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Success of Mega Projects Vital to Driving 'Vision 2035'



THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

Prioritizing the implementation of vital projects is crucial to realizing Kuwait's Vision 2035 development plan of transforming the country into a financial, commercial and cultural hub in the region. In particular, infrastructure projects outlined in the plan, including in transportation, communication, energy, and urban development, are critical to drive economic growth, enhance productivity, create jobs, attract foreign and local investment, and improve overall quality of life for citizens.

Kuwait has been disadvantaged for long by poor infrastructure, relative to its more dynamic and investment-friendly peers in the region. This is a drawback that the current government appears keen to address rapidly. Since taking office in May 2004, the government has prioritized the development



of infrastructure projects, with the country currently having nearly 300 active projects, valued at approximately KD35 billion, with

large infrastructure projects making up nearly half of that total.

Modern infrastructure forms the spine of

thriving economies, boosting productivity by reducing operational costs, time delays, and enhancing efficiencies in public services and for businesses. A robust infrastructure also demonstrates stability and growth potential of the country, positioning it as an attractive destination for investments. Direct domestic and foreign investments, or through public-private partnerships, are a key mechanism for mobilizing capital and expertise needed to implement large-scale projects.

Implementation of mega infrastructure projects are also key to Kuwait's economic diversification plan, as they encourage private sector participation, generate employment opportunities, drive demand for goods and services, and create a positive multiplier effect in the overall economy. Additionally, infrastructure projects in transportation facilitate regional economic integration, expand market access, and enhance global competitiveness.

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From Services to Experiences, Human-Centered Government Must Define Kuwait's Next Phase of Reform



By Sarah Al Sabah
Government Advisor
& Communication Strategist
Special to The Times Kuwait

Governments today are not judged only by the elegance of their policies; they are judged by the lived experiences they create for people. Citizens expect services to be as intuitive as the best private-sector platforms they use daily. When interactions with the government are confusing or time-consuming, trust erodes. When they are smooth, clear, and responsive, confidence grows. As Kuwait advances toward Vision 2035, human-centered government must become a defining pillar of its next phase of reform.

Human-Centered Approach: A human-centered approach begins with a simple shift in mindset: designed around people, not procedures. Instead of asking how ministries operate internally. We must ask what the citizen or the resident actually experiences when having a child, starting a business, applying for a service, or navigating a regulatory process. The key is life-event models, where services are organized around key moments in a person's life. Around the world, governments that have



This op-ed argues that Kuwait's next phase of reform, aligned with New Kuwait Vision 2035, must put human experience at the center of government service delivery. It highlights that modern governments are judged not only on policies but on the quality of the citizen's lived experience. The piece explains what a human-centered government looks like — designing around life events, building continuous listening systems, and using multi-way communication to understand real needs. The article calls for a shift from transactions to holistic experiences, using behavioral insights, service design labs, and journey mapping to overcome pain points that undermine trust. The Op-Ed underscores that technology should enable empathy rather than replace it, and that AI can help ministries anticipate needs and personalize services. Finally, the op-ed frames Kuwait's current moment as a unique opportunity to embed citizen experience blueprints across ministries and train public servants as experience designers.

Multi-way communication: citizens to government, government to citizens, and horizontally across government sectors. A multi-way communication system builds transparency and strengthens the public's sense of partnership. This is essential for modern governance. Trust must be earned through daily actions, not occasional announcements.

From Transactions to Experiences: Shifting from transactions to experiences is at the heart of this transformation. Many frustrations

A Systemic Analytics Loop for Institutional Reform in Kuwait:



Human-centered government begins with seeing services through the eyes of the citizen — as one coherent journey, not separate transactions.

A citizen journey for a human-centered government

1 See life from citizens' perspective

Use human-centered design to map citizen journeys around major life events. Focus on what people actually experience—not internal government structures



2 Use multi-way communication

Employ continuous two-way and community-level communication channels to capture changing needs and make insights actionable



3 Create flexible, responsive engines

Build an accessible and adaptable service delivery model that can quickly respond to citizen needs. Use cross-functional teams, agile workflows, and integrated data systems



4 Deliver better outcomes continuously

Be intentional about:

- Enhancing citizen satisfaction
- Measuring service performance
- Holding leaders accountable for improvements
- Ensuring outcomes improve year after year



Human-centered government begins with seeing services through the eyes of the citizen — as one coherent journey, not separate transactions.

adopted life-event models have seen major gains in satisfaction and efficiency. Kuwait has taken steps in this direction through unified platforms like Sahel. The opportunity now is to embed this thinking across the entire government.

Listening Systems for Human-Centered Government: Human-centered government requires listening systems that continuously capture citizen needs. Surveys, digital feedback tools, and service-center observations help governments spot pain points early. But more importantly, they create a culture where public institutions learn and adapt.

AI cannot replace compassion, cultural understanding, or the reassurance that comes from a human interaction when complexity arises. The most successful digital governments use technology to amplify the human touch, not eliminate it.

Lead Citizen Experience: Kuwait is well positioned to lead in citizen experience. The country already benefits from high digital readiness, strong institutional reform momentum, and a young population eager for modernized services. What comes next is embedding human-centered principles into everyday government operations. Ministries can develop citizen-experience blueprints for major life events. One way is to map out the ideal journey and align all relevant agencies. These blueprints serve as shared frameworks, ensuring coordination across the public sector and reducing inefficiencies that burden citizens.

Public Servants as Experience Designers: Equally important is investing in public servants as experience designers. This requires training in design thinking, empathy-based engagement, and cross-government collaboration. Many countries now operate service design labs. A place where innovation teams prototype and test solutions before wider rollout. Kuwait could create similar hubs to drive reform from within. The result would empower teams to challenge old assumptions and rethink how services should be delivered in a digital, human-centered era.

Beyond Administrative Improvement: The rewards of this transition extend far beyond administrative improvement. Human-centered government strengthens the social contract. Through this system government actions illustrate to citizens and residents that their time, dignity, and needs matter. This type of government system supports economic diversification. When bureaucracy eases, it opens the path to start businesses, attract investment, and navigate regulation. Human-centered government contributes to national unity. The system ensures public services are fair, inclusive, and accessible to all. Ultimately, human-centered government aligns with Vision 2035 in that it envisions a government that is efficient, transparent, and responsive to people.

The Next Chapter: As Kuwait steps into its next chapter, the question guiding reform should be simple: Does this make life easier, clearer, and more dignified for the people we serve? When the answer is yes, then the government becomes more than an institution; it becomes a partner. Human-centered government is the path that transforms strategic ambition into everyday impact. Mainly human-centered government ensures that every citizen and resident feels seen, heard, and supported on the journey toward Kuwait Vision 2035.

Editors Note: As Kuwait accelerates its national transformation under Vision 2035, the question is no longer whether government services should be digital, but whether they are truly designed around people's lives. This op-ed explores why human-centered government, grounded in empathy, listening, and real-life experience, must guide Kuwait's next era of reform.

The analysis offers timely insight for policymakers, innovators, and public leaders. From service design labs to AI-enabled personalization. The article highlights practical pathways for building a government that earns trust through every interaction.

with public services stem not from the service itself but from the journey to access it: unclear instructions, multiple visits, repetitive paperwork, or lack of status updates. Efficiency alone does not solve this. What matters is how people feel during the process. Are the people confident or confused, supported or lost? Studies consistently show that citizens who have positive service interactions are far more likely to trust government institutions. That trust becomes a foundation for national stability and economic confidence.

Kuwait can build on global best practices by applying service design methods, journey mapping, and behavioral insights to redesign key public experiences. This means analyzing every step from a citizen's perspective. The idea is to identify where friction occurs and remove unnecessary burdens. Redesigning processes around clarity, transparency, and emotional ease does more than improve efficiency. Redesigning shapes a government that feels accessible, humane, and responsive.

Technology: Technology plays a vital role. The aim in the use of technology is as an enabler not a substitute for human insight. Digital transformation succeeds only when guided by empathy. A poorly designed digital service can frustrate people just as much as a slow in-person procedure. Artificial intelligence and data analytics offer powerful opportunities to personalize services and anticipate needs. For instance, proactively alerting a citizen about required renewals or eligibility for benefits.

Your Winter Getaway Begins with Jazeera Airways

Beautiful Places, Easy Journeys, and Unforgettable Memories

As the year winds down and the festive season begins to shine a little brighter, December has a way of making us crave something different — colder winds, brighter lights, or simply a horizon that isn't the same one we've stared at all year. And the best part? Some of the season's most dreamy destinations are closer to Kuwait than most people think. We take a closer look at some of this season's favourite destinations — each offering its own kind of holiday magic. The best getaways are the ones that don't feel complicated. Jazeera Airways connects Kuwait to these winter-worthy destinations with short & direct flights, easy fares, and schedules made for spontaneous escapes.



Georgia

- Winter That Feels Like a Hug
- ⌚ 2.5 hrs away

Picture snow settling on wooden rooftops, warm cheese bread in a café window, and mountains that look like they've been dusted with sugar. That's Georgia in December —

peaceful, scenic, and effortlessly charming. It's not just a winter holiday; it's a winter feeling. And you get there in less than the time it takes to watch two movies.

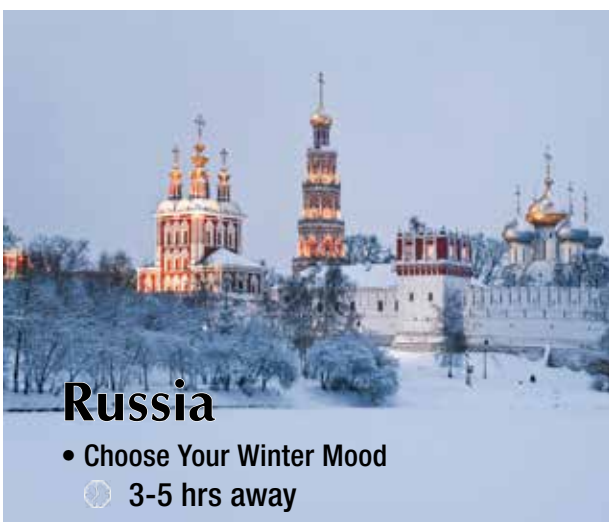


Armenia

- Where Winter Glows From the Inside Out
- ⌚ 2.5 hrs away

Yerevan doesn't try to impress — it just does. Christmas markets pop up with handmade crafts, the smell of cinnamon drifts through the air, and locals gather in

squares glowing softly under winter lights. It's intimate, warm-hearted, and comforting in a way that stays with you long after you return home.



Russia

- Choose Your Winter Mood
- ⌚ 3-5 hrs away

Want a city that sparkles like a snow globe? Moscow is all energy, lights, and charm — the kind of place that feels alive even when it's below zero. Or maybe you want calm. Sochi offers soft snow, mountains that quiet your thoughts, and resorts where time slows down just enough for you to breathe again.

The UAE doesn't just celebrate the holidays — it stages them. In Dubai, the skyline glitters a little louder, the malls turn festive, and the New Year's countdown feels like a city-wide performance. Abu Dhabi brings its own style: calm sophistication, cultural landmarks, and beautifully lit evenings along the Corniche.

