



LOCAL
Kuwait marks 63 years at UN with strong diplomatic, humanitarian legacy **4**

LOCAL
Rethinking leadership in Kuwait's oil and gas sector **5**

LOCAL
Kuwait marks 'Women's Day', 21 years of political rights, national contribution **9**



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International Climate Law Needs Teeth



By Ralph Regenvanu
Minister of Climate Change, Vanuatu
Special to The Times Kuwait

Last year, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) delivered a legal opinion on climate change with a clarity of purpose not seen since the 2015 Paris agreement. It left no doubt that states have a legal obligation to prevent significant harm to the climate system, and that failure to do so carries legal consequences.

My own country, Vanuatu, brought this question to the world and to the ICJ. But we were not alone. We built a coalition of countries spanning every region and gained sustained support from youth movements. Ultimately, 132 countries co-sponsored a motion for a United Nations resolution asking the ICJ to rule on the



matter, which then passed by consensus. It was a historic moment, and one that did not happen by accident.

Now we are back at the UN General Assembly,

presenting a resolution to give the ICJ's advisory opinion practical effect and calling on the world to support it. It is normal practice for ICJ advisory opinions to go back to the UN General

Assembly, where resolutions give member states an opportunity to amplify such rulings' political and normative authority. This new resolution not only calls on the UN to endorse the opinion but also urges all member states to uphold the obligations that the Court identified. It sets the stage for follow-up action within the UN system, such as a formal request to the secretary-general to find ways to advance compliance.

We believe this new resolution is the best way to ensure that legal obligations to deal with climate change do not just sit on a shelf. They must be reflected in the real world, even if certain states would rather pretend that the ruling did not happen.

We are under no illusions that the ICJ's ruling will be difficult for some countries to implement. But we cannot ignore the costs of inaction. This is a critical moment, not just for the climate but also for the future of international cooperation. The entire postwar, post-colonial multilateral order is under significant pressure. Large states are withdrawing from international agreements and withholding funding from multilateral organizations. Bilateral deals are replacing collective frameworks.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

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Social Affairs Ministry moves to curb cooperative shops subletting amid major revenue losses

- Ministry inspectors uncovered suspected violations that may have caused cooperative societies to lose millions of dinars in rental revenues over several years.
- Some investors rented cooperative shops for as little as KD1,500 monthly before illegally subletting them for between KD6,000 and KD10,000 per month.
- Authorities detected suspected conflict-of-interest cases involving investors linked by first-degree family ties to cooperative board members.

The Ministry of Social Affairs has launched a wide-ranging review into the leasing of branches and commercial outlets operated by cooperative societies, following the discovery of suspected violations that may have cost the cooperatives millions of dinars in lost revenues over the years.

According to preliminary findings, some investors had secured cooperative retail spaces at relatively low rental rates and then illegally sublet them to other businesses at significantly higher prices, generating substantial profits while depriving cooperative societies of fair market returns. In some cases, shops reportedly rented for around KD1,500 per month were later subleased for between KD6,000 and KD10,000 monthly.



The investigation also uncovered suspected conflict-of-interest cases involving investors with close family ties to members of cooperative society boards, raising governance and transparency concerns.

Authorities are reportedly considering legal action, including the possible referral of the case to the Kuwait Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) for further investigation.

The ministry is now preparing stricter regulatory measures, including enhanced inspections, field verification visits, and tighter oversight of investment contracts to ensure compliance with applicable laws and regulations. The move is aimed at protecting shareholder interests, improving transparency, and preventing future misuse of cooperative assets.

City Hypermarket appoints Nasser Alghanim as CEO, signaling bold new phase of expansion

City Hypermarket has announced the appointment of Nasser Adel Alghanim as its new Chief Executive Officer, ushering in a new era of leadership as the homegrown retail chain accelerates its growth ambitions and reinforces its commitment to innovation, operational excellence, and customer-centric retail experiences.

The appointment marks a significant milestone for the company, with Alghanim taking the helm after more than a decade of dedicated service within the organization.



Having played an instrumental role in shaping City Hypermarket's strategic direction and operational evolution, his elevation to CEO reflects both continuity in leadership and confidence in a vision rooted in long-term sustainable growth.

A respected business leader with deep institutional knowledge, Alghanim has built a strong reputation for driving performance, embracing innovation, and championing operational transformation. Throughout his tenure with City Hypermarket, he has contributed significantly to strengthening the company's market presence, streamlining internal processes, and enhancing the overall shopping experience for customers.

His appointment comes at a time when the retail sector in Kuwait is undergoing rapid transformation, influenced by changing consumer expectations, digital innovation, and growing demand for

convenience, affordability, and service excellence. City Hypermarket's decision to appoint a leader with a proven internal track record underscores its intention to remain agile, competitive, and responsive to these market shifts.

Industry observers note that leadership continuity often plays a critical role in sustaining momentum during periods of expansion, and Alghanim's appointment positions the company to capitalize on emerging opportunities in the retail landscape.

Under his leadership, City Hypermarket is expected to intensify its focus on strategic expansion, operational efficiency, supply chain optimization, and innovation-led customer engagement. The company is also likely to explore new business opportunities



and strengthen its position as one of Kuwait's leading retail destinations.

The company highlighted that Alghanim's appointment reflects a broader commitment to nurturing leadership from within and building on the strong foundations established over the years. His familiarity with the company's culture, operations, and growth strategy is expected to ensure a seamless transition while injecting fresh momentum into future initiatives.

As CEO, Alghanim will be tasked with steering City Hypermarket through its next chapter of development, balancing expansion ambitions with sustainable business practices and continued customer value creation.

The leadership transition comes as City Hypermarket continues to strengthen its presence in Kuwait's competitive retail market, where innovation, agility, and strong customer relationships remain key differentiators.

With a seasoned executive now at the helm, the company appears poised to embark on a transformative phase aimed at reinforcing its market leadership and delivering long-term value to stakeholders, employees, and consumers alike.

PACI introduces new Sahel service for digital linking of dependents' Civil IDs

The Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) has launched a new digital service through the Sahel application, enabling users to electronically link and manage the Civil ID information of their dependents, in a move aimed at enhancing convenience and streamlining access to government services.

The newly introduced feature allows citizens and residents to digitally connect the Civil IDs of dependents under their sponsorship through the Sahel platform, eliminating the need for in-person procedures and reducing administrative steps. The initiative reflects Kuwait's continued push toward digital transformation and improved public service accessibility.

PACI said the service is designed to simplify identity management for families by allowing seamless access to dependent-related civil information through a single digital interface. The move is expected to make official procedures more efficient while supporting the government's broader strategy to expand smart



electronic services across public institutions.

The Sahel app has increasingly become a central platform for accessing a wide range of government services in Kuwait, with the latest addition further strengthening its role in delivering user-friendly digital solutions for residents and citizens alike.

Kuwait launches automated pre-clearance system to accelerate cargo release

Kuwait's General Administration of Customs has introduced a new automated pre-clearance mechanism aimed at speeding up the release of imported goods at land ports, as part of broader efforts to modernize customs operations and enhance logistics efficiency.

The initiative, introduced under Customs Instruction No. 24 of 2026, allows importers and their legally authorized representatives to begin customs clearance procedures electronically before shipments physically arrive at customs checkpoints. By enabling advance submission of required documents and shipment data, the system is expected to significantly reduce paperwork, shorten clearance times, and improve the flow of commercial cargo.

Customs authorities said the move aligns with Kuwait's ongoing digital transformation strategy and reflects adoption of modern international customs practices aimed at strengthening the country's trade and business environment. The automated system also includes a safeguard under which customs declarations will be automatically cancelled



if shipments fail to arrive within 30 days of registration, ensuring procedural accuracy and operational efficiency.

Officials said the mechanism is expected to ease truck congestion at land ports, improve governance in customs processing, and deliver a smoother experience for importers while supporting faster and more efficient movement of goods across Kuwait's trade network.



Kuwait charts bold tourism future at landmark Jazeera Airways forum

To explore tourism opportunities in support of the 'Visit Kuwait' agenda

Jazeera Airways hosted the first Kuwait Tourism Forum 2026, bringing together key tourism stakeholders, industry leaders, government representatives, hospitality partners, and aviation experts to spotlight Kuwait's tourism potential and explore opportunities to strengthen inbound tourism and support the country's Vision 2035 ambitions.

Attended by Dr. Nasser Muhaisen, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Information, and supported by the Crowne Plaza Al Thuraya City Hotel, the forum marked a significant step in fostering dialogue and collaboration across the tourism ecosystem under the theme of unlocking Kuwait's tourism potential and positioning the country more strongly on the regional and global tourism map.

The event featured keynote addresses and presentations from leaders across aviation, tourism, hospitality, and economic research sectors, including Sleiman Algharib from Visit

Kuwait, Mohamed Anis Najia, from the Kuwait Hotel Owners Association and Dominique Exmann from Oxford Economics.

Discussions focused on Kuwait's tourism opportunity, the importance of connectivity and infrastructure, demand stimulation, hospitality readiness, and the role aviation can play in driving economic diversification and visitor growth.

Barathan Pasupathi, Chief Executive Officer of Jazeera Airways, said, "Kuwait has immense untapped tourism potential. Strategically located at the heart of the region, with strong connectivity, a rich cultural identity, growing hospitality infrastructure, and access to a catchment of billions of people within a few hours' flying time, the opportunity ahead is significant. "This forum is about bringing stakeholders together to not only start meaningful conversations and align priorities but also collectively shape the future of



tourism in Kuwait," he added. Naser Alobaid, Chief Executive Government Affairs at Jazeera Airways, highlighted the importance of public and private sector collaboration in enabling tourism growth and building a stronger inbound visitor economy that contributes to national development goals.

Paul Carroll, Chief Commercial Officer

at Jazeera Airways highlighted "The Big Opportunity and How Airlines Can Support It", addressing connectivity and airline networks contributing to tourism growth.

