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## Million-strong diaspora, a living-bridge in boosting India-Kuwait relations

• *Bilateral relations strong and ready for an upgrade* • *We could also explore trade settlements in local currencies. We hope that Kuwait could consider connecting its KNET payment infrastructure to India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI).* • *A million Indians reside in Kuwait and send back remittances of USD1 billion. A community of a million people means that there are a million ambassadors between our nations.* • *"When it comes to making decisions, our two yardsticks are national interest and global good.* • *India is one of the largest consumers of oil and gas in the world and Kuwait is India's sixth biggest energy partner.*

By Reaven D'Souza  
 Executive Managing Editor

India and Kuwait are ready for an upgrade of the strong historical relationship between the two countries, India's External Affairs Minister (EAM) Dr. S. Jaishankar told The Times Kuwait during his one-day visit to the country on 18 August.

The minister also praised His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al Sabah, as Kuwait's former foreign minister elevated bilateral ties. He also added that India and Kuwait shared centuries-old bonds of goodwill and friendship, and that the contemporary partnership between the two countries was expanding steadily.



Dr. S. Jaishankar with  
 HH Sheikh Sabah Al Khaled

Elaborating further the minister said "Let me highlight some crucial aspects of our ties. A million Indians reside in Kuwait and send back remittances of USD1 billion. This country is our sixth biggest energy partner. The Kuwait Investment Authority (KIA) has made substantial portfolio investments in India. We believe that there is growing Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) interest now. Bilateral trade has long been steady at \$10-15 billion. Many Indian companies are involved in infrastructure projects and offer services across multiple domains. Politically, we have long been understanding of each other's interests. Overall, the relationship is strong and in many ways, ready for an upgrade."

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التراث  
 الهندي  
**Indian**  
 heritage

- Souq Safat**  
Kuwait City, Kuwait
- Kuwait Magic**  
Abu Halifa, Kuwait
- Sama Mall**  
Eqaila, Kuwait
- The Avenues**  
Al Rai, Kuwait
- Khiran Mall**  
Khiran, Kuwait
- Souq Al Baraha**  
Shop No. 1215  
Kingdom Of Bahrain

Opening Soon

- Souq Al Baraha**  
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# Kuwaiti investors invited to invest in Uzbek projects

Visiting Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan Bakhtiyor Saidov invited Kuwaiti investors to explore lucrative opportunities in his country, particularly in infrastructure and energy sectors.

The Uzbek minister, who headed a high-level economic delegation to Kuwait last week, delivered the invitation during his visit to the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI). In his address to the gathering at KCCI Minister Saidov underscored the development of remarkable relations with Kuwait in recent years and emphasized the strength of the bilateral ties between the two nations.

He pointed out that the visiting delegation comprised representatives of various Uzbek business sectors including, food production, agriculture, light industries, medical supplies, sweet factories and poultry farms.

On his part, Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry Saleh Al-Azmi, noted that recent international challenges significantly shifted the landscape of global



trade policies. He affirmed the importance of adopting modern policies and cementing the principles of free trade and establishing multilateral and bilateral international agreements to enhance trade exchange rates and diversify its sources.

Al-Azmi added that a proposed draft memorandum of understanding on commercial

cooperation, initiated by the Uzbek side, will be the cornerstone for establishing a bilateral framework to boost trade exchange rates. He pointed to the formation of a joint trade committee to explore available investment and trade cooperation opportunities.

Following the meeting, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry released a statement

explaining that this meeting follows the Kuwaiti-Uzbek Investment and Trade Forum held last May.

The Uzbek delegation included 60 businesspeople and 15 officials representing the ministries of industry, commerce, finance, and health, along with members from Uzbekistan's chambers of commerce and industry.



## Bader Al Shuaib first Kuwaiti to reach both poles

Bader Al Shuaib became the first Kuwaiti to visit both the North and South geographic poles. Last month Bader reached the North Pole onboard the Russian nuclear powered icebreaker ship, post his South Pole visit, situated in the heart of Antarctica, on New Year's Eve 2022.

Both poles are considered the farthest points on earth to travel to, where all directions point to either North or South only. Bader is currently rounding up his travels around the world to every country that is recognized by Kuwait, with

at least 170 countries under his belt so far.

On his journey to the poles, Bader says that they were extraordinary experiences, each one unique, as the journey to reach them clearly varies, and climate-wise too they differ.

Bader is steadfast on educating his followers on Instagram about the two poles and how they distinctly differ, and he would like to correct any misinformation many have about the two poles and the journey to get to them. Bader reaffirms that there are tourist expeditions available every year, however, they come at a high price.

## Nepali embassy engages with diaspora to improve services

By Raj Malla  
Special to The Times Kuwait

Embassy of Nepal held an informal community gathering at the embassy premises last week, to solicit feedback from various leaders and organizations, including the community's Federation of Journalists. The event was aimed at enhancing the embassy's efficiency and effectiveness in addressing the needs of Nepali citizens in Kuwait.

Nepali Ambassador H.E. Ghanshyam Lamsal, who has been in office for almost ten months, detailed the embassy's accomplishments, including rescuing and repatriating 759 domestic workers, certifying approximately 87,000 demand letters, and renewing or issuing over 13,000 passports. Additionally, an amount of KD185,000 was sent to Nepal as employee compensation.

The ambassador also reported that 51 Nepalis are currently imprisoned in Kuwait, with cases ranging from drug-related offenses to murder. Over the past ten months,

63 Nepalis have died in Kuwait and Iraq, with their remains repatriated. The embassy has also facilitated the return of 16 ill workers to Nepal and is currently treating four others.

Feedback from the event highlighted several areas for improvement, including upgrading the embassy's facilities,



addressing issues related to the recruitment and treatment of domestic workers, and enhancing public awareness about traffic safety and social media regulations. Ambassador Lamsal assured the community that these suggestions would be given due consideration to further improve the embassy's services and operations.



## 'India Utsav' at LuLu Hypermarket a kaleidoscope of culture, heritage, products

As India celebrated its 78th Independence Day, LuLu Hypermarket transformed into a tri-colored symphony of all-things-Indian during the week-long 'India Utsav' promotion. Held from 14 - 20 August, the cultural and shopping extravaganza was a true celebration of the Indian spirit, showcasing the country's diversity and its unique blend of tradition and innovation.

The festivities kicked off with a grand inauguration ceremony on 14 August at the Al-Rai outlet, as Indian Ambassador to Kuwait H.E. Adarsh

Swaika along with LuLu Kuwait's top management, revealed the wonders of the fest amidst the melodies of a traditional Indian music band.

The 'India Science Expo & Monuments Expo' for students was a showstopper that displayed the creativity of young minds in exhibiting India's inspiring scientific advancements and architectural marvels. Winners of the expo were rewarded with exciting prizes, while all participants took home consolation prizes. The 'Future India' wall was another thought-provoking display. As customers ventured

through the hypermarket, they discovered a treasure trove of exclusive offers and discounts on products, ranging from fragrant Indian spices, groceries, meat & fish, fruits and vegetables to health and beauty, households, and fashion.

The 'Indian Ethnic Fashion and Food-Couples Show' was a visual feast, bringing out the elegance of Indian attire, and the diversity of its cuisines. Selfie enthusiasts were able to snap memories against vibrant backdrops of traditional monuments and displays, while cultural programs performed by Indian school

students filled the air with music and dance that kept everyone entertained.

Enticing aromas wafted from special food stalls and free sampling counters, tempting taste buds with authentic Indian flavors. LuLu Hypermarket also unveiled an array of new Indian products, catering to the diverse preferences of its customers.

LuLu Hypermarket's 'India Utsav' celebration was a cultural spectacle that will be remembered and cherished by shoppers, a true celebration of India's diversity, spirit and splendor.

# Kuwait banks total assets reach historic highs

MEED magazine reported that Kuwaiti banks possess total assets amounting to \$384.7 billion as of the end of the first quarter of 2024, which is their highest historically, as they have continued to rise since the first quarter of 2022 when they reached \$326.8 billion, jumping to \$382.8 billion by the end of 2023.

MEED indicated that the total loans granted by the local banking sector amounted to about 228.9 billion dollars, and in return, the total customer deposits with banks amounted to 297.6 billion dollars, the banks achieved revenues during the first quarter of the current year, amounting to 3.26 billion dollars.

The net interest margin was 2.87%, and it achieved a net income of \$1.34 billion, pointing out that the banking sector was able to achieve good performance, benefiting from the stronger net interest margins that flowed thanks to the rise in global interest rates in recent years.

The profits of the banking sector in general

grew by 28.7% in 2023, according to the "Kamco Invest" report, and banks continued to achieve good growth rates during the current year, as the National Bank of Kuwait witnessed a 6.2% increase in Net Profits for the first half of 2024 to reach 292.4% million dinars, while Kuwait Finance House (KFH) announced a 2.3% increase in net profits to 341.2 dinars for the same period.

The magazine stated that considering prudent financial regulations and supervision, Kuwaiti banks maintained strong reserves and buffers of capital and liquidity, while their profitability recovered from their lowest levels during the Corona pandemic, and non-performing loans remained low and well covered by provisions. MEED said that one of the challenges facing Kuwaiti banks is that the local market is still unable to provide sufficient lending opportunities to significantly impact the banks' performance. This partly reflects familiar issues related to Kuwait's



unique political structure.

It pointed out that there is a possibility of another major local merger in Kuwait, with Boubyan Bank and Gulf Bank conducting a preliminary feasibility study for a possible merger, and further merger steps may lead to a traditional bank acquiring another that is compatible with Islamic Sharia, or acquire an Islamic branch. As of now, all options remain open.

The magazine stated that the net interest

margin situation reflects Kuwait's distinctive policy approach, as the Central Bank of Kuwait does not systematically follow the interest changes imposed by the US Federal Reserve, which means that banks still need more support, and usually, for every two or three changes made by the Federal Reserve, one change in Kuwait.

