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## Education Reforms Prepare Youth for World of Tomorrow

### The Times Kuwait Report

**E**ducation is a basic human right, a social good, and a public responsibility, which is crucial to the empowerment of people, progress of societies, and prosperity of economies. On the personal level it equips people with problem-solving and communication skills, enhances critical thinking, and equips them with the knowledge that enables individuals to adapt to global changes.

An educated, skilled, and innovative workforce shapes labor markets, through increased productivity and economic output. Knowledgeable workers support technological advancements, adopt and adapt technologies crucial to competitiveness, and attract investments. An educated public creates informed, engaged citizens who demand accountability and good governance from governments, catalyzes social progress

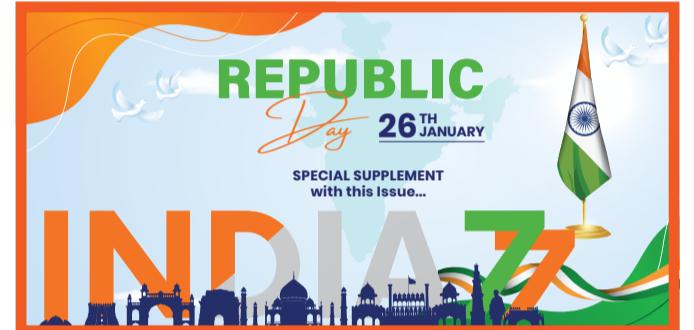


Education (IDE). The day emphasizes education as a human right, addresses issues like lack of access to quality education amid rapid geopolitical, climate, and technological shifts, and, in recent years, focuses on areas like AI in education to ensure inclusive, equitable learning for all.

and collective societal advancements.

Without inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all, countries will not succeed in achieving all outlined UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), including reducing poverty, eliminating gender inequalities, or breaking free from the cycle of poverty that leaves millions of children, youth and adults behind in today's world.

The multi-faceted benefits associated with quality education led the United Nations General Assembly in 2018 to proclaim 24 January every year as the International Day of



According to the World Bank, making smart and effective investments in quality education through early childhood development initiatives is critical for developing the human capital that will end extreme poverty and drive economic growth in a technology-driven world. At the core of this strategy is the need to tackle the global learning crisis, and help youth acquire the advanced cognitive, socioemotional, technical and digital skills they need to succeed.

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Dalal Corn Oil 5Ltr

Devaaya Basmati Rice 5Kg

Dream Cream Caramel Powder 6x92gm

Ferrero Nutella 825gm

Nescafe 3in1 Coffee Original 35x20gm

Alwazzan White Meat Tuna 3x160gm

Dettol Antiseptic Liquid 2x1Ltr

Nivea Soft Cream 2x200ml

CLEENWOOD

Cookware Set

City Tissues 8x150's

Electric Kettle 1.8Ltr CW-510

Remote Control Car with Light Asstd

1:24 4 Way Remote Control Car with Light Asstd

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## Between Anxiety and Ambition

# How the New Generation Is Redefining Saving and Investing

- *Culture of Saving, Investing Among New Generation: Between Economic Anxiety and Ambition to Break Rules*
- *The allure of quick riches tempts young people to skip the stages of understanding and planning.*



By Sheikha Suhaila Al-Sabah  
Managing Editor

In an era where economic certainties are eroding one after another, the new generation seems to stand alone before a harsh financial landscape, without ready-made plans or guaranteed solutions. What was once considered a safe path to stability, a secure job, regular savings, and gradual investment is now nothing more than impractical formulas in a reality where prices are rising faster than salaries, and where the rules of the labor market are changing before new entrants can grasp them.



Thus, young people find themselves compelled to redefine the concept of financial security from its very foundations, not out of rebellion, but under the pressure of a merciless economic reality.

This generation has grown up watching dreams of owning a home or building wealth through long-term savings recede into the background, until they seem like projects postponed indefinitely. Real estate prices have skyrocketed, and debt has become almost a normal part of starting a career, while a job alone is no longer a guarantee of stability.

In this climate, faith in traditional solutions has eroded, and a widespread sense of futility has begun to permeate the financial consciousness of young people—a bitter feeling, but understandable within its context.

This has given rise to what is now known as 'financial nihilism', a psychological and economic condition embraced by young people who believe that adhering to old rules will only lead them to spin in the same cycle. This frustration has not remained confined to emotions; it has translated into bold, and sometimes reckless, financial behaviors. Many have turned to cryptocurrencies and engaged in rapid speculation and gambling, not so much out of a love for risk as out of a desperate search for a shortcut.

Here, the question shifts from condemnation to understanding: Are we witnessing a mass escape from a dead end, or a rational response to an economy that has lost its traditional logic?

The new generation is not a monolith, but it shares distinct financial characteristics. We are talking about young people at the beginning of their careers, who have entered the job market and are accumulating limited financial surpluses, but without a clear investment strategy. This generation is quintessentially tech-savvy, managing money through apps and digital platforms, measuring opportunities in terms of quick returns and high figures. They are highly susceptible to the narratives of meteoric success that permeate social media, where a single exception becomes the norm, while stories of loss and failure are obscured.

On the other hand, it cannot be ignored that this generation is more aware than its predecessors of ethical and social responsibility issues, which is sometimes reflected in their investment choices. However, this awareness clashes with the harsh reality of inflation, which erodes the value of traditional savings, and a lack of trust in traditional financial institutions. Meanwhile, the allure of quick riches tempts many to skip the stages of understanding and planning.

Even more dangerous is that some young people, under the pressure of life or driven by a desire to enjoy the moment, deplete their savings in immediate consumer patterns without a clear vision for the future. This behavior is understandable from a human perspective, but it is financially worrying. The core of the problem

lies not in the ambition of young people, but in the intellectual void they find themselves in.

The absence of a clear investment culture leaves them with choices that are either extremely conservative or extremely risky, with no mature middle ground.

When we ask: Who is responsible for this lack of awareness? We find no single answer. While it is true that official bodies and financial institutions repeatedly emphasize saving and planning, and stress that financial independence begins with small steps, this discourse often remains theoretical, far removed from the language and daily realities of young people. Statistics clearly indicate that a large segment of youth saves nothing from their income, meaning the message has not been received, or has not been presented effectively.

Discussions about financial literacy should not remain mere slogans, but rather a comprehensive project that begins with early education, where students learn the meaning of saving, investing, and risk-taking before receiving their first paycheck.

We need practical awareness programs that do not just warn, but explain, train, and utilize tools this generation understands, from digital payment applications to automated savings mechanisms that transform financial responsibility into a habit, not a burden. Investing in human capital, through workshops and community courses, is no longer a luxury but a necessity in a rapidly changing world.

At the investment level, the discourse must be rebalanced. Saving should not be presented as the antithesis of ambition, nor should high-risk investment be portrayed as the only path to success. True understanding begins with distinguishing between saving for emergencies and short-term goals, and investing for the long term with rationality and diversification. This understanding alone can protect young people from falling into the trap of emotional decisions.

