

*A Land of Hospitality,
 Friendship and Hope*
 - Archbishop Eugene M. Nugent Reflects
 on Five Transformative Years in Kuwait
 See Page 2

www.timeskuwait.com 250 Fils



MATCH SCHEDULE &
 STANDINGS | See Page 8 & 9



Kuwait's Education Reforms Begin to Show Results as Global Recognition Grows

Education reform is a long-term investment, but Kuwait's recent progress shows that sustained policy changes are beginning to deliver measurable results.

By Reaven D'Souza
 Executive Managing Editor

Kuwait's long-term investment in education is beginning to produce tangible results, signalling a significant shift in the country's efforts to build a knowledge-driven economy under the framework of New Kuwait Vision 2035.

One of the strongest indicators of this progress came recently when Kuwait University achieved a remarkable leap in the 2026 Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings, climbing nearly 400 places from the 801-1000 category to the 401-600 band. While university rankings alone do not define the quality of an education system, the achievement reflects years of sustained reforms aimed at strengthening academic excellence, improving governance, promoting research, and aligning education with national development priorities.

More importantly, the university's success mirrors a broader transformation taking place across Kuwait's educational landscape from schools and universities to vocational training institutions where policymakers are working to improve standards, enhance accountability and prepare future generations for an increasingly competitive global economy.

Education has become one of the key pillars of New Kuwait Vision 2035, which seeks to



diversify the economy, reduce dependence on oil revenues and develop a highly skilled national workforce capable of driving innovation and sustainable growth.

To achieve these ambitions, Kuwait has embarked on an ambitious reform agenda focused on modernising curricula, strengthening teach-

er quality, promoting academic integrity, expanding digital learning, encouraging scientific research and ensuring that graduates possess skills relevant to the evolving labour market.

Rather than concentrating solely on increasing student enrolment, the emphasis has shifted towards improving educational outcomes

and creating an environment where merit, innovation and critical thinking are rewarded.

Restoring Confidence Through Academic Integrity

Among the most significant reforms has been Kuwait's determined effort to eliminate examination fraud. For years, incidents involving leaked examination papers and organised cheating had undermined public confidence in academic qualifications. Recognising that educational excellence cannot flourish without integrity, the government enacted Decree-Law No. 77 of 2025, introducing stringent penalties, including imprisonment and substantial fines, for anyone involved in leaking examination papers, manipulating grades or facilitating cheating.

The legislation is supported by tighter supervision of examination centres, electronic monitoring systems, surprise inspections and decisive action against online groups involved in selling examination answers.

These measures reinforce an important principle that academic success must be earned through knowledge, hard work and fairness rather than manipulation. Recognising that the quality of any education system ultimately depends on the quality of its teachers, Kuwait has also introduced a comprehensive professional licensing framework for educators.

Continued on Page 13

Fortune
 RICE RANGE
 NOW AVAILABLE IN KUWAIT!
 Purity in every grain. Happiness in every meal.

100% NATURAL AND PURE | PERFECTLY SORTED, EXTRA LONG GRAINS | AROMA & TASTE THAT STAY | PERFECT FOR EVERY MEAL & OCCASION

Sole distributor in Kuwait

Al-Othman & Al-Bisher Trd.Co. W.L.L
 P.O. Box: 22984 Safat 13090 Kuwait
 Tel: +965 24755074, 24755073
 Fax: +965 24760108
 Email: sales@obtckwt.com
 info@obtckwt.com
 www.obtckwt.com

50+
 years of Continued Excellence

Follow us on Instagram @obtc_kwt

A Land of Hospitality Friendship and Hope

Archbishop Eugene M. Nugent Reflects on Five Transformative Years in Kuwait

The Times Kuwait Report

As Archbishop Eugene M. Nugent prepares to conclude his mission as Apostolic Nuncio of the Holy See to Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar, he leaves behind not only a distinguished diplomatic legacy but also a deep affection for a country he now considers his second home.

Arriving in Kuwait in February 2021 amid the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic, Archbishop Nugent's tenure coincided with one of the most challenging periods in recent global history. Yet, through those years, he witnessed the resilience of communities, the strength of faith, and the enduring power of dialogue and coexistence.

In this exclusive end-of-mission interview, the Archbishop reflects on his experiences, the growth of interfaith dialogue, the contribution of Kuwait's diverse communities, and the lessons he will carry with him as he embarks on his next assignment as Apostolic Nuncio to the Czech Republic.

A Mission Marked by Faith and Friendship

Looking back on his five years in Kuwait, Archbishop Nugent describes the experience as a profound personal, pastoral and spiritual blessing. "When I arrived in Kuwait during the difficult days of the pandemic, I did not fully know what lay ahead," he recalls. "What I discovered was a country characterized by generosity, openness and a deep respect for human dignity." The Archbishop says one of the greatest sources of inspiration during his mission came from Kuwait's Catholic community, largely composed of expatriate workers who have left their families and homelands in search of better opportunities.

"Their resilience, devotion and trust in God have been truly remarkable," he says. "Their faith has been a constant source of encouragement and inspiration."

Among the memories he treasures most are the friendships he developed with Kuwaitis, diplomats, government officials, religious leaders and members of the wider community.

"Saying goodbye is not easy because Kuwait has become a second home to me," he admits.

Navigating a World in Crisis

Archbishop Nugent's tenure unfolded against the backdrop of global and regional upheaval, including the COVID-19 pandemic and escalating geopolitical tensions. He recalls how the pandemic fundamentally changed the way religious communities operated. "We had to find new ways of maintaining pastoral care while protecting public health," he says. "It required creativity, adaptability and perseverance."

One particularly memorable moment came when diplomatic protocols themselves had to adapt to pandemic restrictions. "I remember presenting copies of my Letters of Credence to the Foreign Minister of Bahrain through a Zoom call," he says with a smile. Beyond the pandemic, ongoing regional tensions reinforced the importance of peacebuilding and dialogue. "In such circumstances, the mission of the Church is not political but deeply human and spiritual," he explains. "We seek to support people, encourage dialogue, promote understanding and pray for peace." These experiences strengthened his conviction that humanity's future depends on cooperation, solidarity and mutual respect.

Kuwait's Model of Coexistence

Throughout his diplomatic career, Archbishop Nugent has served in numerous countries, giving him a unique perspective on intercultural and interreligious relations. Asked what distinguishes Kuwait, he points to its remarkable ability to accommodate diversity while preserving social harmony.

"Kuwait has developed a unique model of coexistence where people from many nations, cultures and religions live and work together while contributing to the country's development and prosperity," he says. What stands out most, he notes, is the genuine spirit of hospitality that permeates society. "There is a sincere willingness to engage respectfully with others. This openness creates an environment where trust can flourish."

At a time when many parts of the world are experiencing polarization and division, Archbishop Nugent believes Kuwait offers an important example. "It demonstrates that diversity can be a source of enrichment rather than conflict."

Advancing Interfaith Dialogue

One of the defining themes of Archbishop Nugent's mission has



“When I arrived in Kuwait during the difficult days of the pandemic, I did not fully know what lay ahead. What I discovered was a country characterized by generosity, openness and a deep respect for human dignity. One of the greatest sources of inspiration during my mission was Kuwait's Catholic community, especially the expatriate workers who have left their families and homelands in search of better opportunities.”

been the advancement of interreligious dialogue across the Gulf region. He identifies the historic visit of Pope Francis to Bahrain in November 2022 as one of the most significant milestones of his tenure. "That visit sent a powerful message that dialogue, fraternity and mutual respect are essential foundations for building a more peaceful world," he says.

According to the Archbishop, recent years have witnessed growing engagement among religious leaders and institutions throughout the region. "Dialogue does not require us to abandon our differences," he explains. "Rather, it teaches us how to respect one another while working together for the common good." He believes that in a region often affected by political and social tensions, dialogue remains one of the most effective instruments for fostering peace, stability and understanding.

Serving a Diverse Catholic Community

Kuwait is home to one of the Gulf's most vibrant and diverse Catholic populations, bringing together faithful from Asia, Africa, Europe, the Americas and the Middle East.

For Archbishop Nugent, this diversity represents both a blessing and a challenge. "The Church in Kuwait is extraordinarily multicultural," he says. "Our challenge has been ensuring that pastoral care is available to people in their own languages and traditions." He points to the need for additional places of worship, particularly in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh (Abbasiya), where a large Catholic population resides.

"There is an urgent need for a church in that area to better serve

the faithful," he notes. Despite these challenges, the Archbishop highlights several achievements during his tenure.

He praises the dedication of priests, religious communities and volunteers who continue to support parish life throughout Kuwait.

Among the most significant milestones was the visit of Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Secretary of State of the Holy See, in January 2026 for the elevation of Our Lady of Arabia in Ahmadi to the status of a Minor Basilica.

"This was a historic moment," Archbishop Nugent says. "It became the first Minor Basilica on the Arabian Peninsula and brought immense joy to Catholics across the region."

Kuwait's Message to the World

Through his interactions with Kuwaiti leaders, officials and representatives of various faiths, Archbishop Nugent believes the country offers a valuable lesson to the international community. "Kuwait demonstrates that dialogue and mutual respect are not merely ideals; they can be lived realities."

He commends the country's humanitarian efforts and commitment to regional stability, describing them as widely respected both regionally and internationally.

"Peace is built through relationships, respect and a willingness to listen," he says. "Kuwait exemplifies these principles."

Lessons Learned from Kuwait

On a personal level, Archbishop Nugent says the people of Kuwait have taught him invaluable lessons that he will carry into the next chapter of his diplomatic service.

"Above all, I have learned the importance of hospitality and personal relationships," he reflects. He speaks warmly of the country's strong family values, generosity and sense of community. "I have admired the patience and dignity with which people face life's challenges," he says.

The Archbishop also emphasizes the importance Kuwaitis place on family life and social solidarity. "These are values that leave a lasting impression and that I will carry with me wherever I go."

