



LOCAL
 H.H. the Amir condemns aggression, calls for safeguarding Kuwait's sovereignty, stability **3**

LOCAL
 Foreign workers constitute backbone of GCC economies **4**

LOCAL
 Visas, refunds and rights of passengers amid travel disruptions **8**

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Legal Equality Ensures Equitable Economic Opportunities

As agents of change, women in leadership positions are vital to push through women-centric reforms, strengthen accountability and transparency, help disrupt biased gender perspectives, and wield justice more equitably.

THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

More than 95 percent of women around the world live in an economy that does not provide full legal equality to them, and no economy in the world secures the legal rights needed to ensure the full participation of women in the economy. This, and other glaring gaps in gender-equitable laws to support economic engagement of women, are brought to the fore in this year's 'Women, Business and the Law' (WBL) index released recently.

Drawing on data from 190 global economies, the annual benchmarking WBL index, prepared by analysts at the World Bank Group, notes that although many countries have passed



reforms to support women in the workforce, only about half of all laws and reforms are

effectively enforced—limiting opportunities for women and denying them access to equal pay,

assets, entrepreneurship support, childcare, and workplace protections.

In his foreword to the index, Chief Economist and Senior Vice President for Development Economics at the World Bank Group, Indermit S. Gill noted: It is a shocking statistic that less than 5 percent of women worldwide have access to full legal equality. Although economies score an average of 64 out of 100 in the WBL index on laws that support women's economic equality, when it comes to actually enforcing the laws, the average score is down to 53. And, when the systems needed to implement those rights are assessed for adequacy, the score is a dismal 47.

The sharp drop from available to accessible legal equality emphasizes the importance of not only having laws, regulations,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

سي تي هايبر ماركيت

عروض التوفير
BIG SAVINGS
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<p>4,995 KD 3.990 KD</p> <p>جواهر جالكسي شوكولاته 4x400 جم Galaxy Jewels Chocolates 2x400gm</p>	<p>1,595 KD 1.100 KD</p> <p>كنكو بسكويت متنوع 1,370-كجم Kitco Asstd Biscuit 1.370Kg</p>	<p>3,270 KD 2.250 KD</p> <p>40 TEA BAGS FREE ليبتون الحجم العائلي 240 حبة Lipton Yellow Label Tea 240's</p>	<p>0,780 KD 0.550 KD</p> <p>كويكر شوفان ابيض 500-جم Quaker White Oats 500gm (Tin)</p>	<p>1,395 KD 1.190 KD</p> <p>الوزان تونا ابيض بزيت دوار الشمس 11x3 Alwazzan White Meat Tuna 3x160gm</p>	<p>1,450 KD 0.990 KD</p> <p>رانبينو حليب مخثر لبيت / هيل 17x17 Rainbow Evap Milk Light LF /Cardamom 6x170gm</p>	<p>1,950 KD 1.590 KD</p> <p>مينارا زيت عباد الشمس 3 لتر Minara Premium Sunflower Oil 3Ltr</p>	<p>2,795 KD 2.590 KD</p> <p>صنابيت أرز كالروز 5 كجم Sunwhite Calrose Rice 5Kg</p>	<p>1,520 KD 1.290 KD</p> <p>المراعي حليب كامل الدسم مع فيتامينات 1x4 لتر Almarai Uht Milk Full Fat With Vitamin 4x1ltr</p>
<p>1,800 KD 1.250 KD</p> <p>ساديا بزر دجاج / لحم بقري 1 كجم Sadia Chicken/Beef Burger (20 Pcs) 1Kg</p>	<p>1,440 KD 1.250 KD</p> <p>نايف بيض 30-قطعة Naif Fresh Eggs Tray Grade A 30's 60/70</p>	<p>1,200 KD 0.875 KD</p> <p>سبتي مناديل اللوجه 10-xA City Facial Tissue Paper 150x8pcs</p>	<p>2,650 KD 2.250 KD</p> <p>بيرل مستوق غسيل اونوماتيك 3 في 1 عالي / منخفض الرغوة 6 عبوة 6 كجم (اللوحة) Pearl Automatic 3in1 High/Low Foam Detergent Powder Asstd 6Kg (Each)</p>	<p>2,000 KD 1.250 KD</p> <p>النتوهوم مع معدني اوتنبة Into home Steel Mug 30/40 Oz</p>	<p>6,250 KD 3.750 KD</p> <p>النتوهوم مقلاة غير لاصقة 2 قطع 24+26 سم Into home 2pcs Fry Pan/ Wok Pan 24cm+26cm</p>			

Ramadan Imsakia 2026 - Kuwait

Day	Ramadan	Date	Fajr	Sunrise	Dhur	Asr	Magrib	Isha
Sunday	26	March 15	4:37 AM	5:58 AM	11:57 AM	3:22 PM	5:56 PM	7:26 PM
Monday	27	March 16	4:36 AM	5:57 AM	11:57 AM	3:22 PM	5:57 PM	7:27 PM
Tuesday	28	March 17	4:34 AM	5:56 AM	11:56 AM	3:22 PM	5:58 PM	7:28 PM
Wednesday	29	March 18	4:33 AM	5:55 AM	11:56 AM	3:22 PM	5:58 PM	7:28 PM
Thursday	30	March 19	4:32 AM	5:53 AM	11:56 AM	3:23 PM	5:59 PM	7:29 PM

Balancing work, family life, and spiritual obligations

The holy month of Ramadan is here, and with it comes even more responsibility, considering the various religious obligations people are required to fulfill during the month of fasting, amid balancing their work and family life.

The key to maintaining a regular working schedule and meeting your religious obligations is preparation. Here are a few suggestions to help busy professionals and their families prepare for a productive and successful month of Ramadan.

Set clear goals along with specific action steps: Set some specific spiritual goals along with your home life and work goals, during the month of Ramadan. Some religious daily goals could include making an effort to be on time for each prayer, reading at least one juz of the Quran a day or participating in nightly Taraweeh prayers. Weekly goals may

include limiting time-wasting activities such as time spent on the computer and watching television. Monthly goals can be more long-term like correcting a negative character trait.

The important thing is that your goals should be specific, realistic and measurable in some way to help gauge your progress toward meeting the goal. It is important to actually write or schedule time on your calendar because it helps reinforce your commitment to reaching your goal.

Plan ahead: Think about everything you want to accomplish for the day and create a plan to make it happen. Make a simple 'to do' list that includes everything you want to accomplish for the day and week. For example, meal planning a week or so in advance can be beneficial, especially if you can double the recipe so one meal can be stored away in the freezer for those impossibly hectic days. You can plan a week's worth of healthy, well-balanced Suhoor and Iftar meals so you are not scrambling around for morning and evening meal ideas at the last minute.

Prioritize your tasks: When you create your daily 'to do' list, prioritize each task based on importance. Managing each task in order of importance will ensure you set aside enough

time to handle pressing tasks in a timely manner. You can set aside intervals of time throughout the day for completing certain tasks if necessary. Knowing that you have a designated amount of time to work on a task can do wonders for eliminating distractions and increasing productivity.



Keep your family in the loop: Sitting down with your family to discuss plans for preparing and participating in Ramadan is a great exercise to help everyone. Are there specific areas you hope to work on improving during



Ramadan such as controlling your tongue and temper or not gossiping and backbiting? This is a good time to assess our character and consider any improvements to our character.

ny scenarios that might come up and help develop strategies to avoid and/or navigate them with family members. Getting everyone involved increases enthusiasm and reinforces the goals of each individual and the family as a unit.

Take full advantage of this blessed month and plan ahead for a productive, successful Ramadan so you may reap the rewards, both spiritual and physical.






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H.H. the Amir condemns aggression, calls for safeguarding Kuwait's sovereignty, stability

*We affirm that our homeland is a red line
its sovereignty is protected by the will of its people*

In his annual address to the nation on the occasion of the last ten days of the holy month of Ramadan, His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah reaffirmed that the sovereignty, security and stability of Kuwait will never be compromised, and termed the continued brutal aggression on the homeland by 'a neighboring Muslim country', as a 'red line'.

"These attacks constitute a blatant violation of international norms, UN charters, and good neighborly relations, causing destruction and terrorizing the innocent," said His Highness. He asserted Kuwait's full and legitimate right to defend itself under Article 51 of the UN Charter and pledged to take all necessary measures to protect its territory, people and residents while safeguarding national sovereignty and stability.

His Highness noted that despite Kuwait stating that its territory, airspace, and shores would not be used for any military actions against the neighboring country, its attacks targeted Kuwait's airspace, territory, civil facilities and infrastructure, resulting in the martyrdom of armed forces personnel, the death of an innocent child, and injuries to citizens, residents and personnel from allied countries.

Praising Kuwait's armed forces for their steadfastness, readiness and professionalism, His Highness referred to them as "a solid shield against aggressors", and commended their unwavering commitment and loyalty to the homeland. He emphasized that attacks on Kuwait's sister countries are threats to the region's security as a whole and stressed that the Gulf Cooperation Council's security is indivisible, warning that any violation of a member state's sovereignty endangers collective security.

Calling on citizens and residents to remain vigilant, His Highness the Amir stressed that public awareness, trust in state institutions and societal cohesion are essential to counter rumors, prevent exploitation of crises, and strengthen national resilience.

Highlighting the spiritual significance of Ramadan, His Highness described the holy month as "a school of values and ethics", that teaches patience, discipline, compassion, cooperation, fraternity and selflessness. He urged Kuwaitis to embody these principles, remaining united, strong and dedicated to national progress and peace.

His Highness also expressed deep appreciation and gratitude to leaders of friendly and neighboring countries who voiced solidarity with Kuwait and condemned the attacks, calling their support "a reflection of enduring bonds of brotherhood and unity in the face of threats to regional stability".