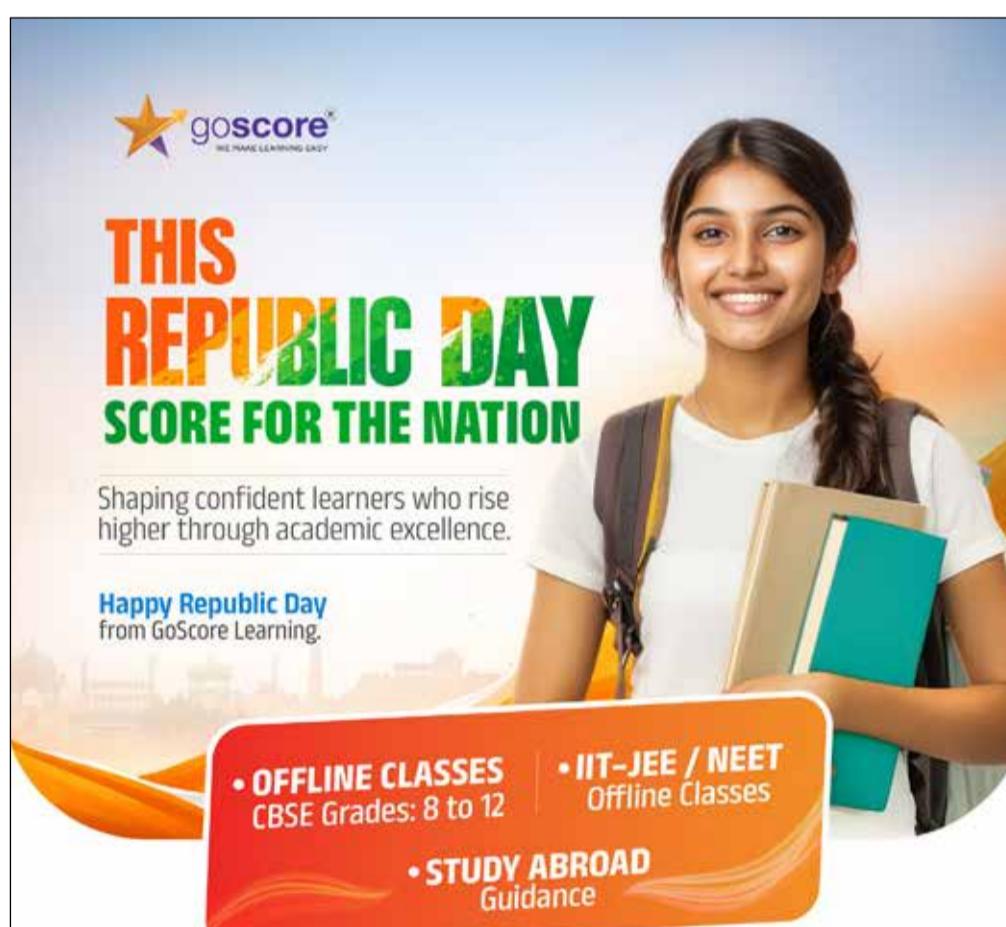
The responsibility here does not lie solely with individuals. Government agencies and relevant institutions are required to play a more prominent and transparent role, especially in raising awareness. Stories of small projects that begin with enthusiasm and end in losses within a year are no longer exceptional. Many of these failures stem from poor choices, a project that is not suited to the owner's capabilities, or a lack of follow-up and commitment.

Some young people enter the world of investment without the time, patience, or knowledge, only to be surprised that reality is harsher than the glamorous image of the opening.

Amidst all this, the golden rule remains valid regardless of changing times: saving should precede spending, not be leftovers. This simple shift in mindset makes a tremendous difference in the long run. As for investing, it should not be a leap into the unknown, but rather a conscious decision built on understanding, experience, and gradual implementation.

The financial uncertainty experienced by the new generation is not a sign of failure, but a reflection of a turbulent economic world. The real test lies not in rejecting ambition or pursuing it recklessly, but in the ability to balance boldness with caution.

This balance does not emerge from a vacuum, but from a well-established financial culture, genuine institutional support, and responsible media that acknowledges the complexity of the situation instead of marketing it as an easily attainable dream. Only then can young people redefine financial security, not as an impossible dream, but as a realistic and achievable path.



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# Kuwait, Turkey aim to boost trade volume widen bilateral trade

The Times Kuwait Report

The Turkish Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (MÜSİAD), in collaboration with the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) and the Embassy of the Republic of Türkiye, organized the Türkiye-Kuwait Business Forum and Business-to-Business (B2B) meetings last week, reaffirming the growing momentum in economic and commercial relations between the two nations.

The forum, held at the KCCI premises, brought together senior officials, business leaders, and investors from both countries, providing a high-level platform to explore new avenues of cooperation and investment.

Addressing the opening session, Ambassador of Turkey H.E. Tuba Nur Sönmez, expressed her satisfaction with the steady growth in bilateral trade, noting that trade volume between Türkiye and Kuwait has exceeded US\$1 billion for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic.

She highlighted that the leadership of both countries has set an ambitious target to raise bilateral trade to US \$5 billion, emphasizing that business forums and direct engagement between private-sector stakeholders play a crucial role in achieving this goal.

Ambassador Sönmez reaffirmed the Turkish Embassy's full commitment to supporting Turkish and Kuwaiti companies, stressing that the diplomatic mission remains an accessible partner for facilitating investment, resolving challenges, and encouraging sustainable economic collaboration.

As part of the forum, representatives of Turkish companies operating across key sectors, including construction, energy, tourism, information technology, manufacturing, and



food industries, held a series of structured B2B meetings with their Kuwaiti counterparts. The discussions focused on joint ventures, sector-specific cooperation, investment frameworks, and long-term commercial partnerships.

Participants noted that the forum contributed significantly to strengthening the economic dimension of the already strong bilateral relationship, while fostering a shared vision of sustainable, mutually beneficial, and

long-term cooperation between the private sectors of both countries.

During their visit to Kuwait, the MÜSİAD delegation also conducted official visits to the Union of Investment Companies (UIC) and the Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA), where in-depth discussions were held on investment opportunities, financial cooperation, and mechanisms to enhance trade and capital flows.

Founded in 1990, MÜSİAD is one of Türkiye's leading business-oriented non-governmental organizations, representing more than 14,000 members with offices in 78 provinces across Türkiye and a presence in 99 countries worldwide.

Through its extensive network and global outreach, MÜSİAD plays a vital role in supporting Türkiye's production capacity, employment growth, and export performance.

## CAPT approves new wastewater treatment facility in Kabd area

Board of Directors of the Central Agency for Public Tenders (CAPT) has approved a direct contract for the construction of the wastewater treatment plant in the new northern Kabd area, for a total value exceeding KD1 billion.

The Agency is set to formally notify the approval to the Ministry of Public Works (MPW), which is responsible for implementing the project. Once it receives the approval, the ministry will submit the

contract to the State Audit Bureau, probably by next week to obtain final clearance, paving the way for the signing of the contract with the Chinese company selected to execute the project.

Members of the Agency's Board are reported to have held a meeting with representatives of the Ministry of Public Works last week, during which they reviewed the contract in detail and examined the terms and conditions governing the project's implementation phases.

The wastewater treatment plant project is considered one of the strategic infrastructure projects, aimed at supporting urban expansion in northern Kabd area and enhancing wastewater management capacity in line with Kuwait's development plans.

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# Kuwait City second most expensive Arab City for apartments

**K**uwait City ranked second among the most expensive Arab cities for purchasing residential apartments in 2026, according to the latest Numbeo index, despite a noticeable year-on-year decline in prices.

The report showed that the average price per square meter for apartments in the city center reached KD1,633, reflecting a decrease of 10.9 percent compared to 2025, when prices stood at approximately KD1,833 per square meter. Outside the city center, prices fell by 11.3 percent to KD816.7 per square meter, down from about KD921 a year earlier.

With regard to rental rates, data from a specialized real estate price index indicated that the average monthly rent for a one-bedroom apartment in the city center stands at KD258.33, compared to KD188.5 dinars outside the central areas. For three-bedroom apartments, rents average KD560.13 dinars per month in the city center and KD405.55 dinars in areas outside the center.

Kuwait's position as the second most expensive Arab city is attributed to a combination of structural and economic factors, most notably



the limited supply of housing in central areas relative to steady demand. Demand remains particularly strong for apartments located near business districts and service hubs, while high land prices in the city center continue to support elevated real estate values.

The rental data also reflects the resilience

of demand in the Kuwaiti market, as central locations remain attractive to middle- and upper-income residents despite high costs. At the same time, the widening price gap between city-center properties and those in surrounding areas points to a growing shift toward suburban and outlying regions as more affordable

alternatives, a trend expected to stimulate real estate activity in those areas in the coming period.

Regionally, Dubai topped the list by a wide margin, with apartment prices in the city center reaching US\$7,172 per square meter, making it the most expensive Arab city for residential real estate investment.

