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Kuwait Rewrites the Rules of Influence

New media framework puts vloggers, bloggers and social-media influencers under clearer rules

The Times Kuwait Report

The era when an influencer could argue that "it's only Instagram" or "I'm just a blogger" is rapidly disappearing. Kuwait is updating its media framework to reflect a reality that has changed dramatically in recent years: a smartphone can now be a newspaper, television channel, advertising agency, production studio and personal broadcasting platform all at the same time.

The new framework brings professional digital activity into a more clearly defined regulatory environment, while separate digital-commerce legislation establishes obligations around online advertising and the use of influencers to promote products and services.

For Kuwait's growing army of TikTok creators, YouTubers, Instagram influencers, bloggers, vloggers and online publishers, the message is becoming increasingly clear: having a large digital following comes with responsibilities.

The new rules do not mean that every person who posts a photograph, makes a Reel or comments on an issue suddenly

becomes a licensed journalist. There remains an important distinction between ordinary personal use of social media and professional media activity. The issue arises when an account develops into a professional operation producing content systematically, generating income, carrying advertising or functioning in practice as a media platform.

That distinction is particularly important for creators who have built businesses around their online personalities.

Influencers are now part of the commercial equation

Perhaps the biggest change for influencers comes from Kuwait's new Digital Commerce Law. The legislation specifically addresses the use of influencers in commercial promotion. Kuwait's Decree-Law No. 10 of 2026 on Digital Commerce has already been enacted and contains provisions relevant to influencers and digital advertising.

It is separate from the new Media Regulation draft. Where influencers are used to promote products or services, businesses must maintain records and agreements relating to the influencer for at least five years. Payments to influencers must also be made through reliable payment methods consistent with anti-money-laundering requirements and banking regulations.

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Finland's 'Infrastructure of Happiness' and a New Chapter in Kuwait Relations

• Finnish Deputy Foreign Minister and Under-Secretary of State for International Trade Jarno Syrjälä will make a two-day visit to Kuwait from Sept 26 to 28. • Finnish Ambassador Juha Mustonen says education, innovation, resilience and trusted partnerships are bringing Finland and Kuwait closer

By Reaven D'Souza
Executive Managing Editor

Happiness, in Finland, is not something to chase. It is something to build. That philosophy may offer one of the most intriguing explanations for why Finland has once again been named the world's happiest country for the ninth consecutive year in the 2026 World Happiness Report. Finland's approach describes this achievement as the result of an "infrastructure of happiness": a society shaped around trust, education, equality, nature, work-life balance, security and the freedom to make meaningful choices.

At the heart of this philosophy is the Finnish sauna, a tradition that offers more than relaxation. It provides a space to step away from daily pressures, disconnect from the outside world and reconnect with oneself and others.

This distinctly Finnish understanding of well-being offers an interesting window into a country whose relationship with Kuwait is now entering a broader and more ambitious phase.

From education and lifelong learning to digital transformation, cybersecurity, critical infrastructure, investment and tourism, Finland and Kuwait are exploring new areas of cooperation while building on more than five decades of diplomatic relations.

Speaking to The Times Kuwait, Finnish non-resident Ambassador to Kuwait based in Doha H.E. Juha Mustonen said the upcoming visit of Finnish Deputy Foreign Minister and Under-Secretary of State for International Trade Jarno Syrjälä reflects the growing momentum in bilateral relations and the desire to translate longstanding friendship into new areas of practical cooperation.

A relationship built on shared principles

Finland and Kuwait established diplomatic relations in 1969, and Ambassador Mustonen describes the relationship as one founded on mutual respect, trust and friendship. He also points to 1990 as a defining moment, when Finland supported Kuwait's sovereignty following the Iraqi invasion through international legal frameworks and diplomatic engagement.

Following Kuwait's liberation, Finland contributed to the country's recovery and environmental rehabilitation, while bilateral cooperation gradually expanded into education, health, technology and innovation.

Today, the relationship is broadening further. "While trade and education remain important pillars of our relationship, we are increasingly seeing cooperation expand into areas such as security, technology, innovation, resilience and investment," Mustonen said. He believes the timing is particularly relevant as Kuwait pursues its Vision 2035 agenda while Finland brings expertise in many of the sectors supporting that transformation.

Education: the foundation of Finland's success

Education remains one of the strongest bridges between the two countries. Finland's education experience, according to Mustonen, aligns closely with Kuwait Vision 2035, particularly its emphasis on creativity, lifelong learning and human capital development.

"Finland prioritizes problem-solving, innovation and student-centered education," he said, noting that these approaches can help prepare young people for the skills required in a rapidly changing economy. The Finnish model also places importance on cooperation between educational institutions, government and industry. This ecosystem approach, he said, can help connect education, innovation and workforce requirements.

Mustonen sees considerable scope for cooperation beyond the Finnish early childhood education methods that have already established a presence in Kuwait. Potential areas include teacher training, professional development, curriculum modernization, digital learning, vocational education and closer links between education and industry.

He also sees opportunities for stronger university and research partnerships, student exchanges, researcher mobility and joint academic programmes. "The human dimension is equally important," he said, emphasizing that people-to-people connections can create lasting relationships, mutual understanding and trust.

Technology must serve people

As both countries pursue digital transformation, the Ambassador sees considerable potential for cooperation in

artificial intelligence, educational technology, digital skills and lifelong learning. Finnish expertise in educational technology, AI-enabled learning, cybersecurity education and workforce reskilling could complement Kuwait's digital transformation agenda, he said.

But Finland's experience also offers a broader lesson: technology itself is not the answer. "Technology alone does not transform education," Mustonen said. Its real impact comes when it empowers teachers, engages learners and develops skills relevant to the future.

He stressed that AI and digital tools should be viewed as enablers rather than ends in themselves, with successful education systems continuing to emphasize teacher capacity, critical thinking, creativity and lifelong learning.

From security to resilience

Another emerging area of cooperation is comprehensive security and national resilience. inland's approach is based on the understanding that resilience is a collective responsibility involving government, the private sector, academia and citizens.

For Kuwait, Mustonen identifies preparedness, critical infrastructure protection, cybersecurity and continuity of essential services as areas where cooperation could be particularly relevant.

"Resilience is not only about security agencies," he said. "It is about building trust, strong public-private partnerships and a culture of shared responsibility." The Finnish approach also recognizes that resilience depends on the ability to anticipate, respond to and recover from disruptions.

At the same time, Mustonen stresses that cooperation should be a two-way exchange. Recent developments in the Middle East, he noted, have highlighted Kuwait's own experience in operating in a complex and rapidly changing regional environment, including its agility, crisis management, diplomacy and ability to maintain continuity amid uncertainty.

Critical infrastructure at the centre

Among the areas being explored are telecommunications, cybersecurity, security of supply, civil protection and critical infrastructure. Mustonen sees particular immediate momentum around critical infrastructure because it brings many of these areas together.

"Today, resilience depends not on a single technology, but on the ability to protect essential services, maintain connectivity and ensure continuity under any circumstances," he said.

The Finnish delegation accompanying the Deputy Foreign Minister includes companies and institutions with expertise in telecommunications, defence, digital security, space systems and nuclear and radiological safety. Among the Finnish companies participating are Nokia, Patria, Temet and ReOrbit."

Mustonen also highlighted the potential role of Finland's Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority (STUK), particularly in regulation, safety oversight, emergency preparedness and capacity building.

Kuwait as a gateway to the GCC

The Ambassador believes Kuwait's strategic location, regional connectivity and Vision 2035 ambitions could make the country an attractive partner for Finnish companies seeking opportunities in the wider Gulf.

He said Finland's companies have expertise that could complement Kuwait's priorities in digital transformation, economic diversification, critical infrastructure and resilience. At the investment level, the focus is currently on facilitating contacts and identifying areas of mutual interest.

Potential opportunities include innovation, digitalization, resilience and human capital development, while Finland itself offers Kuwaiti investors access to a technology and innovation ecosystem encompassing areas such as deep technology, renewable energy, digital infrastructure and advanced technologies.

Mustonen also sees opportunities for greater Kuwaiti participation in Finland's technology and startup ecosystem, particularly in AI, cybersecurity, digitalization and advanced technologies.

Tourism: discovering a different Finland

Beyond business and government-to-government cooperation, Mustonen sees tourism as an important way to strengthen people-to-people relations. Finland offers Kuwaiti travellers the Northern Lights, thousands of lakes and the Midnight Sun, but the Ambassador believes there is much more to discover.

Safety, cleanliness, sustainability, high-quality services, luxury accommodation, wellness experiences, family activities, shopping, design and Nordic cuisine all form part of the Finnish tourism proposition.

For Kuwaiti visitors accustomed to extensive international travel, Finland can offer something markedly different: space, nature, privacy and the opportunity to disconnect from everyday pressures while remaining within a modern and welcoming society.

The growing "coolcation" trend, he noted, is also creating new interest in destinations offering milder climates, clean air and natural surroundings. And perhaps this brings the story back to where it began happiness. Finland's appeal is not simply about what visitors can see. It is also about what they can experience: tranquility, nature, simplicity and time to slow down.

A new chapter in bilateral relations

For Mustonen, the current momentum in Finland–Kuwait relations is being driven by a combination of strong historical ties and shared ambitions for the future. "In an increasingly uncertain world, countries are placing greater emphasis on resilience, critical infrastructure and trusted partnerships," he said. "Finland and Kuwait share many of these priorities."

The two countries are therefore moving beyond a relationship traditionally centred on trade and education toward a wider partnership encompassing technology, innovation, investment, security and resilience.

For Mustonen, success would ultimately be measured not simply by agreements signed during a visit, but by what follows. He hopes to leave Kuwait with stronger relationships, a better understanding of each country's priorities and concrete ideas for future cooperation.

"If this visit leads to new partnerships, follow-up discussions and long-term engagement between Finnish and Kuwaiti institutions and companies," he said, "I would consider it a very successful outcome."

