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THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

An educated and skilled workforce is vital to the social and economic development of nations. Faced with fast changes taking place in academic, technological, economic, societal, and environmental spheres in the 21st century, countries are revamping education to keep pace with these transformations and meet the rapidly evolving demands of marketplaces.

In line with this thinking, Kuwait has made empowering human resources and developing creative human capital a key pillar of its ambitious New Kuwait Vision 2035. Reasoning that effective and sustainable development of human resources begins at the school level, the government is in the process of incorporating learning and teaching reforms in schools, and modernizing the curriculum to keep abreast of global developments.




As part of advancing Kuwait's new education agenda, Minister of Education Sayed Jalal Al-

Tabtabaei is reported to have met early this year with the Director of Education and Skills

Department at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Dr. Andreas Schleicher. The meeting focused on developing a collaboration between Kuwait's Ministry of Education and the Education and Skills Department at OECD, to reorient Kuwait's school curriculum and make it relevant to the global changes underway today.

The OECD collaboration envisions curriculum reforms focused on, among others, improving reading, mathematics, and science skills, and implementing the OECD's 'Programme for International Student Assessment' (PISA)—which measures the ability of 15-year-old school children to use their reading, mathematics and science knowledge and skills to meet real-life challenges—as well as the organization's 'Future of Education and Skills 2030' framework, which aims to build the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that students need in the 21st century.

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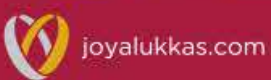
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Hungarian Foreign Minister highlights strengthening ties with Kuwait, GCC

Budapest values partnerships based on mutual respect, rationality, and common sense, avoiding excessive politicization and ideology in international relations - Péter Szijjártó

The Times Kuwait Report

During his visit to Kuwait the Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Péter Szijjártó reaffirmed Hungary's commitment to deepening cooperation with Kuwait, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and the broader Middle East.

The minister's visit coincided with the 29th EU-GCC Joint Council and Ministerial Meeting hosted by Kuwait this week, which was attended by foreign ministers of EU and GCC states. Describing the meeting as one of the most significant gatherings of its kind in recent years, Szijjártó noted that the meeting came at a critical time, as the world faces numerous conflicts and crises. "We are living in an age of dangers," said the minister while emphasizing the importance of diplomatic efforts to resolve armed conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East.

He praised the GCC countries for their stabilizing role in the region, calling them part of the "global majority of peace-loving nations." The Minister expressed hope that cooperation between the EU and the GCC would contribute to achieving peace in both Ukraine and the Middle East.

Highlighting Hungary's foreign policy approach, Szijjártó stated that his country values partnerships based on mutual respect, rationality, and common sense, avoiding excessive politicization and ideology in international relations. He stressed that the European Union must enhance its engagement with the GCC to regain competitiveness and global relevance.

Szijjártó outlined Hungary's goals for the future of EU-GCC relations, which include the signing of a strategic cooperation agreement, establishing visa-free travel, and concluding an interregional free trade agreement. These three steps, he said, would strengthen economic ties and promote mutual growth.

Turning to bilateral relations, the Hungarian minister recalled the historic friendship between Hungary and Kuwait, dating back to the 1980s. He emphasized that Kuwait holds a special



Turning to bilateral relations, the Hungarian minister recalled the historic friendship between Hungary and Kuwait, dating back to the 1980s. He emphasized that Kuwait holds a special place in the hearts of Hungarians, as both nations understand the pain of facing external aggression. "Whenever it comes to Kuwait, you have high respect in Hungary," he affirmed.

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Szijjártó announced that Hungary and Kuwait recently signed a Mutual Investment Protection Agreement, which will encourage businesses to operate more confidently in each other's markets. He highlighted existing cooperation between Hungary's MOL Group, one of Central Europe's largest energy companies, and the Kuwait Oil Company, particularly in high-value energy and chemical projects, including enhanced oil recovery and rubber-bitumen-related operations.

The minister also pointed to water management and food security as promising areas for collaboration. He explained that Hungary possesses advanced water technologies suitable for regions affected by climate change, and that its Genetically Modified Organism (GMO)-free agricultural policies, enshrined in the Hungarian Constitution, ensure high standards of food safety. "We hope our technologies will contribute to a healthy and sustainable food sector in Kuwait," he said.

Addressing regional issues, Szijjártó reaffirmed Hungary's commitment to peace in the Middle East, referencing his attendance at the signing of the Abraham Accords in 2020 in the Garden of the White House, as the only European foreign minister. He emphasized that Hungary seeks to maintain communication with all sides to facilitate peaceful resolutions. "We believe President Trump's peace proposal represents great hope for both Ukraine and the Middle East," he stated.

Concluding his remarks, Szijjártó extended an invitation to Kuwaiti investors to explore opportunities in Hungary. He also highlighted Hungary's competitive investment climate, including Europe's lowest corporate tax rate at 9 percent; a 15 percent personal income tax, and attractive cash incentives. "Hungary has become a meeting point for Eastern and Western investors," he said. "We welcome Kuwaiti companies to discover these opportunities and invest in our growing economy."



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Greece praises Kuwait's mediation role, its bridge-building diplomacy

The Times Kuwait Report

Relations between Greece and Kuwait are at 'their best stage ever', and despite their relatively small sizes both nations share the principles rooted in the rule of law and a rejection of power over justice, said Greek Deputy Foreign Minister Haris Theoharis.

by Kuwait, Theoharis said, "Throughout our history, we have experienced how powerful neighbors can violate or occupy territories. We believe such actions must never happen again. That is why we place great importance on cooperation with Kuwait. Our partnership is based on shared principles and opens broad horizons for cooperation across multiple fields."

He noted that discussions with Kuwaiti counterparts focused on economic and trade cooperation, emphasizing many opportunities to strengthen ties, whether through exporting Kuwaiti products to Greece or encouraging two-way investment flows, benefiting both countries.

Regarding bilateral aspects of his current visit, he explained that no new agreements have been signed with Kuwait yet. Instead, the focus has been on "reinvigorating dialogue with relevant bodies, such as the Kuwait Investment Authority," with further meetings planned in the coming weeks to arrange practical steps for cooperation.

Describing the EU-GCC ministerial meeting in Kuwait as an important opportunity for consultation between two strategic regions in trade and politics, Theoharis revealed that the discussions

included sensitive regional and international issues, such as Ukraine, Gaza, the Red Sea, Iraq, and Lebanon, with positions largely aligned, which he said makes him optimistic about future dialogue and collaboration.

On Kuwait's regional and international role, the Greek minister praised the country as a "mediator and builder," noting that Kuwait enjoys respect due to strong relations with most nations and for actively practicing bridge-building and mediation roles that are needed now more than ever.

Expanding on economic ties and prospects for investment in Greece, he highlighted his country's safe and attractive investment environment, noting that growth rates exceed twice the EU average, unemployment is low, and political stability allows investors to plan long-term investments "without surprises." He called this an ideal environment that ensures investment security and mutual benefit.

On education and healthcare coordination between the two sides, Theoharis pointed out the existing cooperation includes several Greek professors and researchers working in Kuwaiti institutions. He also mentioned partnerships in healthcare, including



agreements between Kuwaiti and Greek hospitals, with plans for further expansion.

Looking ahead, he confirmed that more political and economic meetings between the two countries are expected. "We are confident that cooperation between Greece and Kuwait can develop far beyond its current level, and our relations will always remain fruitful and constructive," he concluded.

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Speaking to local media following his participation in the 29th EU-GCC Joint Council and Ministerial Meeting hosted

Media regulation law encourages responsible media

Ministry of Information organized a panel discussion last week under the banner of 'National Media as an Action Serving Kuwait Vision 2035'. The event was attended by owners and managers of newspapers and electronic media outlets in Kuwait.

Addressing the gathering, Director of the General Department of Media Regulation at the Ministry of Information, Lafi Al-Subaie confirmed that the ministry observed greater responsibility on the part of the media this year, with only nine cases referred to the prosecution, compared to 96 in 2024. He added that the remarkable decrease by nearly 90 percent in the number of media outlets referred to the Public Prosecution underscored the growing sense of responsibility in media work.

Al-Subaie explained that the Media Regulation Law will contribute to establishing a mechanism to regulate advertising, with misleading advertisements or unlicensed products being prohibited. Advertising companies and celebrities will also be required to clarify that the content presented is a paid advertisement or a commercial collaboration. He added that the goal of these measures is not to impose restrictions, but to set professional boundaries to ensure responsible media work and quality content.

He revealed the ministry contacted all relevant authorities regarding the Media Regulation Law, which was discussed with the Legal Advice and Legislation Department. He stressed that the law repeals all previous laws related to visual, audio, print, publication and electronic media, putting everyone under the umbrella of one comprehensive law. He affirmed the commitment of the ministry to ensure that the law does not include any media warnings, only guiding principles for media content, while ensuring that everyone working in

the field is aware of these principles and adheres to them

Asked about some entities filing complaints against media outlets through the ministry, Al-Subaie clarified "we have no arbitrary summons system now, but the Media Regulation Law is arranged so that matters pass through several stages, including a warning, and a summons being issued only when the next stage would be referral to the judiciary."

He pointed out that the Media Regulation Law allows the establishment of licensed media companies and allows five or six people to obtain a license to establish a media institution or company. He stressed that the licensed media companies and institutions system is the best in terms of legal and regulatory structure, and this will be done in cooperation with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Public Authority for Manpower.

He went on to add, "Rumors today are found to originate from certain accounts, which publish information without verification. The current discussions aim to unify a mechanism for media coverage that is visible and clear to everyone, based on the media's responsibility to produce reliable and appropriate content."

He noted that previously, media outlets, both newspapers and others, were subject to review of their content before publication out of a sense of responsibility. But today, individual accounts are required to verify the accuracy of the news before publishing it, in order to maintain media credibility and professionalism.

For his part, Dr. Saleh Al-Otaibi, head of the strategy team at the ministry, revealed in a press statement that the panel discussion is part of the participatory approach of the ministry to develop its media strategy for the years 2026-2030, which aims to develop the national media system in line with the fourth development plan of the country. He added that "the ministry is currently developing a comprehensive media strategy that enhances the role of national media and keeps pace with the rapid transformations in the global media."

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EU-GCC Meeting underlines a new level of maturity in relations

*The Times Kuwait had the privilege to meet and talk to the **European Union Special Representative for the Gulf region, Luigi Di Maio**, following his participation in the 29th EU-GCC Joint Council and Ministerial Meeting, which was hosted by Kuwait on 5–6 October.*

The Times Kuwait Report

The veteran Italian politician, and the EU's special representative in the Gulf since June 2023, began by congratulating Kuwait on the successful organization of the meeting. "Kuwait's organization and hospitality were truly exemplary. From the professionalism of Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the warm welcome extended to all delegations, everything reflected Kuwait's long standing diplomatic tradition and its role as a bridge builder in the region. Hosting this meeting in Kuwait was also symbolic, as it underlined the country's commitment to dialogue, moderation, and multilateralism, values that are at the heart of the EU-GCC partnership."

Turning to his assessment of the EU-GCC ministerial meeting, Di Maio stated: "The 29th Joint Council and Ministerial Meeting marked a new level of maturity in the partnership between the European Union (EU) and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)."