His Highness the Amir concluded his address by praying for the martyrs, the injured, and all residents of Kuwait, asking God Almighty to protect the nation, preserve security and peace, and bless the holy month with goodness. "May God grant mercy to our martyrs, raise their ranks among the righteous and grant patience and solace to their families," he said, adding, "May He also heal the injured and grant them good health."

The following is the full text of the Amiri speech:

**"In the name of God, the most gracious,
the most merciful**

Praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds. We

praise Him for His many blessings and great favors, with the praise of the grateful, and for making us from the nation of the master of the prophets and messengers, whom God Almighty sent as a mercy and guidance to the worlds, and upon his family and all his companions.

**My sisters and brothers... my daughters
and sons of my dear homeland:
May the peace, blessings, and mercy of
God be upon you,,,**

On this blessed night of the last ten days of Ramadan, which hearts yearn for and souls long for, we meet with you in a conversation between a brother and his sisters and brothers, and a father and his daughters and sons, to congratulate you and all residents on the good land of (Kuwait) and its honorable guests on this holy month. May God bring it back to everyone, and to our dear homeland, and our Islamic and Arab nations, and may goodness and peace prevail.



The month of Ramadan holds a great place in our hearts and minds; it is a comprehensive school of values, morals, principles, and virtues. We draw from it many lessons and rulings that call for patience and endurance, discipline and habituation, compassion and solidarity, affection and brotherhood, and selflessness in order to achieve the good and righteousness of society.

How much we need to learn these lessons, and stand as one man, so that our homeland remains strong through the solidarity of its sons, proud through their minds and arms, and through their cohesion and solidarity they achieve accomplishments, under foundations and pillars that establish cooperation among them as a path, and make consultation a method and approach, and justice a principle and scale, and progress through hard work a message, and peace an objective.

**My sisters and brothers... my daughters
and sons of my dear homeland:**

Tonight, I address you as a father, a leader, and someone responsible before God Almighty and then before you for the security and safety of the State of Kuwait, at a time when the region is witnessing rapid developments,

increasing tensions, and an unprecedented escalation, resulting in repercussions that require everyone to have the highest levels of awareness, vigilance, and confidence.

Being aware of what is happening around us is no longer an option, but a national necessity that enables us to read developments accurately, understand the political and security challenges that may arise from them, and deal with them rationally and responsibly, without exaggeration or downplaying.

Vigilance is a duty that is not limited to state institutions alone, but includes every individual of this nation. Vigilance protects our society from rumors, prevents the exploitation of circumstances to incite strife or undermine confidence, and strengthens the state's ability to take appropriate measures at the right time.

As for trust, it is the foundation upon which the strength of the state rests...trust between the leadership and the people, and with the state's institutions and agencies, and that our national unity is the first line of defense, and

readiness to ensure your safety and security in all circumstances. We have directed that the level of preparedness be raised, preventive measures be strengthened and deployments be made in vital locations, in order to ensure a rapid response to any emergency and to maintain public peace of mind.

**My sisters and brothers... my daughters
and sons of my dear homeland:**

Our country has been subjected to a brutal attack by a neighboring Muslim country that we consider a friend, even though we have not allowed the use of our land, airspace, or coasts in any military action against it, and we have informed it of this repeatedly through our diplomatic channels.

These heinous attacks, which targeted the airspace, territory, civilian facilities and infrastructure of the State of Kuwait, and resulted in the martyrdom of members of our armed forces and an innocent child, and the fall of a number of victims from friendly countries, in addition to the wounded and injured citizens and residents, constitute a flagrant violation of international norms and conventions and a blatant transgression against its sovereignty, security and stability, and leave nothing but destruction and terrorizing innocent people, in complete contradiction to the principles of good neighborliness and in violation of international law and the Charter of the United Nations.

While we affirm that our homeland is a red line and its sovereignty is protected by the will of its people and the bravery of its men and women, and we will not allow any country to compromise its security or stability, we call upon the international community to assume its responsibilities in condemning this heinous aggression and to take decisive positions that ensure respect for international laws and conventions, consolidate international peace and security, and prevent the recurrence of such violations. We also affirm that the attacks that targeted our sister countries are attacks on the security of our entire region and a direct threat to its stability and peace, and that the security of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries is indivisible, and any infringement on the sovereignty of any member state is an infringement on our collective security.

From this standpoint, the State of Kuwait affirms its full solidarity with its brothers and its support for all measures taken to protect the sovereignty of our countries, the security of our peoples and their stability, asking God Almighty to have mercy on our righteous martyrs, to place them among the righteous and the good, to inspire their families with patience and tranquility, and to heal the innocent wounded and clothe them in health and wellness.

I also express my deep gratitude and appreciation to Their Majesties, Excellencies and Highnesses, the leaders of the brotherly and friendly countries, for the honorable positions they expressed in their gracious communications condemning the Iranian aggression against the State of Kuwait, and affirming their sincere solidarity and standing by its side in defending its sovereignty and security, highly appreciating their support which reflects the depth of the bonds of brotherhood and friendship that unite us, and embodies the unity of positions in confronting any threat that affects the stability of our region and the safety of its peoples, asking God Almighty to perpetuate security and prosperity for their countries and peoples.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 5

Foreign workers constitute backbone of GCC economies

The six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries — Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates — are home to nearly 62 million people, more than half of whom are foreign workers.



The Times Kuwait Report

The latest data released by the Statistical Centre for the Cooperation Council for the Arab Countries of the Gulf, 'GCC-Stat' revealed that the population of the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries—Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates—stood at 61.2 million by the end of 2024.

Known for offering economic opportunities unmatched in the wider region, the GCC has long attracted laborers, professionals, and skilled specialists from around the world. From construction sites to hospitals, offices to airports, foreign workers are instrumental in sustaining the region's modern infrastructure and its ambitious vision for the future.

Latest figures from the GCC Statistical Center (GCC Stat) show that more than half (54.2%) of the total GCC population are foreign

workers, with these 31.8 million expatriates forming the backbone of the region's economic, industrial, and social infrastructure, fueling both daily life and large-scale development projects across the Gulf.

The total number of males in the GCC countries reached approximately 38.5 million, accounting for 62.8 percent of the total population, while the number of females stood at around 22.7 million, representing 37.2 percent of the total population.

The sex ratio in the GCC countries reached 169 males for every 100 females in 2024, compared to a global sex ratio of 101 males for every 100 females in the same year. The skewed male to female ratio is attributed largely to the presence of single male expatriates in the workforce. Total male workers in the workforce accounted for 78.7 percent, while females made up 17.6 percent. The number of working citizens in the GCC stood at 5.6 million, constituting 23.4 percent of the total labor force, with 60 percent males and 40 percent females. The data indicated that the

government sector is still the largest employer of Gulf workers with the percentage of employed citizens working in the public sector reaching 83.5 percent in 2024 compared to 14.2 percent in the private sector. This reveals the wide scope that exists for localisation in the private sector.

According to data compiled by news reports, the majority of expatriates in the GCC come from South Asia, with smaller but significant communities from the Middle East and Africa. The ten largest foreign communities across the GCC are respectively, India (9.1 million); Bangladesh (5 million); Pakistan (4.9 million); Egypt (3.3 million); Philippines (2.2 million); Yemen (2.2 million); Sudan (1.1 million); Nepal (1.2 million); Syria (694,000); and Sri Lanka (650,000).

Expat populations in individual GCC states vary from over 88 percent in the UAE to just over 40 percent in Oman. Below is a country-wise break-up of expat residents:



Bahrain

About half the population is non-national, led by Indian, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Filipino, and Egyptian communities.



Kuwait

Of 4.8 million residents, roughly 2.16 million are non-nationals, mainly from India, Egypt, Bangladesh, the Philippines, and Pakistan.



Oman

Foreigners make up 41 percent of the population, with India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Egypt, and the Philippines being the largest expatriate groups.



Qatar

Around 88 percent of the population is expatriate, including 700,000 Indians, 400,000 Bangladeshis, and sizeable communities from Nepal, Egypt, and the Philippines



Saudi Arabia

With 37 million residents, foreign workers account for nearly 16.4 million, concentrated among communities from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Yemen, and Egypt.



United Arab Emirates

Expatriates dominate the population at 88 percent, with over 4.3 million Indians, nearly 2 million Pakistanis, and large groups from Bangladesh, the Philippines, and Iran.

While large numbers of foreign workers are employed in labor-intensive sectors, highly skilled expatriates also play a vital role in banking, finance, technology, aviation, medicine, media, and government services. Many have made the Gulf their home, contributing to knowledge transfer, innovation, and global business integration.

According to experts the demographic composition of the GCC, which is heavily reliant on expatriate labor, is both an opportunity and a challenge.

Governments must balance economic growth with social cohesion, ensure fair labor practices, and prepare for potential regional instability that could affect millions of residents.

As the GCC navigates geopolitical tensions and ambitious development goals, the role of its tens of millions of foreign residents remains more critical than ever. They are not just workers; they are integral to the region's economy, culture, and social fabric.

Primary health centers to provide specialized mental health care

The Times Kuwait Report

Ministry of Health has announced the availability of 75 specialized mental health clinics operating within primary health care centers across all governorates, aiming to improve access to psychological care and encourage individuals to seek professional help when needed.

The initiative to integrate mental health services into primary healthcare, is part of the ministry's broader efforts to make support more accessible to residents without requiring visits to such specialized services from local primary healthcare centers gains added relevance under the prevailing traumatic circumstances that have significantly raised anxiety and panic among the public.