More than five decades after diplomatic relations were established, Finland and Kuwait appear to be looking toward a relationship shaped increasingly by knowledge, innovation, resilience and people-to-people connections.

And perhaps Finland's own experience offers an additional idea worth considering: that the strongest societies are built not only around economic or technological infrastructure, but also around the less tangible infrastructure of trust, well-being, community and human connection.

Small Transactions, Big Fines

Kuwait Tightens AML Compliance in Jewellery Sector

By Legal Counsel Suha Alsahli
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Special to The Times Kuwait

Kuwait is tightening its scrutiny of money-laundering risks in the precious-metals and jewelry sector, with businesses being urged to look beyond individual transaction values and pay closer attention to patterns of repeated purchases.

Gold and jewelry have long been an area of concern for financial-crime regulators because they combine high value with portability, liquidity and ease of resale. Kuwait's risk assessments have identified the precious-metals sector as particularly vulnerable to money-laundering risks, placing greater emphasis on effective anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing (AML/CFT) controls.

Under current Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI) procedures, jewelry businesses are required to conduct basic customer due diligence for sales and purchases. Transactions exceeding KD 3,000 are subject to additional documentary requirements, while enhanced due diligence may be required in certain higher-risk circumstances. However, the regulatory focus is increasingly extending beyond the value of a single transaction.

MOCI's updated 2026 compliance procedures identify small, repeated transactions conducted within close periods of time as a suspicious indicator. The Ministry's July 2026 guidance on suspicious transaction reporting also highlights multiple purchases over a short period as conduct requiring closer scrutiny.

For example, a customer may purchase jewelry worth KD 900, return a few days later to make a KD 1,200 purchase and then spend another KD 850 the following week. While none of these transactions individually reaches the KD 3,000 threshold, the transactions warrant examination and must be viewed collectively.

A suspicious indicator, however, does not automatically mean that money laundering has taken place or that a suspicious transaction report must be filed. It requires the business to examine the circumstances and assess whether there are reasonable grounds for suspicion. Where such grounds exist, the transaction must be reported to the Kuwait Financial Intelligence Unit (KwFIU) within two working days.

Potential KD 5,000 fine

The consequences of failing to identify and report suspicious activity can be significant. Under MOCI procedures, where an inspector determines that suspicious activity should have been reported but was not reported within the required period, the business may face a KD 5,000 fine.

For jewelry businesses, one of the key challenges is determining what constitutes a pattern of "repeated" transactions or how short a period must be before transactions are considered sufficiently connected to warrant further examination.

The regulations do not prescribe a fixed number of transactions or a specific number of days. Instead, businesses are expected to apply a risk-based approach and develop a clear and defensible methodology for identifying, reviewing and escalating potentially suspicious activity.

Risk-based approach

Another important consideration is that the AML/CFT framework does not provide a blanket exemption based on the size or ownership structure of a jewelry business. While the way compliance controls are implemented can be proportionate to the nature, scale and complexity of the business, the underlying AML/CFT obligations continue to apply in full.

For jewelry businesses, the compliance challenge in 2026 is therefore no longer limited to determining whether a customer's purchase crosses the KD 3,000 threshold. Businesses must now be able to recognize when several apparently ordinary transactions, considered together, form a pattern requiring examination. They must also be able to demonstrate that they have a documented and rational process for determining when such activity requires examination and/or escalation.

In a sector where relatively modest purchases can take on regulatory significance when viewed collectively, effective transaction monitoring is becoming an increasingly important part of AML compliance and a key safeguard against potentially costly regulatory action.

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China marks 77th National Day in Kuwait, celebrates 55 years of friendship

National Day reception highlights China-Kuwait ties, shared ambitions and a growing partnership under Vision 2035



The Times Kuwait Report

The colours, traditions and spirit of China were on display in Kuwait as the Chinese Embassy hosted a reception marking the 77th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China, bringing together senior Kuwaiti officials, diplomats, business leaders and friends of China to celebrate a relationship that has grown steadily over more than five decades.

The reception, attended by Kuwait's Minister of Electricity, Water and Renewable Energy Dr. Sabeeh Al-Mukhaizeem and other distinguished guests, was not only a celebration of China's National Day but also an occasion to reflect on the close friendship between China and Kuwait.

Welcoming guests, Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait Yang Xin thanked Kuwaitis and friends from different sectors for their continued support of China and their contribution to strengthening the friendship between the two countries.

A celebration with a wider message

The 77th National Day comes at an important moment for China as the country enters the 15th Five-Year Plan period. In his address, Ambassador Yang highlighted China's continued economic development, noting that its GDP grew by 4.7 percent year-on-year in the first half of the year, with advanced manufacturing, the digital-intelligent economy and modern services accounting for more than 40 percent of the growth.

For guests at the Kuwait reception, however, the evening was also about experiencing the human side of a relationship that has increasingly extended beyond government and diplomacy.

55 years of China-Kuwait friendship

This year carries particular significance for both countries as China and Kuwait celebrate 55 years of diplomatic relations. The ambassador described the relationship as one built on mutual respect, equality and shared success, noting that cooperation has expanded across trade, infrastructure, energy, science and technology and continues to deliver benefits to people in both countries.

The anniversary provides an opportunity to look back at how dramatically the relationship has evolved. What began as a formal diplomatic partnership has developed into a broad relationship involving government institutions, companies, investors, universities and people-to-people exchanges.

Where Belt and Road meets Vision 2035

One of the most important dimensions of the relationship is the potential alignment between China's Belt and Road Initiative and Kuwait's Vision 2035 development agenda. For Kuwait, the partnership comes at a time when the country is seeking to diversify its economy, strengthen its infrastructure and develop its position as a regional trade and logistics hub.

For China, Kuwait's strategic location and development ambitions create opportunities for deeper cooperation in infrastructure, energy, technology, logistics and investment. The emphasis is increasingly shifting from simply building projects to creating long-term economic connections that can generate opportunities for businesses and communities.

China calls for peace in the region

The National Day reception also came against the backdrop of continuing uncertainty in the Middle East and Gulf. In his address, Ambassador Yang said China remains committed to easing tensions through dialogue and called for a political settlement and a permanent, comprehensive ceasefire, while stressing the importance of respecting the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of countries in the region.

He also emphasized the need to protect personnel, facilities and maritime shipping lanes, and said China was ready to work with Kuwait and other countries to contribute to stability and peace in the region.

Looking ahead

As China and Kuwait mark 55 years of diplomatic relations, the two countries are looking toward a relationship that is broader than ever. The Chinese Embassy's National Day celebration therefore carried two messages pride in China's journey over the past 77 years and confidence in the future of its partnership with Kuwait. Ambassador Yang said China was eager to work with Kuwait to implement the understandings reached by the two countries' leaders and take the partnership toward a "broader and brighter future."

For Kuwait and China, the next chapter is likely to be shaped by the same themes that have brought the relationship this far trade, investment, infrastructure, technology, culture and, above all, the growing connections between their people.

China and Kuwait celebrate 55 years through music, heritage and cultural exchange

A night of music, traditional arts and shared stories highlights the people-to-people ties behind a five-decade friendship

The Times Kuwait Report

Fifty-five years of friendship between Kuwait and China came alive through music, art and cultural traditions, as people from both countries gathered to celebrate a relationship that has grown far beyond diplomacy and official agreements.

The cultural celebration brought together Chinese and Kuwaiti traditions in an atmosphere of music, heritage and interaction, offering a reminder that some of the strongest bonds between countries are built not in conference rooms, but through the everyday connections between their people. The event highlighted the growing importance of cultural diplomacy in Kuwait-China relations, with performances and traditional artistic expressions providing audiences with an opportunity to discover the similarities and differences between the two cultures.

From diplomacy to people-to-people friendship

China and Kuwait established diplomatic relations on March 22, 1971, making Kuwait the first Gulf Arab state to establish formal diplomatic ties with China. Over the past 55 years, the relationship has developed across politics, trade, investment, healthcare, education and infrastructure. But increasingly, cultural and people-to-people exchanges have become an important part of that relationship. Chinese Ambassador to Kuwait Yang Xin has repeatedly emphasized the importance of these human connections, noting that the relationship between the two countries is not defined only by government-to-government cooperation, but also by the growing familiarity and friendship between their peoples.

Music took center stage during the cultural celebration, bringing together artistic traditions from Kuwait and China. Traditional performances offered a glimpse into the cultural heritage of both countries while creating a relaxed setting in which audiences could experience each other's traditions. It was a fitting way to mark 55 years of diplomatic relations. While the two countries are separated by thousands of kilometres and have very different historical and cultural backgrounds, music, food, art and traditional celebrations have provided simple and meaningful ways for people to connect. Recent cultural initiatives in

Kuwait have increasingly focused on creating such opportunities for interaction. A major development in this area was the opening in Kuwait in 2025 of the first Chinese Cultural Center in the Gulf region.

Located in Salmiya, the center has become a platform for Chinese language courses, traditional arts, exhibitions, film screenings, culinary activities, music and other cultural programmes. The center had already been operating on a trial basis since 2023, giving people in Kuwait opportunities to learn more about Chinese culture and contemporary China. Chinese and Kuwaiti performers have also shared the stage at events, symbolizing the two-way nature of cultural exchange.

A relationship people can experience

For many people in Kuwait, China is no longer a distant country known only through trade or international headlines. Chinese restaurants, products, technology and businesses are now part of everyday life, while increasing numbers of Kuwaitis are travelling to China for tourism, education and business.

Direct air connectivity and China's visa-free policy for Kuwaiti citizens have also helped make travel and personal exchanges easier. At the same time, more Chinese visitors are discovering Kuwait and its culture. Healthcare provides another particularly personal link. Chinese medical teams have been serving in Kuwait for five decades, with the Chinese Embassy saying the teams have provided medical services to more than one million residents.