According to an analysis by Kuwaiti research firm Marmore, the approach of skipping interest rate adjustments means that while the gross net interest margin changed in line with the global interest rate, the magnitude of the change was smaller. For this reason, the net interest margin of all Kuwaiti banks may not decline in the expected next monetary easing cycle.

Marmore notes that while banks such as National Bank of Kuwait expect their net interest margin to stabilize this year, other banks have highlighted the difficulty of providing guidance for net interest margin given the uncertainty around the timing and size of interest rate cuts.



## MEW to set up specialized unit for production of solar panel

Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy (MEW) revealed that the ministry has budgeted for a solar panel production unit for the fiscal year 2024-25, which has won approval from the Central Authority for Public Tenders. The Authority will oversee the submission, evaluation, and awarding of tenders to specialized companies for setting up the unit.

Establishing the workshop is a step towards

increasing the use of renewable energy in electricity production and achieving the goal of generating 15 percent of electricity from renewable sources by 2035. The project involves establishing a new building for solar panel production within the ministry.

The sources also noted that the workshop will focus on producing solar panels, which studies have confirmed are the most suitable for Kuwait. Solar panels have been found to be the most efficient and cost-effective renewable energy source for the Kuwait environment with its abundant solar radiation throughout the year.

In addition, solar energy is a stable and easily-supplied form of energy that can be delivered to customers through the ministry's existing electricity network. Studies conducted by the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research at their pilot-project, the Al-Shagaya Energy plant, which produces 70 megawatts of electricity using three types of renewable energy technologies, demonstrated that solar panel technology is the most effective for Kuwait relative to other technologies.

## Kuwait first in GCC to open expat worker shelters

Public Authority of Manpower (PAM) indicated that Kuwait is the first among Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states and the wider Middle East, to open a shelter for expatriate workers, both in terms of services provided and capacity.

Director of Public Relations and Official Spokesperson at PAM, Aseel Al-Mazid, made the comments on Kuwait's forefront position during a visit by a delegation from the Patients' Aid Fund Association to the Worker Shelter last week. The visit was part of a new push by the Permanent Coordination Committee at PAM to engage with civil society institutions and public benefit associations. The delegation, accompanied by members of the Coordination Committee, toured the Worker Shelter Center and

inspected its facilities.

Al-Mazid explained that the visit aimed to understand the worker reception process, the roles of public benefit associations and government agencies at the center, and the services provided to female residents, including health, psychological, and legal support. Many of the questions raised by delegation members were answered by the Committee during the visit.

She added that the association's delegation was briefed on the center's procedures for the care and rehabilitation of female residents. The delegation also learned about the efforts to provide social protection, psychological services, decent accommodation, and legal protection for female workers.



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# Indian community celebrates India's 78th Independence Day



**B**raving the hot weather more than a thousand Indians gathered at the Embassy premises to celebrate the 78th Independence Day of India.

The official celebrations began with the unfurling of the Indian flag by the Indian

Ambassador H.E. Adarsh Swaika, which was preceded by garlanding the statue of the Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi.

After hoisting the flag and singing of the national anthem, Ambassador Swaika in his address to the gathering wished all Indians a

happy independence day. He also thanked the Kuwaiti leadership for their continued support in further strengthening Indo-Kuwait relations.

Ambassador Swaika also noted that the Indian Embassy prioritized the welfare and well-being of the large Indian community

in Kuwait, serving as a 'Home Away from Home.' He extended his appreciation to Indian community associations, professional bodies, cultural groups, and media representatives for their efforts in supporting the community and strengthening India-Kuwait relations.

## New amendments to rental law aim to streamline contracts

**K**uwait recently introduced significant amendments to its rental law that provides landlords and tenants with a more streamlined and efficient way to handle rental agreements.

Under the new amendments, both parties can now opt to have their rental contracts notarized at the Ministry of Justice. The notarization process involves both the landlord and tenant signing the contract in the presence of a notary public, thereby making the agreement legally binding and enforceable.

To facilitate the collection of overdue rent, the notarized contracts can be used as a basis for legal action. If a tenant fails to



pay the agreed-upon rent at the specified time, the landlord can initiate legal proceedings to recover the outstanding amount.

However, to initiate such proceedings,

the landlord must first issue a formal notice to the tenant and provide proof that the rent has not been paid. The amendments to the rental law, specifically Article 11 bis of Decree Law No. 35 of 1978,

outlines three essential conditions for notarizing rental contracts:

There must be a written rental agreement signed by both the landlord and the tenant. The rent amount must be clearly stated in the contract and payable on a specific date.

Both the landlord and tenant must appear before a notary public to sign the contract and have it notarized.

In addition to the changes related to contract notarization, the amendments have also modified Article 26 of the decree, which now stipulates that appeals against rulings issued by rental courts must now be filed with the Court of Appeal.

## US Air Force Band AFCENT holds concert at Bayt Abdullah Hospital



**A**mbassador of the United States H.E. Karen Hideko Sasahara, expressed her happiness to be among the children of Bayt Abdullah Hospital, in a show of support. This came during a celebration held by the American musical group "AFCENT" at Bayt Abdullah Hospital, in cooperation with the American Embassy in the country, last week.

The American ambassador said, "Our presence here is to support the Bayt Abdullah Hospital, and the presence of the Air Force Band in Kuwait represents an opportunity to present a distinguished performance in this facility, in a bid to bring some cheer to the children, their families, and the employees happy."

Regarding the relations between the United States and Kuwait, Ambassador Sasahara said, "The relationship between the United States and Kuwait extends back to many decades, although some people believe that it is only related to the liberation 34 years ago. Rather, our ties are deeper, as five generations of Kuwaiti students have studied in the United States. We have connected through cultural, financial and commercial relations."

The ambassador concluded, "Kuwait has

made a commitment to the United States, and we also have a commitment to make to Kuwait."

Dr. Tala Al-Dabbous, CEO and Director of Clinical Services at KACCH and Bayt Abdullah, expressed her happiness in the presence of the American musical team "AFCENT," a concert that brought joy to the children.

Regarding the number of children in Bayt Abdullah Hospital, Dr. Al-Dabbous explained Bayt Abdullah has approximately 100 palliative disease patients, in addition to thousands of children in various hospitals in Kuwait who receive psychological and social support services from the KACCH team in eight government hospitals.

In response to a question about government support towards Bayt Abdullah Hospital, she said, "The government supports us with employees and medicines. We are not a government entity, but we have an understanding with the MOH to provide this service free of charge to any patient, whether Kuwaiti or non-Kuwaiti, or any palliative patient. We do not receive any compensation for treatment and our services are completely based on the support we receive from society, whether from corporates or individuals."

## Sheikha Suhaila guest of honor at global conference in Bahrain

**A**t the invitation of the Regional Network for Social Responsibility, Sheikha Suhaila Fahad Al-Sabah, director of the Journal of Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies at Kuwait University, participated as Guest of Honor in the Third Arab Conference of Advocates of the Principles of the United Nations Global Compact of 2024, in Bahrain.

On the occasion, Sheikha Suhaila also received the 'International Responsible Commitment Award for Sustainable Development'. The ceremony was held under the honorary patronage of Ahmed Abdul Wahed Qatta, Second Deputy Speaker of the Bahraini House of Representatives.



Earlier Sheikha Suhaila Fahad Al-Sabah was also awarded an honorary membership of the 'Arab Fund for the Support of Corporate Social Responsibility Research'.

## Gas supply constraints prompt MEW to reduce load on grid

**A** total suspension of gas treatment units by the Kuwait National Petroleum Company on 17 August, led to a decrease in the quality of gas supplied to fuel several electricity generation and water distillation units of the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy (MEW).

In response to the fall in gas supply, MEW announced that it had reduced the electricity load on these units to preserve the integrity of the national electricity grid. The ministry noted that the gas processing units are operated by the Kuwait National Petroleum Company, and the situation is being monitored.

The reduction in gas supply as well as the



cut in electricity and water supplies occurred on the same day that Kuwait witnessed a record high 17,000 megawatts of energy consumption, which has been attributed to the heightened summer temperature on Saturday.

Accordingly, the ministry has urged consumers to reduce their electricity use during peak hours, in line with the ministry's guidelines in this regard, so as to protect the national grid. The ministry also noted that power could be cut to a few non-residential areas if necessary to ensure the stability of the electrical grid.

# IOM and UNHCR commemorate World Humanitarian Day

International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Kuwait joins the global community in commemorating World Humanitarian Day under the theme 'Act For Humanity'. This day honors the unwavering dedication of humanitarian workers who risk their lives to provide life-saving assistance to those in need.

In 2023, the humanitarian community faced significant challenges, with 280 aid workers killed by violence, marking the global humanitarian community's deadliest year on record. The sacrifice of those who have lost their lives in the line of duty underscores the urgent need for stronger protections and enforcement of International Humanitarian Law to ensure the safety and security of those who risk their lives to save others.

IOM's work on the mobility dimensions of crises had an operational reach of over 31.6 million people in 2023, including internally displaced persons, refugees, migrants and host communities, either directly or as part of community-based programs. The Organization worked with its partners to protect crisis-affected populations, ensure their basic needs were met and reduce barriers for marginalized and vulnerable individuals.

This month marked the 75th



**Mazen AboulHosn**  
Chief of Mission at IOM Kuwait

anniversary of the Geneva Conventions, which serves as a reminder of the enduring importance of these foundational treaties in safeguarding human dignity during armed conflicts. The Geneva Conventions have been instrumental in saving lives and ensuring humane treatment for those affected by war. However, the ongoing humanitarian crises around the world highlight the need for renewed commitment to these principles.