"Brilliantly co-chaired by Her Excellency Kaja Kallas, High Representative of the European

Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and His Excellency Abdullah Al-Yahya, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Kuwait, the meeting demonstrated the strength, balance, and mutual respect that now define our dialogue."

"The meeting was not only a continuation of our political engagement but also a confirmation that our cooperation is now strategic, comprehensive, and forward looking. Both sides came to Kuwait with the same conviction that the EU-GCC partnership is essential to addressing the regional and global challenges we face, from security and stability to climate change and sustainable growth."

Elaborating on the outcome of the meeting, Di Maio stressed that the outcomes were substantial and concrete. "The Joint Statement issued at the end of the talks, reflects a shared commitment to deepen cooperation on regional security, energy transition, trade and investment, and to strengthen joint work on humanitarian and diplomatic issues."

"The Joint Statement also sends a clear and unified message on the situation in Gaza, where both the European Union and the Gulf



Cooperation Council expressed support for President Trump's peace plan as a basis to end the war and move toward a comprehensive and lasting settlement. This includes reaffirming our

joint commitment to the two-state solution, respect for international law, and the protection of civilians.

"The meeting also set the stage for the next milestone: the EU-GCC Business Forum, to be held in Kuwait City on 5 November, in the presence of European Commission Vice-President and Commissioner for Trade Maroš Šefčovič. This forum will focus on strengthening trade, investment, and clean technology partnerships between our regions."

"Also, for the first time, both regions have articulated a clear, operational agenda, including a joint working group on counterterrorism, enhanced maritime and cyber cooperation, and new initiatives on renewable energy and connectivity. This meeting has confirmed that the EU-GCC partnership is not only about dialogue, but about delivering real results for peace, stability, and shared prosperity."

He concluded by noting that the meeting reflected the strength of the EU-GCC strategic partnership to address global challenges and craft sustainable and effective solutions for diplomacy, peace, and shared prosperity.

Joyalukkas announces glittering offers for Diwali 2025

This Diwali, Joyalukkas, the world's favorite jeweller, invites customers across Kuwait to embrace the spirit of the Festival of Lights with an exquisite blend of festive jewelry, dazzling offers, and exclusive rewards. From October 2 to 20, 2025, shoppers can enhance their celebrations with complimentary 24K gold bars, vouchers and unmatched value on every purchase, while exploring the brand's specially curated Diwali collections.

The festive season at Joyalukkas shines brighter with its diamond and gold collections designed for every occasion. Diamond enthusiasts can delight in the lightweight and elegant Vivid, Spring and Bella collections from Pride Diamonds, perfect for everyday glamour or celebratory sparkle. For gold aficionados, the special festive collections include Apurva, Veda, Sita Kalyanam and Krishna Leela, offering intricate designs, mythological inspirations and timeless appeal for both traditional and contemporary celebrations.

Shoppers can also enjoy a host of exclusive rewards. Customers spending KWD 375 on diamond and precious stone jewelry will receive a complimentary 500 mg 24K gold bar, while those purchasing KWD 650 on diamond and precious stone jewelry or KWD 2,500 on gold jewelry will be rewarded with a 1 gm 24K

Gold bar. For grander celebrations, purchases of KWD 5000 on diamond and precious stone jewelry will receive a 10 gm 24K gold bar.

Additionally, customers spending KWD 300 on diamond and precious stone jewelry will enjoy a KWD 10 cash voucher, adding even more sparkle to their festivities.

Complementing these festive rewards, Joyalukkas is offering special privilege including 0% deductions on old gold exchange, ensuring maximum value and satisfaction for every shopper.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. John Paul Alukkas, Managing Director, Joyalukkas Group, said, "Diwali is a festival that celebrates light, prosperity and togetherness – and at Joyalukkas, we are thrilled to be part of these cherished moments for families across Kuwait. Our exclusive offers this season are designed to reward our customers generously, while our specially curated festive collections bring elegance and joy to every celebration. We remain committed to delivering unmatched experiences that combine trust, transparency and delight, which have earned us the privilege of being the world's favorite jeweller."

With its dazzling festive collections, generous offers and focus on making every moment memorable, Joyalukkas ensures that Diwali 2025 will shine brighter than ever for jewelry lovers across Kuwait, transforming every celebration into a luminous and joyful occasion.



IWG, Embassy of Greece host Greek Cultural Day

International Women's Group (IWG), in collaboration with the Greek Embassy hosted Greek Cultural Day at the Crowne Plaza Hotel on 5 October. The event centered on the theme: 'Greece: Healthy Nutrition, Mindful Living, and the Power of Human Connection.'

In her opening remarks, the President of IWG, Marika Kochlamazashvili, expressed gratitude to all attendees and acknowledged the support of the Vice-President of IWG, Theano Tsoumi Plotas, and Ambassador of Greece H. E. Ioannis Plotas, for organizing the event. In her address, Mrs. Kochlamazashvili highlighted the significance of cultural exploration and joyful gatherings. The IWG president also emphasized that future IWG events would continue to offer a truly enriching experience for all participants.

Following the president's remarks, Ambassador Plotas welcomed the distinguished guests and acknowledged the contributions of the IWG president, IWG board members, the press, and all attendees.

Ambassador Plotas emphasized the strong cultural ties between Greece and Kuwait, rooted in shared history, Greek traditions, music, food, and dance, which have long captivated Kuwaiti audiences. He also referenced the historical passage of Greek ancestors, including during the

era of Alexander the Great, to Failaka Island, as a foundation for lasting cultural appreciation and respect between the two nations. The ambassador also highlighted Greece's rich heritage, noting the enduring influence of the Greek language on global vocabulary, with words such as symphony, biography, rhapsody, anatomy, and philosophy originating from Greek. He congratulated all participants and especially the Greek team for presenting traditional Grecian outfits, dances, and authentic Greek cuisine.

A special segment featured Greek psychotherapist and retreat specialist from Greece, Eleni Dimitriadou, who combines mental health expertise with holistic wellness practices. She shared practical insights on balanced living, and presented a short video showcasing a retreat experience in Greece, inspiring all to embrace mindfulness, self-care and a healthier lifestyle.

The event concluded with lively Greek music and traditional dances, including the Zebekiko and Zorba dances, leaving attendees immersed in Greek culture. Greek Cultural Day exemplified the power of cultural exchange and human connection, and strengthening bonds between Greece and Kuwait while celebrating shared values, heritage, and traditions.



Czech Republic Praises GCC-EU Cooperation at 29th Joint Meeting in Kuwait

Czech-Kuwaiti relations poised for greater cooperation in investment, technology, and security.

By Reaven D'Souza
Executive Managing Editor

The 29th GCC-EU Joint Council and Ministerial Meeting, held in Kuwait, marked another significant step forward in deepening relations between the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the European Union (EU). Delegates from across the 27 member states of the EU and the six-nation GCC bloc convened to discuss a wide range of strategic issues, from international politics to economic cooperation and regional development.

Speaking exclusively to The Times Kuwait following the Joint Council meeting the Czech State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Radek Rubeš, expressed strong appreciation for the event's organization and its outcomes. "First of all, I think it was very well organized by the Kuwaiti side, and we are grateful to the host country for bringing us together," the official said, adding "It's always important to exchange views in such a forum where we can speak openly and align our positions on key issues."

A Platform for Real Dialogue

The Joint Council and Ministerial meeting covered critical topics of interest to the two sides, including international diplomacy, regional security, economic reforms, and development within the GCC. According to the Czech official, one of the most valuable aspects of the conference was the opportunity to engage in transparent discussions that brought the EU and GCC countries closer in terms of policy alignment and shared strategic priorities.

Rubeš further stated "These meetings are crucial because they allow us to deepen our mutual understanding without barriers. We are clearly seeing our positions converge,"

Czech Support for GCC Aspirations

The Czech Republic reaffirmed its support for the GCC's long-standing aspiration to achieve visa-free travel to the Schengen Area. While noting that the issue must be decided collectively by all 27 EU member states, the Czech representative emphasized that the matter is being seriously discussed at the EU level in Brussels. "We certainly support the GCC countries' ambitions regarding visa liberalization," the official said. "However, this is an EU-wide decision, and the discussions are ongoing."

Consensus and Cooperation

A key takeaway from the meeting was the growing consensus between the two regions on many global and regional challenges. The Czech representative highlighted the alignment of views on various international political developments, underscoring the constructive nature of the dialogue.

"There was consensus on many subjects," the official confirmed.

"The positions of both GCC and EU countries are, in many ways, becoming more and more aligned."

Looking Ahead: Economic and Business Collaboration

Beyond politics, the conference also opened doors for future economic and business cooperation. The Czech Republic expressed strong interest in fostering deeper ties between the private sectors of both regions.

"We believe that after such meetings, cooperation becomes much easier," the representative noted. "We are eager to bring our people and our business communities together to explore opportunities."

On the Horizon: Agreements in Progress

While no formal agreements were signed during this session, discussions are ongoing regarding several memorandums of understanding between the GCC and the EU. The Czech official noted that while talks are advancing, it is still too early to announce any finalized agreements.

Elaborating on bilateral relations between Kuwait and the Czech Republic, he said that these ties are based on a strong historical foundation, marked by mutual respect and longstanding cooperation. Today, both countries are exploring new avenues to strengthen political dialogue, economic cooperation, and investment opportunities in line with Kuwait's Vision 2035.

Rubeš further highlighted the enduring friendship between Kuwait and the Czech Republic and outlined promising prospects for deepening cooperation. From growing Kuwaiti investments in Czech real estate and technology to potential Czech contributions in food security, defense, and high-tech innovation, the state secretary underscored the many ways the two nations can work together for mutual growth, while reaffirming their shared commitment to stability, development, and peace in the wider region.

On the development of bilateral relations with Kuwait, the state minister said they are built on a solid foundation—the former Czechoslovakia was one of the first countries to recognize independent Kuwait in 1961, and just two years later, in 1963, bilateral diplomatic relations

were established, and it took only two more years to open Czech Embassy in Kuwait. The Czech chemical unit also helped during the process of liberation of Kuwait in 1990-1991. The solid ground provides great space for deepening the relations, both on the political and the business levels.

He further noted that there were plenty of opportunities for private investments in the Czech Republic, including in real estate in Prague or in the spa areas as Czechia offers wonderful green areas, forests, mountains, historical cities, natural resources, excellent cuisine and shopping opportunities for visitors. In short,



its geographic position and also unique landscape, tradition, rich history, healthy (business) environment, mild climate, high safety and quality of life are very attractive for foreign businessmen.

Besides investments in real estate, Czechia also offers a broad spectrum of interesting opportunities in venture capital investments focusing on new technologies, IT, cybersecurity, and research in the medical and energy sectors. Czechia is traditionally one of the most industrialized countries within the EU and its qualified people represent a great bond for future development and investments. In addition, Kuwait and Czechia have also signed a bilateral Investment Treaty, which helps to facilitate investments, said the minister

On the prospects of Czechia contributing to Kuwait's food security, he said that his country was ready to help in various spheres, from wastewater treatment systems to nutritional supplements, Vafo granules, feed mixtures enriched with vitamins and minerals, innovative technologies in agriculture, and live cattle. He pointed out however that Kuwait has taken a prudent approach to food imports that has enabled the country to avoid any potential food security situation. On defense and security the state secretary said Czechia was one of the strongest manufacturers and exporters in the security sector and there have been numerous meetings with the Kuwaiti side. We can offer unique and innovative technologies in these fields, he pointed out.

