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Rethinking Waste Today for a Sustainable Future

THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

Every year humanity generates over two billion tonnes of municipal solid waste (MSW)—the organic and non-organic waste collected by municipalities primarily from households, retail, commercial, and business outlets. Only a small fraction of MSW is recycled, and without urgent rethink and action this waste is expected to cross over 3.8 billion tonnes annually by 2050, hampering global sustainability efforts and accelerating climate change.

International Day of Zero Waste, observed annually on 30 March, aims to raise awareness on the acute waste crisis, address waste pollution, strengthen waste management, and encourage sustainable production and consumption patterns that minimize waste. The day emphasizes the need for reducing, reusing, and recycling waste, and moving towards a circular economy,

with the goal being to encourage governments, industries, and individuals to embrace zero-waste initiatives, reduce extraction of resources, and prevent pollution of land and water.

For this year's International Day of Zero Waste, the focus is on food—what we eat, what we waste, and how we can move towards a more circular future. According to the 2024 Food Waste Index Report, published by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), an estimated 1.05 billion tons of food is wasted worldwide annually. This wastage comes against the backdrop of a world where more than 783 million people go hungry every day, and where more than 2.3 billion individuals remain food insecure.

In Kuwait, according to environmental figures from the Central Statistical Bureau, the country generated nearly three million tonnes of MSW in 2022. For a nation that relies almost entirely on imports for most of the products used, and, in particular, for much of its food supplies, this resource wastage is unsustainable and unconscionable. The wastage hinders efforts aimed at achieving sustainable development and food security, as well as impedes the state's progress towards realizing its ambitious New Kuwait Vision 2035.

Jazeera Airways steadily restores flights to various destinations

The Times Kuwait Report

Jazeera Airways announced last week the full restoration of flights throughout its Indian network linking to eight cities in India with the addition of Ahmedabad and Thiruvananthapuram, under Project Vande Bharat, reinforcing connectivity between Kuwait and India during the ongoing regional situation.

The introduction of Ahmedabad and Thiruvananthapuram builds on the airline's existing list of operational Indian cities that include Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Mumbai, and Kochi, further enhancing access across key regions of the country and catering to strong passenger demand.

Speaking about the restoration of flights throughout the Indian network of the airline, Chief Executive Officer of Jazeera Airways, Barathan Pasupathi, said: "By restoring our entire Indian network, Jazeera Airways is not only enhancing its connectivity, it is also bringing people closer to home and to their families, especially as the only airline operating to India from Kuwait. In close coordination with the Embassy of India, we are proud to strengthen this vital air bridge and support the journeys of thousands who rely on it every day."

Since the relaunch of operations on 20 March, Jazeera Airways has already enabled more than 1,300 passengers to travel between Kuwait and India, supporting critical movement at a time when travel options remain limited. Passengers travelling on these routes will continue to benefit from structured check-in processes at the designated facility in Kuwait, followed by seamless transfers to Qaisumah Airport in Saudi Arabia for onward departures.

Last week, the airline also announced the relaunch of its two weekly flights to Lahore from 29 March, marking its first route back to Pakistan and restoring a vital air link between Kuwait and one of its very important travel markets.

Speaking ahead of resumption of flights, Ambassador of Pakistan H.E. Dr. Zafar Iqbal commended Jazeera Airways for their agility and determination in restoring connectivity under challenging conditions. "The swift and innovative response by Jazeera Airways reinforces the airline's position as a dependable regional carrier. The resumption of flights to Pakistan is timely and will directly benefit our community by restoring a vital travel lifeline," added the envoy.

Jazeera Airways continues to lead efforts in maintaining connectivity from Kuwait during this exceptional period for regional aviation,

with operations currently being facilitated via Qaisumah Airport (AQI), with passengers travelling on Kuwait–Lahore route being transported by bus from Kuwait to Qaisumah before boarding onward flights to Lahore, ensuring continuity of travel.

Elaborating on the flight restoration to Lahore, the CEO of Jazeera said: "The relaunch of Lahore marks an important milestone as we reconnect Kuwait to Pakistan, one of our key markets with longstanding ties to the country. At a time when connectivity carries greater meaning, restoring

this route enables thousands of passengers to reunite with their families or return back to Kuwait. As the first airline to operate from Kuwait, we remain focused on ensuring safe, reliable, and continuous connectivity. Lahore is the first step in rebuilding our Pakistan network, and we look forward to expanding further in the near future."

In another indication of steadily restoring its services in the region, Jazeera Airways announced that it had resumed flights to Dubai, marking a significant step in reconnecting Kuwait to one of the world's most important aviation hubs and unlocking seamless access to onward destinations across the globe.

As a key gateway for international travel, Dubai plays a vital role in linking passengers to major markets across Asia, Europe, Africa, and the Americas.

The reinstatement of this route strengthens Jazeera Airways' network and provides travelers with renewed flexibility and expanded travel opportunities during a time when connectivity is more important than ever. With Dubai serving as a global crossroads, passengers can now benefit from smoother connections to a wide range of destinations, whether for business, family reunions, or essential travel.

Speaking about restoration of flights to Dubai, Mr. Pasupathi, said, "The resumption of flights to Dubai represents more than just the return of a route; it is the reopening of a critical gateway for our customers. Dubai is one of the world's most connected cities, and restoring access to it enables our passengers to seamlessly reach destinations far beyond the region. As we continue to operate under unique circumstances, our focus remains on ensuring that people stay connected safely, reliably, and with greater choice."

Operating via Qaisumah Airport, Jazeera Airways continues to maintain essential air links for Kuwait, ensuring continuity of travel despite ongoing regional challenges. Passengers will be transported overland from Kuwait to Qaisumah before boarding onward flights to Dubai.

The addition of Dubai further enhances the growing network of the airline, which currently includes destinations across Egypt, India, Jordan, Sri Lanka, Türkiye, and the UAE. The airline remains committed to progressively expanding its network and restoring key routes that enable passengers to reconnect with the world.

Bookings to the all restored destinations of Jazeera Airways are available through jazeeraairways.com and the Jazeera App, with bookings to additional frequencies and destinations expected to be introduced in phases.

Jazeera Airways opens a second base in Saudi Arabia at Damman

As part of its continued operational evolution, Jazeera Airways announced last week that it will now operate from two bases in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, adding King Fahd International Airport in Dammam to its existing operations at Qaisumah Airport. The airline stated that effective from 26 March, the addition of Dammam will further boost seat and cargo capacity, supporting efforts to keep Kuwait connected to global destinations amid the prevailing exceptional situation.

Jazeera Airways currently offers more than 20 destinations, 1,000 flights, 200,000 seats and 2 million tons of cargo capacity across its network through 30 April. This will support Kuwait as a whole, addressing the overwhelming need of the community as well as supporting supply logistics. Elaborating on the efforts of the airline amid the ongoing regional situation, CEO of Jazeera Airways, Barathan Pasupathi, said: "Our priority from day one is to establish the connectivity bridge to keep Kuwait moving safely and reliably, despite the extraordinary challenges facing the region and Kuwait. By swiftly expanding our operational footprint in

Saudi Arabia to include King Fahd International Airport in Dammam alongside Qaisumah, we are strengthening this connectivity bridge, supporting both the movement of people and the flow of essential goods, reflecting the resilience of our operations and the strong ability to serve Kuwait.

Thanking Saudi authorities for their support to the connectivity efforts of the airline, the CEO noted that the entire Jazeera family has been tirelessly working round the clock to keep Kuwait and its community connected, and added that the airline will always be there especially when it matters the most.

Jazeera Airways continues to operate as the only airline connecting Kuwait to a growing network of destinations across Egypt, India, Jordan, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Türkiye, and the UAE, while remaining focused on ensuring safe, reliable, and continuous connectivity as it adapts its operations in real time to evolving circumstances. All departures and arrivals for both Qaisumah and Dammam will continue at Jazeera's temporary Terminal in Mishref at the Kuwait International Fairgrounds, Hall No. 8.

MoCI strengthens market monitoring, warns against price gouging

Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) has warned vendors against price manipulation and emphasized that ministry inspection teams would strictly monitor the market to ensure price stability and availability of products.

In a statement to the media, following an inspection tour of tomato production and distribution sites, Minister I of Commerce and Industry, Osama Boodai, affirmed that the ministry is continuing intensive monitoring of markets to ensure price stability, adequate supplies, and the protection of consumers from price violations.

Stressing that regulatory authorities will take firm legal action against offenders, the minister said the shortage of some produce in local markets recently were due to the transitional period between harvests and the extended Eid holidays that delayed distribution to outlets. He

clarified that such shortages are a normal part of the agricultural production cycle.

The tour included a visit to Al-Fardah, the central fruits and vegetables auction market,

where the minister was briefed on operations and supply levels. Around 3,500 pallets of local produce are traded daily through the market by farmers.

Minister Bodi also reviewed tomato supply volumes, which reached approximately 34,000 cartons at the Wafra Company auction and about 16,000 cartons at the Kuwaiti Farmers Union auction, with expectations of further increases in the coming days.

During his visit to the Kuwaiti Farmers Union auction, the minister met with farmers alongside Union President Ahmed Al-Adwani to discuss issues focused on production conditions, distribution, and market challenges, with the minister praising the efforts of farmers in supporting national food security.