Mazen AboulHosn, Chief of Mission at IOM Kuwait, stated, "The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has over 27,000 staff, with the majority of them working in the field. This extensive presence allows us to effectively address the needs of migrants

and displaced persons worldwide. Despite the significant challenges posed by conflict, limited access, and harsh conditions, our teams remain steadfast in their mission to provide essential support and protection to the most vulnerable populations in hard-to-reach areas such as Sudan and Gaza - where our staff work tirelessly to ensure that those affected by ongoing hostilities receive the humanitarian assistance they desperately need."

IOM continues to be one of the principal agencies responding to multiple and challenging displacement crises worldwide, ranging from disasters, environmental degradation and food insecurity to complex protracted conflicts.

As we observe World Humanitarian Day, let us remember the sacrifices made by humanitarian workers and renew our commitment to protecting those who risk their lives to help others.

In a statement issued ahead of World Humanitarian Day on 19 August, UNHCR Representative, Nisreen Rubaian stated: "On World Humanitarian Day, we pay tribute to the courage and commitment of humanitarian workers who relentlessly #ActForHumanity. As global crises escalate, these dedicated individuals risk their lives to ensure the rights, safety, and dignity of those affected by conflict and disaster.

"Kuwait remains steadfast in its mission to support refugees and displaced persons. The noble humanitarian values are deeply rooted in Kuwait's commitment to provide aid and support to all organizations and entities working in the humanitarian field. As a result, Kuwait was elected as part of the Human Rights Council by the UN General Assembly. His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Amir of the State of Kuwait, also stressed in his royal speech that Kuwait will continue its humanitarian legacy.

"On this day, we count on the State of Kuwait's continued support for UNHCR's humanitarian activities, especially in



**Nisreen Rubaian**  
UNHCR Representative in Kuwait

light of the estimated 130.8 million displaced people by the end of 2024. UNHCR's financial needs are projected at USD10.6 billion to implement its activities worldwide, which include ongoing operations and programs as well as supplementary emergency coverage. This coverage is designed to enable UNHCR and its partners to provide protection, assistance, and life-saving solutions in both new and protracted displacement situations."

## Reconnaissance Research sets up new India-focused unit



Dr. Aftab Kamal Pasha



Abdulaziz Al-Anjeri

Reconnaissance Research has announced the appointment of Dr. Aftab Kamal Pasha as a Non-Resident Scholar, where he will head the Centre's Studies on India unit.

Dr. Pasha is the former Director of the Gulf Studies Program, Chairperson of the Centre for West Asian Studies, and Associate Dean of the School of International Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. He is currently the Director of the Centre for India West Asia Dialogue in New Delhi.

Abdulaziz Al-Anjeri, the founder and CEO of Reconnaissance Research, stated: "Dr. Pasha has specialized in Middle Eastern issues, researching, teaching, and writing since 1978. He is one of the foremost scholars in his field, having authored and edited over sixty books on India, the Gulf, West Asia, and North Africa. His association with our think tank will bring 45 years' worth of experience and knowledge, which is of great value as we continue to broaden our research interests to include India."

The Indian Studies Unit at Reconnaissance Research was established in recognition of India's growing significance as an emerging global power and its close ties with the Gulf countries, including Kuwait. India is a strategic partner for Kuwait in several vital areas, including energy, trade, and food security.

By conducting ongoing research and studies on India, the Centre aims to provide in-depth analysis and a comprehensive understanding of India's domestic, economic, and foreign policies, along with their potential impact on the Gulf region, particularly Kuwait. This effort is intended to enhance bilateral relations and advance Kuwait's interests in the Asian region.

In his first project in collaboration with Reconnaissance Research, Dr. Pasha will prepare a research study titled 'India-GCC Trade Strong Fundamentals and Challenges for Rapid Progress' which will examine the growing trade relations between India and the GCC countries. The paper will also focus on the strategic importance of these relations, their impact on Gulf food security, and India's energy needs, among other related issues.



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# Salman entertains with magical live performance

*Guests taken on a spectacular musical journey*



**The Times Kuwait Report**

Salman Ali, winner of Indian Idol 10 and celebrated Bollywood playback singer, gave a scintillating live performance to a packed Al Baraka Hall at the Crowne Plaza Hotel on 15th August. This landmark event was organized by Saaz Events and Artistic Group and exclusively sponsored by Pyramid Infratech Pvt.Ltd.

Held to commemorate India's 78th Independence Day, the performance was a spectacular musical feast for guests who were taken on a journey of some of Bollywood's best songs. Guests showed their excitement and enjoyment with foottapping and clapping as Salman raised the tempo during the evening with a mix of chart-topping Bollywood tracks and a selection of famous Sufi renditions, ranging from energetic numbers to soulful ballads some popular songs that had the audience in awe.

Bringing both energy and melody to the evening Salman's non stop three hour performance was a delight to audiences who were able to experience a live performance of the highest standard. The evening not only showcased his musical prowess but also highlighted the growing cultural exchange between India and Kuwait.

Kicking off the event H E Dr. Adarsh Swaika, Ambassador of India expressed his delight to attend a celebration of India's 78th Independence Day. A host of diplomats present at the event also praised the performance of such a talented singer.

Dr. Shabbir Qamar, Founder and MD of the Saaz Group, the key driver of this event, joined

by esteemed guests, presented a token of appreciation to Salman Ali, Ashwini Kumar, CEO of Pyramid, and Crowne Plaza Hotel, as the hospitality partner for the successful evening. Ravita Dalal Mishra, International Sales Director of Pyramid Infratech Pvt.Ltd presented the vote of Thanks. The evening was gracefully hosted by Kuwait's well known emcees, Nita Bhatkar

Chogle and RJ Rachana. Salman Ali, who hails from a small town in Haryana, came to Mumbai to make his family proud. He comes from four generations of professional singers, who made a living off singing.

Salman became popular in 2011 after participating in the Indian reality show Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Li'l Champs where he emerged a runner up. In 2018, he catapulted to fame after his Indian Idol win and went on to Bollywood playback, even lending his voice to Salman Khan for a song in Dabangg 3. Currently, he also mentors other upcoming singers in reality shows like Singing Superstar.

Known for his powerful and emotive voice, Salman is extremely soft spoken, simple and courteous in person. However, from the moment he took the stage, he commanded the audience's attention with his charismatic presence and powerful vocals.

Speaking exclusively to The Times Kuwait, Salman explained, "I loved performing for the audience in Kuwait. They enjoyed all of my songs without leaving their seats throughout. They also sang along enthusiastically, which was so good to experience."

Totally mesmerized, the crowd, kept singing along and swaying to the rhythms all evening. Needless to say, Salman Ali's stupendous performance was a resounding success.



# Kuwait aims to provide employment to all registered nationals

The Economic Affairs and Legal Affairs Committees of the Cabinet held its first meeting on 18 August to discuss and review the procedures for canceling and merging certain government agencies, so as to enhance services and work efficiency at these public entities.

The meeting comes in response to the Cabinet's recommendations to reduce budget expenditures, resolve overlaps in

responsibilities between government agencies, and address the bloated administrative structure of the state. Regarding employment of nationals, it was reported that the government aims to provide employment to all citizens nominated for government positions by the Civil Service Commission by the end of September.

At the same time, the authorities also underlined the need for encouraging the private



sector, as part of its national responsibility, to employ citizens. Additionally, the government is said to have made significant progress in filling leadership vacancies across many ministries and forming boards of directors for various bodies and institutions.

The names of nominated leaders are being reviewed and approved, with plans to submit them to the Council of Ministers for final approval.

## Minister Al-Mutairi leads first planning session for 2025 national events

Minister of Information and Culture, Abdul Rahman Al-Mutairi presided over the first meeting of the standing committee that is overlooking the celebration of national festivals and events to be held in 2025.



During the meeting held in Kasr Saif, the Minister Al-Mutairi appreciated the efforts of the head of the voluntary work center Sheikh Imthal Ahmad Jaber Al-Sabah and members of the committee for successfully organizing past

national events befitting the reputation and status of Kuwait.

The members of the committee called for seamless planning for important events like the Gulf Summit in the beginning of December, the Gulf course, festivals and national events starting from the flag hoisting in February.

Minister Al-Mutairi said "We have a great past record and experience that should come in handy for the upcoming events". The committee sought to involve the private sector and several coordination meetings were held between the private sector and the emerging teams in the standing committee.

The Minister added that the upcoming events will be marketed on the 51 digital platforms owned by the Ministry of Information.

During the meeting, the agenda items were discussed including the presentation of the slogan of the National Celebrations 'Pride and Prejudice' which was adopted last year and will continue in the coming years.

## Project awardings surge in first-half of year

The surge in project awardings witnessed during the first-half of the year, if sustained over the coming months, could lead to a record in infrastructure and construction projects awarded for two consecutive years.

According to MEED, a leading publication on Middle East construction activity, the value of awarded construction and transportation contracts from the start of the year to the first-week of August amounted to a record USD2.5 billion.

The total amount of project awardings was divided into \$1.3 billion for the construction



sector and \$1.2 for the transportation projects. MEED noted that the total value of contracts awarded in 2023 amounted to \$3.3 billion



## Ethiopia to build Africa's largest airport

Ethiopian Airlines has signed the deal for the 'biggest airport in Africa' with the first phase predicted to cost \$6 billion. Mesfin Tasew, the head of state-owned Ethiopian Airlines, said this money will come from loans which companies are already voicing interest in. The Dubai-based engineering and consulting firm Sidara will design the airport, the company's director of operations Tariq Al Qanni has said.



capacity of serving 25 million passengers per year. "It is a five-year project (that) will be finalised in 2029. It will be the biggest in Africa," Mesfin said.

Ethiopia has signed an agreement for the design of a new four-runway airport which, when construction is complete in 2029, will be Africa's largest, the head of

state-owned Ethiopian Airlines said on Friday. Plans to build the airport were first announced in 2018. Located near the town of Bishoftu, around 45 km (28 miles) from the capital AddisAbaba, the airport will have capacity to handle 100 million passengers a year and provide parking for 270 aircraft, Ethiopian Airlines' CEO Mesfin Tasew told a news conference.