Revealing that high-level meetings were being slated between the two countries, the minister said that during the first quarter of 2026 political consultations are expected to take place in Prague. Also, Kuwait's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abdullah Ali Al Yahya has received an invitation from his Czech counterpart, Jan Lipavský to visit Czechia.

He concluded by noting that the Czech Republic welcomes the peace plan introduced by President Trump, adding "The world wants peace in Gaza. We hope that Hamas will accept all parts of the peace plan."

Besides investments in real estate, Czechia also offers a broad spectrum of interesting opportunities in venture capital investments focusing on new technologies, IT, cybersecurity, and research in the medical and energy sectors. Czechia is traditionally one of the most industrialized countries within the EU and its qualified people represent a great bond for future development and investments.



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Kuwait a 'superpower' in humanitarian aid, diplomacy

UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Tom Fletcher highlights Kuwait's remarkable record of generosity and leadership in global humanitarian efforts; commitment to compassion, wisdom, and international cooperation continues to inspire the global humanitarian community

The Times Kuwait Report

UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Tom Fletcher described Kuwait as a 'superpower' in humanitarian work and diplomacy. Fletcher made the comments last week while speaking at a lecture hosted in Kuwait by the Saud Al-Nasser Al-Sabah Diplomatic Institute.

In his lecture titled 'Humanitarian Action in a Shifting Global Landscape: Challenges, Opportunities and Kuwait's Leadership' Fletcher highlighted Kuwait's steadfast partnership with the United Nations, its firm commitment to humanitarian principles, and said, the country's longstanding record of generosity and wisdom continues to inspire the entire humanitarian community.

Stressing the importance of strengthening the existing partnership and finding ways to work more closely to keep humanitarian action principled, effective and more efficient in serving communities worldwide, Fletcher said the UN would like to further boost its partnership with Kuwait and leverage its strength as a superpower in humanitarian support and a leader in development assistance.

He expressed gratitude to the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry-led relationship with the UN that has helped save many lives around the globe over many years. He further commended the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development



for its generous support, reflecting Kuwait's commitment not only to emergency response, but also to long-term resilience and stability.

Fletcher also lauded cooperation with Kuwaiti NGOs and private sector, which reflects a whole-of-society approach to humanitarian work, noting that "Kuwait is among the world's largest per-capita humanitarian donors, making it a leader in this field," and highlighting the "great legacy" of the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah as a humanitarian leader.

On the ongoing humanitarian effort to ease the Gaza crisis, Fletcher noted, "Kuwait was among the first to call for an unconditional ceasefire in Gaza and has maintained this powerful call as the conflict intensified, remaining a key champion through its advocacy for the protection of civilians and



unhindered humanitarian access." On global humanitarian action, Fletcher said the context has become more difficult, with a "perfect storm of overlapping conflicts, crises and growing needs pushing the number of people in need to more than 300 million worldwide". He noted that last year (2024) "was the deadliest on record for humanitarian workers, with more than 300 killed," and expressed his fear that this year "could be deadlier".

Calling for a reset in humanitarian support due to the severe funding gap—with only 21 percent of appeals funded so far this year—Fletcher said the reset would entail regrouping, reform and renewal. Elaborating on this reset, he explained that reforms aim to enhance agility, efficiency and innovation, including leveraging technology and artificial intelligence to improve supply chains, while shifting

power from central hierarchies to affected communities and defining life-saving priorities more clearly. He noted the UN will aim next year to save 114 million lives at a cost equal to just one percent of global spending on arms and security.

For his part, Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) Director General Fawaz Al-Mazrouei told Kuwait's state news agency that Fletcher's remarks constitute a "renewed international endorsement that humanitarian action in Kuwait is not merely a state policy, but part of its national identity and deeply rooted values, making it a 'superpower in giving,' as the UN official described."

Al-Mazrouei said the challenges Fletcher outlined; underfunding and the targeting of aid workers, mirror what KRCS teams face daily as they translate the lofty principles of international humanitarian law into tangible assistance for people in the toughest conditions, affirming that "Kuwait will always remain at the forefront of nations extending bridges of hope to those in need."

He stressed that today's shifting global landscape indeed requires a humanitarian reset based on genuine partnerships between international organizations and on-the-ground actors such as KRCS, reiterating the Society's commitment to remain a strategic UN partner in addressing global crises and carrying forward Kuwait's humanitarian message established by the nation's wise leadership over generations.



Entertainment City project draws international investment interest

Kuwait is preparing to attract leading international companies to invest, develop, and operate the Entertainment City project, following the completion of regulatory procedures that now pave the way for implementation of this upcoming world-class tourist destination.

BlackRock, one of the world's largest asset managers, is reported to have been included in the list of global firms nominated to supervise the project, noting that the company, working in coordination with the relevant authorities, is seeking a key oversight role in the development of the landmark facility.

A delegation from BlackRock is expected to arrive in Kuwait in the coming weeks to meet with senior government and economic officials and discuss opportunities for cooperation. Recent regulatory approvals and the granting of commercial licenses to BlackRock to operate in Kuwait underscore the company's confidence in the strength of Kuwait's economy and its commitment to supporting value-added foreign investment and developing national talent.

Meanwhile, Amazon, the global e-commerce and technology company, is also said to be planning on expanding its operations in Kuwait, exploring a new operational model aimed at enhancing its local presence and revitalizing its activities in the Kuwaiti market. The move by Amazon, reiterates growing international interest in Kuwait's lucrative investment landscape.

Mubarakiya Market reconstruction to be completed on schedule

Capital Governor Sheikh Abdullah Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah disclosed that the Mubarakiya Markets reconstruction project embodies the state's ongoing commitment to revitalizing heritage areas and enhancing the unique tourism and commercial character that defines this historic marketplace.

He emphasized that the development efforts aim to modernize the market's infrastructure while preserving its cultural identity, ensuring that Mubarakiya continues to serve as a vibrant tourist, economic, and entertainment hub that stimulates commercial activity and attracts visitors from both inside and outside Kuwait.

The Governor made these remarks during a field visit to Mubarakiya Markets to inspect the progress of restoration and rebuilding works in the area affected by the previous fire incident. He stressed the importance of completing the reconstruction within the scheduled timeframe,



noting that Mubarakiya stands as a prominent heritage landmark with deep historical and social significance to the Kuwaiti community.

MoI cracks down on fake social media accounts

Ministry of Interior has dealt a decisive blow to fake social media accounts that have been spreading rumors, inciting discord, and insulting citizens and officials.

According to local media, Kuwaiti security authorities have taken custody of Nawaf Al-Badri, who is accused of managing several fake accounts to disseminate false information and provoke public unrest.

Al-Badri was recently arrested in Qatar and handed over to Kuwaiti authorities following coordinated efforts between Kuwait and Gulf security agencies. He is expected to be referred to the competent authorities for legal action based on the charges filed against him.

The move underscores the Ministry of Interior's



continued efforts to combat cybercrimes, preserve public order, and hold accountable those who exploit digital platforms to harm individuals or spread misinformation.

Cyprus committed to deepening Cypriot-Kuwaiti relations

By Reaven D'Souza
Executive Managing Editor

During a brief visit to Kuwait to participate in the EU-GCC Joint Council and Ministerial Meeting, which was held in Kuwait last week, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cyprus Dr. Constantinos Kombos spoke with The Times Kuwait, on the robust Cypriot-Kuwaiti relations, and the potential for these ties to be furthered strengthened going forward.

How do you view the development of bilateral relations with Kuwait?

Cyprus and Kuwait enjoy friendly relations, rooted in mutual respect and shared challenges as small states in a turbulent region, as well as being countries that have experienced a foreign invasion themselves. The first round of political consultations in Kuwait in 2022 constituted an important milestone in this relationship.

We now look forward to building on that momentum and my meeting with the Kuwaiti Foreign Minister on the sidelines of the EU-GCC Ministerial will mark an important step to this end.

Looking ahead, we are committed to further strengthening our ties, both bilaterally and within the broader EU-GCC cooperation. The Amalthea humanitarian initiative for providing complementary humanitarian aid to the civilian population in Gaza is a prime example, and we warmly welcome the active participation of Kuwaiti organisations—notably the 700 tons of aid. We also see potential for future cooperation on regional humanitarian efforts.

Moreover, Cyprus will be assuming the rotating Presidency of the Council of the European Union on 1 January 2026 and we aim to place the Middle East and the Gulf in focus during our presidency.

Therefore, I have the strong belief that we will be able to lay apt foundations both with regard to Cyprus-Kuwait ties, and also with Kuwait's relations with the European Union, and see the deepening of EU-GCC relations.

What is your message to Kuwaiti businessmen? Do you offer facilities for foreign investors?

Cyprus welcomes Kuwaiti businessmen and investors, offering a unique blend of strategic location, business-friendly environment, and investment opportunities. Cyprus provides access to the European market with a well-established legal system, favorable tax regime, and high-quality services.

Cyprus and Kuwait have signed a double-taxation avoidance agreement, promoting economic and commercial relations between our two countries. Our financial sector, including investment funds and asset management, could offer opportunities for Kuwaiti businesses.

Overall, Cyprus offers a promising environment for Kuwaiti investors and businesses, with opportunities for growth, collaboration, and mutual benefit.

Will we see Cypriot companies investing in Kuwait in the future?

Cypriot investment and corporate presence in Kuwait are



Cyprus and Kuwait are currently working on several bilateral agreements and memoranda of understanding aimed at expanding our cooperation in key areas of mutual interest. These include sectors such as security, culture, and water management—areas where both countries can benefit from shared expertise and experiences.

currently modest, mostly in areas such as trade, maritime services, education, and financial services. However, there is strong potential for growth, driven by the strengthening of bilateral relations and Kuwait's ambitious development goals under its Vision 2035 strategy.

As Kuwait accelerates its diversification and launches large-scale projects in infrastructure, renewable energy, tourism, real estate, and smart city developments, new opportunities are opening up. These sectors align well with Cypriot expertise in construction, professional services, renewable energy, hospitality, and education. Cypriot companies are internationally oriented and eager to engage with Kuwaiti partners. The Cyprus-Kuwait Business Association, an organization that fosters trade and socioeconomic relations between Cyprus and Kuwait

is operating under the auspices of the Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Are there any memoranda of understanding or joint agreements you are working on?

Cyprus and Kuwait are currently working on several bilateral agreements and memoranda of understanding aimed at expanding our cooperation in key areas of mutual interest. These include sectors such as security, culture, and water management—areas where both countries can benefit from shared expertise and experiences.

We remain committed to deepening and formalizing our cooperation through these pending agreements, which will provide a solid framework for long-term partnership.

We are also particularly pleased with recent progress in the field of higher education. After sustained efforts, Kuwait officially recognized the University of Cyprus in 2022, and in 2024, it also recognized the Dental School of the European University Cyprus. These developments pave the way for stronger academic and institutional ties between our two countries. The inclusion of more Universities can further enhance this cooperation.

