



LOCAL
Kuwait Among World's
Richest Nations, Ranks Fifth
in Gulf and Arab World **3**

Remembering
AUGUST 2
Iraqi Invasion

Nation's
Darkest Day
... See Pages 7 - 10



The Scars That Time Cannot Erase, The Freedom Kuwait Will Always Cherish

By Reaven D'Souza
Executive Managing Editor

Thirty-six years have passed since the Iraqi invasion shattered the peace of a nation that had enjoyed decades of stability and prosperity. Yet for those who witnessed that morning, the memories remain vivid. They remember the disbelief as tanks rolled across the border, the fear that gripped families, the uncertainty that clouded every day, and the courage that emerged from ordinary people thrust into extraordinary circumstances.

History often measures wars by military victories and political outcomes. People remember them differently. They remember the empty chair at the family table. The neighbour who never returned. The whispered conversations in darkened homes. The anxiety of not knowing what tomorrow would bring.

These are the scars that no monument can fully capture.

For many Kuwaitis and expatriates who lived



through the occupation, the invasion was not simply a geopolitical event. It was a deeply personal experience that forever changed the

way they viewed their country, their freedom and their future. The physical destruction that followed liberation could be rebuilt. Roads,

buildings, schools and oil fields could be restored. But rebuilding confidence, healing emotional wounds and overcoming the trauma of occupation required far more time.

Yet if the invasion exposed Kuwait's vulnerability, it also revealed its greatest strength.

In those seven difficult months, the country witnessed remarkable acts of courage. Members of the resistance risked their lives to protect fellow citizens. Security personnel refused to abandon their duty. Medical professionals continued to care for the injured despite immense danger. Families opened their homes to strangers. Communities shared food, information and hope. These were not acts performed for recognition. They were expressions of love for a homeland that refused to surrender its identity. The occupation also strengthened the bond between Kuwait's leadership and its people. Faced with an attempt to erase the country's sovereignty, Kuwaitis stood together with uncommon unity.

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Kuwait Airways' New Corporate Structure Signals a New Era for the National Carrier

The Times Kuwait Report

Kuwait's decision to transform Kuwait Airways into a fully state-owned shareholding company marks one of the most significant structural reforms in the airline's history. While the move may appear to be a technical legal change, it represents a strategic shift in how the national carrier will be managed and positioned in an increasingly competitive regional aviation market.

Under the newly issued decree-law, Kuwait Airways will continue to remain wholly owned by the State of Kuwait, but it will now operate under a corporate framework designed to provide greater commercial flexibility, stronger governance, and faster decision-making.

The move effectively modernizes the airline's legal and operational structure while ensuring that ownership remains entirely in government hands.

A Corporate Model with Government Ownership

Unlike a traditional government department or public institution, a state-owned shareholding company operates under commercial corporate governance principles.

Although the State retains full ownership of the airline through the Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA), the new framework grants Kuwait Airways greater autonomy to manage its operations, investments, procurement, recruitment, and long-term strategy.

Importantly, the decree also makes it clear that the airline is not being privatized. The company's shares remain fully owned by the government and cannot be sold, pledged, or transferred without the approval of the Council of Ministers. This provides stability while allowing the airline to function more like a commercially driven enterprise.

Faster Decisions in a Fast-Moving Industry

The aviation industry is one of the world's most competitive sectors, where airlines often need to respond quickly to changing fuel prices, passenger demand, geopolitical developments, and market opportunities.

Operating under traditional public-sector procedures can slow major decisions involving fleet expansion, route planning, procurement,



and strategic investments. The new corporate structure is expected to streamline these processes, enabling Kuwait Airways to make commercial decisions more efficiently and respond faster to market conditions.

This flexibility is particularly important as Gulf carriers continue to expand aggressively across international markets.

Competing with Regional Aviation Leaders

Kuwait Airways competes directly with some of the region's largest and most successful airlines, including Emirates, Qatar Airways, Etihad Airways, Saudia, and Gulf Air.

These airlines operate with commercial governance structures that allow them to respond rapidly to changing market conditions, introduce new services, and invest in fleet modernization.

By adopting a similar corporate model while retaining government ownership, Kuwait Airways is expected to gain greater operational agility and improve its competitiveness within the Gulf aviation sector.

Greater Freedom to Recruit Global Talent

One of the most significant advantages of the new structure is increased flexibility in attracting and retaining highly qualified professionals.

The airline will have greater freedom to recruit experienced executives and aviation

specialists from around the world, strengthening expertise in areas such as operations, finance, engineering, digital transformation, revenue management, and customer experience. This could help accelerate modernization efforts and improve operational performance over the coming years.

Improving Procurement and Operational Efficiency

Airlines depend on rapid procurement processes for aircraft maintenance, spare parts, technology systems, catering, and operational equipment. Under the new framework, Kuwait Airways is expected to benefit from more streamlined procurement procedures and internal financial management, reducing administrative delays that can affect efficiency.

The ability to negotiate contracts and execute commercial agreements more quickly should enhance operational resilience while supporting future growth.

Strengthening Corporate Governance

The restructuring also introduces a clearer governance model. The Kuwait Investment Authority will exercise shareholder responsibilities on behalf of the State, while a dedicated Board of Directors will oversee the company's strategic direction and corporate performance.

This governance structure is designed to improve accountability, strengthen oversight, and align the airline's management with

international corporate standards while preserving public ownership.

What Passengers Can Expect

For travelers, there will be no immediate changes. Flight schedules, ticket prices, loyalty programs, and existing services will continue as normal. However, over the medium to long term, passengers could benefit from improvements resulting from the airline's increased operational flexibility, including expanded route networks, enhanced customer service, continued fleet modernization, improved punctuality, and greater investment in digital services.

The full impact will depend on how effectively the new corporate structure is implemented and how management capitalizes on the additional autonomy provided by the reforms.

Supporting Kuwait Vision 2035

The restructuring also aligns with Kuwait's broader Vision 2035 agenda, which seeks to modernize state-owned institutions, diversify the economy, and improve the competitiveness of national enterprises. Rather than reducing government ownership, Kuwait has chosen a model that combines public ownership with private-sector management principles, allowing strategic national assets to operate more efficiently while remaining under state control.

A Strategic Step Forward

The transformation of Kuwait Airways into a fully state-owned shareholding company represents more than a legal restructuring. It reflects a broader effort to equip the national carrier with the governance, flexibility, and commercial tools needed to compete in one of the world's most dynamic aviation markets.

While passengers may not notice immediate differences, the long-term objective is clear: to build a stronger, more agile national airline capable of supporting Kuwait's economic ambitions, enhancing international connectivity, and standing shoulder to shoulder with the Gulf's leading carriers.

Ultimately, the success of the reform will be measured not by the change in legal status alone, but by the airline's ability to translate greater autonomy into improved operational performance, stronger financial sustainability, and a better travel experience for passengers.

Finance Ministry Tightens Budget Rules to Rein in Spending, Boost Fiscal Discipline

The Ministry of Finance has introduced a stricter framework for preparing Kuwait's 2027/2028 state budget, signaling a stronger push toward fiscal discipline and more efficient management of public funds. Under the new guidelines, government ministries and agencies will be required to remain within spending ceilings set by the ministry and will no longer be able to submit additional funding requests once their draft budgets have been presented.

The move is part of Kuwait's ongoing efforts to strengthen medium-term financial planning, reduce unnecessary expenditure, and improve the efficiency of government spending without compromising the quality of public services.

According to the circular, all government entities must first prepare their budgets within the approved expenditure limits. If additional funding is considered necessary, agencies may only discuss such requests with the Ministry of Finance after submitting their budgets within the prescribed ceiling and providing detailed justifications. Any revisions to project costs will require the ministry's approval before they can take effect.



The ministry also reaffirmed the Cabinet's directive prohibiting supplementary financial requests beyond approved budget allocations, reinforcing tighter control over public expenditure.

As part of Kuwait's three-year budgeting framework, ministries have also been instructed to prepare indicative budgets for the 2028/2029 and 2029/2030 fiscal years. These projections must remain within the expenditure limits proposed for the 2027/2028 budget, enabling the government to plan its finances over the medium term rather than on a year-to-year basis.

The circular outlines several priorities for the

upcoming budget cycle. Government entities have been asked to curb unnecessary spending while maintaining service standards, accurately estimate staffing requirements, prioritize essential infrastructure projects and contracts, improve the collection of government revenues, recover outstanding public debts, and review service fees in line with existing legislation to better reflect the cost of services provided.

Development projects will also face greater scrutiny. Ministries must submit detailed implementation plans covering project priorities, funding requirements, execution schedules, and delivery capacity. Progress reports on ongoing projects must accompany budget submissions, while new construction projects will only be considered if land has already been allocated by Kuwait Municipality and all required technical studies and approvals have been completed.

The new measures reflect the government's broader strategy to improve financial sustainability by ensuring public resources are directed toward priority sectors while strengthening accountability and long-term budget planning.

Kuwait Pauses New One-Person Company Licenses Pending Regulatory Review

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has temporarily suspended the issuance of new licenses for one-person companies (freelance businesses) while it reviews and updates the regulations governing the sector. The suspension applies only to new applications and does not affect existing license holders, who can continue operating normally.

The review aims to modernize the licensing framework, improve coordination with the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI), strengthen electronic integration of business records and addresses, and ensure the system better reflects current market needs. The move comes amid strong demand for freelance business licenses, with 6,586 one-person company licenses issued during the first five months of 2026. Authorities say the changes are intended to improve transparency and create a more organized business environment, with updated procedures to be announced once the review is complete.

Kuwait Among World's Richest Nations, Ranks Fifth in Gulf and Arab World

Kuwait climbed two places to rank 41st globally and fifth in the Gulf, with a GDP per capita (PPP) of US\$54,149.90, according to the latest Global Finance rankings.

Kuwait's Ubuy Expands to 180 Countries, Strengthening Gulf's Global E-Commerce Presence

Kuwait-based e-commerce platform Ubuy has expanded its operations to more than 180 countries, marking a significant milestone for the Gulf's growing digital economy. The company has evolved from a regional online retailer into a global cross-border marketplace, offering shoppers access to millions of international products while competing with established global platforms.

The expansion reflects a broader shift in the region, where Gulf technology companies are increasingly looking beyond domestic markets to build an international presence. Industry experts say success in cross-border e-commerce depends not only on digital platforms but also on strong logistics, warehousing, customs management, and reliable international shipping networks. Ubuy has responded by developing a multi-regional warehouse network to improve delivery efficiency and strengthen supply chain resilience.

Rather than competing solely on size, Ubuy has focused on offering a wide selection of international brands and hard-to-find products while catering to niche consumer demands. Analysts say its growth demonstrates that Kuwait-based technology firms can successfully compete on the global stage, reinforcing the Gulf's ambition to become an exporter of digital services and innovation, not just a consumer market.