Shared memories, shared future

The cultural celebrations come at a significant moment in the relationship. Kuwait and China have built a partnership that has weathered major international changes, while maintaining close political and economic engagement. The relationship was elevated to a strategic partnership in 2018, and cooperation today extends to major infrastructure projects, trade, investment, technology, healthcare, education and culture. But the anniversary celebrations also underline a simpler message: strong international relationships ultimately depend on people knowing, understanding and appreciating one another.

After 55 years, the Kuwait-China relationship is increasingly being experienced not only through agreements and projects, but through music played on a shared stage, cultural traditions discovered by new audiences and friendships formed between ordinary people.

UK-GCC Strategic Dialogue to open in London after landmark trade deal

Guildhall event to bring together senior government, investment and business leaders from Britain and Gulf states

The Times Kuwait Report

Senior government officials, sovereign investors and business leaders from the United Kingdom and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states will gather at London's historic Guildhall on October 20 for the UK-GCC Strategic Dialogue, the first major business forum of its scale since the conclusion of the landmark UK-GCC Free Trade Agreement in May.

Organized by The Business Year, the dialogue is expected to focus on translating the new trade framework into investment partnerships, expanded market access and stronger commercial ties between Britain and the six GCC states, including Kuwait.

The UK-GCC agreement, concluded on May 20, 2026, is expected to remove an estimated £580 million in duties annually on current UK exports to GCC markets once fully implemented. The British government estimates that the agreement could increase bilateral trade by 19.8 percent, while providing greater certainty for services, investment and digital trade.

Qatar joins as institutional partner

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry of Qatar has joined the Strategic Dialogue as an Institutional Partner. It joins a group of strategic partners that includes UK Export Finance, the City of London Corporation, Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority, TheCityUK and TechUK. The event will be held under the high patronage of the GCC Secretariat.

Senior Gulf and UK participation

The speaker lineup includes GCC Secretary General H.E. Jassem Mohamed Albudaiwi, Lord Mayor of London Dame Susan Langley, Revolut Chairman Martin Gilbert, Qatar Free Zones Authority CEO Sheikh Mohammed bin Hamad bin Faisal Al-Thani, Digital Cooperation Organization Secretary General H.E. Deemah Al-Yahya, Invest Oman CEO Nasser Al Kindi, Muscat Stock Exchange CEO Haitham Al Salmi and Markaz CEO Ali Khalil.

Nicola Watkinson of TheCityUK is also scheduled to participate, alongside senior representatives from Gulf economic authorities, free zones, financial institutions and technology companies. Carlos Martínez, CEO of The Business Year, said the conclusion of the UK-GCC Free Trade Agreement had opened a new phase in economic relations between Britain and the Gulf.

He said the dialogue would bring together the governments involved in negotiating the agreement, sovereign investors and companies expected to capitalize on the opportunities created by the new framework.

Kuwait participation

Kuwait has a significant presence in the initiative. The Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority is among the Strategic Partners, while the Kuwait Banking Association is a Platinum Sponsor.

Markaz and Zain Group are among the Gold Sponsors, while KNET is a Bronze Sponsor. Their participation reflects the growing role of Kuwaiti financial and technology institutions in UK-Gulf economic engagement.

Focus on investment and new opportunities

The one-day dialogue will focus on bilateral investment ties, trade opportunities and high-level networking, bringing together decision-makers from government, sovereign wealth and investment institutions, financial services and technology.

The UK-GCC Free Trade Agreement covers areas including goods, services, investment, digital trade, customs procedures and business mobility. The British government said the agreement is expected to strengthen market access and reduce barriers for companies operating between the two regions.

UK-GCC trade was valued at £53 billion in 2025, according to UK government figures. The GCC is consequently an important trading partner for Britain, while Gulf investment continues to play a significant role across sectors including infrastructure, finance, technology and energy.

The October 20 dialogue is therefore expected to provide an early platform for businesses and investors to examine how the new trade agreement can translate into concrete commercial partnerships and investment opportunities across the UK and Gulf markets.

Kuwait denies October 1 transit flight restart

The Times Kuwait Report

Passengers hoping to use Kuwait International Airport as a transit hub from October 1 will have to wait, as Kuwait's Civil Aviation Authority has denied reports that transit flight operations are set to resume on that date.

The authority said reports circulating about the launch of transit flights from October 1 were inaccurate and stressed that no airline operating from Kuwait International Airport had been officially notified of any decision to begin such services.

Abdullah Al-Rajhi, official spokesperson for the Public Authority for Civil Aviation, urged airlines to check with the authority before announcing new services, schedules or operational arrangements.

The clarification is particularly important for passengers who may have already made travel plans based on reports of transit services restarting next month. The authority advised travellers to rely only on information confirmed through official channels.

Al-Rajhi also criticised the circulation of unverified operational announcements, noting that inaccurate information can create confusion among passengers and the wider public. The authority said necessary measures would be taken against the concerned company in accordance with applicable regulations.

For now, there is no officially approved October 1 date for the resumption of transit flights through Kuwait International Airport. The Civil Aviation Authority said that any decision to introduce or resume transit operations will be announced through its approved communication channels.

Kuwait's Economic Courts Law to boost investor confidence, speed up commercial disputes

Specialized circuits, settlement procedures and digital litigation aim to strengthen Kuwait's economic justice system

The Times Kuwait Report

Kuwait's new Economic Courts Law is set to introduce a specialized judicial framework for economic, commercial and investment disputes, with the aim of accelerating litigation, improving enforcement and strengthening investor confidence in the country's legal and business environment.

Issued in August 2026, the law is scheduled to take effect in October 2027. It establishes specialized economic circuits at the Court of First Instance, Court of Appeal and Court of Cassation, supported by a dedicated technical office with specialized expertise.

The reform is designed to address delays in commercial disputes while adapting Kuwait's judicial system to increasingly complex financial transactions and the growing use of digital technologies.

Faster resolution of commercial disputes

Under the new system, a Case Preparation Office will review lawsuits and supporting documents before cases reach the court, identify missing requirements and facilitate the exchange of memoranda between the parties.

The law also regulates procedural and appeal deadlines to help prevent unnecessary delays and shorten the overall duration of economic disputes. Minister of Justice Nasser Al-Sumait said the legislation represents a major development in Kuwait's economic justice system, with faster dispute resolution, improved enforcement procedures and expanded electronic litigation expected to strengthen contract enforcement and confidence in the country's investment environment.

Settlement before litigation

A major feature of the law is the introduction of a settlement and reconciliation process before judicial proceedings. Where an agreement is reached, the settlement record will have the force of an enforceable instrument, allowing disputes to be resolved without going through a lengthy court process.

The mechanism is intended to reduce litigation costs, preserve commercial relationships and ease pressure on the courts.

Digital litigation becomes central

Digital transformation is another key element of the new system. The law provides for an electronic platform covering litigation and enforcement procedures, digital case files and a database of published judgments and judicial principles.

The framework is also expected to expand electronic notifications, digital procedures and other technology-based court services, reducing paperwork and improving access to the judicial process. The legislation places particular emphasis on the effective enforcement of economic judgments.

A specialized enforcement department will be established and electronically connected with relevant government and financial authorities. The system will also introduce updated procedures for asset seizure and electronic auctions. The objective is to ensure that court judgments are not only issued more quickly but are also implemented efficiently.

Investor confidence

Business and legal specialists have welcomed the move toward greater judicial specialization, noting that the speed and predictability of dispute resolution are important considerations for companies and investors.

Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry Director General Rabah Al-Rabah said efficient economic justice and effective enforcement are important to strengthening the business and investment environment. He noted that prolonged commercial disputes can delay projects, tie up capital and increase costs for companies, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises.

Legal experts have also highlighted the importance of having judges and technical specialists familiar with financial instruments, commercial transactions, investment disputes, fraud, financial crime and money laundering.

Part of wider economic reform

The new economic court framework forms part of Kuwait's broader efforts to modernize its legal and economic infrastructure and improve the country's competitiveness. Specialists have described efficient commercial justice as an important component of the investment ecosystem, arguing that faster dispute resolution can reduce legal uncertainty, lower transaction risks and allow capital tied up in prolonged disputes to return more quickly to productive economic activity.

However, experts have stressed that the effectiveness of the reform will ultimately depend on implementation, including the issuance of clear executive regulations, adequate training for judges and specialists, and the efficiency of the new electronic and enforcement systems.

The Ministry of Justice is expected to issue the executive regulations by October 1, 2027, providing a transition period for preparing judges, experts and other personnel before the law comes into force.

The Times Kuwait joins global media in World News Day 2026 campaign

The Times Kuwait is joining news organisations from around the world in World News Day 2026, reaffirming its commitment to fact-based journalism, trusted news and responsible reporting.

The Times Kuwait is among the media organisations featured as supporters of this year's global World News Day campaign, which will be observed on September 28, 2026, with campaign activities running from September 25 to October 2.

The 2026 campaign carries the message "#ChooseTrustedJournalism", calling attention to the importance of credible, fact-based journalism at a time when audiences are confronted with an unprecedented volume of information, misinformation and competing narratives.

World News Day is an annual global newsroom campaign dedicated to highlighting the role of journalism in providing reliable information and strengthening public understanding. The initiative is presented by the World Editors Forum, WAN-IFRA, Project Kontinuum and the Canadian Journalism Foundation.

According to the organisers, more than 1,000 publishers in 108 countries and 17 languages participated in World News Day in 2025. For 2026, the campaign has expanded its multilingual resources to more than 20 languages and introduced measures to track its global reach.

For The Times Kuwait, participation in the campaign underlines the newspaper's continuing focus on credible journalism and its role in keeping Kuwait's diverse community informed on developments in Kuwait, the region and the wider world.

With its print and digital platforms, The Times Kuwait has developed a growing presence among English-language news audiences in Kuwait. Its digital operation provides continuous news updates alongside its print edition, features, interviews, opinion pieces and community coverage.