According to the Ministry of Health,



the clinics provide both medication-based and non-medication treatments, ensuring a comprehensive and holistic approach to mental health care. Patients can receive professional evaluation, counseling, therapy,

and medication when required. The services are designed to address a wide range of psychological conditions, including depression, anxiety disorders, panic attacks, phobias, sleep disorders, and other common mental health

concerns. The clinics will serve adults aged 18 and above, with consultations available during the morning hours throughout the month of Ramadan. This schedule has been organized to accommodate fasting hours and ensure easier access to care during the holy month.

Residents can visit their nearest primary health center directly or book an appointment online through the Ministry of Health website. The announcement also includes a QR code that allows individuals to quickly access the booking platform.

Health officials emphasize that seeking help early can make a significant difference in managing mental health conditions. By expanding mental health services across the country, Kuwait aims to reduce stigma, improve early diagnosis, and ensure that professional psychological support is available to everyone who needs it.

H.H. the Amir urges public awareness to protect national stability

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

My sisters and brothers...

my daughters and sons of my dear homeland:

The State of Kuwait affirms its full and inherent right to defend itself, under Article (51) of the Charter of the United Nations, in response to this blatant aggression, in a manner commensurate with the scale and form of this attack, and in accordance with the provisions of international law, and to take all necessary measures to protect its territory, its people and residents, and to ensure the preservation of its sovereignty, security and stability.

My sisters and brothers...

my daughters and sons of my dear homeland:

Thanks to God and then to your awareness and solidarity, the State of Kuwait is capable of overcoming all challenges. Throughout our history, we have gone through difficult periods, and we have emerged from them stronger, more cohesive, and with a deeper belief that this nation deserves a lot from us.

Today, as we witness a period of regional tensions and the heinous attacks we are subjected to, my confidence in you to overcome its repercussions is boundless, and my confidence in our nation's institutions to perform their responsibilities is unwavering. Our duty today is to continue working, believing that tomorrow will be better; for crises, however long they last, do not endure, and history has taught us that wisdom prevails, and that the peoples who stand firm in the face of crises are the ones who create their present and future by their own will.

My sisters and brothers...

my daughters and sons of my dear homeland:

We renew our deep appreciation for the sincere efforts made by state institutions and their loyal members, and our pride in their firm national role, affirming our complete confidence in the strength and capability of our armed forces personnel, who continue, with their high readiness and distinguished efficiency, to perform their role as a strong shield and an impregnable fence, against which the ambitions of aggressors vanish, based on a firm military doctrine and unwavering loyalty to the homeland and its leadership.

I ask God Almighty to protect our dear homeland (Kuwait), its people and residents on its land from all evil and harm, to perpetuate security and safety for us, to make these blessed days of goodness, blessings and peace, and to spare the peoples the horrors of wars.

In loyalty to the late Emirs of the State of Kuwait and its people, and their unforgettable memory, we pray to God Almighty to have mercy on them all and grant them great forgiveness, and to have mercy on the righteous martyrs of (Kuwait), and elevate their status in the Gardens of Eternity. He is the All-Hearing, the One Who Answers Prayers. And our final prayer is that praise be to God, Lord of the Worlds.

Ministry of Information calls for strict adherence to media laws

Warns against publishing rumors and unverified news

Ministry of Information has urged all media outlets, digital platforms and journalists to strictly adhere to the regulations governing news coverage in Kuwait and the wider region in order to ensure accuracy, credibility and responsible reporting.

In a media statement issued on 9 March, the ministry said it had circulated new guidelines to all media organizations and accredited correspondents outlining the rules for covering events, stressing that the current circumstances demand the highest levels of professional responsibility in reporting news and information.

The ministry emphasized that journalists must rely only on official or reliable sources when reporting and must verify the accuracy and credibility of all information before publishing or broadcasting it. It also warned against publishing or circulating rumors, unverified reports or misleading information.

Media outlets have been instructed to correct any inaccurate information immediately upon discovery using appropriate legal and professional channels, while clearly citing sources when publishing or republishing news and media material. The circular further also cautioned the public against relying on personal



social media accounts as news sources unless the information is verified through official channels, noting that such practices could undermine media credibility and contribute to the spread of misinformation.

Regarding field coverage, the ministry stressed that live broadcasting or on-site media coverage of events is not permitted without

prior approval from the relevant authorities and the Ministry of Information. Media organizations must also comply with all instructions issued by the ministry and official bodies during coverage. The guidelines also prohibit aerial photography or the use of drones for media purposes without obtaining the necessary official permits from the competent authorities.

In addition, the ministry stressed the importance of respecting Kuwait's foreign relations by avoiding the publication or broadcast of content that could offend sisterly or friendly countries. It also called on media organizations to respect privacy of individuals and refrain from publishing personal data, photographs or information without consent or legal justification.

The ministry reiterated that all media activities must be conducted under a valid license issued by the Ministry of Information and strictly used for its intended purpose, warning against exploiting media licenses for unauthorized commercial or non-media activities.

It added that media outlets and professionals must comply with any directives issued by the ministry to regulate media work in light of evolving circumstances.

The ministry concluded by stressing that adherence to these regulations is part of the media's national and professional responsibility, helping safeguard the credibility of the press and protect the public interest. It warned that legal action will be taken against violators in accordance with Kuwait's media laws and regulations.

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Jazeera Airways announces first-flight from Qaisumah to Cairo

Jazeera Airways announced on 11 March that it successfully operated its first flight from Qaisumah Airport Hafar Al Batin, located in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, to Cairo International Airport in Egypt, marking an important step in facilitating safe travel for passengers during the current operational situation in the region.

Earlier on Wednesday, a total of 145 passengers were safely transported in a convoy of four buses from Kuwait to Qaisumah to board the outbound flight to Cairo. The initiative forms part of Jazeera Airways' efforts to support passenger mobility and ensure continuity of travel while operations from Kuwait International Airport remain temporarily suspended for safety reasons. Jazeera Airways is also facilitating the return of passengers from Cairo to Kuwait through the same route.

The airline plans to gradually increase frequencies and expand the number of destinations served from Qaisumah, with additional flights to Egypt and Jordan being served while other flights to Turkey, India and other cities in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are expected to be added soon.

Commenting on the development, Chief Executive Officer of Jazeera Airways, Barathan Pasupathi, who is on the ground at Qaisumah

Airport said: "We are pleased to be able to facilitate a safe movement for passengers in the current circumstances.

"There is naturally a strong demand from passengers looking to return home to Kuwait or back home to their own countries and we are doing our best to accommodate as many as possible within the number of seats we have on offer at the moment. "Our teams are continuing to work closely with government authorities and stakeholders in both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to ensure the smooth coordination of these journeys while we progressively add additional flights and new destinations.

"As we continue operations, the safety of our people and crew remains our highest priority. We would also like to thank the General Authority for Civil Aviation (GACA), Dammam Airports Company (DACO), Saudi Ground Services (SGS), Kuwait DGCA, Ministry of Interior, and all other stakeholders for making this possible," Pasupathi added.

Passengers wishing to travel are encouraged to book their journeys through the Jazeera Airways website or mobile app. The Jazeera Airways call center is also available at 177 within Kuwait or +965 2205 4944 internationally, however waiting times may be longer than usual due to the high volume of calls.

Expatriate exit permits and rights of an employee if sponsor refuses approval

The Times Kuwait Report

Since 1 June 2025, the Ministry of Interior in collaboration with the Public Authority of Manpower (PAM) has introduced the need for private sector employees (Article 18 residency holders) to obtain an electronic 'Exit Permit' approved by their sponsor prior to their departure from Kuwait.

The need for expatriates employed in the public sector to obtain departmental permission for travel has been in place for long. Over the past nine months the online system, which works through the unified government application for electronic services (Sahel) or the Ashal portal of the PAM, has streamlined the process of requesting and obtaining exit permits.

According to the authorities, since the start of the process, tens of thousands of expatriates employed in the private sector have departed Kuwait without any hassle using the exit permits. Only very few cases of delays in obtaining exit permits have been recorded, mostly due to non-approval of exit permits by sponsors. All of these cases were through timely intervention of PAM and other regulatory authorities. Amid the prevailing extraordinary circumstances there has been a surge in demand for exit permits. So what are the actions that an expatriate can follow if the sponsor delays or denies a request for an exit permit during this period.

What to do if exit permit denied by employer:

If your sponsor (employer) does not approve your request for an exit permit, the first step should be to contact the employer in person and attempt to resolve it amicably, as exit permit approvals are mandatory, unless specific legal and financial reasons are valid.

If the sponsor still refuses to heed your request and unreasonably withholds or delays it, you have the option to file a complaint with the PAM to intervene and ensure approval.



You can also visit the Labor Relations Unit in the area that corresponds to your company's file, to lodge a formal complaint.

However, prior to filing a formal complaint or approaching PAM, ensure that there are no outstanding issues like unpaid fines, expired residency, court cases, or bank dues, which might cause an automatic rejection. Also, keep a record of your application in the Sahel app and any communication that you hold with your employer.

Exit permits are required for:

The need for an exit permit applies to all private-sector expat workers (Article 18 residency holders) and is required for both temporary exits, such as vacations or in emergencies, and permanent departures from Kuwait.

The process for obtaining an exit permit has been designed to be primarily online and accessible 24/7. Multiple-trip exit-permit options are also now available. Domestic workers (Article 20 residency holders) and dependents of Article 18 workers are exempt from the requirement

for an exit permit. If you are unable to use the app, your employer is required to apply on your behalf. The process is designed to be quick, often approved instantly or within hours.

How to apply for an exit permit:

Private sector expat workers can submit an electronic exit permit request using their Civil ID

number and personal information via the unified government application for electronic services (Sahel) or the Ashal portal of the manpower authority. Workers have the right to choose the start and end dates of the permit upon submitting the application, and importantly, the permit does not entail any commitment to a specific return date.

