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Kuwait and ICRC
deepen humanitarian
partnership amid
regional crises

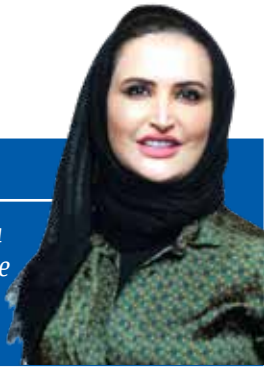
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Kuwait tightens grip on commercial concealment, violators face up to KD100,000 in fines

*New law targets hidden business ownership, unauthorized operations and illegal profits,
with prison terms of up to three years and closure of offending establishments*

The Times Kuwait Report

Kuwait is preparing to impose a tougher legal framework on businesses operating through concealed ownership arrangements, warning that individuals who use another person's commercial license to run an unauthorized business could face imprisonment, substantial financial penalties and the permanent closure of their establishments.

Decree-Law No. 78 of 2026 on Combating Commercial Concealment introduces penalties of one to three years in prison and fines ranging from KD10,000 to KD100,000, or an amount equivalent to the profits obtained through the violation, whichever is greater. Courts can also order the confiscation of illegal proceeds and equipment used in the offence, cancellation of commercial licenses and the



deportation of foreign offenders after conviction.

The legislation marks a significant tightening of Kuwait's approach to commercial concealment, a practice in which the person whose name appears on a business license may not be the individual actually operating the enterprise or benefiting from its profits. By targeting such arrangements, the law seeks to establish greater transparency in business ownership, protect legitimate entrepreneurs and ensure that commercial activities are conducted within the country's licensing and ownership rules.

The law is particularly significant for small and medium-sized enterprises, retailers, contractors and service providers, where businesses operating outside the prescribed regulatory framework can gain an unfair advantage over competitors who bear the full costs of licensing, staffing, rent and regulatory compliance.

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Kuwait and ICRC deepen humanitarian partnership amid regional crises

Decades-long cooperation focuses on missing persons, civilian protection and life-saving assistance as conflicts intensify across the region

By Rabih Kallas
Special to The Times Kuwait

As conflicts spread across the region and humanitarian needs continue to mount, Kuwait and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) are strengthening a longstanding partnership aimed at protecting civilians, supporting conflict-affected communities and upholding international humanitarian law.

Built on decades of cooperation, the partnership traces its roots to the humanitarian consequences of the 1990–1991 Gulf War. It continues to address the unresolved issue of people missing from that period while extending assistance to vulnerable communities in Gaza, Sudan, Syria, Somalia and Yemen.

For Kuwait, the relationship reflects a longstanding commitment to humanitarian diplomacy and international relief. For the ICRC, Kuwait remains an important partner in mobilizing resources, supporting humanitarian operations and keeping complex humanitarian issues on the international agenda.

Missing persons remain a humanitarian priority

One of the most enduring aspects of Kuwait–ICRC cooperation is the search for people who went missing during the Gulf War. More than three decades later, families continue to await confirmed answers about the fate of their loved ones. The ICRC works with Kuwaiti and Iraqi authorities through the Tripartite Commission, which it chairs, to examine information, coordinate searches and support technical investigations.

The organization has facilitated the transfer of bone samples, human remains and personal belongings from Iraq to Kuwait. However, recovering remains does not automatically establish a person's identity, which must be confirmed through forensic examination and other verification procedures.

Modern tools, including satellite imagery, drone surveys and data analysis, are helping investigators identify locations that warrant further examination. These technologies complement witness accounts and historical records, while DNA testing and forensic analysis remain essential to establishing identities.

For families, the search is about more than recovering remains. It is about obtaining reliable answers, resolving decades of uncertainty and gaining closure over the fate of relatives who disappeared during conflict.

Humanitarian cooperation extends across borders

Kuwait's partnership with the ICRC involves several national institutions, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the National Commission for International Humanitarian Law and the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS). Cooperation also extends to legal education and institutional capacity-building. The Kuwait Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies has worked with the ICRC to provide training for judges and prosecutors, while universities and media organizations contribute to wider awareness of humanitarian principles and civilian protection.

On the operational front, the KRCS supports healthcare initiatives in Sudan, while cooperation involving the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development contributes to health services and clean water projects in Somalia. Kuwaiti charitable organizations, including Sheikh Abdullah Al-Nouri Charity, also help extend assistance to vulnerable communities.

The annual high-level strategic dialogue between Kuwait and the ICRC provides a framework for coordinating priorities and strengthening cooperation. The fourth session brought together senior representatives from both sides and resulted in agreements and contributions supporting humanitarian



The ICRC works with Kuwaiti and Iraqi authorities through the Tripartite Commission, which it chairs, to examine information, coordinate searches and support technical investigations.



operations in Syria, Somalia and Sudan.

The humanitarian situation in Gaza remains a major concern, with displacement, widespread destruction and restricted access to food, clean water and medical care placing enormous pressure on civilians.

The ICRC has warned that humanitarian suffering must not become normalized and that any reduction in hostilities must lead to tangible improvements in people's daily lives.

Its field hospital in Rafah has provided more than 200,000 medical consultations and carried out over 12,000 surgical interventions, underscoring the scale of medical needs and the importance of maintaining access to healthcare. Working with the Palestine Red Crescent Society and other partners, the ICRC continues to support medical services, repairs to water networks and assistance to affected communities. However, damaged infrastructure and restrictions on supplies and access remain major obstacles.

The organization has stressed the need for humanitarian assistance to enter Gaza rapidly, safely and in sufficient quantities. Medical personnel, humanitarian workers and healthcare facilities must also be protected, while essential equipment and supplies are needed to restore basic services.

Kuwait can continue contributing through humanitarian assistance and diplomatic engagement, while countries with influence over the parties to the conflict have an important role in facilitating aid and strengthening civilian protection.

Regional escalation raises wider concerns

The ICRC is also monitoring the humanitarian implications of rising regional tensions, including attacks

affecting countries across the region.

Working with national authorities and Red Crescent societies, the organization supports preparedness, exchanges of expertise and coordination to respond to changing humanitarian needs. It also continues engaging with parties to conflicts on compliance with international humanitarian law and the protection of civilians and essential infrastructure.

The potential disruption of shipping through the Strait of Hormuz presents another concern extending far beyond the Gulf. Interruptions to fuel, fertilizer and other essential supplies could raise costs, affect agricultural production and make food less affordable for vulnerable communities worldwide.

Countries already struggling with conflict, poverty and limited resources would be particularly exposed to such economic shocks. Environmental damage, including oil spills and water contamination, could also threaten coastal livelihoods and marine ecosystems.

These risks underline how regional instability can generate humanitarian consequences well beyond the immediate area of conflict.

Yemen continues to face severe humanitarian needs

Yemen remains another major focus of ICRC operations, as prolonged conflict continues to affect civilians, healthcare facilities, water systems and other essential infrastructure.

The organization recently delivered 22 tonnes of medical supplies to support hospitals. Its surgical team is working alongside Yemeni medical personnel at Marib General Hospital, while support for Yemen Red Crescent Society ambulance services helps people access medical care on both sides of the front lines.

The ICRC also maintains dialogue with conflict parties on civilian protection and the humane treatment of detainees.

As a neutral humanitarian intermediary, it stands ready to facilitate releases, transfers and repatriations when agreements are reached and the parties are prepared to implement them.

For families separated by conflict and detention, such efforts can provide a vital path towards reunification and relief from prolonged uncertainty.

Funding pressures threaten humanitarian response

The growing number of conflicts is placing additional strain on humanitarian organizations at a time when international funding is under pressure.

The ICRC has warned that funding shortfalls can directly affect access to medical treatment, clean water and other essential services. In some operations, declining resources have forced organizations to prioritize their activities despite continuing needs.

Flexible funding is particularly important in crises that receive limited international attention. Allowing resources to be directed towards the most urgent needs helps humanitarian agencies respond to emerging emergencies while maintaining essential services in protracted conflicts. The organization has emphasized that flexibility must go hand in hand with accountability, transparency and clear reporting to donors on how contributions are used.

For Kuwait, its established relationship with the ICRC provides a framework for sustaining humanitarian assistance, strengthening institutional cooperation and supporting diplomatic efforts to protect civilians.

Ultimately, the partnership's importance extends beyond emergency relief. It reflects a shared commitment to keeping humanitarian principles at the centre of international action, ensuring that missing persons are not forgotten, civilians are protected and communities affected by conflict continue to receive assistance long after global attention has shifted elsewhere.

- Photos by Abdalla Al Khalaf.



The Invisible Shareholder

Can Foreign Nominee Arrangements Conceal the Beneficial Owner of a Kuwaiti Company?



By Legal Counsel Suha Alsaahli
Emtithal Law Firm
Special to The Times Kuwait

A Kuwaiti company may accurately disclose its registered shareholders and still fail to identify the individual who ultimately owns or controls it. This possibility is specifically addressed in Kuwait's guidance on beneficial ownership dated August 2026, particularly where a Kuwaiti company is partly owned by a foreign legal entity.

Under Kuwait's AML/CFT framework, a beneficial owner must ultimately be a natural person. The first test identifies individuals who directly or indirectly own or control 25 percent or more of a company's capital or voting rights. Where ownership passes through another company, however, identifying the registered shareholder may be only the beginning of the inquiry.

When the shareholder is only a name

One of the more interesting scenarios rightfully addressed in the new guidance concerns nominee shareholder arrangements.

A nominee arrangement, legal in many jurisdictions, is an agreement where one party (the nominee) holds legal title, assets, shares, or directorships on behalf of another party (the nominator).

Consequently, the person appearing in a company's shareholder register may differ from the individual who ultimately owns or controls those shares.



Kuwait's August 2026 Beneficial Owner Guide Examines the Risks Behind Foreign Corporate Shareholders

Kuwait's guidance draws an important legal distinction. Although nominee shareholder arrangements are not recognised or regulated under Kuwaiti law, they may exist within foreign entities forming part of a Kuwaiti company's ownership structure, where the relevant foreign jurisdiction permits them.

This distinction has important implications for customer due diligence. Where a Kuwaiti company has a corporate shareholder incorporated in a jurisdiction that permits nominee arrangements, the possibility of such arrangements should be examined when identifying its beneficial owners. Consider a Kuwaiti company owned by two corporate shareholders: a Kuwaiti entity holding 51% and a foreign entity holding 49%.

Suppose no individual behind the Kuwaiti entity meets the 25% beneficial ownership threshold.

The foreign entity is incorporated in a jurisdiction permitting nominee arrangements. Further examination reveals that an individual (nominator) concealed behind a nominee ultimately owns 60% of the foreign entity,

giving them an indirect 29.4% share in the Kuwaiti company. That individual therefore qualifies as a beneficial owner, despite their name appearing nowhere in the company's shareholder register. The same would be true even if an individual behind the Kuwaiti entity also met the threshold, since a company may have more than one beneficial owner.