The campaign also coincides deliberately with the United Nations' Universal Day for Access to Information, highlighting the connection between access to reliable information and the public's ability to understand events and make informed decisions.

As The Times Kuwait joins fellow publishers across continents in the 2026 campaign, its participation represents a commitment to the principles at the heart of journalism -- accuracy, verification, context, accountability and the responsibility to inform.

Kuwait Municipality steps up campaign against construction waste

A pile of rubble left outside a house or construction site may seem like a minor inconvenience, but across Kuwait, improperly dumped construction waste can quickly become a problem for pedestrians, motorists, neighbouring properties and the appearance of public spaces.

With this in mind, Kuwait Municipality has launched its 'Build, Don't Destroy' awareness campaign, urging property owners and contractors to take responsibility for construction, demolition and renovation waste and ensure it reaches designated disposal sites.

The campaign is part of the Municipality's wider efforts to improve compliance with construction regulations, protect public areas and prevent debris from accumulating on roads, squares and other unauthorised locations.

A cleaner construction site starts with planning

Construction and renovation work inevitably produces waste. The Municipality's message is that dealing with that waste should be part of the job not something left for others to handle later.

Property owners and contractors are being reminded to arrange for rubble and other construction material to be transported to approved disposal locations instead of leaving it outside properties or on public land.

Municipal inspection teams across Kuwait's six governorates are conducting regular field visits to check construction sites and monitor compliance. Violations can result in fines and other penalties under the applicable regulations.

34 safety warnings in Hawalli

The campaign is already producing action on the ground. Kuwait Municipality's Safety Department in Hawalli Governorate has issued 34 safety warnings as part of the ongoing campaign, focusing on compliance with rules governing construction, demolition and restoration work.

The campaign also highlights the importance of protecting neighbouring properties during construction. Municipal teams inspect plots and houses under development to ensure that work is carried out safely and that required precautions are followed.

More than an environmental issue

The Municipality's campaign is not only about keeping streets looking clean. Construction debris dumped in public areas can obstruct roads and pedestrian movement, create safety hazards and affect neighbouring properties. Removing such waste also places an additional burden on municipal services.

By encouraging owners and contractors to manage waste properly from the beginning, the Municipality hopes to reduce violations while creating greater awareness of the responsibilities that come with construction and renovation.

Under Kuwait's municipal regulations, property owners are responsible for ensuring that rubble and construction waste generated by work on their properties does not accumulate outside the premises.

Kuwait turns to AI cameras to help police identify wanted persons and fight crime

Kuwait is stepping up its use of artificial intelligence in policing, with smart cameras and connected security systems being deployed to help authorities identify wanted persons, detect vehicles and respond more quickly when security alerts are triggered.

The move is part of a broader effort by the Ministry of Interior to modernize the country's security infrastructure and connect cameras installed at government buildings and commercial facilities to a centralized security network.

Officials say the technology is already making a difference in the field. Smart cameras have helped security personnel locate wanted individuals, while mobile patrol units equipped with facial-recognition technology can alert operations rooms when a wanted person or vehicle is detected.

From cameras to real-time alerts

The new generation of surveillance is designed to do more than simply record what happens. According to First Lieutenant Engineer Afrah Al-Foudari of the Ministry's Quality Management Department, smart patrol cameras can use facial recognition to identify wanted individuals and send an immediate alert to the operations room. This allows officers to act without waiting for footage to be reviewed manually.

The smart patrols are also being used during security campaigns and inspection operations, bringing technology directly into the field. The Ministry is gradually connecting surveillance systems at government facilities and major commercial locations to its central security network. Hospitals, mosques and other places of worship are among the facilities being considered for integration.

A wider security network

The initiative forms part of Kuwait's broader push to use technology and artificial intelligence in public safety. Kuwait's Ministry of Interior has previously introduced smart patrol vehicles equipped with mobile cameras, facial recognition, licence-plate recognition and mobile fingerprint scanners, with direct links to ministry databases.

The aim is to give officers information in real time and reduce the time needed to identify people or vehicles that trigger security alerts.

Privacy remains part of the equation

With greater use of surveillance technology comes greater emphasis on how recordings are handled. The Ministry has stressed that surveillance footage is protected by law and that unauthorized disclosure or leaking of recordings can result in criminal penalties. Under the rules outlined by officials, recordings must generally be retained for at least 120 days.

The legislation also sets boundaries on where cameras can be installed. Surveillance is prohibited in areas where filming would infringe personal privacy, including restrooms, changing rooms, massage rooms and certain women's facilities.

Facilities covered by the law must also display signs informing people that surveillance cameras are operating. The regulations do not require citizens or residents to install cameras inside their homes or vehicles. People may voluntarily install cameras to protect their property, but they must ensure that the equipment does not intrude into the privacy of neighbouring properties.

The Ministry says there are 39 categories of establishments covered by the surveillance-camera regulations, including government buildings, commercial complexes, hotels, exchange companies, jewellery shops and fuel stations.

Technology to keep evolving

Kuwait is also planning regular upgrades to its surveillance infrastructure. Officials said cameras are being renewed approximately every five years as newer technologies become available, including systems incorporating artificial intelligence. The broader direction is clear: Kuwait's security network is moving from conventional surveillance towards systems capable of analysing images, recognizing faces and vehicle plates, and alerting security personnel in real time.

Kuwait and France celebrate 65 years of cultural and human ties

Kuwait and France are marking 65 years of diplomatic relations with a renewed focus on the people-to-people, cultural, educational and scientific ties that have brought the two countries closer over the decades.

French Ambassador to Kuwait H.E. Olivier Gauvin highlighted the depth of these longstanding connections on Wednesday during the launch of the French Institute in Kuwait's cultural programme for the second half of 2026.

The Ambassador said the strength of Kuwait-France relations goes beyond official and strategic cooperation, pointing to the human, educational and scientific exchanges that have developed between the two countries across generations.

He also highlighted the continuing cooperation between the French Institute in Kuwait and the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL), which has helped create opportunities for artists, students and cultural institutions from both countries to engage and collaborate.

French Institute Director Soraya Saa outlined an expanded programme for the coming months, including new spaces designed to encourage creativity and cultural exchange. These include studios for emerging artists, Gallery 41, dedicated to contemporary art exhibitions, and Club France, which will offer programmes covering cinema, literature and digital culture.

The cultural calendar will feature an exhibition by Kuwaiti artist Maryam Al-Salem, along with a musical concert scheduled for October 13 at the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre.

The French Institute will also take part in French Week, being held at Al-Asima Mall from October 28 to 31. The event will showcase French contributions and expertise in areas ranging from education and culture to culinary arts, automotive and technology.

The programme will continue with the Institute's participation in the Kuwait International Book Fair before culminating in December with a special France-Kuwait Diwaniya. The event will be held simultaneously in Paris and Kuwait in cooperation with the Arab World Institute, providing a symbolic conclusion to a year of activities celebrating the 65th anniversary of diplomatic relations.

The anniversary programme reflects the increasingly broad nature of Kuwait-France ties, with cultural and human exchange continuing to complement the two countries' longstanding political and strategic partnership.

Vietnam highlights Kuwait partnership, targets $12 billion trade by 2030

Vietnam aims to expand trade with Kuwait to $12 billion by 2030 as the two countries deepen their strategic partnership across energy, food security, investment, digital transformation, logistics, education and tourism.

The Times Kuwait Report

The Vietnamese Embassy in Kuwait hosted a reception to mark the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Vietnam and Kuwait and Vietnam's 81st National Day, highlighting the longstanding friendship between the two countries and their growing strategic partnership. The event was attended by Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Sheikh Hamad Suleiman Al-Mishaan, along with ambassadors, diplomats, representatives of government bodies and companies, and members of the Vietnamese community.

Speaking at the reception, the Ambassador of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to Kuwait said his country aims to increase bilateral trade with Kuwait to $12 billion by 2030, noting that the two countries have broad opportunities to strengthen cooperation in energy, food security, digital transformation, finance, logistics, education and tourism.

The ambassador said Kuwait was the first Gulf country to establish diplomatic relations with Vietnam in January 1976. He highlighted Kuwait's support for the Vietnamese people during the war years and its contribution to reconstruction and development efforts following the establishment of peace.

He also expressed appreciation for loans provided by the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development to support infrastructure and economic and social development projects in several Vietnamese provinces, as well as Kuwait's donation of 600,000 vaccine doses during the COVID-19 pandemic. He said these contributions reflected a friendship strengthened through concrete actions over five decades.

The ambassador said the official visit of Vietnam's Prime Minister to Kuwait in November 2025 marked a historic milestone, during which the two countries elevated their relations to a strategic partnership.

He noted that Kuwait is the largest Middle Eastern investor in Vietnam, with investments exceeding $3.5 billion, mainly concentrated in the Nghi Son Refinery and Petrochemical Complex.

Kuwait is also Vietnam's largest trading partner in the Middle East and Africa, with annual bilateral trade ranging between $7 billion and $7.5 billion over the past three years. Looking ahead, the ambassador said the two countries have significant scope to build on their existing partnership, particularly in sectors including energy, food security, digital transformation, finance, logistics, education and tourism, as they work toward the $12 billion trade target by 2030.

Speaking about Vietnam's National Day, the ambassador recalled President Ho Chi Minh's declaration establishing the Democratic Republic of Vietnam on September 2, 1945, and outlined the country's path of independence, reunification and development. He said Vietnam's economy grew by 8.02 percent in 2025, while the country attracted nearly $41 billion in registered foreign direct investment during the first eight months of 2026, an increase of more than 55 percent compared with the same period last year.

The ambassador concluded by emphasizing that Kuwait-Vietnam relations are based on mutual trust, friendship and shared interests, and expressed his hope for further growth and prosperity in the strategic partnership between the two countries.

African diplomatic corps bids farewell to Malawi, Tanzania ambassadors

The Times Kuwait Report

The African diplomatic community in Kuwait came together to bid a warm farewell to the ambassadors of Malawi and Tanzania, marking the end of their diplomatic assignments and celebrating the friendships and partnerships they built during their years in the country.