And then there's Al Ain, the UAE's quiet winter treasure. With its cool mountain air and gardens wrapped in greenery, it offers a slower, softer December — the perfect reset before the new year begins

UAE

- Where the Season Shines
- ⌚ 1.5 hrs away



Sri Lanka

- Trade Your Coat for Coconut Trees
- ⌚ 5 hrs away



If your idea of a holiday looks more like sunlight than snowfall, Sri Lanka feels like a gift. Think warm breezes, beaches that stretch into the distance, coastal cafés, and sunsets that unspool slowly across the sky. It's the kind of place where you don't check the time.

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Embassy of Mongolia celebrates 101st anniversary of Republic Day



The Times Kuwait Report

Embassy of Mongolia held a colorful ceremony to mark the country's 101st anniversary of Republic Day and the 50th anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations with Kuwait. The event was attended by Kuwait's Assistant Foreign Minister for Asian Affairs Ambassador Samih Hayat as the chief guest, along with members of the diplomatic corps and other distinguished invitees.

The function underlined the depth of relations and expanding cooperation between Mongolia and Kuwait, reaffirmed the bilateral partnership that continues to grow across political, economic, and cultural fields. In his address to the gathering, Ambassador of Mongolia H.E. Sergelen Purev described the dual occasion—Republic Day and the 50th anniversary of

diplomatic relations—as an important milestone in the journey of friendship and partnership between Kuwait and Mongolia. Noting that five decades of cooperation have cemented a solid relationship built on mutual respect and shared aspirations, he underscored the stability and depth of the bond that has developed since the establishment of ties in 1975.

Ambassador Purev extended his sincere appreciation to Kuwait's leadership, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, praising their wisdom and support in advancing bilateral cooperation. He emphasized that Kuwait's steady and balanced foreign policy has played a pivotal role in reinforcing the foundations of Mongolian-Kuwaiti relations over the years.

For his part, Ambassador Hayat highlighted the rapid bilateral development seen in recent months. He remarked that, two months ago, Kuwait began importing chilled meat from Mongolia, slaughtered according to Islamic rites, marking an important step in strengthening food security cooperation between the two countries.

Ambassador Hayat added that preparations are now under way to begin importing live cattle from Mongolia early next year, broadening the scope of agricultural and livestock collaboration. These imports are expected to contribute to Kuwait's strategy of diversifying food sources and ensuring stable supply channels. He explained that the initial shipments will arrive via direct flights, coordinated with both local and international transport companies to ensure efficiency and

compliance with health and safety standards. Once logistical arrangements are fully finalized, Mongolia-to-Kuwait sea freight routes will also be activated to support larger volumes of trade.

Ambassador Hayat also emphasized the strategic value of Kuwait's location and regulatory alignment within the Gulf market that position the country as an attractive regional trade hub for Mongolian products. He pointed out that since all Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states apply unified Gulf standards, Mongolian products entering Kuwait automatically qualify for export to the rest of the GCC.

Mongolia has expressed interest in leveraging Kuwait's connectivity and regulatory compatibility with its Gulf neighbors to expand the reach of its livestock, agricultural goods, and other products into broader Middle Eastern markets.

Nearly a quarter of Kuwaiti population diagnosed with diabetes

Dr. Thamer Mohammed Al-Essa, consultant endocrinologist and diabetologist and visiting consultant at the Dasman Diabetes Institute, revealed that diabetes affects between 20 and 25 percent of Kuwait's population, noting that the country still lacks precise data to measure the annual number of new cases.

He explained that this percentage includes a wide spectrum of patients whose conditions vary significantly in severity and treatment needs—ranging from individuals who require only simple medications to those who depend on intensive, multi-drug regimens or insulin therapy.

Dr. Al-Essa said the often-quoted estimate of 800,000 diabetic patients—roughly a quarter of Kuwait's population—is undoubtedly a large number, but not surprising, considering the chronic nature of the disease and its strong links to lifestyle patterns and genetic predispositions prevalent in society. He warned that diabetes cases are expected to rise unless lifestyle habits change.

He explained that type 2 diabetes is the most widespread form in Kuwait because of its association with daily lifestyle and dietary patterns, while type 1 diabetes exists but remains far less common.

"Any percentage representing hundreds of thousands of cases reflects a broad spectrum of patients whose needs differ widely—from those

who manage their condition with a single daily pill to patients requiring multiple medications or insulin," said Dr. Al-Essa. He emphasized that the complexity and diversity of diabetes make it difficult to identify the most vulnerable groups precisely, calling for increased community awareness, early detection, and a shift toward healthier lifestyles.

Elaborating on diabetes, Dr. Al-Essa explained that diabetes occurs when blood sugar rises above normal levels, preventing the body from using it properly. While glucose is essential as the body's primary energy source, persistently high levels damage organs and impair their functions. He said long-term elevated sugar levels calcify blood vessels—raising the risk of strokes—and progressively weaken the kidneys due to constant strain.

Type 1 diabetes results from insufficient insulin production. In contrast, type 2 diabetes occurs when the body produces normal or near-normal insulin levels but becomes resistant to it. This resistance, he explained, is closely linked to weight gain, high-calorie diets, and the accumulation of visceral fat around the abdomen.

Over time, many type 2 patients experience a gradual decline in their ability to produce insulin, leading them to progress from simple oral medications to full insulin therapy.

Al-Essa pointed to Kuwait's prevailing diet—rich in starches such as rice, bread, and



flour-based foods—and emphasized that the problem stems not from starches alone but from how they are prepared. "Starches are often cooked with excessive fats and hydrogenated oils," he said. "This combination creates extremely high-calorie meals and accelerates weight gain."

Commenting on diabetes among children, Al-Essa said most young patients with diabetes suffer from type 1 diabetes due to genetic or autoimmune causes unrelated to diet. However, he expressed deep concern over the growing number of children diagnosed with type 2 diabetes, which he attributed to unhealthy diets, lack of exercise, and sedentary lifestyles. He warned that developing the disease early in life increases the likelihood of severe complications later on.

Al-Essa noted that what troubles him most in clinical practice is seeing young patients dependent on multiple medications because of obesity and related complications. Some of these drugs, he said, cause side effects such as hypoglycemia, fatigue, and exhaustion, which affect children's daily performance.

He added that many patients require insulin throughout their lives, even during social gatherings—an inconvenience that becomes harder when patients do not adopt healthier habits. "This is not an individual or family problem—it is a national public health issue requiring coordinated efforts from the state, the private sector, and civil society," he said, calling for stronger initiatives to combat obesity, diabetes, and unhealthy behaviors.

Despite these challenges, he acknowledged the rapid progress in medical technology and artificial intelligence, which has significantly improved the quality of life for diabetic patients, especially children. He stated that the cost of treating a type 2 diabetes patient typically ranges between 60 and 100 Kuwaiti dinars per month during the early stages of the disease.

Patients over 40 often require additional medications, such as cholesterol-lowering drugs costing around KD20 per month. This brings the total monthly cost to about KD100, representing a substantial long-term financial burden for both individuals and the national healthcare system.

Kuwait's Diwaniya officially joins UNESCO's list of intangible cultural heritage

A culmination of three centuries of social presence



By Sheikha Suhaila Al-Sabah
Managing Editor

the road, its spacious seating areas accommodating twenty to thirty people, and the 'rawashin' (latticework windows) that adorned the walls and displayed artifacts.

In addition, there was the 'lujar' (cooking room) where coffee and tea were prepared, making it the heart and soul of the diwaniya. Throughout history, several diwanis have become landmarks in Kuwaiti memory, including the diwaniya of Haj Abdul Nabi Marafi, considered the oldest documented diwaniya dating back to the era of Sheikh Jaber Al-Sabah (Jaber Al-Aish); the famous Boursli family diwaniya, known for its gate specifically for camels; the diwaniya of Abdul Rahman Khalaf Al-Naqeeb, renowned for its association with literature and generosity; and the Al-Asousi diwaniya, established in 1742, which has retained its original spirit and structure.

The role of the diwaniya was not limited to the social sphere; it quickly transformed into an influential political, cultural, and economic platform. The diwaniya of Mulla at the beginning of the 20th century stands out in this context, where Mulla Saleh played a significant media role during World War II by translating BBC broadcasts for the attending politicians and dignitaries. The same diwaniya also witnessed the oil exploration negotiations of the 1930s, negotiations that shaped Kuwait's economic transformation.

Recent studies have demonstrated the diwaniya's ability to adapt to rapid changes in Kuwaiti society. A study by British researcher Clemens Chai, published in The Journal of Arabian Studies found that the diwaniya—despite its changing physical form—has retained its social essence, becoming a space that brings generations together, reproduces cultural values, and strengthens social capital through inherited customs of visits and gatherings. The study also affirmed that attending diwanis has become part of the collective unconscious of Kuwaitis, and that they represent a bridge connecting grandparents and



parents with their children. Despite the proliferation of social media and the expansion of virtual communities, the diwaniya continues to maintain its vital role. It remains a free space for political and social discussion, especially since it is exempt from the law on public gatherings, making it a platform for expressing opinions and a destination for diverse viewpoints.

The tradition of diwanis has extended to women in recent years, with

the emergence of women's diwanis, reflecting the institution's capacity for evolution and openness. Over the decades, diwanis have symbolized the close relationship between the ruler and the ruled in Kuwait. The country's rulers have traditionally visited the grand diwanis on various occasions, affirming a governance approach based on participation and choice, as embodied in the famous saying: "We came to rule by choice... the choice

of the people." Today, the number of diwanis in Kuwait exceeds the number of families, a testament to the depth and entrenchment of this tradition within society. While the concept of majlis (traditional gathering places) is similar across the Gulf, the Kuwaiti diwaniya possesses a unique character that surpasses its counterparts, whether in its social, political, or cultural roles.

Thus, the inclusion of the diwaniya on UNESCO's list of intangible cultural heritage is not merely a symbolic achievement, but a global recognition of a social institution that has successfully evolved into a vibrant and dynamic space that remains authentic, embodying the values of communication, participation, and openness. It is the story of a heritage that has transformed from a simple architectural necessity into a national symbol and a cultural treasure worthy of international celebration.

The Kuwaiti diwaniya has been officially added to UNESCO's list of intangible cultural heritage, a historic step that embodies the depth of this long-established social institution and highlights its pivotal role in shaping Kuwaiti and Gulf identity for over three centuries. This international recognition not only celebrates a traditional social space but also honors a vibrant cultural system that has successfully preserved its essence despite the passage of time and changing lifestyles.

The diwaniya's roots trace back to the beginnings of Kuwaiti society, when the urban planning of the old city—with its closely packed houses and narrow alleyways known as 'sikaik'—necessitated a separate space for men to gather. The first diwanis, numbering no more than ten at the time, became the nucleus of a social institution that would later become one of the most prominent features of Kuwaiti society. Initially, the diwaniya was a room attached to the house with a separate entrance, receiving visitors and accommodating those arriving from outside the city, allowing them to stay until their needs were met.