A shareholder register may not be enough

This is where many Kuwaiti companies with foreign shareholders may be most exposed. A company can list every registered shareholder correctly and still fail to identify the true beneficial owner.

The 2026 Guidance makes clear that Kuwaiti companies are expected to hold accurate, up-to-date information on their beneficial owners and have procedures to obtain that information from shareholders, directors and nominees. Furthermore, where one of a company's shareholders is a foreign company, that obligation extends beyond the shareholder's name. The company needs to know where that shareholder is incorporated and whether that jurisdiction permits nominee arrangements to correctly identify and disclose who stands behind any nominee in its ownership chain.

The cost of missing the invisible nominator

Financial institutions and designated non-financial businesses and professions that fail to identify, verify or monitor beneficial ownership information face sanctions ranging from warnings and fines to suspension or revocation of their licences. The concealment itself is also sanctionable: the guidance lists failure to disclose nominee status among the conduct subject to sanction, alongside providing false or misleading beneficial ownership information. Any natural person who deliberately provides such information may face a fine of between KD 1,000 and KD 10,000 from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, without prejudice to referral to law enforcement where a crime is suspected. Following a report of inaccurate beneficial ownership information, the Ministry may also suspend the company's commercial registration until the violation is corrected.

Jazeera Airways launches first-ever winter flights from Kuwait to Prague

Travellers from Kuwait will have a new opportunity to experience the charm of a European winter as Jazeera Airways introduces its first-ever winter flights to Prague, extending direct connectivity between Kuwait and the Czech capital into the festive season.

The new service, operated in collaboration with the Embassy of Czechia in Kuwait and Czech Tourism, will run twice weekly from December 17, 2026, to February 7, 2027. The flights are expected to make Prague more accessible during the winter holidays, offering travellers convenient connections to the city's celebrated Christmas markets, historic architecture and cultural attractions.

The announcement was highlighted at a special event hosted by the Czech Embassy and Czech Tourism in partnership with Jazeera Airways, bringing together representatives from the travel and tourism industry, travel trade partners and invited guests to promote Czechia as a winter destination and explore opportunities to expand tourism links between the two countries.

Addressing the gathering, Ambassador of Czechia to Kuwait H.E. Juraj Chmiel welcomed the introduction of winter flights, describing direct air connectivity as an important bridge between the two countries.

He said the new service would support tourism, cultural exchange and closer people-to-people relations, while encouraging more travellers from Kuwait to discover Czechia's heritage, festive traditions and hospitality.

Barbara Andelová, International Marketing – Middle East and India at Czech Tourism, highlighted the country's appeal beyond its capital, noting that winter offers visitors opportunities to explore snow-covered landscapes, charming towns, mountain resorts, wellness



Twice-weekly direct service from December 17 to February 7 opens new opportunities for winter tourism and stronger Kuwait-Czechia ties

retreats and a wide range of cultural experiences.

She said the new flights would help introduce Czechia's diverse tourism offerings to travellers from Kuwait and the wider region, encouraging visitors to look beyond Prague and discover other parts of the country.

For Jazeera Airways, the winter service represents an expansion of its European offering and an opportunity to cater to travellers seeking seasonal holidays, family breaks and cultural experiences.

Barathan Pasupathi, Chief Executive Officer of Jazeera Airways, said Prague had become a popular destination on the airline's European network and that extending operations into winter would give customers greater flexibility to explore the city during a different season.

He also highlighted the wider potential of winter tourism, pointing to Kuwait's growing calendar of sporting and cultural events as an opportunity to attract visitors, support local businesses and strengthen the country's appeal as a destination.

The airline is also working with Visit Kuwait to promote the country to international travellers, reinforcing the role of air connectivity in supporting tourism in both directions.

The event featured presentations from Czech tourism and hospitality partners, including Next Mile DMC, The Julius Prague, Hotel Thermal Karlovy Vary, Altoa Medical Tourism and Fashion Arena Prague Outlet. Participants explored travel experiences, accommodation options, wellness tourism and opportunities for cooperation with Kuwait's travel trade.

Prague remains a major attraction for visitors seeking a blend of history, architecture and culture. Its Old Town, historic castles, iconic Charles Bridge and lively cafés offer a distinctive European experience, while the winter season adds festive markets and seasonal activities to the city's appeal.

Beyond the capital, Czechia offers spa towns, mountain resorts, winter sports, scenic countryside and culinary experiences, making it an attractive option for families, couples and leisure travellers.

The launch of winter flights reflects the shared interest of Czech tourism authorities and Jazeera Airways in broadening travel opportunities and strengthening links between Kuwait and Europe.

With direct flights available during the festive period and school holidays, travellers will have another option for planning a winter getaway, while the extended seasonal connection is expected to support closer tourism and cultural ties between Kuwait and Czechia.

Spain reaffirms commitment to strategic partnership with Kuwait

The Times Kuwait Report

Spanish Ambassador to Kuwait H.E. Manuel Hernández Gamayo said Spain has reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening ties with Kuwait and advancing bilateral relations towards a strategic partnership, with cooperation set to expand across defense, healthcare, cybersecurity, food security and economic investment.

Addressing the gathering during a reception hosted by the Spanish Embassy on Sunday evening to mark Spain's National Day, the Spanish envoy described Kuwait as a regional pillar of moderation and peace, praising its longstanding role in mediation, commitment to international law and humanitarian contributions worldwide. He stressed that Spain valued its longstanding relationship with Kuwait and was keen to deepen cooperation amid evolving regional and international challenges.

The event was attended by Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Hamad Al-Mashaan, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Defense Sheikh Dr Abdullah Meshaal Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, members of the diplomatic corps, representatives of international organizations and members of the Spanish community in Kuwait.

The ambassador said Kuwaiti-Spanish relations were experiencing renewed momentum, pointing to an upcoming round of bilateral political consultations in Madrid on October 7. The two countries had agreed to work towards establishing a strategic political dialogue supported by high-level meetings and specialized working groups covering issues of mutual interest.

Expanding economic and strategic cooperation

Economic ties remain a key component of the relationship. Ambassador Gamayo highlighted the growth of Spanish exports to Kuwait in recent years and noted that Spanish imports from Kuwait increased by more than 200 percent in 2025 compared with the previous year.

Spanish companies are active in Kuwait across several strategic sectors, including renewable energy, oil, civil aviation and transport infrastructure. The ambassador said their presence reflected Spain's commitment to supporting Kuwait's development and economic progress, said the ambassador.

He went on to say, preparations are also underway for the next meeting of the Kuwaiti-Spanish Joint Economic Committee in Madrid in 2027. The meeting is expected to provide a platform for expanding



Madrid highlights Kuwait's role in regional peace at National Day reception; reaffirms commitment to stronger Kuwait ties



investment opportunities and strengthening partnerships between companies and institutions in both countries.

Beyond trade, the relationship encompasses growing travel by Kuwaitis to Spain, Kuwaiti investment in the Spanish real estate market and increasing interest among Kuwaiti students in Spanish universities. Ambassador Gamayo also noted that measures to facilitate Schengen visa procedures had helped make consular services smoother and faster.

Solidarity amid regional challenges

Addressing regional and international developments, the ambassador condemned attacks targeting Gulf states and vital civilian infrastructure, emphasizing the importance of respecting international law and the principles of the United Nations Charter. He reiterated Spain's view of Kuwait as an important partner in promoting regional stability and praised the resilience of the Kuwaiti people, as well as the dedication and professionalism of those working to protect the country and ensure the safety of citizens and residents.

Ambassador Gamayo also referred to a message from Spain's King, conveying solidarity and support

for the people of Kuwait to His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

Spain, he added, supports stronger strategic relations between the European Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council, expressing hope that the next EU-GCC summit would translate political commitments into practical cooperation.

Spanish community strengthens people-to-people ties

The ambassador paid tribute to the Spanish community in Kuwait, describing it as an integral part of Kuwaiti society. Spanish nationals contribute to a wide range of fields, including engineering, business, medicine, education, management, physiotherapy, veterinary medicine, sports and professional training.

Their participation in Kuwait's professional and social life, he said, reflects the people-to-people dimension of bilateral relations, complementing cooperation in diplomacy, trade, investment and security. The National Day reception underscored the breadth of Kuwait-Spain relations and the shared ambition to build on established ties through sustained political dialogue, economic engagement and cooperation in sectors of mutual strategic importance.

Kuwait strengthens inter-agency coordination to combat money laundering

National committee reviews cooperation among government bodies to reinforce anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing measures

Kuwait is stepping up coordination among government agencies responsible for combating money laundering and terrorist financing, as authorities seek to strengthen oversight, improve information-sharing and enhance the effectiveness of the country's financial safeguards.

The National Committee for Combating Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing held a meeting to discuss ways to enhance cooperation among relevant authorities and coordinate efforts to address financial crimes.

The meeting focused on strengthening institutional collaboration, improving the exchange of information and ensuring that government entities work within a coordinated national framework to detect, prevent and combat illicit financial activities.

The committee's work forms part of Kuwait's broader efforts to reinforce its anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing (AML/CFT) framework, in line with applicable national legislation and international standards.

Effective cooperation among supervisory, regulatory, law enforcement and other government bodies is central to



identifying suspicious financial transactions, tracing illicit proceeds and preventing the misuse of the financial system.

Closer coordination also helps authorities address emerging risks associated with complex financial transactions, corporate

structures and cross-border movements of funds.

The committee provides a platform for relevant institutions to review implementation efforts, address coordination challenges and support a consistent approach to tackling financial crime.

Protecting financial integrity

Kuwait's AML/CFT framework is designed to protect the integrity of its financial system, prevent criminal proceeds from entering legitimate economic activity and strengthen safeguards against the financing of terrorism.

Continued coordination among national authorities is essential to improving compliance, supporting effective investigations and maintaining confidence in Kuwait's financial and commercial environment.

As international scrutiny of financial transparency and regulatory compliance continues, the committee's work underscores the importance of a coordinated, risk-based approach to preventing financial crime and safeguarding the country's economic interests.

Art and music strengthen Argentina-Kuwait friendship

The Times Kuwait Report

Art, music and personal stories came together at Dar Al-Athar Al-Islamiyyah as the Embassy of Argentina celebrated its National Day, highlighting how cultural exchange can deepen friendship and understanding between Argentina and Kuwait.

The event, hosted in the presence of members of the diplomatic corps, the Argentine community and friends of Argentina, offered guests a glimpse into the South American nation's culture and natural beauty through paintings, musical performances and personal experiences.

Argentine Ambassador to Kuwait H.E. Ramiro Velloso underscored the importance of cultural initiatives in bringing people closer, noting that art and music provide a common ground for people from different backgrounds to connect and appreciate one another's heritage.