The forum also featured a panel discussion titled "Kuwait Tourism Potential and Unlocking It", moderated by Sarah AlBaker of KTV2, to discuss the opportunities, challenges, and practical steps required to stimulate inbound tourism and enhance Kuwait's attractiveness as a destination. As part of the event, Jazeera Airways and the Kuwait Hotel Owners Association signed a Memorandum of Understanding aimed at strengthening collaboration between the aviation and hospitality sectors to support tourism development initiatives in Kuwait.

The Kuwait Tourism Forum 2026 reflects Jazeera Airways' continued commitment to supporting Kuwait's economic development, enhancing connectivity, and contributing to the growth of the country's tourism ecosystem.

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Kuwait marks 63 years at UN with strong diplomatic, humanitarian legacy

Kuwait's liberation remains a clear example of how collective international action, grounded in international law and unified global support, can deter aggression and restore justice," Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Tariq Al-Bannai, said while marking the 63rd anniversary of Kuwait's accession to the UN.



Kuwait flag was raised for first time in front of UN headquarters in New York

Kuwait on Thursday commemorated the 63rd anniversary of its accession to the United Nations, marking a major milestone in the country's diplomatic history and reaffirming its longstanding commitment to international peace, security and humanitarian action.

Since becoming the 111th member of the United Nations on May 14, 1963, Kuwait has pursued an active foreign policy built on dialogue, cooperation and peaceful conflict resolution, while strengthening its role as a trusted humanitarian and diplomatic partner on the global stage.

The anniversary reflects Kuwait's decades-long efforts to promote stability, support human rights and contribute to resolving regional and international crises through balanced diplomacy rooted in national principles and international cooperation.

Following the adoption of UN Resolution 1872 approving Kuwait's membership in 1963, the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who was then foreign minister, addressed the UN General Assembly, emphasizing that independence and UN



UN Secretary-General and Resident Coordinator in Kuwait, Ghada Al-Taher



Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Tariq Al-Bannai

membership were not goals in themselves but means of sharing responsibility to build a better future for all peoples.

During its membership in the United Nations, Kuwait served twice as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, first during 1978-1979 and later in 2018-2019, where it actively supported Arab and Islamic causes, particularly the Palestinian issue, while advocating preventive diplomacy, humanitarian protection and peaceful solutions to conflicts.

Kuwait also played an active role in various UN bodies and organizations, including membership in the Economic and Social Council, reflecting growing international confidence in Kuwait's balanced foreign policy and constructive international engagement.

Over the past six decades, Kuwait has emerged as a respected mediator in regional and international disputes and has contributed significantly to humanitarian and relief efforts worldwide through financial assistance, development support and cooperation with UN agencies. In recognition of its global humanitarian contributions, the United Nations in 2014 designated Kuwait as a "Center for Humanitarian Action" and awarded the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad the title of "Leader of Humanitarian Action."

The close partnership between Kuwait and the United Nations was further strengthened with the opening of the United Nations House in Mishref in 2009 in the presence of former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon. The complex houses offices of various UN agencies operating in Kuwait.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs yesterday reaffirmed Kuwait's pride in its historic relationship with the United Nations and stressed the country's continued commitment to supporting humanitarian work, mediation efforts, peacebuilding and sustainable development initiatives.

The ministry stated that Kuwait has consistently supported international efforts aimed at strengthening peace and security while responding rapidly to humanitarian appeals launched by the United Nations to assist countries affected by disasters and conflicts.

It emphasized that support for the United Nations remains a cornerstone of Kuwait's foreign policy, based on the belief that the organization represents the foundation of the multilateral international system and a vital framework for addressing global challenges.

Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Tariq Al-Bannai, said Kuwait has maintained an active and responsible role within the UN system for more

than six decades by supporting international efforts aimed at addressing humanitarian and development crises and enhancing regional and global stability.

Al-Bannai noted that Kuwait's accession to the United Nations marked the beginning of a new phase of active international engagement and reflected its commitment to the principles of the UN Charter, including respect for international law, peaceful settlement of disputes and promotion of cooperation among nations.

He highlighted the role played by the United Nations during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, stressing that the Security Council provided the decisive international framework that protected Kuwait's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

He referred to Security Council Resolution 678 issued in November 1990, which authorized member states cooperating with Kuwait to use all necessary means to restore peace and liberate the country from Iraqi occupation.

Al-Bannai also pointed to Resolution 687 of 1991, which consolidated the results of liberation by reaffirming Kuwait's sovereignty and establishing international arrangements related to borders, compensation, prisoners and missing persons.

He stressed that Kuwait's liberation remains a clear example of how collective international action, grounded in international law and unified global support, can deter aggression and restore justice.

The ambassador also reviewed Kuwait's active participation in numerous UN agencies and specialized committees, where the country contributed to development efforts, human rights initiatives and international cooperation programs.

Meanwhile, the representative of the UN Secretary-General and Resident Coordinator in Kuwait, Ghada Al-Taher, described Kuwait's foreign policy as a unique diplomatic model based on positive neutrality and wise leadership.

She said Kuwait has become an indispensable regional player through its mediation initiatives, peace negotiations and global humanitarian contributions, adding that Kuwait today stands among the United Nations' most reliable and influential partners in promoting multilateral cooperation and international law.

Al-Taher also praised the speech delivered by the representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah at the UN Future Summit in New York in September 2024, which called for reforming the United Nations and strengthening justice, transparency and equal treatment among nations.

Snoonu enters Kuwait market with multi-service digital platform launch



Snoonu, the rapidly expanding GCC-based technology platform, has officially launched operations in Kuwait, marking a significant step in its regional growth strategy and introducing a new digital lifestyle platform aimed at simplifying everyday services for consumers. The move positions Kuwait as a key market in the company's broader expansion plans across the Gulf.

More than a conventional delivery application, Snoonu has entered the Kuwaiti market as a multi-service technology platform designed to integrate a range of everyday needs into a single user-friendly digital ecosystem. As part of its phased rollout, the company is initially offering grocery delivery, on-demand courier services, flowers and gifting solutions, as well as access to home maintenance and professional service providers.

Company officials described Kuwait's launch as an important milestone in the platform's international expansion, highlighting the company's focus on speed, operational efficiency, and customer-centric innovation. Additional services are expected to be introduced in the coming months as Snoonu strengthens its presence and adapts its offerings to the local market.

Founded in 2019, Snoonu has grown into one of the region's prominent digital technology players, with the Kuwait launch reflecting increasing competition in the Gulf's fast-evolving super-app and on-demand services sector.

The expansion also underscores the growing appetite in Kuwait for integrated digital convenience platforms that combine commerce, logistics, and household services under one umbrella.

Rethinking leadership in Kuwait's oil and gas sector



By Dr. Pupjana Kole
Organizational Leadership Researcher Oil and Gas Sector
Special to The Times Kuwait



As Kuwait's oil and gas industry navigates an increasingly complex operating environment, leadership is being redefined beyond traditional measures of technical expertise and operational authority. Emerging perspectives suggest that sustainable organizational performance in high-pressure sectors depends not only on strategic decision-making, but also on the human dimensions of leadership.

Recent research within Kuwait's energy

sector points to emotional intelligence as a critical leadership competency. Leaders who demonstrate self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, and effective communication are seen as better equipped to manage the evolving demands of modern

workplaces. However, emotional intelligence alone may not be sufficient to drive measurable improvements in employee performance.

What appears to create meaningful impact is the practical application of these emotional capabilities through strength-

based leadership. By recognizing employees' individual strengths, aligning responsibilities with their capabilities, and providing targeted support and constructive feedback, leaders can foster stronger engagement and improved productivity.

This evolving leadership approach highlights an important distinction between understanding people and actively enabling their performance. Research suggests that while emotionally intelligent leaders may create positive workplace environments, tangible organizational outcomes are more likely when those qualities are translated into structured leadership practices.

The findings reflect a broader shift in leadership thinking across complex industries such as oil and gas, where resilience, workforce engagement, and adaptability are becoming increasingly important alongside technical excellence. As Kuwait's energy sector continues to evolve amid regional and global challenges, leadership models that combine operational discipline with human-centered management may prove essential in strengthening long-term organizational performance and resilience.

ALSAYER Group spreads happiness and joy to children at Al-Razi Hospital



ALSAYER Group, in collaboration with the Kuwait Association for the Care of Children in Hospital and Bayt Abdullah Children's Hospice, organized a heartfelt initiative at Al-Razi Hospital to bring happiness to young patients.

During the event, ALSAYER Group visited children and their families, spending quality time with them and creating moments of joy.

Each child received specially prepared gift bags, filling the hospital with laughter and smiles, while reinforcing ALSAYER's compassion and care.



The initiative was not only about giving gifts, but also about offering emotional support and reminding families that they are not alone on their journey.

This effort reflects ALSAYER's philosophy of community commitment. The Group strives to be a responsible corporate citizen by dedicating its resources and expertise to social initiatives that

raise awareness of health and environmental issues, while also nurturing cultural and social values. Nehad Mohammad AlHaj Ali, Group Manager of the Corporate Excellence department in ALSAYER Group, highlighted the importance of such initiatives saying, "We will always encourage giving back. It's about sharing time, care, and attention with those who deserve it most."

"By doing so, we set an example of promoting social welfare through educational, cultural, social, and health initiatives, and we are committed to doing even more," he said.

ALSAYER Group will continue to demonstrate its commitment to serving the community, spreading joy among children and promoting a culture of compassion and social responsibility.



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BBF hosts impactful UNICEF-focused monthly gathering

The Times Kuwait Report

The British Business Forum Kuwait (BBF) hosted its monthly networking event at the UK embassy premises, bringing together members of the business community, diplomatic representatives, and supporters of humanitarian causes for an evening dedicated to UNICEF and its global mission of protecting vulnerable children.