What about the tourism sector in your country, and have you considered direct flights?

Tourism is an important sector for Cyprus and we have specialized know-how that we could share with Kuwait. The resumption of flights during this year's summer season by Jazeera Airways has significantly contributed to strengthening the flow of tourists between Cyprus and Kuwait. We are now working towards establishing year-round flights, as well as on broader initiatives to further increase two-way tourism and promote our destinations more effectively.

Are there plans for any high-level visits between officials from both countries soon?

I look forward to welcoming my Kuwaiti counterpart to Cyprus at his earliest possible convenience. The exchange of visits will further strengthen the excellent relations and cooperation between our two countries.

On the international front, how does Cyprus view the devastation taking place in Gaza?

Cyprus has recognized Palestine since 1988, and is committed to the two-state solution based on the relevant UN resolutions which can foster conditions of lasting peace and security for both Palestinians and Israelis.

Cyprus, as the closest EU member state in the Middle East, has been consistent in its approach for an immediate ceasefire, unconditional release of all hostages and unimpeded humanitarian access on a massive scale for the civilians in Gaza.

Cyprus as a responsible country has been trying to do its share in the humanitarian front by sending complementary humanitarian aid through the Amalthea maritime route.

In this context, we welcome President Trump's proposal as a vital step for ending the war and the humanitarian catastrophe. We call on all parties to accept its parameters as the way forward and to reach a deal for its implementation.

Kuwait views women as integral partners in national development

Kuwait reaffirmed that women should not be viewed merely as victims of conflict or as parties requiring protection, but as genuine partners and essential contributors to peacebuilding and community development. The Kuwaiti stance on women was articulated by the country's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Tariq Al-Bannai, during a UN Security Council session on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS).

Ambassador Al-Bannai emphasized that women's empowerment extends beyond protection from violence and conflict. It encompasses the full exercise of their economic, social, and political rights, ensuring access to education and healthcare, and fostering community security and sustainable development.

Citing the report of UN Secretary-General António Guterres, Al-Bannai highlighted the



major challenges facing the WPS agenda—25 years after its adoption through UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000). Pointing out how the exclusion of women undermines peace processes and diminishes the prospects for lasting stability, Al-Bannai called for ensuring at least one-third representation of women in

all political mediation and negotiation efforts. He stressed that women must be recognized as indispensable partners in building a more stable and just future.

He also voiced alarm over the decline in funding for the WPS agenda—particularly direct funding for local women's organizations, which serve as the first line of response in conflict-affected communities.

The ambassador reaffirmed that Kuwait has long viewed women as integral partners in national development, a principle enshrined in the Kuwaiti Constitution, which guarantees equality, justice, and equal opportunities. He noted that Kuwait has enacted progressive laws and policies to promote women's participation in public life and decision-making, in alignment with the national vision 'New Kuwait 2035'.

Al-Bannai pointed to the establishment of the National Committee for the Implementation

of Resolution 1325, chaired by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and led by a woman. The committee includes representatives from various government institutions and civil society organizations. He added that through this committee, Kuwait has achieved notable progress, including the abolition of legal provisions restricting women's rights; the inclusion of women in the army and police; the appointment of female judges and prosecutors; and the growing presence of women in leadership roles within the diplomatic corps, judiciary, and across the development, economic, and media sectors.

He concluded by reaffirming Kuwait's unwavering commitment to supporting women everywhere, stressing that ensuring their rights, protection, and empowerment is a humanitarian, moral, and legal obligation that cannot be delayed.



ACK celebrates cultural night and chairmanship handover

The Times Kuwait Report

ASEAN Committee in Kuwait (ACK) held a chairmanship handover ceremony and cultural night last week, which marked the end of the six-month tenure as chairman of ACK by the Ambassador of Viet Nam H.E. Nguyen Duc Thang, and the handover of chairmanship to the Ambassador of Indonesia H.E. Lina Mariana.

The event was attended by a number of heads of Asian diplomatic missions and representatives of international organizations. In his address on the occasion, the Vietnamese ambassador expressed his happiness at the conclusion of his country's chairmanship of the ACK, and stressed his deep appreciation for the close cooperation and mutual support among ASEAN ambassadors over the past six months. He pointed out that during his tenure, Viet Nam launched five qualitative initiatives for cooperation between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Kuwait.

The ambassador explained that the committee's chairmanship in Kuwait lasts only six months, which provides all ambassadors of ASEAN the opportunity to assume the leadership role during their tenure in the country. He added, "Viet Nam held the chairmanship from March to September, during which we prioritized strengthening the ASEAN community's identity



and consolidating joint cooperation with the State of Kuwait."

He pointed out that his country launched five qualitative initiatives during its presidency, in the fields of sports, tourism, business networks, and community health, adding, "We even consider karaoke singing a means of promoting health and happiness." He explained that "nearly 90 percent of these initiatives have been completed, while the blood donation campaign, in cooperation with Al-Jahra Hospital, has been postponed until next December due to the requirement that donors reside in Kuwait for six consecutive months."

He expressed his gratitude to all ASEAN ambassadors, the committee's dialogue partners,

and friendly countries, commending the support that has contributed to strengthening ASEAN's position in the region and on the international stage. He also emphasized the importance of developing relations between ASEAN and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, especially after the summit held in Kuala Lumpur last May, which established a roadmap for enhancing economic, cultural, and political cooperation between the two sides over the next five years.

At the end of his speech, the ambassador announced the handover of the committee's chairmanship to Ambassador Mariana, expressing his confidence in her ability to continue working in a spirit of cooperation and integration. He

added, "ASEAN in Kuwait is one family, and we will continue working together to deepen cooperation and build bridges of communication with the friendly State of Kuwait."

For her part, the Indonesian ambassador congratulated Viet Nam on its successful presidency, commending the efforts of the working group and the fruitful cooperation between the heads of missions. She affirmed that the committee will continue to promote ASEAN's interests and identity in Kuwait through joint activities and programs, adding that "the coming months will be filled with events aimed at supporting sustainable development and deepening the partnership between the peoples of ASEAN countries and Kuwait."



Dar Al-Muhama Enhances Its International Presence by Participating in an Advanced INTA Workshop

Abdulrahman Al-Houti, Founder and Managing Partner of Dar Al-Muhama Law Firm, participated in the advanced international workshop organized by the International Trademark Association (INTA) titled "Integrating Intellectual Property, Finance, and Valuation."

The workshop, held in Dubai, brought together a distinguished group of experts and specialists to discuss the latest developments and global best practices for integrating IP into corporate financial and investment structures.

"Our participation in this prestigious international event stems from our commitment at Dar Al-Muhama to stay at the forefront of global developments in the intellectual property sector, which has become a vital component of the knowledge economy," said Mr. Al-Houti. "Understanding the mechanisms of valuing and financing intellectual assets enhances our ability to provide integrated legal services to our clients and protect their intangible rights with the highest professional standards."

Dar Al-Muhama involvement in this workshop reaffirms its leading role in business and intellectual property law, both locally and internationally.

Draft law on Criminal Code marks pivotal step towards e-justice

In a media statement last week the Ministry of Justice affirmed that the draft decree-law amending certain provisions of the Code of Criminal Procedure and Trials regarding the Criminal Order System, which approved by the Council of Ministers at its weekly meeting on 7 October, represented a pivotal step toward the transition to electronic justice.

The ministry statement explained that the move aims to accelerate case adjudication and ease the workload on courts and litigants. The draft decree allows courts to handle minor cases entirely through digital processes, starting from receiving requests and deliberations to issuing and announcing judgments via the digital system.

The ministry further clarified that a penal order referred to a judicial decision issued in misdemeanor and violation cases that imposes a fine without the need for a public trial or witness hearings. The purpose of this system is to simplify criminal procedures, speed up rulings, and reduce the pressure on the judiciary.

The ministry added that penal orders rely solely on reviewing case files, allowing judges to issue concise rulings without traditional hearings. The new digital approach will eliminate the need to retrieve roughly six million accumulated paper files, many of which are outdated or affected by statutes of limitations, posing significant logistical challenges.

The statement noted that the draft decree-law marks a qualitative leap in digital transformation, paving the way for a fully integrated electronic justice system in Kuwait. The reform will help streamline judicial processes, save time and resources, and deliver justice more efficiently.

It also ensures comprehensive electronic documentation of criminal orders, enhancing transparency and



reducing the possibility of errors or delays. The initiative aligns Kuwait with international best practices in modern judicial systems and supports the government's broader efforts toward digital transformation.

The ministry further explained that the decree includes new regulations governing the handling of illegally seized items linked to criminal cases, including their storage period and the authority responsible for destroying them when they are no longer needed for investigation or trial purposes.

Earlier, the Cabinet had approved the draft decree-law amending provisions of the Criminal Procedures and Trials Law, originally issued under Law No. 17 of 1960, and referred it to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for approval.

Lithuania backs stronger EU–GCC partnership, praises Kuwait's leadership in fostering regional stability

Lithuania is advocating for a stronger EU–GCC partnership, highlighting Kuwait's leadership in fostering regional stability and cooperation. Vice-Minister Audra Plepyte emphasized opportunities for collaboration in renewable energy, technology, food security, cybersecurity, and humanitarian efforts, while underscoring the importance of diplomacy, shared values, and a rules-based international order to advance peace, sustainable development, and regional security.

By Rabih Kallas
Special to The Times Kuwait

As the European Union (EU) and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) enter a new era of strategic partnership, dialogue between Europe and the Gulf is gaining unprecedented importance. Lithuania, an active EU member, known for its commitment to green transformation, innovation, and principled diplomacy, continues to advocate for deeper cooperation across key sectors such as renewable energy, technology, and food security.

the green transformation, with renewable energy accounting for over 32 percent of total energy use in 2023, a figure expected to rise to 55 percent by 2030. The country aims to achieve 100 percent green electricity by 2028, supported by major offshore wind projects in the Baltic Sea.

According to Plepyte, this experience opens new opportunities for collaboration with GCC countries that are also investing heavily in hydrogen and clean energy technologies. She added that cooperation between the EU and the Gulf can drive climate goals, innovation, and secure energy supply chains.

expanding structured dialogue into issues of security, regional stability, and humanitarian cooperation.

She further noted that the EU–GCC Joint Ministerial Meeting in Kuwait represented an important step in preparing for the next EU–GCC Summit of Heads of State in Riyadh, with both sides working to ensure tangible outcomes that will lay the groundwork for a more ambitious partnership.

The Lithuanian official affirmed that the EU and the GCC are natural partners in promoting security and stability in the Middle East. She stressed that the EU brings diplomatic experience and a commitment to multilateralism, while the GCC contributes deep regional understanding and credibility. Together, these strengths can help de-escalate tensions, encourage diplomacy, and foster peace across the wider region.

Addressing the war in Ukraine, the vice-minister drew parallels between Lithuania and Kuwait as small nations that have both experienced foreign aggression and understand the importance of international law. She expressed appreciation for the Gulf's principled support for Ukraine's sovereignty and the constructive role of regional partners in humanitarian efforts, prisoner exchanges, and peace mediation. She urged continued Gulf engagement to press Russia toward respecting international law and ending its aggression.