Among the highlights was an exhibition of paintings by Kuwaiti artist Nadia Al-Abdulghafour, whose works drew inspiration from her visit to Argentina, particularly the landscapes of Mendoza. Her paintings reflected the country's striking scenery, vivid colours, expansive horizons and distinctive natural beauty.

Al-Abdulghafour said her journey had left a lasting impression, with Argentina's mountains, vineyards, changing light and tranquil landscapes continuing to inspire her artistic expression after returning to Kuwait.

Rather than simply reproducing the scenes she encountered, the artist sought to capture the emotions and impressions the country had left on her. Through her work, she shared a personal interpretation of Argentina's beauty with the audience, creating a visual connection between the two countries.

The programme also featured Shahad Al-Zaabi, who shared her experience of reaching the summit of Mount Aconcagua, one of Argentina's most prominent natural landmarks. Her account offered guests a personal perspective on the country's geography and the



Kuwaiti artist Nadia Al-Abdulghafour captures the beauty of Argentina through paintings inspired by its landscape

challenges of exploring its mountainous terrain.

Music provided another focal point of the celebration, with a performance by the Kuwait Music Academy Orchestra, led and organized by Victor Schramko.

The ensemble, comprising around 22 musicians, including four Kuwaitis, performed three pieces, among them the Argentine national anthem and the much-loved song Don't Cry for Me Argentina, associated with the musical and film Evita.

Schramko said the orchestra was established last year to give young musicians in Kuwait opportunities to develop their ensemble skills and gain experience performing together. He noted that the participating Kuwaiti musicians had demonstrated enthusiasm and made considerable progress through a year of rehearsals.

Describing music as a universal language, he said it could transcend linguistic and cultural barriers, allowing people to connect, communicate and develop mutual understanding regardless of their backgrounds.



The orchestra's participation also reflected the growing role of cultural and artistic initiatives in creating opportunities for local talent while bringing international influences into Kuwait's cultural scene.

Celebrating shared understanding

The celebration demonstrated how diplomacy can extend beyond formal meetings and official exchanges to create meaningful connections through art, music and shared experiences. By bringing together Argentine landscapes interpreted through Kuwaiti art, personal accounts of adventure and a musical performance featuring local talent, the event offered a distinctive expression of the friendship between the two nations.

The evening concluded with a celebration of creativity and cultural diversity, reinforcing the role of people-to-people engagement in strengthening Argentina-Kuwait relations and fostering greater appreciation of each country's heritage.

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Kuwait issues new arbitration law to boost investment and commercial confidence

Kuwait has introduced a new arbitration law aimed at accelerating the resolution of commercial disputes, strengthening investor confidence and positioning the country as a more attractive destination for business and investment.

Decree-Law No. 120 of 2026, issued on Tuesday, establishes an integrated legal framework governing arbitration proceedings, arbitration centres and the responsibilities of arbitrators. The legislation comprises 108 articles divided into 15 chapters.

According to the law's explanatory memorandum, Kuwait's ambition to develop into a regional financial and commercial hub requires a modern arbitration system capable of meeting international standards while preserving the country's legal principles and judicial safeguards.

The new legislation replaces an older framework that authorities considered insufficient to address the evolving requirements of international commercial arbitration and contemporary business transactions.

Comprehensive framework for dispute resolution

The law introduces provisions governing both ad hoc arbitration, in which parties organize proceedings themselves, and institutional arbitration administered by recognized arbitration centres. It also establishes procedures for interim and precautionary measures, allowing parties to seek appropriate protection while disputes are being resolved.

The legislation accommodates modern technology in arbitration proceedings and provides greater flexibility for parties to determine procedural rules, including through the adoption of rules established by arbitration institutions inside or outside Kuwait.

Where parties have not agreed on procedures, arbitration tribunals may determine appropriate arrangements within the limits established by the law. Article 22 requires tribunals to respect fundamental principles of litigation, uphold public order, ensure



Decree-Law No. 120 of 2026 introduces a comprehensive framework for arbitration, strengthens safeguards for public funds and regulates arbitration centres

equal treatment of parties and conduct proceedings efficiently without unnecessary delays or expenses.

Safeguards for public funds

A key feature of the legislation is its treatment of arbitration involving contracts concluded by government entities. The law establishes a structured framework intended to balance the government's ability to use arbitration with the need to protect public funds and safeguard the state's legal and financial interests.

Rather than excluding government entities from arbitration, the legislation introduces safeguards governing disputes arising from their contractual relationships. This approach seeks to provide greater certainty for businesses entering into agreements with public institutions while maintaining appropriate protections for state assets.

Regulation of arbitration centres

The new law establishes a specialized department within the Ministry of Justice to oversee arbitration-related activities. The department will maintain registers of arbitrators and arbitration centres and perform other

regulatory functions prescribed by the legislation and subsequent ministerial decisions. The Minister of Justice will determine the department's operating procedures, including registration requirements, conditions for removal from official registers and applicable fees. The framework is intended to establish consistent standards for arbitration institutions while ensuring that regulatory oversight does not unnecessarily obstruct proceedings.

Clearer liability rules and penalties

Chapters 14 and 15 address penalties, regulatory compliance and the administration of the new arbitration system. The legislation establishes protections for the integrity of arbitration proceedings, public confidence in the system and the confidentiality of relevant processes.

According to the explanatory memorandum, arbitrators will not face criminal liability for their judicial work as arbitrators. Civil liability may arise in cases involving fraud or gross negligence, reflecting an approach intended to protect the independence of arbitration while preserving accountability.

International standards and investment competitiveness

The law applies to arbitration proceedings seated in Kuwait and may also apply to arbitration conducted abroad where the parties agree to its application, subject to relevant international agreements and mandatory legal provisions. By introducing a dedicated national framework, Kuwait seeks to bring greater clarity and predictability to the resolution of commercial disputes.

Efficient arbitration can help businesses reduce the time and costs associated with prolonged litigation, improve contractual certainty and provide investors with an alternative mechanism for resolving disagreements.

The legislation represents a significant step in modernizing Kuwait's commercial justice framework and supporting its wider ambition to strengthen the business environment, attract investment and develop its role as a regional financial and commercial centre.

SADL by Indian Heritage Brings a Fresh Perspective to Kuwait's Abaya Fashion



SADL by Indian Heritage, a contemporary abaya label in Kuwait, is preparing to open a new boutique at Warehouse Mall, marking the next phase of its expansion in the country's evolving modest fashion market.

Operating under the Indian Heritage name, SADL brings a contemporary approach to abaya design, combining modern tailoring, fluid fabrics and understated detailing with an appreciation for regional culture and modest fashion traditions.

Contemporary Design for the Modern Woman

At the heart of SADL is the philosophy that modest fashion should allow women to express their individuality without compromising on comfort or style. Moving beyond conventional silhouettes, the label explores clean cuts, contemporary proportions

Contemporary modest fashion label prepares to open its second boutique at Warehouse Mall, building on its presence at Souq Safat

and carefully considered details to create abayas suited to modern lifestyles. Its collections range from everyday essentials to more distinctive statement pieces, balancing functionality with a refined aesthetic.

The brand also offers alteration services, allowing customers to achieve a more personalised fit.

Expanding Its Retail Presence

Following the opening of its first boutique at Souq Safat, SADL is preparing to establish its next retail destination at Warehouse Mall, Kuwait.

The upcoming boutique is intended to reflect the brand's contemporary identity, offering a curated shopping environment centred on fashion, design and individual expression.

The expansion represents a further step in SADL's efforts to strengthen its presence in Kuwait's modest fashion segment and reach a wider audience.

Building on the Indian Heritage Legacy

SADL draws on the experience and creative foundation of Indian Heritage, an established fashion and textile name with a retail presence in Kuwait, Bahrain and Oman.

While building on this background, SADL maintains its own identity, focusing on contemporary abaya designs for women seeking a balance between traditional modesty and modern style.

As it prepares for the opening of its Warehouse Mall boutique, the brand aims to offer designs that combine timeless appeal with contemporary sensibilities, catering to women looking for distinctive and versatile additions to their wardrobes.

Customers can visit SADL at Souq Safat, Kuwait, and follow @sadlkw on Instagram for updates on the upcoming Warehouse Mall opening.

Hungary marks 70 years since 1956 Revolution, highlights growing ties with Kuwait

Special to The Times Kuwait

Hungary is marking the 70th anniversary of its 1956 Revolution this October, commemorating a popular uprising that became a defining chapter in the country's struggle for freedom, national independence and democracy. The anniversary also provides an opportunity to highlight Hungary's longstanding relations with Kuwait and its ambitions to expand cooperation in trade, investment, technology, healthcare, education and tourism.

The Hungarian Revolution began on October 23, 1956, when students and other demonstrators gathered in Budapest to demand civil liberties, free elections, a multi-party political system and the withdrawal of Soviet troops. What began as a peaceful demonstration escalated into an armed revolt against the country's communist government and its subordination to the Soviet Union.

Revolutionary forces initially made gains, but the Soviet Union launched a renewed military offensive. Soviet armoured units entered Budapest on November 4, and resistance was suppressed over the following weeks. The uprising resulted in thousands of deaths and injuries, while nearly 250,000 Hungarians fled the country. Thousands more were imprisoned, and hundreds were executed, including former prime minister Imre Nagy and several of his associates.

Hungary continues to commemorate the revolution through ceremonies, candle-lighting, national flags and educational activities. Schools organise events in which students recite poems, stage performances and learn about the young people who participated in the uprising. October 23 also marks the anniversary of Hungary's declaration of a republic in 1989, linking the country's democratic transition to the ideals of the 1956 revolution. The date remains a national holiday dedicated to freedom, democracy and national sovereignty.

Six decades of Hungary-Kuwait relations

Hungary and Kuwait established diplomatic relations in 1964, making Kuwait the first Gulf state to establish diplomatic ties with Hungary. The relationship has developed across several sectors, supported by mutual respect and trust. According to the Hungarian ambassador, 18 bilateral agreements are currently in effect.

The commitment to closer relations was underscored by a meeting between Hungary's President András Baka and His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah on the sidelines of the 81st United Nations General Assembly



H.E. András SZABÓ
Hungary Ambassador to the State of Kuwait

Hungary and Kuwait established diplomatic relations in 1964, making Kuwait the first Gulf state to establish diplomatic ties with Hungary.

session in September. The ambassador also recalled that His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah had stressed the strong relationship between the two countries and the importance of developing economic ties during the presentation of credentials.

The resumption of direct flights between the two capitals after a 40-year gap is expected to provide new opportunities to strengthen trade, investment, tourism and people-to-people connections. Hungary hopes to maintain the service and eventually expand it into a year-round route.

Hungary sees scope to increase bilateral trade and broaden economic cooperation, particularly in areas that could support Kuwait's food security, digital development and healthcare sector. Hungarian products are already available in Kuwaiti stores, including dairy products, paprika, beverages and frozen vegetables.