Kuwait has strengthened its position among the world's wealthiest countries, climbing two places to 41st globally and ranking fifth in both the Gulf and the Arab world, according to the latest Global Finance rankings based on International Monetary Fund (IMF) data. The report places Kuwait's GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity) at US\$54,149.90, ahead of several larger economies including Russia, Portugal, Croatia, China, and Brazil. The ranking measures purchasing power rather than total economic output, offering a clearer picture of individual living standards.

Within the GCC, Qatar retained its position as the region's wealthiest country and ranked fifth globally, followed by the United Arab Emirates,



Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain, with Kuwait occupying the fifth regional spot ahead of Oman. Globally, Singapore topped the list, followed by Luxembourg, Ireland, Macau, and Qatar.

The report notes that Kuwait's strong ranking is underpinned by its substantial hydrocarbon wealth,

prudent fiscal management, and one of the world's largest sovereign wealth funds. However, it also cautions that high GDP per capita figures are averages and may not fully reflect income distribution or the varying economic realities experienced by different segments of society.



Jazeera Airways Expands African Network with New Direct Addis Ababa Route

Jazeera Airways is strengthening its presence in Africa with the launch of a new three-times-weekly direct service between Kuwait and Addis Ababa, beginning September 7. The new route marks another step in the airline's network expansion while improving connectivity between Kuwait and one of East Africa's fastest-growing economies.)

The service is expected to benefit both business and leisure travellers, while also serving the more than 70,000 Ethiopian nationals living in Kuwait by providing a direct link to their home country. In addition to meeting community demand, the route is expected to strengthen trade, investment, tourism, and cultural ties between Kuwait and Ethiopia.

Speaking at the launch, Ethiopian Ambassador to Kuwait Dr. Sied Muhumed Jibril described the new flights as an important milestone in bilateral relations, saying the direct connection would bring people closer together while encouraging greater economic cooperation and tourism between the two countries.

Jazeera Airways CEO Barathan Pasupathi said Addis Ababa is more than just a new destination, describing it as the diplomatic capital of Africa and a strategic gateway to one of the continent's largest and fastest-growing markets. He noted that the new route reflects the airline's commitment to expanding connectivity while strengthening links between the Gulf and Africa.

Beyond its commercial importance, Addis Ababa also offers significant tourism appeal. Visitors can explore the city's rich history, museums, renowned coffee culture, vibrant arts scene, and Ethiopian cuisine, while using the capital as a gateway to the country's diverse landscapes and UNESCO World Heritage sites. Its mild year-round climate also makes it an attractive destination for travellers from Kuwait seeking cooler weather.

Flights are now open for booking through Jazeera Airways' website and mobile application, with the new service further expanding the airline's growing international network and reinforcing Kuwait's air links with the African continent.



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Peru Eyes Deeper Economic and Investment Ties with Kuwait

The Times Kuwait Report

Peru is looking to build on its long-standing friendship with Kuwait by expanding cooperation in trade, investment, tourism, and cultural exchange, according to Peru's Ambassador to Kuwait, H E Carlos Jiménez. As the two countries continue to strengthen bilateral relations, the ambassador said the focus is now shifting toward creating new economic partnerships and unlocking investment opportunities for businesses in both nations.

The ambassador noted that Peru and Kuwait

marked the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations last year, describing the milestone as a testament to the enduring friendship between the two countries. He said the relationship has gained fresh momentum in recent years through increased diplomatic engagement and closer cooperation across a range of sectors.

Highlighting Peru's economic strengths, Jiménez said the country offers a stable and open investment environment supported by responsible fiscal policies and an extensive network of free trade agreements. He encouraged Kuwaiti investors to explore opportunities in infrastructure, mining,

renewable energy, food security, logistics, healthcare, education, tourism, and digital technologies, sectors that continue to drive Peru's economic growth.

To showcase these opportunities, the Embassy organized a Peru Investment and Trade Showcase, featuring Peruvian exports such as premium coffee, quinoa, fresh fruits, textiles made from alpaca fibre, and other value-added products. The exhibition also highlighted investment opportunities in mining, energy,



and infrastructure, while providing potential investors with detailed business and investment guides.

The ambassador stressed that economic diplomacy extends beyond trade and investment, emphasizing that stronger business ties help build trust, encourage knowledge exchange, and foster lasting partnerships between the people of Peru and Kuwait. He expressed confidence that continued collaboration would open new avenues for mutual growth and shared prosperity.



Regional Airlines Extend Kuwait Flight Disruptions Amid Ongoing Operational Challenges

Air travel to and from Kuwait continues to face disruption as several international carriers adjust their schedules in response to ongoing operational and regional security concerns. While Qatar Airways and Turkish Airlines have extended service disruptions until August 8, Emirates has announced a significantly longer suspension of its direct Kuwait operations, with flights now cancelled until August 21.

Qatar Airways has postponed the resumption of its Kuwait services until August 8, while Turkish Airlines has warned that flights between Kuwait and Istanbul may continue to experience cancellations through the same date. Both airlines have advised passengers to regularly check their flight status, as schedules remain subject to operational and safety considerations.

Emirates, meanwhile, has extended the suspension of its daily EK857 and EK858 Dubai-Kuwait services until August 21, citing operational reasons. The extension follows an earlier suspension that ended on July 31.

To minimise inconvenience, Emirates has expanded the travel options available to affected passengers. Customers can rebook on alternative Emirates-operated flights in the same cabin, reroute their journeys where applicable, or request a full refund without penalty. For selected long-haul itineraries, the airline will also continue to accommodate eligible passengers on Kuwait Airways when no suitable Emirates or Emirates-flydubai alternative is available.

Turkish Airlines has similarly announced that passengers affected by cancellations will be offered either complimentary rebooking or a full refund, while Qatar Airways has updated its revised schedules through its reservation systems and urged travellers to verify their bookings before departing for the airport. The continuing disruptions reflect the cautious approach being adopted by airlines across the region as they respond to evolving security conditions and operational requirements. Several international carriers have either delayed the resumption of Gulf services or adjusted flight schedules while closely monitoring the situation.

Passengers travelling to or from Kuwait are advised to stay in contact with their airlines or travel agents and confirm the latest status of their flights before heading to the airport, as schedules may change at short notice.

No Kuwaiti Will Face Injustice, But Harm to the Nation Will Not Be Tolerated

First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef Al-Sabah has reassured Kuwaiti citizens that justice will remain a cornerstone of the country's leadership, emphasizing that no Kuwaiti will be treated unfairly under the rule of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. At the same time, he stressed that actions deemed harmful to Kuwait's security, reputation, or national interests would not be overlooked.

His remarks came in response to the recent decision by the Supreme Committee for Nationality to revoke the citizenship of several individuals who had acquired Kuwaiti nationality under Article One of the Nationality Law but were found to have engaged in activities considered detrimental to the country.

Sheikh Fahd said Kuwait's leadership is firmly committed to justice, noting that citizens can be confident their lives, property, dignity, and nationality remain protected. However, he stressed that the country also has a duty to defend itself against those who deliberately seek to damage its interests or tarnish its image at home and abroad.

He pointed out that some individuals had gone beyond criticism by allegedly encouraging actions against Kuwait overseas, including calls for demonstrations outside Kuwaiti diplomatic missions. Such conduct, he said, crossed a line that no responsible state could ignore.

Highlighting Kuwait's standing internationally, Sheikh



Fahd said the country's high quality of life and generous social benefits continue to attract people from around the world seeking Kuwaiti citizenship. He argued that a nation offering such opportunities deserves loyalty from its citizens rather than attempts to undermine its stability or reputation.

He added that remaining silent in the face of actions that harm Kuwait would itself be an injustice to the nation. For this reason, he said, the Supreme Committee for Nationality concluded that those involved should be subject to Article 14 of the Nationality Law, which permits the withdrawal of citizenship in specific circumstances after opportunities for reconsideration had been exhausted.

The minister reiterated that Kuwait remains committed to balancing justice with the protection of national security, affirming that safeguarding the country's unity, sovereignty, and reputation remains a responsibility shared by both the state and its citizens.

PAM Launches 'Report Me' Service on Sahel App to Strengthen Worker Protection

Kuwait's Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) has introduced a new digital service, "Report Me," through the government's unified Sahel application, enabling citizens and residents to report suspected labour law violations quickly and securely using their smartphones. The initiative is part of Kuwait's ongoing efforts to strengthen workplace protections, improve regulatory oversight, and expand digital government services.

The new service allows users to submit complaints about labour-related violations directly to PAM, attach supporting documents or evidence where necessary, and help authorities identify practices that undermine workers' rights or violate Kuwait's labour laws.

According to PAM, the platform is designed to promote

a safer, fairer, and more transparent working environment by encouraging public participation in reporting violations while enabling authorities to respond more efficiently. Officials said the service will also help improve compliance with labour regulations and enhance monitoring across the labour market.

The launch forms part of Kuwait's broader digital transformation strategy, with the Sahel app continuing to serve as a one-stop platform for an expanding range of government services. In recent months, PAM has rolled out several digital initiatives through the application, including online grievance services, electronic work permit procedures, and exit permit services for private sector workers.

Kuwait Strengthens Labour Reforms with Focus on Worker Rights and National Employment

Kuwait is stepping up efforts to modernize its labour market through a combination of stronger worker protections, closer cooperation with international organizations, and expanded initiatives to increase the participation of Kuwaiti nationals in the private sector. The latest measures reflect the country's broader strategy to build a more competitive, inclusive, and sustainable labour market.

As part of these efforts, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, represented by its Human Rights Affairs Department, held a joint coordination meeting with the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM), the Public Prosecution, and representatives of relevant United Nations agencies. The meeting focused on strengthening cooperation in protecting workers' rights, promoting decent work, combating human trafficking, and enhancing institutional coordination in line with

Kuwait's international commitments and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Ambassador Sheikha Jawaher Ibrahim Al-Duaij Al-Sabah said the meeting marks an important step in developing long-term partnerships with UN agencies and strengthening national capacities to improve labour standards and worker welfare. It was the first meeting of its kind bringing together Kuwait's key labour authorities and UN organizations working on labour issues and anti-human trafficking initiatives.

Alongside efforts to enhance worker protection, Kuwait is also reinforcing its Kuwaitization strategy to create greater employment opportunities for citizens. Abdullah Al-Muhaini, Job Opportunities Supervisor at PAM's National Employment Development Department, said regulations governing



government contracts have helped ensure job continuity for Kuwaitis by transferring employees from expiring contracts to new ones while preserving or even improving their salaries.

Al-Muhaini added that the policy primarily

covers ongoing operation, maintenance, and management contracts, helping prevent interruptions in employment while providing greater job security for Kuwaiti workers. He also highlighted the role of the Fakhra (Our Pride) employment platform, which connects job seekers with opportunities in the private sector and encourages nationals to consider careers beyond traditional government employment.