Held under the theme "A Conversation with UNICEF: For Every Child, A Better Future," the event combined business networking with social impact. The gathering highlighted UNICEF's critical humanitarian work worldwide, including emergency interventions in conflict zones and

crisis-hit regions, where millions of children continue to face severe challenges in access to healthcare, nutrition, education, protection, and basic survival. UNICEF currently operates in more than 190 countries and territories, working before, during, and after emergencies to support vulnerable children and families.

In his address UK Ambassador H E. Qudsi Rasheed praised the excellent relations between the two countries. He also had a special message to British citizens in Kuwait from HRH King Charles who expressed his best wishes to them.

Ambassador Qudsi also thanked the BBF team for holding the event and encouraging British businesses in Kuwait. The event also featured

remarks from Patrick Jones, Chairman of British Business Forum, who emphasized the importance of collective action between the private sector, international institutions, and civil society in supporting humanitarian initiatives.

UNICEF representatives outlined the growing scale of global humanitarian needs, noting that nearly 239 million people worldwide are expected to require assistance in 2026, with children accounting for a significant proportion of those affected. Major crises in Gaza, Sudan, Yemen, Haiti, and other regions continue to place enormous strain on humanitarian resources.

The organization also highlighted its longstanding relationship with Kuwait, which

dates back to 1969 through strategic cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, reflecting Kuwait's sustained humanitarian engagement at the international level. BBF said the event reflects its continued commitment to creating meaningful platforms that combine business engagement with social responsibility, encouraging members to connect, collaborate, and contribute to causes that deliver lasting community impact.

The evening brought together diplomacy, philanthropy, and private-sector leadership in support of a shared humanitarian purpose reinforcing the message that collective action remains essential in building a better future for every child.



LuLu Hypermarket honors nurses with special International Nurses Day



Marking International Nurses Day, LuLu Hypermarket's senior management team paid a special visit to Adan Hospital to recognize and celebrate the invaluable contribution of nurses serving Kuwait's healthcare sector. The gesture reflected appreciation for the unwavering dedication, compassion, and professionalism demonstrated by nursing staff in delivering quality patient care across the country.

During the visit, LuLu representatives conveyed heartfelt gratitude to the nurses for their tireless efforts and commitment, acknowledging their essential role in supporting the nation's healthcare system.

The occasion served as a tribute to frontline professionals whose work continues to make a profound difference in the lives of patients and their families. The management team interacted

with hospital staff, expressing admiration for the resilience and selfless service shown by nurses, who remain a cornerstone of medical care and recovery.

The visit also highlighted LuLu Hypermarket's continued emphasis on social responsibility and community engagement, particularly in recognizing those who contribute significantly to public wellbeing.

International Nurses Day, observed annually around the world, serves as an opportunity to honor the dedication of nursing professionals and raise awareness about their vital role in strengthening healthcare systems. LuLu's initiative at Adan Hospital underscored the importance of acknowledging these healthcare heroes, whose compassion and commitment continue to inspire communities across Kuwait.

From Heirloom to Heirloom: Tanishq launches the 'Festival of Exchange'

Headlined by Sachin Tendulkar, the campaign reaffirms Tanishq's commitment to transparency, trust



Tanishq, India's most trusted jewellery brand and a TATA product, today announced the launch of its Festival of Exchange across the region. The campaign invites residents to renew their gold legacy with two of the most rewarding exchange offers ever offered in the region: a 0% deduction on the exchange of old gold above 9KT, and up to KWD 1.5 per gram extra off on exchanged old gold when purchasing diamonds. The offer is available across all Tanishq boutiques in Al Salam Mall & Fahaheel.

Anchored by the campaign idea 'What Endures, Shines' and fronted by Sachin Tendulkar, the Festival of Exchange represents one of the boldest commercial moves by a jewellery retailer, a clear signal of Tanishq's confidence, scale, and intent to lead category transformation in the region.

Speaking on the launch, Mr Aditya Kejriwal, Head of Marketing, Jewellery International Titan Company Ltd, said, "Gold is deeply personal to every family in the region, it carries memory, milestones, and meaning.

With the Festival of Exchange, we are taking a bold step to give that gold a new life

on the most rewarding terms in the market today. Zero deduction on exchange above 9KT is a direct reflection of the Tanishq promise: complete transparency, certified purity, and absolute fairness at every step."

He added, "Whether it is our 0% deduction policy, our certified karatmeter testing, or our lifetime exchange and buyback assurance, every Tanishq promise is designed to ensure that customers walk in with heirlooms and walk out with confidence."

Reflecting on the campaign, Mr Sachin Tendulkar said, "Gold is woven into the lives of every Indian family – gifted, cherished, and relied upon as it is passed on with love through generations. Tanishq's Gold Exchange offers families a transparent and trustworthy way to renew this legacy. Each exchange turns yesterday's jewellery into today's contemporary designs, and also makes the purchase affordable."

The Festival of Exchange is now live across all Tanishq boutiques in Kuwait. Customers are encouraged to visit their nearest store in Al Salam Mall & Fahaheel, or log on to www.tanishq.ae for further details.

Anupam Jain reimagines Indian heritage for the modern Gulf marketplace



The Times Kuwait Report

In an era where heritage brands often struggle to remain relevant amid rapidly evolving consumer preferences, Anupam Jain has emerged as a visionary entrepreneur redefining how traditional craftsmanship can thrive in contemporary markets. As the driving force behind Indian Heritage, Jain has successfully transformed a concept rooted in India's rich cultural legacy into a flourishing retail brand that resonates strongly across the Gulf region.

Under Jain's leadership, Indian Heritage has carved out a distinctive niche by seamlessly blending India's centuries-old textile artistry, craftsmanship, and design traditions with the refined tastes and lifestyle expectations of Gulf consumers. What began as a retail concept celebrating India's cultural richness has evolved into a dynamic cross-cultural business success story.

Jain's business philosophy is built around preserving authenticity while embracing innovation. Rather than presenting heritage as something static or nostalgic, he has reimagined it as aspirational, contemporary, and globally relevant. This approach has enabled Indian Heritage to appeal not only to the Asian diaspora but also to a broader customer base seeking craftsmanship, exclusivity, and timeless elegance.

At the heart of the brand's success is its deep commitment to traditional artisans across India. Indian Heritage works directly with skilled craft communities, helping preserve centuries-old techniques while bringing handcrafted excellence to international markets. From Banarasi silk weaving and chikankari embroidery to handcrafted furnishings, ethnic fashion, and artisanal décor, the company has positioned itself as both a commercial enterprise and a cultural bridge.



Jain's understanding of the Gulf market has been central to this transformation. Rather than simply exporting

Indian products, he recognized the importance of adaptation, curating collections that reflect regional aesthetics while retaining their authentic Indian soul. The result is a product portfolio that seamlessly marries Indian craftsmanship with Arabian sophistication. This market-sensitive strategy has fueled significant expansion for the brand across Kuwait and the wider GCC. Indian Heritage has steadily strengthened its footprint, becoming a familiar name for customers seeking premium textiles, ethnic fashion, home décor, jewelry, and handcrafted lifestyle products. Its growth reflects both robust business execution and Jain's keen insight into evolving regional consumer behavior.

Beyond retail expansion, Jain represents a new generation of entrepreneurs who view cultural commerce as a form of storytelling. Through Indian Heritage, he has demonstrated that heritage is not merely about preservation it can also be a source of innovation, economic empowerment, and international dialogue.

His entrepreneurial journey reflects resilience, adaptability, and strategic vision. In a competitive retail environment increasingly shaped by digital disruption and shifting consumer expectations, Jain has maintained relevance by staying rooted in authenticity while embracing change. Industry observers note that brands with strong cultural identity often succeed when they evolve thoughtfully rather than abandoning their origins. Indian Heritage's trajectory under Jain exemplifies this principle, proving that traditional businesses can remain highly competitive when supported by modern leadership and clear market understanding.

As Gulf consumers continue to seek meaningful, design-led experiences, businesses that combine authenticity with innovation are poised for continued success. Under Anupam Jain's stewardship, Indian Heritage appears well positioned to continue shaping that narrative not merely as a retailer, but as a curator of culture, craftsmanship, and cross-border connection. More than a business leader, Jain represents a broader entrepreneurial movement that sees heritage not as a relic of the past, but as a living asset capable of inspiring contemporary commerce across global markets.

IMRF 2026 concludes in New York with renewed global focus on migration cooperation

The Second International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) concluded at the United Nations Headquarters in New York with renewed international commitment to strengthening cooperation on migration governance and advancing the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The high-level forum brought together governments, international organizations, and stakeholders to review progress and set priorities for the coming years.

Discussions during the forum focused on improving migrant protection, expanding regular migration pathways, addressing labour mobility challenges, and enhancing international collaboration in response to displacement, climate pressures, and humanitarian concerns. Delegates underscored the need for practical and coordinated action to ensure migration policies remain humane, sustainable, and responsive to evolving global realities.

The gathering concluded with a renewed emphasis on shared responsibility and multilateral engagement,

with participating nations reaffirming the importance of migration as a global issue requiring collective solutions. While discussions reflected differing national perspectives on migration policy, the forum served as a significant platform for dialogue and policy review at the international level.

The conclusion of IMRF 2026 highlighted the continuing relevance of international cooperation in managing migration challenges, while reinforcing the role of the United Nations in facilitating policy discussions aimed at balancing national priorities with global humanitarian and development objectives.






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FBCK talks highlights strategic sovereignty and infrastructure security

“No country is fully sovereign,” Dr. Khaled A. Mahdi said during the French Business Council Kuwait’s FBCK Talks, stressing that in today’s interconnected world, true strategic sovereignty lies not in isolation, but in a nation’s ability to act independently, secure essential resources, and maintain resilience during crises through strong institutions, technological capability and operational autonomy.