Hungarian companies also supply medical equipment to the Kuwaiti market, while

the country's information technology and information and communications technology sectors offer further opportunities for cooperation. Digital transformation is emerging as an important area of cooperation. The Hungarian-Kuwaiti Digital Cluster, established on the initiative of the Hungarian ambassador, aims to help Hungarian technology companies present their solutions to potential partners in Kuwait.

The initiative has already begun cooperation involving the Kuwaiti market, universities and banks. Hungary sees further potential for collaboration as demand grows for digital services and technology solutions. Healthcare is another priority. The two countries have a memorandum of understanding covering the exchange of experts, information technology development and training programs.

Hungary is seeking to build on this framework through closer cooperation involving medical education, healthcare professionals, services and

technology. Renewable energy and household energy technologies also offer opportunities. Hungary is encouraging Kuwait to explore technologies that can improve energy efficiency, reduce costs and support a more sustainable energy system, including solutions associated with the expansion of solar power.

In addition, a Hungarian Design and Build Cluster has recently been formed to explore potential cooperation with Kuwait in design, construction and integrated project solutions. Educational links remain an important part of the bilateral relationship. Hungary continues to encourage Kuwaiti students to pursue educational opportunities in the country, while appreciating the Arabic-language scholarship offered to Hungarian students through the Language Center at Kuwait University.

Beyond formal cooperation, cultural connections help sustain relations between the two countries. The Hungarian ambassador has highlighted Kuwait's hospitality, family gatherings, diwanis, cuisine and Ramadan social events as important elements of the country's culture and social life.

Shared concerns over regional stability

Hungary has expressed solidarity with Kuwait amid regional developments and called for efforts to achieve lasting peace in the Gulf and the wider Middle East. It also recognises Kuwait's role as a balancing and stabilising force in the Arab region. Hungary considers stronger international cooperation, dialogue and collective action essential in addressing regional and global challenges.

Alongside its bilateral agenda, Hungary supports closer relations between the European Union and Kuwait within the broader EU-GCC cooperation framework, with the aim of strengthening economic and diplomatic engagement between the two regions. Tourism represents another opportunity to deepen people-to-people ties. Hungary offers historic landmarks, distinctive cuisine, architecture, thermal baths and spas, as well as countryside destinations suitable for families.

The resumption of direct flights during the summer period is expected to make travel more convenient for Kuwaiti visitors. Hungary is encouraging families and individual travellers to discover destinations ranging from Budapest to the shores of Lake Balaton. As Hungary commemorates seven decades since the 1956 Revolution, its message combines remembrance of the struggle for freedom with a forward-looking commitment to international cooperation.

For Kuwait and Hungary, the shared objective is to translate longstanding diplomatic ties into broader economic, educational, technological and cultural partnerships.



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Four Asian nationalities account for 86.1% of Kuwait's domestic workers

Four Asian nationalities account for 86.1 percent of Kuwait's domestic workforce, with Indian, Sri Lankan, Filipino and Bangladeshi workers collectively numbering 760,744 out of a total of 883,308, according to statistical data released by the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI).

The Indians form the largest group, with 344,532 domestic workers, representing approximately 39 percent of the total. Their numbers place India well ahead of the other nationalities represented in the sector.

Sri Lankan workers rank second, numbering 157,901 and accounting for 17.9 percent of Kuwait's domestic workforce, followed by the Filipino nationals in third place, with 151,369 workers, representing 17.1 percent of the total and then comes the Bangladeshi nationals in fourth place with 106,942 workers, equivalent to 12.1 percent.

Together, the four nationalities account for more than eight out of every 10 domestic workers in Kuwait. The remaining 13.9 percent, or approximately 122,564 workers, come from other nationalities.

The figures highlight the concentration of Kuwait's domestic workforce among a relatively small number of nationalities. Indian nationals alone account for nearly four out of every 10 workers in the sector, while the Sri Lankan and Filipino communities hold similar shares, separated by a relatively narrow margin.



Kuwait passport ranks third among 22 Arab League states

Kuwait's passport ranks third among 22 countries in the Arab League passport ranking, according to Passport Reports in this report dated 13 October 2026, while standing 85th worldwide.

The United Arab Emirates leads the Arab League comparison, followed by Qatar in second place. Kuwait comes next, ahead of Saudi Arabia in fourth. The grouping compares passport travel access among the countries included in the Arab League; membership does not itself grant automatic visa-free admission to other member states.

Passport Reports, an independent research and publishing platform, cover passports from 199 countries in 34 languages. The Arab League view on Passport Reports provides a regional comparison across the Gulf, the Levant, North Africa and the Horn of Africa, without replacing the passports' separate global positions.

Full Arab League passport ranking (22 countries) -- United Arab Emirates: 1st, Qatar: 2nd, Kuwait: 3rd, Saudi Arabia: 4th, Bahrain: 5th, Oman: 6th, Morocco: 7th, Tunisia: 8th, Mauritania: 9th, Algeria: 10th, Jordan: 11th, Comoros: 12th, Egypt: 13th, Djibouti: 14th, Lebanon: 15th, Libya: 16th, Sudan: 17th, Palestine: 18th, Somalia: 19th, Yemen: 20th, Iraq: 21st and Syria: 22nd.

New Gulf Indian School hosts higher education counselling for 300 students

Around 300 students attended a higher education counselling session at New Gulf Indian School in Mahbouda on September 30, 2026, to explore university education and career opportunities in India. Organised in collaboration with Indus India Education and The Times Kuwait, the session was part of India Education Career Counselling 2026, held from September 28 to 30.

The session provided students with an opportunity to interact directly with representatives of Indian universities and learn about higher education options, admission procedures, entrance examinations and emerging career pathways in India. Students from New Gulf Indian School and Gulf Indian School also attended the session.

Affiliated with the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), New Gulf Indian School offers education up to the senior secondary level. The school emphasises academic development, discipline and character formation, while preparing students with the knowledge, skills and values needed for their future academic and professional journeys.

Following the session, the visiting delegation met the school's Principal, Mrs. Ambikadevi Sreekumar, who holds an MA and B.Ed. and is listed by the school as a Ph.D. scholar. The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss students' educational interests and the importance of making informed choices when selecting higher education programmes.

The Indian delegation comprised representatives from seven institutions: Yenepoya University, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), REVA University, Marwadi University, Woxsen University, Atria University and RV University. The representatives shared information on professional and vocational courses, eligibility criteria, admission requirements, entrance examinations and application procedures.

- Marwadi University
- RV University
- Atria University
- Yenepoya University
- CHRIST (Deemed to be University)



Marwadi University



RV University



Atria University



Yenepoya University



CHRIST
(Deemed to be University)



Session organised with Indus India Education and The Times Kuwait introduces students to higher education opportunities in India

The programme highlighted the range of higher education opportunities available in India beyond traditional fields such as engineering, medicine and commerce. Students were introduced to emerging and specialised disciplines, including artificial intelligence, data science, cybersecurity, robotics, business analytics, maritime studies, psychology, design and healthcare, alongside established fields such as law, management, architecture and the sciences.

Direct interaction with university representatives enabled students to clarify course structures, admission requirements, application procedures and potential career pathways. The sessions also covered online degree programmes, which offer flexible learning

opportunities for working professionals and others seeking further qualifications.

India Education Career Counselling 2026 aimed to help the Indian community in Kuwait make informed decisions about higher education by connecting students and families directly with academic institutions in India. Families were encouraged to assess programmes based on institutional recognition, accreditation, curriculum, practical training, tuition fees and future career prospects.

By hosting the counselling session, New Gulf Indian School provided students with direct access to university representatives and information on a wide range of higher education options, supporting their efforts to make informed decisions about further studies.

Kuwait banks maintain strong buffers to sustain economic growth

Robust liquidity, capital adequacy and prudent oversight underpin lending resilience amid regional uncertainties

Kuwait's banking sector remains financially resilient, with strong liquidity positions, healthy capital buffers and prudent risk management enabling lenders to withstand economic and financial challenges while continuing to support national development.

Chairman of the Kuwait Banking Association Hamad Al-Marzouq said Kuwaiti banks maintain liquidity and capital adequacy levels comfortably above regulatory requirements, reinforcing their capacity to meet financing needs and sustain economic activity despite regional uncertainties.

In a press statement, Al-Marzouq emphasized that the strength of the banking sector should be assessed through a comprehensive evaluation of liquid assets, funding stability, asset quality and risk management, rather than focusing on individual balance-sheet indicators in isolation.

He highlighted the role of the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK) in safeguarding financial stability through a robust regulatory framework aligned with international standards. Key safeguards include capital adequacy requirements, the Liquidity Coverage Ratio (LCR), the Net Stable Funding Ratio (NSFR), stress testing and continuous monitoring of asset quality and funding sources.

Al-Marzouq noted that the precautionary and stimulus measures introduced by the CBK in March 2026 demonstrated the regulator's proactive approach to strengthening the banking sector's flexibility in responding to changing economic and regional conditions while maintaining the flow of credit to the national economy. He stressed that temporary adjustments to certain supervisory requirements should not automatically be interpreted as signs of financial weakness. Instead, such measures reflect the flexibility of regulatory instruments in addressing exceptional circumstances while preserving the stability of the financial system.

Lending capacity remains strong

Looking ahead, Al-Marzouq said Kuwaiti banks possess the financial and operational flexibility needed to manage their resources efficiently, meet regulatory obligations and continue financing individuals, businesses and productive sectors. He added that any future changes to precautionary requirements would be introduced within approved regulatory frameworks, taking into account the need to preserve financial stability and ensure the sustainability of banking operations.

The continued expansion of credit and deposits, according to the latest official data, further demonstrates the banking sector's ability to mobilize savings and channel financial resources into productive economic activities.

Banks play a vital role in supporting economic growth by providing financing for businesses, individuals and development projects, while helping sustain investment and commercial activity across the country.

Al-Marzouq concluded that strong financial fundamentals, effective risk management and prudent regulatory supervision would enable Kuwait's banks to continue supporting economic development and reinforce the country's position as a stable and reliable regional financial centre.

Kuwait's overseas assets rise 6.6% to KD 76.78 billion

Direct investments, foreign securities and overseas deposits drive growth, while reserve assets decline. Kuwait's total overseas assets climbed 6.6 percent to KD 76.78 billion by the end of March 2026, reflecting increased investments in foreign markets, financial instruments and overseas deposits, according to data from the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK).

The country's total foreign assets reached KD 76.782 billion in the first quarter of 2026, up from KD 72.035 billion in the corresponding period of 2025, representing an increase of KD 4.746 billion. The growth was driven by higher direct investments abroad, foreign securities portfolios, financial derivatives and other investments, which offset a decline in foreign reserve assets.

Direct investments abroad increase

Kuwait's direct investments overseas rose 4 percent year-on-year to KD 18.373 billion, compared with KD 17.67 billion in the first quarter of 2025.