A Heartfelt Farewell

As he prepares to depart, Archbishop Nugent expresses deep gratitude to Kuwait's leadership and people. He extends his appreciation to His Highness the Amir, His Highness the Crown Prince, government officials and all those who supported his mission throughout the years.

To the people of Kuwait, his message is one of sincere thanks. "I will never forget the kindness, generosity and openness that I experienced here."

He fondly recalls sharing Iftar meals during Ramadan, participating in diwanis and enjoying traditional kashta gatherings experiences that allowed him to better understand Kuwaiti culture and hospitality.

To expatriate communities, especially Catholics, he offers encouragement. "Continue contributing positively to the life of this country while remaining faithful to your values and traditions."

Looking Ahead

Archbishop Nugent's next diplomatic mission will take him to the Czech Republic, where he will serve as Apostolic Nuncio of the Holy See. While he looks forward to the new assignment, he admits that leaving Kuwait is bittersweet.

"Diplomatic assignments come and go, but friendships remain," he says. To his successor, he offers simple but meaningful advice:

"Listen carefully, build relationships, appreciate the richness of the local culture, and continue fostering dialogue and mutual understanding. The foundations are already strong."

A Final Reflection

Asked to summarize Kuwait in just a few words after five years of service, Archbishop Eugene M. Nugent pauses briefly before offering a description that captures the essence of his experience: "A land of hospitality, friendship and hope."

For the departing Apostolic Nuncio, Kuwait is more than a diplomatic posting. It is a place where traditions and modernity coexist, where diversity is embraced, and where people from different backgrounds can live together in mutual respect.

As he leaves for his new mission, Archbishop Nugent's final prayer is simple yet profound:

"May God continue to bless Kuwait, its leadership and its people with peace, prosperity and harmony. May the spirit of friendship and dialogue continue to flourish for generations to come."

Women in Diplomacy: Shaping a More Inclusive and Peaceful World

Women diplomats are redefining international relations through dialogue, collaboration and consensus-building in an increasingly complex world.

The Times Kuwait Report

In today's increasingly interconnected world, diplomacy is no longer confined to negotiating treaties or managing international relations. It has become a powerful instrument for addressing global challenges ranging from climate change and humanitarian crises to economic cooperation, conflict resolution and sustainable development. At the forefront of this transformation are women diplomats, whose leadership is helping redefine the practice of diplomacy through dialogue, collaboration and consensus-building.

As the international community marked the International Day of Women in Diplomacy on June 24, attention turned to the remarkable achievements of women serving as ambassadors, foreign ministers, negotiators and policymakers across the globe. The observance not only celebrates their growing influence but also underscores the importance of ensuring greater gender representation at the highest levels of international decision-making.

Over the decades, women have steadily dismantled barriers that once limited their participation in foreign affairs. Trailblazers such as Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, Alexandra Kollontai and Madeleine Albright demonstrated that diplomacy flourishes when diverse perspectives and inclusive leadership are embraced. Today, women continue to build on that legacy,



bringing fresh approaches to negotiation, peacebuilding and international cooperation.

Research increasingly shows that inclusive diplomacy delivers better outcomes. Peace negotiations that include women are more likely to result in durable agreements, while diverse diplomatic teams often produce more balanced and sustainable policy solutions. Their contributions have strengthened multilateral cooperation, promoted human

rights, expanded humanitarian engagement and fostered stronger partnerships between nations.

Despite this progress, significant challenges remain. Women continue to be underrepresented in senior diplomatic positions worldwide, reflecting persistent structural barriers, limited leadership opportunities and unequal career advancement. Recent studies indicate that women hold just over one-fifth of

ambassadorial positions globally, highlighting the need for continued institutional reforms, mentorship programmes and policies that encourage greater gender parity in foreign services. The Gulf region has also witnessed encouraging progress in recent years. Kuwait, in particular, has steadily expanded opportunities for women in diplomacy and public service. Pioneering diplomats such as Nabeela Abdulla Al Mulla have paved the way for future generations, demonstrating that women can successfully represent the nation on the international stage while contributing meaningfully to regional and global dialogue.



As geopolitical challenges become increasingly complex, the need for inclusive diplomacy has never been greater. Empowering women to participate fully in international affairs is not merely a question of equality; it strengthens institutions, enriches decision-making and enhances the world's collective ability to respond to emerging global challenges.

Today, women in diplomacy are far more than participants in international affairs. They are trusted negotiators, bridge-builders and influential leaders helping shape a more peaceful, resilient and cooperative global order. Their growing presence signals a future in which diplomacy is more representative, more effective and better equipped to meet the demands of an ever-changing world.

Al Muzaini Exchange  **المزيني للمصارفة**

TRANSFER WORLDWIDE AT BEST RATES WITH KUWAIT'S #1 EXCHANGE COMPANY SINCE

1942

 muzainiexchange  al muzaini exchange co.

Download on the **App Store**

GET IT ON **Google Play**

EXPLORE IT ON **AppGallery**

 **18 888 18**
www.muzaini.com

Beyond Traditional Leadership in Kuwait's Oil and Gas Sector

A Shift Toward Human-Centered Performance



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

Building on the earlier discussion of leadership change and regional transformation, this article consolidates these shifts into a more integrated leadership approach for Kuwait's oil and gas sector. For decades, leadership in Kuwait's oil and gas sector focused on technical expertise, operational discipline, and hierarchical authority. While these qualities remain essential for safety and reliability, modern organizations now face rapidly changing demands, requiring leaders to adapt.

Across the Gulf, governments and organizations are driving transformation that demands innovation, workforce engagement, and adaptability. Advances in technology, artificial intelligence, and changing demographics are reshaping operations. As a result, leadership is now evaluated by both operational results and the ability to develop people, foster collaboration, and build high-performing teams.

This shift reflects a broader evolution in leadership. While traditional command-and-control approaches provided structure, today's challenges require leaders who navigate uncertainty, manage diverse teams, and promote



continuous learning. Leadership is moving beyond supervision to enabling performance.

Recent global research reinforces this transition. Reports from the World Economic Forum (2025), Deloitte (2024), Gallup (2024), and PwC Middle East (2024) highlight the growing importance of adaptability, employee engagement, and workforce development in organizational success. Similarly, research on emotional intelligence underscores the importance of self-awareness, empathy, and relationship management in effective leadership (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2013; Miao, Humphrey, & Qian, 2018). Strength-based leadership studies also show that organizations perform better when leaders focus on identifying and developing employee strengths (Rath & Conchie, 2009).

These findings indicate a clear trend: leadership is becoming more human-centered. Leaders are now expected to serve as coaches, facilitators, and talent developers, not just decision-makers. Sustainable performance relies on systems and processes, as well as on people feeling supported, trusted, and empowered.

In this context, emotional intelligence is now a critical leadership skill. Leaders with self-awareness, empathy, and strong communication build trust, manage conflict, and sustain engagement. In high-reliability industries like oil and gas, these abilities directly impact performance and safety.

At the same time, organizations are recognizing the value of strength-based leadership. Rather than focusing primarily on fixing

weaknesses, this approach emphasizes identifying and leveraging employees' unique talents. When individuals are placed in roles that align with their strengths, motivation tends to increase, leading to stronger alignment between individual performance and organizational goals.

Effective leadership today integrates technical expertise with people-centered skills. Technical competence remains essential for credibility in oil and gas, but it is no longer sufficient. Leaders must also understand people, recognize potential, and create conditions for employees to excel.

For Kuwait's oil and gas sector, this is more than a change in leadership style. It marks a broader redefinition of organizational performance. While performance was once measured by efficiency, output, and compliance, it is now increasingly linked to employee engagement, leadership quality, and talent development.

The question, therefore, is not whether leadership is changing; it already is. The real question is whether organizational systems, leadership development pathways, and performance management practices are evolving at the same pace.

Organizations that successfully combine technical excellence with emotional intelligence and strength-based leadership will be better positioned to navigate future uncertainty and sustain long-term success.

As Kuwait's oil and gas sector continues its modernization journey, leadership effectiveness may ultimately be defined not by how well leaders direct others, but by how effectively they develop people and unlock human potential.

Al Mulla Automobiles showcases all-new Mercedes-Benz CLA at exclusive media drive



Al Mulla Automobiles, the sole authorised distributor of Mercedes-Benz in Kuwait, recently hosted an exclusive media test drive of the all-new Mercedes-Benz CLA, offering journalists and automotive content creators an opportunity to experience the latest evolution of the luxury compact sedan.

Held at the iconic Dar Hamad venue on June 20, the event combined Kuwaiti hospitality with an immersive automotive experience. Guests enjoyed live musical performances before taking the new CLA on a scenic drive along the Gulf Road, allowing them to explore the vehicle's performance, comfort and advanced technology in real-world conditions.

The all-new CLA represents the first model in an entirely new Mercedes-Benz vehicle family and has been engineered to deliver greater space, refinement, efficiency and intelligent connectivity than its predecessor. Sporting a sleek, aerodynamic design, the vehicle features a distinctive shark-nose front, frameless doors, sculpted body lines and wheels of up to 19 inches, creating a dynamic yet elegant road presence.

Among its standout exterior features are the



optional MULTIBEAM LED headlights with illuminated star-pattern animations, complemented by LED rear lighting connected by a full-width light strip. A panoramic fixed glass roof extending from the windscreen to the rear enhances the cabin's spacious feel while allowing abundant natural light into the interior.

Inside, the CLA introduces Mercedes-Benz's latest digital architecture powered by the new Mercedes-Benz Operating System (MB.OS). The platform integrates the vehicle's major systems through a chip-to-cloud network, enabling continuous software updates over the air while enhancing connectivity, performance and user

experience. The model also debuts the fourth-generation Mercedes-Benz User Experience (MBUX) infotainment system, incorporating artificial intelligence technologies from Microsoft and Google. An optional MBUX Superscreen stretches across the dashboard, providing both driver and passenger with seamless access to navigation, entertainment, vehicle controls and third-party applications.