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## Finance Ministry reviewing tax system reforms

Ministry of Finance is reportedly working on reforming the tax system with the aim of meeting global tax standards, increasing tax revenues to reduce the persistent budget deficit, and decreasing the economy's overwhelming dependence on oil revenues. Kuwait currently imposes a 15 percent Corporate Income Tax on the profits and capital gains of foreign corporate entities conducting business or trade in Kuwait, directly or through an agent. However, the

country does not impose any corporate tax on companies wholly owned by Kuwaiti nationals.

Companies owned by citizens of other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states are also exempt from paying any corporate tax, but GCC companies that have foreign partnerships are subject to taxation. The tax reform proposals currently under review are said to include applying the corporate tax on all companies operating in Kuwait.

Aside from a corporate tax, Kuwait



also imposes a one percent 'Zakat' on the net profits of all publicly traded and closed Kuwaiti shareholding companies.

In addition, all Kuwaiti shareholding companies are required to pay one percent of their net profits as contribution to the Kuwait Foundation for Advancement of Sciences (KFAS). The Foundation supports and encourages scientific progress in the country.

The imposing of a corporate tax on all companies would constitute a major transformation for Kuwait, and a step towards a more equitable tax structure that contributes more to government revenues.

## Million-strong diaspora, a living-bridge in boosting relations with Kuwait

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The Indian foreign minister also hailed Kuwait's Prime Minister, His Highness Sheikh Ahmad Abdulla Al Sabah's insights on boosting ties and valued the Kuwaiti Prime Minister's perspectives on enhancing economic cooperation between the two nations.

### Indian diaspora as country's ambassadors

During his brief visit the minister also met and interacted with select members of the Indian community and representatives of Indian associations to hear their point of view on community and consular issues.

Underlining that the Indian diaspora plays a significant role in shaping relations with host countries, the Indian EAM said, "As I noted, diaspora serves as a living bridge between our societies. They help build intuitive understanding and serve to smoothen so many of our dealings. It is natural in the world to put a face on every foreign relationship.

"When people in Kuwait think of India, it helps us when they associate our nation with a close friend or acquaintance. As we look to upgrade the level of our partnership, I believe that the importance of the diaspora will only grow further. I am sure that Kuwaiti authorities will also similarly appreciate their full potential and provide even more encouragement and facilities. After all, a community of a million people means that there are a million ambassadors between our nations."

### Enhancing bilateral trade

Expanding on the potential for greater bilateral trade, the foreign minister said, "As I noted, trade levels have been steady at \$10-15 billion annually, with energy and the food sector being its mainstay. In recent years, we have seen the beginnings of diversification. More 'Made in India' products have entered the Kuwait market, including vehicles, electric machinery and telecom equipment. As India's own manufacturing capacities deepen, this trend can be expected to intensify.

"There are some factors that could facilitate this journey. We have Free-Trade-Agreement (FTA) discussions underway in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) format. I am aware of Kuwait's interest in reaching a food security understanding with us, there are also some specific problems pertaining to anti-dumping duties. There is scope to expand cooperation in pharmaceuticals and medical equipment. Recognition of Indian pharmacopoeia would help. We could also explore trade settlements in local currencies. We hope that Kuwait could consider connecting its KNET payment infrastructure to India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI)."

### Future of bilateral energy relations

Asked about the future of bilateral energy relationship in the context of global move towards cleaner sources of energy, Dr. Jaishankar replied, "India is certainly one of Kuwait's major energy partners, especially in oil and gas. This is likely to continue for some time. In fact, studies done by the International Energy Agency (IEA) suggest that India will actually be one of the major drivers of new demand in this domain because much of our growth is still ahead of us.

"At the same time, it should be noted that we have an ambitious renewable energy target. The objective is to install 500 GW by 2030, out of which 195 GW has already been done. We have been exceptionally active in advocating solar energy

and adopting bio-fuels. Two major initiatives, the International Solar Alliance and the Global Biofuel Alliance, bear our imprint. There is now great interest in green hydrogen, on which we have announced a national mission. Similarly, on green ammonia as well. While there is scope for cooperation in the upstream and downstream hydrocarbon sector, it also extends to other forms of energy."

### India, an attractive FDI destination

Pointing to the various opportunities for Kuwaiti investments in India, the minister added, "India is today the fastest growing large economy in the world. It is generally expected that this growth rate of 7-8 percent would be maintained for decades to come. There is confidence that we will be the third largest global economy by the end of the decade. The opportunities in India for investment are enormous. There is an extraordinary pace of infrastructure building, whether we talk of highways, rail, airports or grids. In the last decade, 75 new airports and 15 new metros have been built. Every day, almost 30 km of highway and 12 km of railway track are constructed, and the number of education and skill institutions have doubled since 2014.

"There is an economic buzz that characterizes societal sentiment. The spurt in innovation and start-ups in the last decade has been another

and performing arts. What has made a more recent impression across the world are young Indian artistic talent, expressing themselves in different mediums. You see that in exhibitions and galleries, as in other forms of creativity.

"In the post-Covid era, we have also become more sensitive to wellness traditions and practices. Here, the increasing popularity of yoga has been discernible. Gradually, we are also seeing a better understanding of our traditional health practices. In fact, the WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre, located in the Indian State of Gujarat, helps to serve as an inspiration.

"Finally, I should mention the growth of tourism possibilities in India. We now have 43 UNESCO World Heritage sites. At every location, new facilities are being built. For tourists from a society with which we have such a long history, this is an opportunity waiting to be explored."

### India-GCC relations

Expounding on India's relations with the Arab Gulf region and its relations with GCC countries in particular, the minister noted, "The GCC is seen as a key partner by India. After all, the Gulf is such a proximate region with major economic, energy, diaspora, security and political stakes. Do understand that the GCC region accounts for one-sixth of India's total trade and one-third of

particularly in Palestine and Ukraine, the minister replied, "The two situations are very different. What is common is the need for diplomacy. Where Palestine is concerned, India supports a two-State solution. We feel that in the current conflict in Gaza, there should be due concern for civilian casualties and observance of International Humanitarian Law.

"We have been giving humanitarian assistance through UNRWA and will continue to do so. We also have some notable development projects in the West Bank. Regarding Ukraine, India believes that this is not the era of war and that differences should be settled through dialogue and diplomacy. As a country firmly on the side of peace, we are always willing to contribute to any efforts in the right direction."

### Molding global narratives

Commenting on India's role in shaping global narratives, and the country's active participation in the UN and other multilateral fora, Dr. Jaishankar noted, "India is the most populous nation today, the fifth largest economy and an increasing contributor to global good. Through our presence in the UN Security Council and beyond, we have sought to shape the evolution of the world order in the direction of greater multi-polarity and democratization.

"In times of crisis, whether it is the Covid or natural disasters, India has stepped forward as a 'First Responder'. The people of Kuwait saw that when we sent a medical team for deployment. International maritime shipping appreciates it when we deploy the Navy in the Arabian Sea to secure them. Numerous UN Peacekeeping Operations benefit from India's participation.

"We have led significant initiatives like the International Solar Alliance, Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, Global Biofuels Alliance, International Big Cat Alliance, etc.

We are members of more than 50 plurilateral groups and mechanisms, including the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). By welcoming Kuwait as an SCO dialogue partner during our SCO Presidency in 2023, we strengthened both our bilateral ties and Kuwait's larger diplomatic interests. I am confident that such understanding will keep our partnership steadily growing."

### Multi-vectoral foreign policy

The minister also elaborated on how India balances its close relationships with global powers while maintaining its independent foreign policy, "India has a multi-vector foreign policy that is designed to continuously strengthen its independence, freedom of choice and pursuit of national interest. In a polarized world, this is not always easy to implement. To facilitate that, we have been very transparent and straightforward with key partners. The message has been that we seek relationships on the basis of sovereign equality, mutual respect and convergent interests. In a multi-polar world, countries are gradually realizing that this is the only way that the range of relationships will expand.

The EAM concluded by pointing out, "When it comes to making decisions, our two yardsticks are national interest and global good. They mostly reinforce each other. Our endeavour is therefore to take a positioning that serves these goals in the most optimal fashion. This requires a lot of thinking through, and a long-term view. At the end of the day, I believe it serves both India and the world well."



Dr S Jaishankar with Sheikh Ahmed Abdulla Al Sabah.

hallmark of change. Fintech advancements have been dramatic, especially in regard to digital payments. The increase in the pace of manufacturing is reflected both in domestic growth and export surge. Consumer demands are steadily rising as the middle class expands rapidly. The world is today recognizing these trends, making us one of the largest destinations of international investment flows. We would be keen to see Kuwait take more interest in investment possibilities."

### Indian soft-power

Turning to India's soft-power wielded through its cultural exports such as gastronomy, music, movies, and tourism, as well as the education sector, and how this has impacted global perceptions of India, he said, "India's soft power attraction has kept pace with its growing capabilities, especially in the last decade. In Kuwait and the Gulf, perhaps the most obvious example are Indian movies. Many of you are probably as up to date as us, maybe even more so.

"Because of the community serving as a living bridge, you are equally conversant with our cuisine

its total diaspora. Over 30 percent of our oil and 70 percent of our gas is imported from the GCC. Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has given a particular primacy to cultivating closer ties with GCC member states.

"India's endeavour has been to engage GCC both collectively and through its individual members. We have a Political dialogue at the Ministerial level that has been ongoing for two decades. I expect to meet my GCC counterparts collectively very soon. Insofar as economic and trade ties are concerned, our energy cooperation has only intensified in the aftermath of the Ukraine conflict.

"As India's robust growth has unfolded over the last decade, we are also seeing a greater GCC investment interest in India. We are confident that Kuwait is among those desirous of deepening economic linkages. Our FTA discussions have been going on over the last few years. I understand that they are currently focused on finalizing the Terms of Reference."