She reaffirmed Lithuania's position that sanctions on Russia must remain and be strengthened to ensure accountability. The war, she added, underscores the importance of diversifying energy partnerships—an area where Europe and the Gulf can play a decisive role in shaping a secure and sustainable future.

The Lithuanian official also emphasized the growing need for cooperation between Europe and the Gulf in cybersecurity and defense, particularly in light of hybrid threats revealed by the war in Ukraine. Plepyte noted that both regions face similar risks, including cyberattacks, disinformation, and drone incursions.

She pointed out that Europe offers strong expertise in cyber resilience and regulatory frameworks, while Gulf states bring innovation and agility. Joint efforts, she said, can strengthen both digital and societal resilience.

Reflecting on bilateral relations, the vice-minister described Lithuania and Kuwait's partnership as one built on mutual respect and goodwill. She recalled Kuwait's early support after Lithuania regained independence, including scholarships and cultural exchanges that continue to this day.

She highlighted education as a cornerstone of cooperation, noting Lithuania's interest in



welcoming more Kuwaiti students, particularly in fields such as medicine, technology, and engineering. She also cited growing collaboration in agriculture, food production, renewable energy, and research, as well as the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on political consultations earlier this year.

Pointing out that Lithuanian products, including dairy and grain, are already available in Kuwaiti markets, she expressed optimism about expanding trade and technological partnerships further.

Turning to the ongoing crisis in Gaza, the Vice-Minister expressed deep concern over the humanitarian situation and reaffirmed Lithuania's commitment to providing aid and supporting respect for international humanitarian law.

She voiced hope that the ceasefire initiative led by US President Donald Trump would succeed in ending hostilities and ensuring the release of hostages. Both the EU and the GCC, she said, support this US-brokered effort, which offers a chance to restore hope and stability.

She reiterated that Lithuania and the EU remain steadfast in their support for a two-state solution, grounded in international law and ensuring the legitimate aspirations and security of both Israelis and Palestinians.

Lithuania, she concluded, remains committed to working with Kuwait, the GCC, and the wider international community to advance peace, development, and a rules-based global order.



Growing collaboration in agriculture, food production, renewable energy, and research, as well as the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding on political consultations earlier this year. Lithuanian products, including dairy and grain, are already available in Kuwaiti markets, and the Vice-Minister expressed optimism about expanding trade and technological partnerships further.

In an exclusive interview with The Times Kuwait, Lithuanian Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs Audra Plepyte highlighted her country's vision for strengthening EU–GCC relations, commended Kuwait's leadership during its current presidency of the GCC, and outlined the need for joint efforts to promote stability, humanitarian cooperation, and a rules-based international order.

The vice-minister emphasized that the EU and the Gulf states share a wide range of priorities—from energy transition to innovation and food security—making their cooperation both economically and strategically sound. She further noted that

Lithuania remains strongly committed to

She also noted that in agriculture and food security, Lithuania can provide high-quality products and advanced agri-tech solutions, contributing to sustainability and resilience across regions.

The vice-minister praised Kuwait's presidency of the GCC, describing it as a valuable opportunity to deepen dialogue and cooperation between the two regions. She said that Lithuania appreciates Kuwait's role as a balanced regional actor committed to mediation and stability.

Plepyte underlined that Kuwait's leadership can help advance EU–GCC cooperation in key areas such as renewable energy, food security, and innovation, while also

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UN official lauds Kuwait's financial reforms, human rights commitments

United Nations Independent Expert on External Debt and Human Rights, Atia Waris, commended Kuwait's leadership in developing its financial system and maintaining a comprehensive social assistance framework independent of taxation, describing the country as being "at the forefront of nations advancing financial reform while upholding human rights principles."

Speaking at a press conference held at the United Nations headquarters in Kuwait last week, Ms. Waris highlighted Kuwait's early commitment to universal human rights since its independence, noting that the establishment of the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development in 1961—the world's oldest development fund—reflected an exceptional dedication to international cooperation and assistance as a state obligation.

She lauded Kuwait's innovative mechanisms and institutional frameworks that support the development of public finance, including the Capital Markets Authority, the Sovereign Wealth



Fund, and Kuwait's role in shaping Islamic financial standards through the Accounting and Auditing Organization for Islamic Financial Institutions (AAOIFI). These efforts, she said, demonstrate

Kuwait's ability to rapidly align with global regulatory standards.

She also praised Kuwait's national development plan for aligning with the UN 2030 Agenda, citing initiatives to diversify the economy, strengthen non-oil sectors, and enhance citizens' living standards while preserving Kuwaiti cultural identity.

The UN expert further applauded Kuwait's application of human rights principles within its financial governance, emphasizing values such as accountability, transparency, efficiency, fairness, and justice. She noted the Zakat House's pivotal role in linking spiritual values with institutional mechanisms to combat poverty, bolster social solidarity, and contribute to international human rights goals. She encouraged Kuwaiti authorities to continue strengthening financial transparency and anti-money laundering frameworks, as well as to enhance cross-border cooperation in addressing illicit financial flows. Ms. Waris is expected to present her full report on Kuwait's progress to the UN Human Rights Council at its 61st session in March 2026.

Philippines to raise minimum salary of overseas domestic workers

Philippine government has announced that the minimum monthly wage for overseas Filipino domestic workers will be raised from US\$400 (about 150 Kuwaiti dinars) to \$500 across all countries employing its workers, including the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states.

The decision, confirmed in a circular issued by the Philippine Ministry of Migrant Workers, will take effect on 22 October and applies to both new hires and returning workers.

The new operational guidelines cited multiple reasons for the wage increase, emphasizing that domestic workers, despite being essential to the labor market of destination states, have historically been undervalued. The circular noted that the last official salary adjustment was in 2006, and over the past two decades, inflation

and rising living costs have halved the real value of their wages.

The circular highlighted that domestic workers perform labor comparable to caregiving, teaching, and household management, yet their compensation has lagged behind economic realities and international labor standards. It also referenced International Labor Convention No. 189, which guarantees decent working conditions, social protection, and appropriate rest periods.

Bassam Al-Shammari, a specialist in domestic workers' affairs, noted that any changes to the unified recruitment contracts require the agreement of both employers and workers.

He clarified that while Kuwait's Law No. 68/2015 sets a minimum wage of KD75 per month for domestic workers, salaries can vary depending on duties, with some specialized care contracts exceeding KD200 per month. He highlighted that the announced wage increase has boosted interest among Filipino workers to work in Kuwait and has positively impacted recruitment requests.

The Manila government has also lifted its restrictions on sending new workers to Kuwait and the Gulf, and for the first time expanded this to include new workers—earlier only previously experienced employees were exempt.



The new operational guidelines provide employers a six-month transition period to adjust salaries for both new and returning workers. During this period, employers may voluntarily increase wages, and after six months, the Philippine Department of Migrant Workers will review compliance and may extend the transition or enforce full adherence to the \$500 minimum wage.

Enhancing teaching, a strategic investment in Kuwait's future

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

However, to successfully implement education reforms and enhance academic quality it is vital to have trained and motivated teachers. Empirical evidence from studies worldwide indicate that supporting, training, motivating, and enhancing proficiencies of teachers continuously are fundamental characteristics of high-performing education systems.

Teachers form the backbone of education systems and are crucial to the proper development of children in their most formative years. Qualified and committed teachers not only help students to advance their subject knowledge and keep abreast of new-age technological advancements, but also develop in them creative and critical thinking skills, and help build resilience to adverse impacts. Teachers act as guides and mentors to young minds, and serve as role-models whose principles, values, and behaviors children tend to emulate as they grow up.

Teachers are also among the ones who shoulder the highest responsibility in nation-building, and in the renaissance and future of the country. They prepare students—who are the true assets in the nation's future—for the rapid social and technological challenges taking place, and equip them to face potential future challenges. Additionally, teachers instill values and principles in students and imbue in them the traditions and heritage of their country, thereby preserving and enhancing national identity in the hearts of young people.

It is reassuring that the collaboration in education-reform with the OECD also involves developing training programs and creating professional development opportunities for

teachers, as well as introducing a teacher licensing system to evaluate competencies in the teaching profession. The collaboration will also see the creation of a national task force to oversee the reform implementation process and regularly assess its progress, in achieving international quality standards and making the education system globally competitive by the end of the decade.

The ongoing curriculum and teaching reforms aim to address persistent challenges identified in the education sector by the World Bank and other entities. In particular, experts point to teaching inefficiencies and education outcomes that do not align with Kuwait's high spending on this sector. This is evidenced in the country's consistent low ranking in global assessments of student performance, and in the mismatch between available youth skills and labor-market needs.

In a related statement, the ministry of education recently affirmed commitment to providing teachers with training and professional development opportunities that enable them to keep pace with advancements in education and technology. By empowering, motivating and supporting teachers to enhance their proficiencies, pedagogical approaches, and teaching modalities, as well as elevating their profile in society, the ministry seeks to highlight the value and impact of teachers on the future of Kuwait.

In the wake of discussions with the OECD official, Minister Al-Tabtabaei also instructed directors of relevant sectors within the ministry to form specialized teams. The teams are tasked with immediately implementing the necessary procedures to collaborate with the OECD experts, and to ensure that the goals outlined

in the joint plan for curriculum development are achieved within the agreed upon timeframes.

Additionally, in July this year, the education minister approved plans for the comprehensive development of school curricula in grades one through nine, to be implemented in the current academic year. The new curriculum stresses learning that incorporates the rapid global advancements in artificial intelligence (AI), cybersecurity, digital learning, and includes a national framework that preserves social values, as well as introduces new modalities in teaching.

The reform process also includes integrating AI into the Grade 10 curriculum, in alignment with education policies that have identified AI skills as essential to meet labor-market demands driven by rapidly evolving digital technologies. The revamping of curriculum also seeks to adopt global best practices from countries known for their scholastic achievements and academic excellences, including Finland and Singapore.

The holistic education reform strategy, with its emphasis on improving education quality and enhancing learning outcomes, is considered foundational for fostering a generation equipped to successfully address future global challenges. The reforms also align with Kuwait's Vision 2035 that aims to develop a knowledge-based society. As such, the reforms should be viewed as a long-term investment strategy that drives sustainable social and economic transformation, and supports Kuwait's renaissance as a regional hub fostering educational advancements.

However, sustaining the education reform momentum will require more than policy announcements and on-paper processes. Previous attempts at education reforms were often derailed by the lack of support amid prevailing political instability. Successful

education reforms hinge on effective and transparent implementation of plans and policies, consistent funding, measurable performance outcomes, and firm commitment by everyone involved in the process. Laudably, the new reforms appear to have widespread support from all education stakeholders.

Interestingly, a decade into the adoption of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), the latest annual report by the United Nations on the status of SDG highlights the precarious state of several goals, even as the 2030 deadline looms. More positively, while the section on education (SDG 4) paints an overall dismal picture of progress, it also highlights several educational gains, including that more than 110 million children have entered school since 2015, when 121 million children were out of school.