Abu Dhabi ranked third at \$4,923 per square meter, followed by Doha at \$4,506, Baghdad at \$3,834, and Beirut at \$3,753. Riyadh came in seventh at \$2,927, followed by Muscat at \$2,661 and Manama at \$2,627.

According to Numbeo data, Algiers ranked tenth at \$2,297 per square meter, while Damascus, Rabat, Jeddah, Amman, and Tunis occupied middle positions. At the lower end of the scale, Aden recorded the lowest apartment prices among Arab cities at \$90 per square meter, while prices reached \$854 in Cairo and \$722 in Alexandria.

The report highlights the wide disparity in real estate prices across Arab cities, driven by varying levels of economic stability, housing demand, and the quality of infrastructure, particularly in Gulf markets.



## Lulu Hypermarket Kuwait celebrates Grand 'India Utsav' with colors, culture, and excitement

**L**ulu Hypermarket celebrates the spirit of Indian Republic Day with a grand week-long "India Utsav", held from 21st to 27th January 2026 across its outlets in Kuwait. The celebration drew enthusiastic crowds, offering a perfect blend of culture, cuisine, fashion, and exciting shopping offers.

The festivities were inaugurated on 22nd January 2026 at Lulu Hypermarket, Al-Rai, by the Indian Ambassador to Kuwait, H.E. Paramita Tripathi, alongside Lulu Kuwait's top management and officials. The event commenced with a traditional Indian welcome music band, setting a lively and festive tone for the celebrations. Visitors continue to enjoy amazing discounts and special offers on a wide range of Indian branded products, including groceries, meat, fruits and vegetables, health and beauty items, fresh and



frozen foods, fashion and garments, footwear, and more. A flat 25% discount on sarees, churidars, and lehengas add to the excitement, delighting shoppers across all age groups. The celebration also features an Indian Ethnic Wear Fashion Show and an Indian Patriotic Group Song

Competition, with participation from more than 15 Indian schools in Kuwait. The winners of the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd prizes receive gift vouchers and trophies, while all other participants will walk away with participation certificates, recognizing their talent and enthusiasm.

The event's special attractions include traditional Indian monument decorations and displays, creating a vibrant cultural ambiance; Indian special food stalls and free sampling counters, offering visitors a taste of authentic Indian flavors; displays of Indian organic products, highlighting the richness of Indian agriculture; and exclusive Indian ethnic wear collection stalls, featuring a variety of traditional and contemporary fashion.

Lulu Hypermarket's "India Utsav" successfully brings together the Indian community in Kuwait, celebrating heritage, culture, and national pride. Shoppers and participants alike enjoyed an immersive experience combining entertainment, education, and shopping delights, making the event a memorable tribute to Indian Republic Day.

## MoI intensifies security campaign nabs traffic, residency law violators

**M**inistry of Interior announced that emergency police units carried out wide-ranging security campaigns across the country between 11 and 17 January, resulting in the arrest of a number of wanted individuals, violators of residency law, and reckless drivers, as well as the impounding of vehicles and motorcycles wanted by the judiciary.

According to official statistics issued by the General Directorate of Rescue, the campaigns led to the recording of 2,316 traffic violations and the execution of 1,154 various security operations. During the same period, 32 individuals were apprehended for expired residency permits or registered absences, six vehicles were

impounded for traffic violations, four individuals without identification were arrested, and nine vehicles wanted by the judiciary were seized.

Rescue teams also provided assistance in 410 cases and intervened to break up 11 fights. In addition, authorities dealt with 141 traffic accidents, including one hit-and-run case, while seven suspected individuals were referred to the General Directorate for Drug Control.

In a separate report, the General Directorate of Traffic stated that between the 12th and 18th of this month, traffic patrols issued 25,653 violations as part of intensified monitoring efforts. The same



period saw the referral of 25 juveniles to the Public Prosecution, the detention of 45 violators, and the arrest of 58 individuals for expired residency permits.

Traffic authorities also seized 333 vehicles and 25 motorcycles, arrested three individuals

without identification, and referred one suspect to the General Directorate for Drug Control. Furthermore, 53 wanted persons with registered cases of absence or arrest were apprehended, along with the seizure of 32 vehicles wanted by the judiciary.

During the reporting period, traffic officers handled 2,455 traffic-related reports, including 178 collision accidents involving injuries and 1,200 accidents that did not result in serious injuries. The Ministry of Interior affirmed that these campaigns come within the framework of ongoing efforts to enhance security, enforce the law, and maintain public safety across all areas of the country.

# Cyprus assumes EU Presidency, commits to working with Kuwait & GCC

The Times Kuwait Report

European Union Ambassador to Kuwait, H.E. Anne Koistinen, and the Ambassador of Cyprus, H.E. Andreas Panayiotou held a joint media conference last week to mark Cyprus assuming the rotating Presidency of the Council of the European Union for the first half of 2026.

Speaking at the event, Ambassador Koistinen congratulated Cyprus on taking over the EU Presidency, noting that the role carries significant responsibility in shaping the Union's legislative agenda and advancing common foreign policy objectives.

She underlined that the Cypriot Presidency coincides with a landmark year for EU-Kuwait relations, as both sides mark the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties.

Relations between Kuwait and the EU, she said, continue to deepen across multiple sectors, with both parties looking ahead to negotiations on a bilateral Strategic Partnership Agreement aimed at further elevating cooperation. Ambassador Koistinen highlighted Kuwait's vital role during its presidency of the Gulf Cooperation Council last year, particularly in advancing EU-GCC relations.

She recalled the successful hosting of the first EU-GCC Summit in Brussels in October 2024, followed by Kuwait's organization of the 29th EU-GCC Joint Council and



Ministerial Meeting and the 9th EU-GCC Business Forum in 2025.

She also stressed the role of the EU Delegation in Kuwait in coordinating positions among EU member states and expressed confidence that close cooperation with Cyprus over the coming six months would help advance the priorities of the EU Presidency.

In his remarks on the occasion, Ambassador Panayiotou said Cyprus's presidency will run from January to June 2026 under the theme 'An Autonomous Union. Open to the World'. The theme, he explained, reflects the EU's goal of strengthening its internal capacity while remaining an active and reliable global partner. Panayiotou also highlighted the symbolism behind the Cyprus Presidency logo, inspired by the traditional Lefkara embroidery, which represents unity, resilience and cooperation among

the EU's 27 member states.

The Cypriot ambassador noted the strong engagement between the EU and the Gulf region, recalling the participation of GCC Secretary General Jasem Alabdawi in the official ceremony marking Cyprus's assumption of the presidency earlier this month. He reaffirmed Cyprus's

commitment to strengthening EU-GCC relations and implementing the outcomes of the EU-GCC Ministerial Council and the first EU-GCC Summit.

The Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the European Union has outlined an ambitious agenda aimed at strengthening Europe's autonomy, resilience and global

role, with a strong focus on security, competitiveness and shared values.

Both ambassadors expressed optimism that the Cypriot Presidency would further deepen dialogue and cooperation between the European Union, the GCC and Kuwait in particular, building on the momentum achieved in recent years.

## Civil Service amendments aim to improve administrative efficiency



Proposed amendments to the law on civil service systems, endorsed during last week's Civil Service Council meeting, are aimed at enhancing efficiency of state administrative services and keeping pace with modern management structures. The move is also part of the government's ongoing efforts to push forward its reforms, good governance, and development agenda.

Announcing approval for the new law, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Shereeda Al-Mousherji, who is also the civil service council chairman, said that these amendments would contribute to the optimal use of human resources and help improve the quality of public services. The amendments focus on management concepts, including boosting efficiency and productivity, and linking job advantages such as incentives and allowances to actual performances as well as cementing job justice and job equality.

In addition, the amendments are expected to help bolster control and accountability, raise the effectiveness of administrative accountability, unify public policies for recruitment, and address organizational disarray, along with developing performance, he stated. They also leverage modern methods and tools to assess individual's performance, including using automatic systems and backing decision-making through complete information systems and databases. He added that the changes enable the updating of administrative systems keeping pace with work updates and accommodate the different performance conditions and employment systems that state employees engage in.