The application is then automatically sent to the employer for approval. Employers must use the Sahel-Business app or PAM's Ashal portal. The system will automatically verify the employer-employee match before the permit is issued. Authorised individuals within a company can approve these requests automatically.

Once approved by the employer, the permit is issued instantly, without additional formalities, and is linked online to the Ports Authority at all land, sea and air ports thus facilitating immediate online travel permission verification at these sites. Authorities maintain that the exit permit process is intended to strengthen oversight of the labor market, ensure a balance between the rights of workers and that of employers, prevent illegal departures, and ensure workers settle their dues and fulfill financial and contractual obligations. A significant motive for introducing exit permits is to help curb illicit visa trading and other irregularities within the labor market.

Support for Stranded OFWs in Spain: A Story of Resilience and Kindness

By Ricky Laxa
Staff Writer

In a heartwarming display of support, the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (OWWA) recently assisted ten Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) who found themselves stranded in Barcelona, Spain due to the sudden closure of Kuwait's airspace. Since 1 March, the OFWs were left anxiously waiting for a resolution to their predicament, which arose amidst rising security concerns in the region. Their journey



back to Kuwait, where they hoped to reassume their jobs and provide for their families, appeared indefinitely delayed.

The news of the airspace shutdown cast a shadow over the OFWs, who were all too aware of the potential repercussions of this announcement. As one OFW expressed, "We somehow knew that our return to Kuwait would be indefinite and had to find ways to return and assume our jobs." Faced with uncertainty and

distance from their families, they reached out to the Philippine Embassy in Spain for assistance.

The turnaround in their situation came when the embassy referred them to the OWWA. The OFWs received immediate attention and support from the organization. OWWA stepped in swiftly, providing them with accommodation in a hotel while further extending their stay as needed. According to the stranded workers, the assistance did not stop there; the agency also ensured that they had generous meals and frequent welfare checks to monitor their well-being.

"The care we received was beyond our expectations," shared one OFW. "We thank OWWA and its officials for their kind support and immediate attention to resolve our dilemma." Indeed, the supportive actions from OWWA not only helped bolster their spirits during a challenging time but also exemplified the strong commitment of the Philippine government to its citizens abroad.

As of now, the ten OFWs are en route to Dammam, where they plan to continue their journey by land to reach Kuwait. This event underscores the crucial role that organizations like OWWA play in safeguarding the interests of Filipino workers overseas, particularly in tumultuous situations.

The collective efforts of the Philippine Embassy in Spain, OWWA, and the resilience of the OFWs themselves have turned what could have been a dire situation into a story of hope and solidarity. As they make their way back to Kuwait, their journey serves as a powerful example of community support and the enduring spirit of Filipino workers worldwide.

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Visas, refunds and rights of passengers amid travel disruptions

Government grants automatic visa extensions while airlines offer refunds and rebooking following widespread flight cancellations

Authorities in Kuwait have announced a series of emergency measures to assist travellers and residents affected by widespread flight disruptions caused by the regional security situation and the temporary closure of Kuwait airport and airspace.

The measures include automatic visa extensions for visit visas and visas of residents stranded abroad, as well as guidance on passenger rights and travel insurance claims.

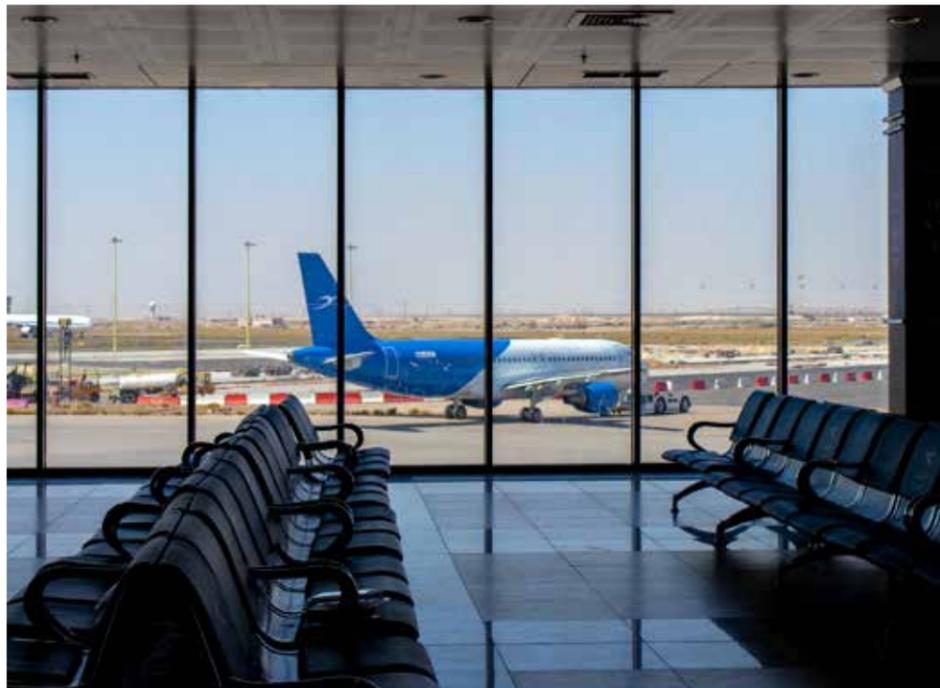
Visit visas: The government has confirmed that all visit visas expiring on or after 28 February will be automatically extended for one month. The extension is applied electronically, meaning visitors do not need to visit immigration offices or submit any paperwork. Authorities have also waived all fines and fees associated with visa overstays during this period. Officials indicated that additional extensions may be introduced if the disruption continues, depending on developments in the region.

Residency visas: Residents of Kuwait who are currently outside the country and risk losing their residency because they have exceeded the permitted absence period will also receive relief. The government has granted an automatic three-month extension to the absence period for all affected residents. The extension is applied electronically and no application is required. While not mandatory, travellers are advised to keep documentation of cancelled flights or travel disruptions as supporting proof if required later.

Flight cancellations: Meanwhile, travellers whose flights were cancelled should be aware that their rights depend largely on where their flight was departing from, not just which airline operated the flight.

Flights departing from Kuwait: Flights leaving Kuwait fall under the authority of the country's aviation regulator, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation.

- When a flight is cancelled, airlines are



generally required to offer passengers either:

- A full refund, or a rebooking on another flight at no additional cost
- Airlines, including Kuwait Airways and Jazeera have been offering these options to affected passengers.
- Because the airport disruption was caused by a security incident and subsequent government airspace closure, the cancellations are considered force majeure, meaning circumstances outside the airline's control, and thus not eligible for additional monetary compensation for the cancellations.

Flights departing from Europe or the UK: Passengers whose flights departed from Europe or the United Kingdom are covered by European passenger protection laws, specifically EU Regulation 261/2004.

Under these rules, passengers are entitled to a full refund within seven days, or

an alternative flight. Airlines must also provide duty of care for stranded passengers, which may include meals and refreshments, communication access, and hotel accommodation if an overnight stay is necessary.

Normally, compensation ranging from €250 to €600 may apply for cancellations.

However, when cancellations are caused by force majeure, airlines are not required to pay additional compensation beyond refunds and assistance.

Travel insurance: For many travellers, travel insurance may provide the most comprehensive financial protection. If a comprehensive travel insurance policy was purchased before the crisis began, it may cover losses caused by the disruption.

Possible reimbursements may include, non-refundable hotel bookings; missed connecting flights; extra accommodation and meals during delays; alternative transport costs, lost prepaid tours or activities.

However, coverage depends on the specific terms of the policy, and some plans exclude war-related events. Travellers are advised to submit claims as soon as possible, as insurers across the region are expected to receive a high volume of requests.

Travellers without insurance still have several possible options, including:

Credit card chargebacks: If an airline fails to process a refund within a reasonable period, passengers who paid by credit card may request a chargeback through their card issuer. This allows the bank to dispute the transaction if the service paid for was not delivered.

Employer responsibility: In some cases, workers whose travel was arranged by their employer may be able to seek assistance from their company. Under certain circumstances, employers may be responsible for arranging alternative travel or covering stranded expenses, depending on employment contracts and labor regulations.

Embassy support: Travellers facing serious financial difficulty should contact their national embassy in Kuwait.

Embassies can help with: Emergency travel documents; Coordination of evacuation flights; Temporary financial assistance, which is usually provided as repayable emergency loans rather than grants.

Keep all receipts: Travellers seeking compensation or reimbursement are advised to keep every receipt related to the disruption, including for hotel stays, meals, transportation, communication costs. These documents will be essential when filing claims with airlines, insurers, employers, or financial institutions.



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Security, defence personnel remain on high alert amid heightened tension

Ministry of Interior (MoI) has urged users of home surveillance cameras to strengthen and adhere to cybersecurity precautions, including regularly changing default passwords, using strong codes and numbers, connecting devices only to secure internet networks, and disabling remote access features when not needed.

The guidance was issued by the Director General of the General Directorate of Security Relations and Media and MoI spokesperson Brigadier General Nasser Bu Salib, during a media briefing on 14 March reviewing the latest developments on the ground amid the ongoing Iranian aggression against Kuwait.

Bu Salib said that over the past 24 hours, explosive ordnance disposal teams responded to 18 reports related to shrapnel resulting from defensive interception operations, bringing the total number of such reports since the start of the aggression to 347. He emphasized that



protecting Kuwait's social fabric and national unity is a shared responsibility among all members of society, reaffirming the ministry's commitment to continue performing its duty to safeguard the country's security and stability. Meanwhile, Ministry of Defense spokesperson



Colonel Saud Al-Atwan said that during the same period, Kuwaiti Armed Forces confronted a wave of hostile air targets that penetrated the country's airspace. Air defense systems detected eight enemy drones, seven of which were intercepted and destroyed, while one fell outside the threat

zone. Al-Atwan added that the National Guard Duty Force also monitored and shot down eight drones in the southern part of the country as part of coordinated efforts among the nation's military authorities. He noted that the Ground Force Engineering's Inspection and Explosives Disposal Group has dealt with and disposed of 172 reports since the start of the operations.