Over time, the diwaniya transformed into an architectural masterpiece, reflecting a profound understanding of the desert environment's requirements. Its ceiling rose to nearly six meters, and its thick walls were constructed from multiple layers of mud, ash, and matting, providing natural thermal insulation. It was also distinguished by its numerous windows overlooking

A diwaniya is a central social institution in Kuwait and the wider Gulf, with clear aims and objectives rooted in culture, community, and civic life.

Aims of a Diwaniya

- Strengthen Social Bonds: To bring family members, friends, neighbors, and community members together, reinforcing relationships and social cohesion.
- Preserve Cultural Heritage: To maintain and pass on Kuwaiti traditions, customs, etiquette, and oral history across generations.
- Encourage Dialogue and Exchange of Ideas: To provide a safe, open space for discussion on social, cultural, religious, and national issues.
- Promote Community Unity: To serve as a unifying forum where people from different backgrounds and viewpoints interact respectfully.
- Support Civic Engagement: To function as a grassroots platform for public opinion, civic awareness, and informal political discourse.

Objectives of a Diwaniya

- Facilitate Regular Gatherings: Organize routine meetings where members can connect, converse, and exchange news and experiences.
- Share Knowledge and Wisdom: Enable the exchange of advice, life experiences, and expertise among elders, professionals, and youth.
- Resolve Social Issues Informally: Act as a place for mediation, reconciliation, and problem-solving within families or the wider community.
- Celebrate Cultural and Social Occasions: Host gatherings during Ramadan, national holidays, weddings, condolences, and other significant events.
- Encourage Respectful Debate: Promote tolerance, listening, and respect for differing opinions within the framework of Kuwaiti values.
- Mentor Younger Generations: Provide guidance, role models, and moral support to youth through interaction with elders.
- Strengthen National Identity: Reinforce a sense of belonging, patriotism, and shared responsibility toward society and the nation.

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Embassy of Canada celebrates 60 years of diplomatic ties

Sixty years of friendship is more than a number — it's a living legacy of collaboration, trust, and people-to-people connection - Ambassador Scheurwater

The Times Kuwait Report

The Embassy of Canada hosted a ceremony to mark the conclusion of celebrations commemorating the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Canada and Kuwait. The event, attended by members of the diplomatic corps, senior Kuwaiti officials, and friends of both nations, highlighted six decades of partnership, collaboration, and people-to-people ties between the two countries.

In her address on the occasion, Ambassador of Canada H.E. Tara Scheurwater, described the anniversary year as a defining chapter in bilateral relations, and noted that 2025 had been an exceptional year for the Canadian Embassy in Kuwait, guided by the anniversary theme of 'Collaboration and Connection'.

She emphasized that the theme reflected the depth of shared history between the two countries, from Canada's role in the liberation of Kuwait to ongoing defense cooperation, from cultural exchanges and student programs in education, to community life and the strong presence of Canadians living and working in the country. Reflecting on the year-long program of events, Ambassador Scheurwater outlined a series of landmark initiatives made possible through close collaboration with Kuwaiti institutions and private-sector partners. The events included the high-profile launch ceremony held in January at the Kuwait National Library.



Among the standout initiatives was the creation of a 'Friendship Blend' coffee, developed in partnership with Canadian coffee brand Tim Hortons; a concert by renowned Canadian pianist and composer Steve Barakatt at the Yarmouk Cultural Centre, hosted in collaboration with Dar Al Athar Al Islamiyyah.

The ambassador also highlighted the 'Take Your Seat, Together - Canada and Kuwait' photography project by Canadian duo Randy and Spencer VanDerStarren, which captured moments of unity across Kuwait. Other key moments included Canada's Flag Day reception, cultural and art exhibitions with the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, classical music collaborations, a Francophonie



Diwaniya marking International Women's Day, and the first-ever Canada-Kuwait friendly ice hockey match, underscoring the role of sport in building connections. Sustainability and community engagement were also central themes, highlighted through a Thanksgiving Environmental Stewardship event and a social media campaign profiling individuals and institutions shaping bilateral relations. The anniversary year further featured the Canada-Kuwait Mural Project, unveiled at the Sharq 52 Building in Bneid Al Gar, and an Alumni Recognition Reception honoring Kuwaiti graduates of Canadian institutions.

As the evening concluded, Ambassador Scheurwater reflected on the legacy of the

anniversary year and the future of bilateral relations. "This is not the end of a chapter—it is the beginning of the next 60 years of collaboration, friendship, and opportunity between Canada and Kuwait," she said. "The Embassy will continue to deepen engagement across sectors and expand the many pathways that connect our two nations."

The ceremony also paid tribute to the leadership of former ambassador H.E. Aliya Mawani and embassy staff whose efforts laid the foundation for the anniversary's success. The evening concluded with a musical performance by Kuwaiti oud player Emad Al Khalifa, followed by a closing video showcasing highlights from the year-long celebrations.

Kenya, Kuwait partnership—practical, transformative, mutually rewarding

By H.E. Halima Mohamud
Ambassador of the Republic of Kenya

The Embassy of Kenya marked the 62nd anniversary of Kenyan independence on 12 December. In a message, Ambassador of Kenya H.E. Halima Mohamud lauded the warm relations between Kenya and Kuwait, noting: "As Kenya celebrates 62 years of independence, we salute the strong and enduring partnership with Kuwait—guided by the President of the Republic of Kenya His Excellency William Samoei Ruto, and His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah—anchored in six decades of trust, shared values, and growing collaboration across diplomacy, trade, investment, and people-to-people ties.

"Since 1965, when Kuwait became the first Arab state to recognize Kenya's sovereignty, our nations have built a robust diplomatic foundation. Guided by our leaders, this framework has enabled cooperation across multiple sectors and the signing of key agreements, including Avoidance of Double Taxation, Reciprocal Promotion and Protection of Investments, and tourism collaboration.

High-level exchanges, such as the recent meeting between President William Ruto and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled, in September 2024, have reinforced goodwill and opened new avenues for partnership." Expanding on



bilateral trade, Ambassador Mohamud said, "Kenya and Kuwait maintain an active trade and investment partnership, reflecting the strong complementarity of our economies. Beyond the exchange of goods, investment opportunities in key sectors are expanding, creating jobs, building skills, and delivering benefits for both nations. This engagement sets the stage for an even stronger partnership, unlocking new opportunities and shared prosperity for years to come."

Pointing out that labor cooperation has become a powerful pillar of bilateral ties, the

Kenyan top diplomat in Kuwait asserted: "The rise in Kenyan migrant workers helps Kuwait meet critical labor needs, while providing Kenya's youth with jobs, skills, and remittance opportunities. Our growing diaspora serves as a living bridge between our nations, making this labor corridor a transformative, people-centered engine of growth." Honoring the Kenyan community in Kuwait, Ambassador Mohamud stated: "To all Kenyans living and working in Kuwait, we extend warm greetings and appreciation. Your contributions strengthen the Kenya-Kuwait bond. Happy Jamhuri Day!

Expressing her firm belief in the potential of further strengthening the bilateral partnership between the two countries, Ambassador Mohamud stated: "Kuwait has long been a vital partner in Kenya's development journey, supporting key infrastructure, education, and health projects through the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development. Kenya is committed to timely implementation of these initiatives, honoring the trust placed by our Kuwaiti partners and maximizing the social and economic impact of our joint development efforts."

Turning to humanitarian assistance, the Kenyan ambassador noted, "Kuwait's generous humanitarian interventions have strengthened Kenya in times of need—from drought relief to education, health, and community projects. These efforts have saved lives and deepened

the bonds between our nations. Continued collaboration promises even deeper solidarity, advances our shared values, and strengthens Kenya-Kuwait relations on a foundation of compassion and mutual support.

Elaborating on shared views and mutual support, Ambassador Mohamud affirmed: "Kenya and Kuwait share common perspectives on key international issues, including regional peace and stability, counterterrorism, human rights, environmental sustainability, and multilateral cooperation. Our joint efforts under platforms such as the Global Counterterrorism Forum exemplify this shared commitment to regional and global stability, and to principled multilateralism."

Concluding her message, Ambassador Mohamud highlighted the bright outlook for future relations between the two countries, noting that "as Kenya advances as one of Africa's most dynamic economies, and Kuwait pursues diversification and global outreach, the opportunity to elevate bilateral cooperation has never been stronger. By expanding trade, investment, labor, and development collaboration, Kenya and Kuwait can build a partnership that is practical, transformative, and mutually rewarding. I invite our Kuwaiti partners—public and private—to seize this moment and explore opportunities in Kenya's strategic sectors: agriculture, infrastructure, agro-processing, real estate, and energy.

Happy Jamhuri Day 2025

Indian Ambassador hosts reception aboard visiting ICGS Sarthak

The Times Kuwait Report

Indian Ambassador H.E. Paramita Tripathi, emphasized that India-Kuwait relations are entering a new phase of expansion and advancement, built on a long history of dialogue, friendship, and partnership. She made the remarks during a reception hosted by the Indian Embassy aboard the Indian Coast Guard ship, ICGS Sarthak, currently visiting Kuwait for four days.

The event, attended by senior diplomatic and military officials, highlighted the strength and depth of bilateral ties. The Indian envoy underscored that the ship's visit is more than ceremonial; it marks a milestone in the rapidly growing defense partnership, reflecting strong mutual trust and shared ambitions.

She described the visit as a significant marker of India's commitment to strengthening long-standing friendship with Kuwait and noted that both nations share a vital role in securing the Arabian Gulf and protecting key maritime routes.

The ship also demonstrates India's maritime capabilities, professionalism, readiness, and



humanitarian service ethos.

Highlighting the broad scope of India-Kuwait collaboration, the ambassador noted cooperation across energy, food security, health, education, and technology, recalling the support both countries extended to each other during the COVID-19 pandemic.

She traced key milestones shaping the modern phase of bilateral relations, starting with the 2006 historic visit of the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah to India, followed by the 2009 visit of Indian Vice President Mohammad Hamid Ansari. The ambassador also highlighted the visit to Kuwait last December by Indian Prime

Minister Narendra Modi, which marked a new chapter with His Highness the Amir conferring the Mubarak Al-Kabir Order and signing four agreements, including a memorandum of understanding in Defense Cooperation.

Noting the defense collaboration, she recalled the 2017 visit of Kuwait's Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Mohammed Khaled Al-Khudher to India as a turning point, strengthened further during the pandemic. In 2023, the two countries held their first joint defense seminar, creating an institutional platform linking policymakers, experts, and the defense industry. Looking ahead, Tripathi expressed India's eagerness to expand cooperation in maritime security, renewable energy, digital innovation, food security, and healthcare, saying, "India stands ready to work hand-in-hand with Kuwait for a more prosperous and stable future for our peoples."

She also praised the Indian community in Kuwait, describing it as "an essential bridge of connection" that reinforces the deep friendship between the two nations and contributes significantly to Kuwait's economy and society.