Additionally, the report shows that global school completion rates in 2024 reached 88 percent for primary, 78 percent for lower secondary, and 60 percent for upper secondary education—up from 85, 74, and 53 percent, respectively in 2015. Youth literacy rose globally from 91 percent in 2014 to 93 percent in 2024, while adult literacy went from 85 percent to 88 percent; over half of youth aged 15–24 were engaged in education or training in 2024—up 10 percentage points from 2000.

A large part of the gains achieved in global education can be attributed to progressive, far-sighted policies by governments, availability of consistent funding and resources to sustain education momentum, and more importantly, to the legions of committed, trained, and supported teachers who strive to make a difference in education everyday, and prepare students to overcome challenges today, and in the world of tomorrow.

Kuwaiti investments in Turkey exceed US\$ 2 billion

The Times Kuwait Report

Turkey's Ambassador to Kuwait, H.E. Tuğba Sonmez, announced on Monday that 427 Kuwaiti companies are currently operating in Turkey, with total Kuwaiti investments exceeding \$2 billion. Additionally, trade between the two countries reached nearly \$700 million in 2024.

Speaking at a reception organized by the Turkish Embassy to mark the visit of Burak Dağlıoğlu, Head of the Investment and Finance Office at the Turkish Presidency, Ambassador Sonmez highlighted the mutual importance both countries' leaderships place on strengthening bilateral relations. She noted that these ties "gained new momentum following His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's visit to Turkey last year."

The ambassador added during the visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to Ankara several agreements were signed covering bilateral trade, defense industry, and investment, emphasizing that cooperation spans multiple sectors including commerce, defense, tourism, and investment.

She also noted that President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan met with His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah on the sidelines of the 80th UN General Assembly.

Over the past two years, the embassy has hosted numerous senior Turkish officials,



including Trade Minister Ömer Bolat and Treasury and Finance Minister Mehmet Şimşek, holding meetings and events with the Kuwaiti business community. Ambassador Sonmez stressed that Turkey and Kuwait are natural partners in all fields, based on shared history, religious and cultural proximity, common values, and vibrant business communities—foundations upon which bilateral relations are built.

She pointed out that current trade and investment figures do not fully reflect the depth of relations, emphasizing the need to connect business sectors in both countries, build new bridges, and enhance dialogue. She described the visit of the Investment and Finance Office head as an opportunity to unlock joint potential, forge

new partnerships, encourage bold investments, and shape a future of mutual growth.

Speaking at the reception, Burak Dağlıoğlu said the visit aimed to meet investors, showcase opportunities across various economic sectors, and encourage capital investment, particularly given the existing experience between the Investment Office and numerous Kuwaiti investors in Turkey. He added that the office supports most Kuwaiti companies with investments in Turkey, visiting their headquarters during his trip to Kuwait to explore further cooperation opportunities. The office, he noted, reports directly to the Turkish Presidency.

Dağlıoğlu explained that the office seeks to attract additional investments in new sectors

such as insurance, technology, and financial services, alongside traditional sectors like banking, especially Islamic finance, which have long been part of Turkey's investment landscape.

He emphasized that encouraging tech entrepreneurs is a key priority and that the office supports young Kuwaitis establishing tech businesses in Turkey, benefiting from the country's advanced digital infrastructure and assistance in overcoming bureaucratic hurdles for licensing. During the reception, Dağlıoğlu also presented a visual overview of Turkey's economic landscape, regional and global economic trends, and the untapped potential for Turkish-Kuwaiti trade, highlighting promising opportunities for Kuwaiti investors.



GCC ministers endorse Kuwait's candidacy to World Heritage Committee

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries have unanimously expressed their support for Kuwait's candidacy for membership in the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, reaffirming the country's prominent cultural and heritage role in the region.

The announcement came at the conclusion of the 29th meeting of the GCC Committee of Ministers of Culture,



held in Kuwait on 9 October. The meeting adopted several key outcomes and recommendations aimed at enhancing joint Gulf cultural cooperation, preserving Gulf identity, and strengthening shared values of belonging.

Among other notable decisions during the meeting were the adoption of a unified Gulf cultural events calendar for 2026-2028, and the approval of initiatives to support creative cultural industries. The ministers also emphasized greater inclusion of people with disabilities in cultural activities across the Gulf.

Additionally, the committee approved the publication of the third edition of the 'Writers' Guide' and the adoption of new regulations governing joint Gulf cultural events, marking further steps toward deeper cultural integration among GCC member states.



ALSAYER Group Shapes Future Generations with Road Safety and Sustainability Awareness

As part of its ongoing commitment to promoting safety & community engagement, ALSAYER Group recently delivered an impactful road safety awareness session on 29-30 September 2025 to 200 students from the Reborn Kids Education Academy. This 2-day initiative reflects ALSAYER Group's dedication to fostering a culture of responsibility and care among Kuwait's youth. Early road safety awareness teaches children to develop essential skills, attitudes & behaviours to become a generation of responsible road users & this ensures safe mobility for all.



Recognizing the growing importance of road safety in an increasingly mobile society, ALSAYER Group designed the "Buckle Up: Road Safety Program" to educate children on essential traffic rules mainly wearing seat belts and pedestrian safety measures. The session focused on helping students identify road signs, understand safe crossing and driving practices, and learn about the consequences

of traffic accidents. Each student actively participated in the Road Safety Pledge, formally committing to adhere to traffic regulations, consistently wear seatbelts, and promote vigilance and caution among their friends and family members. Through interactive lessons, games and quizzes ALSAYER emphasise to instil these values early; these practical program support to reduce future risks and promote safer road behaviours among new generations.

In addition to its safety-focused agenda, the event also highlighted ALSAYER Group's commitment to environmental stewardship. Through the presentation of Toyota and Lexus Plug In Hybrid vehicles, the Group showcased Toyota's innovations in Hybrid and EV segments. Miniature models of Hydrogen Fuel Cell cars excited young minds to know the cleaner and sustainable mobility solutions committed by The Toyota Motor Corporation. The session introduced students to various forms of sustainable energy, including solar, wind, and hydro, reinforcing the importance of environmental responsibility alongside road safety.

ALSAYER Group recognizes that children have a powerful influence in shaping positive behaviors within their families and communities. According to Eng. Nehad Al-Haj Ali, Group Manager of Corporate Excellence, this initiative is designed to "empower young people to become champions of safety and sustainability." He emphasized that ALSAYER Group remains committed to driving long-term cultural transformation and supporting the growth of a more responsible and conscientious society.

This awareness campaign is part of ALSAYER Group's broader Corporate Sustainability & Responsibility strategy, which emphasizes collaboration with educational institutions to build a safer, healthier & more sustainable future for all.

The Danish Secret to Slowing Down in a Fast-Paced World

Ivana Kralova
Special to The Times Kuwait

A family enjoying a picnic on a boat. Friends paddling on kayaks. An elderly woman reading peacefully on a park bench. These were just a few of the many scenes I saw during my stay in Copenhagen. At first sight, they may seem ordinary. But are they really? In a world where so many people have their phones glued to their hands, laptops always within reach, and heads buried in screens as they rush from one place to another, are moments like these still considered normal, or are they something more? In Denmark, they call it hygge.

Denmark has long held its place among the world's happiest countries, according to the World Happiness Data. And anyone who visits Denmark is likely to come across the word hygge—a word that originally came from the Norwegian language but became part of Danish culture in the 19th century. Hygge is often translated as a happy state of mind and the concept of it, especially during the last 10 years, became a global trend. In fact, there are around 900 books on Amazon related to hygge. But what is hygge really? And more importantly, how can we bring it into our own lives?

Hygge can take many forms. And if you think it is only sipping a pumpkin latte by the fireplace, you are wrong. It is much more than that. Meik Wiking, founder and CEO of the Happiness Research Institute and author of *The Art of Making Memories* and *My Hygge Home*, believes that hygge helps increase the presence of positive emotions in our lives. It shows us how to create and embrace those relaxed, comforting



moments in our everyday routines.

He describes many ways to organize and decorate our homes in a way that supports our sense of happiness and well-being. One of the key elements he highlights is the importance of creating meaningful connections through the ambiance around you. For example, he talks about how simply lighting a few candles during an ordinary dinner, whether alone or with family, can extend the time of dinner, spark more conversation and help us enjoy the moment more deeply.

Wiking also emphasizes the role of interior design in our emotional comfort. He suggests that everyone in a home should have their own personal space or corner—a spot where they can focus, recharge, or simply feel at ease. According to him, the best places are often in corners, which subconsciously provide a sense of safety. These spaces should include soft cushions and personal objects that bring joy when we look at them, such as favorite books,

flowers, or souvenirs.

However, in some countries, hygge has become overhyped, with many people focusing solely on trendy Scandinavian interior design and the idea of coziness at home. But as I learnt more about hygge, one common thread stood out: the ability to be fully present and to enjoy the right atmosphere with yourself or with people you care about. This idea is also supported by research Wiking mentions in one of his books, where he refers to research done by Anglian Home Improvements, which revealed that none of the top five things that make a house feel like a home were materialistic. Instead, people often mentioned feelings of safety and security, laugh, shared meals and spending meaningful time with family or friends. These emotional and social experiences lie at the core of what hygge truly represents.

When I asked Karin Weiser, who proudly says she grew up with hygge, thanks to her Danish mother, what people most often misunderstand

about the concept, she said: "They think it's expensive or can't be done alone. There is sometimes more joy doing it solo." She also shared her own personal secret for bringing more hygge into everyday life. "Focus on what brings you joy and hygge will follow," she said.

Even though hygge is a fundamental aspect of Danish culture, it can be embraced anywhere in the world. For me, hygge is about connection,



and the ability to fully appreciate and enjoy the little things, whether alone, with family, or even with just a cat. It is not about perfection, it is about feeling at home, within us and with those around us. So slow down, feel the atmosphere, and be hygge.

Ivana Kralova is a Czech-born, Kuwait-based features writer and London School of Journalism postgraduate. She covers human-interest, arts and lifestyle across Kuwait, with a focus on profiles and behind-the-scenes reporting. Her work highlights the country's creative community and everyday stories.



Mandarin Oriental, Muscat among top 15 hotels in Mideast in 2025

Listed on Condé Nast Traveller Readers' Choice Awards

Mandarin Oriental, Muscat is delighted to announce that it has been recognised as one of the region's most exceptional hotels in the "Top Hotels in the Middle East" category in the 2025 Condé Nast Traveller Readers' Choice Awards.

The prestigious annual awards, now in their 38th year, celebrate the very best in travel as voted for by readers of Condé Nast Traveller around the world. Each year, hundreds of thousands of discerning travellers cast their votes across a range of categories, from hotels and resorts to islands, airlines, cities, and more.

This accolade highlights Mandarin Oriental, Muscat's position as one of the region's most sought-after destinations, since opening its doors in June 2024. Perfectly situated in the prestigious Shatti Al-Qurum district between the sea and

the city, the hotel blends Omani heritage and craftsmanship with contemporary design, offering a refined yet welcoming sense of place. With panoramic views of the Gulf of Oman, the property's elegantly appointed rooms and suites, destination dining concepts, serene Spa, and legendary service make it a benchmark for luxury hospitality in Oman.