The farewell reception was hosted by the Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps and Ambassador of the Comoros, H.E. Dr. El-Anrif Said Hassane, in honour of Malawi Ambassador H.E. Younos Abdul Karim and Tanzania Ambassador H.E. Said Hussein Masourou.

The gathering was attended by Minister Plenipotentiary Khaled Al-Wazzan, representing the Assistant Foreign Minister for African Affairs, Counsellor Ahmed Shannar Al-Bakheet, representing the Assistant Foreign Minister for Protocol Affairs, as well as a number of ambassadors, heads of diplomatic missions and members of the diplomatic corps. In his remarks, Ambassador Hassane praised the contributions of the two departing ambassadors, noting their efforts to strengthen relations between their respective countries and Kuwait and their active participation in the African diplomatic community. Both ambassadors were also recognised for their role in promoting cooperation and maintaining close coordination among African missions in Kuwait.

Building bridges beyond diplomacy

During their tenure, both envoys became familiar faces within Kuwait's diplomatic community, participating in meetings and initiatives aimed at strengthening Africa-Kuwait relations.

Their engagement extended beyond formal diplomatic duties, with both ambassadors contributing to African community activities and events that brought together representatives of the continent's diverse diplomatic missions.

Ambassador Abdul Karim, reflecting on his departure, spoke warmly of the friendships he had developed in Kuwait. His message underlined a sentiment often expressed by departing diplomats that while an official assignment may come to an end, the personal relationships built during those years can continue long afterwards.

Ambassador Masourou similarly spoke fondly of Kuwait, describing the country as a place that had become a second home and recalling the memories and relationships formed during his tenure.

A farewell marked by friendship

The reception reflected the close-knit nature of Kuwait's diplomatic community, where ambassadors and diplomats from different regions often come together not only for official engagements but also to mark important personal milestones.

The evening concluded with expressions of appreciation and best wishes for the two ambassadors as they begin their next assignments, along with commemorative gestures marking their service in Kuwait.

For the African diplomatic community, the farewell was therefore more than the conclusion of two diplomatic postings. It was also an opportunity to acknowledge the friendships, cooperation and shared experiences that have helped strengthen the relationship between Africa and Kuwait.

MOI urges public to stay alert around stray dogs, report gathering spots

Residents advised to keep children and elderly safe and avoid approaching or feeding stray dogs

The Ministry of Interior has urged citizens and residents to exercise caution when encountering stray dogs and to avoid approaching or attempting to chase them away, particularly in residential areas and near public facilities.

In a public safety advisory, the ministry stressed the importance of keeping children under supervision and taking extra care to protect elderly people, while avoiding areas where stray dogs gather.

The ministry also called on the public to report locations where stray dogs are found so that the relevant authorities can take the necessary measures and deal with the animals safely. Residents can report the presence or gathering of stray dogs by calling the emergency number 112, providing the exact location to help authorities respond and coordinate with the specialised agencies.

The Ministry of Interior urged everyone to cooperate with the authorities, follow preventive safety instructions and report any gatherings of stray dogs.

The ministry said public cooperation can help strengthen community safety and protect lives.

Ayurveda puts everyday wellness in focus as Indian Embassy marks 11th Ayurveda Day

Kuwait celebration explores an age-old Indian approach to healthier living, from better sleep and stress management to mindful eating

The Times Kuwait Report

What does it really mean to live well? For Ayurveda, the answer goes beyond treating an illness. It is about how we eat, sleep, move, manage stress and bring greater balance into everyday life.

That idea was at the heart of the Indian Embassy's celebration of the 11th Ayurveda Day in Kuwait on September 23, where more than 200 Ayurveda practitioners, wellness experts, representatives of Ayurveda-related organisations and members of the Indian community came together to explore the traditional Indian approach to health and wellbeing.

Held under the theme 'Ayurveda for a Healthier Tomorrow,' the programme combined expert discussions with an exhibition, healthy food displays and cultural performances, turning the occasion into more than a formal commemoration it became an opportunity to think about some of the simple choices that shape everyday health.

Looking beyond illness

Addressing the gathering, Ambassador of India to Kuwait H.E. Paramita Tripathi highlighted Ayurveda as an important part of India's traditional knowledge and healthcare heritage, while noting its growing recognition internationally.

At its core, Ayurveda places emphasis on balance between the body and mind, and between daily habits and overall wellbeing. Nutrition, routines, sleep and lifestyle are all viewed as part of maintaining health.

That philosophy has particular relevance at a time when busy schedules, sedentary lifestyles, stress and poor sleep have become familiar challenges for many people.

The programme addressed some of these very modern concerns. Dr C. Ashwin Chandra spoke on 'Ayurveda for Stress Management and Better Sleep,' looking at approaches to managing stress, improving sleep and supporting overall wellbeing.

Another presentation by Dr Gauri Bhagwat examined Ayurveda's role in preventing or managing lifestyle-related health concerns, while Roopesh Ravi discussed the broader benefits of Ayurveda and its approach to holistic wellbeing. The message running through the sessions was simple: health is not something that begins only when we fall sick. Everyday habits can play an important role in maintaining wellbeing.

A taste of healthier living

The celebration also moved beyond the lecture hall. An Ayurveda and healthy-living exhibition gave visitors an opportunity to explore Ayurvedic products and wellness practices, while healthy food stalls offered examples of nutritious preparations.For visitors, it provided a more tangible way to experience the philosophy behind Ayurveda including the connection between food, lifestyle and wellbeing.

The cultural programme added another dimension to the celebration. A Kalari-Yoga performance presented by the Centre for India Studies in collaboration with KMS Kalari brought together elements of Kalaripayattu and Yoga, showcasing traditions built around physical discipline, balance and control.

It was a reminder that India's traditional approaches to wellbeing extend well beyond medicine, encompassing movement, breathing, discipline and a broader understanding of the relationship between body and mind.

Ayurveda and India's wider wellness tradition

The Kuwait programme formed part of the global observance of the 11th Ayurveda Day. India now observes Ayurveda Day annually on September 23, following a government notification that gave the occasion a fixed date. The 2026 theme, 'Ayurveda for a Healthier Tomorrow', places preventive health, wellness and community awareness at the centre of the observance.

Ayurveda Day has also evolved into an international platform for awareness and community engagement, with activities held in countries around the world.

A bridge between tradition and modern life

For the Indian community in Kuwait, the event offered a chance to reconnect with an important part of India's cultural and health heritage. But its message reached beyond the community.

The growing interest in wellness has created space for traditional practices to be discussed alongside contemporary concerns such as stress, sleep, nutrition and preventive health. The Embassy's celebration reflected that intersection bringing an ancient Indian tradition into a very modern conversation. Ultimately, Ayurveda's appeal may lie in a deceptively simple idea: being healthy is not only about adding years to life, but about bringing greater balance and wellbeing to the years we live.

Saudi National Day celebration highlights enduring Kuwait-Saudi bonds

The Times Kuwait Report

The Saudi Embassy in Kuwait marked the Kingdom's 96th National Day on Wednesday with a celebration that placed the long-standing friendship between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia at the heart of the occasion.

The reception was attended by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, along with ministers, senior government officials, ambassadors and heads of diplomatic missions, reflecting the importance attached to the close ties between the two neighbouring countries.

Saudi Ambassador to Kuwait and Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, H.E. Prince Sultan bin Saad bin Khalid Al Saud, said the relationship between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia was built on deep-rooted brotherhood, shared history and strong bonds between the two peoples. He noted that the relationship extends well beyond formal political and economic ties, describing it as a connection shaped by generations of shared traditions, values and experiences.

For Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, the ties between the two countries have a history that stretches back well beyond the establishment of modern

diplomatic relations. The ambassador pointed to more than 150 years of historical connections, emphasising that geography has only been one part of a much broader relationship.

The occasion also provided an opportunity to reflect on Saudi Arabia's journey since the unification of the Kingdom under its founder, King Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman Al Saud.

Prince Sultan highlighted the Kingdom's continuing development and the emphasis placed on people, economic growth and infrastructure, noting that the country's transformation has been built through successive stages of planning and development. He also referred to Saudi Vision 2030, which continues to guide the Kingdom's efforts to develop human capabilities, diversify the economy and create new opportunities for its people.

Shared bonds beyond borders

The National Day reception carried a significance that went beyond a national celebration. It brought together representatives of Kuwait's leadership, government and diplomatic community in an atmosphere that reflected the close personal and historical connections between Kuwaitis and Saudis. The ambassador also expressed appreciation for the participation of Kuwait's leadership and people in the celebration, underscoring the warmth that continues to characterise relations between the two countries.

The gathering served as a reminder that Kuwait-Saudi relations are sustained not only through government-to-government cooperation, but also through family ties, shared traditions, social connections and a common history.

As Saudi Arabia celebrated its 96th National Day, the occasion in Kuwait therefore became as much a celebration of the Kingdom's national journey as it was a reflection of the enduring friendship between two neighbouring countries whose relationship has remained deeply rooted across generations.

Thailand, ACD explore stronger Asian voice from Kuwait

Thailand and the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) are looking at ways to make the pan-Asian grouping more effective in responding to the challenges facing the region and the wider world, with Kuwait playing an important role as the ACD's host.

The discussions took place during a meeting in Kuwait on September 20 between H.E. Arthayudh Srisamoot, Adviser to Thailand's Minister of Foreign Affairs, and H.E. Nasser Riden Thamer Al-Motairi, Secretary-General of the ACD. Srisamoot also visited the ACD Secretariat during his stay.

The meeting comes as the ACD prepares to mark its 25th anniversary in 2027, providing an opportunity for its members to look at how the dialogue can evolve and respond more effectively to a rapidly changing international environment.