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# KOC, KAK-Lamor agree to extend soil remediation project

**K**uwait Oil Company (KOC) and KAK-Lamor, a joint venture owned by Lamor—one of the world's leading providers of environmental solutions—and Kuwaiti company Khalid Ali Al-Kharafi Bros. Co. have agreed to extend the current Kuwait soil remediation project by up to 18 months. Under the new agreement, the project will continue until July 2027 at the latest. The contract extension also slightly increases the contract's total value.

Lamor's remediation work is part of the Kuwait Environmental Remediation Program (KERP), established under the United Nations Compensation Commission to rehabilitate land contaminated during the 1991 Gulf War. Lamor, which owns 45 percent of the joint venture and KAK the remaining 55 percent signed the original agreement with KOC in 2021 under an UN-led program to remediate land affected by the world's largest man-made oil disaster in Northern and Southern Kuwait.

The time extension and the now confirmed additional volumes are related to the 2021 order originally worth a total of US\$380 million, signed between KOC and the joint venture KAK-Lamor for a five-year soil remediation project.

The areas designated under the original contract have now been cleaned. This significant



achievement was celebrated in Kuwait on 21 January 2026 at a seminar attended by representatives from Lamor and the joint venture, as well as a representative from the UN project, the Ambassador of Finland to Kuwait, several other EU ambassadors to Kuwait, and the CEO of KOC. Under the new agreement, work related to remaining contract value and the extended volumes will continue in two additional areas in Southern Kuwait.

During this significant remediation project,

the joint venture has already processed approximately 6.5 million tonnes of oil-contaminated soil according to strict criteria, enabling safe land restoration.

"Lamor has demonstrated its ability to deliver comprehensive soil remediation and restoration projects at large scale. Working together with our partners, we provide everything from extensive soil relocation to advanced bioremediation and soil washing, and final disposal. Both soil washing operations

in Kuwaiti treatment centres operate with closed-loop water systems that recycle around 90 percent of processed water—a critical innovation in water-scarce environments," says Johan Grön, Lamor's CEO.

"Building on this proven capability, we are ready to bring the same expertise and integrated solutions to other large-scale remediation projects across the Middle East and globally," he added. The project has received multiple awards for advancing sustainability. Most recently, in October 2025, it was named Environmental & Sustainability Project of the Year at Kuwait's TEF EEA Awards, underscoring its engineering excellence and measurable environmental impact.

"We are proud that the teams of Lamor and Kharafis have successfully completed the original remediation scope as planned and with high quality, and we can now continue working together in 2026–2027. KOC's commitment to cleaning up the land areas has been crucial, and this new agreement ensures the controlled completion of the project. At the same time, we continue discussions on new soil remediation and other environmental projects in Kuwait and the broader Middle East region, as we see significant opportunities there for the future," says Grön.



## KSES launches geological volunteer program

**K**uwait Society for Earth Sciences (KSES) announced the launch of a volunteer geological trips program as part of the activities of the (Kuwait Geopark) project under the slogan, 'Kuwait: A Sustainable Geological and Cultural Heritage', in a step that reflects the Society's commitment to promoting scientific and environmental awareness and establishing a culture of specialized knowledge-based volunteering.

The Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Association, Dr. Mubarak Al-Hajri, said that the program represents an open national platform for members of the Association and volunteers from within and outside it to give them the opportunity to learn more about the sustainable geological and cultural heritage that Kuwait abounds in.

Al-Hajri pointed out that this initiative embodies the global trend towards promoting quality volunteering based on knowledge, explaining that the trips include specialized field tours carried out with qualified and trained guides who provide simplified scientific content that highlights the distinctive geological characteristics of the State of Kuwait and enhances understanding of the integrated relationship between the land, man and civilization.

He called on accredited volunteer teams to join and actively participate in this program, explaining that the focus on volunteer work this year is in line with the international call to maximize the values of volunteering and transform them into a sustainable impact that serves the community and supports the paths of environmental sustainability, geological and educational tourism.

He stated that the launch of the program coincides with the United Nations' selection of 2026 as the International Year of Volunteers, noting that allocating geological trips at this time aims to highlight the role of volunteering as a human and developmental value and link it to scientific knowledge and the protection of the natural and cultural heritage of the State of Kuwait. The geological field trip program is one of the sustainable volunteer initiatives included in the operational plan of the Kuwait Society for Earth Sciences and within the framework of the National Volunteer and Sustainability Program. It contributes to raising community awareness, enhancing the quality of volunteer work outcomes, and solidifying Kuwait's position as a leading model in the field of environmental and knowledge-based volunteering at both the regional and international levels.

## IWG delegation visits HORECA Kuwait 2026 at Kuwait International Fair Grounds



**A** delegation from the International Women's Group (IWG) paid a visit to the 14th edition of HORECA Kuwait 2026, the country's largest food and hospitality exhibition, held at the Kuwait International Fair Grounds.

The visit began with welcoming remarks by Joumana Dammous Salamé, Founder of HORECA; Mohamed A. Najia, Secretary General of the Kuwait Hotel Owners Association and Executive Director of HORECA; and Nabila Al Anjari, who underscored the exhibition's pivotal role in supporting and advancing Kuwait's food and hospitality sectors.

Featuring the participation of more than 100 companies, HORECA Kuwait 2026 brings together leading names in hospitality and food service, showcasing cutting-edge products and innovations while providing a dynamic platform for networking and business development.

Accompanied by exhibition officials, the IWG delegation toured the participating pavilions, where members expressed their admiration for the diversity and quality of products on display.

The private tour was graciously led by Ms. Randa Dammous, who offered a curated overview of the exhibition's key highlights, including Salon Culinaire, Barista and Mocktail Competitions, Bed Making Showcases, HORECA Talks, and the latest food and non-food innovations shaping the industry.

On behalf of the IWG Board, the IWG President, Mrs. Marika Kochlamazashvili, spouse of the Georgian Ambassador, extended her sincere appreciation to the organizers of HORECA Kuwait for their warm hospitality and for arranging a seamless and insightful private tour, which was highly appreciated by the IWG delegation.

## Health Ministry regulates medicine pricing in private sector

**M**inister of Health Dr Ahmed Al-Awadhi has issued a ministerial decision regulating the pricing mechanism for medicines in the private sector, as part of efforts to enhance transparency and protect consumers.

In a press statement, the Ministry of Health said the decision establishes a clear and approved legislative framework for pricing medicines, requiring all human medicines to be registered and officially priced prior to being traded in the local market. The decision also defines permissible profit margins and prohibits any form



of price manipulation or excessive pricing, with the aim of preventing exploitation and ensuring fair access to medicines for consumers.

The ministry explained that the pricing mechanism was developed based on Gulf and international benchmarks, as well as comprehensive economic studies, which were used as key references in determining medicine prices. In addition, the decision introduces clear procedures for reviewing prices and submitting objections, in order to maintain a balanced approach that considers the interests of consumers, suppliers and the private healthcare sector.

# Mega PPP projects set to launch as part of Vision 2035

Kuwait is pressing ahead with a major investment drive, launching 12 mega-projects through public-private partnerships as part of Vision 2035, positioning political stability, strong global ties and private-sector leadership as key pillars to attract long-term foreign investment.

Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy, Minister of Finance, and Acting Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment Dr. Subaib Al-Mukhaizeem affirmed that Kuwait is undergoing a rapid transformation aimed at creating a more attractive environment for foreign investment and private sector growth.

He revealed that the government is moving forward with the launch of 12 major mega-projects through the public-private-partnership (PPP) route, six of which are currently being rolled out, with six more scheduled for launch in the near future.

Al-Mukhaizeem made the remarks during his participation in a high-level dialogue session organized by Bloomberg on securing the future of the Gulf region and prioritizing sustainable growth. The session, held on the sidelines of the ongoing World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, also featured the Co-Chief Executive Officer of Goldman Sachs International, Anthony Gutman.