Al-Atwan stressed that the Armed Forces remain on high alert and maintain full readiness, operating continuously in joint coordination with various security and military bodies. He concluded by praying that Kuwait continues to enjoy security, safety, pride and prosperity under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir and Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and asked God Almighty to have mercy on the nation's righteous martyrs.

Eid Al-Fitr holidays to start on 19 March

Kuwait Cabinet has announced the official public holiday schedule for Eid al-Fitr, with dates depending on the end of the holy month of Ramadan.

According to the announcement, if Ramadan completes 30 days, the holiday will run from Thursday, 19 March, through Monday, 23 March, with government offices and public institutions resuming work on Tuesday, 24 March.

However, if Ramadan lasts 29 days, the holiday will instead run from Thursday, 19 March, through Sunday, 22 March, and work will resume on Monday, 23 March. The final holiday duration will be confirmed based on the official sighting of the moon marking the end of Ramadan and the beginning of Eid Al-Fitr.



Indian community mourns demise of physician, community leader Dr. K.V. Johny

The Indian community in Kuwait mourns the passing of Dr. K. V. Johny in Kerala on 14 March. He was a distinguished physician, educator and community leader whose contributions to healthcare and community service will be long remembered.

Dr. Johny was widely respected for his pioneering work in nephrology and his dedication to advancing kidney care. During his tenure at Mubarak Al-Kabeer Hospital, he played an important role in strengthening renal care services and contributed to the development of dialysis and transplant programmes in Kuwait. His commitment to patient care and medical education left a lasting impact on the country's healthcare sector.

Beyond his medical career, Dr. Johny was deeply involved in community initiatives. He was actively associated with the Association of Indian Professionals, where he mentored young professionals and supported initiatives that brought together members of Kuwait's Indian professional community.

Dr. Johny also maintained a strong connection with the Indian education sector in Kuwait. He supported and encouraged educational initiatives at The Indian Community School, where he also served as chairman, playing a key role in guiding the institution and supporting its growth.

Following his retirement from Kuwait, Dr.



Johny continued to contribute to the medical field in India through his association with VPS Lakeshore Hospital & Research Centre. At Lakeshore, he played an important role in complex renal transplant programmes, hospital governance and the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) committee, supporting the institution's commitment to patient care and community service.

A compassionate doctor, visionary academic and respected community figure, Dr. Johny's legacy lives on through the countless lives he touched—patients he healed, students he inspired and the communities he served.

The community extends its heartfelt condolences to his family, friends and colleagues. May his soul rest in eternal peace.

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Iran's strategic oil hub at Kharg Island of concern to Gulf states

The tiny coral island of Kharg Island, located about 25 kilometres off Iran's coast in the northern Gulf waters, plays an outsized role in Iran's economy and the global oil market, with any disruption there likely to reverberate across Gulf countries and beyond.

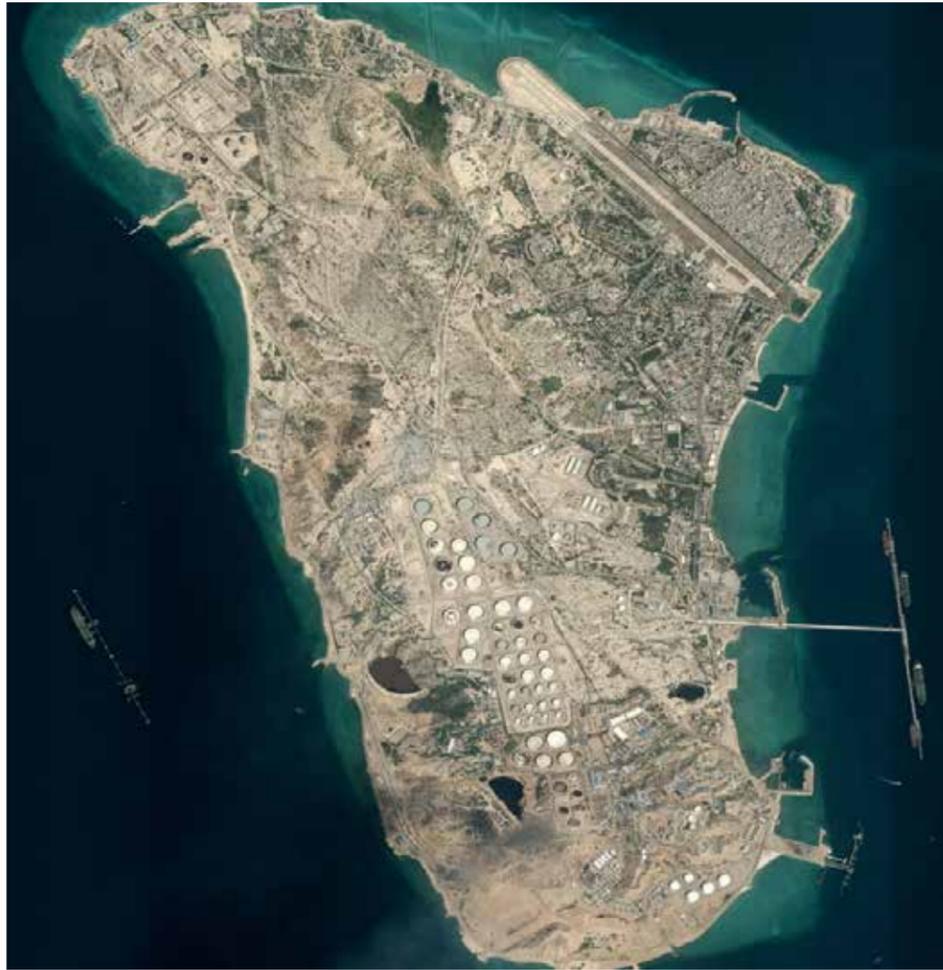
Despite being only around 20 sq km in area, Kharg Island serves as a strategically important area for Iran, as the ports on the island are the country's primary oil terminals handling up to 90 percent of Iran's oil products and providing storage for nearly 30 million barrels of oil.

Oil produced in major Iranian fields such as Ahvaz, Marun, and Gachsaran is transported through pipelines to Kharg Island, where it is stored and loaded onto large tankers bound for international markets. The island's deep-water jetties allow it to accommodate supertankers, enabling Iran to ship millions of barrels of oil daily.

Iran produces roughly 3.3 million barrels of crude oil and 1.3 million barrels of condensates and other liquids per day, accounting for about 4.5 percent of global oil supply. Because of its critical role, Kharg Island has long been heavily guarded and is often referred to by Iranians as the 'Forbidden Island' due to strict military controls. During the first weeks of the current conflict involving Iran, the United States and Israel, Kharg Island had largely been spared direct attacks. However, this week, the United States carried out extensive strikes on military infrastructure on the island.

US forces reportedly targeted missile storage bunkers, naval mine depots, and airport facilities, while deliberately avoiding the oil export terminals themselves.

US officials have indicated that the oil facilities could become targets if Iran continues disrupting shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most critical maritime energy corridors. The strait, which



connects the Arabian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea, is among the most important energy transit routes in the world, with around one-fifth of global oil supplies passing through the strait annually, including exports from Gulf producers.

If Kharg Island's export infrastructure were severely damaged, analysts warn that Iran's oil exports could collapse for months or even longer, given the complexity of rebuilding such facilities under international sanctions. However, for Gulf states, the significance of

Kharg Island goes far beyond Iran's domestic economy.

First, any attack on Iran's oil infrastructure could trigger retaliatory strikes across the region. Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps has warned that attacks on Iranian energy sites could lead to broader strikes on oil and gas infrastructure across the region. Such threats raise concerns for energy facilities in the Gulf countries, all of which depend heavily on stable oil exports.

[Incidentally, the Islamic Republic has been carrying out attacks against Gulf oil infrastructure since the start of the war.]

Second, instability around Kharg Island increases the risk of disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz. Any closure or prolonged interference with shipping lanes could halt or slow exports from multiple Gulf producers, affecting global markets and regional economies.

Third, heightened tensions could push global oil prices sharply higher, which would impact both energy producers in the Gulf and consumers worldwide. While higher prices may temporarily boost revenues for oil-exporting countries, prolonged conflict could disrupt trade routes, shipping insurance, and regional economic stability.

Meanwhile, the United States is deploying additional military forces to the Middle East, raising the possibility of further escalation. Analysts caution that targeting Kharg Island's oil facilities would mark a major shift in the conflict, moving from military objectives toward economic warfare.

For Gulf countries located just across the waters from Kharg Island, the stakes are therefore exceptionally high. Any disruption to the island's operations or the shipping routes surrounding it could reshape energy flows, destabilize regional security, and send shockwaves through the global oil market.

Legal Equality Ensures Equitable Economic Opportunities

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and policies favoring gender equity, but also the systems to equitably implement the laws. It is apparent that along with expediting legal reforms and eliminating gender-discriminatory provisions, policymakers need to also put in place mechanisms to enforce these laws and regulations, and ensure that granted legal rights translate into protections and opportunities in daily life.

There is a substantial body of research to substantiate that reducing obstacles for women in the workplace can generate real economic results. Laws that promote opportunities for women and shape gender-inclusive development are shown to result in more productive economies and more resilient societies. And yet, regions that need women's contributions the most—the Middle East and North Africa, South Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa—continue to maintain some of the most restrictive legal barriers to the full economic participation of women.

Amid the continued denial of equal legal rights to women worldwide, and the rights of women and girls are being rolled back in many places, it is noteworthy that in Kuwait, women have in recent years made significant advancements in achieving equal rights and equal justice. Today, Kuwaiti women play an important role in national development, particularly in education, healthcare, business, politics, diplomacy and judiciary.