According to the ministry, local tomato production is expected to reach at least 350 tons per day soon, which will help stabilize supply and meet consumer demand. The minister emphasized the need for strict adherence to approved pricing, warning against black market activities or artificial price hikes.

China celebrates anniversary of diplomatic relations with Kuwait

For more than five decades, the two nations have cultivated a relationship rooted in trust, mutual respect, and shared ambition, standing today as a model of enduring international friendship.

By H E Yang Xin
Ambassador of China
Special to The Times Kuwait

On 22 March, China and Kuwait marked a defining milestone in their bilateral relations, celebrating the 55th anniversary of diplomatic relations and a partnership that has not only endured the test of time but flourished across distance, history, and shifting global landscapes.

For more than five decades, the two nations have cultivated a relationship rooted in trust, mutual respect, and shared ambition, standing today as a model of enduring international friendship.

China and Kuwait are, above all, steadfast friends bound by trust. Kuwait's principled support for restoring the legitimate seat of the People's Republic of China at the United Nations remains etched in history, alongside its unwavering adherence to the one-China principle. In return, China stood firmly by Kuwait during its most critical moments, particularly during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, supporting its sovereignty and independence and championing its role on the global diplomatic stage.

In 2018, relations were elevated to a strategic partnership, opening a new chapter of cooperation. High-level engagements between the Chinese President Xi Jinping and His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah have further solidified this trajectory, setting a forward-looking vision for deeper collaboration.

Amid escalating tensions in the Middle East since February 2026, China has also emerged as a voice for dialogue and restraint, advocating de-escalation while supporting Kuwait's sovereignty, security, and territorial integrity.

Beyond diplomacy, the partnership has evolved into a powerful engine for shared prosperity. Kuwait played a pivotal role in supporting China's early economic development, extending significant concessional financing at a formative stage.

Today, the relationship has come full circle— China has been Kuwait's largest trading partner for 11 consecutive years, with bilateral trade reaching $18.58 billion in 2025.

Under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, cooperation has reached unprecedented levels. Nearly 70 Chinese companies are actively contributing to Kuwait's development landscape, participating in strategic projects such as the Mubarak Al Kabeer Port. a cornerstone of the country's long-term economic vision.

As Kuwait advances Kuwait Vision 2035, collaboration in industrial transformation, green energy, and the digital economy continues to expand, while Chinese innovations—from smart technologies to advanced manufacturing—are increasingly woven into everyday Kuwaiti life.

Yet, beyond economics and geopolitics lies a deeper dimension , one of human connection and solidarity. China and Kuwait are brothers in times of need. Kuwait has consistently extended support to China during natural disasters and health crises, while China has reciprocated, most notably by dispatching expert teams to help extinguish Kuwait's oil well fires.

People-to-people ties have also reached new heights. Enhanced connectivity through direct flights and visa facilitation has brought the two societies closer than ever. The inauguration of the Gulf's first Chinese Cultural Center in Kuwait in 2025 stands as a symbol of cultural exchange, while Chinese medical teams, which have been serving in Kuwait for over half a century, have provided care to more than a million residents.

Tourism and cultural curiosity continue to grow in both directions, with citizens from both nations acting as ambassadors of goodwill and understanding. This anniversary coincides with another historic milestone — the 70th anniversary of relations between China and the Arab world. At this pivotal juncture, China is set to host the upcoming China-Arab States Summit and the China-GCC Summit, initiatives that promise to chart a bold, comprehensive roadmap for future cooperation and inject fresh momentum into China-Kuwait relations.

As the Arab proverb wisely says, "True friendship never fades with time." For 55 years, China and Kuwait have stood side by side; partners in progress, allies in adversity, and brothers in spirit. Guided by visionary leadership and strengthened by the will of their peoples, this relationship is poised not only to endure, but to shine ever brighter in the decades ahead.

Being first is valuable once...
Being right is valuable every time...

Inside Kuwait's Fight Against Misinformation in the Age of AI

The Times Kuwait Report

Broadcasting every afternoon on 99.7 Super Station, Mishari & Farid bring listeners a lively mix of music, conversation, and real-time interaction, making the 3:30 PM slot one of the most engaging parts of Kuwait's radio landscape. The show blends contemporary hits with light-hearted conversational-style discussions that explore trending topics and social issues. The show, which welcomes public participation through call-ins and shoutouts that reflect the pulse of everyday life and experiences in Kuwait, resoundingly resonates with the country's diverse audience.

In a recent segment, the show discusses how journalism in today's fast-moving, information-heavy environment has become a critical responsibility, especially amid rising misinformation, AI-generated content, and manipulated media. The discussion highlighted the challenges of distinguishing fact from noise and the importance of accuracy and trust in reporting. Focusing on Kuwait, it raised questions about how different media platforms shape narratives and where editorial boundaries lie.

In this engaging segment, Mishari & Farid spoke to Reaven D'Souza, Executive Managing Editor of The Times Kuwait, to share his insight into how media professionals are navigating these journalistic challenges and protecting the integrity of information.

1. In the current regional climate, how would you assess the performance of official Kuwaiti media in covering fast-moving and sensitive developments?

In the current regional climate marked by fast-moving security developments and high public anxiety, the official Kuwaiti media has generally leaned toward caution, control, and consistency. From an editorial standpoint, I would characterize its performance as responsible with clear strengths and equally clear limitations.

Official Kuwaiti media has performed its core function well: it is trusted, steady, and non-inflammatory.

2. With the surge of misinformation and AI-generated content, what concrete verification processes does your newsroom use to authenticate videos, images, and breaking reports?

• *Start with the source, not the story*

• *Do not become part of the thread of misinformation*

• *Separate 'breaking news' from 'confirmed news*

In today's environment, verification is no longer a back-end function, it sits at the center of the newsroom workflow. With AI-generated content and recycled war footage circulating at warp speed, we have had to formalize what used to be instinct into repeatable, documented processes.

We classify incoming material into three buckets:

- Unverified → never published, only flagged internally
- Partially verified → used with clear labeling ("reports suggest…")
- Fully verified → cleared for headline use

3. How has artificial intelligence changed the way journalists approach fact-checking, and do you see it as more of a threat or a tool?

Artificial intelligence or ACTUAL Intelligence has fundamentally changed fact-checking from a human-led process into a hybrid system where speed and doubt must coexist. It has raised both the ceiling of what journalists can verify and the floor of how easily misinformation can be produced. From an editorial perspective, it is both a tool and a threat, but not in equal measure. Right now, it is a force multiplier on both sides.

4. In moments of crisis, is speed still the defining priority for breaking news, or have editorial safeguards and accuracy taken precedence over being first?

Speed still matters but it is no longer the defining priority. In today's environment, accuracy under pressure has overtaken being first as the metric that actually protects a newsroom's credibility.

From an executive editor's perspective, the shift is quite clear: Being first is valuable once. Being right is valuable every time.

5. How do you evaluate the way international media outlets are reporting on the current regional tensions compared to local and regional coverage?

From my perspective, the contrast between international and local/regional coverage of current tensions is less about who is 'better' and more about what each is structurally equipped to do. They operate with different priorities, audiences, and editorial instincts.

6. In your view, have social media and new media platforms begun to replace traditional journalism, or do they serve fundamentally different roles, and is there still a clear distinction between the two today?

They have not replaced traditional journalism but they have redefined its environment so completely that the old boundaries are blurred. I feel social and new media platforms serve fundamentally different roles, even if, on the surface, they now appear to do the same thing: deliver news.

7. Finally, what advice would you give to audiences in Kuwait on how to distinguish between credible journalism and misleading or manipulated content during times of conflict?

In a conflict environment, audiences are no longer just consumers of news, they are frontline filters of information. The volume of misleading and manipulated content today means that distinguishing credible journalism is a practical skill, not a passive habit.

I would suggest the most useful ways to approach it would be to:

Start with the source, not the story: Before reacting to any piece of news, ask:

Who published this? Is it a recognized outlet or an anonymous account?

Trusted institutions whether local like Kuwait News Agency or established international outlets have reputations to protect. Anonymous posts do not.

A dramatic claim from an unknown source should always be treated as unverified by default.

Separate 'breaking news' from 'confirmed news': During crises, the first version of events is often incomplete or wrong. Check if multiple credible outlets are reporting it. One report is not a confirmation. If something is real and significant, then more than one reputable outlet will carry it

Do not become part of the thread of misinformation: The biggest amplifier of misinformation is well-meaning sharing. Before forwarding anything, ask: Am I sure this is true or am I just reacting to it?

Bottom line: In times of conflict, the question is no longer just, "What is happening?" It is, "What can I trust?" The safest approach is simple: Slow down, verify the source, cross-check before believing or sharing

People who apply these habits do not just protect themselves, they help protect the information environment of the entire society.

PACA updates travel-related regulation for travelers, travel offices

Public Authority for Civil Aviation (PACA) announced that complaints related to airlines and travel agencies must be submitted electronically via the unified government e-services app Sahel.

Elaborating on the regulatory reform, spokesperson for PACA, Abdullah Al-Rajhi said last week that complainants must attach relevant documents and follow the app's steps outlined by the app to ensure efficient service and proper review by the competent team. He added that delayed responses to complaints on Sahel, or other issues can be submitted through the Towasal platform in the Sahel app, where feedback will be handled with impartiality.

The measure comes as part of efforts to boost transparency, safeguard the rights of passengers and enhance regulatory oversight as part of the government's push for digitalization of public services and efficiency goals.