Officials said the combined initiatives underscore Kuwait's commitment to building a labour market that protects workers' rights, supports national talent, and aligns with international best practices. By strengthening institutional cooperation and expanding employment opportunities for citizens, the country aims to create a more resilient labour market capable of meeting the needs of a rapidly evolving economy.



PAM Clarifies Annual Leave Rules Under Kuwait Labour Law

As many employees prepare to travel during the summer holiday season, Kuwait's Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) has reminded both workers and employers of the rules governing annual leave under the country's Labour Law. The awareness campaign aims to ensure that annual leave is granted and managed in accordance with the law while balancing employee rights with workplace requirements.

Under the Labour Law, eligible private-sector employees are entitled to 30 days of fully paid annual leave. However, workers cannot take annual leave during their first year of employment until they have completed at least six months of continuous service with the same employer. PAM stressed that this does not affect the entitlement itself but determines when it can first be used.

The authority also clarified that while employees may request their preferred vacation dates, employers have the legal right to organize leave schedules according to operational requirements to ensure business continuity. If both parties agree, annual leave may be split into separate periods in line with the provisions of the Labour Law.

To safeguard workers' rights, PAM emphasized that employers must pay an employee's annual leave salary before the vacation begins, ensuring workers have access to their wages before they start their leave.

The authority said the awareness campaign is intended to help both employers and employees better understand their rights and responsibilities, encouraging compliance with the Labour Law and reducing disputes over annual leave arrangements.

Businesses Given 15 Days to Update Beneficial Ownership Records Under New Rules

Kuwait has introduced tighter corporate transparency requirements, giving companies 15 days to update records identifying their beneficial owners the individuals who ultimately own or control a business. The move is aimed at strengthening corporate governance, improving regulatory compliance, and reinforcing efforts to combat money laundering and financial crimes.

The new requirements are contained in Ministerial Resolution No. 156 of 2026, issued by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, which amends provisions of the 2023 regulations governing beneficial ownership disclosures. Under the revised rules, all legal entities must establish and maintain

a dedicated register containing accurate details of their beneficial owners.

Companies are required to create the register within 15 days of their incorporation or the regulation taking effect. They must also update the register within 15 days of becoming aware or when they reasonably should have become aware of any changes in ownership or control.

The regulations also introduce new obligations for nominee directors and board members. Individuals serving in these roles must notify the company of their status and provide the required information within 15 days of assuming the position. Those already acting in such capacities before the

new rules came into force must also submit the required disclosures within the same timeframe.

In addition, businesses must submit their beneficial ownership register, along with shareholder or partner records, to the relevant commercial registry within 15 days of incorporation or registration. Companies are also required to safeguard these records against loss, damage, or destruction to ensure they remain accurate and readily available for regulatory review.

The Ministry said the amendments form part of Kuwait's broader efforts to align with international standards on corporate transparency and financial integrity.

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Kazakhstan Ambassador Visits The Times Kuwait, Highlights Investment Potential and Stronger Bilateral Cooperation

His Excellency Yezhan Yelekeyev, Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the State of Kuwait, paid a courtesy visit to The Times Kuwait, where he met with Editor-in-Chief Tareq Yousef Al-Shumaimry and Executive Managing Editor Reaven D'Souza to discuss regional developments, Kazakhstan-Kuwait relations, and opportunities to further strengthen economic cooperation.

During the meeting, the participants exchanged views on regional and

European, and Middle Eastern markets.

The Ambassador also outlined Kazakhstan's ongoing efforts to diversify its economy and attract foreign investment. He noted that the country offers promising opportunities across a wide range of sectors, including renewable energy, agriculture, mining, manufacturing, financial services, digital technologies, and infrastructure. He emphasized that Kazakhstan continues to create a more competitive and investor-friendly environment through economic reforms and modernization initiatives.

The discussions also explored ways to encourage greater engagement between the business communities of Kazakhstan and Kuwait, with both sides recognizing the potential for deeper collaboration in sectors that support innovation, sustainable development, and regional connectivity.

The conversation further highlighted the role of responsible media in



international developments, including the evolving geopolitical landscape in the Gulf and Central Asia. They underscored the importance of dialogue, regional cooperation, and economic partnerships in promoting stability, prosperity, and sustainable growth.

A major focus of the discussions was the growing relationship between Kazakhstan and Kuwait, particularly in the areas of trade, investment, tourism, and business cooperation. Ambassador Yelekeyev spoke about Kazakhstan's strategic position linking Europe and Asia, highlighting the country's advanced transport and logistics network, business-friendly reforms, and expanding role as a gateway connecting Asian,

building stronger international understanding by showcasing economic opportunities, cultural exchanges, and positive bilateral developments. The management of The Times Kuwait reaffirmed the publication's commitment to delivering accurate, balanced, and responsible journalism while supporting informed public dialogue and strengthening ties between Kuwait and its international partners.

The meeting concluded with both sides expressing confidence that Kazakhstan-Kuwait relations would continue to grow, driven by expanding economic cooperation, stronger people-to-people connections, and continued engagement between the diplomatic and media communities.

MOH Introduces New Procedures for Medical Staff Resignations and Service Terminations

Kuwait's Ministry of Health has introduced new procedures governing the resignation and service termination of doctors and dentists, a move aimed at strengthening administrative oversight, ensuring legal compliance, and streamlining the process for healthcare professionals leaving government service.

Under a new administrative decision issued by MOH Undersecretary Sheikh Dr. Salman Al-Sabah, the ministry has adopted a unified verification form that must be completed before a resignation or termination request can be approved. The form is designed to confirm whether the medical professional is subject to any ongoing administrative or technical investigations.

As part of the process, the employee's status will be reviewed by the relevant hospital or department, the Medical Liability Authority, and the Legal Affairs and Investigations Department. The aim is to ensure that all pending legal and regulatory matters have been resolved before an employee's service officially ends.

The ministry said the new mechanism is intended to protect the rights of both healthcare professionals and the government while ensuring



that resignation procedures are completed in a transparent and legally compliant manner. The decision also replaces any previous instructions that conflict with the updated regulations and takes effect immediately.

The updated procedures are based on the Civil Service Law and Law No. 70 of 2020, which governs the practice of medicine and related health professions, patients' rights, and healthcare facilities. Officials said the changes form part of the ministry's broader efforts to improve governance, enhance administrative efficiency, and strengthen accountability across Kuwait's healthcare sector.



Kuwait's Building Count Nears 230,000 as Residential Sector Continues to Drive Urban Growth

Kuwait's urban landscape continued to expand during the first half of 2026, with the total number of buildings across the country reaching 229,748, according to the latest figures released by the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI). The data highlights the continued strength of the real estate sector, with residential properties remaining the dominant feature of Kuwait's built environment.

Residential buildings accounted for 146,800 structures nearly 64 percent of the country's total building stock underscoring the sector's central role in Kuwait's ongoing urban development. The remaining inventory includes 41,400 mixed-use buildings, 13,700 commercial buildings, 17,500 vacant properties, and 10,200 buildings classified under other uses.

Among the six governorates, Al Ahmadi recorded the largest concentration of buildings with 52,400 structures, representing around 23 percent of the national total. It was followed by Al Jahra (46,900), Al Farwaniya (35,900), Hawalli (34,300), the Capital Governorate (33,600), and Mubarak Al-Kabeer (26,300).

Private housing continues to dominate Kuwait's residential market, with 174,500 private homes registered nationwide. Villas remain the country's most common residential property, numbering 157,900, followed by 16,400 houses and 2,813 chalets. The building inventory also includes 100 hotels, 71 palaces, 629 residential complexes, and smaller numbers of kiosks, sheds, and other specialised structures.

Al Ahmadi also leads the country in the number of villas, while the Capital Governorate has the highest concentration of palaces and hotels, reflecting its role as Kuwait's administrative and commercial hub. Hawalli ranks close behind the Capital in hotel numbers, highlighting its importance as another major urban centre.

The PACI figures also point to the steady expansion of Kuwait's public infrastructure. The country is home to 1,144 schools, 104 hospitals, 115 clinics, 28 colleges, 22 institutes, and 13 health complexes, alongside thousands of government, commercial, industrial, and religious facilities that support the nation's growing population and economy.

The Scars That Time Cannot Erase, The Freedom Kuwait Will Always Cherish

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Political differences became insignificant when compared with the shared determination to restore the nation's independence.

The liberation of Kuwait on 26 February 1991 was therefore more than a military victory. It was the triumph of resilience over fear, unity over division and hope over despair. It demonstrated that while a country may be occupied, the spirit of its people cannot be conquered.

Kuwait has never forgotten those who stood beside it during that defining period. The support of the international community and the

multinational coalition reinforced the principle that aggression against a sovereign nation cannot be accepted. It remains one of the clearest examples of international cooperation in defence of peace and international law.

Today, an entire generation has grown up knowing the invasion only through history books, museums and the stories of parents and grandparents.

They have inherited a Kuwait that is peaceful, modern and secure. That is both a blessing and a responsibility.

Freedom is often most appreciated when it is lost. Those who experienced the occupation

understand that liberty is never guaranteed simply because it exists today. It must be protected through national unity, responsible leadership, respect for the rule of law and an unwavering commitment to the country's sovereignty.

Remembering August 2 is therefore not about reliving pain or keeping old wounds open. It is about preserving perspective. It reminds every Kuwaiti and everyone who calls Kuwait home that peace should never be taken for granted and that national unity remains the country's greatest defence against any challenge.

As Kuwait marks the 36th anniversary of the invasion, it does so with solemn remembrance but also with confidence in the future. The nation honours its martyrs, salutes its heroes and expresses gratitude to all who helped restore its freedom.

The scars of invasion have not disappeared. They never truly will.

But neither has the courage that overcame them. That courage lives on in every generation that remembers the past, values the present and works together to ensure that Kuwait's future remains defined not by conflict, but by peace, resilience and hope.

Nation's Darkest Day

*Every nation has moments that shape its identity.
For Kuwait, few dates carry the emotional weight of August 2, 1990.*

The Times Kuwait Report

On that day, Iraqi forces invaded Kuwait, plunging the country into seven months of occupation, uncertainty, and immense suffering. Families were separated, lives were lost, and an entire nation was forced to endure one of the most painful chapters in its history. Yet amid the devastation emerged a story of extraordinary courage, unity, and resilience that continues to inspire generations.

As Kuwait marks another anniversary of the invasion, the day is not only a time to remember the tragedy but also to honor the men and women who refused to surrender their love for their homeland. Soldiers, members of the resistance, medical workers, volunteers, and ordinary citizens risked everything to defend their country. Many paid the ultimate price, becoming martyrs whose sacrifices remain deeply woven into Kuwait's national memory.