In just one year, Mandarin Oriental, Muscat has firmly established itself on the regional hospitality landscape through prestigious culinary collaborations with renowned restaurants such as Talea and Tasca. The property has also forged meaningful connections with Omani culture through partnerships with iconic institutions including Amouage and the Royal Opera House Muscat.

"We are deeply honoured to be named among the top hotels in the Middle East by the



Nicolas Dubort
 General Manager of
 Mandarin Oriental, Muscat



readers of Condé Nast Traveller," said Nicolas Dubort, General Manager of Mandarin Oriental, Muscat.

"This recognition is particularly meaningful as it reflects the impressions of our guests, whose support inspires us every day to deliver exceptional service and memorable experiences. We look forward to continuing to share the spirit of Omani hospitality and the distinctive Mandarin Oriental touch with



travellers from around the world."

The Condé Nast Traveller Readers' Choice Award highlights Mandarin Oriental, Muscat's commitment to the highest standards of service and its dedication to preserving the spirit of Oman through thoughtful design, cultural resonance and authentic guest connection.

For more information about Mandarin Oriental, Muscat, please visit mandarinoriental.com/muscat.

EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Science Needs a New Social Compact



By Nicholas Dirks

President and CEO of the New York Academy of Sciences.

In 1945, as the world emerged from a global war that had demonstrated the strategic importance of scientific discovery and technological innovation, Vannevar Bush, the chief of America's wartime Office of Scientific Research and Development, published a landmark text. In 'Science, the Endless Frontier', he argued that governments should invest heavily in basic research, confident that scientific breakthroughs would translate into economic growth, improved health, and global preeminence.

That vision was fully realized in the United States, ushering in a golden age of discovery. The American research university underpinned US progress in science, and that progress established the country as a global leader in innovation.

But even before President Donald Trump's second administration had launched a full-scale assault on US universities and scientific research, Bush's 80-year-old model was showing signs of age. The model has always rested on three assumptions: that there is a linear pathway from fundamental science to socially beneficial applied technologies; that scientists, largely free from regulation, would naturally generate outcomes in the public interest; and that the government could be relied on to fund basic research. None still completely holds true.

Rarely has the scientific enterprise been both as important and as vulnerable as it is now. Climate change demands urgent innovation in clean energy. AI promises to unleash both revolutionary opportunities and profound risks. And while biotechnology holds the potential to cure numerous diseases, it also raises thorny ethical questions. Moreover, these fields



grantmaking powers, and place extortionate demands on universities that it disapproves of (for whatever idiosyncratic reason). The situation demands a new social compact for science, one that recognizes twenty-first-century political and industrial realities and reimagines the relationship between research and society.

Research scientists' vulnerability to the whims of populist political leaders and movements shows that we must establish more reliable forms of support. This is especially true when it comes to work on climate change, AI, and synthetic biology. Novel approaches to biomedical research are producing new therapies for cancer, infectious diseases, and a range of other challenges to our personal and public health; but these gains could be squandered without ongoing support.

Moreover, today's political environment forces us to recognize that the loss of trust in science can be reversed only by emphasizing the role of science as a civic enterprise. Knowledge is not just the property of governments, researchers, universities, or corporations; it is a public resource. Research must be subject to institutional mechanisms of accountability, not only to ensure technical rigor, but also to monitor and manage its ethical, environmental, and social impact. If cutting-edge advances in AI are governed solely by technology companies, what confidence can we have that they will serve the public good? For science to regain public trust, it must demonstrate, in tangible ways, that it serves more than shareholder interests.

Science also must be better networked and distributed. Discoveries happen not only at elite universities or in federal laboratories but also in private industry, and through international collaborations, citizen-science initiatives, and digital platforms. A new social compact for science must embrace this diversity.

While industry and private philanthropy need to develop a more productive relationship with government-supported initiatives, we also need more open science, shared infrastructure, and interoperable data. These are not luxuries; they are necessary for accelerating discovery, ensuring transparency, facilitating broader participation, and drawing on more of the world's talents and resources.

Equally, we must invest in people, not just programs. The current funding regime too often marginalizes early-career scientists and rewards incremental advances over bold, groundbreaking ideas. A society that is serious about discovery must be willing to place risky bets on the next generation. That means empowering scientists with portable

funding, more flexible career paths, and the freedom to pursue ambitious questions. We cannot afford to waste talent by locking it into bureaucratic cycles or prolonged postdoc precarity, and we must be more tolerant of failure.

By the same token, science must become more interdisciplinary. Whether in fields like AI, which cries out for stronger ethical controls and social-science perspectives, or in some biological research, where the

focus can be too narrow, there is an obvious need for broader intellectual participation. Science has the unique capacity to help us better understand the complex nature of the social and physical world, but only if we let it.

At its core, science must be cross-sectoral by design. The old 'triple helix' of government, universities, and industry is no longer sufficient.

Civic institutions, individual communities, and others from around the world must be part of the process of shaping and creating scientific agendas. Scientists should learn to listen, so that they can engage with communities not as subjects or beneficiaries, but as partners in the design and direction of research. The COVID-19 pandemic was a powerful lesson in the need to engage communities early and often. Failing that, scientific messaging will no longer be widely trusted or heeded.

The challenges before us, whether they are pandemics, climate change, or disruptive technologies, are not just scientific; they are social, political, and ethical as well. Bush's vision helped win the peace and build prosperity after World War II. Our task today is to craft a vision for an even more fraught world. We need a new social compact to ensure that science remains a shared frontier that is free of political influence, open to all, accountable to society, and committed to both human and planetary flourishing.

“

Novel approaches to biomedical research are producing new therapies for cancer, infectious diseases, and a range of other challenges to our personal and public health; but these gains could be squandered without ongoing support.

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are advancing at a time when public trust in science has eroded, federal funding has declined, and the line between basic and applied research has become blurrier with the rise of entrepreneurial labs and more interdisciplinary research teams.

This issue has grown even more urgent now that the Trump administration is determined to slash research funding, weaponize federal



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Thought for the week

Faith is the bird that feels the
light and sings when the dawn is
still dark

— Rabindranath Tagore

IBS and Fiber: Understanding Soluble vs. Insoluble Fiber

Ask Mira: Eating Right to Live Happy & Healthy



Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) is one of the most common digestive disorders worldwide, affecting millions of people with symptoms such as bloating, abdominal pain, diarrhea, and constipation. While nutrition plays a central role in managing IBS, a powerful nutrient often misunderstood is fiber in the diet.

In fact, there are two main types: Soluble and insoluble fiber and each interacts with the gut differently. For people with IBS, understanding these differences can mean the difference between calm digestion and a flare-up. Let us look at the differences between these two fibers.

Soluble fiber dissolves in water and forms a gel-like texture in the digestive tract. This slows down digestion, helps regulate blood sugar, and promotes a regular bowel rhythm. For IBS sufferers, soluble fiber is often considered the gentler option.



Examples of soluble fiber foods include oats and oat bran, psyllium husk (a common supplement for IBS); apples, pears, and citrus fruits (with their peels); carrots, zucchini, and sweet potatoes

Insoluble fiber, on the other hand, does not dissolve in water. Instead, it adds bulk to stools and speeds up movement through the intestines. This can be too harsh for IBS patients, often worsening symptoms such as bloating, cramping, and diarrhea.

Examples of insoluble fiber foods include, whole wheat bran and whole wheat products, nuts and seeds, cauliflower,

broccoli, cabbage, dark leafy greens (kale, spinach), corn and popcorn

People with IBS often receive the advice to eat more fiber, but without distinguishing between the two types. Research consistently shows that increasing insoluble fiber may worsen symptoms, while increasing soluble fiber often provides relief

A few practical tips for IBS patients:

- Start with soluble fiber: Introduce gentle, soluble-rich foods first, such as oatmeal or chia seeds.
- Go slow: Adding fiber too quickly can cause gas and bloating. Increase gradually and monitor symptoms.
- Mind portion sizes: Balance is key.
- Hydration is essential: Fiber needs water to work properly. Drink plenty of fluids, especially if taking fiber supplements.

Fiber is not the enemy in IBS. It is a powerful tool when understood and used correctly. Soluble fiber, in particular, is often a friend to the sensitive gut, helping to ease both constipation and diarrhea. Insoluble fiber, while beneficial for general gut health, should be approached with more caution in IBS management.

By paying attention to the type of fiber consumed, IBS patients can shift from fear and frustration to greater control and comfort in their daily lives.

Eat like Mira
Create healthy habits, not restrictions

To subscribe to my diet programs,
don't forget to log in to:
www.eatlikemira.com.



Mira is a go-to source for nutrition and wellness and has joined The Times Kuwait team in a new weekly column discussing nutrition and answering queries. You can send in your questions to infotimeskuwait@gmail.com

RECIPE

TINY PIZZA BITES



These little bites are perfect for parties and fun for weeknights! These little two-bite pizzas were easy to make and a total hit. It is an ideal guilt-free snack recipe for any kitty party or celebration feast as it can be served in small portions. It can be customized with different toppings for a variety of textures and tastes!

Total time: 1 hour 30 min

Serving: 12 pizza

INGREDIENTES:

*FOR PIZZA DOUGH :

- 2 cups all purpose flour
- 1 tsp instant dry yeast
- Warm water
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tbsp. sugar
- 2 Tbsp. Oil
- Extra flour for dusting and extra oil for greasing the baking tray

*FOR PIZZA SAUCE:

- 1/2 cup tomato sauce
- 2 tbsp. Tomato ketchup
- 1/2 tsp. Chilly flakes
- 1 tsp .mix herbs

*FOR PIZZA TOPPINGS:

- Pizza sauce
- Grated Mozzarella cheese
- Your choice of veggies like chopped onion, Capsicum, olives, tomatoes, sweetcorn, jalapeno
- Chilli flakes, mixed herbs

*TO MAKE PIZZA SAUCE:

- in a small bowl take tomato sauce
- tomato ketchup, chilli flakes, mixed herbs
- mix well make sure well combined
- instant pizza sauce is ready

*TO MAKE THE DOUGH:

- In a large bowl, mix together the flour, dried yeast, sugar and salt. Make a well in the middle of the flour mixture and pour in the oil.
- Mix the flour with your fingertips and knead the dough with as required lukewarm water as soft dough.
- Sprinkle flour on the work surface and turn out the dough. Knead the dough for 10 minutes until it becomes smooth.
- Shape the dough into a ball. Grease the dough with little oil.
- Place the dough ball in the center of the bowl.
- Cover and rest for 1 hour.
- Spread the pizza dough onto a floured surface and cut into circles with a cookie cutter or rim of a cup or glass.
- Place the dough circles onto the baking tray.
- Spread 1-2 teaspoons of pizza sauce onto the dough.
- Sprinkle with 1-2 tablespoons of mozzarella cheese.
- Add your toppings of choice.
- Bake for 8-10 minutes, until the cheese is melted and is golden brown.
- Let cool for a few minutes before serving.