IWG holds annual Seasonal Dinner



To celebrate the spirit of the season and the coming New Year, the International Women's Group-Kuwait (IWG) held its annual Seasonal Dinner for members and honored guests, including women ambassadors accredited to Kuwait, on 10 December at the Crowne Plaza Hotel.

In her opening address, IWG President Marika Kochlamazashvili expressed her gratitude for the opportunity to serve on the IWG Executive Board since September and conveyed her appreciation to the Honorary President, Sheikha Hanouf Bader Al Mohammed Al Sabah, as well as to the

Executive Board for their support.

She highlighted the group's vibrant program of cultural and community activities throughout the year and noted the Executive Board's hard work and unwavering commitment, which continue to strengthen the IWG and elevate its mission. She wished members an evening filled with warmth, inspiration, and anticipation for a prosperous year ahead.

The program began with a musical performance by the St. John the Baptist Scout Band from the Orthodox Church. The evening continued with a heartfelt address by Mrs. Rima



Khalidi, vice president of the IWG, who spoke about the significance of the Palestinian city of Bethlehem during this season, a time when it captures the world's attention and brings together Palestinian Christians and Muslims in shared festivities, parades, and public celebrations.

Guests then enjoyed a short video offering a glimpse into Bethlehem's seasonal traditions, followed by a musical performance by renowned Palestinian singer Yacoub Shaheen. The festive atmosphere was further elevated by the beautiful voices and harmonies of the Savior Choir from the Catholic Church, adding to the evening's

spirit of unity and joy. For the final segment of the program, attendees participated in karaoke led by Baigalmaa Bayantsagaan creating a lively and cheerful close to the night's activities. Guests spent the rest of the evening enjoying raffles and an exquisite dinner prepared by the Crowne Plaza Hotel.

The Seasonal Dinner concluded with warm wishes for the coming year and gratitude to all IWG members and partners for their continued support of the organization's mission to foster cultural understanding, international friendship, and the empowerment of women in Kuwait.

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Jazeera Airways marks 20 years of operation, honors partners

The Times Kuwait Report

Jazeera Airways, Kuwait's leading low-cost carrier, celebrated its 20th anniversary with an exclusive partner recognition event that brought together stakeholders from across the airline's local and global ecosystem.

The event honored key government entities, including the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), the Ministry of Interior, Kuwait Customs, and the Public Authority of Manpower, as well as general sales agents (GSAs), travel agencies, service providers, international airport partners, and major global suppliers—most notably Airbus and CFM the airline's long-standing aircraft and engine manufacturers respectively.

Gathered under one roof were business leaders, dignitaries, and industry partners who reflected on Jazeera's journey and reaffirmed a shared commitment to shaping the next era of growth for Kuwait's aviation and tourism sectors. Established following an Amiri Decree enabling the formation of privately owned airlines in

Kuwait, Jazeera Airways was founded with a vision to advance the country's aviation industry and expand its international reach. That vision has guided the airline through two decades of consistent and sustainable growth.

Speaking at the event, Chairman of Jazeera Airways, Marwan Boodai, said: "The success of Jazeera Airways over the past 20 years has been shaped by strong partnerships, the dedication of our people, and the trust of our customers."

"Together, these pillars have built a resilient airline that strengthens Kuwait's global connectivity, contributes to its economy, and continues to grow with purpose. As we celebrate this milestone, we pay tribute to all our partners and reaffirm our commitment to the next 20 years of progress and expansion."

Over the past two decades, Jazeera Airways has grown its network, expanded operational capabilities, forged key global partnerships, including its strategic aircraft partnership with Airbus, and invested significantly in enhancing passenger experience. Today, Jazeera operates a



fleet of 23 Airbus aircraft and serves more than 70 destinations across the Middle East, Central and South Asia, Europe, and Africa, carrying over five million passengers annually. The airline remains aligned with Kuwait's broader ambitions to develop its tourism offering and build a modern aviation ecosystem that can support future demand.

As Kuwait progresses toward its national vision for tourism and economic diversification, demand for airport infrastructure is expected to rise significantly — requiring terminal capacity of 50 million passengers or more in the years ahead.

Reflecting on the milestone, Chief Executive

Officer of Jazeera Airways, Barathan Pasupathi, said: "Jazeera Airways proudly marks twenty years of partnership and belief—belief in Kuwait, in opportunity, and in the power of aviation to connect people and drive growth. Our journey has been built on shared ambition, the dedication of our partners, and the tireless efforts of the Jazeera team—the heart of this airline. Looking ahead, Kuwait is ready, Jazeera is ready, and together we will unlock the next phase of growth."

"As we expand our fleet to 50 aircraft, serve up to 10 million passengers annually, and grow across strategic markets, we will lead through innovation, digital transformation, and sustainability, while staying unwavering in our commitment to safety and customer experience."

As Jazeera Airways enters its next chapter, it remains committed to deepening partnerships, building new bridges, and creating shared value across its network in Kuwait and beyond. The next 20 years promise to be a transformative period; for the airline, for its partners, and for the future of aviation in Kuwait.

Kuwait a pillar of humanitarian support amid global funding crisis

The Times Kuwait Report

At a time when humanitarian crises are multiplying worldwide and international funding is declining, Kuwait continues to stand out as one of the most committed nations in humanitarian relief and support for UN agencies, said Head of the IOM Mission in Kuwait, Mazen AboulHosn.

The remarks came on the occasion of the conclusion of a visit to Kuwait last week by a delegation from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), which praised Kuwait's central role in strengthening humanitarian response and enhancing regional and international partnerships.

Offering a comprehensive overview of major global challenges and humanitarian

needs during a press conference, AboulHosn highlighted the existing cooperation with Kuwait and future prospects for partnership, noting that the meetings held over the past two days were excellent and successful by all standards.

He noted that the visit provided an important platform to review the organization's efforts worldwide and discuss joint humanitarian priorities with Kuwait, represented by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Kuwait Fund for Development, and charity organizations. He also expressed the organization's appreciation for Kuwait's renewed and long-term support to UN agencies, even as global crises intensify and humanitarian financing declines.

Emphasizing that Kuwait is one of the core supporters of IOM, AboulHosn cited a series



of agreements signed recently with Kuwaiti entities and ongoing efforts to develop new partnerships in Syria, Yemen, and Sudan to strengthen humanitarian action.

AboulHosn also announced the launch of IOM's Global Appeal for 2026, covering programs in 172 countries to assist 40 million people, for which the organization needs to raise US\$4.1 billion, but so far only \$1.2 billion

had been secured. He stressed that the scale of current crises requires a collective effort involving governments, donors, the private sector, and civil society.

He stressed that the greatest challenge remained the gap between limited resources and expanding needs, and urged donors to increase support to address escalating humanitarian demands globally.

More than 30,000 SMEs close shop, cite adverse business climate

A growing number of small and medium-sized enterprises in Kuwait are being pushed to the brink, with many already shutting down and others preparing to exit the market in the coming months.

Despite the diversity of their commercial activities, these businesses share a common struggle that includes intensified competition, shifting consumer behavior, declining purchasing power, reduced spending, and a persistent lack of support and incentives from the government. Unfavorable economic conditions have reportedly led to thousands of companies seeking cancellation of their commercial licenses over the past few months. Official data show that since the beginning



of the year, more than 3,000 companies have submitted requests to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to cancel their commercial licenses and either dissolve or liquidate their entities. In the past two months alone, the Ministry's Companies Sector approved the dissolution and liquidation of more than 600 companies. Most of these businesses fall under the SME category and operate as limited liability companies or single-person enterprises.

Many of the closures are said to be in sectors that are particularly sensitive to changes in consumer spending, such as restaurants and cafés, sweets and pastry shops, general trading companies, delivery service providers, building contracting firms, wholesale and retail businesses, women's salons and tailoring services, as well as children's clothing and small boutique stores.

Business owners registered under Chapter Five—a program designed to support entrepreneurs—say they receive minimal benefits, especially when it comes to securing accessible financing or loans to sustain their operations. They also point to the high government fees associated with transactions and permits, strict regulatory oversight, and punitive fines that many describe as excessive or disproportionate.

Stakeholders stress that without targeted intervention and a more supportive business environment, Kuwait risks losing a significant portion of its SME sector, which remains a key engine of economic diversity and a vital contributor to local employment.

French trade minister's visit highlights bilateral cooperation

By Shouq AlMulla
Special to The Times Kuwait

French Minister Delegate for Foreign Trade and Economic Attractiveness, Nicolas Forissier, concluded an official visit to Kuwait marked by intensive high-level engagements, underscoring a shared commitment to deepening bilateral cooperation at a pivotal moment in relations between France and Kuwait.

Addressing a media conference at the conclusion of his eventful visit to Kuwait, Minister Forissier described Kuwait as a friendly nation with which France maintains a relationship built on trust, consistency, and shared ambition. He noted that the visit was characterized by highly substantive and productive discussions, supported by the presence of a significant delegation of French companies.

The visit comes as both countries prepare to mark the 65th anniversary of diplomatic relations in 2026, reflecting a growing will in Kuwait and Paris to translate the long-standing friendship into forward-looking, multi-sectoral cooperation, aligned with national development priorities.

Minister Forissier emphasized that the current momentum in bilateral relations follows a period of remarkable intensity in political dialogue, highlighted by the historic visit of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, to Paris on 14 July this year, at the invitation of French President Emmanuel Macron. The meeting enabled the two Heads of State to set out a clear roadmap for an innovative, diversified, and mutually beneficial economic partnership.

Central to this new phase is the Strategic Investment Partnership (2025-2035), signed during the Amir's visit, which aligns Kuwait Vision 2035 with France 2030. Priority areas include economic and investment cooperation, energy and sustainability, advanced technology and innovation, defense and security, healthcare, education, and culture.

Minister Forissier began his Kuwait program with a meeting with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah, during which he reaffirmed the historic and strategic nature of France-Kuwait relations and stressed France's full commitment to shaping what he described as "the partnership of tomorrow," built around major future-oriented projects agreed upon at the highest level.

He also met with Minister of Defense Sheikh Abdullah Ali Al-Sabah, alongside Director General



of the Public Authority for Civil Aviation, Sheikh Hamoud Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah. Discussions highlighted France's recognized expertise in aeronautics and airport infrastructure, gaining particular relevance as Kuwait advances major connectivity projects, including Mubarak Al-Kabir Port and the new passenger and cargo airport, both central to strengthening Kuwait's regional positioning.

Meetings with Minister of Commerce and Industry Khalifa Abdullah Al-Ajeel and Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Abdullatif Al-Meshari focused on how French companies can contribute directly to Kuwait Vision 2035. Minister Forissier presented French expertise in transport, logistics, smart mobility, connected infrastructure, and sustainable urban development as a strong complement to Kuwait's national priorities.

Energy transition emerged as a central theme throughout the visit. France's experience in waste-to-energy solutions, solar power, energy efficiency, battery technologies, and climate adaptation was highlighted as a practical response to Kuwait's efforts to modernize its energy network. Minister Forissier stressed that France seeks to build long-term industrial partnerships, rather than short-term commercial transactions.