The anniversary also serves as a reminder of the remarkable solidarity shown by the Kuwaiti people. Regardless of background or profession, citizens stood together with unwavering determination, united behind their leadership and committed to preserving the



nation's sovereignty and dignity. That spirit of unity became one of Kuwait's greatest strengths during its darkest hours.

The international community also played a decisive role. The swift condemnation of the invasion by the United Nations and the formation of a multinational coalition ultimately led to

Kuwait's liberation on February 26, 1991. Kuwait has never forgotten the support extended by friendly and allied nations that stood firmly on the side of international law and justice during the crisis. (Times Kuwait) More than three decades later, the legacy of August 2 continues to resonate. It is reflected in memorial ceremonies,

educational initiatives, and the stories passed from one generation to the next, ensuring that the sacrifices of the martyrs are never forgotten. The anniversary is not about reopening old wounds but about preserving history, honoring courage, and reaffirming the values that carried Kuwait through one of the greatest challenges in its existence.

Remembering the invasion is also a reminder of the value of peace. It underscores the importance of national unity, respect for sovereignty, and the need to resolve conflicts through dialogue rather than aggression. These principles remain central to Kuwait's approach to regional and international affairs today.

As Kuwait bows its head in remembrance this August 2, it pays tribute to those who sacrificed their lives for the nation and expresses gratitude to all who stood beside it during its time of greatest need. Their courage transformed a national tragedy into a lasting symbol of resilience, hope, and determination.

The events of August 2, 1990, will forever remain an inseparable part of Kuwait's history—not simply as a day of invasion, but as the day a nation proved that its spirit could never be occupied.



August 2, 1990

When Kuwait Awoke to War

The Times Kuwait Report

Some dates are remembered for celebration. Others are remembered because they changed the course of history. For Kuwait, August 2, 1990 is one such day. Thirty-six years have passed since Iraqi forces crossed Kuwait's borders, plunging the nation into seven months of occupation that tested the courage, resilience and resolve of an entire people. While the memories of those difficult days have faded with time for some, they remain vivid for those who lived through them and continue to shape Kuwait's national identity.

Every year, the anniversary is observed not simply to remember a tragedy, but to honour the extraordinary spirit that emerged from it.

The invasion brought unimaginable hardship. Families were displaced, livelihoods were destroyed, and thousands endured uncertainty, imprisonment and loss. Yet, even in the darkest moments, Kuwait never lost sight of its identity or its hope.

Across the country, stories of courage unfolded quietly

and without expectation of recognition. Members of the resistance risked their lives to gather intelligence, distribute supplies and support fellow citizens. Security personnel and members of the armed forces defended their homeland with unwavering determination. Doctors, nurses and volunteers continued to care for those in need despite immense personal danger. Ordinary Kuwaitis opened their homes, shared what little they had and stood together as one people. It is these countless acts of courage—many known only to the families who lived them—that define the true legacy of August 2.

The occupation also revealed something even stronger than military resistance: the unbreakable bond between Kuwait's leadership and its people. Throughout the crisis, Kuwaitis remained united in their commitment to restoring their nation's sovereignty. Differences of background, profession and social status disappeared in the face of a common purpose.

When liberation came on February 26, 1991, it was more than the end of an occupation.

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The resolve that defied occupation

From invasion to liberation, the extraordinary story of a nation's courage, unity and unbreakable spirit



The Times Kuwait Report

At dawn on August 2, 1990, the State of Kuwait awoke to one of the darkest chapters in its modern history. In the silence before sunrise, Iraqi forces crossed Kuwait's borders in a full-scale invasion that violated international law, shattered regional stability and plunged the Gulf into an unprecedented crisis.

What unfolded over the next seven months would forever change Kuwait. Yet from the devastation emerged a story that continues to inspire generations—not one of defeat, but of resilience, sacrifice, unity and an unshakable belief that freedom would ultimately prevail.

Within hours, thousands of Iraqi troops, supported by tanks, armored vehicles and aircraft, swept across the country, overwhelming border defenses and rapidly seizing strategic locations. Government ministries, airports, ports and communication centers became immediate targets as the invasion unfolded with overwhelming force.

The assault claimed the lives of soldiers, police officers and civilians who stood in defense of their homeland. Many Kuwaitis made the ultimate sacrifice resisting the invading forces, while others risked

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36 Years On Kuwait Honours the Heroes, Unity and Resilience That Reclaimed a Nation

The Times Kuwait Report

Thirty-six years ago, Kuwait awoke to the unimaginable.

In the early hours of August 2, 1990, Iraqi forces crossed the border, bringing an abrupt end to the peace and stability the country had long enjoyed. Within hours, familiar streets were transformed into conflict zones, communications were disrupted, and an entire nation found itself confronting one of the greatest challenges in its modern history.



For many Kuwaitis, that morning remains frozen in time. It is remembered not only for the shock of invasion but also for the uncertainty that followed—families separated by circumstance, communities living under occupation, and a nation determined to preserve its identity despite overwhelming odds.

Today, as Kuwait marks the 36th anniversary of the invasion, the focus extends beyond remembrance. It is a tribute to the courage of those who resisted, the resilience of a people who refused to surrender, and the unity that ultimately led to the restoration of the country's sovereignty.

When a Nation Stood Together

History often celebrates extraordinary leaders and historic decisions, but the story of Kuwait's occupation is also the story of ordinary people who performed extraordinary acts.

Members of the armed forces and the National Guard defended strategic positions despite being heavily outnumbered. Police officers remained committed to protecting communities even as normal institutions ceased to function. Doctors, nurses and healthcare workers continued treating the injured under dangerous conditions, while volunteers quietly organised food, medicine and essential supplies for families in need.

Across neighbourhoods, Kuwaitis opened their homes to relatives, friends and strangers alike. Resistance networks emerged, risking their lives to gather information, distribute humanitarian assistance and support the effort to restore Kuwait's independence.

Many never returned home.

Their sacrifice became one of the defining chapters of Kuwait's national story, and every



August 2, the nation remembers those who gave their lives so that future generations could live in freedom.

Leadership That United a Nation

While courage was displayed on the streets, leadership played an equally vital role on the international stage.

The late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah led diplomatic efforts to rally global support for Kuwait's liberation. Working alongside the Government-in-Exile and Kuwait's diplomatic missions around the world, he ensured that



the country's voice remained heard despite the occupation. Those efforts reinforced an important principle that continues to shape international relations today—that the sovereignty of nations cannot be undermined through force.

For Kuwaitis enduring months of occupation, that steadfast leadership became a source of hope and reassurance that their country would one day be free again.

A World That Refused to Look Away

Kuwait's liberation was not achieved by the nation alone.

The invasion prompted an unprecedented international response. The United Nations swiftly condemned the aggression, passing a series of resolutions demanding Iraq's withdrawal and affirming Kuwait's sovereignty. Countries across the Gulf, the wider Arab world and the international community united behind a common objective: restoring Kuwait's independence and upholding international law.

The multinational coalition that followed ultimately led to the liberation of Kuwait on February 26, 1991, bringing an end to seven

months of occupation.

For Kuwait, that support remains a lasting reminder that justice and collective action can prevail even in the face of overwhelming adversity.

From Recovery to Renewal

Liberation marked the beginning of another challenge—rebuilding a nation.

Infrastructure had suffered extensive damage, oil wells had been set ablaze, and public institutions faced the enormous task of restoring normal life. Yet Kuwait approached reconstruction with determination.

Schools reopened. Businesses resumed operations. Homes and public buildings were rebuilt. Over time, the visible scars of war gave way to new roads, modern infrastructure and renewed economic growth. Perhaps more importantly, Kuwait emerged with an even stronger sense of national identity. The experience reinforced the importance of unity, resilience and preparedness—values that continue to guide the country's development today.

Passing the Legacy to Future Generations

For many young Kuwaitis, the events of 1990 are known only through family stories, museums and history lessons.

As those who experienced the invasion grow older, preserving their memories has become increasingly important. Their experiences are more than historical records—they are reminders of the price paid for peace, security and independence.

Every anniversary serves as an opportunity to ensure that the lessons of the past remain relevant for the future: that freedom cannot be taken for granted, that national unity is a nation's greatest strength, and that resilience is built through shared purpose.

Remembering the Past, Building the Future

The story of August 2 is no longer defined solely by invasion or occupation.

It is defined by the people who refused to surrender their identity, by the families who stood together during months of uncertainty, by the martyrs whose sacrifices secured Kuwait's future, and by a nation that emerged stronger than those who sought to break it.

Thirty-six years later, Kuwait remembers with humility, honours with gratitude and looks ahead with confidence. The anniversary is not simply a reflection on a painful chapter in history. It is a celebration of endurance, unity and the enduring spirit of a nation that reclaimed its freedom and transformed adversity into one of its greatest sources of strength.

As Kuwait bows its head in remembrance this August 2, it also stands tall in pride—proud of its heroes, grateful for its friends, and steadfast in its commitment to safeguarding the peace, sovereignty and unity that define the nation today.

When Kuwait Awoke to War

Continued from page 7

It marked the triumph of perseverance over oppression and reaffirmed the values upon which modern Kuwait continues to stand—unity, dignity, justice and faith in the future.

Kuwait has never forgotten those who stood beside it. The support of the international community, under the leadership of the United Nations and the multinational coalition, demonstrated the importance of collective action in defending international law and the

sovereignty of nations. That solidarity remains an important chapter in Kuwait's history and its enduring relationships with friendly countries around the world.

In the decades since liberation, Kuwait has rebuilt not only its infrastructure but also its confidence. It has invested in education, healthcare, economic development and regional cooperation while remaining committed to peace and diplomacy. The lessons of 1990 continue to influence national policy, reminding every generation that security, unity and stability can never be taken for granted.

For many young Kuwaitis, the invasion is a chapter they know through photographs, documentaries and the memories of parents

and grandparents. As eyewitnesses grow fewer with time, preserving these stories becomes increasingly important. They are not merely historical accounts—they are lessons in courage, sacrifice and the enduring value of national unity.

Remembering August 2 is therefore not about dwelling on the past. It is about ensuring that the sacrifices of those who defended Kuwait are never forgotten and that future generations understand the price that was paid for the freedoms they enjoy today.

This anniversary also serves as a reminder that patriotism is expressed not only during times of conflict but also in the daily work of building a stronger nation. Every contribution to Kuwait's progress—whether in education,

healthcare, business, public service or community life—is part of the same journey that began with rebuilding the country after liberation.

As Kuwait marks the 36th anniversary of the Iraqi invasion, it does so with solemn remembrance, profound gratitude and quiet confidence. The nation honours its martyrs, salutes its heroes and reflects on a history that transformed adversity into resilience.

The story of August 2 is no longer only one of invasion and occupation. It is the story of a people who refused to surrender their identity, a nation that emerged stronger from its darkest chapter, and a legacy that continues to inspire Kuwait's journey towards an even brighter future.