The minister emphasized that Kuwait Vision 2035 seeks to establish a diversified, private-sector-led economy supported by robust infrastructure and strong regional and international partnerships, enhancing

the country's resilience in the face of global economic fluctuations.

He highlighted political and economic stability as among Kuwait's most significant competitive advantages, positioning the

country as an attractive destination for long-term, multi-generational investments amid volatile global markets and widespread economic uncertainty. He noted that Kuwait's extensive network of international relations further strengthens investor confidence.

Al-Mukhaizeem explained that, through the Kuwait Authority for Partnership Projects (KAPP), the government is accelerating the introduction of major projects in collaboration with the private sector to leverage private expertise and share risks. He pointed out that while only four projects have been awarded in the more than ten years since the Authority's establishment, six projects are currently being introduced, with an additional six expected to follow shortly.

He added that several other projects are under study and preparation, with plans to offer them as public-private partnerships in the coming period, as part of the government's broader strategy to stimulate economic growth and expand private sector participation.

## Indian Heritage: Weaving India's textile legacy into GCC fabric

As India commemorates its 77th Republic Day, the occasion invites reflection not only on constitutional values, but also on the living traditions that have shaped India's identity across centuries.

Among these, few are as enduring and influential as India's textile heritage—an art form that has travelled across time, borders, and cultures. It is from this legacy that Indian Heritage emerged.

### Born in Kuwait, Inspired by India

Indian Heritage was founded with a clear purpose: to serve Kuwaiti customers by bringing them the highest-quality Indian fabrics and fabric-based garments, sourced directly from India's most respected textile regions. From the outset, the brand was shaped by the preferences, aesthetics, and cultural sensibilities of women in Kuwait—long before any regional expansion was envisioned.

Today, Indian Heritage serves local women across Kuwait, Bahrain, and Oman, offering Indian textiles not as replicas of Indian fashion, but as refined materials that integrate



seamlessly into Arab lifestyles. At the core of Indian Heritage is its commitment to sourcing. Fabrics are carefully selected from across India's historic textile regions—

from Banaras to Kanchipuram, from Gujarat and Rajasthan to Tamil Nadu and Bengal.

Each region contributes its own language of weaving, texture, and technique. Whether silk, cotton, blends, or intricately crafted fabrics, the emphasis remains constant: authenticity, craftsmanship, and uncompromising quality.

Rather than mass production, Indian Heritage curates with intention—ensuring that every fabric carries both heritage value and contemporary relevance.

### An Evolving Brand, A Constant Purpose

Indian Heritage began its journey offering Indian attire, jewellery, and fabrics rooted in tradition. Over time, the brand has evolved—responding to the lifestyles and preferences of women across the GCC—while remaining true to its original purpose.

Today, the ready-to-wear garments created for Kuwaiti and other GCC women, as well as the fabrics offered in-store, are ethically sourced from India and designed with a thoughtful balance of Indian craftsmanship and Arab culture. Silhouettes, detailing, and aesthetics reflect modern Arab sensibilities, while the quality and textile integrity remain distinctly Indian. The name Indian Heritage has remained unchanged—serving as a reminder that while form evolves, the foundation of craftsmanship, quality, and cultural respect endures.

The path forward lies in reimagining Indian

textiles for the modern Arab woman.

By blending India's weaving traditions and premium fabrics with Arab elegance, cultural context, and contemporary design, Indian Heritage has carved a unique position within the GCC—where heritage meets modernity with restraint, relevance, and respect.

This philosophy continues to guide the brand's measured expansion across the region, positioning Indian textiles not as ethnic expressions, but as timeless materials shaped for modern lives.

### A Republic Day Reflection

Republic Day reminds us that India's strength lies not only in its institutions, but in its ability to carry its culture forward with confidence and humility. Every fabric sourced, every artisan tradition sustained, contributes quietly to that legacy. On this 77th Republic Day, Indian Heritage extends its warm wishes to all.

Happy Republic Day. May India's textile heritage continue to inspire, evolve, and endure—across generations and cultures.

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## Indian Embassy, ICAI-Kuwait host India-Kuwait AI dialogue

**E**mbassy of India in Kuwait, in collaboration with the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI)-Kuwait Chapter, organized the India-Kuwait AI Impact Dialogue 2026 on 19 January at the Salwa Sabah Conference Center. The event was a prelude to the India AI Impact Summit 2026, scheduled to take place in New Delhi from 16-20 February.

The event brought together senior professionals and experts from Kuwait's information technology ecosystem, providing a platform for the exchange of views on artificial intelligence and emerging digital technologies. Discussions focused on AI-driven innovation, ethical and responsible use of AI, capacity building, and opportunities for deeper India-Kuwait cooperation in the digital domain.

Addressing the gathering, Ambassador of India H.E. Paramita Tripathi, underscored India's commitment to leveraging artificial intelligence for inclusive development and strengthening partnerships with friendly countries such as Kuwait. She highlighted India's rapid emergence as a global hub for AI, supported by a strong talent base of more than five million technology professionals and a robust digital public infrastructure.

The Ambassador noted that India ranks among the world's leading countries in AI skill penetration and in the integration of AI across key sectors including healthcare, agriculture, finance, education and governance. These advancements, she said, are enhancing productivity, accelerating innovation and fostering inclusive growth. She also pointed to India's vibrant startup ecosystem, which includes more than 100,000 startups and over

100 unicorns, many of which are AI-driven and active in areas such as fintech, health technology, climate solutions, logistics, smart cities and enterprise automation.

The event also featured remarks by Rohit Agarwal, Chairperson of the ICAI-Kuwait Chapter, who emphasized the importance of collaboration between the technical and professional sectors of India and Kuwait. The keynote address was delivered by Nithya Subramanian, Senior Director, Data and AI Code at Best Buy, on building AI-ready organizations through data culture, digital literacy and leadership. Founder and CEO of Journey Consulting, Jamal Al-Humoud, led a session on building trustworthy AI, focusing on safety, security and governance in the era of generative AI. An interactive question-and-answer session followed.

The India-Kuwait AI Impact Dialogue 2026 forms part of the embassy's broader efforts to highlight India's technological capabilities, particularly in artificial intelligence and emerging digital technologies, while promoting the exchange of best practices and expertise between the two countries.

The upcoming India AI Impact Summit 2026, announced by Indian Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi at the France AI Action Summit in February 2025, will be a major global platform bringing together world leaders, policymakers, industry experts and innovators.

The summit will be the first global AI summit hosted in the Global South, underscoring India's growing leadership in the global AI ecosystem and its commitment to inclusive, responsible and human-centric artificial intelligence.

## IBPC Secretary among select attendees at Loka Kerala Sabha

**S**ecretary of the Indian Business and Professional Council (IBPC) Kuwait, Suresh KP, is among select attendees invited to attend the fifth Loka Kerala Sabha (World Kerala Assembly), which will be held from 29 to 31 January at the Kerala Legislative Assembly premises. Suresh will represent the Kerala expatriate business and professional community from Kuwait at the assembly.

The selection of IBPC Secretary to attend the prestigious gathering, is widely viewed as a recognition of the structured and collective efforts of IBPC Kuwait and the broader Indian business and professional community in the country. It also reflects the Government of Kerala's continued emphasis on strengthening engagement with the diaspora and enhancing the welfare of Non-Resident Keralites through formal platforms for dialogue

and representation. IBPC Kuwait has long functioned as an institutional forum for articulating the concerns, ideas, and aspirations of Indian professionals and business leaders in Kuwait in a constructive and coordinated manner. The selection of Suresh is seen as a continuation of this collaborative engagement between overseas organisations and Kerala's development initiatives.

Several Indian diaspora organisations in Kuwait have congratulated Suresh on his nomination, recalling in particular his service to the community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

With more than three decades of involvement in promoting India-Kuwait bilateral trade, cultural exchange, and community-oriented initiatives, Suresh's participation at the Loka Kerala Sabha is expected to contribute meaningfully to discussions on expatriate welfare, overseas investment, and diaspora collaboration.