Kuwaiti women hold 28 percent of ministerial and senior government posts, a percentage that continues to grow in sectors such as diplomacy,

the police force, the oil industry, and the judiciary. As one report put it, women in Kuwait are not only participants in national development, they are also increasingly designers of its progress, visionaries of its future, and representatives of a progressive, purposeful nation that values freedom, equal rights and equity in all aspects of life.

As agents of change, women in leadership positions are vital to push through women-centric reforms, strengthen accountability and transparency, help disrupt gender-biased perspectives, and wield justice more equitably. The historic appointment of Kuwaiti women as public prosecutors in 2013, despite opposition from some lawmakers, served as the entry point for women to make further inroads in the country's judicial system.

In 2020, backed by legal rulings, the government took the unprecedented step of appointing Kuwait's first eight female judges. That it took over five decades from the enrollment in 1967 of the first batch of female students in judicial studies, to the appointment of the first female judges in 2020, speaks volumes of the hurdles that women have had to overcome in realizing their judicial aspirations.

In September 2025, in yet another remarkable milestone in the history of Kuwait's judiciary, Kuwait's Supreme Judicial Council announced the appointment of two women judges to the prosecution office of the Court of Cassation, the country's highest judicial authority. Inclusion of the two judges marked the entry of women to the top echelons of Kuwait's legal system and is seen as one of the most significant advancements for women in the judiciary.

Through their diligent efforts and professional

dedication women in Kuwait now serve in various judicial capacities, from officiating in criminal courts to serving as court session secretaries. Their services support judicial work and help promote equal legal rights for women in access to economic and other opportunities. Empowering women and ensuring their legal rights is also the main agenda at the 70th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW70) currently underway in New York.

CSW70, the largest annual UN gathering on gender equality and women's rights, reiterates that without justice systems that work for women, rights become a promise that never arrives. Ahead of CSW70, UN Women urged all governments, partners, institutions and communities everywhere to stand up, show up and speak up for rights, justice and action, so all women and girls can live safely, speak freely and exist equally.

Several barriers continue to hinder women's full participation in economic life, including safety, availability of childcare, and lack of access to a favorable entrepreneurial environment. Safety is foundational, as women cannot work or travel freely, or participate fully in public life, when protections against violence are weak or poorly enforced. Lack of childcare is another major obstacle, as without reliable and affordable childcare, mothers have to cut work hours, turn down opportunities, or step out of the workforce entirely.

Additionally, although entrepreneurship is a pathway to economic independence, women still encounter hurdles that limit their access to credit, markets, and enforcement of economic rights. While the legal ability to start a business is nearly universal, only about half of the world's

economies currently guarantee equal access to finance. Without capital, women-led firms cannot grow, innovate, or contribute fully to economic development.

It is laudable that on the very second day of CSW70 governments adopted by broad consensus, a powerful set of Agreed Conclusions aimed at strengthening access to justice for all women and girls and advancing gender equality worldwide. Affirming that access to justice is a transformative force for women and girls which advances equality and non-discrimination, the leaders agreed upon a roadmap to build more inclusive governance, support social cohesion, and prevent violations.

Justice is the foundation of every right that women and girls are entitled to, and at CSW70 the call to action is for everyone to join in helping close the justice gap.

The path to stronger, more resilient, and more inclusive economies runs directly through gender equality, and no economy can afford to leave half its potential untapped, and its future constrained by structural biases that deny women their rights.

Speaking on the sidelines of CSW70, at a Town Hall Meeting he held with women civil-society leaders, UN Secretary-General António Guterres said: "Working together, we have shown how institutions become stronger and more credible when women are in senior leadership; and how outcomes improve when women are included as decision makers from the start. Your work is making a real difference for women and girls; for peace and sustainable development; for human rights; and for the shared future of each and every one of us."



Four Seasons Orlando

The Art of Balancing Magic and Luxury

By Noura Khan
Special to The Times Kuwait

In many destinations, a hotel is simply an address. In others, it becomes an integral part of the journey.

Orlando is a city defined by movement—theme parks, energy, excitement, and the joyful intensity of family travel. Yet during my visit, I was searching for something more composed. A space that could counter-balance the pace of the parks with refinement and calm. A place that delivers luxury without spectacle.

At Four Seasons Resort Orlando at Walt Disney World Resort, I found precisely that. From the moment of arrival, it was evident that this was not a conventional family resort. The architecture feels intentional, the service intuitive rather than intrusive, and the atmosphere distinctly polished. As the only property within Disney grounds that delivers the full Four Seasons standard, it carries a sense of privacy and discretion rarely associated with a destination as dynamic as Walt Disney World.

not only their scale, it was the atmosphere they created. One evening, I dimmed the lights and stepped onto my terrace to watch the Magic Kingdom fireworks illuminate the sky. I did not need to be inside the park to feel the magic. It arrived quietly, framed by comfort and privacy. That moment encapsulated the essence of this property: immersion without overwhelm.

Culinary standards exceed expectations. Capa, the Spanish-inspired steakhouse on the 17th floor, holds a Michelin star—a rare distinction within Walt Disney World. Dining there felt elevated yet cinematic, as fireworks glowed in the distance while each course arrived with measured precision. The

underwater audio—a sanctuary that feels worlds away from the surrounding attractions.

Explorer Island spans five acres of thoughtfully designed water experiences, from a winding lazy river to slides and outdoor movie nights. The complimentary Kids For All Seasons program for children aged four to twelve provides structured daily activities in a supervised environment — an invaluable addition for families.

And yet, what makes Four Seasons Orlando particularly compelling, especially for Gulf travelers, is how naturally it aligns with our expectations of comfort, privacy, and space. For many families from the region, generous room sizes are not an indulgence but a necessity. The resort's spacious layouts, particularly within its suites, offer clear separation between living and sleeping areas, allowing family stays to feel genuinely comfortable rather than simply practical. Service remains discreet yet attentive, and the overall environment feels secure, well-managed, and culturally accommodating—qualities that resonate deeply with Gulf families.



My stay was not simply about proximity to the parks. It was about redefining what a luxury family holiday can be. Here, childhood enchantment and elevated hospitality do not compete; they coexist seamlessly.

Located within the exclusive Golden Oak community, the resort offers privileged early park access each morning. Those 30 minutes before the official opening fundamentally transform the experience—fewer queues, quieter pathways, and the ability to enjoy the magic before the crowds gather. Complimentary luxury transportation to Magic Kingdom, EPCOT, Animal Kingdom, and Hollywood Studios ensures effortless transitions, while the in-house Disney Planning Center operates with the precision of a private concierge.

The resort's 443 rooms and suites are among the most spacious in Orlando, but what lingered with me most was

broader restaurant portfolio ensures variety without sacrificing refinement—a crucial element for extended family stays.

After long days exploring the parks, the spa became my personal retreat. With 18 treatment rooms, including six for couples, the transition from activity to tranquility is immediate. The adults-only Oasis Pool, overlooking the lake, offers a serene infinity-edge setting complete with private cabanas and

The diversity of dining options ensures flexibility during longer stays, while the presence of an adults-only pool introduces essential balance. In a destination built around children, it is important that adults, too, experience moments of calm. Four Seasons Orlando understands this equilibrium.

Orlando offers no shortage of luxury hotels. However, few combine strategic location within Disney itself with the level of privacy, refinement, and spatial comfort that Gulf travelers value most. Too often, a hotel serves merely as a place to rest between activities. Here, it becomes an essential chapter of the experience.

At Four Seasons Orlando, one may immerse fully in Disney, or simply watch the fireworks from a private terrace, in quiet elegance. For me, this stay was proof that sophistication and wonder need not compete; they complement one another, effortlessly.

Thought[“] for the week

Sometimes your joy is the source of your smile, but sometimes your smile can be the source of your joy.

- Thich Nhat Hanh

Myth of Weight Loss on Caffeine

Ask Mira : Eating Right to Live Happy & Healthy



Are you one of those who lost weight on caffeine? Or maybe thinking that it was the caffeine effect while you were trying to control your food quality and quantity.

I personally never think of using those methods to lose some weight or fat. I always adapt the natural way, by eating a balanced diet and exercising.

But, what is the direct relation between caffeine and weight loss? And why are a lot of fat burning pills made of caffeine?



I will start by saying that caffeine may slightly boost weight loss or maybe prevent weight gain, but there is no clinical evidence that increased caffeine consumption can lead to permanent weight loss.

When I say caffeine, it does not mean only the caffeine from the coffee we drink, but also from different beverages that contain caffeine such as tea and energy drinks.

So what does caffeine do in the body? For starters, it stimulates thermogenesis; one of the ways your body generates heat and energy from digesting food.

Thermogenesis is a basal metabolic rate reaction, that means the metabolism of your body at rest, when you are not doing any effort. So it is a minimal reaction. And there is no evidence that long-term coffee consumption aids in

weight loss.

Caffeine also acts as a diuretic, which means it increases the amount of urine you excrete. So you end up losing the water more than the fat; That is what makes you lose weight!

Additionally, caffeine acts as a natural appetite suppressant. Caffeine lovers, those who drink more than three cups of coffee a day, may end up eating less throughout the day. Caffeine gives a feeling of satiety, especially when the caffeine consumption is accompanied by smoking.

Coffee contains antioxidants, which fight against cancer problems, but too much caffeine might cause nervousness, insomnia, nausea and increased blood pressure.

It contains 'cafestol' which increases blood cholesterol levels, so it is not recommended for people with cholesterol problems.

My advice is that drinking up to two cups of coffee daily is healthy due to their high antioxidant levels, but not more than this. Remember, caffeine causes irritability, addiction and hypertension.