The resolve that defied occupation

Continued from page 7

everything to protect their families, neighbors and fellow citizens during the chaotic first hours of the occupation.

Beyond its military objectives, the invasion represented a direct assault on Kuwait's sovereignty, constitutional legitimacy and internationally recognized borders. Iraq's attempt to erase Kuwait's independence and annex the country was swiftly rejected by the international community, reaffirming that aggression could never be accepted as a means of altering the destiny of a sovereign nation.

While Iraqi forces sought to dismantle the state, Kuwait's legitimate leadership ensured that the nation itself endured. His Highness the Amir Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and the government continued to represent Kuwait internationally, preserving constitutional legitimacy and rallying diplomatic support across the world. Their steadfast leadership ensured that Kuwait's voice remained heard even while its territory remained under occupation.

Inside occupied Kuwait, however, another remarkable story was unfolding.

As fear spread across the country and daily life was upended, ordinary citizens became extraordinary patriots. Men and women from every walk of life formed one of



the most determined civilian resistance movements in modern Gulf history. They distributed food and medicine, gathered intelligence, safeguarded public property and quietly helped one another despite the enormous personal risks.

Teachers became messengers. Students volunteered in underground networks. Doctors and nurses continued treating patients under extremely difficult circumstances, often with limited supplies. Families opened their homes to those fleeing danger, while countless Kuwaitis carried out acts of quiet defiance that would later become enduring symbols of national courage.

The occupation brought immense human suffering. Thousands of Kuwaitis were arrested, detained or forcibly disappeared. Many endured imprisonment and torture, while countless families spent months without knowing the fate of loved ones. The pain of the missing and the sacrifices of those who never returned remain deeply woven into Kuwait's national memory.

Beyond the human tragedy, the country also endured widespread destruction. Homes, businesses, museums, hospitals, schools and government institutions suffered extensive damage as public and private property was looted or destroyed. Financial institutions ceased normal operations, commercial activity came to a standstill and essential public services were severely disrupted,

bringing one of the Gulf's most dynamic economies to an abrupt halt.

As the humanitarian crisis deepened, Kuwait's plight galvanized the international community. The United Nations Security Council moved swiftly to condemn the invasion, impose sanctions on Iraq and demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Iraqi forces. Countries across the world united in an unprecedented coalition to uphold international law and restore the sovereignty of an independent nation.

When diplomatic efforts failed, the coalition launched Operation Desert Storm, a military campaign that would ultimately pave the way for Kuwait's liberation. Throughout the occupation, Kuwaiti diplomats, officials and citizens worked tirelessly across world capitals to ensure that the country's cause remained firmly on the international agenda and that global support never wavered.

As coalition forces advanced in early 1991, retreating Iraqi troops embarked on a deliberate campaign of destruction. Hundreds of oil wells were set ablaze, creating one of the worst environmental disasters in modern history. Thick black smoke blanketed Kuwait's skies for months, while vast oil lakes spread across the desert and millions of barrels of crude oil contaminated land and sea, leaving environmental scars that took years to heal.

Then, after nearly seven months of occupation, hope returned.

On February 26, 1991, Kuwait was liberated. The sight of the Kuwaiti flag once again flying freely across the nation became a powerful symbol of triumph over aggression and a moment of profound relief for a people who had endured months of hardship, uncertainty and loss.

Liberation marked not the end of Kuwait's journey, but the beginning of an extraordinary national recovery.

Entire communities had to be rebuilt. Roads, schools, hospitals, ministries and essential infrastructure required restoration. Businesses gradually reopened, public services resumed and families began the difficult process of healing from the trauma of occupation. The resilience displayed during those challenging years became one of Kuwait's defining national characteristics and a testament to the determination of its leadership and people.

The experience also reshaped Kuwait's approach to national security, regional cooperation and international partnerships. The lessons of 1990 continue to influence the country's strategic outlook and its commitment to collective security within the Gulf Cooperation Council and the wider international community.

Each year, Kuwait pauses to remember not only the tragedy of August 2, but also the extraordinary courage displayed by those who defended the nation, resisted occupation and sacrificed their lives for freedom. Their legacy continues to inspire new generations and remains deeply embedded in the country's national identity.

The annual commemoration also honors the unwavering support of friendly and allied nations whose diplomatic, humanitarian and military contributions proved instrumental in restoring Kuwait's sovereignty. Their solidarity demonstrated the strength of international cooperation in the face of unlawful aggression.

For younger generations who know the invasion only through history books, museums and the memories of their parents and grandparents, August 2 serves as a powerful reminder that peace, independence and constitutional legitimacy should never be taken for granted. It also stands as a lasting lesson that unity, resilience and international solidarity can overcome even the gravest of challenges.

Today, Kuwait stands as a modern, confident and forward-looking nation that transformed one of the greatest trials in its history into a source of enduring national strength. Its remarkable recovery reflects not only the vision of its leadership but also the resilience of its people and the steadfast support of the international community.

Thirty-six years after the invasion, the memory of August 2 continues to unite Kuwaitis across generations. It is remembered not simply as the day Iraq invaded Kuwait, but as the day the Kuwaiti people proved that while a nation can be occupied, its spirit can never be conquered. That spirit carried Kuwait through occupation, guided it to liberation and continues to shape the nation it is today.

Harbajan Singh Vedi

The Man Who Chose to Stay When Thousands Were Leaving

How one community leader helped steer the largest civilian evacuation in history during Kuwait's darkest days

The Times Kuwait Report

When Iraqi forces invaded Kuwait in the early hours of August 2, 1990, panic swept across the country. Nearly 170,000 Indians the largest expatriate community in Kuwait at the time found themselves trapped in an occupied nation, cut off from normal communication, uncertain of their future, and fearful for their lives.

As thousands searched desperately for a way out, one man made a decision that would define his legacy forever.

Harbajan Singh Vedi chose to stay.

At a time when many were seeking safety, Vedi remained in occupied Kuwait, determined to help fellow Indians navigate one of the gravest humanitarian crises in the Gulf's modern history. His decision was not driven by politics or personal gain, but by an unwavering sense of responsibility to the community he had served for decades.

Within days of the invasion, community leaders came together to establish the Indian Citizens Committee (ICC), a volunteer body formed to assist the tens of thousands of stranded Indians. The committee initially comprised 51 members, with Vedi serving as Convenor and Secretary for Coordination. It was entrusted with an enormous task: to organize relief, restore communication, and ultimately help facilitate the safe evacuation of an entire community.

The circumstances could hardly have been more daunting.

Law and order had collapsed. Communication networks were severely disrupted. Banking services had ceased functioning, fuel was scarce, and food supplies were becoming increasingly difficult to obtain. Many expatriates had lost contact with their families in India, while countless others had been displaced from their homes by the fighting and occupation.

Operating under these conditions required courage, improvisation and extraordinary resolve. Working alongside dedicated volunteers, Vedi helped transform the Indian School in Salmiya into the operational heart of the community's relief efforts. The school became far more than an educational institution it evolved into a shelter, information centre, medical assistance point and coordination hub for thousands of distressed Indians seeking guidance and support. The committee organized food distribution, arranged temporary accommodation, assisted families separated during the invasion and worked tirelessly to reconnect stranded expatriates with their relatives. Volunteers risked arrest and harassment while travelling across occupied Kuwait to identify those in need and deliver essential assistance.

Yet humanitarian relief was only the beginning.

As it became evident that a prolonged occupation was inevitable, attention turned to an even greater challenge—bringing tens of thousands of Indians home safely.

Working closely with officials of the Indian Embassy and the Government of India, the Indian Citizens Committee became a crucial bridge between stranded expatriates and the authorities coordinating the evacuation. Vedi's organizational skills and leadership helped bring structure to what could easily have descended into chaos.

The evacuation itself was unprecedented.

With Kuwait's airport closed and commercial flights suspended, evacuees first had to travel by road through occupied territory into Iraq before crossing into Jordan, where Air India operated one of the largest humanitarian airlift operations ever undertaken. Convoys carrying thousands of men, women and children departed almost daily under difficult and often uncertain conditions.

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When Home Was Left Behind

By Nita Bhatkar
Special to The Times

There are journeys you remember for the places you visit. Then there are journeys you remember because they change who you become.

When Iraqi forces invaded Kuwait on 2 August 1990, life stopped in an instant. Nobody knew what tomorrow would bring.

Thirty-six years later, I can still relive those days with startling clarity.

I was just 14 years old, born and raised in Kuwait, the only home I had ever known. Then, overnight, we became refugees.

This year, those memories feel especially poignant as I remember my late uncle, Narendra Khambete, my father's closest friend, who passed away recently. He, along with his wife and son, became my companions on that unforgettable ten-day convoy journey from Kuwait to India. It was my first time away from my parents, and I had little understanding of what lay ahead.

We travelled through Kuwait, into Iraq and onwards to Jordan. Every checkpoint brought fresh anxiety, and every delay left us wondering whether we would make it out safely.

I still remember our first night in a makeshift camp. The women and children slept inside a tent while the men stayed outside, guarding our belongings through the night. I slept peacefully beside my aunt and cousin. By morning, my uncle and the other men returned covered in dust after enduring a fierce desert sandstorm. It was only years later that I truly appreciated what that night must have been like for them.

By the time we reached the Azraq refugee camp in Jordan, survival had become part of everyday life. Fresh food was limited to khubzoos, yoghurt, apples, tomatoes, cucumbers and the occasional tin of sardines. As families departed on evacuation flights, we searched the tents they left behind for anything they could not carry. One day, we found rice and a few spices. Using the tomatoes we already had, we cooked what we proudly called our "Hyderabadi biryani." Whether it resembled biryani or not hardly mattered. It was a hot meal and, for a brief moment, it tasted like home.

Bathing meant filling buckets with water and carrying them to makeshift bathrooms erected over the desert ground. No matter how thoroughly you washed, your feet were muddy again the moment you stepped outside.

After days of waiting, we finally boarded an Air India flight to India, having spent an entire night at the airport. By sheer luck, we were upgraded to First Class. I can still remember the taste of the biryani served on board. After days of camp life, it was the most comforting meal I had ever eaten.

Landing in Mumbai marked the beginning of a new chapter. My parents soon joined me, and together we began rebuilding our lives in India. Following Kuwait's liberation, we were fortunate to return to the country we had always called home.

But the journey never truly ended.

Those ten days, and the two years that followed in India, shaped the person I would become. They taught me resilience in uncertainty, gratitude in hardship, compassion for those forced to leave everything behind, and a profound understanding that home is more than a place. It is the people you carry with you, and the hope that carries you forward.

Some journeys end when you arrive. Others become part of who you are forever.



Mathunny 'Sunny' Mathews

The Community Leader Who Helped Bring Thousands Home

How one man's courage, leadership and compassion became a lifeline for Indians trapped during Kuwait's darkest chapter.