The Times Kuwait Report

In a timely gathering focused on resilience, strategic autonomy, and long-term economic cooperation, the French Business Council Kuwait (FBCK) hosted a new edition of its FBCK Talks at the Residence of France, bringing together policymakers, business leaders, and strategic thinkers to examine how nations and institutions can navigate an increasingly uncertain global environment.

Hosted by His Excellency Olivier Gauvin, Ambassador of France to Kuwait, the event centered on the theme, “Post-Crisis Opportunities and Strategic Sovereignty: Building Autonomy for a Resilient Future,” reflecting the growing urgency of strengthening resilience amid geopolitical uncertainty, economic disruptions, and evolving global dependencies.

Welcoming participants, Ambassador Gauvin described the FBCK Talks as a growing platform for Franco-Kuwaiti economic dialogue, emphasizing its importance not merely as a conference series, but as an interactive forum where strategic conversations evolve into meaningful partnerships, institutional cooperation, and future business opportunities.

The event brought together two distinguished speakers—Dr. Khaled A. Mahdi, former Secretary-General of Kuwait’s Supreme Council for Planning and Development, and Sabry Elkady, Chief Operating Officer of Veolia Arabia—offering complementary perspectives from strategic public policy and operational industrial resilience.

Dr. Mahdi delivered a thought-provoking keynote exploring the evolving meaning of sovereignty in today’s interconnected world, challenging traditional assumptions about national independence.

He drew a critical distinction between formal sovereignty and strategic sovereignty, arguing that while nations may possess internationally recognized borders, institutions, and diplomatic legitimacy, true sovereignty is tested during crises—when countries must demonstrate the capacity to act independently, secure essential resources, protect vital infrastructure, and absorb external shocks without losing operational stability.

“No country is fully sovereign,” Dr. Mahdi observed, noting that modern globalization, digital interdependence, and complex international supply chains have fundamentally changed the meaning of autonomy.

Rather than viewing sovereignty as absolute independence, he argued that the more



Dr. Khaled A. Mahdi
Former Secretary-General of Kuwait’s Supreme Council for Planning and Development

relevant concept today is strategic autonomy—the practical ability of nations to make independent decisions and sustain resilience under pressure.

Drawing from French political thought, Dr. Mahdi referenced the long-standing strategic philosophy that sovereignty requires not simply political legitimacy, but capability, institutional strength, and national preparedness.

He emphasized that strategic sovereignty rests on five critical pillars: energy sovereignty, industrial sovereignty, technological sovereignty, financial sovereignty, and institutional sovereignty.

Expanding on these pillars, Dr. Mahdi stressed that energy security is no longer simply about resource ownership, but about diversification, resilience, and reliability. Industrial sovereignty, he said, has become increasingly important as global crises exposed dangerous dependencies in supply chains and manufacturing systems.

He also highlighted technological sovereignty as a growing strategic concern, particularly in an age dominated by artificial intelligence, cybersecurity risks, foreign software dependencies, and digital



Sabry Elkady
COO of Veolia Arabia

infrastructure vulnerabilities.

Financial sovereignty and institutional governance, he argued, are equally essential, as economic resilience and effective implementation ultimately determine whether ambitious national strategies can be translated into practical outcomes.

Referencing France’s investment in nuclear energy and Singapore’s transformation of water scarcity into strategic resilience, Dr. Mahdi emphasized that strategic sovereignty is not about isolationism or disengagement from globalization, but about participating in the global economy from a position of strength.

For Kuwait and the wider GCC, he stressed that the real challenge is not formal sovereignty, but capability-building developing human capital, resilient institutions, and operational autonomy that can withstand future crises.

Complementing this strategic perspective, Sabry Elkady, COO of Veolia Arabia, delivered a practical industry-focused assessment of resilience in modern infrastructure systems.

Elkady noted that recent global crises have fundamentally reshaped corporate and governmental priorities, accelerating investments in sectors considered essential to operational continuity and national

resilience, including water, energy, oil and gas, environmental services, and industrial infrastructure. He emphasized that while crises inevitably create disruption, they also generate opportunities for innovation, transformation, and strategic repositioning.

Drawing on Veolia’s international expertise, Elkady explained that resilient organizations are built not merely on capital investment, but on strong technical know-how, highly skilled personnel, autonomous operational capabilities, secure supplier ecosystems, and rapid-response infrastructure.

He noted that access to critical spare parts, chemicals, mobile utility systems, and emergency deployment solutions has become indispensable for maintaining operational continuity during disruptions.

Elkady also highlighted the increasing importance of mobile water treatment systems and rapid deployment utility services, particularly in emergency scenarios where infrastructure continuity becomes mission-critical. Looking specifically at Kuwait, he expressed confidence that the country will continue prioritizing strategic infrastructure investment in desalination, industrial water security, oil and gas support systems, waste optimization, and energy efficiency as part of its broader modernization agenda.

With more than 170 years of global experience, Veolia remains well positioned to support Kuwait’s future mega projects through expertise in industrial water management, environmental services, utility optimization, emergency response capabilities, and digital infrastructure solutions.

The event concluded with an interactive Q&A session and networking reception, reinforcing the French Business Council Kuwait’s growing role as a bridge between French expertise and Kuwait’s development ambitions.

As geopolitical uncertainty continues to redefine strategic priorities worldwide, the discussions highlighted a shared understanding that resilience, strategic autonomy, and strong international partnerships will remain central to sustainable economic growth and long-term stability.



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Kuwait marks 'Women's Day', 21 years of political rights, national contribution

Kuwaiti women have become a driving force in national development, expanding their presence across government, diplomacy, the judiciary, security services, academia, and the oil sector since gaining full political rights in 2005 — a milestone that reshaped Kuwait's political and social landscape.

The Times Kuwait Report

The State of Kuwait celebrated on Saturday Kuwaiti Women's Day, observed annually on May 16, marking a landmark moment in the nation's modern history when Kuwaiti women were granted full political rights 21 years ago.

The occasion reflects both official recognition and popular appreciation of the



significant role Kuwaiti women have played across various sectors, establishing themselves as key partners in national development and state-building.

The anniversary comes as a reminder of a pivotal reform that reshaped Kuwait's political and social landscape, enabling women to vote, run for office, and actively participate in decision-making processes.

Over the past two decades, Kuwaiti women have steadily expanded their presence in government, diplomacy, education, the judiciary, security sectors, and the private economy.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that "the achievements of Kuwaiti women enhance Kuwait's regional and international standing," reflecting their role in strengthening the country's global reputation.

The statement added that women have become "an active partner in decision-making and development processes," supported by state policies that promote gender inclusion and empowerment.

In recent years, Kuwait has witnessed increasing female leadership appointments across key institutions, including university administration, anti-corruption bodies, municipal leadership, and cybersecurity agencies.

Women now also serve in the judiciary and prosecution, alongside rising representation in security forces and military-linked institutions, marking what officials describe as historic progress.

In the economic sector, Kuwaiti women continue to play a vital role in the oil industry, contributing to engineering, planning, research, and executive management, while holding around 21 percent of board positions within Kuwait Petroleum Corporation and its subsidiaries.

Women's achievements also extend to academia and scientific research, where they have excelled in STEM fields and earned international recognition through innovation, publications, and awards.

Kuwait has also strengthened its legal framework to support women, including the recent adoption of legislation on protection



from domestic violence and the establishment of shelters for victims.

The government has further integrated women's empowerment into national development plans, focusing on healthcare, economic participation, social protection, and equal access to financial resources.

Kuwait is also a signatory to key international conventions on women's rights, including CEDAW and protocols addressing trafficking in persons, reinforcing its global commitments.

Officials say these measures reflect a long-term national strategy to ensure women's



Minister of Public Works
Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan

empowerment remains a cornerstone of sustainable development and social stability.

The current government includes three female ministers: Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan, Minister of Public Works; Dr. Amthal Al-Huwaileh, Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Childhood Affairs; and Dr. Reem Al-Fulaij, Minister of State for Development and

Sustainability Affairs.

Since the granting of political rights in 2005, a total of 18 women have served as ministers, reflecting what officials describe as growing institutional confidence in women's leadership.

Minister of Public Works Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan described May 16 as "a pivotal turning point and a decisive milestone in the history of Kuwait and the journey of empowering women through the granting of political rights and their active participation in decision-making positions." She added that Kuwaiti women have demonstrated their capabilities across



Minister of Social Affairs
Dr. Amthal Al-Huwaileh

generations, noting their contributions "from the pre-oil era until today" and highlighting their resilience during historic national crises.

Al-Mashaan also recalled the role of Kuwaiti women during the 1990 Iraqi invasion, saying they embodied "the highest meanings of sacrifice and courage" in defending the homeland.

She emphasized that women's achievements are rooted in constitutional principles of justice and equality, which have enabled them to assume senior leadership positions across government and society.

Minister of Social Affairs Dr. Amthal Al-Huwaileh said Kuwaiti Women's Day is not merely symbolic, but a "strategic milestone to reflect on the journey of achievement and to strengthen legislative and institutional frameworks for continued empowerment."

She noted that the granting of political rights in 2005 was a historic decision that "reinforced democracy, equality, and equal opportunity within society."

Al-Huwaileh added that Kuwaiti women have proven their excellence in administration, academia, diplomacy, and scientific research, becoming "a fundamental partner in sustainable development and Kuwait Vision 2035." She further highlighted that women's participation in the national workforce has reached significant levels, with strong representation in both government and private sectors.

According to official data, Kuwaiti women represent about 47 percent of leadership and supervisory positions, alongside growing influence in the judiciary, security services, and oil sector.

On the occasion, ministers reaffirmed their commitment to continued progress, with Dr. Al-Huwaileh stating that Kuwaiti Women's Day represents a renewed pledge to "continue giving to the nation and building a society founded on justice and equality."