His participation will also further enhance IBPC's role as the premier Indian business and professional platform in the country, representing the interests of Indian expatriate business community.



## Education Reforms Prepare Youth for World of Tomorrow

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The Bank points out that globally, there is a 9 percent increase in hourly earnings for every extra year of schooling, with countries having higher levels of education increasing their national GDP by 1.5 to 2 times on average. South Korea and Singapore are examples of countries that pulled themselves out of poverty and low development, to become some of the most developed economies in the world within a span of a few decades due to investment in good quality education.

As the main beneficiaries of education and the ones whose future depends on it, youth have a special role to play in shaping the future of education. But regrettably, prevailing education systems have very little, if any, input from youth in co-creating the education that meets their aspirations and ambitions, and aligned with the needs of a rapidly evolving, technology-infused labor market of today.

The dearth of youth representation in the education decision-making processes at a time of radical technological transformations, calls for a total rethink on the purpose and modalities of teaching and learning. It is worth noting that with youth under 30 constituting more than half of the global population, this demographic cohort is poised to be the driving force for sustainable development, innovation and social transformation, going forward.

In Kuwait with 51 percent of the population below the age of 30 and nearly a third of the population between the ages of 15 and 35, youth represents an influential demographic, whose voice is being listened to and acted upon

only in recent years. As economies worldwide navigate rapidly evolving geopolitical and technological shifts it is vital for Kuwait to pursue a forward-thinking strategy in human resource development, focused on building a future-ready workforce by leveraging technology, enhancing AI skills, and ensuring inclusive, equitable growth.

To its credit, Kuwait has over the years invested in digital infrastructure including the latest 5G technologies in mobile communication. This has resulted in the country having a very high digital penetration rate, with the percentage of the total population using the internet (internet adoption rate) in 2025 being near universal at 99 percent, mobile connections stood at 7.89 million, and social media adoption stood at more than 80 percent in 2025, as per recent data from Datareportal.

On the education front, the 2025-2027 Education Reform Plan is the engine behind Kuwait's accelerated academic overhauling, which reportedly has already achieved more than 60 percent of its milestones. These include curriculum updates paired with modernization of teaching modalities and learning infrastructure, including interactive screens, and teacher upskilling programs with international partners.

Curriculum updates through introduction of AI modules in Grade 10 and AI basics in earlier grades, focus on problem-solving, data literacy, and fundamentals of machine-learning, while weaving concepts of cybersecurity and ethics throughout the new curricula. These efforts aim to make AI learning hands-on and locally relevant, transforming classrooms into launchpads for digital careers.

The reforms dovetail with Kuwait Vision 2035 and swelling demand for AI skills, with the country's Civil Service Commission signalling that around 24,000 new positions with a large tech component currently remain to be fulfilled. This bodes well for students who grasp AI concepts early on, positioning them for gainful employment in Kuwait's burgeoning public and private tech sectors.

At the labor-market level, the transformation sweeping across the world from AI advancements will require significant upskilling and reskilling of the workforce to enable them to adapt to the accelerated pace at which businesses are adopting this transformative technology. Available data reveals that along with AI developments, the rising performance expectations and the globalization of white-collar work have converged to reset the rules of entry-level employment.

A recent analysis of task composition reveals that by 2030, over 30 percent of entry level work hours in organizations could be taken over by AI, leaving millions of workers redundant. Meanwhile, the rapid pace of AI implementation by businesses has created an acute shortage of talent, with a new report showing that as many as 1.6 million AI positions remained unfulfilled globally in 2025. This highlights a critical disconnect between education systems and modern workforce demands. Kuwait's ambitious Vision 2035 views digitalization AI development and data as strategic assets in its economic diversification plan that aims to ensure economic resilience by transforming into a largely knowledge-based economy. Government initiatives in this regard have led to

digitalization of public services and significant digital infrastructure investments, in cooperation with global tech leaders, resulting in initiation of plans for large data centers, cloud and other digital services.

The World Economic Forum's latest 'The Future of Jobs Report' shows that technological advancements, geoeconomic fragmentation, economic uncertainty, demographic shifts and the green transition—individually and in combination are poised to be among the major drivers expected to shape and transform the global labor market by 2030. Workplace technological transitions are already creating new jobs, transforming existing ones and making others redundant or obsolete.

In this changing milieu, balancing technology, talent and inclusion is seen as critical. Proactively training, upskilling, and retaining talent at the speed warranted by competitive, fast-evolving technological ecosystems, as well as ensuring that this transition benefits all of society through policies that promote inclusivity, are vital to unlock the significant productivity gains from AI, enhance human capital, and ensure sustainable economic growth.

Experts opine that rather than reacting to AI-induced work redundancies, nations need to focus strategies on empowering people, making training in AI ecosystems widely accessible, and supporting life-long learning. We cannot control the pace of technological developments, but we can control how we prepare people to meet it. The decisions we make today about skills and education will determine whether the future is one of continued inequalities or shared prosperity.

EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

# AI and the Future of Education



**Pinelopi Koujianou Goldberg**  
A former World Bank Group chief economist and editor-in-chief of the American Economic Review, is Professor of Economics at Yale University.

The rapid progress of large language models (LLMs) over the past two years has led some to argue that AI will soon make college education, especially in the liberal arts, obsolete. According to this view, young people would be better off skipping college and learning directly on the job.

I strongly disagree. Learning through hands-on experience is valuable and always has been. But it works best when people have a good sense of which jobs and skills will be in demand. If there is one thing we can be confident about, it is that the future of work is highly uncertain. Advising young people to forgo college in favor of early entry into the labor market is misguided, at best.

Geoffrey Hinton, widely regarded as one of the pioneers of modern AI, once compared progress in his field to navigating through fog: you can see what lies immediately ahead, but not what comes next. Accordingly, the central challenge for educators is to prepare students to operate effectively in fog-like conditions. The answer is not to train them for specific tasks that may soon become obsolete, but to make them as adaptable as possible. Trying to prepare people for a fixed set of challenges, when those challenges are constantly changing, is a losing strategy. We want skilled drivers who can navigate unfamiliar roads and unexpected obstacles.

From this perspective, education, and especially higher education, plays a more important role than ever. Because we do not know which specific skills will be in demand in the future, a return to fundamentals is imperative. Liberal education emphasizes how to think, rather than what to do. It trains students to reason, to read carefully, to write

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Just as remote schooling during the pandemic widened educational gaps, an AI-driven shift toward intensive in-person teaching could disadvantage those who rely most on public education.

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clearly, and to evaluate evidence. These skills will age far better than narrow technical competencies.

This does not mean ignoring technology. On the contrary, students must learn to work with AI. But the goal should be to make them critical users and informed judges of AI tools, not passive consumers. It remains essential to teach basic mathematics, logic, and reasoning; to engage with foundational texts; and to learn how arguments are constructed and tested. These are the skills that allow individuals to stay ahead of rapidly evolving technology.

This principle raises two practical questions: what should we teach, and how should we teach it? The first question is difficult and will inevitably generate debate. While there may be broad agreement on the importance of core



concepts, the details will change over time. Our experience with earlier technologies offers useful guidance. The introduction of calculators and computers did not eliminate the need to teach arithmetic. Students still learn how calculations work, but time-consuming manual computation is now delegated to machines. Similarly, spelling and grammar remain important, but software has largely replaced the need for endless drills.

AI calls for a similar adjustment across many domains. LLMs now perform tasks such as summarizing text or identifying main ideas—longtime staples of education—extremely well. The same is increasingly true for programming, solving quantitative problems, and even drafting text. Though these activities should not disappear from the curriculum, the goal should shift. Students need to understand the underlying concepts and logic, rather than mastering every step of the execution.

The students who will succeed are those who can use AI tools effectively to achieve well-defined goals. It is the same with good management: success depends on setting priorities, structuring problems, and deploying available resources wisely. These are conceptual skills, not narrow technical ones.