Designed with sustainability and practicality in mind, the interior features premium trim options, wireless charging capabilities and environmentally conscious materials, including recycled paper finishes. Powering the new CLA is an advanced 48-volt hybrid system that integrates an electric motor within the transmission, enabling electric-only driving at urban speeds and enhancing fuel efficiency through regenerative braking across all eight gears.

With its blend of progressive design, intelligent technology and electrified performance, the all-new Mercedes-Benz CLA underscores the brand's continued commitment to shaping the future of premium mobility while offering Kuwaiti customers a new benchmark in the luxury compact segment.

Kuwait, US reaffirm strategic partnership, deepen cooperation on regional security

Kuwait and the United States have reaffirmed their longstanding strategic partnership, pledging to deepen bilateral cooperation and strengthen coordination on regional and international issues during high-level talks between Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who visited Kuwait on Wednesday.

The meeting came at a significant moment in the history of Kuwait-U.S. relations, as the two countries commemorate 65 years of diplomatic ties and 35 years since Kuwait's liberation in 1991 milestones that continue to underscore one of the Gulf region's most enduring strategic partnerships.

According to Kuwait's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the discussions focused on expanding cooperation across a wide spectrum of sectors while reaffirming the shared commitment of both nations to advancing their mutual interests. The two sides explored ways to further strengthen political dialogue, economic engagement and strategic coordination, reflecting the depth of relations that have evolved over more than six decades.

Regional security featured prominently in the



talks, with both leaders reviewing the rapidly evolving situation in the Middle East following the recent memorandum of understanding between the United States and Iran. The discussions highlighted the importance of sustained diplomatic engagement to preserve regional stability, reduce tensions and support peaceful dialogue among all parties.

Secretary Rubio reaffirmed Washington's

commitment to the security of its Gulf partners, stressing that the United States would continue to work closely with Kuwait and other regional allies to ensure that any future engagement with Iran does not compromise Gulf security. He also reiterated America's commitment to safeguarding freedom of navigation and maintaining stability across the region.

The visit also coincided with the reopening

of the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait after a temporary suspension of operations earlier this year, a move that Rubio described as a symbol of the resilience and strength of the bilateral relationship. Raising the American flag once again over the embassy, he described Kuwait as an indispensable partner in promoting regional peace, security and stability. Over the decades, Kuwait and the United States have built a comprehensive partnership encompassing defence, security, trade, investment, education and people-to-people exchanges. The relationship, forged through decades of close cooperation and strengthened during Kuwait's liberation in 1991, continues to serve as a cornerstone of stability in the Gulf region.

The latest meeting reflects the shared determination of both countries to maintain close consultation on emerging regional challenges while broadening avenues of cooperation in support of peace, prosperity and sustainable development. As geopolitical dynamics continue to evolve, Kuwait and the United States reaffirmed their commitment to working together to safeguard regional security and strengthen their strategic alliance for the years ahead.

LuLu Hypermarket Kuwait celebrates 25th Anniversary with Up to 50 percent off



Hypermarket Kuwait Marking a significant milestone in its retail journey, Land has launched its much anticipated 25th Anniversary Celebration, unveiling a spectacular promotion featuring LuLu On Sale up to 50% discounts on selected brands and products across all LuLu outlets in Kuwait.

The anniversary campaign was officially inaugurated at LuLu Hypermarket Al Rai by the senior management, alongside well-wishers and customers, commemorating 25 years of serving shoppers in Kuwait with quality products, exceptional value, and world-class shopping experiences.

As part of the celebrations, customers can enjoy special offers across a wide range of categories, including daily essentials, groceries, household items, home furniture, toys, luggage, fashion, footwear, and much more. The promotion is designed to thank loyal customers for their continued support while providing families with exceptional savings on their everyday and lifestyle needs.

Adding further excitement to the anniversary festivities, LuLu has also launched its biggest technology promotion of the year, "Let's Connect." The campaign features outstanding deals on the latest electronics, home appliances, smartphones, mobile accessories, laptops, gadgets, and digital lifestyle products from leading international brands.

LuLu management extends its sincere gratitude to its valued customers, employees, suppliers, and business partners whose trust and support have been instrumental in its success. The anniversary celebration reflects LuLu's continued commitment to delivering quality, value, innovation, and an enhanced shopping experience to consumers across the country.

Customers are invited to visit any LuLu Hypermarket branch in Kuwait to take advantage of the anniversary offers and explore the exciting promotions available during this special celebration.

As LuLu celebrates 25 years of retail excellence in Kuwait, the lulu reaffirms its commitment to customer satisfaction by continuing to offer high-quality products, a diverse product selection, and outstanding value at affordable prices. With customers at the heart of its success, LuLu remains dedicated to delivering a great shopping experience while meeting the evolving needs of families and communities across Kuwait.



LARGEST SPREAD IN TOWN

Child Buffet

KD 3.450

**EVERY THURSDAY
DINNER ONLY
6 PM TO 11 PM**

Adult Buffet

KD 5.950

**EVERY FRIDAY
LUNCH & DINNER
12:30 PM TO 4:30 PM
& 6 PM TO 11 PM**

HAWALLY ONLY
**EVERY SATURDAY
LUNCH ONLY
12:30 PM TO 4:30 PM**

**AVAILABLE AT
HAWALLY BRANCH
BEIRUT ST, LULU AL
WATAN COMPLEX, OPPOSITE CBK
22626782 ☎ 22626783**

**AVAILABLE AT
FAHAHEEL BRANCH
1ST FLOOR, AL HOOR BUILDING
BLOCK NO.11, BEHIND TO CENTERPOINT
23911175 ☎ 23911174**

Not All Those Yellow Flowers Are

ARFAJ



Dr. Jose Kaitharan
Agricultural Specialist, Worley, Kuwait
Special to The Times Kuwait

Let's be aware that all those yellow flowers flourished all over the urban areas of Kuwait are neither Arfaj nor the National flower of Kuwait. In fact, Kuwait blessed with massive blooming this year, presence of yellow flowers everywhere, and locals are talking about Arfaj, people start taking photos of those yellow flowers and posting in social media as Arfaj. This article gives some insight into the most common seasonal flowers, and their life pattern so that people will not get confused with Arfaj.

Arfaj *Rhanterium epapposum*

Rhanterium epapposum is known locally as Arfaj. It is native to the Arabian Peninsula and Kuwait. It is a bushy dwarf shrub with a round regular shape growing to between 40 to 80 cm high and covers an area up to 150 cm diameter. The branches are silvery white, and the leaves are small, lanceolate and with small spikes. The small yellow flowers appear in spring. It grows in silty, sandy and gravelly soil, and is highly salt-tolerant. Arfaj can be found rarely in and around Kuwait's urban landscapes, whereas in the desert it is common but being grazed by camels. It is one of the characteristic plants in the remote region.

SPRING FLOWERS IMITATING ARFAJ

• 'Nuwair' *Senecio glaucus*

After the first rain, mostly in late October or beginning of November, there comes the yellow blossoms. Commonly called as 'Nuwair' or 'Nuwar', and scientifically *Senecio glaucus* is the yellow carpet that covers all over Kuwait. The rainfall pattern triggered the germination and establishment of large number of these annual species. Nuwair, is among the species which



started to bloom early, adorning the streets and roads. It has carpeted the sands in the open desert areas with yellow color in natural, eye-catching scenes, drawing visitors from across the country. The species flourishes well during the months of January-February and extend till the end of April depends on the arrival of summer. It blooms at dawn when the sun rises and closes at sunset.

• 'Atheed' *Launaea mucronata*

This year more specifically starting from mid of April, *Launaea* shows its peak presence all over



Kuwait. People mistakenly consider it as Arfaj. The presence of those attractive yellow blooms catches drivers and visitors everywhere, especially in the road medians, traffic triangles, and pedestrian walkways. The surprising fact is that it looks like somebody planted as part of the landscape greenery project due to its uniform pattern of flowering. It plays a significant role in ecosystem stability. Its roots help stabilize soil, while its flowers provide nectar for pollinators like bees and butterflies. The leaves serve as forage for herbivores, contributing to nutrient



cycling in arid habitats. Its resilience makes it an important species for maintaining biodiversity in desert ecosystems.

• 'Howaithan' *Picris babylonica*

It's not common in the urban areas but it appears mostly as yellow carpets in desert regions immediately after the first appearance of *Senecio* and other annuals. *Picris* flowers look similar in size



and look but are differentiated from *Launaea* with the presence of black colored center. Flowers of *Launaea* have only yellow petals without black in the center.

There are few others who contribute colors to the wild garden as well. Listed below are the most common ones.

• 'Shiliat' *Sysimbrium irio*

• 'Iqhowan' *Anthemis deserti*



• 'Iqhowan Al Hadaeg' *Chrysanthemum coronarium*

Conclusion

The soil seed bank of Kuwait is very rich in terms of species and genetic diversity. The buried seeds are very clever that a fraction only will germinate upon the first rain; others will wait for more favorable conditions. Many will take years to break the dormancy. However, rainfall plays a major role in bringing back plant life and decides the lush and species in every season.

In conclusion, those yellow blooms that are seen in the cityscapes are not Arfaj flowers. They are only seasonal or annual species, which means those plants live for a couple of months and die. However, Arfaj is a perennial shrub that lives more than 20 years and seen only in undisturbed or protected areas of Kuwait.

World Cup Knockout Stage Set as 32 Nations Advance

Golden Boot Race Intensifies



The Times Kuwait Report

The group stage of the 2026 FIFA World Cup has concluded in spectacular fashion, paving the way for the first-ever Round of 32 in the tournament's history. The expanded 48-team competition has already exceeded expectations, delivering thrilling encounters, dramatic late goals, memorable upsets and inspiring performances from both established football giants and emerging nations.