A central theme of the discussions was the ambition to give Asia a stronger collective voice. Thailand and the ACD leadership discussed ways of strengthening the framework so that it can better address common regional and global challenges and more clearly reflect the perspectives of Asian countries. Thailand's Ambassador to Kuwait, H.E. Songchai Chaipatiyut, and Pornpimol Sugandhavanija, Deputy Director-General of Thailand's Department of International Economic Affairs, also took part in the discussion.

Building cooperation across Asia

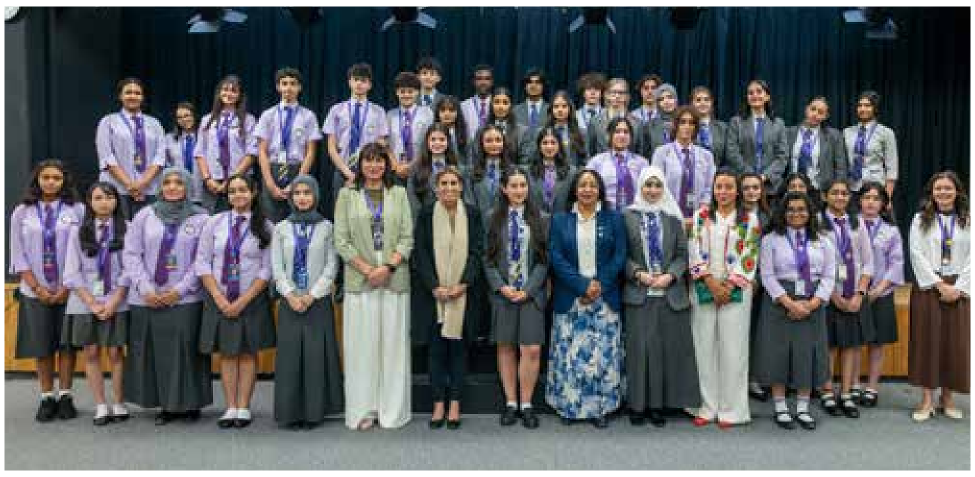
The ACD was established in 2002 as an Asia-wide platform designed to bring countries together for dialogue and practical cooperation. Its agenda covers a broad range of areas, including economic cooperation, connectivity, energy and water security, food security, human development and sustainable development.

The grouping has also stressed that its role is complementary to existing regional organisations and mechanisms, allowing Asian countries with different political and economic structures to engage through a broader pan-Asian platform. For Thailand, the discussions reflect its continued interest in strengthening multilateral cooperation and making greater use of regional platforms to address issues that cross national borders.

Kuwait's role

The talks also underline Kuwait's growing role in facilitating dialogue between Asian countries. The ACD Secretariat is based in Kuwait, providing the country with a platform for engagement with the grouping's members and for supporting discussions on issues affecting the wider Asian region.

With the ACD approaching its 25th anniversary, the discussions in Kuwait could form part of a broader effort to examine how the organisation can become more responsive and relevant to the challenges confronting Asia.



BSK opens United Nations dialogue with students on peace and diplomacy

To mark the International Day of Peace, observed annually on 21 September, The British School of Kuwait (BSK) hosted Ms Ghada El-Tahir, Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General and UN Resident Coordinator in the State of Kuwait, and Dr Bahareh Azizi, Young Ambassadors Programme Officer, on Monday 21 September 2026.

The guests joined students from Years 11-13 for a panel talk exploring peace, security and diplomacy, as well as the role young people can play in these areas. The session gave students a chance to speak directly with the guests. It opened with the idea of "sustainable peace" and what that looks like in a society like Kuwait, then turned to what actually holds peace together beyond the absence of conflict, and how it ties to development, equal opportunity, security and stability.

The discussion also looked at Kuwait's experience in diplomacy and mediation, and at the value of dialogue in working through disagreements before they escalate. Students and the two guests then focused on the role young people can play on peace and security, and what their generation brings to those conversations. The session is part of BSK's wider effort to prepare Higher Phase students for life after school, giving them the chance to interact directly with experienced professionals and to look closely at fields and issues beyond the curriculum.

Through events like this, BSK seeks to broaden students' horizons and help them grow more confident asking questions, weighing in on discussions, and thinking through issues that matter to their future and the world around them. This is part of how the school helps them form their own outlook on important topics, while preparing them for university and the working world.

The session was not only limited to the topics planned in advance. Higher Phase students were invited to pose their own questions to the guests directly about peace, security, and diplomacy, building on issues that had come up over the course of the discussion. The event closed with a conversation about individual responsibility in building peace, and the steps young people can take in their own lives and communities to help spread a culture of dialogue and understanding, and to approach differences in a positive, constructive way.

The UN Budget: Between Reform and a Growing Funding Crisis

From $3.72 billion in 2025 to $3.45 billion in 2026, the United Nations' regular budget has fallen by about 7.3%. What does this mean for the Organization's future?

By Tareq Yousef Alshumaimry
Former Observer of the Executive Council and Chairman of the Budget Committees at the Permanent Court of Arbitration – The Hague

The United Nations is facing a familiar but increasingly difficult question: how can it continue to meet expanding global responsibilities while operating under tighter financial constraints?

The UN budget is more than a collection of figures. It reflects the priorities agreed upon by Member States and, increasingly, the differences between them over spending, efficiency and the role the Organization should play in addressing global challenges.

From peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance to human rights, development and political mediation, the UN operates across a broad range of areas. Yet the resources available to it depend ultimately on decisions taken by its Member States.

The debate today is therefore not simply about whether the UN has a large or small budget. It is about what is being funded, who pays, when payments are made and how efficiently available resources are used.

How does the UN budget work?

The basic principle is set out in Article 17 of the UN Charter, which provides that the Organization's expenses are borne by Member States according to assessments determined by the General Assembly.

Member States do not simply choose what they wish to contribute. The General Assembly approves a scale of assessments based on recommendations from the Committee on Contributions.

The system is primarily based on a country's capacity to pay. Under the assessment scale for 2025–2027, the minimum assessment is 0.001 percent, while the ceiling applicable to the least developed countries is 0.01 percent. No single Member State can be assessed more than 22 percent of the regular budget.

These assessed contributions are financial obligations rather than conventional voluntary donations. They are also separate from voluntary contributions that governments provide to individual UN programmes, funds and agencies.

Who decides how much the UN spends?

The process begins with the Secretary-General's proposed budget. It is then examined and negotiated through the relevant UN financial and administrative committees before recommendations are submitted to the General Assembly, which has the final authority to approve the budget.

The UN has also moved towards a more frequent budget review. After operating experimentally with an annual budget cycle from 2020, the General Assembly decided in December 2022 to retain the annual system permanently.

The change gives Member States an opportunity to reassess priorities and resources more frequently. At the same time, it means that the Organization's finances are more closely tied to annual negotiations and the economic circumstances confronting governments each year.

The numbers tell the story

The UN regular budget has moved significantly over the past several years. The General Assembly approved approximately $3.12 billion in 2022, followed by around $3.4 billion in 2023. The figure increased to approximately $3.59 billion in 2024, before reaching $3.72 billion in 2025.

For 2026, however, the approved regular budget stands at $3.45 billion. That represents a reduction of approximately $270 million, or about 7.3 percent, compared with 2025. Yet viewed over a longer period, the picture is different. The 2026 budget remains approximately $330 million, or 10.6 percent, higher than the 2022 level.

The figures therefore point to a reduction from last year, but not necessarily to a long-term contraction in the UN's regular budget.

UN80: Reform at a critical moment

The budget reduction comes as the United Nations pursues the UN80 Initiative, launched in 2025 as the Organization marked its 80th anniversary.

The initiative focuses on three broad areas: improving efficiency and reducing operating costs; reviewing UN functions to identify duplication and overlapping responsibilities; and examining how the wider UN system can be restructured to become more efficient and responsive.

From a professional perspective, the reduction in the 2026 budget can therefore be viewed in the context of an effort to reform administration and improve efficiency rather than simply as an automatic decline in support for the United Nations.

The real test, however, will come with implementation.A smaller budget does not automatically mean a more efficient organization. The outcome will depend on whether reforms actually reduce duplication, improve management and ensure that resources reach the programmes and activities considered most important by Member States.

Approved budget does not mean cash in hand

One of the less visible aspects of the UN's financial situation is the distinction between an approved budget and the cash actually available to the Organization. Even when the General Assembly has formally approved a budget, delayed payments by Member States can create cash-flow pressures.

In 2025, the Organization faced reported liquidity pressures and introduced measures that included expenditure reductions and delays in some recruitment activities. This distinction is important. A budget can exist on paper, but the Organization still needs Member States to meet their financial obligations on time for programmes and operations to function according to schedule.

The United States and China carry a substantial share

The United States remains the largest contributor to the UN regular budget, with an assessment of 22 percent, the maximum share assigned to a single Member State under the 2025–2027 scale. China is assessed at 20.004 percent. Together, the two countries account for approximately 42.004 percent of the regular budget. They are followed by Japan, Germany, the United Kingdom and France among the major contributors.

The concentration of contributions means that the financial positions and payment schedules of major contributors can have a significant effect on negotiations and, when payments are delayed, on the Organization's liquidity.

A debate over priorities, not simply cuts

Member States do not all approach budget reductions in the same way.Some favour reducing administrative expenditure and eliminating duplication while seeking to protect field operations. Others support additional resources for particular programmes while calling for reductions elsewhere.

The disagreements consequently extend beyond the headline budget figure. They concern which functions should be reduced, which programmes should be protected, when changes should take effect and what level of financial oversight should apply.

The consequences may also differ from one country or region to another. Countries carrying large assessed contributions could see their future financial obligations reduced if overall budgets decline. The Organization itself could benefit if reforms succeed in eliminating duplication and improving management.

But countries dependent on UN programmes or hosting UN missions could face consequences if resource constraints translate into reduced services or programmes. Areas potentially affected include humanitarian assistance, support for refugees and displaced people, human rights programmes, development activities and conflict-prevention efforts.