Kuwait invests in youth to build a future rooted in dialogue and coexistence

By Shouq Al Mulla
Special to The Times Kuwait

As the world grapples with rapid transformation, social polarization, and mounting global challenges, Kuwait is placing renewed emphasis on empowering its youth as architects of a more inclusive and sustainable future. Through strategic investment in young people, the country continues to reinforce its longstanding values of dialogue, coexistence, and civic responsibility.

Recognizing youth as a driving force for national development, Kuwait's approach

centers on creating platforms that encourage leadership, critical thinking, and active participation in shaping society. By fostering environments where young voices are heard and respected, the nation is nurturing a generation equipped to engage constructively with complex local and global realities.



At the heart of this vision is the belief that meaningful dialogue and mutual understanding are essential foundations for social cohesion. Initiatives focused on

youth engagement increasingly emphasize tolerance, cultural exchange, and collaborative problem-solving, reflecting Kuwait's broader



commitment to peaceful coexistence and community resilience.

This youth-centered strategy also aligns with wider efforts to strengthen national identity while preparing future generations to navigate an interconnected world. By investing in education, empowerment, and values-based leadership, Kuwait is helping young citizens develop not only the skills to succeed, but also the perspective to lead responsibly.

As societies worldwide seek sustainable pathways through uncertainty, Kuwait's continued focus on youth empowerment offers a compelling model one that sees the next generation not merely as beneficiaries of progress, but as its most important partners.

Dar Al Muhama Law Firm strengthens Kuwaiti legal presence globally

In a move reflecting Kuwait's growing legal engagement on the international stage, Dar Al Muhama Law Firm has reinforced its global presence through participation in the 2026 Annual Meeting of the International Trademark Association (INTA) in London, one of the world's largest gatherings focused on intellectual property and trademark law.

Representing the firm, Founder and Managing Partner Abdulrahman Alhouthi joined more than 10,000 legal professionals and experts from over 140 countries at the prestigious event, highlighting Kuwait's expanding role in international legal and intellectual property discussions.

A key highlight of the participation was Alhouthi's contribution to a high-level panel

discussion examining the advancement of intellectual property frameworks across the Middle East. The session brought together senior policymakers and legal experts from across the region to discuss challenges, regulatory developments, and practical solutions aimed at strengthening IP protection systems.

The conference also explored emerging issues shaping the legal sector, including the growing influence of artificial intelligence on intellectual property rights, trademark protection in an increasingly digital environment, and arbitration mechanisms for resolving IP-related disputes.

On the sidelines of the event, Dar Al Muhama held strategic meetings with international



law firms and global organizations, aimed at expanding professional collaboration and strengthening cross-border legal expertise.

The participation underscores the firm's commitment to bringing international best practices to Kuwait's legal sector while enhancing its capabilities in specialized areas

such as trademarks, patents, copyrights, and broader intellectual property advisory services.

As Kuwait continues to modernize its legal and commercial frameworks, such international engagement reflects the increasing importance of global partnerships in shaping the country's legal landscape.

Udupi Restaurant brings authentic South Indian flavors to Salmiya

The Times Kuwait Report

Kuwait's dynamic dining landscape has been enriched with the opening of new Udupi Restaurant in Salmiya, bringing an authentic South Indian culinary dining experience for residents and food enthusiasts seeking traditional vegetarian flavors rooted in India's rich gastronomic heritage.

Conveniently located in Salmiya between Salmiya Garden and Metro Clinic on Fifth Ring Road, the newly opened restaurant aims to bring the timeless appeal of classic Udupi cuisine to Kuwait, offering a menu inspired by the celebrated culinary traditions of Karnataka's temple town of Udupi renowned worldwide for its wholesome vegetarian fare, aromatic spices, and comforting flavors.

The opening ceremony was marked by a ribbon cutting ceremony by proprietor Venkatraman Potti and attended by distinguished guests including Sponsor Mahadi Al Ajmi and Managing Editor of The Times Kuwait Reaven D'Souza and members of the community, reflecting the growing appreciation for authentic regional Indian cuisine in Kuwait's multicultural food landscape.

Udupi cuisine is widely known for its balanced flavors, nutritious ingredients, and iconic dishes such as crisp dosas, fluffy idlis, medu vadas, traditional sambar, coconut chutneys, and an assortment of South Indian specialties that have gained international popularity over the years.

The restaurant seeks to recreate this culinary legacy with an emphasis on freshness, authenticity, and traditional preparation

techniques.

Speaking on the occasion, the management expressed enthusiasm about introducing a dining destination that captures the essence of South Indian hospitality and home-style vegetarian cuisine.

The launch of Udupi Restaurant also reflects the continued growth of Kuwait's hospitality sector, where diverse international culinary concepts continue to thrive in response to strong consumer demand for authentic global dining experiences.

With its focus on quality, traditional taste, and accessible family dining, Udupi Restaurant is expected to appeal not only to the Indian expatriate community, but also to a wider audience eager to explore regional Indian cuisine in an authentic setting.



As Kuwait's food scene continues to evolve, the opening of the new Udupi Restaurant adds another distinctive culinary destination celebrating heritage, flavor, and community through one of India's most beloved vegetarian traditions.



ALBANIA

emerges as
Europe's rising summer destination
for Gulf travelers and investors

THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

As international travel demand gathers pace ahead of the summer holiday season, destinations that combine scenic beauty, safety, affordability, and authentic cultural experiences are attracting growing global attention. Among Europe's emerging tourism hotspots, Albania is steadily positioning itself as a compelling destination for travelers from the Middle East, including Kuwait, offering a diverse mix of leisure, adventure, and investment opportunities.

With its pristine Mediterranean coastline, dramatic mountain landscapes, crystal-clear



H E Ilir Hysa
Ambassador of Albania to Kuwait

lakes, winding rivers, and charming rural settings, Albania presents a rich and varied tourism experience suited to a broad range of visitors. From luxury beach escapes along the Albanian Riviera overlooking the Adriatic and Ionian Seas to eco-tourism, mountain adventures, heritage tourism, and immersive cultural experiences, the Balkan nation is increasingly being recognized as one of Europe's most attractive up-and-coming travel destinations.

Speaking on the country's growing international appeal, H E Ilir Hysa, Ambassador of Albania to Kuwait, said the country has experienced remarkable tourism growth in recent years, attracting families, young travelers, and international visitors seeking new European experiences beyond traditional destinations. He noted that Albania welcomed more than 12 million visitors last year, underlining its rapid ascent on the global tourism map.

The ambassador emphasized that Albania's tourism offerings cater to a wide spectrum of

traveler preferences. For holidaymakers seeking relaxation, the country offers picturesque beaches, turquoise waters, and scenic coastal resorts. Adventure enthusiasts can explore trekking routes across mountainous terrain, rivers, lakes, and countryside retreats, while cultural travelers can immerse themselves in Albania's rich historical legacy, distinctive architecture, and longstanding traditions of hospitality.

Youth tourism, he noted, is witnessing particularly strong growth, driven by vibrant summer festivals, a thriving café culture, expanding dining experiences, nightlife, and entertainment options. He added that Albania's reputation as a safe and stable destination has become an increasingly important factor in attracting both families and younger visitors seeking peace of mind while traveling.

For travelers from the Gulf region, Albania offers several advantages that enhance its appeal. Ambassador Hysa highlighted the widespread availability of halal food throughout the country, supported by Albania's Muslim-majority demographic and its inclusive social environment. Visitors from Kuwait and across the Gulf can readily access halal dining options, in addition to Middle Eastern and Mediterranean cuisine, creating a familiar and comfortable travel experience.

He also pointed to Albania's welcoming cultural environment for Muslim travelers, noting that mosques are present in many cities and towns, reflecting the country's long tradition of

coexistence, openness, and religious diversity. This cultural familiarity, he said, contributes to Albania's growing popularity among Arab travelers seeking destinations that offer both European charm and cultural comfort.

Beyond tourism, Ambassador Hysa highlighted Albania's increasing attractiveness as an investment destination. He said the country is continuing to strengthen its legal, regulatory, and economic frameworks to attract foreign capital, particularly as it progresses toward European Union membership — a development expected to enhance investor confidence and unlock long-term strategic opportunities.

He invited Kuwaiti investors to explore opportunities across multiple high-growth sectors, including tourism development, hospitality, real estate, renewable energy, agriculture, and infrastructure. Albania, he said,

offers a secure and investor-friendly business climate with strong prospects for strategic partnerships between Albanian and Kuwaiti stakeholders.

On travel access, the ambassador noted that Kuwaiti citizens benefit from simplified entry arrangements and are warmly welcomed to visit Albania. Travelers holding valid and previously used visas from the United States, the United Kingdom, or Schengen member states may also qualify for visa-free entry, while other nationalities can conveniently apply through Albania's electronic visa system.



Concluding his remarks, Ambassador Hysa described Albania as far more than a conventional holiday destination, characterizing it as a complete lifestyle and cultural experience that combines natural beauty, accessibility, security, hospitality, and economic opportunity. As travel preferences continue to evolve, Albania appears increasingly well-positioned to attract not only leisure travelers from the Gulf, but also investors seeking promising opportunities in one of Europe's fastest-rising markets.

Royal Thai Embassy hosts vibrant Thai Night Market



The Times Kuwait Report

The Royal Thai Embassy, in collaboration with the Thai Club in Kuwait, opened its doors on Friday evening for a vibrant celebration of Thai culture, cuisine, and community spirit through the much-anticipated Thai Night Market 2026, held under the heartfelt theme "Oon Jai Nai Baan Rao" (Warmth in Our Home).

Hosted at the Royal Thai Embassy in Bayan, the event brought together members of Kuwait's Thai community, their families, diplomats, guests, and media representatives in an atmosphere that reflected the warmth and hospitality for which Thailand is renowned.

