident, and inspired to pursue their future paths. Indus Group reiterated its mission to bridge the gap between aspiring students and top-tier educational opportunities worldwide, further strengthening its role as a trusted partner in education and career development.



ILOA students get career clarity through Indus Group counseling session



The future felt a little clearer for students of Indian Learners Own Academy (ILOA), Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, recently, as they participated in an interactive career counseling and guidance program organized by Indus Group, one of India's foremost organizers of educational exhibitions.

The event brought together experienced career counselors who engaged students in open discussions about their academic interests, ambitions, and the realities of today's job market.

From understanding industry shifts to exploring emerging career paths, the counselors provided actionable advice. Each student had the opportunity to ask questions and receive personalized guidance, helping them connect their passions with practical academic and career options. ILOA Principal, Mrs. Asha Sharma, praised Indus Group's initiative, noting how it offered students not only direction but also confidence. She encouraged participants to take full advantage of such platforms, reminding them that decisions made today could shape their futures tomorrow.

For Indus Group, this session was another step in its long-standing mission. Since 1995, the organization has hosted more than 120 exhibitions across India and over 150 international events in 20 countries.

Notably, it has held 111 India Education Exhibitions across the globe. With its vision to position India as a world leader in education, the group is working towards organizing events in over 50 countries while attracting more than 15,000 international students to Indian institutions. Speaking at the event, Mr. S. Thiagarajan from Indus Group explained: "Our

mission is to guide and support students so they can make informed, strategic decisions. This is part of our broader goal of promoting education tourism, raising awareness about future careers, and empowering young people to succeed in a globalized world." Adding depth to the program, several renowned Indian universities participated.

Senior faculty members -- in addition to S Thiagarajan, Director, Indus Group the panel included Dr Rajeev PV, Head - Admissions & Global Partnerships, DCSMAT Institutions; Sudhakara M R, Manager - International

Admissions & Welfare, REVA University; Dr. K P Venkataswamy, Assistant professor, REVA University; Vinodh Reddy Katta, General Manager, Woxsen University; Dr. Bharat Kumar Assistant Professor, Biotechnology Karpagam Academy of Higher Education; Naseem Banu, YENEPLOYA; Dr. M Vignesh, Associate Professor, Faculty of Engineering, Karpagam University; Yasin Patel, Head Outreach, RV University; Raghunandan G, PhD, Associate Professor and Associate Dean, Christ University and Pritha Biswas, Associate Professor, Department of Professional Studies, Christ University -- shared insights into higher education opportunities in India, enriching the dialogue and giving students a closer look at academic options.

The event wrapped up on a high note, with students feeling more confident about their academic journeys and professional goals.

By combining counseling, expert advice, and exposure to leading universities, Indus Group once again underscored its role as a bridge between ambition and opportunity, guiding students toward successful futures.