With the knockout rounds now underway, the margin for error has disappeared. Every match becomes a winner-takes-all contest where a single goal, a moment of brilliance or an individual mistake can decide a nation's fate. As football's biggest prize comes into sharper focus, anticipation is building for what promises to be one of the most exciting knockout stages ever witnessed at a FIFA World Cup.

The expanded tournament format has transformed the global spectacle by allowing greater representation from every continent. Far from diluting the competition, the additional teams have increased its unpredictability, with several lesser-known nations producing fearless performances to challenge football's traditional powers. The result has been a group stage filled with compelling storylines and fierce competition until the very final whistle.

While many of the tournament favourites successfully negotiated the opening phase, they were forced to work hard for their places in the knockout rounds. Defending champions Argentina once again demonstrated the qualities that made them world champions, combining experience with attacking flair to comfortably advance. Five-time champions Brazil also lived up to expectations, while Germany, France, England, Spain, the Netherlands, Belgium and Switzerland all progressed with impressive displays that underlined their credentials as serious contenders for the title.

Co-hosts Mexico and the United States also enjoyed successful group campaigns, delighting home supporters and adding further excitement to a tournament already attracting record global audiences. Their progression ensures that North American interest in the competition remains strong as the tournament enters its decisive phase.

Perhaps the most captivating stories of the group stage, however, have been the performances of the tournament's surprise packages. Cape Verde, Bosnia and Herzegovina, South Africa and Canada have all exceeded expectations by securing places in the Round



of 32, proving that international football has become more competitive than ever before. Their fearless displays and disciplined teamwork have earned admiration from fans around the world while demonstrating the growing strength of football beyond its traditional powerhouses.

South Africa's remarkable campaign has been among the standout achievements of the tournament, while Cape Verde has emerged as one of the competition's biggest success stories after qualifying for the knockout rounds against considerable odds. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Canada have likewise shown tactical maturity and resilience, earning their places among the world's top 32 teams.

The knockout stage now presents a series of fascinating encounters. South Africa and Canada will meet in an all-surprise fixture that guarantees one of the tournament's breakthrough nations a place in the last 16. Brazil begin their pursuit of



a record-extending sixth World Cup title against an energetic Japanese side, while Germany face Paraguay in what promises to be a closely contested battle between European and South American football traditions.

Elsewhere, the Netherlands take on Morocco, Spain face Austria, Switzerland meet Algeria and Portugal renew their rivalry with Croatia in another heavyweight European contest. Defending champions Argentina will open their knockout campaign against Cape Verde, whose remarkable journey has already captured the imagination of football fans across the globe.

As attention shifts towards the race for the World Cup trophy, another captivating contest continues to unfold that for the prestigious adidas Golden Boot. Argentina captain Lionel Messi has once again demonstrated why he remains one of football's greatest players, leading the tournament's scoring charts with



a series of influential performances that have propelled the defending champions into the knockout rounds. Every goal has further strengthened his remarkable World Cup legacy and reinforced his importance to Argentina's hopes of retaining the title.

The competition for the Golden Boot, however, remains far from decided. France's Ousmane Dembélé has enjoyed an outstanding tournament, while Brazil's Vinicius Júnior continues to produce moments of brilliance capable of changing matches in an instant.

Norway's prolific striker Erling Haaland and Germany's Deniz Undav also remain firmly in contention as the knockout rounds offer additional opportunities to add to their goal tallies. Several other global stars are expected to play decisive roles as the tournament progresses. France will once again look to Kylian Mbappé for inspiration, while Egypt's Mohamed Salah continues to carry his nation's attacking hopes. Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo, playing in what could be his final World Cup, remains a constant threat, and England captain Harry Kane possesses both the experience and finishing ability to challenge for the tournament's top scorer award should England advance deep into the competition.

Beyond the individual accolades, the knockout stage represents the true test of championship character. History has shown that the World Cup is often decided not only by talent but by resilience, tactical discipline and the ability to perform under immense pressure. Teams that dominated the group stage must now prove they can handle the intensity of elimination football, where every mistake is magnified and every opportunity carries enormous significance.

The expanded World Cup has already demonstrated that international football is entering a new era. Emerging nations have shown they can compete with established powers, while the traditional favourites have been reminded that reputation alone offers no guarantees. The balance between experience and ambition has created one of the most open and competitive World Cups in recent memory.

With the road to the final now clearly mapped out, the coming weeks promise unforgettable moments, dramatic encounters and emotional triumphs. Whether it is the battle to lift football's most coveted trophy or the race to claim the adidas Golden Boot, the 2026 FIFA World Cup has entered its defining chapter and if the group stage is any indication, the very best is still to come.

Group A	P	W	D	L	GF	Pts
Mexico	3	3	0	0	6	9
S Africa	3	1	1	1	2	4
S Korea	3	1	0	2	2	3
Czechia	3	0	1	2	2	1

Group B	P	W	D	L	GF	Pts
Switzerland	3	2	1	0	7	7
Canada	3	1	1	1	8	4
Bos & Herz	3	1	1	1	5	4
Qatar	3	0	1	2	2	1

Group C	P	W	D	L	GF	Pts
Brazil	3	2	1	0	7	7
Morocco	3	2	1	0	6	7
Scotland	3	1	0	2	1	3
Haiti	3	0	0	3	2	0

Group D	P	W	D	L	GF	Pts
USA	3	2	0	1	8	6
Australia	3	1	1	1	2	4
Paraguay	3	1	1	1	2	4
Turkey	3	1	0	2	3	3

Group E	P	W	D	L	GF	Pts
Germany	3	2	0	1	10	6
C. d'Ivoire	3	2	0	1	4	6
Ecuador	3	1	1	1	2	4
Curaçao	3	0	1	2	1	1

Group F	P	W	D	L	GF	Pts
Netherlands	3	2	1	0	10	7
Japan	3	1	2	0	7	5
Sweden	3	1	1	1	7	4
Tunisia	3	0	0	3	2	0

ROUND OF 32

MATCH 1
June 29 • 11:30pm • Boston, USA
1E Germany vs 3AB CDF Paraguay

MATCH 2
July 1 • 12:00am • New York/New Jersey, USA
1I France vs 3CD FGH Sweden

MATCH 3
June 28 • 10:00pm • Los Angeles, USA
2A S Africa vs 2B Canada

MATCH 4
June 30 • 4:00am • Monterrey, Mexico
1F Netherlands vs 2C Morocco

MATCH 5
July 3 • 2:00am • Toronto, Canada
2K Portugal vs 2L Croatia

MATCH 6
July 2 • 10:00pm • Los Angeles, USA
1H Spain vs 2J Austria

MATCH 7
July 2 • 3:00am • San Francisco Bay Area, USA
1D USA vs 3BE FIJ Bosnia & Herzegovina

MATCH 8
July 1 • 11:00pm • Seattle, USA
1G Belgium vs 3AE HIJ Senegal

ROUND OF 16

MATCH 1
July 5 • 12:00am • Philadelphia, USA
M1 vs M2

MATCH 2
July 4 • 8:00pm • Houston, USA
M3 vs M4

MATCH 3
July 6 • 10:00pm • Dallas, USA
M5 vs M6

MATCH 4
July 7 • 3:00am • Seattle, USA
M7 vs M8

FIFA WORLD CUP 2026



→ P = Matches Played | W = Wins | D = Draws | L = Loss | GF = Goals For | Pts = Points

لولو للصيرفة
LuLu Exchange
MONEY TRANSFER APP

MATCH SCHEDULE & STANDINGS

ROUND OF 16

MATCH 5
July 5 • 11:00pm • New York/New Jersey, USA
M9 vs M10

MATCH 6
July 6 • 3:00am • Mexico City, Mexico
M11 vs M12

MATCH 7
July 7 • 7:00pm • Atlanta, USA
M13 vs M14

MATCH 8
July 7 • 11:00pm • Vancouver, Canada
M15 vs M16

ROUND OF 32

MATCH 9
June 29 • 8:00pm • Houston, USA
1C Brazil vs 2F Japan

MATCH 10
June 30 • 8:00pm • Dallas, USA
2E C. d'Ivoire vs 2I Norway

MATCH 11
July 1 • 4:00am • Mexico City, Mexico
1A Mexico vs 3CE FHI Ecuador

MATCH 12
July 1 • 7:00pm • Atlanta, USA
1L England vs 3EH IJK DR Congo

MATCH 13
July 4 • 1:00am • Miami, USA
1J Argentina vs 2H Cape Verde

MATCH 14
July 3 • 9:00pm • Dallas, USA
2D Australia vs 2G Egypt

MATCH 15
July 3 • 6:00am • Vancouver, Canada
1B Switzerland vs 3EF GJH Algeria

MATCH 16
July 4 • 4:30am • Kansas City, USA
1K Colombia vs 3DE IJL Ghana

Group G	P	W	D	L	GF	Pts
Belgium	3	1	2	0	6	5
Egypt	3	1	2	0	5	5
Iran	3	0	3	0	3	3
NewZealand	3	0	1	2	4	1

Group H	P	W	D	L	GF	Pts
Spain	3	2	1	0	5	7
Cape Verde	3	0	3	0	2	3
Uruguay	3	0	2	1	3	2
Saudi Arabia	3	0	2	1	1	2

Group I	P	W	D	L	GF	Pts
France	3	3	0	0	10	9
Norway	3	2	0	1	8	6
Senegal	3	1	0	2	8	3
Iraq	3	0	0	3	1	0

Group J	P	W	D	L	GF	Pts
Argentina	3	3	0	0	8	9
Austria	3	1	1	1	6	4
Algeria	3	1	1	1	5	4
Jordan	3	0	0	3	3	0

Group K	P	W	D	L	GF	Pts
Colombia	3	2	1	0	4	7
Portugal	3	1	2	0	6	5
DR Congo	3	1	1	1	4	4
Uzbekistan	3	0	0	3	2	0

Group L	P	W	D	L	GF	Pts
England	3	2	1	0	6	7
Croatia	3	2	0	1	5	6
Ghana	3	1	1	1	2	4
Panama	3	0	0	3	0	0

Note: Standings updated as of Sunday morning, 28th June.