Delivering his welcome remarks, Thai Ambassador to Kuwait H.E. Songchai Chaipatiyut described the gathering as more

than just a cultural event, emphasizing its deeper purpose of strengthening community bonds and ensuring that the Embassy remains a welcoming space for Thai nationals living in Kuwait.

"We organized this event to bring our community closer together, and to provide an open space to listen to your experiences, ideas, and suggestions. I want you all to feel that this Embassy is truly your home away from home," the Ambassador said.

The evening transformed the Embassy grounds into a bustling Thai-style night market, recreating the lively charm of Thailand's iconic street markets. Guests were treated to an authentic culinary journey featuring an array of traditional Thai street food, desserts, signature beverages, and specialty retail offerings that showcased the

rich flavors and heritage of Thailand.

Beyond the food experience, the event served as a cultural showcase, offering activities and interactions that reflected the Thai way of life, fostering greater understanding and cultural exchange between the Thai community and Kuwait's wider multicultural society.

Ambassador Songchai, who assumed his post in Kuwait in March this year, also used the occasion to connect personally with members of the Thai diaspora, noting that as a newcomer to the country, one of his priorities is to engage with and understand the community more closely.

He also expressed gratitude to the Kuwaiti authorities for ensuring the safety and well-being of the Thai community, while encouraging continued unity and vigilance amid uncertain regional circumstances.

"My greatest wish is for us to live in harmony, remain united, and support one another whenever possible," he said.

The Ambassador reassured Thai nationals that the Embassy remains accessible and committed to assisting citizens whenever needed, reinforcing the event's central message of home, belonging, and solidarity.

The Thai Night Market not only offered a festive evening of food and fellowship, but also highlighted the enduring friendship between Thailand and Kuwait, while underscoring the Embassy's role as a pillar of support for the Thai community in the country.

The event provided media representatives with a unique opportunity to capture the spirit of Thai culture in Kuwait as a celebration where tradition, community, and diplomacy came together in a warm and welcoming setting.

FIFA World Cup 2026 ticket resale prices tumble amid sluggish early demand

With just weeks to go before the FIFA World Cup 2026 enters its most active ticketing phase, the secondary ticket market is already showing signs of weakness, as resale prices for several matches have fallen sharply amid softer-than-expected early demand.

Market analysts tracking unofficial resale platforms indicate that ticket values for a number of group-stage matches have dropped significantly from their initial post-release highs, suggesting that speculative enthusiasm may be cooling as buyers become more price-conscious.

The FIFA World Cup 2026, which will be jointly hosted by the United States, Canada, and Mexico, is set to be the largest edition in the tournament's history, featuring 48 teams and an expanded match schedule. While anticipation for the event remains strong globally, the early resale market

appears to reflect a more cautious consumer mood than many expected.

Industry observers note that resale prices had initially surged following the first wave of ticket allocations, driven largely by speculative buyers hoping to capitalize on strong demand. However, as supply in the resale ecosystem has grown and actual consumer purchasing has remained measured, prices have begun correcting downward.

This decline is particularly evident for less high-profile fixtures, especially group-stage encounters involving teams that traditionally generate lower international travel demand. Matches without marquee football nations or major regional rivalries have reportedly seen the steepest price adjustments.

Analysts suggest multiple factors are

contributing to the softer resale environment.

One major reason is the sheer scale of the 2026 tournament. With significantly more matches being played across multiple host cities, overall ticket inventory is much larger than in previous World Cups. Greater supply naturally reduces scarcity-driven pricing pressure, making speculative markups harder to sustain.

Travel economics may also be influencing buyer behavior. For international supporters, attending the World Cup in North America involves not just ticket costs, but also expensive airfare, accommodation, internal travel between host cities, and general hospitality expenses. This broader financial burden may be causing many fans to delay purchases or seek better value closer to match dates. Currency fluctuations and wider economic uncertainty in several global



markets may also be dampening discretionary spending on major sporting travel.

Despite the current weakness in resale pricing, demand remains robust for premium fixtures.

Matches involving football powerhouses such as Argentina, Brazil, England, Portugal, Spain, and defending champions with large international fan bases continue to command strong premiums in the secondary market. Knockout matches, particularly quarterfinals onward, are also expected to remain highly sought after.

International Climate Law Needs Teeth

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Many fear that the global architecture of rules, norms, courts, and international accountability is crumbling before our eyes.

In this context, reaffirming the role of institutions like the ICJ would be a shot in the arm for multilateralism. What Vanuatu, a country of only around 340,000 people, has accomplished shows that the system can still function. We took a legal question to the appropriate institution, and that institution did its job. The process was slow, and we faced plenty of resistance along the way. But justice prevailed. All states had a chance to argue before the Court, whether they were for or against the motion, and the outcome was clear.

The ruling gave vulnerable people around the world hope and lent new momentum to multilateral climate action, especially the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change—

the process that has organized the international response to climate change for more than 30 years. Everyone participating in the annual UN Climate Change Conferences (COPs) now knows where the world court stands. The obligation to cooperate on meaningful solutions is not merely political and moral, but legal.

Following weeks of negotiations, our new resolution has been shaped by input from almost every UN member state and facilitated by a core group of countries from every region of the world. That breadth of engagement is no accident. It shows that the appetite for a truly global response to climate change remains strong, even at this fraught geopolitical moment.

There is no defensible reason for states to vote against the resolution. If we fail here, we will be signaling to current and future generations that we have moved from a system built on cooperation to one governed by power alone.

We will be conceding that pressure from vested interests can derail the progress we have made toward guaranteeing our collective survival.

It is no secret that powerful vested interests want to delay the transition away from fossil fuels. Despite the rapidly falling costs of renewables, they have no problem leveraging their money and influence to frustrate efforts to mitigate climate change. Small island states like Vanuatu are particularly vulnerable to these bad-faith actors.

Still, the world is now witnessing the consequences of relying on a fossil-fuel economy. While Vanuatu has long been vulnerable to growing climate-related risks like cyclones and drought, we are currently experiencing a different kind of storm. Those fueling up at gas stations in Port Vila are seeing the same high prices as hundreds of millions of others around the world. We are all learning the hard way what

a failure to phase out fossil fuels looks like.

The conflict in the Middle East reminds us that fossil fuels do not just heat the planet; they also inflame conflicts. The sooner all of us move away from such volatility, the better.

We all have a duty to keep fighting for international cooperation, because the alternative—a world that stops trying to solve its hardest problems collectively—would be worse than the current one. Vanuatu and its many like-minded partners will continue to push forward, not only on behalf of our own communities but on behalf of yours, too. Billions of people are already facing, or will soon face, rising seas, intensifying storms, deadly wildfires, and the relentless erosion of everything we have built.

The law has spoken. The question confronting every state is simple: We know the rule of law applies to climate change, but do you intend to act on it?

EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

The World Economy After the Trump-Xi Summit



Shang-Jin Wei
Former chief economist at the Asian Development Bank, is Professor of Finance and Economics at Columbia Business School and Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs.



The optics of this week's summit between Donald Trump and Xi Jinping were carefully staged to signal parity between the United States and China. Trump, the first US president to visit mainland China in nearly a decade, was accompanied by an entourage of American CEOs—including Tesla's Elon Musk (with his son X), Apple's Tim Cook, Boeing's Kelly Ortberg, and Nvidia's Jensen Huang—whose businesses rely on maintaining good relations with the People's Republic. They were duly given a grand welcome in the Great Hall of the People.

But the summit's (less photogenic) substance may matter more. If the meeting cements two outcomes—a longer-lasting Sino-American trade truce and a path to reopening the Strait of Hormuz—it will give the world economy something it has lacked for the past year and a half: a reduction in tail risks.

On the matter of trade, the October 2025 Busan agreement between the US and China did halt implementation of most of Trump's punitive tariffs, with China agreeing to ease its rare-earth export controls. The economic implications of a summit-level agreement to extend this truce through 2027 would be difficult to overstate. China processes roughly 85% of the world's rare earths and over 90% of its rare-earth magnets—inputs in every electric vehicle, wind turbine, F-35 fighter jet, and Nvidia AI accelerator (an advanced data-processing platform). A stable supply removes a binding constraint on multiple Western industries at once.

The likely winners are easy to identify. Boeing, starved of Chinese orders since 2019, may finally receive the type of headline-making aircraft purchase that Trump can boast about back home. Apple would gain a more reliable supply of rare-earth magnets for everything from speakers to camera modules. Tesla would benefit from clearer rules for its Shanghai gigafactory, which now produces more than half of its global output. And American farmers—a

“If Donald Trump and Xi Jinping's Beijing summit produces a sustained Sino-American trade truce and a path to reopening the Strait of Hormuz, that will give the world economy something it has lacked for the past year and half: a reduction in tail risks. In a year when so much has gone wrong, that is a welcome prospect.”

constituency Trump cannot ignore—would regain access to the Chinese soybean and grain import markets, which quietly redirected their orders to Brazil and Argentina.

For China, the most immediate benefit is greater predictability. The greatest costs incurred over the past year and a half came not from any particular US policy or statement by Trump, but from the cloud of uncertainty that he has cast over the global economy. A stabilized regime would allow for companies around the world—not least Chinese exporters—to resume normal corporate planning.

The second potential dividend concerns the Strait of Hormuz. The International Energy Agency has described Iran's effective closure of the Strait as the largest supply disruption in the history of the global oil market. The global oil price is now about 50% higher than it was before the US-Israeli war on Iran began.

Roughly 20% of seaborne oil and liquefied natural gas normally pass through the Strait, and in 2024, 84% of that crude went to Asia, with nearly 70% destined for China, India, Japan, and South Korea.

Thus, the pain has been unevenly distributed. Bangladesh faces what some analysts describe as recession-like conditions. Pakistan and Vietnam are rationing energy. Asian airlines have surcharged fares in response to higher fuel costs. And with over 30% of urea normally routed through Hormuz, fertilizer prices have raised food-security alarms from Cairo to Manila.