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

Pistachio Kunafa Phyllo Cups with Three-Milk Drizzle



This dessert is a modern twist on the classic Middle Eastern kunafa, served in crispy phyllo cups for an elegant bite-sized treat. The crunchy phyllo cups are filled with a rich, creamy pistachio-kunafa and topped with a luxurious three-milk mixture. Each bite offers a delightful balance of textures and flavors—crispy, nutty, creamy, and sweet, making it a perfect dessert for any special occasion.

Yield: 12-15 cups

Total Time: 40 minutes

Ingredients:

- For the Phyllo Cups:
- 200g phyllo dough (thawed if frozen)
- 50g unsalted butter, melted
- For the filling :
- 1.5 cups Kataifi (shredded phyllo dough)
- 2 tbsp. butter
- 1/4 cup crushed pistachio (powder)
- 1/2 cup sweetened condensed milk
- Few drops green food color (optional)
- 1 tbsp rose water
- For the garnish:
- 1 tbsp sliced pistachios
- Few rose petals
- For the Three-Milk Drizzle:
- 1/2 cup sweetened condensed milk
- 1/2 cup evaporated milk
- 1/2 cup heavy cream



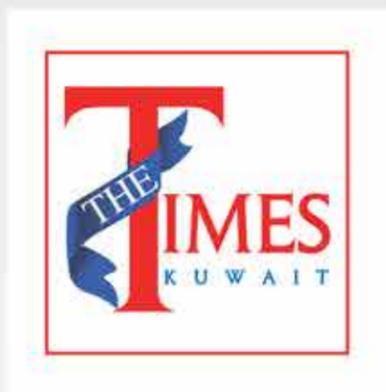
Chef Chhaya Thakker

Instructions:

- Preheat the oven to 180°C (350°F)
- Cut phyllo dough into small squares, layering 3-4 sheets together with melted butter in between
- Press the layered squares into a muffin tin to form cup shapes
- Bake for 10-12 minutes or until golden brown and crispy
- Meanwhile, shred the Kataifi (phyllo dough) over a cutting board.
- Place 2 tbsp. of butter in a pan over medium heat
- Add the shredded kataifi to the pan
- Roast the kataifi for a few minutes while stirring continuously until golden brown
- Turn the heat off and then add the crushed pistachios and few drops of green color Add in the sweetened condensed milk and rose water
- Mix everything together to combine
- Scoop portions of the mixture into each phyllo cup
- Whisk together condensed milk, evaporated milk, and heavy cream in a bowl
- Drizzle the smooth three-milk mixture generously over the phyllo cups
- Garnish with extra sliced pistachios and rose petals
- Serve warm and enjoy the crispy, creamy, and indulgent dessert.



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



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EXCLUSIVE TO THE TIMES KUWAIT

Africa Is Reimagining Climate Finance



By Saliem Fakir
Founder and Executive
Director of the African Climate
Foundation.

Africa is taking control of its climate future. Unable to count on foreign aid and traditional development finance to meet its needs, the continent is mobilizing investment using new models that integrate climate initiatives with development objectives. This is not a matter merely of repackaging old approaches; it represents a fundamental change in how climate action is designed and delivered across Africa.

When climate finance first emerged in the 1990s, it was shaped by the principles of responsibility and assistance, with developed economies expected to support their developing-country counterparts through financial transfers. Early climate finance was oriented largely toward mitigation and structured through project-based mechanisms that reflected donor priorities rather than recipient needs.

The Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), established under the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, exemplified this approach. The CDM allowed industrialized countries to invest in projects that reduced emissions in developing economies instead of pursuing more expensive emissions reductions at home, regardless of whether the projects aligned with the development pathways or adaptation needs of developing countries.

As the climate regime evolved, the shortcomings of this early approach were acknowledged, and the scope of climate finance broadened to include adaptation and longer-term financing commitments. The 2015 Paris climate agreement's introduction of Nationally Determined Contributions was a particularly promising step, as it explicitly sought to align financing with the

development strategies of countries.

In practice, however, the climate-finance model in Africa remained largely unchanged. Climate action continued to be tied to soft power, funded by official development assistance, and implemented largely on a project-by-project basis. And mitigation continued to take precedence over adaptation, despite Africa's acute vulnerability to the effects of climate change.

More fundamentally, outside actors—governments, NGOs, and development agencies—continued to base decisions on their own perceptions of climate risk, imposing solutions that did not reflect African priorities or perspectives. While individual projects might have sometimes delivered localized benefits, they consistently failed to close infrastructure gaps, let alone strengthen state capacity or transform markets and economic ecosystems.

These weaknesses were exacerbated during the COVID-19 crisis, when flows of climate finance to Africa stagnated, and they

approximately 8 percent growth year on year. Nonetheless, this was still slower than the 15 percent growth recorded between 2022 and 2023, reflecting headwinds including elevated interest rates, lower natural-gas prices, and grid infrastructure constraints. And Africa's share of the pie has not kept pace with overall growth.

There has also been a shift back toward mitigation-oriented investments. In 2019-20 and 2021-22, the share of total finance dedicated to adaptation in Africa declined from 39 to 32 percent, owing largely to the expansion of dual-benefit finance that combines mitigation and adaptation objectives. While this dwarfs the share elsewhere, including Latin America, South and Southeast Asia, and the Middle East (1-14%), the total remains insufficient to safeguard African countries from rapidly escalating climate impacts. The largest increases in climate finance in 2024 occurred in transport, particularly electric vehicles—making them mitigation-focused—with China, Brazil,

economic development and growth. Since the concept's introduction at the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Glasgow (COP26), Indonesia, Vietnam, and Senegal have followed South Africa's lead in signing JETPs with the advanced economies of the International Partners Group.

As the Africa Expert Panel noted in a recent report, investment platforms like JETPs provide a structured mechanism for identifying bankable projects and reducing the cost of capital. This can reduce debt-related pressures, while mobilizing larger, more diversified sources of climate and development finance that would otherwise remain out of reach.

To be sure, important challenges still lie ahead. When both first-order (civil and political) and second-order (social, cultural, and economic) rights are at stake, no single program or platform can deliver inclusivity; not even one that, like the JETP that is designed to promote justice and equity. Instead, a more inclusive economy requires broader political and institutional reforms, supported by political, financial, and economic elites who adopt an enlightened, long-term perspective.

But JETPs can bolster this effort. By embedding social-justice considerations in investment frameworks, including in project selection, evaluation, and management, they would support gradual system-wide change. As such, JETPs represent a truly transformative model of climate financing, which is aligned with needs and interests of countries.

Although the climate-investment models African countries are embracing remain in the early stages of development, they are already opening up new modes of engagement that are firmly anchored in the real economy. As they mature, they promise to mobilize larger amounts of new and concessional capital—exactly what Africa needs to sustain investment and productive capacity, support economic resilience amid climate and macroeconomic shocks, and advance long-term development objectives.

“ Faced with stagnating adaptation financing and intensifying climate impacts, Africans are devising new approaches to climate finance that better reflect their needs. One such example is South Africa's Just Energy Transition Partnership. ”

were not resolved in the pandemic's wake, even as flows rebounded. According to the Climate Policy Initiative, climate finance to Africa surged by 48 percent between 2019-20 and 2021-22, from \$29.5 billion to \$43.7 billion, driven largely by renewed multilateral engagement and a partial recovery in private investment.

This recovery mirrored a broader global rebound: worldwide climate finance surpassed \$2 trillion for the first time in 2024, representing

Vietnam, and Indonesia leading the way.

Faced with stagnating adaptation financing and intensifying climate impacts, Africans are taking matters into their own hands, devising new approaches to climate finance that better reflect their needs. One prominent example is South Africa's Just Energy Transition Partnership, a pioneering investment platform that seeks to align climate-related finance, particularly to support decarbonizing the energy system, with broader strategies for

Global scientific effort to map human exposome

Exposome represents the totality of environmental, chemical, biological, and psychosocial exposures an individual experiences from conception to throughout their lifetime. Although research into a particular exposure such as fluoride in drinking water, ultraviolet (UV) radiation from sunlight, or trace chemicals found in common household and personal-care products, provide a deeper understanding of that specific exposure or environmental factor, it often fails to account for how these issues coalesce to shape the big picture of public health.

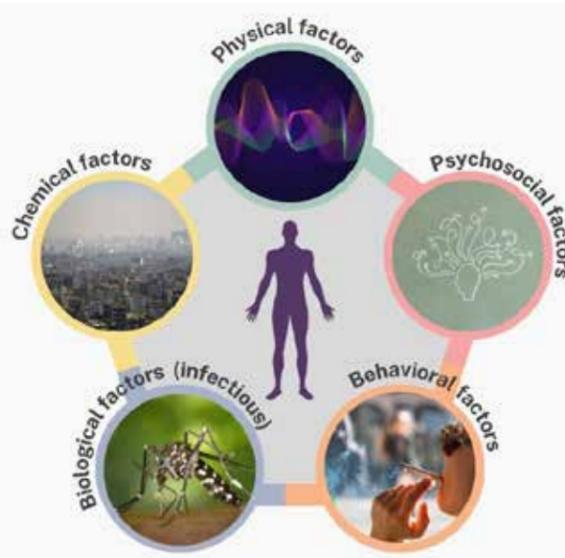
On the other hand, studies on exposomes deliver a richer understanding of the sheer scale of exposures that impact individuals, families, and communities. This allows scientists to examine public health through a holistic lens, recognizing how different factors interact, and how those interactions impact vulnerable communities over time. Exposomics is the emerging field of research that brings a systematic approach to measuring and examining the totality of exposome and its many factors or exposures.