REGIONAL FINTECH PARTNER OF THE ARGENTINE FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION

send earn shop

Turn Your LuLu Money Transfers Into FREE Shopping!

Earn 180 points worth **1.5 KWD** on your first transfer

Earn 60 points worth **500 Fils** on every other transfer

Refer your friend and earn 180 points worth **1.5 KWD**

Unlimited Referrals | Unlimited Rewards

Redeem your points at any LuLu Hypermarket Outlet in Kuwait

Download LuLu Money Now!

Every 240 points worth 2 KWD unlocks your shopping reward

Customer Care: +965 9727 9025

www.luluexchange.com/kuwait



9 of 10 African Teams Reach FIFA World Cup 2026 Knockout Stage

Africa has achieved an unprecedented milestone at the 2026 FIFA World Cup, with nine of its ten participating nations qualifying for the Round of 32 the best performance by the continent in World Cup history. The achievement underscores the rapid rise of African football on the global stage, aided by the tournament's expanded 48-team format and the growing strength of African national teams.

Among the standout stories:

- **Algeria** secured qualification after surviving a dramatic 3-3 draw with Austria.



- **DR Congo** reached the World Cup knockout stage for the first time ever, thanks to a remarkable 3-1 comeback

- **Cape Verde**, making its World Cup debut, continued its fairy-

tale campaign by advancing to the knockouts despite not winning a group-stage match.

- Morocco maintained its impressive form, building on its recent success as one of Africa's strongest footballing nations.

The record-breaking achievement reflects the growing competitiveness, depth, and maturity of African football. With nine teams still in contention, the continent now has its strongest-ever chance of producing a deep World Cup run and possibly reaching the latter stages of the tournament for the first time.



LuLu Exchange Hosts World Cup Screening of Argentina–Austria Match

Association with the Embassy of Argentina in Kuwait



LuLu Exchange and its digital remittance platform LuLu Money, two of the region's leading names in remittance and financial services, hosted a special live screening of the World Cup 2026 group stage match between Argentina and Austria at VOX Cinemas, Kuwait, in association with the Embassy of Argentina in Kuwait.

The event brought together ambassadors, diplomatic representatives, business leaders, members of the Argentine community, LuLu Exchange customers, and football enthusiasts for an evening of sporting excitement and community spirit. The gathering underscored the enduring role of football as a unifying force that transcends cultural and national boundaries.

Among the distinguished guests present were H.E. Ramiro Velloso, Ambassador of Argentina; H.E. Ruben Alfredo Avila, Ambassador of Venezuela; H.E. Alain Perez Torres, Ambassador of Cuba; H.E. Carlos Enrique Tomas, Ambassador of Peru; H.E. Rodrigo Gabsch, Ambassador of Brazil; H.E. Paramita Tripathi, Ambassador of India; H.E. Eduardo Peña Haller, Ambassador of Mexico; H.E. Noshrevan Lomtadize, Ambassador of Georgia; H.E. Lena Maryana, Ambassador of Indonesia; and H.E. Ulrich Frank, Ambassador of Austria. The gathering was further graced by the presence of Mr. Rafael Martinez, Deputy Chief of Mission of El Salvador, and Mr. Fernando Grande Fria, Chargé d'Affaires of the Vatican Embassy.

H.E. Ambassador Ramiro Velloso of Argentina set the tone for the evening, reflecting on what the occasion represented beyond



the sport itself. "It is a pleasure to see so many friends gathered here to share the excitement of the World Cup," said Ambassador Velloso. "Football has a unique ability to bring people together across cultures, languages, and nationalities, and tonight we can see that spirit alive and well."

He extended his appreciation to LuLu Exchange and LuLu Money for sponsoring and organising the event, and thanked VOX Cinemas, members of the diplomatic community, and supporters of Argentina in Kuwait for contributing to an unforgettable evening.

Mr. Subaheer Thayil, Deputy General Manager of LuLu Exchange,

welcomed the gathering on behalf of LuLu Exchange. "Football has a unique way of bringing people together, transcending borders, cultures, and languages. Tonight, we celebrate the spirit of unity, friendship, and sportsmanship that the beautiful game inspires," he said. Mr. Subaheer took the opportunity to thank the Embassy of Argentina, VOX Cinemas, and all event partners for their cooperation and support. He also extended his appreciation to Mr. Shafaz Ahamed, Head of Operations, and Mr. Muhammad Aslam, Digital Manager, for their efforts in organising the event. The contributions of Mr. Salem Aljamiah and the Boca Juniors Consulate in Kuwait were also acknowledged for helping bring the initiative to life.

As Argentina claimed a 2-0 victory over Austria, the atmosphere inside VOX Cinemas captured everything the evening had set out to achieve. Diplomats, members of the Argentine community, football fans, and LuLu Exchange customers celebrated together, united by the shared thrill of the beautiful game. The event left a lasting impression as a moment of genuine connection between communities, and a reflection of the spirit LuLu Exchange continues to champion.

This exclusive event is a proud extension of LuLu Exchange's broader partnership with the Argentine Football Association (AFA). As the tournament continues to captivate the globe, LuLu Exchange and LuLu Money remain dedicated to championing the spirit of the game and bringing world-class, unifying experiences to their diverse customer base in Kuwait and beyond.

Indian Ambassador hosts media luncheon to strengthen engagement and dialogue

The Times Kuwait Report

The Embassy of India in Kuwait hosted a special luncheon for members of the media on Tuesday, June 23, reaffirming its commitment to fostering strong relations with Kuwait's media fraternity and encouraging open dialogue on issues of mutual interest.

The luncheon was hosted by H.E. Paramita Tripathi, Ambassador of India to Kuwait, at the renowned Mughal Mahal Restaurant in Sharq. The gathering brought together editors, senior journalists and representatives from leading English and Arabic media in an atmosphere of warmth, friendship, and candid conversation.

Welcoming the guests, Ambassador Paramita Tripathi expressed her appreciation for the constructive role played by the media in strengthening India-Kuwait relations and in highlighting the contributions of the vibrant Indian community to Kuwait's continued growth and development.

She emphasized that responsible journalism and regular engagement between diplomatic missions and the media help promote greater understanding, transparency, and people-to-people connections.

The luncheon served as an informal yet



meaningful platform for exchanging views on a wide range of subjects, including bilateral relations, trade and investment, cultural cooperation, education, tourism, and the welfare of the Indian diaspora in Kuwait.

Discussions also touched upon the Embassy's ongoing initiatives aimed at enhancing consular services and promoting India's economic, technological, and cultural achievements.

Since assuming office, Ambassador Paramita Tripathi has actively promoted dialogue with various stakeholders, including government

institutions, business leaders, community organizations, educational institutions, and the media. Her outreach initiatives have further strengthened the already close strategic partnership between India and Kuwait, while reinforcing the deep historical, cultural, and economic ties shared by the two nations.

The Ambassador also acknowledged the invaluable role played by the Indian community one of the largest expatriate communities in Kuwait in contributing to the country's economic progress and social fabric. She noted that the Embassy remains committed



to supporting the welfare of Indian nationals while continuing to deepen cooperation across multiple sectors.

The luncheon concluded with warm exchanges and renewed commitments to continued collaboration between the Embassy and members of the media. The event underscored the importance of maintaining open channels of communication and highlighted the media's vital role in fostering understanding, strengthening bilateral relations, and showcasing the enduring friendship between India and Kuwait.

Kuwait Debtors Campaign approves 2,422 cases, disburses 7.5 million dinars

Minister of Justice Counselor Nasser Yousef Al-Sumait said the ongoing Debtors Campaign continues to achieve its humanitarian and social objectives under strict regulatory controls, noting that as of Thursday, June 25, 2026, a total of 2,422 cases have been approved and 7,505,987 dinars have been disbursed from the 16.5 million dinars collected so far, representing around 45 percent of the total funds raised.

Al-Sumait made the remarks during a meeting with six working groups tasked with reviewing debtor files, attended by Undersecretary of the Ministry of Justice Awatif Abdul Latif Al-Sanad, Acting Assistant Undersecretary for Technical and

Administrative Affairs Nouf Al-Qabandi, and senior officials from the ministry and the General Directorate of Execution.

He explained that the ministry has introduced a structured review mechanism in coordination with the Head of the General Directorate of Execution, Counselor Abdullah Al-Qasimi, through the formation of six specialized teams assigned to study cases according to governorates.

These teams operate under the supervision of the ministry's undersecretaries before submitting their findings to enforcement judges for verification and final approval.

The minister stressed that the updated procedures are designed to ensure that charitable contributions are directed to their rightful beneficiaries, in line with clear criteria that prioritize transparency, fairness, and maximum humanitarian impact.

He added that approved cases must have a valid enforcement file and a confirmed executive document, with priority given to



the most vulnerable categories, including individuals facing imprisonment or arrest orders, cases related to alimony and housing rent, and personal debts.

Consideration is also given to the age of the enforcement file and the value of the debt, with a cap of 10,000 dinars per beneficiary, whether across one or multiple files.

Al-Sumait expressed his gratitude to donors for their support, saying the achievements of the campaign reflect the authenticity of Kuwaiti society

and its deeply rooted values of solidarity and compassion. He also praised enforcement judges, working teams, and Ministry of Justice staff for their efforts in ensuring aid reaches those in need efficiently and transparently.

It added that the step supports efforts to safeguard the domestic tax base, promote tax justice, and contribute to the development of a more transparent and equitable global financial system.

Lulu Hypermarkets Launches "Let's Connect" Tech Festival Across Kuwait with Unbeatable Deals and Interactive Technology Experiences



Lulu Hypermarkets has officially launched its much-anticipated annual tech promotion, "Let's Connect" Sponsored by Motorola, bringing together the latest innovations, exclusive deals, and immersive experiences for customers across Kuwait. The promotion will run from June 25 to July 10, 2026, offering shoppers an exciting opportunity to explore cutting-edge technology while enjoying some of the biggest tech promotions of the year.