Peacekeeping is a separate equation

There is another important point when assessing the UN's financial position: the $3.45 billion regular budget does not represent the Organization's total expenditure. Peacekeeping operations have a separate budget. The peacekeeping budget for the 2024–2025 financial period was approximately $5.6 billion.

Peacekeeping operations require substantial and continuous resources for troops, equipment, transportation, security and logistics. Delays in contributions can therefore create operational pressures even after a budget has formally been approved.

Any assessment of the UN's finances must consequently distinguish between the regular budget, peacekeeping expenditure, voluntary funding for programmes and funds, and in-kind contributions.

The wider funding challenge

Countries can face difficulties meeting their financial obligations for a variety of reasons, including inflation, higher interest rates, wars and other crises that place additional demands on national budgets.

Domestic economic pressures can also contribute to financing difficulties. But these factors do not necessarily explain every payment delay, as the circumstances differ from one Member State to another.

This is why the reduction in the UN budget cannot be judged by the headline figure alone. The more important questions are: Which programmes will be affected? How many positions will be eliminated or redistributed? Where will resources be reallocated? And will the reforms produce measurable improvements in efficiency?

It is equally important to distinguish between proposed budgets and actual expenditure, and between approved appropriations and the cash available to the Organization.

The challenge ahead

The United Nations enters this period with a difficult balancing act. Member States want greater financial discipline and more efficient use of resources. At the same time, the Organization is expected to continue addressing conflicts, humanitarian emergencies, development challenges, human rights concerns and other global issues.

The central challenge is therefore not simply whether the UN should spend more or less.It is whether the resources available can be used more effectively without weakening the responsibilities that Member States have assigned to the Organization.

The reduction from $3.72 billion in 2025 to $3.45 billion in 2026 will inevitably intensify that debate.

Ultimately, the success of the reform process will depend not on the size of the reduction alone, but on whether the United Nations can demonstrate that every dollar available is being used where it can have the greatest institutional and human impact.

IQOS launches BONDS in Kuwait


- ***New-generation BONDS by IQOS combines a compact, all-aluminum design with ROUNDHEAT Technology***
- ***The device provides up to 28 experiences with BLENDS tobacco***
- ***The launch expands PMI's portfolio of smoke-free alternatives for adults who would otherwise continue to smoke***



IQOS, one of the leading brands of smoke-free products from Philip Morris International (PMI), has launched BONDS by IQOS in Kuwait, introducing a new-generation tobacco heating device designed to offer legal-age adult smokers, who would otherwise continue to smoke, a compact, and accessible smoke-free alternative to cigarettes.

The launch expands the range of smoke-free technology alternatives available in Kuwait as PMI continues to address the different needs and preferences of adult smokers. Recognizing that no single alternative will necessarily address every legal age adult consumer's requirements, PMI is developing a broader portfolio across different technologies, usage experiences, tastes and price points.

BONDS by IQOS brings together decades of tobacco expertise with ROUNDHEAT Technology, which uses resistive external heating to heat specially designed ROUNDHEAT STICKS across their external surface rather than burning them. This enables the release of a nicotine-containing aerosol with no ash and no cigarette-smoke smell.

Steven Steven, General Manager, Kuwait, Philip Morris International, said: "Understanding adult consumers and listening to what they expect from alternatives to cigarettes is essential. Different people have different preferences, which makes greater choice important.

The introduction of BONDS by IQOS in Kuwait adds another option to our smoke-free portfolio, combining simplicity, and advanced heating technology in an accessible format for adults who would otherwise continue to smoke."



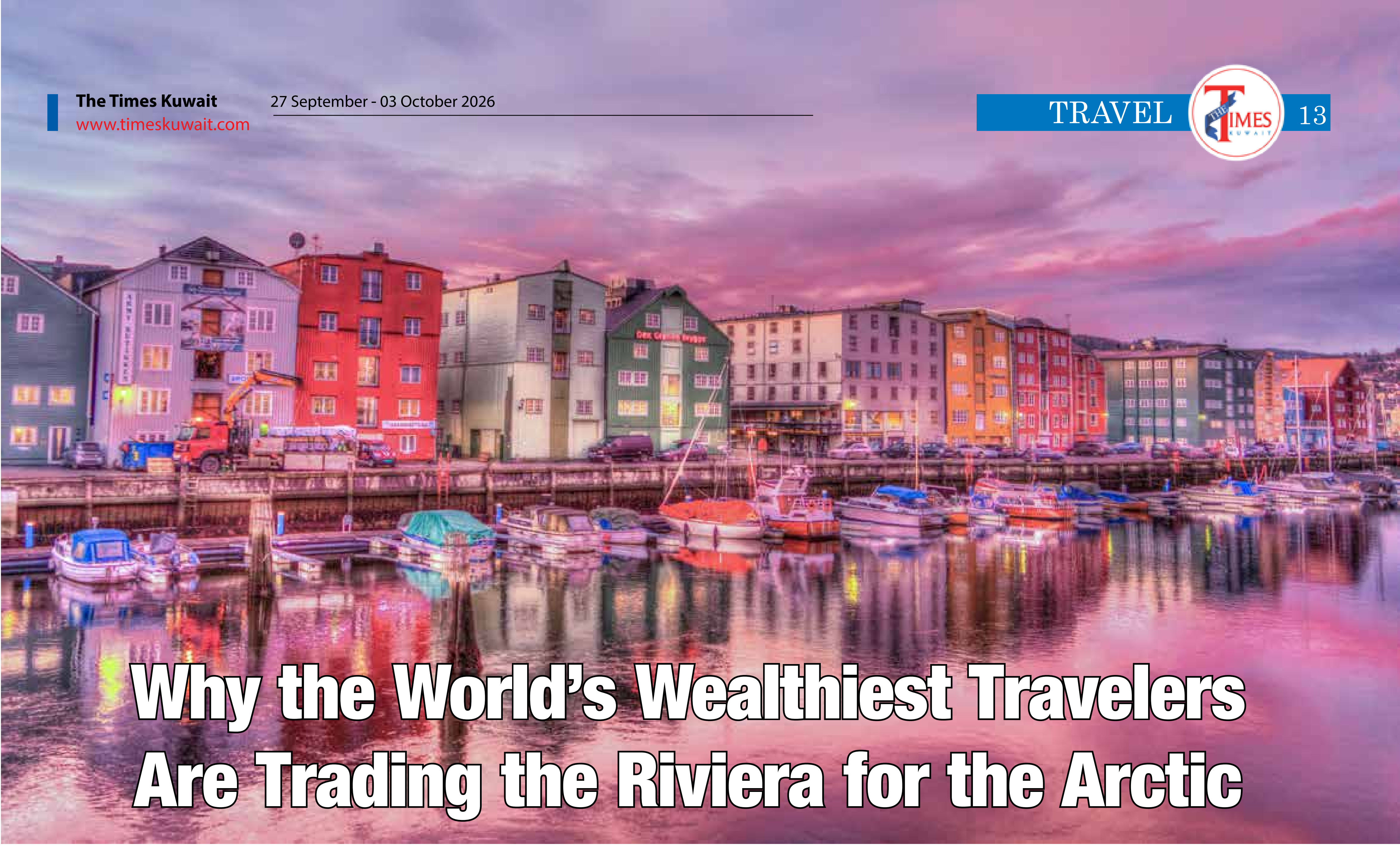

Designed as an all-in-one, lightweight aluminum device, BONDS by IQOS offers a simple, low-maintenance experience and requires no regular cleaning. Compared with the previous generation, the device has a larger 3,100 mAh battery, up from 2,800 mAh, while its full charging time has been reduced from three hours to approximately two hours. It provides up to three consecutive experiences and has approximately 30-second pre-heating time.

BONDS by IQOS is designed exclusively for use with ROUNDHEAT STICKS, called BLENDS. On a full charge, BONDS by IQOS delivers up to 28 experiences with BLENDS sticks.

Since 2008, PMI has invested over USD 16 billion, as of 31 December 2025, to develop, scientifically substantiate and commercialize innovative smoke-free products for adults who would otherwise continue to smoke, with the goal of completely ending the sale of cigarettes. As of 31 December 2025, PMI estimates that more than 43 million adults globally use its smoke-free products, including more than 35 million IQOS users.

Important information: BONDS by IQOS is not risk-free and provides nicotine, which is addictive. The best thing smokers can do is quit tobacco and nicotine altogether. BONDS by IQOS is intended for adults who would otherwise continue to smoke or use other nicotine-containing products.





Why the World's Wealthiest Travelers Are Trading the Riviera for the Arctic

By Hermoine Macura-Noble
Special to The Times Kuwait

There is a particular kind of hush that settles over Oslo's Karl Johans gate at dusk – the low gold light skimming off granite facades, the click of a single set of heels on cobblestone, the distant hiss of a floating sauna somewhere exhaling steam into the fjord air. It is, perhaps, the sound of luxury travel changing its mind about what it wants.

For decades, the five-star pilgrimage led south: to marble lobbies on the Côte d'Azur, to infinity pools stitched into cliffsides, to wherever the champagne was coldest and the crowd was loudest. Norway offered none of that. And that, travelers are discovering, is exactly the point.

At the Grand Hotel Oslo, the city's gilded 1874 landmark, chandeliers throw amber light across an oval lobby that has hosted playwrights, artists, and every Nobel Peace Prize laureate since the prize's inception in 1901. It remains the city's beating heart of old-world grandeur – a place where the doormen still seem to know your name before you've said it. The hotel has spent recent years on a careful, ongoing renovation – three separate creative firms each entrusted with a different wing of the property, refreshing restaurants, suites, and public spaces while keeping the pale pink walls and dramatic chandeliers that have watched over the room for 150 years. Featuring 283 rooms, 54 of them suites, the hotel sits directly across from the Norwegian Parliament on Karl Johans gate, with select suites offering views over the plaza to the Royal Palace beyond.