Chef Chhaya Thakker

Indian Chef Chhaya Thakker, who has a huge following online on WhatsApp and YouTube will be sharing her favorite recipes and cooking tips with readers of The Times Kuwait. For feedback, you can write to editortimeskuwait@gmail.com

Eye-drops that could replace reading glasses

In most people their eyes gradually lose the ability to focus on nearby objects as they age, with the condition usually beginning in the early 40s and continuing to worsen over the years. The condition is known in medical terms as presbyopia, and in more common parlance as 'long-sight' or long-sightedness. Early signs of presbyopia include the person having to hold reading material farther away than usual to make the letters and words clearer; blurred vision at normal reading distance; eyestrain or headaches from reading or doing close-up work for an extended period, especially when tired, or in dim lighting conditions.

Presbyopia is generally corrected through the use of prescription eyeglasses, contact lenses, or surgery. But these solutions have limitations, including being inconvenient, causing physical and social discomfort, and carrying the potential risks of infections arising from improper use of contact lens, or complications following surgeries.

The significant unmet medical needs in presbyopia management led researchers at Advanced Research for Presbyopia, in Buenos Aires, Argentina, to offer a non-invasive, convenient and effective pharmacological alternative in the form of eye drops. In initial trials, the eye-drops, applied two to three times daily, were seen to significantly restore near-vision lost to aging. In some cases, sight improved within an hour of applying the drops, and the restored sight was sustained for years, with minimal side-effects.

The newly developed eyedrops contain a combination of two active agents: pilocarpine, a drug that constricts the pupils and contracts the ciliary muscle, which is a muscle controlling the eye's accommodation for seeing objects at varying distances, and diclofenac, a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) that reduces inflammation and the discomfort that pilocarpine often causes.

The study included 766 patients—373



women and 393 men, with an average age of 55—who were divided into three groups to receive one of three eye-drop formulations. Each group received a formulation that had a fixed dose of diclofenac but with the concentration of pilocarpine varying from 1, 2, and 3 percent respectively.

The specially formulated eye-drops were administered twice a day, usually on waking and again approximately six hours later, with an optional third dose if symptoms recurred or additional visual comfort was needed. The researchers assessed sight improvement by measuring how well patients could read the Jaeger chart—the standard chart used for testing uncorrected near visual acuity (without reading-glasses)—one hour after the first administration of the drops. The visual acuity of the patients continued to be monitored for two years.

The results showed that nearly all patients experienced positive improvements in near visual acuity, although the magnitude of the improvement depended on the status of their vision before treatment at baseline. The results also showed rapid and sustained improvements in near vision for all three concentrations. One hour after having the first drops, patients had an



average improvement of 3.45 Jaeger lines. The treatment also improved focus at all distances.

Impressively, 99 percent of 148 patients in the 1 percent pilocarpine group reached optimal near vision and were able to read two or more extra lines. Approximately 83 percent of all patients maintained good functional near vision at 12 months. Importantly, no significant adverse events like increased intraocular pressure or retinal detachment were observed. In the 2 percent group, 69 percent of 248 patients were able to read three or more extra lines on the Jaeger chart, and in the 3 percent group, 84 percent of 370 patients could read three or more extra lines.

The improvement in the patients' vision was sustained for up to two years, with a median duration of 434 days. Adverse side effects were mild, with the most common being temporary dim vision, which occurred in 32 percent of cases; irritation when the drops were instilled (3.7%); and headache (3.8%). No patients discontinued the treatment.

The study revealed that optimal pilocarpine concentrations could be individualized depending on the baseline severity of presbyopia as assessed by the initial Jaeger scores. Patients

with less severe presbyopia responded best to 1 percent concentrations, while those with more advanced presbyopia required higher 2 percent or 3 percent concentrations to achieve significant visual improvement.

The results suggest this combination therapy offers a safe, effective, and well-tolerated alternative to traditional presbyopia management. It significantly reduces dependence on reading glasses, providing a convenient, non-invasive option for patients. However, the eye-drops do not eliminate the need for glasses in all individuals, and are not intended to replace surgical interventions, but rather to provide eye care professionals with an evidence-based pharmacological option that expands the spectrum of presbyopia care beyond glasses and surgery.

An evaluation of the study by independent experts found the study to be robust based on the large number of patients involved and the long follow-up time. Moreover, it was the first systematic evaluation comparing three different pilocarpine concentrations in combination with diclofenac. But the evaluators also highlighted the limitations of the study.

They pointed out that the study was based on a single center and that it was a retrospective study—which analyzes existing data from the past to understand outcomes, risks, or associations related to a disease or event. Long-term pilocarpine use has also been associated with side-effects such as red-eyes, eye-stain, irritation, reduced low-light and night vision, and, in rare cases, retinal detachment. Prolonged topical NSAID use may also pose corneal risks.

Warning that the limitations observed introduces selection bias and prevents the generalizing of the results over a wider population, the experts called for broader, long-term, multi-center studies to be conducted so as to confirm safety and effectiveness of the eye-drops before the treatment could be widely recommended.

Dehydration fuels anxiety, other health issues

Prolonged or chronic stress can trigger various health issues affecting the body, mind and behavior, worsening existing health conditions and increasing the risk for serious illnesses by affecting inflammation, hormone levels, and the functioning of vital systems like the heart, brain, and immune system. A new study by researchers at the Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) in the United Kingdom, shows that drinking too little water could increase vulnerability to stress-related health issues.

The study found that people who drink less than 1.5 liters of fluid per day, experience a cortisol—the primary stress hormone in the body—response to stress that was over 50

percent higher than those who met the daily water intake recommendations. Higher cortisol response has been linked to increased risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes, as well as aggravating digestive problems, headaches, anxiety, depression, and sleep disturbances.

For their study, the researchers divided the healthy young adults participating in the study into two equally sized groups, representing the lowest and highest 25 percent for daily fluid intake. The 'low fluid' group consisted of individuals who typically drank less than 1.5 liters of fluid per day. The 'high fluid' group included individuals who regularly met the daily water intake recommendations—2 liters for women and 2.5 liters for men. Both groups were matched for key factors known to influence stress responses such as psychological characteristics and sleep.

Participants maintained their usual drinking habits for one week, during which hydration levels were monitored in blood and urine samples. Then participants underwent the Trier Social Stress Test—a widely used test that



simulates real world stress through a mock job interview and a mental arithmetic task.

The study found that while both groups felt equally anxious and experienced similar increases in heart rate during the stress test. However, only the 'low fluid' group showed a significant increase in saliva cortisol in response to the stress test.

Although the low fluid group did not report being thirstier than the high fluid group, they had darker and more concentrated urine,

clear signs of poor hydration. The relationship between dehydration and increased stress can be traced to the body's water-regulation system, which is closely connected to the brain's stress-response center. When the body senses dehydration, whether due to inadequate fluid intake or excessive fluid loss, it triggers the release of a hormone called vasopressin.

Vasopressin acts primarily on the kidneys, promoting water reabsorption to maintain blood volume and electrolyte balance. This conservation mechanism comes at a cost. Sustained vasopressin release places additional strain on the kidneys, which must work harder to concentrate urine and manage electrolyte balance.

Vasopressin also acts on the brain's stress-response center, the hypothalamus, where it can influence the release of cortisol. This dual role for vasopressin helps maintain blood volume and electrolyte balance but also increases cortisol. The researchers say that while further long-term studies are needed to collaborate their findings, the study nevertheless reinforces current water intake recommendations.



Rethinking Value-Added Taxes for Developing Economies

EXCLUSIVE to
THE TIMES KUWAIT


Rabah Arezki, Grégoire Rota-Graziosi, Rick van der Ploeg

Rabah Arezki, a former vice president at the African Development Bank, is Director of Research at the French National Center for Scientific Research and a senior fellow at Harvard Kennedy School.

Grégoire Rota-Graziosi is Professor of Economics at Clermont-Auvergne University. Rick van der Ploeg is Professor of Economics at the University of Oxford and University Professor of Environmental Economics at the University of Amsterdam.

The value-added tax (VAT) is one of the most widely implemented tax innovations of the past 70 years. First piloted in the early 1950s in Côte d'Ivoire, then a French colony, and gradually introduced across France from 1954 until its formal adoption in 1966, it has since been embraced by 175 countries, with the notable exception of the United States. In many developed and developing economies, it is the leading source of tax revenue, surpassing both corporate and personal income taxes.

The VAT's global appeal lies in its intrinsic features. As a tax on final household consumption, it provides governments with a stable revenue base. Its debit-credit mechanism, applied throughout the value chain, prevents the



cumulative tax burden that was once common with turnover and sales taxes. This method not only ensures neutrality but also strengthens compliance: by cross-checking transactions between suppliers and customers, the VAT generates a more reliable revenue stream even in cases of business failure or fraud.

The spread of the VAT has been closely tied to trade liberalization, as developing countries reduced tariffs and became integrated into the global economy. With tariff revenues shrinking, the VAT—anchored in domestic consumption and collected at the border—offered a powerful substitute capable of offsetting and even surpassing lost customs revenue.

But after decades of widespread use, the VAT warrants reassessment. As our recent study shows, its results have been mixed. In developed economies, it has been effective at boosting tax revenue, supporting industrialization, and promoting diversification. In resource-rich developing countries, by contrast, it has not delivered the expected benefits, failing to make up for lost tariff revenues and leaving governments with significant fiscal shortfalls.

With donor governments slashing foreign-

aid budgets, the need to mobilize domestic resources, primarily through taxation, has become increasingly critical. This urgency was reaffirmed at the Third International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa in 2015 and July's Fourth Conference in Seville. Both gatherings highlighted domestic revenue as crucial for achieving the United Nations' 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

Beyond its impact on tax revenues, the VAT has had unintended structural consequences for resource-rich developing countries. By design, the VAT applies only to domestic consumption; exports are exempt. Under the destination principle, exporters are even entitled to full refunds on VAT paid for equipment and intermediate goods.

Combined with tariff reductions, this framework has lowered the cost of resource extraction and deepened these countries' reliance on unprocessed raw material exports such as oil and minerals rather than fostering industries that could add value. The result has been the 'resource curse', a self-reinforcing cycle of limited diversification and economic underdevelopment.

Our findings point to a fundamental issue: tax systems cannot simply be transplanted wholesale from one economy to another. For this reason, the VAT has undergone numerous adaptations since its inception in the early 1950s to reflect different national contexts.

China offers a telling example. When the country introduced a VAT at a rate of 17% in 1994, it initially adhered strictly to the destination principle, granting exporters full refunds on VAT paid for inputs and equipment. Just two years later, however, the Chinese government began restricting VAT refunds on certain exports in response to significant budgetary pressures.

Over time, what began as an emergency measure evolved into an explicit instrument of Chinese industrial policy, used alternately to encourage exports and boost tax revenue, depending on economic circumstances. In December 2024, for example, China halted VAT reimbursements for copper and aluminum exporters. While this raised the cost of shipping these raw materials abroad, it also created powerful incentives to process them domestically, allowing China to capture greater value within its own supply chain.

China's experience offers a useful model for resource-rich countries seeking to adjust their VAT to meet fiscal and developmental objectives. It demonstrates that, with careful design and implementation, such taxes can be reshaped to promote industrialization, foster diversification, and achieve long-term economic stability.

For developing economies, many of which now grapple with severe budget constraints and the need to create productive, well-paying jobs for growing populations, the lesson is clear: to break the cycle of dependence that holds them back, they must reform the VAT.

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