### Gaza and the Ukraine conflicts

Asked about the ongoing global conflicts,



# Are Advisory Opinions a New Way to Resolve Disputes?

*GCC and Arab States should Rely on Advisory Opinions to Resolve Disputes with Third Parties, Especially in Issues Related to Maritime Boundaries and Sovereignty*



By Tareq Yousef AlShumaimry

Recently, there has been an increase in requests for advisory opinions from the International Court of Justice (ICJ) that relate to vital interests that directly affect the independence of States. Although advisory opinions are not binding and do not require the consent of the States concerned, advisory procedures have been increasingly and strategically used by States and international organizations as procedures to resolve specific legal disputes.

Procedures to request an advisory opinion constitute a "soft" litigation strategy and a particularly useful tool for small States or non-governmental entities, as they have the potential to balance the inherent power disparities in the international negotiation process by adding the authoritative voice of the ICJ to their disputed position.

Since its establishment in April 1946 the ICJ has addressed some of the most controversial issues in international affairs, including the independence of Kosovo and the use of nuclear weapons.

It also addressed issues that directly affect the vital interests of the State, such as the legality of the Israeli wall in the West Bank and, more recently, the end of Israel's illegal occupation (recognition) of the Palestinian territories (the 1967 borders) as soon as possible.

Only two matters are pending before the ICJ – one relating to the obligations of the State in relation to climate change and the other relating to the International Labour Organization on the right to strike.

The ICJ accepts requests for advisory opinions from the UN General Assembly, the UN Security Council, specific international organizations, and authorized UN bodies.

Although an ICJ advisory opinion is not formally binding on States, in advisory opinions the ICJ exercises its authority to determine the precise scope of the rights and obligations of States or organizations and to declare what international law requires the State or organization to do or refrain from doing.

The pursuit of a formal ruling of law by an international court is rarely an end in itself, but rather a step in a broader political process, and the ICJ can therefore play a crucial role in international negotiations.

Advisory opinions can also play an increasingly important role in resolving disputes and can be used as a convenient litigation strategy.

One could also argue that resorting to advisory procedures involves less risk of political costs, as there are no winners or losers in an advisory opinion.

Advisory procedures are fairly easy to access, as the main requirement is to lobby the UN General Assembly and obtain a majority vote, and then refer it to the ICJ. Advisory opinions are issued within a year, usually after the request of the UN General Assembly.

The GCC countries have not used the advisory opinion route in settling disputes. That it is a very feasible option is also evident from the fact that the ICJ itself cites its previous advisory opinions in its judgments and previous opinions, indicating that advisory opinions are considered valid precedent.

Moreover, the advisory opinion procedure also involves less financial costs compared to the procedures related to a dispute by filing a

case before the International Court of Justice and it also appears that topics such as borders between states, controversial procedures and advisory procedures that are not clear in theory or practice can be used as a persuasive procedure in an attempt to resolve disputes between states if they cannot be resolved through political means.

The question naturally arises as to why states resort to requesting an advisory opinion instead of the controversial procedures of filing a case before international courts such as the International Court of Justice or the Permanent Court of Arbitration.

In some cases, an advisory opinion is the only available means of giving legal status to issues of international affairs in a world where not all states have agreed or joined the authority of international courts to determine their rights and obligations under international law.

Moreover, requesting an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice may be the only mechanism available for settling disputes between recognized states and separatist groups within those states.

An advisory opinion is an attractive option when the state or non-state entity requesting the opinion has high moral standing and distinguished diplomatic and political relations and is likely to win acceptance of the request and obtain an advisory opinion in its favor.



For example, in the Kosovo Advisory Opinion, the dispute between Serbia and Kosovo was Serbia's sole sponsor of the UN General Assembly resolution and believed it would win. However, the ICJ concluded in its advisory opinion that the adoption of the Declaration of Independence did not violate any applicable rule of international law.

A request for an advisory opinion may level the playing field and avoid the imbalance of power that pervades international negotiations to some extent in international judicial proceedings. All states and non-state entities are formally equal parties with respect to their legal standing and ability to make claims.

The ICJ responds to all legal claims in a coherent legal manner regardless of whether the claim is brought by a non-state entity, a powerful state, or a small state.

Vanuatu, an archipelago in the South Pacific and one of the countries most affected by climate change, has led the application, which is still pending before the International Court of Justice.

International request for an advisory opinion on States' obligations related to climate change. The request includes a specific question regarding the legal consequences of these obligations in relation to States, especially Small Island Developing States, which, due to their geographical circumstances and level of development, are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change.

One potential benefit of an advisory

opinion on climate change is that it will help strengthen "States' arguments in international climate change negotiations or undermine the arguments of other States." Kuwait was also a party to this request, as were other GCC States.

Other reasons for seeking an advisory opinion include:

- The legal position of an advisory opinion constitutes strong support for the legitimate rights claimed.
- The advisory opinion identifies contradictory texts and illegal actions taken by one party against the other.
- The advisory opinion sometimes addresses whether compensation is due to the other party, which would be the beginning of a claim for compensation.
- In dealing with the issue of requesting an advisory opinion, the rest of the countries may have to point out and remind of the illegality of dealing with the usurping party.
- The advisory opinion reinforces the legal principles that help in the future negotiation process with the other party.
- The advisory opinion emphasizes the call to respect and implement this fatwa as an important step towards strengthening international legitimacy.
- The advisory opinion constitutes great moral and political pressure on the other

may not be the most effective way to resolve the dispute because of its non-binding nature.

However, resolving the dispute finally is not the only thing that states may think about when they choose to initiate dispute proceedings before international courts against another state. The advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice may be particularly effective when the motive behind its request is to publicize the matter and gain the support of world public opinion and diplomatic momentum.

Historically, even in the limited number of cases where adversarial procedures are available, states have been reluctant to avail themselves of them. Bringing a dispute against a third party or state is risky and time-consuming, and litigation can also be seen as an unfriendly act on the part of the respondent state and may affect its relationship with the state filing the claim.

The vast majority of requests for advisory opinions are made by the UN General Assembly through a resolution requiring a simple majority of states, so states do not stand alone but rather as a majority bloc against the "respondent" state, if any, and this can mitigate the adversarial nature inherent in contentious litigation.

From 1948 to 2024, the International Court of Justice has issued only 28 advisory opinions. Of the 28 advisory opinions published by the International Court of Justice, 20 of them relate to procedural and/or administrative issues of UN organs, such as the powers of the UN General Assembly to admit a State to the UN and to compensate for damages suffered in the service of the UN, the effects of compensation decisions issued by the UN Administrative Tribunal, requests for review of recent court decisions, and the interpretation of agreements concluded between UN organizations and States.

The subject matter of some of these opinions may have been of particular importance to some States, such as the interpretation of treaties between international organizations and host States. However, none of these cases affected the vital interests of the State and had a serious impact on international affairs.

During its first 40 years of operation, the ICJ issued only three advisory opinions (two requests to the UN General Assembly and one to the UN Security Council) directly relating to vital state interests and politically controversial issues, including two opinions on the independence of Namibia from South Africa and one on the decolonization of Western Sahara. However, from the mid-1990s onwards there has been an increase in the number of such advisory opinions.

The ICJ has issued four advisory opinions on matters that fundamentally and directly affect a state's vital interests and/or territorial sovereignty, and two equally important requests for advisory opinions are still pending, all of which were submitted to the UN General Assembly.

The advisory opinion given by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) last month (July 19, 2024) to oblige Israel to end its illegal occupation of the Palestinian territories (1967 borders) as soon as possible is a landmark ruling that should serve as an example for considering advisory opinions as an option to conflict resolution.

**Tareq Yousef AlShumaimry**, served as Chairman of the Finance Committee and Chairman of the General Budget Committee of the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague (PCA) and an observer in the Administrative Council of the Court and the Consular at International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the Embassy of the State of Kuwait in the Netherlands during this period from 2013 to 2020. Email: tareq@alshumaimry.com

However, procedures and advisory opinion



# Qatar emerging as the new destination for tourism and entertainment

*Qatar, renowned as one of the safest and most crime-free countries globally, welcomed over 700,000 tourists in January 2024 and is investing billions to modernize infrastructure and boost various economic sectors, particularly entertainment and tourism.*

## The Times Kuwait Report

Qatar Tourism hosted a press trip to celebrate the 'Summer Season' in Doha, designed to showcase the country's top tourist and entertainment landmarks.

The event aimed to highlight the diverse activities available to visitors from around the globe, positioning Doha as a leading destination in the region for tourism, entertainment, luxury shopping, and culture. This follows the city's notable success in organizing the FIFA World Cup in 2022.

Doha is experiencing significant urban development and population expansion, with construction projects for large commercial and residential complexes taking place throughout the city. The road network is also undergoing major improvements, and transportation options have diversified, including the 'Doha Metro', tram lines, buses, and taxis.

Investing billions of dollars in global markets, Doha is also directing substantial capital spending domestically to modernize all aspects of life and develop various economic sectors, particularly entertainment and tourism. This investment aims to diversify revenue sources in line with the 'Qatar National Vision 2030.'

As Qatar rapidly establishes itself as a leading global travel destination with its unique blend of authentic Arabian hospitality and rich cultural heritage, Doha welcomed over four million visitors last year, surpassing the total number of visitors from the previous five years. In the first half of 2024, the city attracted over 2.6 million tourists, marking a 28.5% increase compared to the same period last year. Notably, in January 2024 alone, Qatar welcomed over 700,000 tourists, the highest number ever recorded in a single month.