The grand inauguration of the festival took place at Lulu Hypermarket Al Rai, where Lulu's senior management and invited officials formally launched the event, marking the beginning of a nationwide celebration of technology, connectivity, and innovation. The launch

ceremony highlighted Lulu's commitment to bringing the latest technological advancements and value-driven offers to customers while creating engaging experiences for families and technology enthusiasts. As one of the largest technology-focused promotions organized by Lulu Hypermarkets, "Let's Connect" features exceptional offers across a wide range of product categories, including smartphones, accessories, consumer electronics, home appliances, and smart technology solutions.

The event showcase the latest innovations in mobile technology and smart devices, providing customers with access to new-generation products and hands-on demonstrations. The partnership enhances the festival's focus on



innovation, allowing visitors to experience emerging technologies and discover products designed to simplify and enrich everyday life.

Shoppers can take advantage of exclusive discounts and special promotions on products from some of the world's most popular technology brands, including Apple, Samsung, Sony, Panasonic, and many more. From flagship smartphones and wearable devices to home entertainment systems and household appliances, the festival offers attractive deals across a comprehensive range of technology products. One of the standout attractions of this year's event is the Robotics & AI Workshop Zone, Sponsored by Mee tech AI Steam Education in collaboration with



UBTECH International Robotics, China an interactive learning space designed to inspire curiosity and innovation among students and visitors. The workshop offers participants the opportunity to explore robot assembling, concepts, and demonstrations conducted by experienced instructors. The initiative reflects Lulu's commitment to supporting educational engagement and encouraging interest in future technologies among younger generations.

Customers are invited to visit Lulu Hypermarkets to experience the excitement of the "Let's Connect" Tech Festival, explore the latest innovations, participate in interactive activities, and enjoy exclusive offers available for a limited time

Kuwait's Project Pipeline Holds Steady at \$240 Billion as Gulf Infrastructure Boom Accelerates

Stable project market underscores long-term confidence despite regional uncertainties

Kuwait's construction and infrastructure sector continues to demonstrate resilience, with the total value of active and planned projects remaining firmly at approximately \$240 billion, according to the latest MEED Gulf Projects Index covering the period from 15 May to 19 June 2026. The figures reaffirm Kuwait's position as one of the Gulf's leading project markets, reflecting sustained government investment in strategic infrastructure and long-term economic diversification.

Although the market recorded only a modest increase of 0.2 percent during the reporting period, the stability itself is significant at a time when global markets continue to grapple with geopolitical tensions, fluctuating energy prices and economic uncertainty. Kuwait retained its position as the fifth-largest projects market in

the GCC, narrowly behind Qatar, whose project portfolio stood at approximately \$241 billion.

The latest MEED data shows that the Gulf's infrastructure sector remains on a remarkable growth trajectory. The overall regional projects market expanded for the 15th consecutive month, adding nearly \$66 billion in new project activity during the review period and pushing the combined value of projects across the GCC and neighboring markets to around \$5.08 trillion. The regional market recorded growth of 1.3 percent, broadly matching the previous month's performance, indicating that governments across the Gulf continue to prioritize infrastructure investment as a key driver of economic growth and diversification despite external economic headwinds.

Kuwait's steady progress

While several neighboring countries



experienced stronger percentage growth, Kuwait's consistent performance reflects a measured and sustainable approach to development. Rather than pursuing rapid expansion, the country continues to focus on

advancing major projects in transportation, energy, housing, utilities and public infrastructure that support the objectives of Kuwait Vision 2035. Industry observers note that maintaining a project pipeline of \$240 billion demonstrates the country's ability to preserve investor confidence while carefully managing expenditure and prioritizing strategic developments. Stability in the projects market is also viewed as an important indicator of confidence among contractors, developers and financial institutions.

Kuwait's infrastructure ambitions are expected to gain additional momentum as the government advances reforms aimed at encouraging greater private sector participation, attracting foreign investment and accelerating the delivery of major development initiatives.

KEMS Zajil Launches Next-Generation Cloud Services in Kuwait in Partnership with Huawei



KEMS Zajil Telecom is pleased to announce the official launch of its next-generation cloud services in the State of Kuwait, marking a strategic milestone that reflects the company's ongoing commitment to supporting digital transformation initiatives and enabling organizations to adopt the latest advanced cloud technologies.

This launch is delivered in collaboration with Huawei and is powered by the Huawei Data Center Stack platform, supported by a trusted local infrastructure developed and operated according to the highest standards of quality, security, and reliability.

The launch represents an important step in the evolution of KEMS Zajil's cloud services ecosystem, enabling organizations across various sectors to benefit from advanced cloud solutions that address modern business requirements and keep pace with the growing demand for data and digital applications. The platform provides a secure, flexible, and intelligent operating environment specifically designed to support enterprise digital transformation, enhance data sovereignty within Kuwait, ensure full compliance with regulatory and legislative requirements, and enable the efficient operation of mission-critical workloads with reliable business continuity.

The cloud platform is designed to accelerate innovation and digital transformation through a scalable infrastructure that combines high performance with operational flexibility. It also helps improve operational efficiency and

reduce costs, allowing organizations to focus on their core business activities and achieve their strategic objectives.

Commenting on the launch, Mr. Mohammed Al Noaimi, Chief Operations Officer of KEMS Zajil Telecom, said:

"We are delighted to announce the launch of our next-generation cloud services in Kuwait as part of our strategic partnership with Huawei. This collaboration aims to empower organizations to scale, innovate, and operate with confidence through secure, high-performance, locally hosted cloud solutions that align with Kuwait's digital transformation ambitions."

Mr. Frank Fu, General Manager of the Enterprise Business Group at Huawei, added:

"Huawei Data Center Stack enables enterprises to unlock the potential of cloud technologies while maintaining control, security, and compliance. Through this collaboration with KEMS Zajil Telecom, we are laying the groundwork for intelligent, sovereign data services that will support business innovation and long-term digital growth in Kuwait."

This launch comes at a time of rapid growth within the information technology sector and increasing demand for secure and flexible cloud solutions, highlighting the importance of developing a robust local digital infrastructure capable of supporting innovation and accelerating digital transformation across both public and private sector organizations.



ALSAYER & Toyota Introduce the All-New RAV4 in Kuwait

Mohamed Naser Al Sayer & Sons Est. Co. W.L.L. and Toyota have launched the all-new RAV4 in Kuwait, marking a full model change for one of Toyota's most popular global SUV models. The latest generation introduces a refined design, enhanced driving performance, and advanced technologies that reinforce Toyota's commitment to combining everyday usability with a spirit of adventure.

Since its debut in 1994 as a pioneer of the monocoque SUV, the RAV4 has played a key role in defining the recreational vehicle segment by combining passenger car comfort with SUV versatility. Over the years, it has become a globally trusted model across diverse markets and lifestyles.

The all-new RAV4 continues this legacy with a focus on improved capability, efficiency, and intelligence. Built around the philosophy of "Life is an Adventure," the model is designed to support drivers in both daily routines and more dynamic journeys with confidence and comfort.

Electrification remains central to the new RAV4, featuring Toyota's 5th generation hybrid electric system. The system delivers stronger acceleration, improved fuel efficiency, and a smoother driving experience without the need for external charging, reinforcing Toyota's multi-pathway approach toward sustainable mobility. The hybrid powertrain combines the familiarity of petrol driving with the benefits of electrification, making it practical and accessible for everyday use.

Visually, the new RAV4 features a more refined yet confident design and is offered in two distinct styles: Core and Adventure. The Core style delivers a clean, urban-focused design, while the Adventure style emphasizes ruggedness and light off-road capability, reflecting the model's versatile character. Inside, the cabin has been redesigned to enhance functionality and driver engagement, with an intuitive layout, improved ergonomics, and higher quality materials. Platform enhancements and increased body rigidity contribute to improved ride comfort, reduced noise, and a more stable driving experience across different road conditions.

Technology and safety have also been significantly upgraded. The model is equipped with the latest Toyota Safety Sense (TSS4), offering improved detection and support systems, including enhanced pre-collision and adaptive cruise control functions. The new-generation audio multimedia system provides a more connected and personalized driving experience, with faster response and improved display clarity.

Convenience features include a Panoramic View Monitor for improved parking visibility and advanced parking assistance for easier



maneuvering in tight urban environments. Select variants also offer a Head-Up Display and panoramic moonroof, enhancing both comfort and driving awareness.

Driving dynamics are further improved through optimized suspension tuning, enhanced stability, and features such as Trail Mode, which supports confident performance on uneven or low-grip surfaces. Additional refinements such as Shift-by-Wire technology contribute to smoother operation and a modern cabin layout.

Customisation options include nine exterior mono-tone colours, including the new Urban Rock, along with five bi-tone combinations for the Core style. Alloy wheel options range from 17-inch to 20-inch designs depending on variant, offering customers a wide degree of personalisation.

Indians remain Kuwait's largest workforce as jobs top 3 million

• India continues to rank as the largest expatriate workforce, accounting for 578,900 workers excluding domestic workers. • Egypt ranked second with 467,900 workers, followed by Kuwaiti nationals with 441,200 employees. • Bangladesh, Nepal, Syria, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Jordan complete the list of the top ten nationalities.

Kuwait's labour market crossed a significant milestone in 2025, with the total number of workers exceeding 3.04 million, reaffirming the country's continued reliance on expatriate talent to sustain economic growth, develop infrastructure, and support virtually every sector of the national economy.

Latest figures released by the Labour Market Information System show that the workforce expanded by 97,400 employees during the year, representing an annual growth of 3.3 percent. While government employment among Kuwaiti nationals remains largely stable, it is the expatriate workforce that continues to fuel growth in the country's productive sectors.