In the investment sphere, Minister Forissier met with, Director of the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA), Sheikh Meshal Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, and with Executive Director of the Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA), Sheikh Saud Salem Abdulaziz Al-Sabah. Discussions centered on strengthening bilateral investment flows within the framework of the Strategic Investment Partnership.

France, already Europe's leading destination for foreign direct investment, presented its economic ecosystem—combining industrial capacity, technological innovation, financial stability, and advanced expertise—as a platform for deeper Kuwaiti investment, while reaffirming its support for French companies seeking to expand operations in Kuwait.

In advanced industries, Minister Forissier underscored France's leadership in digital technologies, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and space systems, noting that French companies are keen to engage closely with Kuwaiti stakeholders to deliver tailored solutions aligned with national priorities.

Healthcare emerged as a rapidly expanding pillar of the partnership. Together with Minister of Health Dr. Ahmad Al-Awadhi, Minister Forissier welcomed the signing of six memoranda of understanding earlier this year with leading French healthcare institutions, including Gustave Roussy, Institut Curie, and Hôpital Foch. These agreements provide a framework for comprehensive cooperation spanning patient care, hospital management expertise, professional training, and joint research. The establishment of the Gustave Roussy Precision Medicine Hub in Kuwait was highlighted as a model for sustainable capacity-building and knowledge transfer.

The visit also underscored cooperation in media and digital transformation. Accompanied by Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi, Minister Forissier toured the production site of Vectracom, which is partnering with Sultan-Ejabi Telecom



on the digitization and enhancement of Kuwait Television's archives. The project was presented as a model media partnership combining technological innovation with cultural preservation.

Education remains a cornerstone of France-Kuwait relations, with both governments working to expand student mobility, particularly for Kuwaiti students pursuing higher education in France. With a growing number of English-taught programs and globally ranked institutions, academic exchange continues to play a key role in long-term human capital development.

Minister Forissier also attended a networking reception hosted at the residence of Sheikh Mubarak Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, whom he described as a great friend of France. The gathering brought together senior Kuwaiti and French private-sector leaders, aiming to translate high-level political dialogue into tangible economic outcomes through direct business engagement. Minister Forissier emphasized that private-sector partnerships are essential to transforming strategic vision into implementation.

Concluding his visit, Minister Forissier stressed that beyond trade and investment, France-Kuwait relations are defined by warmth, trustworthiness, and honesty. He noted that cooperation extends across culture and people-to-people exchanges, giving the partnership its distinctive and enduring character. Reflecting on the relationships forged during the visit, he expressed his intention to return to Kuwait, while welcoming continued visits by Kuwaiti counterparts to France, underscoring a partnership rooted in genuine connection and sustained engagement.

Turkish Diwan, boosts relations strengthens cultural ties



The Times Kuwait Report

Turkish Embassy held its monthly Turkish Diwan at the embassy premises last week, bringing together members of the diplomatic corps, Kuwaiti friends of Turkey, Turkish students, and other distinguished guests for a lively cultural event.

Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador of Turkey H.E. Tuba Sonmez described the Diwan as a vibrant platform that reflects the strong ties between Turkey and Kuwait, and which offers guests an opportunity to better understand Turkish culture and build wider networks

for cultural rapprochement and expanding cooperation between the two nations. "Turkey enjoys warm relations within the diplomatic community," she added. "We are here as one family, and I always tell our guests: 'My home is your home.'"

Ambassador Sonmez highlighted the growing Kuwaiti interest in Turkey across tourism, economics, and culture. She stressed that the Diwan serves as "an ideal opportunity to strengthen these ties and foster greater academic and economic cooperation," particularly with Turkish professors and doctors working in Kuwaiti universities and hospitals, as

well as ongoing Turkish language courses in local institutions.

Regarding high-level exchanges, the ambassador pointed out that President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's recent visit to Kuwait represented the highest level of political engagement. "We are now in the implementation phase of the signed agreements, working to activate joint programs—an important responsibility that the embassy strives to accomplish effectively," she said. For his part, Ambassador of Tajikistan and Dean of the Diplomatic Corps H.E. Dr. Zubaydullo Zubaydov, praised the diversity of

attendees at the Turkish Diwan, noting that the event coincides with the approach of the festive season. He described the Kuwaiti tradition of holding a diwan transcends borders, offering diplomats an informal setting away from official duties while celebrating the blending of Kuwaiti and global cultures.

The Dean thanked Ambassador Sonmez for hosting diplomats and Turkey enthusiasts and commended her role in strengthening Kuwaiti-Turkish relations. He also expressed appreciation to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for providing continuous support and facilities to diplomatic missions accredited in Kuwait.



What is the difference between smoke and aerosol

Not all aerosols are created equal: The science behind smoke, vapor, harm reduction

It is widely known that cigarette smoking is harmful, yet there are over one billion smokers in the world today.

If you hear the word aerosol, you might think of a can of deodorant, but it's actually much more than that. Aerosol is the scientific, umbrella term for solid and liquid particles suspended in gas – such as a cloud.

Smoke is actually a type of aerosol that is generated during combustion, the scientific name for 'burning.' And while smoke is an aerosol, not all aerosols are smoke.

■ **How smoke-free technology could cut thousands of toxic chemicals**

■ **A billion smokers, one big question: Can science help us move toward a smoke-free future?**

Science and technology have allowed the production of alternative products that don't burn tobacco, therefore don't produce smoke — they are in fact, smoke-free. When scientifically substantiated and subject to appropriate quality and safety requirements, smoke-free products do not create smoke and therefore should not be a source of second-hand smoke or ash.

The absence of smoke can significantly reduce the average levels of harmful chemicals in smoke-free products when compared to cigarettes. Whilst not risk-free and delivering nicotine, which is addictive, scientifically substantiated smoke-free products are better alternative to adult smokers who would otherwise continue smoking.

What is Smoke?

Smoke is the result of combustion or

What is Aerosol?

Aerosol is not associated with combustion.



burning. When a cigarette is lit it burns tobacco at temperatures up to 900°C. That creates smoke which contains approximately 6,000 chemicals, around 100 of which have been classified by public health authorities as harmful or potentially harmful. If the temperature is reduced to a level where tobacco or nicotine containing liquid is heated rather than burned, the smoke is removed.

Smoke-free products, whilst not risk-free, have the potential to significantly reduce the average levels of harmful chemicals compared to cigarette smoke. Consumers typically use the term "vapor" to refer to the aerosol generated from heated tobacco products or other nicotine-containing products.

Quitting tobacco and nicotine altogether is the best choice for health. Existing tobacco control measures designed to discourage initiation and encourage cessation should continue.

However, despite these efforts, millions of people continue to smoke. Science-backed, smoke-free products can play a role in moving adults who would otherwise continue to smoke away from cigarettes. With the right regulatory encouragement and support from civil society, together we can deliver a smoke-free future more quickly than relying on traditional measures alone.

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Kuwait, NATO keen to deepen strategic ties, strengthen regional security

The Times Kuwait Report

Kuwait hosted the seventh meeting of the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) Policy Advisory Group at the NATO-ICI Regional Center in Kuwait last week. The meeting underlined Kuwait's commitment to advancing regional security and strengthening its strategic partnership with NATO.

Deputy Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, who opened the session, described the gathering as a reflection of Kuwait's unwavering dedication to dialogue and cooperative security. He noted that the meeting brings together partner countries, experts, and guests from across the region, reflecting the shared commitment of stakeholders to strengthen dialogue, cooperation, and collective security.

Highlighting the significance of holding the meeting at the NATO Regional Center in Kuwait, which is the first of its kind outside NATO territory, the deputy minister said that this was proof of the depth of the Kuwait-NATO partnership and the Center's pivotal role in communication and cooperation. The meeting discussed a wide range of vital topics, including cooperation under the



Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, developments in the political and security environment in the region, shared security perspectives, emerging challenges related to cybersecurity and AI, as well as cooperation in addressing cross-border threats.

Emphasizing the value of the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative as a long-standing platform for meaningful dialogue and coordinated action, the deputy minister said: "With rapid regional developments and challenges that transcend borders and institutions, the value of this initiative emerges clearly—as a platform built on mutual respect, partnership, and the firm belief that

security is constructed through cooperation, transparency, and shared responsibility. By working together, we can advance our shared goals, support stability, strengthen dialogue, and build a safer and more peaceful region," he concluded.

For his part, NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for the Southern Neighborhood, Javier Colomina, praised Kuwait for its enduring role in advancing NATO-Gulf relations, and noted that the meeting reflected the shared commitment of NATO and its Gulf partners to dialogue and cooperation in pursuit of stability and common security," he said.

Colomina thanked Kuwait for strong support to the cooperation track, noting that the ICI Regional Center in Kuwait has become one of NATO's most important hubs for training and education in the region. Pointing to the significance of hosting the meeting at this juncture in time, Colomina outlined global tensions—from the war in Ukraine to regional instability in the Middle East—that heightened the urgency for shared security efforts.

He underscored that security in the Gulf and the Euro-Atlantic region is interconnected, noting examples such as the use of Iranian drones in Ukraine and the broader impact of geopolitical competition on global food and energy security.

Rapid global shifts, Colomina emphasized, make NATO's cooperation with regional partners indispensable.

"By working together, we not only strengthen our ability to preserve stability, but also open new horizons in defense innovation and the development of advanced capabilities that benefit both sides," he said. Discussions during the meeting are set to cover border security, maritime security, counterterrorism, hybrid threats, emerging technologies, and cybersecurity.

Travel Trumps Therapy in Strengthening Relations



By Hermoine Macura-Noble
Special to The Times Kuwait

New research suggests the most powerful spark for romance may lie not in traditional gifts, but in passports and plane tickets. While many couples turn to therapy to strengthen their bond, psychologists say shared travel experiences can be even more effective in deepening emotional connection.

"Romance is not about routine gestures, it is about shared discoveries, new experiences and unforgettable moments," says Jacques Claudel, general manager at Mazagan Beach & Golf Resort in Morocco.

Science agrees. Studies published in the Journal, Personality and Social Psychology show that couples who engage in novel activities together experience higher relationship satisfaction and stronger emotional bonds. The reason? Shared adventures activate the brain's reward system—releasing dopamine, the same feel-good chemical associated with early-stage love.

Renowned relationship expert Dr. Terri Orbuch, known as 'The Love Doctor', has long advocated for shared experiences as a key to long-term connection. In her publicly available guidance, she notes, "Couples who break out of routine and try something new together



reignite the excitement that brought them together in the first place."

Similarly, licensed marriage therapist Aaron Anderson, director of The Marriage and Family Clinic in Colorado, USA, has stated in his relationship advice resources, "Travel forces couples to communicate, problem-solve, and experience joy together; the three ingredients that strengthen intimacy far more effectively than sitting on opposite sides of a therapy couch."

This trend is especially visible among GCC travelers, who are increasingly seeking destinations that offer both luxury and cultural

resonance. From beachfront rooms to bespoke spa rituals and gourmet dining, many couples are seeking both indulgence and authenticity.