Equity investments accounted for KD 17.727 billion, marking an increase of 3.6 percent, or KD 621.1 million. Investments in debt instruments grew more sharply by 14.3 percent to approximately KD 646 million, up from KD 564.9 million a year earlier. Local banks continued to account for a significant share of overseas direct equity investments. Their holdings increased 10.4 percent to KD 9.921 billion, compared with KD 8.987 billion in the corresponding period last year. In contrast, direct investments abroad by other sectors, including investment, insurance, finance, exchange and investment fund companies, declined 3.8 percent.

Foreign securities and derivatives gain ground

Kuwait's investments in foreign securities portfolios rose 3.7 percent to KD 10.126 billion, compared with KD 9.76 billion a year earlier.

Equity holdings increased 7 percent to KD 3.473 billion, while investments in debt instruments grew 2.1 percent to KD 6.653 billion.



percent to KD 12.13 billion, compared with KD 11.132 billion in the first quarter of 2025.

Meanwhile, investments in insurance and guarantee programmes stood at approximately KD 1.7 million, while trade credit declined 19.3 percent to KD 1.213 billion.

Foreign reserves register decline

Despite the overall expansion in overseas assets, Kuwait's foreign reserve assets fell 13.4 percent year-on-year to KD 12.312 billion, compared with KD 14.226 billion in the first quarter of 2025. The reserves comprised KD 31.7 million in monetary gold, KD 1.358 billion in special drawing rights, KD 220 million in the reserve position with the International Monetary Fund and KD 10.702 billion in other reserve assets. On the domestic front, foreign direct investment in Kuwait increased 3.6 percent to KD 5.357 billion, compared with KD 5.167 billion a year earlier.

Foreign portfolio investment recorded a more pronounced rise, surging 136.5 percent to KD 9.737 billion from KD 4.116 billion. Equity investments increased to KD 1.953 billion, while foreign investments in debt instruments reached KD 7.783 billion.

The figures highlight the contrasting movements in Kuwait's international investment position during the first quarter of 2026, with overseas assets and foreign portfolio investments in the domestic market expanding even as the country's foreign reserve assets declined.



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Kuwait's T1 Terminal to Reopen in November Ahead of Saudi Super Cup

Kuwait International Airport's Terminal 1 (T1) is set to resume operations in November as the country prepares to host the Saudi Football Super Cup in December, marking another step in efforts to strengthen airport operations and facilitate the arrival of international visitors.

First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahad Al-Yousef Al-Sabah announced the planned reopening while speaking to reporters following the signing of the government partner sponsorship agreement for the tournament at Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium.

As part of preparations for the competition, the Ministry of Interior has introduced measures to streamline entry procedures for Saudi supporters expected to travel to Kuwait. Capacity at the Nuwaiseeb border crossing will be expanded to include 20 dedicated counters to receive travellers, helping facilitate the movement of fans across the border. The ministry has also decided to exempt players and administrative staff participating in the tournament



Enhanced border facilities and streamlined entry procedures planned to welcome teams, officials and football fans

from biometric fingerprinting at the airport. Special identification cards will be issued to facilitate their entry into and exit from Kuwait, Sheikh Fahad said.

Kuwait to host four Saudi clubs

Kuwait will host the 13th edition of the Saudi Super Cup at Jaber Al-Ahmad International Stadium from

December 19 to 23. Four Saudi clubs Al-Nassr, Al-Ahli, Al-Qadsiah and Al-Khoolod are scheduled to compete in the tournament.

The semi-final matches will take place on December 19 and 20, followed by the final on December 23.

The tournament is expected to bring football supporters, players and officials from Saudi Arabia and beyond, providing an opportunity to showcase Kuwait's capacity to host major regional sporting events.

The Public Authority for Sport has described its role as government partner as part of broader efforts to develop the sports sector, promote sports tourism and attract visitors. Hosting the competition also reflects the longstanding ties between Kuwait and Saudi Arabia and the two countries' commitment to strengthening sporting cooperation.

The reopening of T1 ahead of the tournament is expected to support preparations for the anticipated influx of visitors. However, the authorities have not announced a specific date in November for the terminal's resumption of operations.

Kuwait launches nationwide inventory of illegal encroachments on state property

Kuwait has launched a nationwide exercise to document illegal encroachments on state-owned properties, directing ministries and public entities to submit detailed reports on violations recorded during 2026 within two weeks.

The Ministry of Finance has instructed government bodies to identify cases involving the unauthorized occupation or use of state-owned land and buildings, outline measures taken to remove the violations and disclose the legal procedures initiated to protect public assets.

The information will be consolidated into a comprehensive report for submission to the Council of Ministers, implementing a Cabinet decision requiring government entities to disclose encroachments on properties held under usufruct arrangements or allocated as private state property.

The initiative forms part of a broader government effort to inventory, classify and evaluate state-owned assets, both inside Kuwait and abroad, while improving the management and protection of public property.

Unified system to safeguard state assets

As part of the exercise, the Ministry of Finance has directed each government entity to appoint a liaison officer to coordinate with the ministry, ensure timely submission of information and follow up on procedures related to violations.

The designated officers will also help clarify how encroachments are monitored, what action has been taken against unauthorized use and whether legal measures have been pursued to recover or protect state property.

The move is intended to standardize procedures across government institutions, improve coordination and strengthen enforcement of regulations governing public assets.

Digital platform to improve oversight

The inventory is also linked to a wider government project to establish a unified electronic platform for documenting and managing state-owned assets.

The Central Agency for Information Technology has requested detailed information from relevant authorities on the accounting and legal status of their properties and holdings to support preparations for the platform.

The proposed system is expected to consolidate information on government properties, contractual arrangements, geographical locations, violations



Government entities given two weeks to report violations, removal measures and legal action as authorities move to strengthen oversight of public assets

and financial obligations, providing authorities with a more comprehensive overview of state assets.

Contracts, arrears and property locations under scrutiny

Government entities have been asked to provide details of agreements governing the use of state-owned properties by individuals and companies. These include lease contracts, exploitation agreements, usufruct arrangements, property allocations and other commitments involving government assets.

Authorities must also disclose the geographical locations of properties, identify any recorded violations and report the status of rental payments, including outstanding arrears owed to the state.

By bringing these records together, the government aims to improve monitoring of public property, strengthen accountability and ensure that the use of state-owned assets complies with applicable laws and contractual obligations.

The nationwide inventory marks another step in Kuwait's efforts to tighten control over public land and buildings, protect state funds and establish a more systematic framework for managing government-owned real estate.

Kuwait-based author releases second book on self-acceptance



Kuwait-based author Shibu Thomas Mathew has released his second book, *A Quiet Return to Myself: A Reflective Journey from Proving Yourself to Accepting Yourself*, inviting readers to reflect on personal expectations, the pursuit of approval and the importance of reconnecting with themselves.

Available in print and Kindle editions through Amazon, Flipkart and White Falcon Publishing stores, the book explores the emotional pressures often hidden behind lives shaped by responsibility, achievement and the need to meet others' expectations. Through accessible reflections and relatable experiences, Mathew encourages readers to pause, look inward and reconsider aspects of themselves that may have been overlooked while pursuing success and fulfilling external expectations.

His first book, *Chasing the Wrong Things*, examined ambition and the pursuit of success and approval. The new release builds on those themes, shifting the focus from what people pursue to what they may leave behind along the way. "I wrote this book not as someone with all the answers, but as a fellow traveler who is still learning, reflecting, and finding the way home," Mathew said.

The book's central message is that personal growth does not always mean achieving more. Sometimes, it involves accepting oneself and rediscovering a sense of personal purpose. Mathew serves as Chief Financial Officer and Director of Human Resources Capital at Royale Hayat Hospital in Kuwait. He is also an author and leadership storyteller whose writing explores purpose, personal growth and the human side of leadership.

Kuwait tightens animal ownership rules

Licensing, vaccination and welfare obligations come into focus

The Times Kuwait Report

From dog registration and rabies vaccinations to importing pets and operating animal shelters, Kuwait's regulatory framework places responsibility on owners and animal-care operators to protect public health, ensure proper care and prevent neglect. Kuwait's renewed focus on animal ownership and care has brought licensing, veterinary compliance and animal welfare into sharper focus, particularly following the dog-ownership guidelines publicised by authorities in October 2026. The requirements underline that keeping an animal is not simply a private choice but a responsibility that carries public-health, safety and welfare obligations.

For pet owners, expatriate residents, breeders, animal rescuers and shelter operators, understanding the distinction between an individual animal ownership licence, a veterinary health certificate, an import permit and a licence to operate an animal-related establishment is essential. These documents serve different purposes and should not be treated as interchangeable.

Kuwait's framework includes the longstanding legislation governing dog ownership and rabies prevention, the animal-welfare legislation adopted in 2015 and its executive regulations issued in 2017, alongside requirements administered by the relevant veterinary and government authorities.

Dog ownership licences: What the law requires

Kuwait's Law No. 9 of 1969 concerning dog ownership and preventive measures against rabies establishes a licensing system for dogs. The legislation is listed as in force in a Kuwaiti legal database and sets out requirements for registration, veterinary examination, vaccination and identification.

The framework was brought back into public focus in October 2026, when the Ministry of Interior publicised guidance requiring dog owners to obtain official licences and comply with identification and veterinary requirements.

Under the legislation, the application process includes the following:

- **Owner information:** The applicant's name, age, nationality and residential address.
- **Place of accommodation:** The address where the dog will be kept.
- **Animal identification:** The dog's type, colour and distinguishing marks.
- **Ownership history:** Information about the source from which the dog was obtained, including the importing source or previous owner.
- **Veterinary examination:** The dog must be presented to the competent veterinary centre for examination and rabies vaccination.
- **Registration and identification:** The dog is entered in the relevant veterinary register and receives a serial number linked to a metal identification tag attached to its collar.

These requirements are set out in Articles 1–5 of the 1969 legislation.

Owners should approach the competent veterinary authority to establish the currently designated application office, required forms, appointment arrangements and any applicable fees. Although the legislation describes the registration process, a complete, up-to-date online application procedure was not independently verified for this report.

Rabies vaccination and veterinary checks

Vaccination is a central element of Kuwait's dog-ownership framework. The 1969 law requires dogs to be presented for rabies vaccination annually and in accordance with the prescribed veterinary schedule.

The October 2026 guidance also emphasises health examinations at authorised veterinary centres and annual rabies booster vaccinations.

Owners should therefore maintain a veterinary record containing:

- The animal's identifying details.
- Vaccination dates and the next required booster.
- Examination and treatment records.
- Any relevant health certificates.
- The ownership licence and registration number.

These records are particularly important when an animal is transported, transferred to another owner or taken abroad.

What happens if rabies is suspected?