Meanwhile, Mohammed Al-Mutairi, Chairman of the Union of Travel Offices, stated that a recent circular issued by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation regarding the contractual relationship between travel agencies and passengers under the prevailing exceptional circumstances is clear and fair to all parties

He explained that Clause Four of the circular explicitly states that travel-market entities are permitted to deduct agreed service fees and charges, even if the bookings are non-refundable, provided that this clause was disclosed to the passenger at the time of booking.

He emphasized that this provision establishes the important principle that travel offices have the legal right to deduct their service fees, provided that they were agreed upon in advance with the customer and are clearly stated in the booking terms and conditions.

He added that travel office fees represent compensation for actual services rendered, including booking procedures, follow-ups, and coordination with airlines and service providers, especially under the current exceptional circumstances that require increased operational effort.

He stressed the importance of all parties adhering to the circular's provisions as issued, ensuring a balance between protecting the rights of passengers and ensuring that travel offices can continue to perform their vital role in the market.

Continued investment momentum reflects resilience of region's SWFs

Sovereign Wealth Funds (SWFs) in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states are maintaining their investment momentum, even under prevailing heightened geopolitical strife in the region, reflecting the resilience and sophistication of GCC financial strategies.

According to an investment sector report, the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund, the Kuwait Investment Authority, and the Qatar Investment Authority are continuing their work uninterrupted, despite ongoing hostilities in the Middle East.

While immediate priorities may involve rebuilding infrastructure damaged by recent attacks, the long-term investment agenda remains focused on economic diversification and sustainable development. GCC wealth funds are reportedly increasingly targeting sectors beyond energy, with technology, artificial intelligence, and infrastructure projects high on the list. Efforts include expanding pipelines and logistics to reduce reliance on oil transport through the Strait of Hormuz.

Collectively managing trillions of dollars, these sovereign wealth funds are among the largest clients of Wall Street, drawing close attention from global financial institutions. Analysts suggest that although the recent conflict led to some operational disruptions to businesses—such as the late cancellation of the Formula 1 Grand Prix in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia—daily business and social activity largely continue, with officials balancing remote work, evening meetings, and networking.

The report emphasizes that the abundant financial surpluses of GCC states provide a significant fiscal buffer and resilience to the energy-rich states. If the conflict is resolved favorably, with Iranian threats diminished, oil prices could retreat from current highs above $100 per barrel, further accelerating economic diversification.

Conversely, even in a prolonged crisis, Gulf wealth funds are positioned to maintain active investment strategies, ensuring the region's economies continue to grow and adapt despite uncertainty.

Kuwait introduces new laws to combat terrorism, protect security interests

Kuwait's commitment to safeguarding national security and stability, and enhancing its ability to face contemporary security challenges were buttressed last week with the introduction of two new decree-laws that were published in the official gazette, Kuwait Al-Youm and came into effect immediately

Announcing the laws, member of the Public Prosecution's Technical Office, Fahad Al-Mutairi affirmed that Decree-Law No. 47 of 2026 on combating terrorism crimes, and Decree-Law No. 13 of 2026 on securing and protecting the supreme interests of military entities, come in light of rapidly evolving security threats. He added that the new laws integrate prevention, deterrence, and protection aspects that help reinforce national security interests.

Al-Mutairi explained that the terrorism law provides a modern legislative framework defining 'terrorist acts' as offenses targeting individuals, property, public facilities, transportation, or cyberspace, aimed at spreading fear, undermining societal security, or influencing authorities.

The law distinguishes between a 'terrorist organization', 'terrorist', and a 'state of terrorist danger', applying to acts committed inside or outside Kuwait if related to the country's security or interests. Penalties for such crimes are severe, including life imprisonment or the death penalty in certain cases. The law criminalizes

assisting perpetrators, failing to report crimes, and includes incentives for cooperation with authorities, such as immunity if the crime is reported before execution or aids in identifying offenders.

It also criminalizes attacks on vital facilities, diplomatic premises, recruitment, training, or affiliation with terrorist entities, and introduces precautionary measures under judicial supervision through the 'state of terrorist danger' concept, including monitoring and rehabilitation programs. The legislation establishes a National Committee for Combating Terrorism to set national strategy, coordinate efforts,

and ensure compliance with international obligations. Decree-Law No. 13 of 2026 provides a comprehensive framework to protect military interests, enabling efficient operations by regulating access to military sites, safeguarding classified information, and managing security procedures.

The law criminalizes unauthorized entry, dissemination of false information affecting military morale, and exploitation of military assets, with penalties reaching life imprisonment for severe violations. Al-Mutairi emphasized that the Public Prosecution has exclusive authority to investigate and prosecute crimes under these laws, strengthening

procedural efficiency while balancing security and legal safeguards. He noted that protecting national security is a shared responsibility requiring public awareness, law compliance, and cooperation with competent authorities.

Meanwhile, Ministry of Interior spokesperson, General Nasser Bu Salib, praised the vigilance and dedication of security personnel in protecting Kuwait's safety and stability. He detailed that explosive ordnance disposal teams continue to handle safety situations involving debris from defensive operations against Iranian attacks, activating warning sirens of imminent threats, and securing attacked sites to ensure safety and security of citizens and residents.

Speaking on behalf of the Ministry of Defense, Colonel Saud Al-Atwan praised the loyalty and dedication of Kuwait's military and security personnel, stressing that after God, the nation is protected by its citizens who safeguard its sovereignty and stability through unity, sacrifice, and determination.

For its part, the National Guard reported that airspace and territorial water readings were within normal ranges. Brigadier General Dr Jadaan Fadel, spokesperson for the National Guard, said specialized teams at the Sheikh Salem Al-Ali Center for Chemical Defense and Radiation Monitoring continue to coordinate with relevant authorities to ensure safety, urging the public to rely only on official sources to avoid rumors or misinformation.

PACI suspends evening shifts amid prevailing situation

Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) has announced a revised visitor reception mechanism, effective Tuesday, 24 March, as part of efforts to streamline services and enhance operational efficiency.

Under the new measures, evening service hours have been suspended until further notice, with all in-person transactions now limited to a single morning shift from 8am to 1pm.

The authority emphasized that access to its facilities will be strictly by prior appointment, which must be booked through the Meta Platform or the Sahel application. PACI further stressed that any transactions that can be completed online will not be processed at service centers, reinforcing the government's push toward digital service delivery.

Kuwait Ministry of Interior activates cellular alert system

The Kuwaiti Ministry of Interior announced on Thursday the activation of the National Emergency Alert System using cellular broadcasting technology.

In a press release, the ministry said that the messages sent via this system are based on field assessments and precise security indicators, which are constantly monitored by concerned authorities.

It urged people to take these messages seriously and follow relevant guidelines and instructions in order to ensure public safety. The ministry elaborated that these alerts are meant to enable relevant authorities to take swift preventative measures to keep public safety, underlining that it is essential to immediately seek shelter upon receiving the alert and to keep away from windows and open areas.

MoCI bans sale of tobacco products, e-cigarettes online

Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) has issued a ban on the sale of tobacco, its derivatives and all types of cigarettes, including electronic cigarettes, as well as tools, devices and accessories used for their consumption through delivery platforms or any similar digital channels.

The decision by Minister of Commerce and Industry Osama Boodai authorizes the ministry, without prejudice to stricter penalties under other laws, to impose one or more of the following sanctions upon confirmation of a violation: Issue a warning to the offending outlet, issue a temporary administrative closure, or a complete revocation of the outlet's operating license in case of repeated offense.

Concerned ministry officials have been directed to implement the decision within their respective jurisdictions. The decision is effective from the date of issuance, repeals any conflicting provisions, and will be published in the Official Gazette.

Meanwhile, officials from MoCI conducted a field inspection tour last week in Hawally governorate, issuing 13 violation reports against several commercial shops. In a statement to state media, the ministry said that the campaign, led by Minister Boodai and carried out with the participation of the ministry's emergency inspection team on 14 March. The inspections identified a number of infractions, most notably failure to comply with decisions regulating fixed prices for food items. The ministry stressed that emergency teams will continue their inspection campaigns across markets to monitor prices, protect consumers and ensure that shops comply with regulatory decisions.

Separately, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry announced that emergency inspection teams in Farwaniya and Ahmadi governorates carried out field campaigns targeting commercial shops, issuing violation reports. The violations included failure to comply with fixed food pricing decisions, selling goods at prices higher than the approved rate, failure to display prices, improper promotional offers, failure to issue invoices and not specifying the country of origin of products.

The ministry also recorded a violation involving a mismatch between the actual commercial activity and the licensed activity of a shop. Legal measures have been taken against the violators, the statement said. MoCI affirmed that inspection campaigns will continue in various areas to control prices and ensure that commercial establishments adhere to market regulations.

Meanwhile, Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwailah conducted an inspection tour on Saturday of several cooperative societies in Mubarak Al-Kabeer Governorate to review stock levels and assess the availability of food and basic commodities. During the visit, Al-Huwailah met with a number of citizens and listened to their views and observations regarding the availability of goods. The step comes as part of the ministry's efforts to maintain direct communication with the public and ensure that cooperative markets are operating smoothly.