The second, pedagogical question concerns how learning is reinforced and assessed. Understanding requires some practice, but AI makes it easier than ever for students to avoid doing the work themselves. Even highly motivated students will sometimes be tempted to take a shortcut, especially under time pressure. We therefore need a major change in assessment.

Take-home essays, problem sets, and unmonitored exams are increasingly ineffective. They will need to be replaced by in-person quizzes and exams, oral evaluations, and problems solved in real time, whether on paper or at the whiteboard. Such changes have far-reaching implications. They require in-person attendance, smaller classes, and more direct interaction between students and instructors. In many ways, this would mark a return to older teaching models, reversing some of the scale and standardization introduced by earlier technologies. It could even usher in a new golden age for liberal-arts education.

But this model also raises serious concerns. It places greater responsibility on instructors, who must be willing to enforce standards and make difficult judgments. Institutions must support them in doing so. At the same time, evaluation based on personal interaction raises legitimate worries about bias. Standardized exams have their flaws, but their biases are at least visible. Subjective assessment based on oral exams and personal interaction can be less transparent.

Perhaps the most serious challenge concerns

inequality. Small-class, highly personalized education is expensive. Elite institutions may be able to provide it, but large public universities will struggle. Just as remote schooling during the pandemic widened educational gaps, an AI-driven shift toward intensive in-person teaching could disadvantage those who rely most on public education.

Some argue that AI itself will reduce the need for formal education by providing information and personalized guidance on demand. But this assumes that users know what to ask and how to interpret the answers. The most motivated or gifted individuals may

thrive in such an environment, but they would do so regardless. Formal education matters most for the broad middle.

If AI is to benefit society, we will need more, not less, investment in education. AI will displace jobs, but it will also create new ones. Education should be among the sectors that expand. As AI becomes widely available, educational quality will depend less on access and more on expectations and enforcement. Smaller classes, more instructors, and greater personal interaction are costly, but the productivity gains promised by AI make such investments both feasible and worthwhile.

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# AI Is Unlike Previous Tech Booms



**Dambisa Moyo**  
*International economist, and author of Edge of Chaos: Why Democracy Is Failing to Deliver Economic Growth – and How to Fix It*

**C**oncerns about an artificial intelligence (AI) bubble have intensified since the start of 2026, as investors and policymakers focus on whether, and when, it might burst. But the real question is not whether current valuations are inflated; it is whether AI's emerging business model differs from those of earlier technological revolutions.

For decades, scale has been the primary driver of tech companies' performance and valuations. As apps, websites, online retailers, and social media platforms expanded their user bases, marginal costs fell, network effects took hold, and pricing power increased. Valuations came to reflect long-term growth potential rather than short-term profitability.

The forces that defined past tech winners are unlikely to dominate AI's rollout, because the competitive dynamics differ across six critical dimensions. First, capital expenditure is no longer a shallow moat; it is a formidable barrier. In earlier technological waves, capital requirements were largely confined to the startup phase and relatively modest. Facebook, for example, initially raised just US\$500,000 in seed funding.

But those earlier innovations were built on top of existing infrastructure such as Linux, Apache, MySQL, and PHP (the so-called LAMP stack), which dramatically lowered upfront costs. AI, by contrast, is extraordinarily capital-intensive. Industry-wide capital investment is projected to exceed \$7 trillion by 2030 as companies build data centers, expand computing capacity, and invest in specialized hardware. Unlike previous tech cycles, these investment requirements will not fade as the industry matures and may even intensify.

Moreover, those costs may never decline meaningfully, since the lifespan of data centers is often measured in years, not decades. While cloud computing also required massive investment in general-purpose servers, AI demands entirely new infrastructure, including graphics processing units and tensor processing units (TPUs), to handle the vast number of simultaneous calculations involved in training and running AI models.

Such systems are expensive and energy-intensive. A single large-scale AI training run is expected to cost over \$1 billion by 2027. Only firms that can afford the entry price will survive, giving today's tech giants—with their enormous cash flows, robust balance sheets, and access to capital markets—a decisive advantage.

Second, AI's operating-cost structure undermines traditional economies of scale. In earlier tech cycles, marginal costs per user collapsed as platforms grew. Whether it was social media, software, or ride-sharing apps like Uber, costs were spread across an expanding customer base, enabling platforms to sustain high margins as they scaled up.

Those models were also marked by low operating expenses. Once Facebook reached sufficient scale, the marginal cost of adding users became negligible. As a result, companies



paid little attention to the cost of serving each user, as it rarely threatened financial viability.

AI flips these dynamics. Controlling marginal costs is no longer optional, since large language models and other AI systems incur significant costs with every interaction, which requires billions of calculations. This is why AI firms focus on reducing per-query costs through custom hardware like TPUs and by developing leaner, more efficient models such as China's DeepSeek. The third area where AI departs from previous tech revolutions is in the weakness and fragility of network effects. Legacy tech platforms benefited from self-reinforcing growth. Buyers and sellers were drawn to Amazon's marketplace precisely because activity was already concentrated there.

All users can switch easily between models, use several at once—one for text, another for images, a third for coding—or even build their own. Switching costs are low, and loyalty is weak, making network effects far less influential in determining long-term winners.

For legacy tech companies, the combination of falling marginal costs and network effects amplified the benefits of scale, fueling a

markets: Google dominated search; Amazon focused on retail. By seeking distinct niches like college students (Facebook) and professionals (LinkedIn), companies had time to mature before competition intensified.

AI, by contrast, is a general-purpose technology that cuts across industries. With users able to gain access to it instantly through apps or application programming interfaces, companies no longer have the luxury of reaching maturity before competitors emerge. This dynamic gives AI the potential to disrupt not just individual sectors but every existing technology business model.

Fifth, political influence now matters as much as market power. Earlier innovation waves did not require companies to engage with governments and regulators to the extent AI must. While social media platforms eventually faced scrutiny over their addictive effects, the perceived risks posed by today's emerging technologies are deeper, and, in many ways, existential, given AI's potential to cause job displacement, exacerbate inequality, and undermine democratic governance. With AI companies confronting both market forces

The AI sector, at least initially, is unlikely to follow that pattern. Rather than converging on a single monopolistic winner, it could support multiple dominant players, each controlling its own niche.

To be sure, an AI company could reach a point at which its technological lead becomes self-reinforcing and effectively insurmountable. Through continuous self-improvement and overwhelming product superiority, or even the development of artificial general intelligence, such a firm could achieve lasting market power, allowing it to dominate the field.

Until then, investors must recognize that AI follows a new strategic logic. Applying legacy technology metrics to this rapidly evolving landscape is not only counterproductive but potentially costly. Investors who rely on past playbooks risk becoming the losers in today's AI-driven market. Consider stock-based compensation. Historically, equity incentives enabled tech companies to hire and retain talent, acquire intellectual property, and expand through mergers and acquisitions. But stock options cannot pay for data centers, computing power, or energy infrastructure. To meet these needs, AI companies require real investment, established cash flows, and reliable access to capital markets.

Similarly, investors once tolerated negative margins so long as user growth was robust and advertising revenues were growing. But the uncertainty surrounding AI and the scale of required capital expenditure limit their ability to assess when these investments will break even or how AI-driven transformations will ultimately increase margins. The result is a growing emphasis on strong balance sheets and demonstrable financial resilience.

So, the race for AI leadership will not be won by the companies with the most users or fastest growth rates. Instead, the victors will be firms that can combine superior products with financial strength and political influence.

In this sense, AI more closely resembles the capital-intensive industries of the mid-20th century than the asset-light tech models of recent years. With operating costs rising and consumers moving easily between models, profitability will depend on capturing elastic demand while translating political capital and regulatory influence into lasting competitive advantage.

**Applying legacy technology metrics to the rapidly evolving AI landscape is not only counterproductive but potentially costly. Investors who rely on past playbooks risk becoming the losers in today's AI-driven market.**

race to capture as many eyeballs as possible. That strategy made sense for companies like Facebook, which created value by monetizing consumer attention through advertising.