If the summit creates the conditions for a sustainable reopening of the Strait—with China pressuring Iran as its largest oil customer, and the US lifting its counterblockade of Iranian ports—the global economy would regain roughly one-fifth of its

hydrocarbon supply. The worst-hit emerging economies would benefit immediately from lower oil prices, fertilizer costs, and shipping insurance premiums. Still, three caveats are in order. First, China's relaxation of its rare-earth export controls will remain partial, in order not only to deter future US tariff escalations and export controls, but also actions by Europeans and others to support such US measures or introduce their own. To prevent others from building up large stockpiles, China will probably maintain sufficient rare-earth exports to support current use, but not strategic hoarding.

Second, whatever happens with the Strait of Hormuz will rest on a ceasefire that has proved fragile. Iran has demonstrated that it can close Hormuz at will, and that knowledge will not be unlearned. Lastly, any bargain struck at the summit could be undone when America's famously mercurial president returns to Washington.

In any case, the most important result of the summit may be one that the headlines miss. For a year and a half, corporate decision-making—about where to locate plants, how much inventory to carry, which suppliers to diversify toward, whether to hire—has assumed that the global trading system is progressively fragmenting. The costs of this calculation are evident everywhere, from the Chinese auto giant BYD's new plants in Thailand and Vietnam, to TSMC's \$165 billion commitment to a semiconductor fab in Arizona, Apple's shift of iPhone assembly to India, and the duplication of capacity across many other sectors.

A stable US-China economic relationship would not reverse those decisions (many geopolitical considerations are here to stay), but it would slow the next round of fragmentation. Firms that have been building two of everything could strike a better balance between efficiency and resilience.

Trump's trip to China, and Xi's planned visit to the US in September, will not end the era of strategic competition. But if these summits lower the probability of accidents or escalations—an expansion of the US chip embargo, a sudden stop of rare-earth shipments, or a shipping crisis spiraling into something worse—they will have done more for the world economy than most recent summits have. In a year when so much has gone wrong, that is a welcome prospect.

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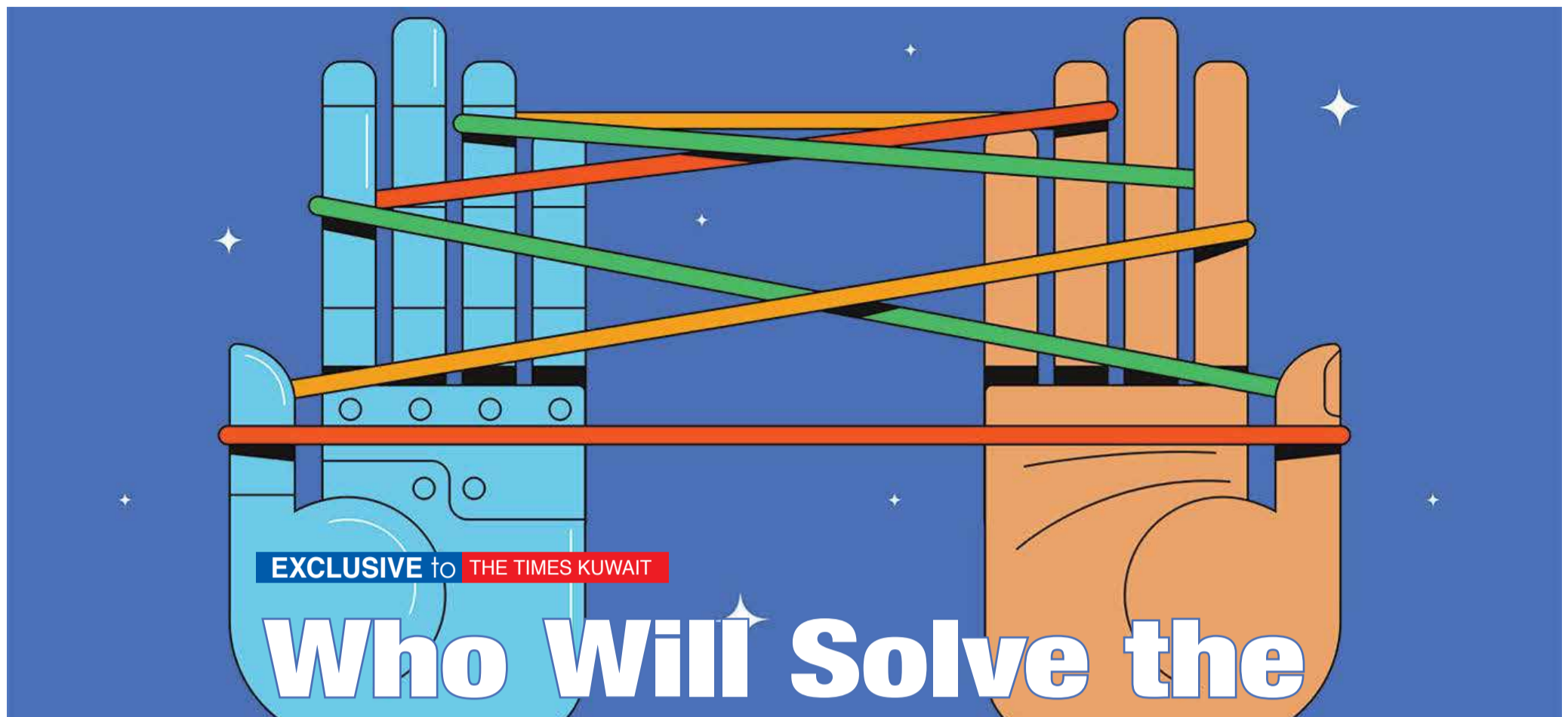
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Who Will Solve the AI Productivity Puzzle?



Robin Rivaton
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Last week, OpenAI and Anthropic both announced that they will launch private-equity-backed consulting businesses to push their models into the workflows of mid-market companies. With backing from Blackstone, Hellman & Friedman, and Goldman Sachs, Anthropic is reportedly raising \$1.5 billion for the venture, whereas OpenAI has reportedly raised \$4 billion from 19 investors—led by TPG, Brookfield, and Bain—at a \$10 billion valuation.

The combined \$5.5 billion is aimed at cracking the one problem the frontier labs cannot solve with better models: the AI productivity paradox. Although generative AI tools are now widely available, their benefits have yet to show up in the productivity statistics. Gallup finds that the share of American adults using AI tools at work at least a few times a year grew from under a quarter in early 2023 to almost a majority by 2026.

Yet US nonfarm business productivity growth has shown little sustained improvement. Though there was a brief acceleration in nonfarm business-sector productivity in 2024, it had fallen back toward its baseline by mid-2025. These trends echo the IT productivity paradox of the 1990s, which eventually resolved itself when firms reorganized around new IT capabilities. The open question is whether the same conditions are in place today, and if so, where.

What's the problem? In a recent paper, I identify organizational plasticity as the key variable. Productivity growth depends on a firm's capacity to convert task-level gains into system-level throughput, and that

capacity in turn depends on whether work is legible, processes are modular, task routing is substitutable, and managers have the authority to redesign workflows. Where those conditions are absent, AI saves individuals time without changing what the firm produces.

The standard economics literature has the same blind spot. The canonical empirical studies by David Autor, Erik Brynjolfsson, Shakked Noy, Whitney Zhang, and their co-authors measure individual productivity on isolated tasks. A customer-service agent may resolve more tickets, a consultant may write better memos, and a programmer may ship usable code faster. The gains are real, but they do not necessarily make the firm move faster.

specific workflow redesign, the consulting businesses they are launching will be priced and staffed accordingly. The labs have concluded that the value of the models they have built sits one layer up, in rewiring firms, rather than in the unit economics of an API.

China is moving in the same direction, albeit through a different channel. In March, the open-source AI agent OpenClaw escaped the developer community and achieved mass-market status among Chinese users. Within days, a platform war had erupted. Zhipu released AutoClaw, a one-click local installation bundled with dozens of pre-loaded skills. ByteDance shipped ArkClaw as cloud software. Tencent rolled out WorkBuddy for enterprise users and

followed with a provincial framework for AI-enabled solo entrepreneurship, and Sichuan pursued similar measures.

This approach works because the physical infrastructure is already in place. A single operator with a laptop in Shanghai can plug into the supply chains of Dongguan or Suzhou. Subsidized compute (processing power), a pre-installed agent, integrated messaging, embedded payments, and direct access to manufacturers, logistics providers, and marketplaces are enough to turn an individual into a viable unit of production. AI agents transform the firm externally rather than redesigning it from within.

The American bet is on expertise. Low-plasticity firms must be made plastic from the inside, with paid teams of forward-deployed engineers working through one mid-market company at a time. But while this approach could unlock a great deal of value, it is slow and capital-intensive.

The Chinese strategy is more radical. It starts with the insight that the firm itself is the bottleneck. Instead of raising the plasticity of incumbents, China is lowering the minimum organizational scale required to produce. The result is a blossoming of free agents, default installation, super-app integration, public subsidies, and millions of micro-businesses iterating in parallel.

Neither approach is guaranteed to pay off. American consultants may find that organizational change resists scale, no matter how many engineers they embed. Chinese local governments may subsidize a wave of low-quality automation and speculative one-person ventures that crash and burn. On both sides, the hard problem is the same: turning task-level time savings into measurable economic output. AI competition has moved past chips, data-center capacity, and frontier model performance. What matters now is the social architecture through which intelligence is deployed.

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“It is tempting to argue that we should want productivity to grow as rapidly as possible. Rising living standards mean new and better medicines, safer workplaces, longer lives, and more leisure time.”

A six-month randomized experiment by Eleanor Dillon, Sonia Jaffe, Nicole Immorlica, and Christopher Stanton demonstrates the problem. They gave 7,137 knowledge workers across 66 large firms access to Microsoft 365 Copilot, which was integrated into email, documents, and meetings. Time spent on email dropped, but time in meetings did not, and task quantity and composition remained flat. Most of the hours saved went into fewer evenings working from home rather than additional output. Individual cogs achieved higher efficiency, but the machine ran at the same pace.