The minister confirmed that food supplies remain stable and that cooperative societies continue to meet the needs of consumers without shortages. She urged officials at the societies to maintain adequate quantities of essential commodities and give priority to national products. Al-Huwailah noted that such field tours are conducted in line with directives from the political leadership to closely monitor market conditions and ensure the continued availability of essential goods. She added that the ministry will continue to follow up with cooperative societies across all governorates to maintain market stability and meet the needs of citizens and residents.

PM Modi briefed by LuLu's Yusuffali as food supplies to GCC continue from India

India continues to play a crucial role in ensuring stable and uninterrupted supply of food products to GCC countries. Prime Minister Narendra Modi was briefed by Yusuffali M.A., Chairman of LuLu Group, on a series of initiatives being undertaken to maintain supply continuity during the current challenging times.

The meeting held at PM's official residence in New Delhi, focused on ongoing efforts to maintain the availability of essential food items across the Gulf region, which is home to a large Indian diaspora and has strong consumption of Indian-origin food products. Discussions also covered the importance of strengthening supply chain continuity and ensuring price stability during the current global challenges.

LuLu Group, which operates more than 280 hypermarkets across the GCC, is among the major players contributing to food distribution in the region. Its recent supply chain interventions are seen as part of broader efforts by retailers and governments to ensure there is no disruption in availability of essential goods, while also helping maintain market confidence and prevent panic buying.

During the interaction, Yusuffali briefed the Prime Minister on LuLu Group's recent initiatives aimed at supporting food security across its GCC markets. The group has been facilitating large-scale imports of both perishable and non-perishable food products (15,000 tons till date) through a combination of exclusive chartered flights, cargo vessels, and regular shipping services from multiple locations in India.

According to LuLu Group, '34 dedicated chartered flights' have come in so far and similar numbers are expected to continue in days to come. These efforts are supported by the group's own sourcing and export infrastructure across various Indian states, where production and logistics hubs are operating at enhanced capacity to meet international demand.

India continues to be a key trade partner for GCC countries, with Indian agricultural and food products widely consumed by both expatriates and local populations. The ongoing supply initiatives are also providing timely support to India's food and agriculture sector, enabling farmers, producers, and exporters to efficiently move their produce to international markets during a challenging period.

Yusuffali also outlined plans to continue these supply initiatives in the coming weeks, with additional chartered flights and cargo shipments being scheduled to support ongoing demand.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi acknowledged the importance of such initiatives and assured full support from the Government of India to facilitate the smooth export of food products to GCC countries.

Elite teams, advanced tech ensure vigilance on borders

At the core of Kuwait's customs operations lies a highly sophisticated command hub where every movement is tracked and every piece of data is analyzed in real time.

During a field visit, Al-Rai gained exclusive access to the control room of the General Administration of Customs—an advanced operational center widely regarded as the "beating brain" of border security.

Speaking on the sidelines of the tour, Deputy Director General for Research, Investigation and Customs Ports Affairs, Saleh Al-Omar, described the control room as the nation's first line of defense against smuggling.

Operating around the clock, the facility integrates skilled national personnel with cutting-edge technology to ensure rapid response and precise decision-making at all times.

Al-Omar highlighted the significant progress made in modernizing customs systems, with a strong reliance on artificial intelligence and advanced data analytics.

These technologies enable authorities to identify high-risk shipments with remarkable accuracy, while maintaining seamless connectivity across all land, sea, and air entry points. The goal, he noted, is to strike a balance between stringent security measures and the smooth flow of trade.

The control room functions through close coordination with key government entities, most notably the Ministry of Interior.

This integration has played a decisive role in thwarting numerous smuggling attempts, reflecting a unified national effort built on real-time information sharing and operational efficiency.

Describing the nature of operations, Al-Omar explained that the control room serves as the central command and monitoring unit for all customs activities. From tracking the movement of goods and travelers to handling routine and emergency reports, the system ensures immediate response and continuous oversight.

Operations within the facility are uninterrupted, supported by specialized teams working in shifts and a surveillance network of approximately 1,000 cameras installed across all ports. This extensive coverage guarantees full readiness, particularly amid rising trade volumes and increasingly sophisticated smuggling techniques. The technological backbone of the system includes integrated digital platforms that track shipments and link them to importer data, alongside smart surveillance systems and AI-

powered analytics. Together, these tools enhance the precision of monitoring and reduce reliance on random inspections.

Incoming reports are handled with speed and efficiency. Each case is analyzed by specialists, classified according to risk level, and immediately assigned to field teams for action. Continuous monitoring ensures that every case is followed through to resolution. Risk management remains a cornerstone of operations. By analyzing historical smuggling patterns and building comprehensive databases, customs authorities can target suspicious consignments with accuracy. This strategic approach not only strengthens control but also facilitates legitimate trade by minimizing unnecessary delays.

Al-Omar emphasized the importance of ongoing coordination with national agencies, particularly security and regulatory bodies. Instant information exchange and joint operations have significantly enhanced the effectiveness of border protection efforts. The achievements of the control room are notable. Authorities have successfully intercepted multiple smuggling attempts while also accelerating customs clearance procedures. Continuous upgrades to electronic systems have further improved overall operational performance.

However, challenges persist. Smuggling methods continue to evolve, trade volumes are increasing, and the demand for constant technological upgrades remains high. Addressing these challenges

requires sustained investment in both systems and human capital.

To that end, customs authorities place strong emphasis on workforce development. Personnel undergo specialized training programs, both locally and internationally, alongside workshops focused on modern technologies, ensuring they remain equipped to handle complex and rapidly changing scenarios.

Supporting this centralized system are control rooms established at each customs port, serving as backup operational centers. These units maintain direct communication with the main command center and relevant authorities, ensuring continuity of operations under all circumstances.

Public engagement also plays a vital role. Through the "Masdar" application, citizens and residents can submit reports and complaints confidentially. Authorities stress that community cooperation is essential in safeguarding national security and preventing the entry of prohibited items.

Al-Omar concluded by commending the dedication and professionalism of customs personnel, describing them as a critical pillar in protecting the nation while facilitating trade.

He reaffirmed the administration's commitment to ongoing development, enhanced coordination, and maintaining the highest standards of operational efficiency—assuring the public that the country's supply lines remain secure and fully operational despite current challenges.

ALSAYER and Lexus debut the New IS350 with refined performance, design

Mohamed Naser Al Sayer & Sons Est. Co. W.L.L and Lexus announce the arrival of the new IS in Kuwait, marking the latest evolution of the compact front-engine, rear-wheel-drive (FR) sports sedan that has pursued the joy of driving since the first-generation model debuted in 1999.

Widely regarded as a cornerstone of the Lexus driving experience, the IS continues to earn praise for its excellent performance and sporty design, while extensive worldwide testing, including at the Technical Center Shimoyama, continues to refine the unique "Lexus Driving Signature."

In this update with the launch of the new IS350, the key development theme is "maturation." Building on the strengths the IS has pursued to date, Lexus further polishes a pleasant driving experience where the driver can effortlessly communicate with the car, while evolving the model's aggressive and sporty design into an even sharper, more purposeful expression.

The result is a more focused sports sedan that brings driver confidence and comfort into closer harmony, whether navigating daily city routes or enjoying winding roads.

Commenting on the launch of the latest evolution of the IS, Lexus International Chief Engineer, Yasushi Muto, said: "In refining the IS, our unwavering focus was on achieving true dialogue between car and driver, where the driver's intentions are faithfully conveyed to the vehicle, and the car's responses are clearly felt in return. With that ideal in mind, we've pursued development without compromise, always aiming for the next level."

Muto added that "building on the IS's distinctive ride comfort and outstanding vehicle control, the model has evolved to deliver an even more engaging experience from within the cabin.

This evolution is driven by careful attention to detail in the redesigned interior, advancements in preventive safety technologies through Lexus Safety System +, and the integration of the latest multimedia system. We invite you to experience the pure joy of driving in the newly reimagined IS."

With refinement in both performance and design as the guiding direction, development of the IS350 focuses on elevating steering feel, vehicle stability, ride comfort, and cockpit usability, all key elements for a compact FR sports sedan intended to keep the driver fully engaged with the road.

To further enhance driving performance, the Electric Power Steering system is revamped with the adoption of a variable gear rack. This supports more precise path tracing with minimal

steering input at intersections and through successive corners, while maintaining stability during straight-line driving.

In parallel, the Adaptive Variable Suspension system is improved to deliver a high-level balance between vehicle stability and reduced road-surface shock, helping to achieve a more comfortable and composed driving feel without compromising the direct connection that defines the Lexus Driving Signature.

> • Delivers exhilarating driving experience that strengthens dialogue between driver and car
>
> • Evolves aggressive and sporty interior and exterior design with a sharper, more focused character

Supporting safe and secure driving, the new IS350 advances the Lexus Safety System + and introduces additional features designed to make long-distance travel more relaxed and comfortable.

Expanded safety and driver assistance functions are complemented by Lexus Teammate Advanced Drive, an enhanced driver assistance system that supports highway driving.

On the exterior, the new IS350 introduces a redesigned front face that emphasizes a low center of gravity and wide stance, reinforcing a powerful and sharp styling identity.

The F SPORT model further enhances this dynamic appeal with a newly designed rear spoiler that improves aerodynamic performance, as well as newly styled 19-inch lightweight aluminum

wheels that reflect the IS's sharp, responsive driving character.

The exterior color lineup expands to a total of eight options, including the addition of Neutrino Gray, a new hue that expresses a dynamic sense of motion through its hard-toned light gray base infused with metallic highlights, offering more choice to suit diverse lifestyles and preferences.