### Qatar's five ambitious goals

Qatar is renowned as one of the safest and most crime-free countries globally. In line with its National Vision 2030, which underscores the significance of tourism, the National Tourism Sector Strategy has outlined five ambitious goals to achieve:

- Attract over six million visitors annually by 2030, positioning Qatar as the fastest-growing tourist destination in the Middle East.
- Boost the contribution of the tourism and travel sectors to the Qatari GDP by 12% by 2030.
- Enhance Qatar's reputation as a top global destination for excellence in tourism services.
- Increase domestic tourism spending by three to four times compared to 2019 levels.
- Double the number of employees in the tourism sector by 2030.
- A world of diverse attractions, from stunning beaches to luxurious resorts and cultural wonders.



Qatar offers a wide range of tourist attractions to suit all tastes and interests, thanks to its advanced services, diverse cultural and heritage sites, international museums, pristine beaches with clear waters, luxurious resorts, and modern architectural landmarks.

During the summer season, Qatar hosts a variety of outdoor and indoor tourism and entertainment activities for all ages, including the Qatar Games Festival, the Children's Summer Camp, the Arab Design Exhibition, 'Your Vacation in Msheireb,' the Qatar Summer Trade Fair, and more. Additionally, the indoor amusement park 'Doha Quest,' located in the Doha Oasis Mall in the Msheireb area, spans over 32,000 square meters and stands out as an entertainment destination with over thirty games, attractions, and virtual reality experiences.

Qatar has all the makings of a world-class tourist destination, featuring stunning natural landscapes, a thriving art and culture scene, and unique tourism assets that celebrate its cultural roots.

For thrill-seekers and adventure enthusiasts, Qatar offers a variety of experiences, including desert safaris over sand dunes, water sports in its clear waters, and breathtaking views from paragliding and hot air balloon rides.

**Marial Water Park:**  
*Dive into 69 thrilling rides and 53 exciting water slides*

Located near the Rixos Hotel on Qetaifan Island, north of Doha, this park features a variety of water activities, including 69 rides and 53 water slides, and spans over six acres. It includes the world's tallest water slide, Icon Tower (85 meters high), and the iconic Marial. The

park also extends along beautiful sandy beaches, providing an ideal place to relax.

**Lusail:** *Qatar's modern economic hub with 38 square kilometers of luxury, entertainment, and innovation*

Lusail, the modern economic capital of Qatar, is located north of Doha and spans 38 square kilometers. It encompasses four islands, 19 multi-purpose residential areas, entertainment and commercial spaces, and luxury hotels. Additionally, it will house the headquarters of national and international companies.

Conceived in 2005, the city is designed to accommodate more than 200,000 residents, 170,000 employees, and 80,000 tourists in its entertainment and hospitality facilities, bringing its total population to nearly half a million.

Lusail was one of the major projects unveiled by Doha in conjunction with hosting the FIFA World Cup in 2022. The city featured some of the tournament's largest stadiums, including the venue for the final and several key matches.

Al Maha Island in Lusail is a popular destination for entertainment and leisure, distinguished by its location across from Marina Walk.

The sustainable city boasts a modern transportation network, with its gardens and green spaces covering over 3.5 million square meters. Treated water is used for irrigation, and the city includes a 27-kilometer sea strip that contributes to the creation of artificial coral reefs along the waterfront.

**National Museum of Qatar:** *Modern immersions into a rich historical tapestry*

Inspired by the natural crystal formations known as the 'desert rose,' the National Museum of Qatar was designed by renowned French architect Jean Nouvel and built around the old palace of Sheikh Abdullah bin Jassim Al Thani, which served as the seat of government for 25 years.

Covering an area of 430,500 square feet, the museum features several interconnected halls that narrate the country's history from ancient times to the modern era.

The National Museum of Qatar houses a wide array of artifacts, manuscripts, photographs, jewelry, and traditional costumes. Among its highlights is the pearl-studded Baroda Carpet, commissioned by the Maharaja of Baroda in India in 1865. This exquisite carpet is adorned with over 1.5 million pearls, as well as diamonds, emeralds, and blue sapphires.

The museum also includes halls where visitors can explore Qatar's evolving wealth through sensory experiences involving hearing, sight, and smell, using films, archival photographs, and scents that evoke historical times and places across the country.

CONTINUE ON PAGE 11



# Journey to Nepal filled with volunteering and adventure

*The trip to Nepal was uniquely enjoyable and entertaining, packed with adventures and experiences such as safaris, boat trips, mountain climbing, and various adventure games.*

By Fajr Sabah  
Special to The Times Kuwait

We are used to embarking on journeys for various reasons — be it a tourist trip, an adventure, or a volunteer mission. This time, however, the experience was uniquely enjoyable and entertaining, while still providing numerous benefits and a sense of happiness.

Last February, during the ten days leading up to Kuwait's National Day, I participated in a trip to Nepal. Over the course of ten days, we traveled between three regions under the management and coordination of the SahabatAmal Voluntary Team. The journey included volunteering at schools and offering various forms of donations, such as educational supplies, medical check-ups, distributions, sweets, and toys to students in Chitwan, Kathmandu, and Pokhara.

In addition to the volunteer activities, the trip featured several events and activities for both the Nepalese people and the volunteer team, including various competitive contests and talent showcases. The journey did not stop there — it was packed with adventures and experiences, from safaris and boat trips to mountain climbing and various adventure games.

The trip was comprehensive and diverse,

leaving no room for boredom. It began with exploring and getting to know the group members, then moved on to understanding the country's customs, key sites, and traditions, with a focus on school volunteering and various forms of giving.

The experience was enriched with entertaining activities and real-life experiences that matched the local environment, along with competitive contests and adventures. These ten days concluded with enjoyment, benefits, and a unique experience for each individual.

UNHCR Representative in Kuwait pays tribute on World Humanitarian Day

In a statement issued ahead of World Humanitarian Day on 19 August, UNHCR Representative, Nisreen Rubaian stated: "On World Humanitarian Day, we pay tribute to the courage and commitment of humanitarian workers who relentlessly #ActForHumanity. As global crises escalate, these dedicated individuals



to all organizations and entities working in the humanitarian field. As a result, Kuwait was elected as part of the Human Rights Council by the UN General Assembly. His Highness Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the Amir of the State of Kuwait, also stressed in his royal speech that Kuwait will continue its humanitarian legacy.

"On this day, we count on the State of Kuwait's continued support for UNHCR's humanitarian activities, especially in light of the estimated 130.8 million displaced people by the end of 2024. UNHCR's financial needs are projected at USD10.6 billion to implement its activities worldwide, which include ongoing operations and programs as well as supplementary emergency coverage. This coverage is designed to enable UNHCR and its partners to provide protection, assistance, and life-saving solutions in both new and protracted displacement situations."

*Fajr Sabah, writer and content creator among the group chosen as a young leader to represent Kuwait and highlight the country's rich culture, history and literature at the World Youth Festival 2024. Fajr Al Sabah is also a Member of the Kuwaiti Traveler's Association and Member of the Media Committee. A graduate of the Higher Institute of Dramatic Arts - Department of Criticism and Theatrical Literature, Fajr is a travel enthusiast and can be found on Instagram as fajersabah\_blog.*



risk their lives to ensure the rights, safety, and dignity of those affected by conflict and disaster.

"Kuwait remains steadfast in its mission to support refugees and displaced persons. The noble humanitarian values are deeply rooted in Kuwait's commitment to provide aid and support



## Qatar emerging as the new destination for tourism and entertainment

CONTINUEU FROM PAGE 10

**Katara:** Explore stunning mosques, a Greek theater, and a grand opera house

Katara is a unique cultural village located in The Pearl, situated between the renowned financial district and the crescent-shaped Katara Towers. It is a favorite destination in Doha for those who appreciate culture, arts, and food.

The Katara Cultural Village features the Blue Mosque, adorned with Persian and Turkish tiles and décor inspired by the Dolmabahce Palace in Istanbul. Also notable is the Golden Mosque, located opposite the open-air theater.

Built in classical Greek style, the theater spans over 3,200 square meters, accommodates more than 5,000 people, and offers stunning views of the sea and the Cultural Village.

Additionally, Katara houses the Opera House, various public spaces for the arts in traditional Qatari style, and within the Katara Mall, visitors can find the luxurious French Galeries Lafayette, the shops of "21 High Street," and relaxing waterfront areas."

**Cartier Channel:** Venice-inspired elegance on Pearl Island with canals and colorful charm

Inspired by Venice, this residential area on Pearl Island offers a vibrant and charming setting for shopping and dining, featuring canals and colorful buildings. Visitors can relax in the shaded walkways, enjoy an ice cream, and admire the replica of Venice's Rialto Bridge.

Throughout the day until 11 p.m., visitors to Quartier can rent watercraft for a fun exploration of the area's waterways and bridges.

**Souq Waqif:** A vibrant blend of life and history

The most famous market in Doha, Souq Waqif is known for its bustling atmosphere during the moderate months of the year and is a popular spot for spending quality time with relatives and friends, particularly in its traditional roadside cafes.

Built on the site of the old Doha Souq from a century ago, Souq Waqif showcases a rich history through its heritage buildings and shops.

The market is a vibrant hub filled with gifts, household items, antiques, handicrafts, fabrics, carpets, wooden furniture, and fishing and diving equipment. It comes alive with the sounds of vendors, commercial activity, and the bustling movement of restaurants and cafes throughout its various areas.

**Msheireb:** The dynamic pulse of Doha

Msheireb Downtown Doha is one of the world's first sustainable downtown regeneration projects, strategically located in the heart of the city.

The district promotes a modern, digital society with smart living and working environments, making it an excellent place to work, shop, play, and live. It features the Doha Design District, a cultural hub for regional and international talent, as well as the Msheireb Museums, which consist of four heritage houses celebrating Qatar's history.

**Al Maha Island and Place Vendôme:** A fusion of luxury, entertainment, and elegance in Doha

Al Maha Island covers 230,000 square meters and features entertainment areas and upscale hospitality services, including Lusail Island, Winter Wonderland, and some of the finest restaurants in the world. It is renowned for combining entertainment and leisure in a single location.