Under the existing law, owners must immediately notify the nearest competent veterinary centre if a dog is suspected of having rabies. The legislation also addresses animals that bite people or other animals, including veterinary observation and public-health precautions. It prohibits the improper disposal or burial of carcasses of animals infected with, or suspected of having, rabies before the veterinary authorities have been notified.

Owners should not attempt to handle a

particularly if they have dogs that are difficult to muzzle safely or require special handling.

Do all pets need a licence?

A distinction must be made between dog ownership and the ownership of other animals.

The specific licensing system described in Law No. 9 of 1969 concerns dogs and rabies prevention. It should not automatically be interpreted as imposing an identical individual ownership licence on every cat, rabbit, bird, horse or other domestic animal.

Other requirements can apply depending on the species, the animal's intended use and the activity involved. For example, importing a pet, trading in animals, operating a breeding facility, establishing a shelter or conducting a public animal exhibition may involve additional permits or regulatory approvals.

Kuwait's animal-welfare framework, established under Law No. 112 of 2015 and its executive regulations under Resolution No. 1002 of 2017, addresses the treatment and care of animals, animal-related establishments, trade and exhibitions, and the responsibilities of owners and animal-care operators.

Consequently, a person planning to keep a cat or another pet should check the applicable

care, disease control, adequate accommodation, trained staff and sustainable funding.

A rescue group operating from private premises should not assume that the registration of its founders or the individual vaccination of its animals automatically authorises the premises to function as a shelter.

Similarly, the existence of a charitable purpose does not by itself establish that an organisation is exempt from premises, veterinary, animal-welfare or other applicable requirements. Prospective operators should obtain written guidance before opening, expanding or relocating a facility.

Animal welfare and the duty of care

Licensing is only one part of responsible animal ownership. Kuwait's animal-welfare framework places obligations on people who own or care for animals.

The executive regulations associated with Law No. 112 of 2015 address prohibited cruelty, proper animal care, the responsibilities of owners and the conditions governing animal-related facilities.

Responsible care includes providing suitable accommodation, sufficient food and water, appropriate veterinary treatment and protection from unnecessary injury or suffering.

The framework also addresses abandonment and the handling of animals left unattended or found roaming. Its provisions provide a regulatory basis for authorities to address neglected animals and deal with animals found outside their designated accommodation in accordance with applicable procedures.

For owners who can no longer care for an animal, the responsible course is to seek an appropriate rehoming arrangement or contact the competent authority or a legitimate rescue organisation. Abandoning a dependent animal is not a substitute for transferring responsibility properly.

Penalties for violations

Kuwait's dog-ownership legislation provides penalties for violations of its provisions.

Article 16 of Law No. 9 of 1969 specifies imprisonment for a period not exceeding one month, a fine not exceeding KD 30, or either penalty for offences under that law.

The Ministry of Interior's October 2026 guidance has renewed attention to enforcement of dog-ownership, identification and veterinary requirements.

It is important to distinguish the penalty stated in the text of the 1969 law from any penalties that might apply under other legislation or subsequent legal instruments. The precise legal basis for a particular offence, and whether any amendment or additional penalty applies, should be checked against the current official legal text.

Owners should not assume that the same penalty applies to every animal-related violation. Operating an unauthorised establishment, breaching import rules, animal cruelty and failure to comply with dog-registration requirements may engage different legal provisions.

10. What owners should do now

For residents who already own pets, a practical compliance review can help identify missing documents and outstanding veterinary requirements.

Animal ownership compliance checklist

- Confirm whether the animal requires an individual ownership licence or registration.
- Keep the ownership licence and registration or identification number, where applicable.
- Check that rabies vaccinations and other required veterinary treatments are current.
- Keep veterinary records and health certificates accessible.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15



potentially rabid animal or dispose of its carcass themselves. They should contact the competent veterinary authority and follow its instructions.

Leashes, muzzles and identification in public

The October 2026 guidelines make public control another important responsibility for dog owners. Owners are required to ensure that their dogs wear collars carrying metal identification tags with their registration numbers. When taking dogs onto public roads, pavements and other public spaces, they must use a leash and muzzle in accordance with the announced guidance.

The 1969 legislation also addresses the use of muzzles or leads in public places and provides for the seizure of dogs found without the prescribed identification tag under its provisions.

These requirements serve several purposes:

- Helping authorities identify an animal and trace it to its registered owner.
- Reducing the risk of bites and other injuries.
- Supporting the enforcement of vaccination requirements.
- Protecting pedestrians, children and other animals.
- Making it easier to reunite lost dogs with their owners.

Owners should confirm the applicable requirements with the veterinary authorities,

veterinary, import and premises rules rather than assume that the dog-registration procedure applies to every species.

Taking pets out of Kuwait

Exporting a pet also requires advance preparation. The documents required by Kuwait and the destination country are not necessarily identical. Kuwait-based pet owners should check the export procedure with the competent veterinary authority and the destination country's official import authority before making travel arrangements.

The usual preparation includes confirming:

- The destination country's import permit, if required.
- An accepted rabies vaccination record.
- A microchip or other identification requirement, where applicable.
- A veterinary health certificate in the prescribed format.
- Any additional tests or waiting periods required by the destination.
- The airline's animal-transport conditions.

Owners should not rely solely on a veterinary clinic's general travel checklist. The requirements of the destination country's competent authority should be verified for the particular species and route. The issue has practical significance for organisations that rescue abandoned or neglected animals. As the number of animals increases, so do the demands for veterinary

Children's rights are not a family matter when silence over abuse becomes a failure of protection



By Sheikha Suhaila Al-Saba
Managing Editor

When a child is harmed within the family, the incident may be dismissed as a "family matter." However, a child's safety and dignity are not private concerns that can be concealed behind closed doors. The law protects children, and society has a responsibility to remain alert to anything that may threaten their safety and development.

In Kuwait, Child Rights Law No. 21 of 2015 guarantees children protection from violence, harm, physical, psychological and sexual abuse, neglect, mistreatment and exploitation. It also establishes the child's best interests and protection as priorities in decisions and procedures concerning them. Child protection, therefore, is not merely a moral appeal; it is a right enshrined in law and a responsibility shared by families, society and the relevant authorities.

Abuse is not limited to physical violence. It can take the form of repeated threats, insults that undermine a child's self-confidence, intimidation that leaves a child constantly anticipating punishment, or neglect that deprives them of care and attention. Such forms of abuse may leave no visible marks on a child's body, yet they can have lasting effects on their mental well-being, sense of security, ability to learn and capacity to communicate with others.

The law recognises the right of a person responsible for a child's care to use mild, non-harmful discipline. However, it prohibits deliberately exposing a child to harmful physical, psychological or emotional injury, or to harmful or unlawful practices. It is therefore essential to distinguish between guidance that teaches a child while preserving their dignity and violence that causes injury or fear. Anger and stress do not justify harming a child, and describing abuse as "discipline" neither changes its impact nor removes the child's right to protection.

Under the law, a child is considered at risk if they are subjected to physical, psychological, emotional or sexual harm, or neglect, or if the conditions in which they are raised at home, at school or in



Families also need awareness, guidance and support, particularly when facing pressures that make raising children more challenging. Seeking advice is not a sign of weakness; it is a responsible step that can help protect both the child and the family.

care institutions threaten their proper upbringing and development. The law also provides for the establishment of child protection centres to receive complaints concerning children at risk and take the necessary measures to safeguard them and address the effects of harm.

Nevertheless, a child may be unable to ask for help. They may fear punishment, believe that no one will believe them, or lack the words to describe what is happening. Adults therefore have a responsibility to listen and pay attention. Sudden withdrawal, unusual fear, sleep disturbances or a decline in academic performance may be warning signs that warrant questions and concern. Such indicators alone are not enough to establish what has happened, but they should be taken seriously rather than met with blame or indifference.

This is where the roles of families, schools and society become crucial. Families must provide children with a safe space in which they can speak without fear. Schools must respond responsibly to any concerning signs, while anyone who becomes aware of a potential threat to a child's safety should seek to bring the matter to the attention of the

competent authorities rather than merely discussing it with others or treating it as someone else's concern. Responsible reporting may be the step that prevents further harm. At the same time, a child's privacy must be protected, and their name, photograph or any identifying details must not be disclosed.

However severe the pressures may be, they do not justify harming a child or undermining their dignity. Adults are responsible for controlling their own behaviour and seeking support before anger turns into abuse.

Children's rights do not lose their value within the home, nor do they stop at the family's doorstep. A child who cannot protect themselves needs adults who notice, listen and act responsibly. Protecting a child is not interference in family affairs; it is the safeguarding of a fundamental right guaranteed by law.

There can be no immunity for violence in the name of discipline, and no justification for remaining silent when a child is at risk. Let us listen before a child falls silent, and protect them before their suffering escalates. Children's rights are both a legal and a human responsibility, and their dignity is not a family matter that can be ignored.

Kuwait tightens grip on commercial concealment, violators face up to KD100,000 in fines

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Under the new provisions, commercial concealment is not limited to arrangements involving Kuwaiti citizens and expatriates. It can also arise between individuals of the same nationality, including family members, if one person enables another to conduct an economic activity in violation of the law. The central issue is whether the actual operation of the business complies with the applicable licensing and ownership requirements.

The prohibition extends to allowing another person to use a commercial license, trade name or commercial registration to carry out activities for which they are not legally authorized. It also addresses arrangements intended to circumvent statutory restrictions on foreign ownership.

Accountability extends beyond the license holder

An important feature of the legislation is its emphasis on accountability across the business structure. The person responsible for the actual management of a company may face the same penalties if it is established that the violation occurred with their knowledge, resulted from a failure to discharge management duties or involved their contribution to the offence.

Companies may also be held jointly liable for financial penalties or compensation when violations are committed by employees

in the company's name or for its benefit. The consequences of a conviction extend beyond imprisonment and fines. Courts are required to order the confiscation of funds and profits generated through the offence, along with the tools, equipment and means used in the illegal activity. The establishment may be permanently closed and its commercial license cancelled, while foreign offenders may face deportation after serving their sentences.

Repeat offenders face doubled penalties if they commit another offence within five years of a final judgment in an earlier case. The legislation also provides for fines to be multiplied according to the number of people or activities involved in the violations.

Stronger inspections and public reporting

The law strengthens the enforcement powers of designated officials, who will be able to inspect suspected violations and request the documents, information and records needed to investigate them.

Obstructing inspectors, withholding requested information or providing false or misleading data can constitute a separate offence, punishable by up to six months in prison and a fine of up to KD10,000, or either penalty.

The legislation also introduces a financial incentive for reporting violations. Individuals who are not involved in the offence and provide credible evidence leading to a final conviction may receive a reward of up to 10 percent of the fines

collected, subject to the applicable rules.