Inside, Lexus places particular focus on the cockpit, an essential priority in a compact FR sports sedan, to ensure an environment that helps to concentrate on driving.

The center display is enlarged to 12.3 inches, delivering high visibility and intuitive operation while aligning with the driver's natural line of sight. The TFT LCD meter in front of the driver has also been increased to 12.3 inches, providing clear, easy-to-read graphics that communicate information directly and intuitively, supporting confident decision-making in real time.

The interior design further evolves with newly developed "Forged Bamboo" ornamentation applied to the upper console and start switch bezel. The natural bamboo fibers create a distinctive "In-ei" shading effect, adding an expressive sense of depth that complements the IS350's dynamic energy and enhances the sporty feel of the cabin.

Additionally, a new interior color, Prominence, inspired by the vivid glow of solar flares, is introduced to create an aggressive and sporty cabin atmosphere. The launch of the new IS350 reflects Lexus' continued commitment to delivering vehicles that combine refined craftsmanship, driver-focused performance, and advanced technologies that enhance everyday confidence and peace of mind.

Kuwait banks tighten prize draw rules as KD18 million payout nears

As Kuwaiti banks prepare to resume long-delayed prize draws on savings accounts and banking products, attention is turning to a sweeping overhaul of the rules governing these high-value incentives.

The upcoming draws are expected to distribute approximately KD 18.2 million in prize money, but under stricter regulatory standards designed to enhance fairness, transparency, and customer protection.

At the heart of the new framework is a firm restriction on repeat wins. Banking and regulatory authorities have agreed on measures that prevent customers who win prizes from re-entering draws at the same bank for specified periods, depending on the value of the prize received.

The move follows the implementation of a comprehensive governance system that standardizes draw procedures, strengthens oversight, and ensures full compliance with regulatory requirements.

According to banking sources, winners of prizes valued at KD 50,000 or less will be excluded from participating in further draws at the same bank for a period of 90 working days—equivalent to roughly four months.

For prizes exceeding KD 50,000, including grand prizes ranging between KD 1 million and KD 2 million, the exclusion period extends to 12 months.

The system also maintains that every KD 50 deposited grants customers one entry into the draw, with a minimum deposit threshold set at KD 200 to qualify for participation.

While the new rules aim to create a more equitable playing field, some banks have expressed concerns about potential shifts in customer behavior.

Specifically, there are fears that prize winners may transfer their deposits to other banks in search of additional opportunities, potentially leading to a redistribution of liquidity across the sector.

However, sources familiar with ongoing discussions indicate that such movements are unlikely to disrupt the overall balance of bank portfolios. Instead, any transfer of funds is expected to result in a natural rotation of prize-seeking customers among banks, rather than a concentration in any single institution.

Further measures under consideration include setting a cap on individual deposits eligible for prize draws, with expectations that the ceiling will not exceed KD 500,000

per customer. This would effectively limit the maximum number of entries per participant

to 10,000, reinforcing fairness by preventing disproportionate advantages.

The resumption of prize draws follows a hiatus of nearly one year, during which regulators introduced a series of stringent controls to ensure integrity and accountability. These include mandatory rotation of external audit firms overseeing the draws, comprehensive auditing of all transactions regardless of prize value, and continuous monitoring of the software used to select winners.

Additional safeguards require independent internal audits, live broadcast coverage of draw events, and the public disclosure of winners' names on official platforms and media channels. Banks are

also obligated to maintain detailed records of all draw results for future reference.

With regulatory approvals from the Central Bank of Kuwait and licensing from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in place, the first wave of resumed draws is expected to begin with the National Bank of Kuwait, which plans to relaunch its "Al Jawhara" prize scheme in early April. Other banks are set to follow, either simultaneously or in phases throughout the month.

As the sector moves forward, the new framework signals a decisive shift toward greater discipline and fairness in prize-linked banking products—ensuring that opportunity is more evenly distributed while maintaining confidence in the system.

Jazeera Airways resumes flights to Jeddah via Al-Qaisumah Airport from April 7

Jazeera Airways announced on Saturday that commercial flights to and from Jeddah via Al-Qaisumah Airport in Saudi Arabia will be resumed, with three weekly flights starting from April 7.

Jazeera CEO Barathan Pasupathi told KUNA that the flights will be resuming on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, explaining that this reflects the company's commitment to connecting Kuwait and main destinations during the current situation. Pasupathi added that the Jeddah destination is a main gateway in Saudi Arabia, serving a wide segment of travelers who have cultural, economic, and religious ties, as well as continuing transport of essential goods.

French embassy reopens visa section, resumes consular services

The French Embassy in Kuwait announced Tuesday the reopening of its visa section and the resumption of consular services, as well as operations at the Visa Application Centre (CEPIGO), following temporary closure of services.

In a press release, the embassy advised those wishing to obtain a visa to France to follow the usual procedures, which require applicants to begin their application electronically through the official French visa website and book an appointment in advance at the Visa Application Centre.

The Truth About Staying
Fit During Gulf Summers

In extreme Gulf heat, fitness is no longer about pushing harder — it's about training smarter and understanding your body's limits.

By Hermoine Macura-Noble
Special to The Times Kuwait

I n the Gulf, summer fitness is often framed as a test of discipline—wake up earlier, train harder, push through the heat. But medical professionals warn that when temperatures in the Gulf exceed 45℃, exercising outdoors becomes less about commitment and more about risk.

"Heat adds significant strain on the cardiovascular system, particularly during physical activity," says Dr. Stefan Schneider. As the body attempts to cool itself, heart rate increases and dehydration can occur rapidly, especially in humid conditions common across the region.

The science backs this up. In hot and humid conditions, the body struggles to regulate temperature because sweat evaporates less efficiently. This makes cooling down harder and increases the risk of overheating. According to fitness specialists at Fit Fortune, individuals can lose 1–2 liters of fluid per hour during intense exercise in the heat; far more than most people realize.

This is where one of the biggest misconceptions comes in: that drinking water alone is enough.

"Water alone isn't enough; you're losing critical electrolytes through sweat," explains guidance from UAE-based hydration experts at Electrag Gold. Without replacing minerals like sodium and potassium, the body's fluid balance can be disrupted, leading to fatigue, dizziness, and muscle cramps.

Global health authorities echo this. The World Health Organization highlights that heavy sweating in heat can lead to substantial fluid and electrolyte loss, with individuals potentially losing several liters of water a day during activity. "We need to drink a lot more than we think," says veteran performance coach David Richardson.

But hydration is only part of the picture. Timing and intensity are equally critical.

Experts recommend avoiding outdoor exercise during peak heat hours and instead training early in the morning or later in the evening. Even then, workouts should be adjusted. Lower intensity, shorter sessions, and longer recovery periods are key to avoiding heat-related illness.

Hydration strategies also need to be more deliberate. Guidance from performance and health platforms suggests drinking fluids before, during, and after exercise, rather than waiting until thirst sets in. Monitoring urine color—aiming for pale yellow—is often recommended as a simple indicator of proper hydration.

There is also a broader truth that challenges the Gulf's performance-driven fitness culture: summer is not the time to push limits. Instead, it is a season of adaptation. Air-conditioned gyms, indoor classes, and water-based activities become essential tools; not shortcuts. Even everyday factors, such as constant transitions between outdoor heat and indoor air conditioning, can affect how the body regulates temperature.

Ultimately, staying fit in a Gulf summer is less about intensity and more about awareness. It means recognizing early warning signs—fatigue, dizziness, cramps—and responding quickly. It means fueling the body properly, not just with water but with balanced nutrition. And most importantly, it means understanding that rest and recovery are part of fitness, not a break from it.

The truth is simple: in extreme heat, pushing harder is not the goal. Training smarter is.

Hermoine Macura-Noble
The first Australian English speaking News Anchor in the Middle East. She is also the Author of Faces of the Middle East and Founder of US-based 501c3 charity – The House of Rest which helps to ease the suffering of victims of war. For more from our Contributing Editor, you can follow her on Instagram, @ hello_hermoine

Baccarat Hotel New York

Where Crystal Becomes a Way of Living

By Noura Khan
Special to The Times Kuwait

In a city like New York, where luxury hotels constantly compete to impress, it is rare to find a place that leaves an impression beyond the stay itself. During my recent visit, my experience at Baccarat Hotel New York stood out in a way that felt deeper than luxury—it felt meaningful.

Perfectly located in the heart of Manhattan on 53rd Street, directly across from the Museum of Modern Art and just steps away from Central Park and Fifth Avenue, the hotel offers a balance that is not easy to achieve—immediate access to the city's energy, yet a sense of calm the moment you step inside. Each morning, I would walk out into one of the world's most dynamic neighborhoods, and within minutes, return to a space that felt entirely removed from its intensity.

From the moment of arrival, it became clear that this was not a conventional hotel, but a carefully curated world built around a singular identity. The welcome was understated, the details intentional, and the atmosphere carried a quiet confidence that did not rely on excess.

That identity traces back to 1764, when the French House of Baccarat, associated with fine crystalware, was founded. Over centuries, it became synonymous with royal luxury, its crystals adorning palaces and marking some of history's most prestigious occasions. Today, that legacy is no longer confined to display—it is reimagined as a living experience.