A short walk away, Sommerro performs a different kind of magic: a landmark 1931 Art Deco power station, quietly rewired for modern indulgence, rooftop plunge pool and all. It is heritage without the dust. Designed by Norwegian architects Andreas Bjercke and Georg Eliassen as the headquarters of Oslo's electric company – its old motto, fittingly, was "Light, Power, Warmth" – the bones are original interwar Oslo and the finish is contemporary Nordic glamour.

Of the hotel's 231 rooms and suites, guests can book their way up to a penthouse townhouse spanning the top floor. But it is the spa where Sommerro truly performs: beneath the same roof sits Vestkantbadet, Oslo's original 1930s public bathhouse, painstakingly restored down to tiles re-sourced from the original Italian manufacturer, alongside the city's first rooftop pool and sauna, with sweeping views over Frogner.

But it is in Arctic Norway where Nordic luxury turns genuinely theatrical. At Snow Resort Kirkenes, tucked along the shores of the Bøkfjord in the country's remote northeast, Gamme cabins – built in the spirit of traditional Sámi hunting huts – frame a private slice of sky through oversized windows for whenever the aurora decides to perform. Guests don't so much sleep here as keep watch.

The resort sits minutes from some of the clearest, least light-polluted aurora skies in Norway, alongside its famous Snowhotel, rebuilt from scratch in ice and snow every winter with a new set of hand-carved sculptures. The on-site restaurant, Låven, looks out over the fjord and leans into hearty Arctic cooking built around the region's signature catch. For those looking for adventure, the resort arranges husky safaris across the frozen fjord, snowmobile tours in search of the northern lights, reindeer encounters, and king crab safaris on the Barents Sea – a delicacy found in vanishingly few other places on earth.

Ask hospitality insiders why Norway has become such fertile ground for quiet luxury, and the answer keeps circling back to one idea: friluftsliv – roughly, "open-air living," the deeply rooted Norwegian belief that a good life is one spent outdoors, whatever the weather. That ethos runs through everything the country does well, and lately it's spilled straight into the harbor: Oslo's fjord is now dotted with dozens of communal floating saunas, a home-grown ritual industry insiders describe less as a wellness amenity than a civic one, something locals invite visitors into rather than sell them.

Norway consistently ranks among the happiest nations on earth, translating that contentment into a hospitality style built on restraint rather than reach. There is no shouting here, no gold-leafed excess for its own sake – only granite, fjord water, timber, and light that in summer refuses to leave at all.

For a certain traveler – one who has done the yachts, the villas, the velvet ropes – Norway offers something rarer than opulence: the sensation of actually slowing down. In a world addicted to more, Norway has built its luxury economy on less. And increasingly, the world's most discerning guests are checking in to find out what that feels like.

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IWG welcomes new season under new president with a taste of Denmark

Mona Haddad El-Khoury takes the helm as women from Kuwait's international community reconnect over Danish culture

The Times Kuwait format

A new chapter began for Kuwait's International Women's Group (IWG) as Mrs. Mona Haddad El-Khoury, wife of the Ambassador of Lebanon, took office as the group's newly elected President, promising a season built around friendship, cultural discovery and mutual support.

The IWG opened its 2026–2027 season with a warm Danish-themed meet-and-greet at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, bringing together women from Kuwait's diplomatic and international community after the summer break.

For El-Khoury, the occasion marked the beginning of her tenure at the helm of an organisation that has long provided a welcoming space for women of different nationalities to meet, share experiences and discover one another's cultures.

Expressing her gratitude for being entrusted with the presidency, El-Khoury said the new board was committed to supporting the group and its members. She also thanked the IWG's Honorary President, Sheikha Hanouf Bader Al Sabah, for her continued support. This was followed by the introduction of the new board by Mrs. Marika Kochlamazashvili, wife of the Ambassador of the Republic of Georgia and Presidential Advisor to the IWG.

She introduced the motto for the new season: "Discover, Connect, Empower."

A Danish beginning

The first gathering under the new board took members on a journey through Denmark the land of hygge, happiness and history. IWG member Mrs. Elsie Qutteineh prepared and presented a programme exploring Denmark's Viking heritage, monarchy and modern identity, while introducing guests to hygge, the Danish idea of warmth, comfort, simplicity and togetherness.

The presentation also touched on Danish family life, work-life balance, cycling, equality and trust themes that offered plenty of points for conversation among the guests. In a thoughtful connection between the two countries, the programme also highlighted two of Kuwait's best-known landmarks the Kuwait Towers and the National Assembly Building.

Friendship at the heart of IWG

The event was less about formal protocol and more about people. For women who spend much of their lives moving between countries because of diplomatic or professional commitments, organisations such as the IWG can provide something particularly valuable: a sense of community.

The beginning of a new season offers an opportunity to welcome new faces, renew old friendships and create connections that extend beyond individual events. That spirit was evident throughout the gathering.

From Denmark to Kuwait

Following a documentary about Denmark, Mrs. Leen Odeh, wife of the British Ambassador and IWG Vice President, hosted a lively quiz for members. IWG member Mrs. Patricia Alenezi then shared her personal enthusiasm for cycling in Kuwait, drawing parallels between Kuwait and Denmark's cycling cultures. Her message was simple and memorable: roads are not always smooth, and life brings its share of obstacles, but the answer is often to keep moving forward. For Alenezi, the bicycle also became a symbol of connection bringing together two countries, two wheels and one feeling.

Looking ahead

The Danish-themed gathering concluded with a raffle, but for the IWG it was really the beginning of a new season. Under Mona Haddad El-Khoury's presidency, the group now looks ahead to a year of cultural experiences, friendship and community engagement.

And if the first gathering is any indication, the new season will be about more than visiting different countries through presentations and celebrations. It will be about discovering more of Kuwait, learning from one another and building the kind of friendships that make an international community feel a little more like home.

New media framework puts vloggers, bloggers and social-media influencers under clearer rules

Continued from Page 1

Most importantly, companies cannot use influencers in campaigns designed to mislead consumers, deceive them or circumvent financial regulations. This means the relationship between an influencer and a business is no longer simply a private commercial arrangement. It is becoming part of Kuwait's regulated digital economy.

Paid promotion must be treated as advertising

For influencers, one of the most important practical lessons is the need to distinguish between personal opinion and paid promotion. A restaurant review, hotel recommendation, beauty treatment, property promotion or product endorsement may look like ordinary social-media content to viewers.

But if the creator is being paid, receiving a benefit or participating in a commercial campaign, the commercial relationship becomes relevant. The Digital Commerce Law requires advertising to provide clear and accurate information about the product or service, while prohibiting misleading or false information and practices that could deceive consumers. In other words, an influencer cannot simply turn an advertisement into a personal recommendation and assume that the regulatory responsibility disappears.

The rules follow the audience

An important feature of the new media framework is that the focus is not simply on where the influencer lives. The new media legislation provides that advertising and promotional activity on social-media platforms can fall within its scope when it targets an audience inside Kuwait, regardless of whether the person conducting that activity is a Kuwaiti citizen, resident or visitor.

That could have implications for overseas influencers, visiting creators and international campaigns specifically targeting Kuwait's market.

Bloggers face a changing landscape

The same distinction applies to bloggers and online news accounts.Someone occasionally expressing a personal view is different from an account that regularly publishes news, commentary or specialised information as a professional operation. Kuwait's Ministry of Information already provides electronic licensing services and identifies electronic publishing among the activities falling within its media-regulatory responsibilities. The direction of travel is clear: digital publishing is increasingly being treated as part of the wider media sector rather than as an entirely separate world.

News cannot become rumours simply because it is online

For vloggers and bloggers who cover current affairs, another responsibility is accuracy. The speed of social media can make verification difficult. A photograph, video or message can reach tens of thousands of people before its authenticity has been established.

The new regulatory environment therefore makes the traditional journalistic principles of verification, attribution and accuracy increasingly relevant to professional digital creators.

Being first may attract followers. Being wrong can create legal and reputational consequences. Vloggers also need to consider privacy when filming in public. A crowded shopping mall, restaurant, street or event may provide the setting for a popular video, but the presence of a camera does not automatically remove people's rights to privacy. Creators should be particularly cautious when filming children, private conversations, personal documents, vehicle information or individuals who are not part of the story. The more professional and commercial the content becomes, the greater the need for creators to understand the legal responsibilities attached to what they publish.

AI adds another layer

Kuwait's media reforms also arrive at a time when artificial intelligence is transforming content production. AI can now create realistic photographs, videos, voices and even apparently authentic interviews. That makes transparency increasingly important. For professional creators, the question will no longer simply be "Did I film this?" but potentially "What exactly did I create, alter or generate and does my audience know?"

The new media framework's recognition of technological developments, including AI, reflects the reality that regulation designed only for newspapers and television cannot adequately address today's digital environment.

The five questions every influencer should ask

For Kuwait's professional digital creators, the emerging rules can be distilled into five basic questions:

1. Is my account still personal, or has it become a professional business?
2. Am I being paid or receiving products, services or other benefits to promote something?
3. Have I clearly identified commercial content and checked the claims I am making?
4. Am I publishing information about another person without properly considering privacy and consent?
5. Do I need a media, commercial or other licence for the activity I am conducting?

These questions will become increasingly important as the detailed implementing regulations and administrative procedures take shape.

A new generation of media professionals

Kuwait's media landscape is no longer defined only by newspaper offices, television studios and radio stations. A creator working alone from a bedroom can potentially reach a larger audience than a traditional publication. A ten-second video can generate more public attention than a lengthy article. An influencer can move consumer behaviour with a single post.

The law is catching up with that reality. For influencers, vloggers and bloggers, this does not necessarily mean the end of the freewheeling digital culture that made social media so powerful.

It means something more fundamental: Digital influence is becoming a professional activity and professional influence comes with professional responsibility. The camera may still be in your hand. But increasingly, the rules apply to what happens after you press "post."

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