Place Vendôme is a luxury mall spanning over one million square meters, inspired by classical French architecture and featuring a central water canal with small boats. The four-story mall houses approximately 580 luxury and mid-range stores, including global fashion brands. Visitors can explore the mall's intricate design and enjoy a variety of dining and café experiences.

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الخميس - الجمعة  
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# Recommitting to Pandemic Preparedness



**Gro Harlem Brundtland**

A former prime minister of Norway and former director-general of the World Health Organization, is a co-chair of the Global Preparedness Monitoring Board and a member of The Elders.



Four years ago, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, governments were scrambling to protect their populations and prevent an economic meltdown. No one would dispute that addressing this existential threat was the top political priority back then.

As a former prime minister and director-general of the World Health Organization, I was impressed by the coordinated international response to COVID-19. To be sure, there were large inequalities within and between countries, resulting in society's most vulnerable paying too high a price, especially when it came to vaccine access. But I saw reason to hope that the pandemic's devastating impact would prompt a political sea change and lead to a greater commitment to future preparedness, prevention, and response.

I was wrong. It is depressingly obvious that the lessons of COVID-19 are being forgotten. The world remains stuck in the familiar cycle of panic and neglect that has characterized this past pandemic. Political leaders are largely ignoring current threats, including COVID-19

(which has not been consigned to the history books, despite no longer being a public-health emergency), H5N1 bird flu, and dengue fever. And new pandemics with potentially catastrophic outcomes will almost surely occur, especially as climate change and environmental degradation worsen.

These are not hypothetical risks. On Wednesday, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus declared the latest outbreak of mpox in East Africa a "public-health emergency of international concern." Not only must the international community now rally behind affected African countries and those at highest risk; it must also prepare itself for potential spread into more countries and across the globe.

Even before COVID-19 hit, I had been warning that our failure to break this vicious cycle was putting us at grave risk. In September 2019, the Global Preparedness Monitoring Board (which I co-chair) issued a report highlighting the acute risk of a devastating global epidemic or pandemic. Little did we know how prescient our warnings were.

And now we find ourselves in a new phase of neglect, which can only be understood as a failure of political will. For all the pious words uttered in the COVID-19 era, heads of state and governments are failing to address the inequalities that stymied recovery efforts. It is unacceptable that rich countries have done so little to make the next pandemic response more equitable — and therefore more effective.

In June, for example, the 77th World Health Assembly failed to finalize a new pandemic accord, even though the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB) had been working on the global pact, which aims to prevent a repeat of COVID-19, for two years. Member states have extended talks for up to 12 months. But, crucially, they still seem unwilling to provide negotiators with the political support needed to agree on measures that can address inequities in pandemic readiness, response, and recovery.

The failure to find consensus on substantive matters is symptomatic of the growing trust deficit between advanced and emerging economies, and of the ineffectiveness of the multilateral system in an era of deepening geopolitical tensions. But this cannot be an excuse to delay action on one of the biggest threats of our time. The INB needs a new approach that enables maximum engagement from independent experts and civil-society organizations, while ensuring that member states stay focused on improving, instead of just paying lip service to, global equity.

Moreover, if the past four years have taught

us anything, it is that WHO-led processes alone are not enough to tackle the existential threat of pandemics. Other multilateral institutions should take up the cause of improving preparedness. The United Nations' Summit of the Future in September, as well as the upcoming meetings of the G7 and the G20, must highlight the urgency of this challenge and encourage world leaders to act. More visible advocacy for global health security in these fora could be crucial in securing the political leadership and financing needed to bring about meaningful change.

To that end, the group of former political leaders known as The Elders support the

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The United Nations' Summit of the Future in September, as well as the upcoming meetings of the G7 and the G20, must highlight the urgency of improving pandemic preparedness and encourage world leaders to act.

”

adoption of an emergency platform — a set of protocols that would allow UN leaders to respond quickly to global shocks — at the Summit of the Future. World Trade Organization members should also agree to review, as proposed by Colombia, the implementation of the agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights. The TRIPS agreement governs patent protection for vaccines and treatments, and thus plays a key role in pandemic-response efforts.

Recommitting to pandemic preparedness is essential. But it also should be part of a broader revival of multilateralism. Only through compromise and collaboration can we confront humanity's gravest challenges.



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# Right to Truth



**Geoff Mulgan**

A professor at University College London, is the author of *When Science Meets Power*



Hardly a week goes by without a new piece of misinformation circulating online, from the freshest of conspiracy theories unleashed by the attempt on former US President Donald Trump's life to Elon Musk tweeting the far right's false claim that the United Kingdom has a two-tier policing policy. Truth is under attack, and people know it. According to a recent global survey conducted by the United Nations, more than 85 percent of respondents were worried about the impact of online disinformation.

The world is awash in lies and distortion largely because of the rise of social media and digital platforms. Designed to profit by maximizing audience engagement, these platforms' algorithms amplify information that attracts attention, regardless of its veracity. Moreover, negativity has been found to boost engagement, with one study showing that each additional negative word in a headline increased the click-through rate by 2.3 percent.

But another reason for our failure to combat disinformation is that the liberal tradition has prioritized freedom of expression over the right to truth. Any restrictions on free speech in the democratic world, the argument goes, would be used by dictators to justify censorship or worse.

The West's approach to speech assumes that free and fair competition in the 'marketplace of ideas' will ensure that truth triumphs over lies. But we now know that this is wrong. Something similar to Gresham's Law, which says that bad money drives good money out of circulation, can be applied to information: "flooding

heart of such an effort would be a new right to truth, which could rest upon long-established principles like the golden rule and the categorical imperative. Found in almost every civilization, the idea of treating others as one would want to be treated by them can serve as a foundation for rebuilding the infrastructure of truth.

The first place to start is with the law. Many governments in Europe and elsewhere have strong consumer-protection laws that prohibit misleading and false claims in advertising and marketing. The same principle should be applied to all political communications — a move that Australia is contemplating alongside a raft of other measures to bolster democratic resilience — and eventually to any type of mass communication. Knowingly spreading lies should have consequences — primarily financial, but perhaps including bans from holding public office or working in media.

The justice system has occasionally been used to penalize media organizations for spreading misinformation. For example, Dominion Voting Systems' defamation case against Fox News for airing conspiracies about its voting machines 'rigging' the 2020 US presidential election against Trump resulted in a settlement of nearly \$800 million. But much more can be done to open pathways for legal recourse against blatantly dishonest news outlets and political figures through new laws that prescribe intentional distribution of lies.

Second, independent institutions that are committed to truth must be strengthened. These already exist in science, finance, health, and safety. In media, nonprofit news outlets and public-service broadcasting fill this role. The key to these institutions' success is their insulation from political and market pressures.

Third, regulation could force powerful information providers to become purveyors of truth. In July, the European Commission released its preliminary finding that Musk's X deceives users by letting anyone pay for a verified account, and was therefore in breach of the Digital Services Act. As a result, X could face fines of up to 6 percent of global revenue. Meanwhile, Germany's Network Enforcement Act, passed in 2017, requires platforms with more than two million users to remove 'clearly illegal' content.

Fourth, independent electoral commissions need powers to fact-check and correct false claims and block the most damaging misinformation or deep-fakes in the run-up to elections, when truth is most vulnerable, the risk of interference is greatest, and the stakes for democracy are highest.

Fifth, the next generation must be better equipped to distinguish truth from lies. Schools should prepare young people to spot falsehoods of all kinds. Finland and Denmark are leading the way by incorporating lessons on disinformation into curricula.

Lastly, tech pioneers such as Facterverse, Fullfact in the UK, Myth Detector in Georgia, and Norway's Faktisk Verifiserbar are developing new tools combining artificial

and collective intelligence to spot and assess misinformation. These and other initiatives should be encouraged and supported.

To ensure success, the right to truth — in other words, the right not to be lied to or knowingly misled by powerful and influential organizations — should be added as a protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights and should balance the US Constitution's guarantee of free speech. There would need to be a high bar for invoking this right, to account for differences of opinion and interpretation. And it should be enforced by courts, not by governments or 'Ministries of Truth'.

All other civil liberties implicitly rely on some right to truth. For example, a right to a fair trial by jury has little meaning unless judges ensure

that juries have the best possible information. More broadly, truth is dependent on a never-ending process of discovery bolstered by laws and institutions.

Musk and others fervently believe that freedom of speech is an absolute good, and that the right to lie should outweigh any right to truth. Their view is understandable, and has honorable roots. But it has become increasingly dangerous and ill-suited to the times. The seventeenth-century French mathematician Blaise Pascal wrote, "Truth is so obscure in these times, and falsehood so established, that unless we love the truth, we cannot know it." Today, we should demonstrate that love by making it a right, and putting it at the heart of our laws and constitutions.

“Independent institutions that are committed to truth must be strengthened. These already exist in science, finance, health, and safety. In media, nonprofit news outlets and public-service broadcasting fill this role.”

the zone with shit," as Trump's former chief strategist Steve Bannon put it, fuels distrust and makes it harder to distinguish fact from falsehood.

Some believe that truth is now fragmented beyond repair. But many countries have strengthened institutions that are designed to seek the best available truths, and on which societies and economies often depend. Finance laws penalize falsehood and deception in accounts and public statements. Courts use sophisticated forensic tools such as DNA to make better judgments. And modern science mobilizes critical peers to interrogate claims.

We now need to build on these foundations to ensure that every powerful institution provides the best available knowledge. At the

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## RECIPE

## Lentil Fritters



A popular South Indian tea-time snack, lentil fritters are also a favorite street-food item and a staple at small restaurants and wayside tea shops. The savory fritters are a perfect option for snacking or at gatherings, and feature simple ingredients that pack a rich flavor.