The Times Kuwait Report

When Iraqi forces invaded Kuwait in the early hours of August 2, 1990, more than 170,000 Indians found themselves stranded almost overnight in a country under occupation. Cut off from normal communication, uncertain of their future and confronted with an unfolding humanitarian crisis, thousands looked not only to governments for help but also to trusted community leaders for guidance.

Among those who answered that call was Mathunny Mathews, affectionately known throughout Kuwait as "Sunny" Mathews.

A respected businessman and one of the Indian community's most prominent figures, Sunny Mathews could have chosen to leave Kuwait at the earliest opportunity. Instead, he remained behind, believing that his first responsibility was to help those who suddenly found themselves frightened, displaced and in desperate need of assistance. The invasion transformed everyday life into a struggle for survival. Banks stopped functioning, communications collapsed, food supplies became uncertain and thousands of expatriates were separated from their families. With Kuwait International Airport closed and the country under military occupation, there appeared to be no clear path to safety.

Recognizing the scale of the crisis, Indian community leaders came together to establish the Indian Citizens Committee (ICC), a volunteer organization created to coordinate relief and assist stranded Indians. Sunny Mathews quickly emerged as one of its leading members, working alongside H.S. Vedi and dozens of other volunteers in what would become one of the largest humanitarian efforts ever undertaken by an expatriate community.

For Mathews, the crisis was deeply personal.

Having made Kuwait his home for more than three decades, he viewed the suffering around him not as someone else's tragedy, but as a responsibility he could not ignore. Friends and colleagues recall that he never regarded the thousands seeking help as strangers. They were members of one community facing an extraordinary challenge together.

Working from the Indian School in Salmiya, which became the operational centre of the relief effort, Mathews and fellow volunteers helped organize food distribution, temporary shelter and medical assistance for distressed expatriates. Families who had lost their homes found refuge through the committee, while volunteers worked tirelessly to identify vulnerable people and provide them with essential support.

One of the greatest challenges, however, was evacuation.

With flights suspended and Kuwait's airport closed, the only practical escape route led north through occupied Iraq and onward to Jordan. Organizing such a journey for tens of thousands of people required extraordinary planning, negotiation and courage.

Mathews played a pivotal role in securing transportation for stranded Indians. Drawing on years of experience in Kuwait's business community and his extensive network of professional contacts, he helped negotiate with transport providers and arranged buses that carried thousands of evacuees across occupied territory toward Jordan, from where Air India would fly them home. His ability to coordinate logistics under wartime conditions proved indispensable to the success of the operation.

The challenges extended far beyond transportation.

Passenger lists had to be prepared, families reunited, travel documents coordinated and vulnerable people

given priority. Every convoy required meticulous planning, while volunteers constantly adapted to changing security conditions inside occupied Kuwait.

Despite the enormous risks, the operation continued. The Indian Citizens Committee worked in close coordination with the Indian Embassy and the Government of India, helping facilitate the evacuation of more than 143,000 Indians from Kuwait by land, sea and air. From Amman, Air India completed what would later be recognized as the world's largest civilian air evacuation, transporting more than 150,000 people safely back to India.

Yet numbers alone cannot measure Sunny Mathews' contribution.

Those who worked beside him remember a leader whose calm reassured frightened families, whose practical thinking solved seemingly impossible problems and whose compassion never diminished despite months of uncertainty and personal risk. He remained focused not on recognition, but on ensuring that every possible life could be brought to safety.

The occupation also came at a personal cost. Mathews suffered significant financial losses, was robbed by Iraqi soldiers and witnessed the destruction of a country he had helped build over decades. Yet he rarely spoke of his own hardships. Instead, he remembered the courage shown by volunteers, the resilience of the Indian community and the generosity of Kuwaitis who stood together in the face of adversity.



Even after leaving Kuwait in October 1990, following the evacuation of substantial numbers of Indians, Mathews remained deeply attached to the country. He returned soon after Kuwait's liberation, convinced that the nation would recover from its darkest chapter and determined to contribute once again to its future.

The humanitarian airlift of 1990 has since entered history as the largest civilian evacuation ever undertaken. While it was the result of coordinated efforts by the Government of India, Air India, diplomats, volunteers and countless unnamed individuals, its success also depended on community leaders who chose service over personal safety.

Mathunny "Sunny" Mathews was one of those leaders. His legacy is not defined simply by the thousands who reached home safely, but by the hope he gave to those who believed they had been forgotten. During Kuwait's darkest days, when fear overshadowed daily life and uncertainty gripped an entire community, he demonstrated that courage is measured not by words, but by action.

More than three decades later, his story remains an enduring chapter in the history of the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, a story of compassion in the midst of conflict, leadership under extraordinary pressure and an unwavering commitment to humanity. It is a legacy that continues to symbolize the deep bonds of friendship between India and Kuwait, forged not only through diplomacy, but through shared adversity and acts of selfless service.

Why Technology Alone Cannot Drive Innovation in GCC Oil and Gas



By Dr. Pupjana Kole
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Special to The Times Kuwait

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries are rapidly transforming their energy sectors through large-scale investments in artificial intelligence (AI), automation, robotics, digital twins, predictive analytics, and other Industry 4.0 technologies. Across Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, and Bahrain, these digital initiatives are helping national oil and gas companies improve operational efficiency while supporting broader economic diversification goals.



The pace of digital adoption has been remarkable. Recent industry surveys show that nearly three-quarters of GCC organizations have deployed generative AI in at least one business function, while 57 percent allocate at least five percent of their digital budgets to AI well above the global average. AI adoption across the region has also risen significantly, increasing from 62 percent in 2023 to 84 percent in 2025.

These investments support ambitious national development strategies, including Saudi Vision 2030, Kuwait Vision 2035, Qatar National Vision 2030, Oman Vision 2040, Bahrain Economic Vision 2030, and the UAE's long-term economic plans.

Yet despite the rapid adoption of advanced technologies, many organizations continue to struggle with a critical challenge: technology alone does not create innovation.

Global research consistently shows that the greatest barriers to successful digital

transformation are rarely technological. Instead, they stem from leadership practices, organizational culture, workforce capabilities, and outdated ways of working.

Recent studies reinforce this conclusion. Researchers have found that investments in AI and automation generate lasting value only when organizations foster cultures that encourage continuous learning, collaboration, adaptability, and employee empowerment. Organizations built on trust, knowledge sharing, and adaptive leadership are far more successful in converting digital investments into meaningful innovation.

Industry experience tells a similar story. Companies achieve greater returns from AI when they redesign business processes, involve leadership at every stage of implementation, and equip employees with the skills needed to embrace new technologies. Simply introducing AI without changing organizational practices often limits its impact.

In essence, technology provides the tools, but people determine the outcome.

This is reflected in recent global findings, including research from McKinsey, which shows that while AI investment has become widespread, relatively few organizations have succeeded in generating enterprise-wide value. The key obstacles are no longer technological limitations but leadership capability, organizational alignment, workflow redesign, and effective change management.

The GCC presents a similar picture. Although AI adoption is accelerating across the region, many organizations remain in the pilot stage because their organizational structures and management practices have not evolved at the same pace as technological investment.

For Kuwait, the challenge goes beyond acquiring advanced technologies. As the country advances its Vision 2035 agenda and modernizes its oil and gas sector, long-term competitiveness will depend on building organizations that encourage innovation, strengthen leadership, and invest in human capital.

Kuwait already possesses the infrastructure, expertise, and ambition to become a regional leader in energy innovation. However, sustainable success will require equal emphasis on developing people, encouraging collaboration, and creating workplaces where new ideas can flourish.

In the years ahead, the organizations that lead the GCC's energy transition will not necessarily be those with the most advanced technology, but those that successfully combine technological excellence with visionary leadership, agile organizational cultures, and a commitment to continuous learning.



Pakistan Envoy Highlights Strong Pakistan-Kuwait Partnership During Visit to The Times Kuwait

His Excellency Dr. Zafar Iqbal, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to the State of Kuwait, paid a courtesy visit to The Times Kuwait, where he met with Editor-in-Chief Tareq Yousef Al-Shumaimry and Executive Managing Editor Reaven D'Souza to discuss Pakistan-Kuwait relations, regional developments, and the evolving role of responsible journalism.

The meeting featured an exchange of views on a range of issues of mutual interest, including the changing geopolitical landscape in the Gulf and the wider Middle East. Discussions underscored the importance of dialogue, diplomacy, and regional cooperation in promoting peace, stability, and shared prosperity.

A key focus of the meeting was the recently ratified Defence Cooperation Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Pakistan and Kuwait. Both sides noted that the agreement represents a significant milestone in the growing strategic partnership between the two friendly nations, providing a framework for enhanced defence collaboration through joint training, exchange of expertise, and cooperation in areas of mutual interest.

The discussions also highlighted the broader and steadily expanding relationship between Pakistan and Kuwait, particularly in trade, investment, healthcare, and people-to-people ties. Both sides acknowledged the longstanding contributions of the Pakistani community to Kuwait's economic and social development and expressed confidence that bilateral cooperation would continue to strengthen in the years ahead.

The conversation further explored the increasingly important role of credible

journalism in today's fast-evolving digital media environment. Ambassador Dr. Zafar Iqbal emphasized the need for factual, balanced, and objective reporting, particularly at a time when misinformation can spread rapidly across digital platforms. He noted that responsible journalism plays a vital role in fostering public trust and promoting informed discourse.



The management of The Times Kuwait reaffirmed the publication's commitment to delivering accurate, balanced, and responsible journalism while upholding the highest professional and ethical standards. They also emphasized the role of independent media in enhancing public understanding, encouraging constructive dialogue, and strengthening ties between nations.

The meeting concluded on a positive note, with both sides expressing appreciation for continued engagement between the diplomatic community and the media, and reaffirming the importance of open dialogue in further deepening the longstanding friendship and cooperation between Pakistan and Kuwait.

Harbajan Singh Vedi: The Man Who Chose to Stay When Thousands Were Leaving

Continued from page 9

The logistical challenge was immense.

Travel documents had to be prepared, passenger manifests coordinated, transportation arranged and vulnerable families given priority. Every convoy required meticulous planning and constant communication between volunteers inside Kuwait, Indian officials and transport operators outside the country.

Despite the dangers, the operation continued.

By mid-November 1990, more than 143,000 Indians had been safely repatriated from Kuwait through coordinated land, sea and air operations, while Air India went on to evacuate more than 150,000 people from Amman to India in what would later be recognized as the world's largest civilian air evacuation.

What made Vedi's contribution particularly remarkable was his decision to remain behind even after many others had left.

As the months passed, the original 51-member committee gradually diminished as volunteers departed with their families. Only

a handful, including Vedi, continued operating inside occupied Kuwait until substantial numbers of Indians had been evacuated. Their commitment ensured that relief operations continued during some of the occupation's most difficult weeks.