The first moment that truly captures this transformation is in the lobby. The iconic wall composed of hundreds of crystal pieces, crafted from the signature Harcourt glasses, reflects light in a way that feels almost theatrical. It is not simply décor, but a living installation that evolves throughout the day as light shifts across its surface. Grand crystal chandeliers hang throughout the space, each one sculptural and commanding, reinforcing the brand's deep-rooted relationship with light and reflection.

This presence of crystal extends seamlessly into the guest rooms, where the experience becomes more personal. From finely crafted glassware to subtle decorative accents and lighting elements, crystal is not an addition—it is part of the language of the space, quietly reminding you of the heritage behind every detail.

The interiors, designed by the French duo, Gilles & Boissier, strike a delicate balance between Parisian classicism and contemporary New York sophistication. Every corner feels considered, yet never overwhelming, allowing elegance to exist alongside comfort.

Stepping into my room, what I noticed first was the silence—a rare luxury in a city that never truly pauses. Floor-to-ceiling windows framed the city in a way that softened its intensity rather than amplified it. One morning, I found myself sitting with a cup of coffee, simply observing the view, and realizing how profoundly a hotel can shape your perception of a destination.
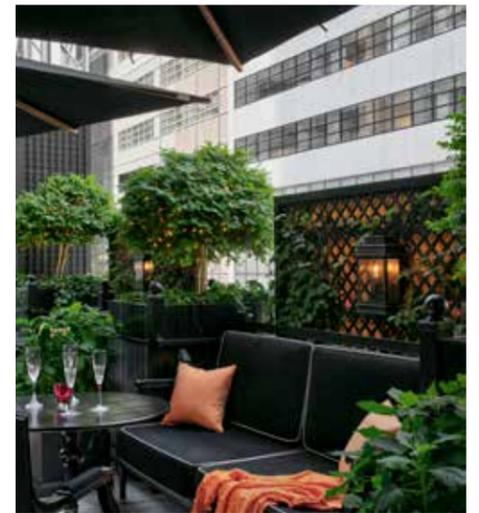
Inside, the details reflected a high level of craftsmanship: refined textiles, a marble bathroom, and amenities curated with precision, including products by the renowned perfumer Francis Kurkdjian. The crystal elements present throughout the room added a subtle continuity, connecting the private space to the broader identity of the hotel. What stood out most was the restraint—luxury here is not loud, but composed, elegant, and self-assured.

Throughout my stay, the hotel became more than a place to return to—it became part of my daily rhythm. Mornings began in the Grand Salon, where natural light and refined surroundings set a calm tone for the day ahead. Evenings ended with a sense of quiet retreat, a contrast to the city's constant motion. The culinary experience, led by Michelin-starred chef Gabriel Kreuther, followed the same philosophy—refined, thoughtful, and balanced.

Another highlight was the spa by La Mer, the only one of its kind in the United States. The space offers a serene, almost European atmosphere, anchored by a striking marble pool that feels both intimate and architectural.

What ultimately defines this hotel is not just its level of luxury, but the way it reinterprets it. Art is not decorative—it is integrated into the experience, from curated pieces throughout the property to thoughtful details that invite interaction and reflection. Despite being in the very center of Manhattan, the overall feeling is closer to Paris—in the calmness, in the service, and in the understated way luxury is delivered without excess.

In the end, my stay at Baccarat Hotel New York was not simply a hotel experience, but a fully immersive journey—one that transforms a heritage spanning over 250 years into something contemporary, tangible, and deeply felt. Here, luxury is not displayed to impress, but carefully crafted to be understood by those who truly seek its meaning.

Noura Khan, a travel influencer and content creator, is a Kuwaiti national, holds a degree in law from Kuwait University and has worked as a journalist prior to taking up a position in the government. In 2018 she started blogging on travel and visited more than 57 countries since. She has more than 125k followers on her blog post @nourajtraveller is well appreciated for content and travel information. Noura writes exclusively for The Times Kuwait on her travel visits.

Thought
for the
week

" To ask what causes poverty is like asking what causes cold. It is the absence of energy. Similarly, poverty is the absence of wealth. We should ask, "what are the causes of wealth?"

- Madsen Pirie
British researcher and author

IBS: Irritable Bowel Syndrome

Ask Mira: Eating Right to Live Happy & Healthy

Recently, I have been dealing with a lot of irritable bowel syndrome cases, or what is known as colon problems. The reason for IBS is still unknown and can happen suddenly. Common symptoms include flatulence, abdominal gases, constipation and diarrhea at the same time. And these symptoms can even become worse with stress.

For all IBS sufferers, diet modifications will surely reduce those symptoms a lot. But you need to be aware of all the foods you are eating to see which items are causing extra discomfort. One note to remember is that the symptoms are very personal and unique for each individual, and one symptom can affect one person but not the other one.

Nutrition Modifications: Poor eating habits such as skipping meals, low fiber and water intake, excessive fatty food intake, sensitivity to milk and other dairy products, excessive caffeine and alcohol intake need to be modified as a first step to relieve the IBS symptoms.

The most common dietary treatment is a high fiber diet, especially for those who suffer from constipation. But some patients may not benefit from an increase in dietary fiber which may worsen the symptoms for them. That is why the increase in fiber should be gradual, involving a variety of fibers and an adequate water intake of at least 1.5 liters per day.

IBS symptoms tend to increase after a large meal, particularly if the meal is high in fat, or if the meal is eaten quickly. You should try and split your meals into five small and healthy ones.

Avoid eating quickly and try to relax after a meal.

As I mentioned before, flatulence is a major symptom for IBS. Some food items should be excluded completely from the diet then reintroduced gradually once the problem is solved. The items include broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, green pepper, capsicum, beans, foul, hummus, burghul, lentil or couscous. Carbonated soft drinks should also be excluded.

Some individuals with IBS should try and eliminate all sources of lactose from their diets, due to the lactose intolerance. Lactose is mainly found in dairy products such as milk, cheeses and yogurt. Remember that these foods give us important nutrients, and their reduced consumption can affect our calcium and vitamin D levels; a workaround is to start taking supplements.

Some people can feel extremely bloated with a strong stomach pain right after eating onion or garlic. If this is the case, these two items should be excluded as well.

My personal advice to people suffering from IBS is to:!
Keep a diary of your food, fluid and symptoms, as this will help you track your case

Start with the basics of three low fat, high fiber meals with two light snacks per day. Drink 1.5 liters of water daily and avoid excessive intake of soft drinks and caffeine. Eat slowly and make mealtimes as relaxing as possible.

Once symptoms have settled, reintroduce the foods excluded but gradually.

Consider consulting a dietitian for individual advice regarding your diet and any modifications.

Hope this article was beneficial to you.

Eat like Mira
Create healthy habits, not restrictions

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

Coriander Squares
(Kothimbir Vadi)

Kothimbir Vadil is a famous Maharashtrian appetizer or snack that is quick and easy to make, as well as being highly nutritious. In Marathi language, the 'Kothimbir' refers to coriander leaves, and 'vadi' stands for cubes, squares or slices.

Coriander is good for health and also used to flavor many Indian recipes. It can be steamed and stored in a refrigerator for weeks and it will stay good.
Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes.
Cooling time: Half hour
Yield : 20 to 24 cubes

Ingredients:
- 1 cup gram flour (Besan)
- 2 tbsp rice flour
- 2 cups coriander leaves (chopped)
- 2 tbsp oil
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 3 tbsp roasted and crushed peanuts
- 1 tbsp sesame seeds
- 1 tsp green chili paste
- 1 tbsp ginger/garlic paste
- 1/4 tsp turmeric powder
- 1/4 tsp red chili powder
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp sugar
- Pinch of asafoetida
- Salt to taste
- Oil for shallow frying

Chef Chhaya Thakker

Preparation:
- Add gram flour, rice flour, salt, turmeric and chili powder in a large mixing bowl
- Add one cup water to the bowl gradually to make a thick batter
- Add oil to a non-stick pan, bring to heat and then add cumin seeds, crushed peanuts and chili, ginger/garlic pastes and the asafoetida.
- Add a cup of water and bring to boil
- Gently pour the prepared batter into pan and stream cook on a high flame for
- 7 to 10 minutes or till firm and cooked
- Transfer to a greased tray and let it cool to room temperature
- Cut into squares and set aside
- Shallow fry the squares till golden brown and crisp on both sides
- Serve hot with tomato chutney or ketchup or green chutney
- Alternatively, the cut squares can be deep fried or steamed.

EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Solving the Tuberculosis Puzzle

Anafi Mataka, Sharonann Lynch
Anafi Mataka is Head of Division at the African Society for Laboratory Medicine. Sharonann Lynch is Co-Director of the Center for Global Health Policy and Politics at Georgetown University.

The bacteria that cause tuberculosis have been known since 1882, and an effective treatment was developed decades ago. And yet TB remains the world's deadliest infectious disease.

The implications of this stubborn public-health puzzle are dire. In 2024, an estimated 10.7 million people fell ill with TB, but only about 8.3 million were diagnosed. Many of those who go undiagnosed eventually die from the disease. Many more unknowingly spread it.

The 'diagnostic gap'—the difference between confirmed and estimated TB cases—is the greatest barrier to an effective global response. Some see this as a technical constraint; but it is not. The tools to detect TB rapidly and accurately now exist and, crucially, can be deployed far closer to where people first seek care, allowing for same-day treatment.