Study of exposomes complements the Human Genome Project that revolutionized genetics in the 1990s, and advanced the field of genomics, the interdisciplinary study of an organism's complete set of DNA (genome), including the structure, function, evolution and interactions of all genes. While genomics enabled scientific breakthroughs, genes account for only 10–20 percent of disease risks. The balance 70–80 percent of health risks are caused by non-genetic factors such as biological, chemical, and environmental exposures that are collectively known as exposomes.

Despite the scale of the impact of exposomes, large coordinated efforts to study these exposures have been slow to emerge. That is now changing. An ambitious global project to map the 'human exposome'—the lifelong mix of environmental, biological, and chemical impacts that a human body is exposed to, and which drives most diseases—is fast expanding across continents since its launch in May 2025.

Scientists, backed by new partnerships with governments, UNESCO, and international science advisory bodies, and powered by artificial intelligence (AI) and advanced data tools, are aiming to transform medicine by examining real-world factors shaping human health. The project is expected to further exploration of follow-up hypotheses surrounding disease causality or sources of exposure, and provide sizable datasets that can be examined to highlight exposure accumulations and interactions.

Data from the project will also reportedly play a powerful role



in advancing public health insights and in equipping public health professionals with a broader and more actionable understanding of exposures and their influence. Additionally, breakthroughs from exposomics will inform public policy, providing scientists and decision-makers with a nuanced understanding of how environmental exposures impact entire populations. This deeper understanding can influence how public health programs are designed and implemented, ensuring interventions that are effective and equitable.

Despite the scale of the impact of exposomes, large coordinated efforts to study these exposures that had been slow to emerge are now rapidly gathering pace. Newly formed regional chapters and working groups are scaling up exposomics research by combining AI, advanced sensor technology, metabolomics, and big data analytics. These teams are actively forming partnerships and working to translate scientific discoveries into policies that benefit broad populations and communities rather than select groups.

A prominent scientific session held on the sidelines of the annual American Association for Advancement of Sciences (AAAS) gathering in mid-February and titled 'How the human exposome will unlock better health and medicine', updated members of

the international research community on the progress made in exposomics since the initiative launched nearly a year ago. The discussion introduced attendees to what many consider one of the most significant public health opportunities of our time; understanding the human exposome.

The human exposome initiative complements the Human Genome Project that revolutionized genetics, and is designed to align with ongoing global research efforts in medicine and healthcare. Organizers recognize that integrating complex scientific guidance into policymaking, especially around emerging and sometimes controversial technologies, is essential to long term success. A bottom-up model that engages both citizens and elected officials forms the foundation of the exposome project. Supporters argue that whether addressing childhood autism and asthma, managing cognitive decline in older adults, or regulating microplastics, pesticides, and food colorants, research must focus on understanding how combined exposures influence health outcomes. There are many justifications for the development of the concept of exposome including a major limitation in that many epidemiological studies currently focus on a single or few environmental factors at a single time-point and ignore effects, co-exposures, confounding, and synergy between different environmental factors. Moreover, the major common diseases have an environmental etiology, and the simultaneous assessment of the totality of exposures provide an accurate assessment of their combined impact on health.

There are multiple overlapping classifications of the exposome. They can be external (e.g., economic and climatic factors) or internal (e.g., hormones, sex, and aging); major (e.g., smoking, obesity, and cholesterol) or minor (e.g., sleep and stress); modifiable (e.g., body weight and smoking) or non-modifiable (hormones and genes); and general acting on population level (e.g., traffic risks and climatic factors) or specific acting on individual level (e.g., diet and physical activity).

Whether addressing childhood autism and asthma, managing cognitive decline in older adults, or regulating microplastics, pesticides, and food colorants, research must focus on understanding how combined exposures influence health outcomes. Through coordinated public and private partnerships, international cooperation, and shared research infrastructure, the Global Exposome Forum is helping move exposomics from an emerging concept to a transformative force in public health and modern medicine.

Late-night eating, short overnight-fast time, harms heart health

Circadian rhythm, the body's internal 24-hour clock that regulates cycles of alertness and sleepiness by responding to light changes in the environment, influences a host of bodily functions including sleep, metabolism, temperature, and hormone levels. The circadian rhythm also plays a central role in regulating cardiovascular and metabolic function. Researchers at Northwestern University in the United States are now exploring whether timing an overnight fast to match a person's natural sleep wake cycle could improve heart and metabolic health.

For their trial-study the researchers examined 39 overweight/obese adults (36 to 75 years old), 80 percent of whom were women. Participants were assigned either to an extended overnight fasting group (13 to 16 hours of fasting) or to a control group that maintained a habitual fasting window (11 to 13 hours). Both groups dimmed lights three hours before bedtime. Importantly, participants did not reduce calories, the focus was entirely on adjusting when they ate.

The study found that middle age and older adults at elevated risk for cardiometabolic disease benefited from extending their overnight fasting window by roughly two hours. The dining time changes led to measurable improvements in



heart and metabolic markers during sleep and throughout the following day. The study suggests that timing our fasting window to work with the body's natural wake-sleep rhythms can improve coordination between the heart, metabolism and sleep, all of which work together to protect cardiovascular health.

The study also found nighttime blood pressure decreased by 3.5 percent, and heart rate dropped

by 5 percent among participants. These shifts reflected a healthier daily pattern, with heart rate and blood pressure rising during daytime activity and falling at night during rest. A stronger day night rhythm is associated with better cardiovascular health. Participants also demonstrated improved daytime blood sugar control. When given glucose, their pancreas responded more effectively, suggesting improved insulin release and steadier

blood sugar levels.

The study postulates that it is not only how much and what you eat, but also when you eat relative to sleep that is important for the physiological benefits of time-restricted eating. Data from previous studies have shown that only 6.8 percent of adults in the US had optimal cardiometabolic health in 2017 to 2018. Poor cardiometabolic health raises the risk of chronic conditions such as type 2 diabetes, non-alcoholic fatty liver disease, and cardiovascular disease.

Time-restricted eating has grown in popularity because studies suggest it can improve cardiometabolic markers and sometimes match the benefits of traditional calorie restricted diets. However, most research has concentrated on how long people fast rather than how well that fasting window aligns with sleep timing, which is crucial for metabolic regulation.

With nearly 90 percent adherence by participants in the trial-study, the researchers believe anchoring time-restricted eating to the sleep period may be a realistic and accessible non-pharmacological approach, especially for middle aged and older adults who face higher cardiometabolic risk. The team now plans to refine their research protocol and expand testing in larger multi-center trials.



How Current Energy Shock Could Play Out



Jim O'Neill

A former UK Treasury minister and a former chairman of Goldman Sachs Asset Management.

After the first week of the US-Israeli war against Iran, I have been looking back to my career in finance for hints about how the situation will play out. My own experience is relevant, because I completed my PhD just after the second of the 1970s oil crises (1979-1982), and my primary focus was on OPEC, its monumental surpluses, and the question of how it might re-invest them. (I also shared an office with an Iranian scholar who had recently fled his country, following the Islamic Revolution.)

My PhD thesis required me to apply a relatively sophisticated (at the time) asset-allocation model, according to which 'low absorbers' like the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries could choose to optimize the future value of oil currently in the ground, its value today, or their investment portfolios, which included overseas holdings. They were called low absorbers because they did not need all the current revenues from oil production, as opposed to a high absorber like Nigeria, which had fewer reinvestment options.

These were the early days of the region's sovereign wealth funds, with many Gulf producers becoming highly active investors in global markets for the first time. But now that their outside presence is the norm, one must consider what would happen if Gulf states were suddenly to withdraw or sell their foreign assets. Doing so might not make much fiscal sense, given how sharply oil prices have risen. But it



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In the current context, countries that have already begun to adopt renewables or alternative energy sources will be relatively better off, and those that have not may finally start to advance down this path.

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could make political sense if GCC policymakers want to pressure the US into finding an off ramp and ending the war.

After all, another lesson from my past experience with Middle East crises is that oil-price movements one month after an initial shock often bear little resemblance to the original price response. I used to collect published research and news clippings in which experts would claim confidently that crude oil prices were heading above US\$100 per barrel, where they would remain. In fact, they always fell back down soon enough, and would continue trending down for the next 20 years.

Given how difficult it is to forecast energy prices, one should always be skeptical of anyone who is too confident about their own prognostications. In hindsight, it appears that the long-term elasticity of energy supply in the face of price changes has been greater than many believed. Both the supply and demand response tend to be larger than expected. In

the current context, countries that have already begun to adopt renewables or alternative energy sources will be relatively better off, and those that have not may finally start to advance down this path. Oil and natural gas producers therefore cannot assume that prices will stay high indefinitely.

Three final lessons concern politics and geopolitics. For starters, my earlier work on Middle East issues leaves me skeptical that the Islamic Republic will soon fall to a peaceful internal revolution—even though a more tolerant regime and political system would obviously benefit Iran's 90 million people, not to mention the rest of the region.

Second, we must not ignore the elephant in the room. Recall that, during the 1997-98 Asian financial crisis, it was China that helped to restore order by persuading US Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin to intervene to stop a further destabilizing rise in the dollar. I suspect that something similar could happen this time,

considering that President Donald Trump still plans to meet with his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping, just weeks from now. As a major buyer of Gulf oil, China has every reason to try to bring the conflict to an end, and it can exercise influence through many channels, including the BRICS+ (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa, and five newer members, including Iran).

The last lesson comes from the period immediately following the 11 September 2001, attacks on the US, which led me to coin the BRIC acronym in the first place. Given today's changing global trade patterns and diplomatic relationships, I would not be surprised to see GCC countries moving closer to China, India, and other rising powers, implying that they will subtly start to distance themselves from the West. If this war has shown anything so far, it is that allying yourself with the US no longer guarantees security. The economic opportunities offered by rising Asia are growing more attractive by the day.

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