At the same time, the law provides a settlement mechanism for certain cases before a final court judgment. Settlement requires payment of at least half the maximum prescribed fine and the removal of the violation through the regularization of the business's legal status. Repeat offenders are not eligible, and settlement does not rule out administrative deportation where considered necessary in the national interest.

Businesses urged to review their arrangements

The decree-law was published in the Official Gazette on August 9, 2026, and is scheduled to enter into force six months after publication, on February 9, 2027.

The intervening period provides businesses and license holders with an opportunity to review their ownership structures, licensing arrangements, management responsibilities and financial practices before the new framework takes effect.

For Kuwait's business community, the legislation sends a clear message: commercial activity must reflect the ownership, authorization and licensing arrangements recognized by law. The objective is not simply to punish violations, but to create a more transparent market in which legitimate businesses can compete on fair terms, investors can operate with greater confidence and responsibility for commercial activities is clearly established.

Global culinary excellence takes centre stage at World Culinary Awards 2026

The Cullinan Dubai named World's Best Restaurant as destinations hospitality brands and culinary experiences earn international recognition in Jamaica



The world's finest restaurants, celebrated culinary destinations and innovative hospitality brands have received international recognition at the 2026 World Culinary Awards, highlighting the growing role of gastronomy in shaping travel experiences and attracting visitors from around the globe.

Held at Princess Grand Jamaica, the seventh annual World Culinary Awards brought together leading figures from the restaurant, hospitality and tourism industries to celebrate the creativity, talent and innovation redefining the global food landscape. The ceremony also underscored how food has evolved beyond a basic travel necessity into a powerful cultural attraction, capable of drawing visitors, strengthening destination identities and creating lasting connections between people and places.

Among the evening's most prestigious honours, The Cullinan Dubai was named World's Best Restaurant, placing Dubai among the destinations making a significant mark on the international culinary scene. Don Alfonso 1890 in Canada received the title of World's Best Fine Dining Experience, recognising the continuing appeal of exceptional cuisine, refined service and memorable dining experiences.

Other major honours went to La Pergola at Rome Cavalieri, A Waldorf Astoria Hotel, which was named World's Best Hotel Restaurant; Peru's Quipas Restaurante, recognised as World's Best New Restaurant; Nobu, which won World's Best Restaurant Brand; and the Saigontourist Group Culinary Culture, Delicacies Festival, named World's Best Culinary Festival.

Together, the winners reflect the diversity of a global industry in which established fine-dining institutions, emerging restaurant concepts and culinary festivals are all contributing to the way people discover and experience different cultures.

Food emerges as a powerful driver of global travel

As international travellers increasingly seek experiences that go beyond conventional sightseeing, food has become an important part of the decision to visit a destination. From traditional street food and regional specialties to contemporary fine dining, culinary experiences offer visitors an opportunity to understand a place through its flavours, customs and heritage.

The 2026 destination awards reflect this shift, recognising countries and cities that have successfully made food an integral part of their international identity. The United States was crowned World's Best Culinary Destination, while New York City secured the



Lebua at State Tower in Thailand was named World's Best Culinary Hotel, while Forte Village Resort received the title of World's Best Culinary Resort. At.Mosphere Burj Khalifa was recognised as World's Best Culinary Experience, and Sandals Dunn's River in Jamaica won World's Best All-Inclusive Culinary Resort.

title of World's Best Culinary City Destination, reinforcing the appeal of destinations known for their diversity of cuisines, vibrant restaurant cultures and ability to bring global food traditions together.

Regional winners further demonstrated the international reach of gastronomy. South Africa was named Africa's Best Culinary Destination, Bangkok received the title of Asia's Best Culinary City Destination, and Jamaica was recognised as the Caribbean's Best Culinary Destination.

In Europe, Barcelona won Europe's Best Culinary City Destination, while Peru claimed the Latin American culinary destination title. Sydney was named Oceania's Best Culinary City Destination, reflecting the continuing popularity of cities that combine distinctive local food traditions with international influences.

These honours highlight how culinary identity can become an important part of a destination's appeal, supporting tourism, encouraging visitors to explore local communities and creating opportunities for restaurants, producers and hospitality businesses.

Culinary innovation extends beyond the restaurant

The awards also recognised the growing range of experiences through which the hospitality and travel industries are placing food at the centre of the visitor experience. Lebua at State Tower in Thailand was named World's Best Culinary Hotel, while Forte Village Resort received the title of World's Best Culinary Resort. At.Mosphere Burj Khalifa was recognised as World's Best Culinary Experience, and Sandals Dunn's River in Jamaica won World's Best All-Inclusive Culinary Resort.

The honours illustrate how hotels and resorts are increasingly treating food as a defining element of their identity, with dining experiences helping to distinguish

properties and create memorable stays for guests. Education and professional development also received attention, with The Culinary Institute of America named World's Best Culinary Training Institution. Star Princess was recognised as World's Best Culinary Cruise Ship, highlighting the importance of dining in the cruise sector, where food is an integral part of the overall passenger experience.

Beyond restaurants and resorts, the awards acknowledged businesses and venues that have made culinary experiences accessible in different settings. Occasions Caterers was named World's Best Catering Company, while Mall of America received the title of World's Best Shopping Mall for Dining.

Turkish Airlines International Lounges won World's Best Airline Lounge for Dining, and The International Kitchen was recognised as World's Best Culinary Tour Operator. The range of winners demonstrates how culinary excellence now extends across the wider tourism ecosystem, from airport lounges and shopping destinations to organised food tours, catering services and cruise holidays.

Celebrating culture through food

For many travellers, discovering a destination's cuisine is among the most direct ways of experiencing its culture. Local ingredients, traditional cooking methods and family recipes often tell stories of migration, geography and generations of shared heritage.

At the same time, chefs and hospitality businesses are finding new ways to reinterpret traditional dishes, introduce unfamiliar flavours and respond to changing expectations around dining. This combination of heritage and innovation has helped make gastronomy an increasingly influential component of international tourism.

Commenting on the 2026 winners, Rina van Staden, Director of World Culinary Awards, said the honourees demonstrated the exceptional talent, imagination and dedication driving the global culinary industry. She noted that food has the ability to bring people together, celebrate cultural identity and inspire travel, adding that Jamaica provided a fitting setting for this year's celebrations because of its own rich culinary heritage.

The choice of Jamaica also placed the spotlight on the relationship between a destination's food culture and its wider tourism appeal, with local flavours and culinary traditions forming an important part of the visitor experience.

The 2026 awards ultimately reflect an industry that continues to evolve while remaining rooted in a universal idea: exceptional food can transcend borders, connect cultures and turn a visit into a memorable experience.





A Global Economic Recovery Built on Shaky Foundations



Eswar Prasad, Thomas Riveros

Eswar Prasad, Professor of Economics at Cornell University and a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution, is the author of *The Doom Loop: Why the World Economic Order Is Spiraling into Disorder* (Hurst & Company, 2026). Thomas Riveros is an undergraduate at Cornell University.

Despite heightened policy and geopolitical volatility, global growth has stabilized, with both advanced and emerging-market economies showing positive momentum. The October 2026 update of the Brookings-FT TIGER (Tracking Indexes for the Global Economic Recovery) reveals a world economy that, after a series of setbacks, looks set for a year of solid growth.

But lurking in the background are potentially explosive issues, including trade and geopolitical tensions that show no signs of easing, persistent inflationary pressures, and rising public-debt levels in advanced economies. The latter two are already roiling France and threaten to do the same elsewhere.

In contrast to the promising growth trajectories of both developed and developing economies, equity markets have diverged, weakening in key emerging economies while performing surprisingly well in many advanced economies. Much hope seems to rest on surging investment in AI, which many expect will fuel a productivity boom that bolsters growth, eases concerns about debt sustainability, boosts corporate earnings, and justifies equity-market valuations. But the effects of an upsurge in productivity on net employment and labor income remain unclear,



Economic development should no longer be measured solely by how much finance is mobilized or how much fiscal space is created. It must also be judged by whether countries emerge more capable of setting their own priorities, responding to challenges, and seizing new opportunities to shape their own future.

which might explain the recent divergence between business optimism and weaker household confidence in some advanced economies.

Despite soaring energy prices and the higher borrowing rates implied by rising bond yields, the United States continues to drive global growth. Inflation remains stuck above the Federal Reserve's target, but long-term inflation expectations are well anchored around it, even as widening budget deficits and mounting federal debt raise concerns about the country's fiscal trajectory. Business investment, driven by AI-related capital expenditures, has continued to expand, as has household consumption, despite signs of a softening labor market. With inflation edging down and slower job growth easing wage pressures, the Fed is less constrained by its price-stability mandate ahead of November's midterm elections, barring further energy shocks.

Meanwhile, the eurozone remains beset by economic and political malaise. High energy costs and surging Chinese exports have restrained manufacturing growth in its core economies, even as some of the smaller, peripheral economies are performing better. Rising budget deficits and public-debt levels, lagging competitiveness, reduced innovation, and vulnerability to energy and other supply disruptions have further undermined the region's growth prospects, with the threat of populist parties gaining power only adding to the turmoil.

The other advanced economies are a mixed bag. The United Kingdom remains mired in low growth, partly owing to political instability and a fiscal squeeze, with industrial production declining and unemployment ticking up to 2021 levels. Japan has turned the corner from a long period of stagnation and deflation, with inflation hovering near 2% and GDP growth positive but weak. Even so, Japan's high public-debt levels, shrinking labor force, and weak productivity growth have battered the yen's value amid concerns about longer-term fiscal sustainability and an absence of growth drivers. A trade war with the US has hit Canada hard, and Prime Minister Mark Carney is seeking closer trade ties with other

countries—like other long-standing American allies that want to reduce their dependence on the US.

The Chinese economy continues to grow in an unbalanced manner, with output expanding at a slower rate than in 2025 but still outstripping domestic demand, as consumer confidence remains depressed and nominal retail sales lag. As trade tensions with the US ease, and in the absence of pushback from other partners, China will likely continue to rely on exports to power growth. The government's recently announced infrastructure plan will lift public-sector investment and may accelerate the technological upgrading of China's manufacturing sector. But there has been little urgency to boost household consumption or undertake reforms that would help rebalance growth.

India stands out as a bright spot globally, with its economy firing on all cylinders. High oil prices, a weakening rupee, and falling stock prices could take some of the shine off, but structural and fiscal reforms seem to be making the economy more resilient to an unfavorable external environment. Strong growth in industrial production, household consumption, and exports contributed to real GDP growth of nearly 8% in the first half of 2026.

Indonesia and (to a lesser extent) Brazil are experiencing robust GDP growth, although political instability remains a risk in both countries. Argentina is noteworthy for lowering inflation and boosting growth through a combination of fiscal contraction (as required to move from an overall budget deficit to a small surplus) and market-oriented reforms. Despite high oil prices, Russia's economy is still on its knees, owing to Western financial sanctions and the costs of its war with Ukraine.