Near-point-of-care (NPOC) molecular tests, which the World Health Organization recently recommended for the first time, represent a new and important tool. They are small, portable, and use easy-to-collect tongue swabs, rather than the phlegm samples that many people, particularly children and those with HIV, struggle to produce. And they are more affordable than other types of molecular tests and instruments.

Equally important, NPOC tests produce results in about 30 minutes, unlike traditional lab tests, which require days or weeks to turn around. That means they can be used for same-day diagnosis

> " *A slow rollout is indefensible, given the high human cost. Every day, TB spreads quietly and persistently. Delayed diagnosis not only postpones treatment; it also increases transmission, raises mortality, and accelerates drug resistance* "

in primary-care facilities, such as the community health-care centers that are typically closer to where people live. The testing equipment is battery-powered, meaning patchy national grids need not limit access to life-saving care.

With the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria starting its next funding cycle in early 2026, eligible countries have an opportunity to secure substantial resources for rolling out and scaling up this new technology. Governments that present detailed roadmaps, including a breakdown of costs, strategies for integrating NPOC tests into national TB plans, and measurable coverage targets, are far more likely to unlock support.

Those that fail to act will have to wait three years for the next funding cycle. In global health, timing is often as important as evidence.

A slow rollout is indefensible, given the high human cost. Every day, TB spreads quietly and persistently. Delayed diagnosis does not just postpone treatment; it also causes suffering for millions of people by increasing transmission, raising mortality, and accelerating drug resistance. Each untreated case represents an individual tragedy that augurs more untreated cases, adding to the public-health burden.

Global health is full of examples of innovations that took decades to reach scale. For example, even though better-performing

molecular TB tests were endorsed over a decade ago, microscopy testing, a century-old technique that misses a substantial share of cases, remains widely used.

Harnessing the transformative potential of NPOC testing requires significant political support for a rapid rollout. That appears to exist on paper. At the United Nations High-Level Meeting on the Fight Against Tuberculosis in 2023, governments committed to achieving universal access to rapid molecular TB tests by 2027. But in several regions with a high disease burden, only a minority of countries are on track to meet that target.

NPOC technology could help close the gap between ambition and reality by decentralizing TB testing. Primary health-care facilities and lower-tier testing centers that still rely on microscopy, especially in rural areas, are obvious candidates for upgrading to NPOC tests, as are high-volume treatment units.

Beyond accelerating the initial rollout of these diagnostics, policymakers must provide training for clinicians, ensure their integration into HIV and community-health programs, and strengthen supportive systems such as supply chains and data management.

A rapid test is merely the start of a care pathway; without system-wide preparedness, technological gains could be squandered. Past rollouts have faltered not because the science was weak, but because health systems were not ready.

To translate rhetoric into reality, transparency and accountability will be essential. National roadmaps must include measurable milestones, standardized scorecards, and meaningful reporting mechanisms. Civil-society organizations, often the most effective advocates for underserved patients, must be involved in monitoring progress.

Previous global health campaigns have made it clear that technology can save lives only when it is matched by political ambition. This is the other missing piece of the TB puzzle. To eliminate the scourge of TB once and for all, developing-country leaders must be willing to accelerate the uptake of NPOC tests.

Rethinking Waste Today for a Sustainable Future

In this regard, two waste analysis studies published recently by researchers at Kuwait University highlights the mounting unsustainability of Kuwait's MSW generation, and recommends solutions to address some of the fundamental waste sector challenges. The studies suggest policy initiatives and regulatory reforms that could further strengthen sustainable waste management practices.

Relative to earlier studies, the two new studies provide deeper, more discrete data quantifying and characterizing the MSW generated, and on food wastage patterns among households in Kuwait. The studies also frame the MSW challenge from an institutional, economic, and policy aspect, and recommend strategies and techniques to address the country's growing waste crisis. The studies revealed that on average, each person in Kuwait generates 1.7 kg of MSW daily—more than double the global average of 0.74 kg per day. Organic waste (37.1%), plastics (26%), and paper (25.6%) constituted the three largest components of MSW. Food waste, a sub-component of organic waste, formed the highest fraction of MSW at 35.1 percent—a steep increase from the 26 percent estimated by Kuwait's Environmental Public Authority (EPA) in 2019.

Statistical analysis of results from the quantifying study's household waste survey—conducted among 150 households over a two-week monitoring period—showed that excess food production (58.8%) and rancid or foods past expiry date (14%) accounted for most of the food discarded by households. Nearly half (46%) of the survey respondents said that they discarded excess food produced in the garbage while an equal percentage said they donated it to food banks.

With regard to expired food stuff, most households (40%) said they disposed of it in the garbage; around 23 percent said they used their judgement to decide if expired food was still edible; and 4.7 percent reported feeding expired food to animals. Additionally,

40 percent of households reported that they sometimes donate food, 29.3 percent said they always donate food, and 20.7 percent indicated they never donated food. Fresh fruits and vegetables accounted for the largest chunk of waste, with Fridays resulting in maximum per capita wastage at 1.97 kg.

The study identified cooking and purchasing more food than needed as one of the main contributors to household food waste, and suggested that efforts to reduce this waste should focus on improving kitchen skills, such as portion sizes and meal planning. The study stressed the need to tailor food waste prevention strategies and campaigns to highlight how holidays and social gatherings generate excessive food waste, and to emphasize that donating excess food was a more humanitarian and environmentally better option than sending it to landfills.

While many developed countries have a higher rate of MSW generation than Kuwait, they also tend to treat nearly 90 percent of their MSW systematically, with only a fraction sent to landfills. In contrast, a study by the EPA in 2022 revealed that nearly 88 percent of MSW in Kuwait ends up in one of six unorganized landfills and only around 11 percent was recycled.

The study showed that untreated organic waste, in just three of the operational landfills, was estimated to emit over 4.5 million tons of carbon dioxide equivalents annually, contributing to greenhouse gases (GHG) that precipitate global warming and climate change. Additionally, liquids from the untreated organic waste produced highly toxic leachate that contaminates the surrounding soil, and sinks down to pollute the country's scant groundwater supplies.

The study on characterization of MSW revealed the substantial potential to redirect waste towards recycling and energy recovery programs. For instance, biogas, generated from organic waste using anaerobic digesters, could be used as renewable fuel, or the waste could be composted to serve as soil enhancers.The study noted that preventing food waste from ending up in unstructured landfills could also result in significant benefits to public health and yield economic and environmental advantages.

Based on historic growth rate, the three million tonnes of MSW generated in Kuwait is expected to increase by eight percent annually. The absence of an effective waste management strategy to guide policy- and decision-making processes, the dearth of properly engineered modern landfills, the paucity of economic incentives to promote material recycling and waste-to-energy recovery approaches, have all contributed to the steady rise of MSW in Kuwait. The two analytical studies on waste underlined the need to introduce effective plans, policies, and processes to manage waste, as well as implement coherent awareness and outreach initiatives to educate and encourage wider stakeholder participation in waste management strategies. Unless urgent mitigatory measures to reduce, reuse, and recycle waste are implemented, Kuwait could soon find itself overwhelmed by an avalanche of waste.

Global food loss and waste is estimated to cost over US$1 trillion annually, and reducing this waste offers one of the most cost-effective, scalable, and high-impact solutions to address hunger and food insecurity worldwide. Reducing waste also cuts GHG emissions, especially that of methane, from landfills mitigating their contribution to global warming and climate change. However, for this transition to succeed, we all have a role to play.

A statement from UNEP notes that a zero-waste future is possible when we all work together. Governments can advance food waste prevention through national policies and regulations that reduce food waste, encourage food circularity and sustainable development. Businesses can strengthen partnerships with public enterprises to find innovative solutions that support the transition to circular food systems and improve efficiency across supply chains.

As consumers, we all can contribute to reducing waste by planning, buying, storing, preparing, and consuming food more mindfully; supporting food recovery, redistribution and composting initiatives; reducing waste and saving resources; and working to build circular food systems. Together we can ensure that all food is valued, not wasted.

EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

AI-Driven Productivity
Growth That Society Wants

Michael R. Strain
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Since OpenAI's ChatGPT burst onto the scene in late 2022, economists and commentators have been discussing generative AI's possible effects on productivity. But from a cultural and political perspective, it is useful to ask a normative question: How much productivity growth should society desire?

The economic disruption that accompanies rapid productivity growth can be wrenching. The British Industrial Revolution, for example, led to stagnant or declining average wages in at least the last two decades of the 18th century, with some economists arguing that it took several more decades for industrialization to raise typical workers' living standards. Meanwhile, real wages plummeted in some occupations, and many laid-off workers struggled for years to find jobs. The social consequences were enormous. People flocked to crowded cities without clean water and adequate sanitation. Disease was rampant. Factory employment was hazardous. Workers were agitated.

It is no surprise that Oliver Twist and The Communist Manifesto were published a decade apart, during this period of upheaval. Charles Dickens was a great critic of Victorian London's poverty, workhouses, and poor sanitation.

Karl Marx schlepped through the streets of Dickens's London, often studying in the reading room of the British Museum, directly observing how technology was shaking society to its core.

When Marx and Friedrich Engels wrote in 1848 that "constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production" caused changes in "the whole relations of society," they were not theorizing; they were describing what they saw out their window. "All that is solid," they wrote, "melts into air."