In the GCC region, several hotels stand out as premier sanctuaries for couples looking to reconnect, including luxury ocean-front wellness resort, Mazagan Beach & Golf Resort in Morocco, the iconic Burj Al Arab Jumeirah in Dubai, and the Four Seasons Resort in Bahrain Bay, which includes an overwater spa, lush landscaping, and refined Arabian hospitality.

Whether it is wandering ancient souqs, indulging in spa rituals, or waking up to panoramic sea views, travel invites couples

to step away from routine and back into connection. So, this holiday season, experts suggest swapping therapy appointments for boarding passes. Why sit in a psychologist's office discussing your relationship, when you can explore, discover, and fall in love all over again through travel.



Hermoine Macura-Noble

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Success of Mega Projects Vital to Driving 'Vision 2035'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Meanwhile, investments in communication infrastructure, with emphasis on latest digital networks, promote technological advancement, drive innovation and digital transformation, and support new-age industries, such as AI and big data that further drive economic growth. It is encouraging that the government has initiated several infrastructure initiatives central to Kuwait's development goals, with the draft budget for 2025-26 allocating over KD1.8 billion for ongoing projects.

Upcoming mega construction projects focused on urban development, transportation, and tourism are either ongoing or in the project pipeline. While work on Kuwait International Airport Expansion, Mubarak Al Kabeer Port, and the Kuwait National Railroad Network are ongoing, project work on developing Kuwait Islands and Madinat Al Hareer (Silk City) are in planning stages. These mega projects, vital to Kuwait's Vision 2035, have a combined value of over KD92 billion, with a breakup of their estimated costs being:

- **Kuwait Islands Development:** The plan envisages transforming the five islands of Awha, Miskan, Warba, Failaka, and Boubyan into tourism, logistics, and investment hubs at a cost of over KD49 billion.
- **Madinat Al Hareer (Silk City):** The planned greenfield mega-city spanning 250 sq km and valued at over KD40 billion will offer residential, commercial, and recreational spaces, including Burj Mubarak al-Kabir, set to be among the tallest buildings in the world when completed.
- **Kuwait International Airport Expansion:** Ongoing work at expansion

of Terminal 2 to handle 13 million passengers annually, with future potential increase to 25-50 million is slated to cost KD1.4 billion.

- **Mubarak Al Kabeer Port:** Work on the 24-berth port on Boubyan Island with an annual container capacity of over 8 million Twenty-foot Equivalent Units (TEUs) is valued at more than KD980 million.
- **Kuwait National Rail Road (KNRR) Network:** A 265km railway line with double track, connecting Kuwait City to Nuwaiseeb and Boubyan Port is planned at around KD920 million.

In addition to the above mega projects, the government has green-lighted projects in energy and in urban development that are planned to come online over the medium-term. Although a major oil producer, Kuwait has been grappling with a perennial power shortage problem caused by rapid population growth, urban expansion, soaring annual temperatures, aging equipment, and maintenance delays at some plants, which have led to power cuts being imposed in some areas during peak summer months.

To address the country's persistent power and water shortages, Kuwait is fast-tracking several projects in the energy and water sector. In September, Minister of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy (MEWRE), Subaih Al-Mukhaizim, said that Kuwait would add over 14 gigawatts (GW) of power generation capacity by 2031. Elaborating on the minister's promise, a ministry spokesperson outlined some of the ongoing and upcoming projects.

- **Al-Zour North Phases 2 and 3:** In August the government signed contracts worth over KD1 billion for the Al-Zour North Phases 2 and 3 project, with Saudi Arabia's

utility-giant ACWA and Gulf Investment Corporation. The project, expected to be completed by 2029 will add 2.7 GW of power and 120 million gallons of water daily.

- **Shagaya Renewable Energy Project:** Bidding is underway for the first and second phases of this large-scale solar project, to be built under a public-private partnership model, which aims to have a combined capacity of 1.6 GW. A further 3 GW of power is planned to come online when phases three and four are completed in cooperation with Chinese state enterprises.
- **Al Khairan IWPP-Phase 1:** Bidding for the first phase of this integrated water and power project (IWPP) opened in September to pre-qualified consortiums. The project is set to add 1.8 GW under a Public Private Partnership scheme..
- **Nuwaiseeb Projects:** Parts of the mega 7.2 GW Nuwaiseeb project will be built in stages, with the 3,600 MW Nuwaiseeb II Combined Cycle Power Plant expected to come online by 2027, while the Nuwaiseeb I Desalination Power Plant is anticipated to begin commercial operation in 2026. The remaining portion is scheduled for completion after 2031 and into the next decade.

Development of residential cities is another infrastructure priority for the government. Increase in population among nationals has led to a growing demand for public housing, with figures from the Public Authority for Housing Welfare (PAHW) showing that currently there are over 105,000 housing applications that remain pending. This number is expected to soar to 197,244 by 2035, with an annual increase of around 8,000 applications. Acknowledging the

limits of PAHW to provide sufficient residential units to overcome the growing backlog in demand, the government has decided to engage the services of the private sector in housing development. To this end, the authorities are in the process of amending development policies and drafting a new mortgage law aimed at facilitating home ownership.

Affirming these positive steps, Minister of State for Municipal Affairs and Minister of State for Housing Affairs Abulatif Almeshari recently stated that new residential projects would be executed in future through public-private partnerships (PPP). He added that the ministry is keen to shorten waiting duration, increase ownership of houses, and ensure high quality of construction.

Pointing out that PAHW plans to build 170,000 new housing units through PPPs over the next ten years, Minister Almeshari said this would be in addition to constructing a total of 10,000 houses in Sulaybiya, Taimaa, Saad Al-Abdullah and Mirgab areas over the short-term. He also stressed that the new residential areas would be fully integrated communities with all urban facilities, including schools, commercial areas, health centers, and public services.

However, implementing infrastructure projects on their own will not drive economic growth. For this, the government will need to introduce critical structural reforms that accelerate economic diversification, improve business environment, enhance labor-market productivity, elevate public-sector efficiency, and raise the level of investment flows. With constraints from political instability and bureaucratic hassles a thing of the past, the government should push through much-needed reforms vital to the nation, even if they are initially unpalatable to the public.

Khorezm

A Timeless Cultural Wonder Of Central Asia



By H.E. Ayub Khan Yunusov
Ambassador of Uzbekistan



Situated in the ancient cradle of civilizations along the lower Amu Darya, the Khorezm region of Uzbekistan stands as one of the most remarkable cultural and historical destinations along the Silk Road. From its UNESCO-protected cities and majestic palaces to its unmatched culinary traditions, fruit culture, and vibrant festivals, Khorezm offers a fascinating blend of antiquity and modernity—a place where every stone, every dance, and every flavor tells a story.

At the heart of Khorezm lies Khiva, a timeless city whose very walls seem to whisper the stories of caravans, scholars, craftsmen and rulers who shaped the history of Central Asia. Its inner fortress, Ichan-Kala, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, stands as one of the most remarkably preserved medieval cities in the world. Wandering through its labyrinth of narrow streets, visitors encounter more than fifty architectural monuments, including the legendary Kalta-Minor Minaret, the ancient Kunya Ark Citadel, the soaring Islomkhodja Minaret, the serene courtyards of the Matpanabay Madrasa and the mystical Juma Mosque, supported by 218 wooden pillars carved over generations by Khorezmian masters. Walking through Ichan-Kala feels like stepping back into a distant era, a living museum where centuries of history remain beautifully suspended in time.

Just outside Ichan-Kala stands one of Khorezm's most distinguished architectural treasures, the Nurullaboy Palace. Built in the early 1900s as the residence of the Khivan Khan, the palace is a masterpiece combining Eastern aesthetics with European royal interior design. The palace is famous for its richly decorated halls, stucco work, crystal chandeliers, and the celebrated White Hall, created by Russian architects.

Today, the palace serves as a vivid reminder of political reforms, cultural openness, and the artistic sophistication of the Khivan court during a transformative era.

Adding a vibrant and modern dimension to Khiva's historical landscape is the newly developed cultural and entertainment district known as Arda Khiva. Created to enhance visitor comfort while preserving the traditional aesthetics of the ancient city, Arda Khiva features modern boutique hotels, craft ateliers where local masters practice woodcarving, silk embroidery and pottery, as well as open-air theatres that host folk performances and energetic Lazgi shows.

Khorezm also offers inviting culinary spaces serving authentic Khorezm dishes, allowing visitors to enjoy local flavors in a contemporary setting. Arda Khiva has become a place where the timeless atmosphere of Khiva seamlessly blends with modern amenities, creating an ideal environment for travelers seeking to immerse themselves in both the region's rich history and its dynamic present-day culture.

Khorezm is not only renowned for its magnificent architecture but is also celebrated as a true gastronomic paradise. The region's legendary melons, grown in the fertile soil and unique climate of Khorezm, have been admired across Central Asia for centuries. Varieties such as the incredibly fragrant and sweet Gurbak, the pink-fleshed Gulobi qovun, the traditional Mirzachul, the beautifully drying Kandim, and the long-lasting winter melon Og'uzboqar are so exceptional in taste that many travelers have described them as the 'Nectar of the Silk Road'. Khorezm's orchards likewise produce some of the finest fruits in the region, including sun-ripened apricots, honey-sweet figs, juicy pomegranates, plump grapes, and fragrant peaches and plums.

Khorezm's cuisine is equally rich and diverse, offering authentic dishes such as Shivit Oshi, the bright green dill noodles served with meat and yogurt; Gumma, the tender steamed dumplings; Tukhum Barak, unique egg-filled pastries; Khoshili, a traditional wheat-and-milk dish; and local breads like Patir and Katlama, baked in clay ovens. Amu Darya fish dishes and aromatic Khorezm halva add even more depth to this culinary heritage, each prepared using

techniques passed down for generations.

The cultural vibrancy of the region is further highlighted through its festivals, including the annual Khiva International Silk Road Festival, which fills the ancient streets of Ichan-Kala with Lazgi dance performances, traditional music, craft demonstrations, historical reenactments and colorful processions. The lively Melon Festival (Qovun Sayli) celebrates the region's famed melons through competitions. During this festival, local farmers compete to present the sweetest and largest melon, while visitors enjoy tasting events, traditional games and lively folklore performances that reflect the region's deep agricultural traditions.

Khorezm hosts a rich variety of festivals that honor its ancient traditions, arts, agriculture and historical legacy, turning the region into a vibrant cultural stage throughout the year. One of the most celebrated events is the Khiva International Silk Road Festival, held annually, which brings the ancient streets of Ichan-Kala to life with captivating Lazgi dance performances, traditional music, artisan demonstrations, historical reenactments and colorful street processions that showcase the spirit of the Silk Road.

Equally beloved is the Melon Festival, or Qovun Sayli, a joyful celebration dedicated to Khorezm's world-famous melons. During this festival, local farmers compete to present the sweetest and largest melon, while visitors enjoy tasting events, traditional games and lively folklore performances that reflect the region's deep agricultural traditions. Meanwhile, various handicraft and folk art festivals showcase

Khiva's master artisans who continue centuries-old traditions of woodcarving, pottery, carpet weaving, embroidery and blacksmithing. These festivals collectively highlight the cultural richness of Khorezm and offer travelers unforgettable experiences rooted in authenticity and heritage.