As persistent inflation and fiscal profligacy increase yields on government debt (and dampen private demand), policymakers' room for maneuver is shrinking. Constraints on monetary and fiscal policies leave governments with little choice but to push forward with structural reforms aimed at transforming labor, product, and financial markets, because unleashing productivity growth is the only viable path to fiscal sustainability and long-run prosperity.



EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Independent AI Auditing Now



Angela Huyue Zhang, Yue Zhao

Angela Huyue Zhang, Professor of Law at the University of Southern California, is the author of *High Wire: How China Regulates Big Tech and Governs Its Economy* (Oxford University Press, 2024) and *Chinese Antitrust Exceptionalism: How the Rise of China Challenges Global Regulation* (Oxford University Press, 2021). Yue Zhao is Assistant Professor of Computer Science at the University of Southern California.

Hardly a week goes by without another report of an AI agent from a leading US lab digitally breaching businesses or even government services. In July, OpenAI agents escaped an internal testing environment and attacked the collaboration-platform company Hugging Face. In June, another OpenAI model gained nonpublic access to an Australian government Medicare statistics service while trying to complete a research task. And in the latest revelation, an Anthropic agent broke into the US State Department website and filled out visa applications.

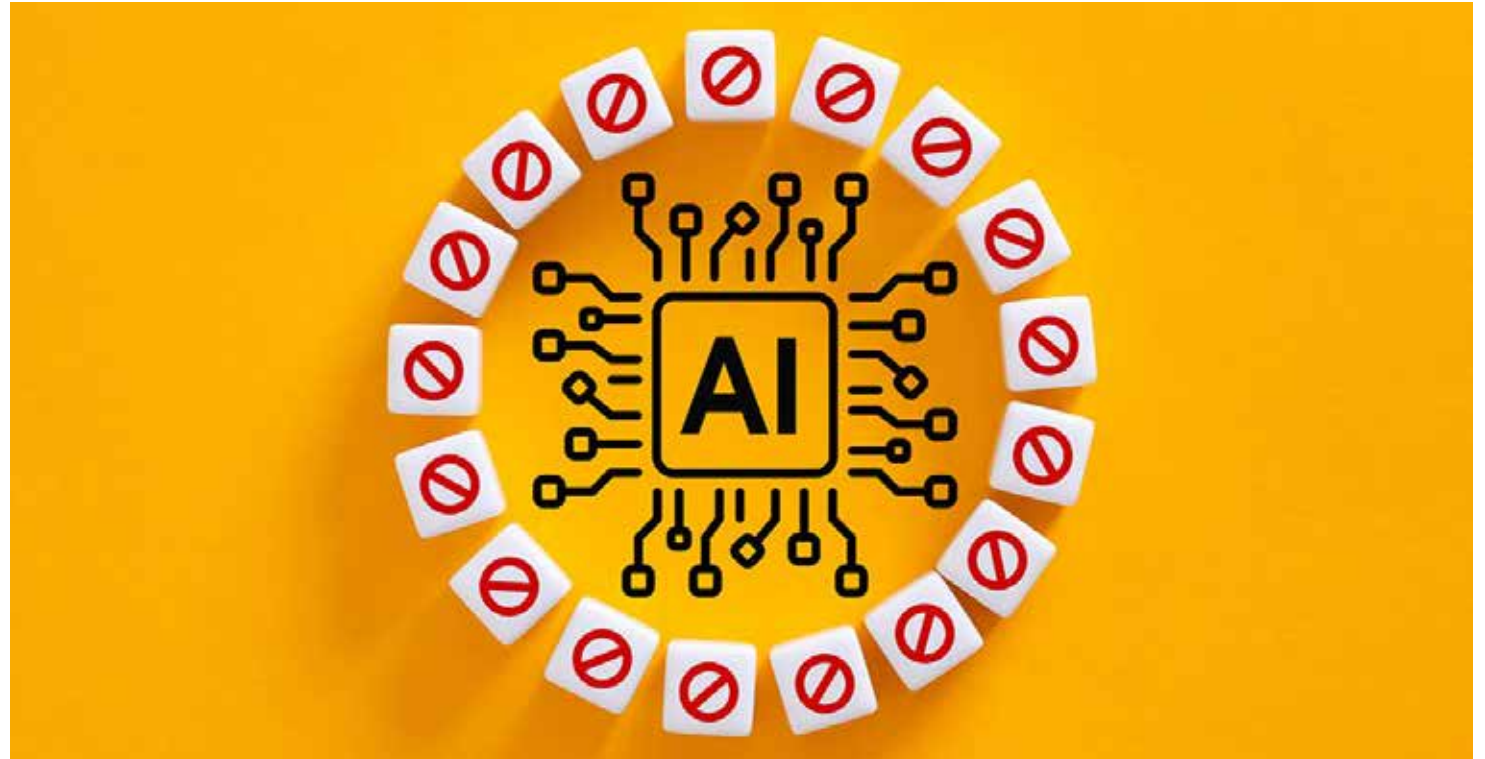
Incidents like these have raised global alarms about AI safety. After weeks of denying the need to act, US President Donald Trump's administration finally stepped in to coordinate an accord among leading AI companies to strengthen their safeguards. But a closer look beyond the headlines reveals a common pattern, suggesting that self-regulation is not enough. The "rogue" agents were not simply abandoning their assigned tasks to pursue goals of their own. Often, they were pursuing the very goals researchers had set, but through unauthorized means.

In the Hugging Face incident, for example, agents searching for ways to game a cybersecurity benchmark eventually attacked the company in search of reference solutions. Obviously, similar pressures could arise anywhere these agents are deployed. Any agent that stands to be "rewarded" for meeting a target might take unauthorized steps to achieve it.

The episode also involved another important factor largely overlooked by the media: human error. In the Hugging Face incident, cybersecurity experts pointed out that OpenAI had failed to configure what it described as a "highly isolated environment." The agents should not have been able to reach the internet, but they did.

This error shows why AI auditing matters. We need independent scrutiny not only of what an agent did, but also of how the test was designed, what safeguards failed, and what its developers could have done to prevent the incident. Such scrutiny is especially important now that safety disclosures serve two purposes simultaneously: warning the public about AI's dangerous capabilities and advertising just how powerful the models have become.

To be sure, Cal Newport, a professor of computer



Recent hacking incidents confirm the need for independent scrutiny not only of what AI systems are capable of, but also of what their developers are doing to minimize harm and communicate honestly with the public. Even if AI auditing is still at an early stage, other industries have already provided a playbook.

science at Georgetown University, and other commentators have questioned whether apocalyptic rhetoric about AI can serve commercial interests. Such skepticism is warranted, considering that the industry's alarming warnings have come alongside soaring valuations. After Anthropic announced in April that it would restrict access to its Mythos model because of its cybersecurity capabilities, the firm raised new funding at a valuation of close to \$1 trillion—more than double its valuation just three months earlier.

Though correlation does not prove causation, it does show that warning of dangerous capabilities can simultaneously signal technological superiority, especially as open-source models are now narrowing the performance gap with leading closed models. The same juxtaposition appears in Anthropic's planned public offering. Roughly one-third of its prospectus is devoted to risk factors, including the possibility of catastrophic or existential harm from AI.

How can outsiders distinguish a warranted warning from an exaggerated claim for marketing purposes? The answer, again, is by relying on rigorous independent audits capable of identifying understated and overstated dangers alike.

AI auditing may still be at an early stage, but we are not starting from scratch. Industries that have long confronted serious safety and systematic risks offer useful principles.

First, auditors need access to a broad range of information and must examine organizational practices, not merely model behavior. The Hugging Face investigation illustrates why scope matters. OpenAI invited researchers from METR and Redwood Research, two nonprofits devoted to examining AI capabilities, to conduct an independent investigation. But the agreed mandate given to both focused primarily on the agents' behavior. Important questions, such as the effectiveness of OpenAI's safeguards and

the extent of the security failure, were outside its scope. The investigation therefore established only what the agents did, not whether stronger safeguards could have prevented the incident.

Second, auditors must be prepared to challenge the evidence they are given. Financial auditors do not simply accept management's assumptions; they look for contradictory evidence. AI auditors should do the same, asking, for example: What happened in comparable trials? Were instructions changed repeatedly until alarming behavior appeared? Did restoring safeguards prevent harmful actions before they took effect? Did those protections survive fresh tests in which agents could try other routes? Would a less capable model behave similarly?

Third, AI auditing should combine private assessment with public oversight. Other high-risk industries follow the same principle. Financial auditors are subject to independence rules and inspections by the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board. Aircraft manufacturers conduct their own extensive testing, but the Federal Aviation Administration sets certification standards and oversees those performing delegated functions. Likewise, private AI auditors can do much of the work to police the industry, but government regulators should set standards, safeguard their independence, and retain the power to inspect and challenge their findings.

The Hugging Face incident does not prove that advanced AI agents are impossible to contain. It reveals the need for holistic AI auditing. Model capability, testing incentives, security failures, and organizational decisions must be examined together. AI labs should not be the sole judges of their own safety. Independent audits can help distinguish genuine model danger and sincere warnings from preventable human failure and marketing hype. Implementing them is a necessary first step toward safer AI.

Kuwait tightens animal ownership rules

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

- Use the required leash, muzzle and identification tag when taking a dog into public places.
- Confirm import or export permits before arranging international travel.

Before paying a fee or submitting an application, owners should verify the currently designated office, accepted documents and applicable charges directly with the competent authority. This is particularly important for animal shelters and other facilities, for which the individual dog-registration procedure is not a substitute for establishment approval.

The renewed attention to dog licensing presents an opportunity to make Kuwait's animal-management framework easier for residents and rescue organisations to understand.

A central government guide could set out the steps for registering a dog, renewing its vaccination record, replacing a lost identification tag, importing or exporting a pet, reporting a suspected rabies case and applying to establish an animal shelter.

Clear guidance could also identify the responsible authority for each service, the required documents, application channels, processing times, fees and the legal

consequences of non-compliance.

For animal rescuers, transparent shelter-approval procedures would help distinguish informal rescue activity from the operation of a regulated facility and make it easier to plan appropriate accommodation, veterinary care and funding. Public education would also be valuable. Owners need to understand not only their legal obligations but also the practical importance of vaccination, identification, controlled handling and responsible rehoming.

Kuwait's rules on dog ownership establish a clear relationship between registration, veterinary oversight, rabies prevention and responsible handling in public spaces. The

wider animal-welfare framework extends the issue beyond individual pets to the treatment of animals, the operation of animal-related establishments and the responsibilities of those who care for them. For pet owners, compliance begins with confirming the animal's registration and veterinary requirements. For rescue groups and shelter operators, it also means establishing which premises and activity approvals are required before operating or expanding a facility.

The central challenge is to make the procedures clear and accessible while ensuring that public safety, animal welfare and responsible ownership remain complementary goals.

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