At the heart of this workforce is the Indian community, which has once again retained its position as the largest expatriate nationality in Kuwait. With 578,900 Indian workers, Indians account for 25.5 percent of all expatriate workers outside the domestic labour sector, highlighting their indispensable contribution to Kuwait's economic development. Indian professionals, technicians, entrepreneurs, skilled workers and service personnel are represented across almost every segment of Kuwait's economy. From healthcare, engineering, banking, education and information technology to construction, retail, hospitality, logistics and manufacturing, Indians continue to occupy vital positions that keep the country's public services and private enterprises operating efficiently.

The report shows that expatriate employment reached 1.83 million workers, recording annual growth of 3.9 percent, despite continuing



government efforts to increase the participation of Kuwaiti nationals in the private sector.

The private sector remains overwhelmingly dependent on foreign manpower. Of the 1.79 million employees working in private businesses, only 4.1 percent are Kuwaiti nationals, while expatriates make up the remaining workforce, illustrating the critical role played by overseas workers in maintaining business continuity and supporting economic diversification.

Following India, Egypt remains the second-largest expatriate workforce with 467,900 employees, while workers from Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Syria and Jordan continue to form substantial segments of Kuwait's labour market.

Together, these communities provide the manpower that powers the country's construction projects, commercial establishments, industrial operations and service industries.

The report also reveals that expatriate workers are primarily concentrated in wholesale and retail trade, construction, accommodation and food services, sectors that collectively employ nearly half of Kuwait's foreign workforce. These industries remain highly dependent on skilled and semi-skilled expatriate labour to meet growing demand. Indians continue to dominate several professional sectors, particularly healthcare, where thousands of Indian doctors, nurses, pharmacists and medical technicians serve both public and private hospitals.

Indian engineers and project managers remain instrumental in Kuwait's infrastructure and energy sectors, while Indian educators, financial professionals and IT specialists continue to contribute significantly to the country's knowledge economy. Beyond professional occupations, Indian workers also represent one of the largest groups employed in household services. More than 40 percent of Kuwait's domestic workers are Indian nationals, reflecting decades of trusted service and enduring people-to-people ties between India and Kuwait.

Although the proportion of expatriates in Kuwait's overall workforce declined marginally to 65.9 percent, compared with 66.7 percent the previous year, foreign workers continue to form the backbone of the country's private economy. Analysts note that the slight reduction reflects ongoing labour market reforms and Kuwaitization initiatives rather than any decline in demand for expatriate expertise.

Meanwhile, Kuwaiti nationals continue to show a strong preference for public sector employment. Of the 529,500 Kuwaitis employed nationwide, 441,200 or more than 83 percent work in government institutions, while only around 22,000 Kuwaitis are employed in the private sector. The latest labour statistics once again underscore the enduring importance of the expatriate workforce in Kuwait's economic landscape. For the Indian community in particular, the figures reinforce its position not only as the country's largest expatriate population but also as one of its most valuable contributors to national development.

Kuwait's Education Reforms Begin to Show Results as Global Recognition Grows

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The new system requires teachers to meet internationally recognised professional standards, obtain approved teaching licences and participate in continuous professional development throughout their careers. Existing teachers are being provided with transition periods to meet the new requirements.

Developed in consultation with international organisations, including the OECD, the initiative aims to ensure that every classroom is led by qualified professionals capable of delivering modern, student-centred education.

Higher Standards Across Private Schools

Education reforms have not been limited to government institutions. Private schools have also come under stricter regulatory oversight, with new measures requiring mandatory teacher licensing, enhanced quality assurance mechanisms, tighter approval procedures for teaching staff and stronger monitoring of educational standards.

The Ministry of Education has simultaneously strengthened oversight of tuition policies while promoting greater transparency and accountability across the private education sector.

These reforms seek to ensure that all students, regardless of the type of school they attend, receive high-quality education consistent with national standards.

Modernising Government Education

Government schools are undergoing equally significant changes. The Ministry of Education has introduced revised curricula from kindergarten through Grade 9, replacing outdated textbooks with modern learning

materials that place greater emphasis on critical thinking, creativity, digital literacy, artificial intelligence and collaborative learning.

The Education Reform Plan (2025–2027) encompasses wide-ranging initiatives covering curriculum development, digital transformation, teacher development, governance reforms, infrastructure upgrades and modern student assessment methods.

Together, these initiatives represent one of the most comprehensive overhauls of Kuwait's public education system in decades.

Universities Becoming More Competitive

The benefits of these reforms are increasingly visible within higher education. Kuwait University has strengthened its research output, sustainability initiatives, international collaborations, innovation programmes and community engagement all of which contributed to its impressive performance in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings.

The university's success is particularly noteworthy because the rankings assess institutions not only on academic research but also on their contribution to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, including healthcare, sustainability, governance, partnerships and social impact.

Adding to this momentum, the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) entered the rankings for the first time, reflecting broader improvements across Kuwait's higher education sector.

Preparing Tomorrow's Workforce

Ultimately, education reform is about preparing Kuwait's future workforce. Each

year, approximately 30,000 students graduate from secondary schools before progressing to universities, colleges or vocational institutions. Higher education establishments collectively produce around 25,000 graduates annually, including roughly 10,000 graduates from PAAET specialising in technical and vocational fields.

Ensuring these graduates possess skills aligned with the demands of a rapidly evolving economy has become a national priority. To bridge the gap between education and employment, government agencies, universities and labour market institutions are working more closely to align scholarship programmes, university admissions and academic specialisations with projected workforce requirements.

Universities are also expanding internships, entrepreneurship initiatives, artificial intelligence programmes, digital skills training and partnerships with industry to improve graduate employability.

Kuwait has historically been recognised as one of the Gulf's pioneers in education, having established one of the region's earliest modern public education systems and founded Kuwait University in 1966. However, over recent decades, neighbouring GCC countries accelerated investment in higher education, research and innovation, allowing them to move ahead in several international rankings.

Challenges including examination fraud, outdated curricula, inconsistent teaching standards, limited research output and weak university-industry collaboration highlighted the need for comprehensive reform.

The current transformation directly addresses these long-standing weaknesses

through systemic improvements rather than simply increasing educational spending.

A Strong Foundation for the Future

While significant challenges remain including expanding research funding, strengthening innovation ecosystems, enhancing international collaboration and improving graduate employability the direction of travel is encouraging.

Education reform is a long-term process whose impact is measured not in months but in generations. Kuwait's recent progress demonstrates that sustained policy reforms, institutional accountability and investment in human capital are beginning to deliver measurable outcomes.

The sharp rise in Kuwait University's international standing is therefore more than a ranking milestone it represents growing global recognition that Kuwait's education system is evolving in the right direction.

If the country maintains its current momentum, today's reforms could lay the foundation for a more innovative, competitive and diversified economy, ensuring that future generations of Kuwaitis are equipped to succeed in an increasingly knowledge-based world.

Editor's Note: The Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings are among the world's most respected university rankings, but unlike traditional university league tables that focus primarily on academic reputation and research excellence, the Impact Rankings measure how much a university contributes to society and sustainable development.



Georgian Ambassador Visits The Times Kuwait

The Ambassador of Georgia to the State of Kuwait, H.E. Noshervan Lomtadze, paid a courtesy visit to The Times Kuwait, where he was warmly received by Editor-in-Chief Tareq Yousef Al-Shumaimry and Executive Managing Editor Reaven D'Souza.

The visit provided an opportunity for a cordial and engaging exchange of views on a range of issues of mutual interest, with discussions highlighting the longstanding friendship and growing partnership between Georgia and Kuwait. Both sides underscored the importance of strengthening bilateral cooperation across diverse sectors, including trade, investment, tourism, culture and education, while recognizing the positive momentum in relations between the two countries.

During the meeting, Ambassador Lomtadze spoke about Georgia's strategic position as a gateway between Europe and Asia, its rich cultural heritage, expanding tourism sector and investor-friendly business environment. He also highlighted the country's efforts to deepen economic ties with Kuwait

and encourage greater people-to-people exchanges through tourism, cultural initiatives and business cooperation.

The discussions also focused on the vital role of responsible journalism and independent media in promoting international understanding, fostering dialogue and enhancing awareness of the opportunities that exist between nations. The Times Kuwait's reaffirmed the publication's commitment to highlighting positive diplomatic, economic and cultural developments that contribute to stronger international relations and greater public engagement.

The meeting concluded with both sides expressing their appreciation for the warm and constructive discussions and reaffirming their shared commitment to strengthening cooperation between the Embassy of Georgia and The Times Kuwait. They also looked forward to continued collaboration in promoting Georgia's growing engagement with Kuwait and further enhancing mutual understanding through informed and balanced media coverage.

Indian Embassy Raises Passport Renewal and Consular Fees



The Embassy of India in Kuwait has announced revised passport, visa, and consular service charges, effective July 1, 2026, following a notification issued by India's Ministry of External Affairs. The revised fee structure applies to Indian missions worldwide, including Kuwait, and covers a wide range of services such as passport issuance and renewal, Tatkaal applications, police clearance certificates (PCC), emergency certificates, surrender certificates,

and other consular services.

The increase is significant across several categories. A standard 36-page passport for adults now costs considerably more, while Tatkaal passport services have seen some of the steepest increases. Fees for replacing lost or damaged passports and obtaining 60-page passports have also been revised upward. Minor applicants and other passport-related miscellaneous services are similarly affected.

Thought[“] for the week

We spend money we don't have on things we don't need to create impressions that won't last on people we don't care about

Tim Jackson
British Ecological Economist

Are 'Healthy' Foods Making You Gain Weight?

Ask Mira : Eating Right to Live Happy & Healthy



Many people are surprised when they tell me, "I eat healthy, but I'm still gaining weight." The truth is that while food quality matters greatly for health, even nutritious foods can contribute to weight gain when portions are larger than our body needs.