Those who worked alongside him recall a leader who remained calm under pressure, made decisions quickly and placed the welfare of others above his own safety. For countless Indians stranded during the occupation, the Indian Citizens Committee became a source of reassurance, and Vedi its steady guiding force.

His efforts also reflected something deeper than community leadership.

Having spent much of his life in Kuwait and enjoying a close relationship with the country and its people, Vedi viewed Kuwait's tragedy as his own. The suffering of Kuwaitis during the occupation profoundly affected him, and he believed that assisting fellow expatriates was both a humanitarian obligation and a way of standing in solidarity with the nation that had become his second home.

The evacuation of Indians from Kuwait has



since entered history as one of the greatest humanitarian operations ever undertaken. While governments, diplomats, Air India crews and countless volunteers all played indispensable roles, the success of the mission also rested on community leaders who refused to abandon those in need.

Among them, Harbajan Singh Vedi occupies a special place.

His legacy is not measured in buildings designed or businesses established, but in the thousands of lives that found hope amid

despair because he chose duty over safety. During Kuwait's darkest chapter, when fear and uncertainty gripped an entire nation, H.S. Vedi stood alongside fellow volunteers to ensure that humanity, compassion and courage prevailed.

More than three decades later, his story remains inseparable from the history of the 1990 Iraqi invasion not only as an inspiring chapter in the history of the Indian community, but also as a testament to the enduring bonds of friendship between India and Kuwait that were strengthened in one of history's most difficult moments.

Certainly, Since Mathunny "Sunny" Mathews deserves to be remembered in his own right—and not simply as the inspiration behind Airlift—the article should focus on his humanitarian leadership during the Iraqi occupation, his role in the Indian Citizens Committee (ICC), and his efforts in organizing what became the world's largest civilian evacuation.

Here's a The Times Kuwait-style feature that complements the H.S. Vedi article while highlighting Sunny Mathews' distinct contribution.

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

How Heat Affects Your Appetite

Ask Mira : Eating Right to Live Happy & Healthy



Have you ever noticed that on very hot summer days, you feel less hungry than usual? You may want something cold and refreshing rather than a full meal. This is not simply in your head. Temperature can influence appetite, digestion, hydration, and even the foods we crave.

When the body gets hot, it has to work harder to maintain its normal internal temperature (37 degrees). One of the main ways it cools itself is through sweating. Blood flow also shifts toward the skin to release heat. These thermoregulatory processes can temporarily affect how hungry and energetic you feel.

Why does appetite decrease in the heat?

Research suggests that heat exposure can suppress appetite, particularly during prolonged or intense heat. One reason may be that the body is prioritizing thermoregulation over digestion. During hot weather, blood flow is directed more toward the skin to help release heat, while gastrointestinal blood flow can be reduced.

Also the role of hunger and satiety hormones changes. These changes can contribute to feeling less interested in food.

Thirst can also be confused with hunger:

Hot weather increases fluid losses through sweat, making hydration important. Sometimes what feels like fatigue, weakness, headache, or even the feeling of hunger may actually be related to inadequate fluid intake.

But hydration does not mean drinking only plain water all day. During prolonged exercise or heavy sweating, electrolyte replacement may become more important.

Why do we crave different foods?

Summer can also change what we want to eat. Heavy, high-fat meals may feel less appealing because they can increase the sensation of

fullness and discomfort when you are already overheated. Instead, many people naturally prefer cold, light and refreshing foods such as fruit, yogurt, salads, smoothies, or cold meals.

If your appetite is low, focus on smaller meals that still provide protein, fiber, healthy fats, and carbohydrates. Greek yogurt with fruit and nuts, eggs with toast and vegetables, a chicken or tuna salad, or a smoothie with yogurt and fruit can be easier to tolerate than a large meal.

Listen to your body but don't ignore nutrition

Your appetite may naturally fluctuate with temperature, and that is completely normal. You don't necessarily need to force yourself to eat large meals during extreme heat. Instead, try smaller balanced meals throughout the day, stay hydrated, and pay attention to your energy levels.

And remember: Feeling less hungry in summer doesn't mean your body needs less protein, vitamins, minerals or overall nourishment.

Summer is about adapting your meals to the heat, not neglecting your nutrition.

Eat like Mira
Create healthy habits, not restrictions

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



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

RECIPE

Paneer Buddha Bowl



A colourful, wholesome and protein-rich Buddha Bowl loaded with perfectly spiced paneer, fluffy quinoa, fresh vegetables, creamy hummus and a refreshing yogurt dressing. This balanced meal is packed with protein, fibre and essential nutrients, making it perfect for a healthy lunch or light dinner.

Preparation Time: 20 minutes

Cooking Time: 15 minutes

Total Time: 35 minutes

Serves: 2

Ingredients

For the Paneer

- 200 g paneer, cut into cubes
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- ½ tsp red chilli powder
- ½ tsp paprika
- ¼ tsp turmeric powder
- ½ tsp cumin powder
- 1 tsp grated garlic
- Salt and black pepper to taste

For the Bowl

- 1 cup cooked quinoa (or brown rice)
- ½ avocado, sliced
- ½ cup cucumber, diced
- ½ cup cherry tomatoes, halved



- ½ cup purple cabbage, shredded
- ½ cup grated carrot
- ¼ cup sweet corn
- 1 cup mixed lettuce leaves

For the Hummus

- ½ cup hummus

For the Yogurt Dressing

- 3 tbsp Greek yogurt
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- ½ tsp honey
- Salt and black pepper to taste

For Garnish

- Pumpkin seeds
- Black sesame seeds
- Fresh coriander or parsley
- Lemon wedges



Chef Chhaya Thakker

Method

- Marinate the paneer with olive oil, chilli powder, paprika, turmeric, cumin, garlic, salt and black pepper. Let it rest for 10–15 minutes.
- Heat a pan and cook the paneer until golden brown on all sides.
- Whisk together the Greek yogurt, lemon juice, honey, salt and pepper to prepare the dressing.
- Arrange lettuce as the base of a wide serving bowl.
- Place the cooked quinoa

in one section and arrange the avocado, cucumber, cherry tomatoes, cabbage, carrot and sweet corn neatly around it.

- Add a generous scoop of hummus and the grilled paneer in the centre.
- Drizzle the yogurt dressing over the paneer and vegetables.
- Finish with pumpkin seeds, black sesame seeds, fresh coriander and a lemon wedge.

Serving Style

- Serve in a wide, shallow ceramic bowl for a clean café-style presentation.
- Arrange each ingredient in separate colourful sections rather than mixing them together.
- Keep the hummus and grilled paneer in the centre to create a striking focal point.
- Garnish with fresh herbs, mixed seeds and a light drizzle of olive oil.
- Serve with a lemon wedge and a wooden spoon for a fresh, elegant finish.

Chef's Tip

- Add roasted chickpeas, toasted almonds or pumpkin seeds for extra crunch and nutrition.
- Marinating the paneer for 15–20 minutes enhances its flavour and keeps it juicy after cooking.

Indian Chef Chhaya Thakker, who has a huge following online on WhatsApp and YouTube will be sharing her favorite recipes and cooking tips with readers of The Times Kuwait. For feedback, you can write to editortimeskuwait@gmail.com



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EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

The Limits of Asia's Two Major Growth Models



Hinh T. Dinh, Karim El Aynaoui

Hinh T. Dinh, a former lead economist in the Office of the Senior Vice President and chief economist of the World Bank, is a senior fellow at the Policy Center for the New South. Karim El Aynaoui, Executive President of the Policy Center for the New South, is Executive Vice-President of Mohammed VI Polytechnic University and Dean of its Humanities, Economics, and Social Sciences Cluster.

What is the most reliable development path for an increasingly fragmented global economy? China and India, the world's two most populous countries, each represent a different answer. But can other countries emulate them?

With its traditional manufacturing-first development model, China has sought to keep manufacturing's share of GDP at nearly twice the advanced-economy benchmark, whereas India has leapfrogged into a services-led growth model, eschewing a manufacturing base. Yet a side-by-side comparison based on a decade of data from the OECD's Trade in Value-Added database is sobering. Neither approach, it seems, is a plug-and-play solution. Each contains structural weaknesses that contemporary developing countries must anticipate.

China and India entered the 2012-22 decade at opposite extremes. China was the world's dominant exporter of manufactured goods, with manufacturing accounting for roughly 32% of its GDP—more than twice that of advanced European economies. Services, meanwhile, accounted for 44% of GDP, an unusually small share given China's income level (Chart 1). In India, by contrast, services already generated about half of GDP, owing to the country's internationally competitive information-technology and software exports. Manufacturing, at 18% of GDP, was small and shrinking, and half of India's workforce remained in low-productivity agriculture. Public infrastructure remained underfunded, and reforms were highly contested.

Both governments pursued deliberate development strategies during this decade. The "Made in China 2025" program, launched in 2015, poured hundreds of billions of dollars into ten strategic industries to sustain China's high share of manufacturing output and upgrade the economy's technological capabilities. India tried something more difficult: reviving manufacturing through the 2014 Make in India campaign and, from 2020, providing \$26 billion in production-linked incentive payments across 14 sectors.

A decade on, the results complicate both official narratives. China did stabilize manufacturing's share of output at around 29% of GDP, but automation severed the old link between industrial output and employment. As displaced factory workers moved overwhelmingly into services, that sector grew to half of GDP and roughly 48% of employment (Chart 1). Yet



most of the new jobs were in low-productivity retail, hospitality, and personal services rather than in knowledge-intensive activities.

Meanwhile, the value added per worker quintupled in water transport and roughly tripled in telecommunications, not because of broad-based hiring, but owing to capital-intensive consolidation and automation. As China approaches high-income status, its labor force is increasingly concentrated in one area while its productivity growth is concentrated in another. India's story inverts the problem. Its flagship knowledge-services sector has grown impressively, with value added per worker in

a stark trade-off: Subsectors that can absorb large numbers of workers hold little potential for productivity gains, and subsectors with the most productivity potential are too small to absorb workers at scale.

The deeper lesson is that neither route is available to today's developing countries. China's manufacturing-led ascent depended on shifting hundreds of millions of workers from farms into labor-intensive export-oriented factories; but robotics and AI are steadily eroding this mechanism. And India's services-led ascent depended on a largely unrepeatable convergence of English-language education, diaspora

countries lacking China's fiscal firepower. Finally, since manufacturing competitiveness ultimately hinges on enabling services—logistics, finance, telecommunications—building factories without upgrading other capabilities can trap an economy in low-value assembly work.

Governments tempted by the services-led route face different but equally demanding constraints. First, relying on sectors that can absorb workers at scale—local retail, hospitality, and personal services—implies the risk of a low-productivity trap. Moreover, since a "successful" services sector can channel productivity gains primarily to shareholders (through economies of scale, automation, and increasing returns to capital), labor's income share can become uncoupled from productivity.