AI companies confront a different cost structure. Each new iteration of their product requires additional capital investment. Every additional user increases costs, particularly inference costs. While training expenses can be amortized across a larger user base and some economies of scale may emerge, usage growth still leads to higher operating costs.

The fourth difference lies in the shift from market fragmentation to instant saturation. Earlier tech platforms grew within largely siloed

and political pressures, firms that can shape regulation, influence public opinion, and absorb reputational risk are better positioned to succeed. Microsoft is a prime example of such a firm. In a clear effort to gain political and social legitimacy, the company recently pledged to cover the electricity costs of its data centers, so that higher prices would not be passed on to consumers.

Lastly, AI may be less susceptible to winner-take-all dynamics. Scale, near-zero marginal costs, and strong network effects enabled companies like Facebook, Google, Amazon, and Apple to dominate social media, search, e-commerce, and smartphones, respectively.



# Irritability can signal underlying mental health problems

*From snapping at a slow customer-service call to simmering in endless traffic, irritability often shows up in everyday moments we brush off as harmless. While occasional frustration is a normal part of life, frequent or intense irritability may signal something deeper at play. Emerging research suggests that persistent irritability is not just a personality quirk, but a widespread and under-recognized indicator of underlying mental health concerns that deserves closer attention.*

Many of us are guilty of feeling a sudden rush of anger, or know of someone who is easily irritated, over some seemingly minor issue, such as being put on indefinite hold while talking on the phone to a customer-service agent, or being stuck in a traffic-jam for hours. While a modicum of irritability in certain situations is natural, its frequency and intensity, or persistence over an extended period, could be signs of mental health problems.

Irritability is often defined as an increased proneness to anger, impatience, or being easily annoyed, and is often precipitated by perceived threats or frustration at things not going the way we wanted. Interestingly, irritability is more common than what we may think. A 2024 random survey of nearly 43,000 adults in the United States found the average irritability score to be 13.6 on a scale that ranged from 5 (never feeling irritable at all) to 30 (feeling highly irritable all the time).

The survey showed that irritability is more widespread than previously believed, and is a cause for concern as irritability can often be an indicator of deeper underlying health problems, especially if it is frequent or a persistent behavioral pattern. Despite the behavior's wide frequency among the public, scientific studies on irritability in adults have long been neglected, with whatever research available being limited to children and adolescents.

A new study by researchers at Massachusetts General Hospital in the United States, focused on irritability in adults shows that just like sadness, irritability can escalate into depression or anxiety. To test the roots of irritability, scientists usually use mouse models that they intentionally frustrate by withholding a treat after training the rodents to expect a reward upon pressing a lever. Frustrated mice press harder and longer on the lever, not unlike



people aggressively jabbing the button of an overly slow elevator. And like irritable humans, the frustrated mice are more likely to show aggression.

What makes some adults more prone to extreme irritability than others is still a mystery. But some clues may come from studies on the brain in younger people. The threat- and reward-processing systems in the brain seem to operate differently in children and adolescents with high irritability. In a 2018 study researchers had 195 children and teenagers play a computer game that was designed to frustrate them by unfairly subtracting points.

Compared with even-tempered kids, the brains of those with irritable tendencies showed a heightened activity in the striatum, a key reward-processing region, when they became frustrated. The team also found unusual responses in brain regions important for executing tasks, which helps explain why moody kids have a hard time focusing

when they are frustrated. Other research has documented unusual activity in the amygdala, the brain's threat-processing center, in highly irritable kids.

Research on adults so far suggests that the same brain regions of children are also implicated in adults. What causes these kinds of brain responses is still not clear, but research points to underlying health conditions as one possible factor. For instance, about half of adults who have depression, and up to 90 percent of youth with anxiety, report being highly irritable.

Notably, frequent irritability is a serious risk factor for developing suicidal thoughts, and is considered a reliable factor in gauging the risk of depressed people experiencing an increase in suicidal thoughts. Irritability also pops up in conditions like attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder and bipolar disorder, and in women undergoing hormonal fluctuations, including during the period leading up to menopause. Factors like being sick, stressed, sleep-deprived,

hungry, in pain, or lonely, can also exacerbate irritability in those who are already moody.

Whatever the underlying cause, scientists have recognized the importance of finding treatments for people with impairing levels of irritability. One study is exploring the use of a nose spray containing oxytocin, which has shown some promise in treating certain irritable kids and teens ages 10 to 18 years. Another technique under test is called transcranial magnetic stimulation, which generates magnetic pulses to restore normal activity in reward-processing brain regions.

Cognitive behavioral therapy can also help treat irritability by teaching people to pick up on early signs of anger and find constructive ways to manage their aggressive impulses. In a study conducted in 2025, researchers gave 98 anger-prone people a smartphone app that prompted them four times a day to evaluate their anger levels. They were also given a simple wearable device to track their heart rate and blood pressure, both of which can indicate stress levels.

Participants were asked to focus on triggers in their environment that caused irritability. The study found that the simple act of self-reflection helped them direct their attention inward. They were able to recognize impending anger episodes, by tracking both emotional and physiological changes, and take action to calm themselves down.

People prone to irritability can also reduce their anger by engaging in deep breathing techniques, removing themselves from triggering situations, or by understanding that the annoying behaviors of others are often not intentional.

Being aware of external factors that can exacerbate irritation, like hunger or being sleep-deprived, is also crucial. That way, people can address those factors wherever possible.

## Gene therapy could ease chronic pain



Chronic pain is defined as a health condition that persists over months or years and can affect any part of the body, interfering with daily life and potentially leading to depression and anxiety. Often referred to as a 'silent epidemic', chronic pain impacts hundreds of millions of people of all ages and demographics, incurring costs in excess of trillions of dollars in direct medical expenditures, as well as from indirect costs through lost productivity, including missed work, job losses, and reduced earning capacity.

Chronic pain is a common condition and is often the main reason why people seek medical care, as it takes quite a toll on the physical, mental, and emotional health of individuals and impacts their quality of life. Chronic pain includes migraine, pain from arthritis, back pain, pain from cancer, pain in muscles and joints throughout the body (fibromyalgia), neck and nerve pains. Some people also have chronic pain that is not linked to a direct physical cause. Often this type of pain (psychogenic pain) is related to changes in the nervous system and other emotional and psychological factors.

Causes of chronic pain are often very complex, it could result from an obvious cause such as cancer or arthritis. Other times, it is more difficult to find the underlying cause, or there may be several factors contributing to

anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAID) that can reduce pain, fever and other types of inflammation, or suggest muscle relaxers and as a final resort opioids such as morphine.

However, morphine, a narcotic derived from opium, has a high potential for addiction, as patients who use it can develop tolerance, requiring higher and higher doses to achieve the same reduction in pain. Now scientists are looking at an innovative new approach that uses artificial intelligent (AI) driven non-addictive

brain circuit-specific pain reliever for conditions such as chronic pain.

By imaging brain cells that act as pain trackers, the new study uncovered fresh insight into how morphine eases suffering. For the study, a team of researchers at the US National Health Institutes, built a mouse-model behavioral platform driven by AI that tracks natural behaviors, creates a readout of pain levels, and helps gauge how much treatment is needed to alleviate the pain. This readout, used as a sort of map, allowed the team to design a targeted gene therapy that mimics morphine's beneficial effects but avoids its addictive ones while delivering an 'off switch' specifically for pain felt in the brain. When activated, this switch provides durable pain relief without affecting normal sensation or triggering reward pathways that can lead to addiction.

The findings represent the world's first central nervous system (CNS) targeted gene therapy for pain. Directly targeting the CNS—which comprises the brain and spinal cord and acts as the body's command center for processing sensory info, integrating it, and issuing motor commands for functions like thought, movement, and feeling—could become a viable blueprint for non-addictive, brain circuit-specific pain medication. The researchers are now moving forward the next phase of work as a hopeful bridge toward future clinical trials.

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