Some of the healthiest foods are also surprisingly calorie-dense. Nuts, for example, are packed with healthy fats, fiber, vitamins, and minerals. However, a small handful contains around 150-200 calories, and it's easy to eat several handfuls without noticing.

The same applies to nut butters. Peanut butter and almond butter provide healthy fats and protein, but two tablespoons contain roughly 180-200 calories. Eating directly from the jar can quickly turn a healthy snack into a high-calorie meal.

Olive oil is another nutritional superstar, rich in heart-protective monounsaturated fats and antioxidants. Yet one tablespoon contains about 120 calories. Generously pouring olive oil over salads, vegetables, and cooked dishes can significantly increase total calorie intake.

Smoothies are often perceived as lighter and healthier than regular meals. However, when they include fruit, honey, dates, oats, nut butter, seeds, and milk, they can easily exceed 500-700 calories without providing the same fullness as chewing solid food.

Granola and energy bars can also be misleading. Although they may contain whole grains, nuts, and dried fruits, many are high in added sugars and calories, making them more similar to desserts than to health foods.

Does this mean you should avoid these foods? Absolutely not.

Foods such as nuts, olive oil, seeds, avocados, and whole grains offer important nutrients and support overall health. The key is portion awareness rather than restriction.

Weight management is not simply about whether a food is "healthy" or "unhealthy." It is about balancing food quality, quantity, and your individual energy needs.

Healthy foods are good for your body, but they are not calorie-free. Learning to enjoy them in appropriate portions allows you to benefit from their nutrition while still achieving your health and weight goals.

"A food can be healthy and still be high in calories. Health and calories are not the same thing."

That's a message many people need to hear.

Eat like Mira

Create healthy habits, not restrictions

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



Mira is a go-to source for nutrition and wellness and has joined The Times Kuwait team in a new weekly column discussing nutrition and answering queries. You can send in your questions to infotimeskuwait@gmail.com



From Shoreline to Skyline

Mandarin Oriental Downtown

Dubai Redefines Luxury in the Heart of the City



By **Hermoine Macura-Noble**
Special to *The Times Kuwait*

The UAE has never been short of luxury hotels, but Mandarin Oriental Downtown, Dubai brings something refreshingly different to the city's ever-evolving hospitality landscape. Rising 303 meters within the striking Wasl Tower, the newly opened property blends refined Asian hospitality with contemporary Emirati influences, creating an experience that feels both globally sophisticated and distinctly rooted in its surroundings.

Located in the heart of Downtown Dubai, the hotel places guests' moments away from icons such as the Burj Khalifa, Dubai Mall, Dubai Opera and the Museum of the Future. Yet its greatest appeal lies not only in its location, but in the quiet confidence with which it delivers the legendary service for which the Mandarin Oriental brand has become internationally renowned.

"Downtown Dubai is the commercial and cultural heart of the city," says General Manager Benjamin Ackhurst. "It moves at a different rhythm to the beachfront, and attracts a different kind of traveler. We saw an opportunity to bring the Mandarin Oriental experience into the very center of that energy, within the striking architecture of Wasl Tower... From shoreline to skyline felt like a natural evolution for the brand in Dubai."

That philosophy extends throughout the property. Interiors showcase understated luxury, with panoramic views across the city's skyline, while thoughtful design elements create a calming sanctuary amid one of the world's busiest urban centers. Floor-to-ceiling windows frame spectacular city vistas, while elegant furnishings and carefully curated materials reflect the hotel's commitment to timeless sophistication rather than passing trends. The result is a property that feels intimate despite its impressive scale.

The hotel has already attracted praise from luxury travel publications and early guests



for its elegant accommodation, meticulous attention to detail and personalized service. Reviews frequently highlight the seamless blend of efficiency and warmth, a hallmark of Mandarin Oriental's celebrated approach to hospitality that has earned the brand a loyal following around the world.

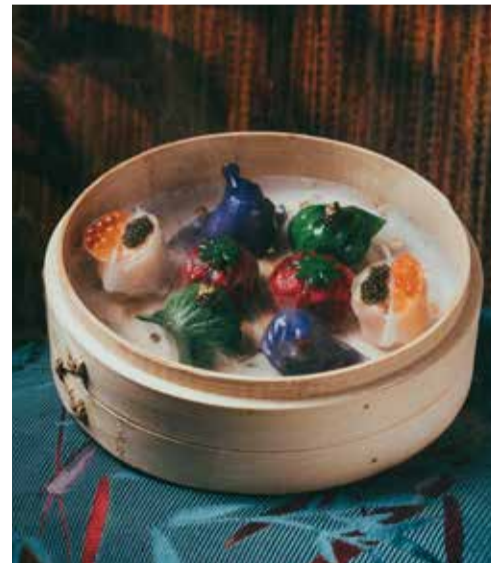
Dining is positioned as one of the hotel's defining experiences. Rather than relying on a single signature restaurant, Mandarin Oriental Downtown has curated a collection of distinctive culinary concepts that celebrate both international excellence and vibrant social experiences.

"Food & beverage is at the heart of what we are building at Mandarin Oriental Downtown, Dubai," explains Ackhurst. "Each concept has been conceived with its own distinct identity and purpose, from the glamour and bold Cantonese and Sichuan flavors of Yü & Mi, to

the immersive nightlife experience brought by Majestas Group through Billionaire, to the Mediterranean spirit of Noia by the Pool."

Among these, Noia stands out as a sun-drenched escape that captures the effortless spirit of the Mediterranean at height above the Dubai skyline. The restaurant wraps around the hotel's stunning outdoor pool terrace, offering a menu that draws on the coastal traditions of Greece – think wood-fired sharing plates, vibrant seafood and expertly mixed cocktails served as the afternoon light softens over the city. The mood is convivial and unhurried, designed for long lunches that drift naturally into early evening. It is the kind of space that invites guests to linger, and few find reason to leave.

The hotel's culinary ambitions continue to grow, with the forthcoming opening of Pavillon, led by world-renowned French chef Yannick Alléno, a name synonymous with culinary innovation and Michelin-starred excellence.



"Our ambition is to be a dining destination for the entire city, not just for guests staying with us," Ackhurst adds.

Beyond exceptional hospitality and dining, art plays a central role in shaping the guest experience. Rather than serving as decorative features, the carefully selected artworks

tell stories of Dubai's culture, heritage and creative future.

"Art at Mandarin Oriental Downtown, Dubai is an expression of place and identity, not decoration," says Ackhurst. He points to the striking Fan installation by Emirati artist Zeinab Alhashemi, crafted from eleven shades of camel hide, as one of the hotel's most meaningful works. "It captures the transition of Wasl Tower from golden daylight to rich evening tones and speaks to both the desert landscape and the energy of a city in perpetual motion."

Ground-floor exhibitions featuring local artists further strengthen the hotel's connection with Dubai's creative community, reinforcing its commitment to showcasing regional talent alongside international luxury. This integration of art, architecture and hospitality creates an environment that feels uniquely Dubai while remaining true to Mandarin Oriental's global identity.

Mandarin Oriental has long been recognized for its hallmark Asian-inspired hospitality – defined by intuitive service, attention to detail and a deep respect for guest experience. At its Downtown Dubai address, that philosophy reaches new heights, offering visitors a sophisticated urban retreat amid one of the world's most dynamic destinations.

In a city where luxury is often measured by grandeur and spectacle, Mandarin Oriental Downtown, Dubai offers something more enduring: genuine hospitality, cultural authenticity and an unwavering commitment to excellence. It is not merely another addition to Dubai's luxury hotel scene – it is a landmark destination that is helping shape the future of hospitality in the emirate, bringing world-class service, culinary ambition and artistic expression together beneath one remarkable roof.

Hermoine Macura-Noble

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





LONDON OR NORTHERN ITALY *this Summer?*



London in summer is made for those who want it all — and with Jazeera Airways flying you there with direct flights, the only question is where to start.

For the shoppers, nowhere does it quite like London. Bond Street, Harrods, Selfridges, and the boutiques of Mayfair and Knightsbridge



offer everything from the world's biggest luxury brands to independent designers you won't find anywhere else. For the food lovers, London has quietly become one of the most exciting dining cities in the world — incredible Middle Eastern and Lebanese restaurants, high-end Japanese, lavish afternoon teas, and some of the best fine dining in Europe. For families, the city keeps children genuinely entertained for days — open parks, iconic landmarks, and experiences that stay with them long after the summer is over.

Beyond London, the English countryside is just a short drive away. The Cotswolds, Windsor Castle, and charming market towns make for a perfect day out with the whole family.

London has a way of giving everyone exactly what they came for. Fly direct this summer with Jazeera Airways and see for yourself.

BERGAMO

Northern Italy in summer is one of Europe's most rewarding escapes — and Jazeera Airways now flies you to Bergamo, with direct flights.

Base yourself in Bergamo and you have some of the finest food in Italy right on your doorstep. The hilltop old town is full of excellent family restaurants, artisan gelaterias, and the kind of unhurried Italian dining that makes every meal feel like an occasion. It's relaxed, beautiful, and far quieter than the big tourist cities.

From here, the best of Northern Italy is within easy reach. Milan — just 45 minutes away — is a must for anyone who takes fashion seriously. The Golden Triangle of Via Montenapoleone, Via della Spiga, and Corso Venezia is home to every major luxury house, and the city's restaurants and café culture are worth the trip alone. Lake Como and Lake Garda offer breathtaking scenery, five-star resorts, and the



kind of exclusive, intimate atmosphere that makes them a favourite for families and couples looking for something truly special. For those wanting a longer adventure, Venice and Verona are both just a couple of hours away.

Northern Italy rewards the traveller who wants beauty, food, and quality time with the people they love. Fly direct this summer with Jazeera Airways and discover it for yourself.



Fly to
Milan, Bergamo

from **KD 45** one-way | from **KD 70** return

Fly to
London, Luton

from **KD 49** one-way | from **KD 119** return