Khorezm today is rapidly transforming to meet international tourism standards while preserving its authentic cultural charm. The region has seen the emergence of new hotels, eco-lodges and boutique guesthouses that offer both comfort and a sense of local identity. Transportation links are steadily improving, making travel to and within the region far more convenient for visitors. Adventure seekers can enjoy organized desert tours and camel trekking across the vast Kyzylkum landscapes, while nature enthusiasts explore dedicated birdwatching routes along the Amu Darya delta, home to diverse and rare species. Rural guesthouses provide immersive cultural experiences where travelers can participate in traditional household activities, sample home-cooked dishes and learn about local crafts. All these developments ensure that Khorezm remains an inviting destination where modern comfort harmoniously coexists with timeless heritage, offering international travelers a journey that is both authentic and unforgettable.



With its unique blend of ancient monuments, royal palaces, modern cultural centers like Arda Khiva, legendary cuisine, world-famous melons, musical heritage, and vibrant festivals, Khorezm stands today as one of the most captivating destinations in Central Asia. For travelers seeking authenticity, history, natural beauty, and unforgettable flavors, Khorezm remains the beating heart of the Silk Road—a place where the past and present blend seamlessly into a timeless cultural masterpiece.





A Gem in the Heart of the Desert, Qatar's Zual Wellness Resort

By Shouq AlMulla
Special to The Times Kuwait

In the northernmost tip of Qatar, where the desert meets the sea and silence carries its own kind of wisdom, stands a place that redefines what wellness can mean for our region. Zual Wellness Resort is often described as a retreat, but after three days immersed in its philosophy, I would argue it is something far more profound. Zual is a conversation between past and present, a bridge between ancient healing traditions and the modern search for balance. It is also a powerful symbol of Qatar's growing leadership in wellness tourism and cultural innovation across the Gulf.

Operated by the world-renowned Thai wellness brand Chiva-Som, Zual represents a groundbreaking fusion of global expertise and regional heritage. To the best of public knowledge, it is one of the world's first full-scale wellness resorts to center its entire philosophy on Traditional Arabic and Islamic Medicine (TAIM). This is the heart of the resort's identity, woven into every aspect of the guest journey. From personalized mizāj (temperament) assessments and herbal formulations to nutrition, movement, spa therapies, and holistic healing. This pioneering model has earned Zual multiple international awards, positioning it as a benchmark for culturally rooted, modern wellness.

My journey began on a quiet road that cuts through the desert. A private driver welcomed me at Hamad International Airport and guided me along the hour-long drive north. Doha's bustling cityscape slowly faded behind us, the towers, the movement, and the noise replaced by the serenity of desert calm. Upon arrival, I was offered a warm herbal infusion in the tea room, a space that blends the simplicity of an apothecary with the elegance of a Gulf majlis. Shelves of herbs, flowers, and white honey reflected centuries of traditional healing. I was immediately captivated by the earthy architecture, the vast library stretching to the ceiling, the silence that filled every corner, and the presence of the grand Sidr trees, symbols of heritage and healing across the Arab world.

My suite in the adults-only Serenity section opened onto a tranquil lagoon, its still surface reflecting the sky like glass. The natural textures and soft lighting allowed the surrounding landscape to speak for itself. I also had my own private pool, a hidden sanctuary where I spent my free time reading and writing. In contrast, the facility includes the Discovery wing, designed for families, reflecting the resort's belief that well-being is a shared journey for all ages.

The next morning, I met with the professional, and incredibly kind wellness team. They were attentive, detailed, and committed to making my stay as comfortable



as possible. This consultation was nothing like the clinical detachment of Western medical forms; it felt like sitting with someone who genuinely wanted to understand how my life, responsibilities, and emotions were carried in my body. That is where Zual begins: by listening.

From this conversation came a personalized program integrating movement, breathwork, physiotherapy, meditation, nutrition, and a TAIM consultation—the philosophical anchor of the resort. What struck me most was the depth behind every element and the richness of Arab-Islamic medicine that is deeply rooted in our region's history. Wellness here was not treated as a passing trend but as a lived expression of heritage—something our ancestors mastered centuries before the modern world rediscovered mindfulness, herbalism, or holistic healing.

Listening to the TAIM practitioner explain humoral theory and the legacy of Ibn Sina was a fascinating discovery, a new horizon in understanding the human body, mind, and spirit. He explained that wellness is not something external we chase, but an internal landscape we learn to interpret. The principle is simple: treat every imbalance with its opposite. Excess heat is cooled, dryness

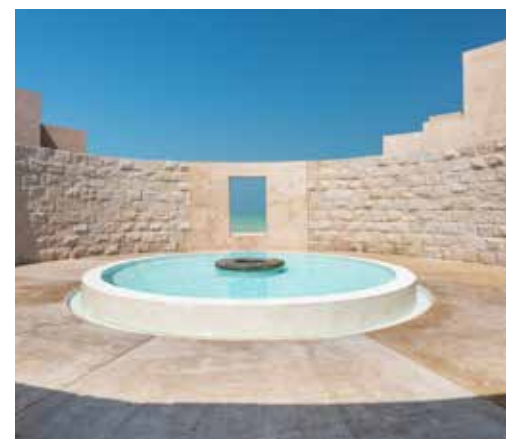


is nourished, stagnation is moved. These classical teachings, drawn from centuries of Islamic scholarship, felt remarkably relevant to the pressures of modern life.

Throughout my stay, I explored the resort's world-class facilities: hydrotherapy pools, ice and snow rooms, Himalayan salt chambers, meditation suites, physiotherapy clinics, and fitness studios. I took part in sound-healing sessions, meditation classes, corrective physiotherapy exercises, and a floating-water therapy session under the stars, an experience that felt like releasing every burden into the

night sky. It was one of the most transformative moments of the entire retreat.

Meals were another reflection of Zual's philosophy. Restaurants such as Acacia, Al Sidr, Aizoon, and seasonal beachside venues served beautifully prepared dishes crafted using ingredients selected for their healing properties. This was not deprivation but nourishment, thoughtful, flavorful, and customized according to each guest's health goals and nutritional needs.



Zual is more than a resort; it is a statement about where Qatar, and the wider Gulf is heading. It demonstrates that we no longer need to look abroad for world-class wellness experiences. They are being built here, rooted in our own identity. More importantly, Zual symbolizes partnership: between ancient healing and modern science, between Gulf heritage and global innovation. It embodies the collaborative spirit shaping the region today, a spirit that values knowledge, sustainability, health, and human development.

When I left Zual, I felt lighter, clearer, and more grounded. But more than anything, Zual reminded me that our region's strength has always been its ability to balance heritage with progress, stillness with ambition, and culture with care. On Qatar's quiet northern shore, that balance has been perfected, and I cannot wait to return.



Thought for the week

“ Education and justice are
democracy's
only life insurance.

Nannie Helen Burroughs
- African-American educator

One Ingredient That Can Induce Blissful Sleep

Ask Mira: Eating Right to Live Happy & Healthy



If you have tried herbal teas, warm baths, and every 'sleep hack' on the internet but still find yourself tossing and turning, there is one ingredient that consistently stands out in scientific research—a mineral your body desperately needs for deep, restorative sleep:

Magnesium is involved in more than 300 biochemical reactions, and one of its most important roles is calming your nervous system. Unfortunately, most people today are deficient due to stress, processed foods, and poor environment. This deficiency leads to night-time anxiety, muscle tension, and difficulty falling or staying asleep.

You can get most of your recommended amount of magnesium from your daily diet by including a variety of green leafy vegetables, beans, lentils, seeds, and nuts as often as possible. However, if you cannot get enough magnesium from diet alone, talk with a healthcare professional about supplementing with magnesium glycinate.

Magnesium glycinate as a supplement aids in sleep as it binds magnesium to glycine, an amino acid that enhances relaxation and improves sleep quality. The combination works in harmony with receptors in your brain, which act like the 'switch off' for your mind at night.

Why magnesium glycinate helps you enjoy stress-free sleep:

- Reduces nighttime anxiety: By lowering cortisol levels and calming the brain, it prevents the overthinking and racing thoughts that keep you awake.
- Relaxes muscles and nerves: If you wake up tense or sore, magnesium helps your muscles naturally loosen and recover.
- Improves deep sleep stages: Studies show magnesium increases slow-wave sleep, the most

restorative phase where your body repairs and recovers.

- More stable sleep, fewer awakenings: It supports steady melatonin production, helping you stay asleep longer.

How to Use It:

Take 200–400 mg of magnesium glycinate about an hour before bed. It is gentle on the stomach and does not cause drowsiness the next morning. Unlike melatonin which pushes your body into sleep, magnesium helps your body naturally unwind, making it perfect for everyday use.

So, If you want one simple and safe supplement that truly transforms your sleep, magnesium glycinate is the scientific solution. It calms the mind, relaxes the body, and supports deep, uninterrupted rest, exactly what your nervous system needs in today's stressful world.

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

Quinoa Coconut Payasam



Quinoa, often called a golden grain on account of its health benefits, is a superbly versatile whole grain with which many dishes can be prepared. In this fresh take on the traditional South Indian sweet dessert, the 'payasam', we replace the rice or vermicelli that is usually the main ingredient in payasams with the protein-rich and gluten-free quinoa. To raise the flavor-quotient we then add in a mix of roasted walnuts and strawberry crush as garnish to create a truly exotic dessert.

Total time: 30 to 40 minutes

Serving: 6

Ingredients:

- 2tsp ghee
- 1/2 cup quinoa
- 1 cup water
- 1,1/2 cup coconut milk
- 1 cup milk
- 1/2 cup dry shredded coconut
- 1tsp cinnamon powder
- 1/2 cup jaggery

For garnish:

- Roasted walnuts
- Strawberry crush

Preparation:

- Wash, rinse and soak quinoa in water for 15 minutes
- Toast the quinoa in a pressure cooker with the 1 tsp ghee
- Add the water, close lid, and heat for 5-6 whistles
- Once the steam get released add roasted shredded coconut, milk and coconut milk
- Stir well to avoid lumps
- Melt jaggery in boiled water until frothy and heat until slightly thick, and strain the mixture to remove impurities
- Add the strained syrupy jaggery into the quinoa mixture
- Cook until the payasam reaches a slightly thick consistency
- Add in the cinnamon powder and stir well
- Transfer the mixture to a serving bowl and garnish with roasted walnuts, and the strawberry crush
- Serve warm or at room temperature.



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

Quality over quantity to beat protein deficiency in body

Proteins are part of every cell in the body and crucial to helping build muscle, bones, cartilage, blood, skin, and hair, as well as assisting in building and repairing cells and tissues. Protein deficiency can lead to serious health issues such as muscle atrophy, weakened immune system, and stunted growth in children, and, in severe cases it can lead to life-threatening diseases.