At the same time, because output per worker is the key driver of long-term living standards, it is tempting to argue that we should want productivity to grow as rapidly as possible. Rising living standards mean new and better

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Seemingly small changes to growth rates can have a huge economic impact. Productivity growth was around 3 percent at the peak of the 1990s digital revolution, compared to roughly 1.5 percent following the 2008 global financial crisis. The former rate would double Americans' standard of living in 24 years, while the latter rate would double it in 47 years.

Finding the right balance between the damage from economic and social disruption and the benefits of rapidly rising productivity and living standards requires considering three key questions.

First, citizens and policymakers must decide their optimality criterion. Is the goal to make aggregate economic output grow as quickly as possible? Or is the aim to increase incomes at a rapid pace while preventing a jump in poverty or long-term unemployment? Or perhaps they want to pursue an entirely different approach, like attempting to forecast all possible outcomes and using economic policy to improve the worst one.

A second consideration is the living standard of future generations. Many people in the American Rust Belt would likely have preferred a slower rate of productivity growth over the past several decades, which would have blunted the impact of manufacturing-job losses.

At the same time, all of us alive today should be glad that our lives are much better than they would have been if our forebears had slammed on the brakes during, say, the Second Industrial

Revolution beginning in the late 19th century, which introduced electrification, the telegraph, blast furnaces, and mass production.

The final consideration is the pace of technological advance: The faster it improves, the greater the social instability and the harder it is for laid-off workers to find new jobs. While 18th-century Britain was not ready for the rapid adoption of mechanized factory production, I would argue, controversially, to be sure, that the United States managed the pace of change during the late-20th-century information age relatively well. Will the AI revolution be more like the former or the latter?

Part of the reason the US handled technological change at the end of the last century better than Britain did in the late 1700s is that there were improvements in economic policy, including the development of the social safety net and expanded access to education. With these policies in place, the US, the United Kingdom, and other advanced economies are much better equipped to manage even extremely rapid technological change.

Given this, I hope that the AI revolution ushers in substantial increases in trend productivity growth. The benefits of productivity growth as rapid as 5 percent or 6 percent—much faster than the 3 percent pace of the internet boom—would clearly outweigh the costs, given our system's ability to absorb and address the consequent disruption.

'Creative destruction' creates as well as destroys. While US politics is drenched in nostalgia for an imagined halcyon past, few people would actually turn back the clock to the 1970s if given the choice. And the same will be true of people one, two, and three decades from now, and beyond.

Screen time in dim indoor light worsens myopia

Myopia, or nearsightedness, is a common refractive error of the eye where distant objects appear blurry because the eyeball is too long or the cornea—the transparent curved portion in front of the eye covering the iris and pupil—is too curved, causing light to focus in front of the retina resulting in blurred distance vision, squinting, and eye strain.

Myopia is gaining epidemic proportions with an estimated 2 billion people currently affected, and, although the rates vary significantly in different regions of the world, projections show that nearly half the global population could be impacted by this eye disorder by 2050. Myopia is managed with glasses, contact lenses, or surgery, but without timely treatment myopia is one of the most common causes of vision impairment, with severe myopia increasing the risk of retinal detachment, cataracts, glaucoma, and macular degeneration.

A risk for myopia may be inherited from one's parents, with genetic linkage studies identifying 18 possible loci—the fixed location of specific genes—on 15 different chromosomes that are associated with myopia, but none of these loci have been identified as part of the candidate genes that cause myopia. Latest studies assert that instead of a simple one-gene locus controlling the onset of myopia, a complex interaction of many mutated proteins acting in concert and causing defects in the control of structural proteins could be the actual cause of myopia.

Human population studies suggest that while genetic factors account for 60–90 percent of variance in refraction, currently identified variants account for only a small fraction of myopia cases. This suggests the existence of a large number of yet unidentified low-frequency or small-effect variants underlying the majority of myopia cases. Previous studies have shown that although genetics undoubtedly plays a significant role in myopia, environmental factors are also crucial.

Environmental factors that increase the risk of myopia include insufficient time spent outdoors exposed to natural light, particularly among children and young adults, and low physical activity. A new study by scientists at the State University of New York College (SUNY) in the United States now suggests that myopia may be influenced by extended time spent indoors engaged in near work under dim lighting conditions that reduces light reaching the retina. They also identified a single neural pathway as being responsible for both causing and reducing myopia.

In a laboratory environment, researchers usually trigger myopia in laboratory models through visual deprivation or the use of negative lenses ((minus lenses used to correct myopia), with the two methods believed to involve different neuronal pathways. In clinical settings, doctors slow myopia progression using multiple strategies that likely act through separate biological mechanisms (multifocal lenses, ophthalmic atropine, contrast-reduction, promoting time outdoors, and others).

The new study now suggests there may be a single neuronal explanation that connects these different methods of both inducing and controlling myopia.

The research findings attempt to solve a long-standing question in vision science: why do such varied factors, from close-up work and dim indoor lighting to treatments like atropine drops, multifocal lenses, and increased time outdoors, all seem to affect how myopia progresses?

The study explains that in bright outdoor light, the pupil constricts to protect the eye while still allowing ample light to reach the retina. When people focus on close objects indoors, such as digital screens or books, the pupil can also constrict, not because of brightness, but to sharpen the image. In dim lighting, this combination may significantly reduce retinal illumination.

Under this proposed mechanism, if lighting is too dim and the pupil narrows excessively at short viewing distances, retinal activity may not be strong enough to support normal visual development. In contrast, exposure to bright light allows the pupil to constrict in response to brightness rather than focusing distance, helping maintain healthier retinal stimulation.

The study also found that the use of negative lenses decrease retinal illumination by causing the pupil to narrow through accommodation—the eye's automatic, reflex-driven process of adjusting the lens shape by becoming more convex for near objects and flatter for distant ones to maintain clear focus.

This narrowing intensifies when viewing distance is shortened or when overly strong negative lenses are worn. It becomes even more pronounced when accommodation is sustained for prolonged periods of time, and increases further once the eye has already become myopic. Researchers also observed additional disruptions in eye turning during accommodation and reduced effectiveness of eye blinks in triggering pupil constriction in myopic eyes.

If validated, the proposed mechanism could significantly change how scientists and clinicians think about myopia progression. The theory suggests that maintaining safe exposure to bright light while limiting accommodative pupil constriction may help control myopia. That reduction in constriction can be achieved by lowering accommodative demand with lenses (multifocal or contrast-reduction), directly blocking the muscles responsible for pupil constriction (atropine drops), or spending time outdoors without engaging accommodation (looking at far distances).

Importantly, the researchers predict that any treatment approach may be less effective if individuals continue prolonged close-up focusing indoors under dim lighting conditions. The study offers a testable hypothesis that reframes how visual habits, lighting, and eye focusing interact and is grounded in measurable physiology that brings together many pieces of existing evidence. While more research is needed, it provides a new way to think about prevention and treatment of myopia.

Fixing inadequacy of fitness trackers in measuring calorie-burns

Wearable fitness trackers have become indispensable tools for many people aiming to monitor how many calories they burn in a day. But for those living with obesity, who are known to exhibit differences in walking gait, speed, energy burned and more, these devices often inaccurately measure activity.

Scientists at Northwestern University in the US have developed a new algorithm that enables smartwatches to more accurately monitor the calories burned by people with obesity during various physical activities. The technology, an open-source, dominant-wrist algorithm, is specifically tuned for people with obesity. It is transparent, rigorously testable and ready for other researchers to build upon. The scientists are now aiming to deploy an activity-monitoring app later this year that will be available for both iOS and Android use.

Current activity-monitoring algorithms that fitness trackers use were built for people without obesity. Hip-worn trackers often misread energy burn because of gait changes and device tilt in people with higher body weight. And many wrist-worn models, while promising better comfort, adherence and accuracy across body types, have not been rigorously tested or calibrated for obese people.

Without a validated algorithm for wrist devices, doctors treating obese patients remain in the dark about exactly how much activity and energy people with obesity actually obtain each day. This slows the ability of healthcare providers to tailor specific interventions to improve health outcomes. Without a validated algorithm for wrist devices, doctors treating obese patients also remain in the dark about exactly how much activity and energy people with obesity actually obtain each day. The gap in information slows the ability of doctors to tailor specific interventions to improve health outcomes, or for patients to effectively enhance their physical activity For the study, 27 participants in one group wore a fitness tracker and metabolic cart—a mask that measures the volume of oxygen the wearer inhales and the volume of carbon dioxide they exhale, to calculate their energy burn in kilocalories (kCals) and their resting metabolic rate.

The study participants went through a set of physical activities to measure their energy burn during each task. The scientists then looked at the fitness tracker results to see how they compared to the metabolic cart results. In another group, 25 participants wore a fitness tracker and body camera while just living their lives. The body camera allowed the scientists to visually confirm when the algorithm over- or under-estimated kCals.

The researchers challenged study participants to do as many pushups as they could in five minutes. Many of the participants could not drop to the floor to do the pushups, but they were able to do wall-pushups quite well. Generally 'standard' workouts such as ground pushups are considered the ultimate test, but those standards leave out so many people.

By using data from these studies, the new algorithm rivalled gold-standard methods of measuring energy burn and could estimate how much energy someone with obesity was using every minute, and also achieved over 95 percent accuracy in real-world situations. This advancement makes it easier for more people with obesity and their doctors to track their daily activities and energy use. The study revealed the need to rethink how gyms, trackers and exercise programs measure success.

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