Without deliberate policies to build linkages, high-productivity sectors can become enclaves that generate impressive exports but weak spillovers to the rest of the economy—as India's IT boom increasingly demonstrates. Because productivity varies relatively little across manufacturing subsectors but widely across services, labor reallocation raises aggregate productivity only if workers move into the right segments; and the right ones are usually those with the least absorptive capacity.

A common lesson of the Chinese and Indian experiences is that regardless of endowments, neither manufacturing-led nor services-led development succeeds without policies to address market coordination failures. Skills, infrastructure, institutions, and sectoral support all must be aligned. These components reinforce one another, and will create imbalances when only some are in place.

China's failing is the local-services trap; India's is siloed high-value services. Both are avoidable, but only if governments anticipate them and plan accordingly.

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“Data from a period in which both China and India pursued deliberate industrial policies show that neither country's development route is accessible to other countries. At best, their experience can alert policymakers to structural limitations and coordination problems that will require their own homegrown solutions.”

computer programming and information services roughly tripling as the industry's integration into global value chains rose fivefold. But India's knowledge industries increasingly look like a siloed enclave, given their weak links to the rest of the domestic economy. With returns increasingly flowing to capital rather than workers, labor's share of total value added collapsed from about 26% in 2012 to roughly 11% in 2022.

Moreover, India's knowledge sector is too small to play the role that manufacturing once did for earlier industrializers. Despite Make in India incentives, manufacturing's GDP share slipped to about 16% by 2022, and close to half of Indian workers remained in agriculture (Chart 1). Outside of IT, India's services present

networks, and early-mover advantages in software. Instead of a blueprint, the Chinese and Indian trajectories offer only warning signs. Governments tempted to take the manufacturing road to development should beware. Given that output and employment can decouple entirely, an industrial policy judged only by output share can overstate job creation. And displaced workers tend to land in low-productivity employment (as in China's "local-services trap"), rather than in knowledge work, unless policies are in place to build skills and overcome geographical constraints.

Moreover, sustaining an elevated manufacturing share typically requires state-directed capital allocation, which in turn generates serious misallocation and waste—a major risk for





EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

The World Needs Compassionate AI



Kailash Satyarthi
*Nobel Peace Prize laureate,
is Founder of Laureates and
Leaders for Children.*

The defining question of our time is no longer whether AI will transform our world. It already has. What the world needs now is a moral compass for the technology, which is why I introduced the concept of Compassionate AI to the 12,000-plus delegates from 170 countries who attended the AI for Good Global Summit in Geneva earlier this month.

If we are serious about ensuring that AI contributes to the common good, not just to profit and power, we must send AI engineers and developers out of their laboratories for one month. Let them meet children working in mines and factories, families displaced by conflict, and vulnerable communities enduring poverty, discrimination, and exclusion. Let them walk beside people whose lives are shaped far more by uncertainty, fear, and injustice than by any technological advance. Even one month can change how a person thinks, and that will bear on how developers build this technology and shape the future.

AI is already reshaping education, health care, business, governance, and scientific discovery. It promises remarkable advances, from accelerating medical research and improving learning to exposing trafficking networks, predicting hunger before famine strikes, and strengthening humanitarian action. But every technological revolution poses a moral test, and AI is no exception. With the technology having become the frontline of an intense global competition for economic and geopolitical power, speed is rewarded, scale is celebrated, and market dominance is prized above all else.

Under such conditions, we risk forgetting

the most important question: Whom is this intelligence ultimately meant to serve? The greatest failure of AI today is one of leadership, not engineering. True, much of the conversation at global gatherings already focuses on concepts like “ethical AI” and “responsible AI,” and these are indispensable. We need stronger governance, meaningful accountability, and effective regulation.

But such safeguards are not enough. Ethics can tell us what is right, and laws can establish boundaries; but neither, by itself, will change the mindset of those who are imagining and designing technologies that will influence billions of lives. That requires something deeper, namely compassion.

Compassion is often mistaken for empathy, kindness, or charity. But it is not synonymous with any of them, nor is it simply an emotion or an abstract moral ideal. Compassion begins

consequences. Before celebrating innovation, it asks who might be left behind.

This single shift changes everything. Many of today’s AI failures—bias, discrimination, exclusion, misinformation, environmental damage, threats to children’s well-being—are often described as unfortunate side effects of progress. But they are not mere side effects. They are evidence that someone was absent, overlooked, or ignored when these systems were conceived.

Technology is not neutral, and neither are algorithms. Every system carries the assumptions, priorities, and values of the people who create it. Because AI was trained on humanity’s accumulated knowledge, it has absorbed humanity’s accumulated prejudices, inequalities, and historical injustices.

Human rights cannot be the paint applied after the building is complete. They must be a

dia, which is powered by relatively simple forms of AI. The effects of far more capable systems on children’s emotional development, relationships, imagination, and mental well-being remain largely unknown, but they could be profound.

Rather than dwelling primarily on how AI could transform the economy, we should be asking what will happen if algorithms replace the uniquely human capacity to feel another person’s pain. Can they uphold justice if they were never designed to recognize suffering? Can they strengthen peace if they optimize only for engagement, efficiency, and profit? These moral questions must precede technical ones, because they could shape the future of humanity.

To be sure, AI could become one of humanity’s greatest allies. It could help eradicate modern slavery and human trafficking, detect child sexual abuse, expand access to high-quality education in every child’s own language, improve health care in underserved communities, predict humanitarian crises, and accelerate progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals.

But AI will not choose that future. We will. The principles we enshrine today will form the foundations for the increasingly powerful systems that we are building. Once those foundations harden into standards, institutions, and business models, they will shape humanity’s relationship with intelligent machines for generations.

We cannot afford to wait until harms become irreversible. Legislation has often followed suffering; but with AI, we no longer have the luxury of a wait-and-see approach. The age of intelligence demands wisdom. History will not judge us by how intelligent our machines became. It will judge us by whether we had the foresight and courage to ensure that intelligence remained in the service of humanity.

“With AI having become the frontline of an intense global competition for economic and geopolitical power, speed is rewarded, scale is celebrated, and market dominance is prized above all else. Under such conditions, we risk forgetting the most important question: Whom is this intelligence ultimately meant to serve?”

with recognizing another person’s suffering as our own, which prompts us to take action to alleviate that suffering. It includes the courage to act before additional harm occurs. It leads us not merely to optimize systems, but also to protect human dignity.

Far from being a constraint on technological progress, compassion is the backbone for responsible innovation. Compassionate AI differs from every other framework because it begins not with technology, but with humanity. Before asking what a system can do, Compassionate AI asks whom the system serves. Before pursuing greater efficiency, it considers the human

load-bearing pillar of the entire structure. We trust that a bridge has been made safe before anyone crosses it, because safety is essential to its purpose. Obviously, AI should be held to the same standard. Compassion cannot be retrofitted after deployment. It must shape the system’s design.

Changing the technology’s trajectory is an urgent priority. Children growing up today may spend more time interacting with intelligent machines than with parents, teachers, or neighbors.

We already understand some of the negative psychological consequences of social me-

The Therapist in Your Pocket


Anne Lepetit

Chief Medical Officer of AXA Health Business.

Ask someone today whom they turn to when feeling anxious or struggling to sleep, and increasingly the answer is a chatbot, not a friend or a doctor. In a survey of 19,000 adults across 18 countries that AXA conducted with Ipsos earlier this year, 61% of respondents said that they use AI for mental-health matters, with the share rising to more than 80% in some Asian countries. This implies that, for a significant segment of the global population, AI is a viable psychological-support tool.

The increased use of chatbots for mental-health problems is not entirely surprising, given that 26% of respondents showed symptoms of depression, anxiety, or stress at severe or more extreme levels—a three-percentage-point rise since 2022. Topping the list of stated causes for this “silent epidemic” were financial insecurity and rapid economic and social change.

Always-online technology has also contributed to the deterioration in mental health. A majority of young adults reported that time spent on screens negatively affects their daily lives, even as they spend an average of more than five hours per day in front of one outside of work. This is the paradox of modern digital life: people recognize that their habits are not serving them well, yet social and professional pressures lock their behavior in place.

It is worrying that people are readily turning to digital tools to cope with mental-health problems that, in some cases, such tools have exacerbated. But even more alarming is that



EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

among the respondents using a chatbot for mental-health matters, 42% said that they almost always follow the advice it gives. And while 38% said that they trust these platforms more than human mental-health professionals, 28% admitted that following a chatbot's recommendation has led them toward harmful behavior.

This is not a fringe activity. The survey shows a relatively new tool being used, often without guardrails, by people who frequently are the least equipped to evaluate what they are being told—either because they are inexperienced and unwell, or simply because a professional is unavailable. Globally, only 40% of people who needed mental-health support over the past year saw a professional, with cost, time, and stigma the most cited reasons for not seeking care.

People are integrating AI into their emotional lives not as an add-on to a well-functioning health-care system, but rather as an accessible

entry point into care that has remained out of reach for most. The question is not whether AI belongs in mental-health treatment (it is already there, providing unsupervised psychological support). It is whether health leaders, employers, insurers, and AI builders take responsibility for shaping its role.

I see three reasons to be optimistic about the technology being steered in a beneficial direction, based on what the data show and on my own clinical experience.

First, AI can be harnessed to enhance access to mental-health support, acting as a bridge between a troubled individual and a complex system. For someone who cannot afford an appointment or is afraid to ask for one, a well-designed AI tool could help them name what they are feeling and point them toward appropriate care. There is certainly a need for such a tool: only 60% of respondents trust their friends and family to provide mental-health support, and nearly half of respondents with a job said that

they would not discuss psychological struggles with their employer. An initial conversation with a chatbot that is private and judgment-free could be the difference between seeking help and staying silent.

Second, AI could save clinicians and caregivers time—a scarce resource. One of the most cited causes of burnout among health professionals is the heavy administrative load. And burnout often has cascading effects, degrading the quality of every interaction with patients. The development of responsible AI tools that can absorb documentation tasks would free clinicians to focus more on human connection, which is one of the strongest protective factors with regard to mental health.

Lastly, AI could serve as a pattern-finder. As the survey shows, many people already sense that their mental health is shaped by many overlapping factors, including work, finances, loneliness, screen time, and sleep. AI systems could help users—and the health systems supporting them—better identify and address these pressures by connecting them with the right kind of help sooner.

Of course, using AI in mental-health interventions requires robust safety features. AI-powered tools should be built and governed to disclose clearly what they can and cannot do, and to escalate to a qualified human whenever risk is detected. Moreover, clinicians and patients must be involved in these tools' development from the beginning, rather than being asked for feedback on finished products. Anything less could compound the very crisis these tools seek to address.

AI will not wait for health-related institutions to catch up. As more people with psychological problems turn to chatbots instead of calling a doctor, it becomes even more important that the tools at their disposal do more good than harm.

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