The AI labs' new vehicles are an admission that selling tokens does not close this gap. With forward-deployed engineers, multiyear statements of work, deployment templates copied across portfolio companies, and sector-

pushed QClaw and ClawBot into WeChat. And Alibaba responded with its own orchestration tools. Because the open-source code was free, the model was no longer a defensible source of rent. Value migrated elsewhere—to default installations, the user interface, integration with messaging apps, and so forth.

Chinese industrial policy has also adapted. For two decades, local governments competed for factories, corporate headquarters, and supply-chain anchors by offering land grants, infrastructure, and tax incentives. Then, in early 2026, several districts and development zones began rolling out subsidy packages for OpenClaw adoption aimed not at firms but at individual operators. Hefei offered compute vouchers. Hangzhou's Xiaoshan district went further. Shenzhen positioned itself as a hub for AI-driven one-person companies. Guangdong



From the Mall to the Airport Gate

The Baby Products Every Gulf Mum Needs



By Hermoine Macura-Noble
Special to The Times Kuwait

Whether you are navigating the mall with a clingy newborn, pacing airport terminals in Kuwait, or doing the school run solo in Riyadh – life as a mum in the GCC is beautiful, busy, and physically demanding. Between the heat, the pace, and the reality of often parenting far from extended family, having the right products in your corner can make an enormous difference.

The truth is, nobody prepares you for how physical early motherhood really is. The endless holding, rocking, feeding, and settling or the way your shoulders ache by midday. What experienced mums will tell you, though, is that a handful of well-chosen products can genuinely change the texture of your days by quietly taking some of the strain off your body and your mind.



Caring for baby's skin is one of the first things Gulf mums learn to be intentional about. The combination of fierce outdoor heat and relentless indoor air conditioning creates a uniquely challenging environment for a newborn's delicate skin. Dermatologist-recommended options like Allergika Dermifant Kids Cream and ISDIN Nutratopic Pro-AMP are just two products earning loyal followings among Gulf parents. The key is using a gentle daily moisturizer across the whole face and body, and reserving more active barrier creams specifically for rashy or reactive patches.

When it comes to sleep – two products are vital. The first is a good breathable swaddle for newborns and sleep sack for babies over 3 months. Aden + Anais muslin options are particularly loved by pediatricians and parents for their open-weave fabric that regulates temperature without overheating baby in air-conditioned rooms. Lightweight and easy to wash, they pull double duty as pram covers, nursing shields, and impromptu changing mats. The second is a white noise machine, which is arguably one of the most underrated investments a new parent can make. In apartments where building noise and street sounds are part of daily life, a consistent sound environment can be genuinely transformative for nap time. Hatch Rest and the Dreamegg are two models that mums turn to for good reason.



And then there is the product that ties all of these essentials together – the one that shows up at the school gate, in the airport queue, during the late-night feed, and on the days when you are doing everything alone. The Hackerlily HipSurfer was created by Laura Campbell, CEO and Founder of Hackerlily – a mum who herself navigated spondyloarthritis through two pregnancies and understood from the inside just how much the physical demands of early parenthood can take out of you. "My kids did not want to feel strapped in and restricted," Laura explains. "They wanted to be close, but they also wanted freedom – to move their head, see me, play, face in, face out, and explore the world around them."

Designed without shoulder straps, the HipSurfer redistributes baby's weight through a wide, padded waistband. It takes around 15 seconds to put on with no help needed, which means parents actually reach for it rather than leaving it in the cupboard. Built-in storage

means you can skip the separate nappy bag for shorter outings, and its washable, customizable cover system means both mums and dads are genuinely happy to wear it – something Laura was deliberate about from the beginning, knowing that style and practicality rarely meet in the baby product world.

What makes the HipSurfer stand out beyond its design is the depth of expertise behind it. Laura spent years refining each version of the prototype with input from chiropractors, pediatricians, osteopaths, occupational therapists, women's health physiotherapists, sleep specialists, and International Board Certified Lactation Consultants.

That collaborative approach shows in the details – the way it sits higher on the waist and hips makes it particularly practical for mums recovering from a caesarean, where lower-sitting carriers can feel uncomfortable in those tender early weeks. Sleep experts have also recommended it as a kind of mobile

breastfeeding pillow, because it works whether you are sitting, standing, or walking – incredibly useful when your baby will not latch, you need to reset the environment mid-feed, or you are simply trying to keep moving while keeping your baby calm and close.

The feedback Laura hears most often says everything. Parents tell her it has taken really stressful shopping trips and exhausting sleep-time routines and brought a sense of calm to those moments. "It is not just taking the weight off their body," she says, "it is taking the weight off their mind as well." For expat mums in the Gulf parenting without their usual support network nearby, that quieter kind of relief – is often exactly what is needed most.

The HipSurfer is suitable from birth right through to toddlerhood, making it one of those rare products that keeps proving its worth at every stage rather than being used briefly and packed away. And because there are no complicated buckles or adjustments, grandparents and partners can put it on in seconds when they visit – making it just as useful for shared caregiving as it is for the solo days. Parenting in this region asks a lot of your body, your patience, and your resourcefulness. The products that truly earn their place are the ones that are quick to use, easy to clean, suited to the heat, and built with real life in mind. Invest in fewer, better things. And give yourself grace for everything else.



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A Defining Moment for Central Asia



Djoomart Otorbaev

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The upcoming IPO of Uzbekistan's National Investment Fund (UzNIF) marks a turning point for Central Asia. With \$2.4 billion in assets and a valuation of \$1.95 billion—implying a discount of roughly 20%—the offering is intended to do more than raise capital. Uzbekistan wants to establish its credibility as an investment destination.

But the IPO also represents a regional milestone. For the first time, a Central Asian country is offering international investors a diversified basket of strategic assets through a London Stock Exchange listing overseen by a major global asset manager.

At its core, the UzNIF IPO will test whether international investors are willing to view Central Asia not just as a risky frontier market, but as a region with real growth potential and reliable governance frameworks.

The IPO's structure reflects a sophisticated understanding of investor concerns. The valuation discount compensates for perceived country risk, and the choice to place the fund under the management of Franklin Templeton alleviates fears of political interference and lack of transparency. Meanwhile, an initial \$300 million commitment from anchor investors, including BlackRock and Franklin Resources, provides a stable base for secondary-market activity. Taken together, these measures directly address many of the longstanding barriers to investment in Central Asia.

Yet the significance of this IPO extends well beyond the mechanics of the deal itself. The interest it has generated highlights Central Asia's



transformation over the past three decades. What was once a peripheral region has become one of the world's most remarkable emerging-market growth stories.

The numbers speak for themselves: over the past 25 years, Central Asian economies have grown at an average annual rate of 4.8%, far outpacing the global average of roughly 3.4%. Over the same period, the region's economy has roughly tripled in real terms.

The past five years have underscored the region's resilience. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, supply-chain disruptions, and escalating geopolitical tensions, Central Asian economies have continued to deliver solid growth. Uzbekistan, for example, has maintained annual growth rates above 5%, supported by strong domestic demand and structural reforms, including gradual liberalization. Kazakhstan, though more exposed to commodity-price fluctuations, has relied on its resource wealth and institutional reforms to maintain macroeconomic stability. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, for their part, have benefited from remittance inflows, infrastructure investment, and greater regional

integration.

The region's economic performance has been underpinned by a set of structural advantages that remain widely underappreciated. Chief among them is human capital. Central Asia retains a comparatively well-educated population, reflecting the enduring legacy of Soviet-era investments in education and technical training. Literacy is nearly universal, while enrollment in tertiary education has been rising steadily.

Moreover, Central Asia's demographic profile remains highly favorable. In contrast to the aging economies of Europe and East Asia, the region's labor force continues to expand, supporting domestic consumption as productivity and incomes rise over the long term.

Geography is another major advantage. Long viewed as a constraint, Central Asia's location is increasingly viewed as a strategic asset. As geopolitical instability and conflicts like the Iran war force governments and businesses to seek alternatives to traditional maritime chokepoints, the region is emerging as a critical overland corridor connecting East and West. The so-called "Middle Corridor," which links China to Europe

through Central Asia and the Caucasus, is rapidly becoming a major commercial artery, accelerating investment in rail, road, and port infrastructure.

Against this backdrop, Uzbekistan's integration into global capital markets is a defining moment for the region. The UzNIF IPO is not an isolated deal, but an early step toward building a regional equity-market ecosystem.

By consolidating minority stakes in 13 state-owned enterprises across sectors such as transport, energy, telecommunications, utilities, and banking, the fund gives investors an opportunity to invest in the Uzbek economy through a single market vehicle. More importantly, it introduces a market-based valuation benchmark—something the region has historically lacked. Over time, this could generate positive spillover effects, reducing the informational asymmetries that have long limited inflows of foreign investment.

The financial implications could be significant. If successful, the UzNIF model could pave the way for a wave of IPOs by individual companies, both in Uzbekistan and across Central Asia. It may also accelerate the emergence of hybrid financing structures that combine public assets, private capital, and international management expertise to fund large-scale infrastructure and energy projects.

In a region where limited access to financing has prevented strategically important investments, such mechanisms could unlock opportunities that have remained out of reach for decades. For example, capital mobilized through vehicles like UzNIF could be directed toward large-scale, cross-border projects such as Kyrgyzstan's Kambarata-1 Hydropower Project or the Rogun Dam in Tajikistan.

Crucially, the credibility of the UzNIF project rests on governance. By entrusting the fund's management to Franklin Templeton, Uzbekistan has effectively signaled its willingness to subject state assets to international standards of transparency, accountability, and fiduciary discipline.

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