Many people, especially in the developed world are consuming more than enough protein, while in many parts of the developing world the opposite is true, with the dearth of protein in daily diet being a significant health risk. Excess protein intake can be just as harmful as protein insufficiency, with many high-protein foods loaded with saturated fats that lead to elevated blood lipids and heart disease. Extra protein intake also taxes the kidneys and poses an additional risk to people predisposed to kidney disease. The World Health Organization (WHO) and other health authorities recommend a daily protein intake of 0.8 grams per kilogram of body weight for adults, which varies based on age, gender, activity level, and life stage, and with higher needs for pregnant/lactating women and children. But these dietary guidelines tend to hinge on the assumption that all whole-food protein sources are equal.

For instance, some guidelines stipulate that the protein in 28g (1 ounce) of meat equals the amount of protein in one cooked egg, a quarter cup of cooked beans, a tablespoon of peanut butter or half an ounce of mixed nuts. However, new studies show this is not true, and that equivalencies are really based on the quality of protein consumed which is vital in overcoming protein insufficiency.

Quality is determined by the molecular makeup of a given protein, how available it is for absorption in the body, and the rate at which it



is synthesized in the body within a given time frame. Proteins are made up of long amino acid chains, with the sequence of amino acids on the chain determining the type of protein created.

To work properly, the human body needs 20 amino acids. Our cells can make only 11 of those amino acids, the remaining nine, called essential amino acids (EAA-9), must come from food. But the EAA-9 composition of foods vary widely, with beef, chicken, fish, milk and eggs containing enough of all the essential amino acids, and nuts and most beans not having all of them.

Additionally, proteins in food are bound up in fibers and other substances that the body must break down to access the essential amino acids. This affects what nutritionists call their bioavailability; in general the body is better at breaking down and making available amino acids in animal proteins than in plant proteins.

Importantly, the body can synthesize only

as many proteins as possible with the amino acids present and bioavailable in a given time frame, though researchers are not yet sure if this means hours or days. Quality of proteins is based on their EAA-9 density and how well they are digested in the intestines. Sources such as grains, nuts and seeds are shown to have low density and low digestible essential amino acids, whereas white fish and tofu are high for both categories.

However, extra amino acids cannot recombine to make a complete protein, so they get tossed out. If only half the protein you eat is actually being digested and absorbed into the body, and the rest is just excreted, it does not provide the expected benefit. One solution is to build dietary guidelines around essential amino acids rather than proteins. To establish this, a team of scientists developed a tool using the EAA-9 framework to calculate amino acid

requirements.

Consider an egg. A single egg provides around 25 percent of the recommended daily allowance for several amino acids, but only 15.8 percent of the allowance for the essential amino acid histidine. Because the body will toss out all the amino acids in excess of the histidine, an egg gets an EAA-9 score of 15.8. Meanwhile, peanut butter is so deficient in the essential amino acid lysine that a single tablespoon clocks in with a score of just 4.04. In contrast, chicken breast has one of the highest EAA-9 scores at around 24.9 percent. Current guidelines stipulate that the amount of protein in a tablespoon of peanut butter is equivalent to the amount of protein in a single egg. But based on the EAA-9 scores this is woefully wrong, as a person would need to eat roughly four times as much peanut butter to get the same protein benefits found in a single egg. When it comes to legumes, a person would need to eat more than twice the recommended daily intake—over half a cup of kidney beans instead of the recommended quarter cup—to match the protein benefits of an egg.

So, even if people are eating enough protein, they may not be eating the right mix. But by combining different plant-based foods, people can avail the amino acid profiles similar to those in animal-derived protein, without the high calories and fat associated with meat products.

In order to reorient nutrition guidelines around a plant-based diet that ensures consumption of high-quality proteins, the scientists suggested that people should adjust their plant-based diet in terms of protein quantity. This can be achieved by using the right mix of foods, such as rice with beans, proper preparation methods, such as prior-soaking of grains and legumes, and using cooking methods that improve the absorption of proteins in the body.

Permeable material could offer injection-free diabetes control

Research studies and developments in transdermal drug delivery are revolutionizing the way drugs are delivered into the body. Medications are usually injected or ingested into the body, but pain, needle-phobia, and skin complications due to injections, or poor compliance and the breakdown of ingested drugs by the digestive system, make these treatment modalities less than optimal.

Transdermal drug delivery, or the safe and efficacious delivering of medications across the skin, has been garnering much time and investment, with several new and innovative approaches being introduced in recent years. A new research by scientists at Zhejiang University in China, potentially offers people with diabetes the option to use a material that permeates the skin to deliver insulin directly to the body, making needle-free insulin treatment a reality in the near future.

Experiments in mice and mini pigs, by attaching the permeating polymer to insulin and applying the resulting compound like a cream normalized blood glucose levels almost as quickly as injecting insulin. This transdermal delivery approach could allow people to manage diabetes using patches rather than injections.



Transdermal delivery is already used for some small molecules like nicotine, but insulin, a large protein hormone, cannot get through the skin's complex structure. Researchers can boost skin permeability with techniques including microneedles, ultrasound or chemicals that liquify parts of the skin's outer barrier layer. But these methods compromise the skin's integrity, raising concerns about infection and safety.

Scientists behind the new research used a new approach by relying on a polymer, which

is designed to travel through the skin by interacting with its different layers. The polymer can change its state depending on pH of the skin layer, exploiting the fact that the pH of skin increases with depth.

The polymer starts off positively charged and so binds to negatively charged fatty acid molecules found in the topmost barrier layer of the skin. This surface layer is acidic, with a pH of 4 to 5, but deeper layers are neutral, with a pH around 7. The increase in pH triggers a reaction

in which the polymer becomes electrically neutral. In this state, it detaches from the fatty molecules, enabling it to diffuse through deeper layers.

The scientists chemically added insulin to this polymer. Using a fluorescent dye and an array of imaging techniques, they confirmed that the combined molecule permeates through skin into the bloodstream, where it accumulates in tissues involved in regulating glucose, including the liver. In diabetic mice and mini pigs, whose skin is similar to humans, applying the permeable insulin lowered blood glucose to normal levels within one to two hours, comparable to injected insulin.

Moreover, the levels stayed normal for 12 hours, significantly longer than the four hours for insulin delivered by needle. The polymer did not show any side effects in mice or pigs, but unlike the short period of laboratory tests, humans use insulin for decades, so there is a need to investigate long-term toxicity. The next plan of the scientists is to test the polymer on humans to evaluate its effectiveness and long-term safety. This will be key to the success of the needle-free approach in future diabetes treatment protocols.



Europe's Tech Firms Need Regulation to Grow



Max von Thun
 Director of Europe and
 Transatlantic Partnerships at
 the Open Markets Institute.

Europeans have long lamented the continent's lack of globally competitive tech companies. But since Donald Trump's return to the White House, the goal of ending Europe's reliance on US-based tech giants has taken on new urgency. With US tech oligarchs interfering in European elections and the Trump administration seeking to sabotage European digital regulation, this dependency is no longer just an economic problem; it poses a grave threat to security, sovereignty, and democracy in Europe.

Europeans are well aware of this, but are of two views on how best to respond. One camp argues that, far from bowing to Trumpian pressure, the European Union should double down on efforts to regulate Big Tech, pursuing an even more ambitious approach that would break the tech giants' market dominance and mitigate their products' social harms. The other camp calls for a massive increase in public and private investment in tech infrastructure, both to limit Europe's vulnerability to foreign coercion and to strengthen its economic competitiveness.

These positions are not as far apart as they might seem. Robust, well-designed, and vigorously enforced regulation could neutralize the advantages of incumbent tech firms, create breathing room for challengers, and entrench the shared standards and norms that underpin both democracy and open, decentralized markets. At the same time, the existence of credible European social-media platforms, AI models, and cloud-computing capabilities would greatly strengthen EU competitiveness and sovereignty.



EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Unfortunately, the complementary nature of these positions is rarely acknowledged. Instead, the 'competitiveness first' camp tends either to dismiss regulation as a waste of time, noting that past efforts to rein in Big Tech have always fallen short, or to condemn it for supposedly thwarting Europe's tech ambitions. The latter view, on display at last month's Digital Sovereignty Summit in Berlin, helps to explain why the European Commission is now rushing to water down landmark digital legislation, including the AI Act and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), through its so-called 'Omnibus' package.

This push for deregulation is based on faulty logic. The tech gap with the US emerged several decades ago—long before the GDPR and the AI Act were a twinkle in Eurocrats' eyes. While there is evidence that small businesses have struggled to comply with the GDPR, blaming it for the EU tech sector's shortcomings requires a large leap of logic. Other flagship EU digital laws, such as the Digital Services Act and the AI Act, are too recent to judge their impact.

Europe's failure to produce globally competitive tech firms should not be attributed to excessive regulation, but rather to weak enforcement. Despite having the authority to break up monopolies and block killer acquisitions, the European Commission has rarely used it, fearing that it would impede innovation or invite retaliation by the United States.

To be sure, where enforcement has created openings for new entrants, US firms have proven far better equipped to take advantage of them than their European counterparts have. But, as scholars like Anu Bradford have observed, this probably reflects factors like regulatory divergences among member states, shallow capital markets, punitive bankruptcy laws, a risk-averse culture, and difficulties attracting foreign talent. EU officials' failure to enforce legislation, especially competition law, has compounded the problem, by allowing Big Tech either to crush promising European startups (like the Portuguese app store Aptoide) or acquire them (as with Sweden's iZettle, Estonia's Skype, and Britain's

DeepMind). One could thus argue that determined regulatory enforcement, including robust control of mergers, is a prerequisite for Europe to develop a strong tech industry. Without it, efforts to build European alternatives will continue to be thwarted by Big Tech's anti-competitive tactics, including its exploitation of market power to collect huge amounts of user data and close off a growing array of markets to smaller rivals.

Consider cloud services. Demand for sovereign cloud solutions is growing in the EU, and capable European providers exist. Yet Amazon, Google, and Microsoft remain as dominant as ever, thanks to a panoply of well-documented unfair practices, including unjustified interoperability restrictions, disproportionate data-transfer fees, and discriminatory pricing. The European Commission is coming to recognize this: last month, it opened several investigations into Amazon and Microsoft's cloud-market dominance under the Digital Markets Act. But this is only the first step toward reining these firms in, which will require Europe to stand firm in the face of stiff resistance from the Trump administration and the tech giants.

Meanwhile, the same giants are rapidly entrenching their dominance over the nascent AI market. As the former CEO of Aleph Alpha—a once-leading German AI firm that effectively gave up—observed last year, the "big players" are able to "use one monopoly to endlessly fund the fight for dominance in a new area."

Rather than choosing between stronger tech regulation and increased incentives and support for the tech sector, Europe must embrace a coordinated approach that squeezes today's US tech giants from both sides. Without credible local alternatives, regulators will struggle to govern tech monopolies that are 'too big to care'. And without strong enforcement to break tech monopolies, cash thrown at European businesses and technologies is likely to end up wasted or, worse, in the vaults of the US giants.

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