**Soaking time:** 3 to 4 hours  
**Cooking time:** 30 minutes

**Serving:** 15 pcs

**Ingredients:**

- 1,1/2 cup Bengal gram (chana dal)
- 1/2 cup red lentils (masoor dal)
- Water, for soaking
- 2 dried red chili
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 1 tsp fennel seeds
- 2 tbsp onion, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup beetroot chopped
- 1 inch ginger
- Few curry leaves, chopped
- 2 chilies,, finely chopped
- Salt to taste
- 2 tbsp rice flour
- 2 tbsp coriander, finely chopped
- Oil, for frying

**Instructions:**

- Place the gram and lentil in a bowl, add water and soak for 3 to 4 hours
- Drain the water, reserve ¼ cup dal, and transfer remaining dal to a grinder jar
- Add dried red chili, ginger, beetroot pieces, cumin and fennel
- Pulse and grind to a coarse paste
- Transfer the dal Mixture to a large bowl.
- Add chopped onion, curry leaves, chili, salt, and dal that was set aside, and mix well
- Add rice flour, coriander, and continue to mix well
- Wet the hand and pinch a ball-sized mixture
- Form a ball shape and slightly flatten it on the palm
- In a deep frying pan add oil and place over medium heat
- Slide the fritters into the hot oil, and fry on both sides over low to medium flame
- Fry the fritters until they turn golden brown and crunchy.
- Drain the fritters and place on a platter.
- Serve warm with tea or coffee or chutney.



Chef Chhaya Thakker

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

## Thought “ for the week

The world will not be destroyed by those who do evil, but by those who watch them without doing anything.

— Albert Einstein

## The consequences of emotional eating

### Ask Mira : Eating Right to Live Happy & Healthy



For many people, their eating habits fluctuate based on their emotions. They binge in excess or sometimes on unhealthy foods when they are sad, angry, frustrated and even when they are in a good mood, or want to celebrate. It is even a kind of punishment, you feel bad about yourself and you eat in excess to punish yourself even more. Or, you follow a strict diet to lose weight, but something triggers a relapse so you binge on fried foods. Then you feel guilty because you have strayed from your diet restrictions in a minute. This behavior makes sense with the term called emotional eating.

**What is emotional eating?**

Eating when you are emotional, rather than when you are hungry is something most people do occasionally including me. It starts to be a problem when it becomes abnormal and you feel that it is out of your control. You start to feel that you cannot stop eating or indulging in your favorite unhealthy snacks. This type of eating



is a major reason why some people gain weight and become overweight. The most common emotional triggers for overeating are boredom, anger, sadness, happiness, anxiety, loneliness, stress, low self-esteem, disappointment and frustration. Ask the question, “Am I hungry now or Am I eating for another reason?”

Usually, when you eat because of your emotions, you are too happy or sad to feel whether you are actually hungry or not, so you find it difficult to recognize the feeling of fullness, because you are under the effect of the emotions of this specific moment.

**Here are some ways to exert self-control over your**

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

**emotional eating.**

**Keep a food diary:** When you feel that you are eating too much and often because of your emotions, keep a food diary for a week. Include the time you eat, the reasons for eating and evaluate your emotions after eating. It is a hard exercise, but a food diary can give you an idea of how often you eat for reasons other than hunger.

Look for an activity that helps channel your emotions: Find an activity that brings you the mental and psychological comfort that you would otherwise find in food, whether its sugary or salty items.

For example, you can run on the treadmill when you are angry or stressed. Any intense activity can secrete endorphines, and these hormones will make you feel relaxed and eventually will block your cravings.

If you are eating because you are happy, replace that with activities that bring you feelings of joy about yourself like shopping, friendly outings or calling a friend.

**Break your dependence on unhealthy food items:**

When you think happiness, it is chocolate. When you think sadness, and stress it can be chips. You can change all these habits by turning your snacks into healthy ones.

If you want something sweet, you can try a fruit salad, yogurt with some fruits or breakfast bar for example, instead of chocolate cakes or doughnuts.

Also, a small amount of nuts and almonds gives you the feeling of fullness for a longer time, even more than biscuits. What about a whole grain toast, with jam on the top? It is a great option to have as well as it is sweet and nutritious.

Before you go sleep, have a cup of skim milk or low-fat plain yogurt. It will calm you down at night.

**Feel hungry:** People, who are emotional eaters, often lose the sense of hunger. They are always full because they tend to snack a lot.

Feeling the hunger before meals is an excellent factor that contributes to weight loss or weight maintenance. So eat your main meals when you are hungry and let your snacks be light and healthy.

And, when you feel that you are losing control towards food, be sure to ask yourself this pertinent question: ‘Am I still hungry or Am I eating for another reason?’.

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# Five-Twenty rule to help make right food choices

*Nutritional labels usually follow a standard format in listing the quantities, number of calories per serving, and serving size, as well as the dietary values of various nutrients found in the packaged food and their percentage daily value (%DV). The nutrients usually listed include fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium, carbohydrate, fiber, protein, vitamins A and C, calcium, and iron.*

Nutrition labels on packaged foods, which provide important nutritional information on key ingredients that impact our health found in the packet, have been a standard feature since the early 1970s. The labels help support our personal dietary needs, as they allow us to intake more of the nutrients that our body needs, and avoid those that need to be limited. However, many people tend to disregard these nutritional labels. Not taking the time to read and understand the nutritional information on foods could lead us to consume ingredients that adversely affect our health.

percent or more, it is deemed to be high in this nutrient.

For example, if a food label indicates that the food contains 2 %DV of sodium per serving, that means that the food is low in sodium. However, it is important to keep in mind the serving size. For instance, if the serving size of that food is two tablespoons and a person consumes one cup of that food, then that person would no longer be consuming low amounts of sodium. The 5-20 rule is obviously helpful only if you adhere to the serving size indicated in the nutritional label.

The 5-20 rule can help you make healthy food choices.

For example, it can help you decrease the amount of foods you eat that are high in harmful nutrients like saturated fats and sodium while increasing the amount of beneficial ones like vitamins and fiber. This can help reduce the risk of critical diseases like diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

Nutritionists point out that the 5-20 rule is also helpful if you are attempting to lose weight, as reducing your calorie intake is often a crucial component of weight management. Additionally, the rule can help identify foods low in added sugars and saturated fats (5% or less of DV) and decrease calorie intake from unhealthy sources. In addition, the 5-20 rule can also help you improve your intake of vital nutrients like vitamins, fiber, and minerals, which are good for overall health, by choosing foods with 20 percent or more DV of these beneficial nutrients.

People can also use the 5-20 rule to compare similar food products and select whichever one is the better choice. For example, the rule could help compare two brands of biscuits and opt for the one with less sodium and added sugars. Except for those who have dietary restrictions, most people can benefit from using the 5-20 rule by choosing foods with less sodium, saturated fat, and added sugars, and with more dietary fiber, calcium, potassium, and iron.

However, it is important to consult with a registered dietitian, as this does not apply for everyone. For instance, some people who are diagnosed with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) may have more gastrointestinal symptoms, including cramping and diarrhea, if they consume too much of certain types of fiber. While others with IBS may be advised to increase their intake of certain fibers. So, if you have IBS or other gastrointestinal conditions, it is important to talk to your doctor or registered dietitian about what types of fiber, and how much, might be best for your symptom management.

Although the 5/20 rule can be helpful, it is also important to understand the ingredients list. Some products may look very healthy when we look at the label (low sodium, low saturated fat, low added sugars, and high dietary fiber), but items found in the list could also contain several highly processed ingredients that can have adverse effects on health.

To put the 5-20 rule in a condensed form, just remember: Less healthy nutrients — like sodium, added sugar, and saturated fat — should generally be kept at or below 5% DV. Healthier nutrients — like fiber, calcium, and potassium — should be consumed in larger amounts at or above 20% DV for most healthy adults. Adhering to this rule can help lose weight, protect your heart, and generally be more healthy. However, we need to be aware that the 5-20 rule is a general one, and specific medical conditions would require more or less of certain nutrients.

**HOW TO DECODE A NUTRITION LABEL**

**Check to see if the serving size is realistic for the amount you are going to eat.**

**WHY %DV MATTERS:**  
%DV are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.  
Aim for less than 5% of: saturated fat, cholesterol, & sodium.

**FIBER IS A CARB:**  
Net carbs are what gets digested as sugar (lower the better)  
Total Carbs - Fiber = NET CARBS  
Aim for > 2.3g of fiber/serving

**MORE PROTEIN LESS ADDED SUGAR:**  
Ideally find products with higher protein content than added sugar.  
Look for snacks with less than 10g of added sugar.

**INGREDIENT LIST... THE MOST IMPORTANT SECTION**  
Choose food products that have simple, real, and minimal ingredients.

Nutrition Facts	
8 servings per container	
Serving size 2/3 cup (55g)	
Amount per serving	
<b>Calories 230</b>	
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 8g	10%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 160mg	7%
Total Carbohydrate 37g	13%
Dietary Fiber 4g	14%
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	20%
Protein 3g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 8mg	
Potassium 235mg	

\*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Nutritional labels usually follow a standard format in listing the quantities, number of calories per serving, and serving size, as well as the dietary values of various nutrients found in the packaged food and their percentage daily value (%DV). The nutrients usually listed include fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium, carbohydrate, fiber, protein, vitamins A and C, calcium, and iron.

Making sense of all this information could be difficult for many people, so health authorities recommend using the 5-20 rule. The rule, which is based on %DV, aims to provide the public with a general guide for selecting foods that are low in certain nutrients that are not needed by the body, such as added sugar or sodium, but high in others that we do want, like vitamins and fiber.

The %DV indicates the percentage of each nutrient that a serving of the food provides toward daily nutrient goals or limits based on eating a 2000-calorie diet. If the %DV is less than or equal to 5 percent, the food is considered to be low in this nutrient. On the other hand, if the %DV is 20



## New AI model learns DNA's hidden language

The DNA (Deoxyribonucleic Acid) within the cells of our body contains the basic underlying information needed to sustain life. Understanding how this information is stored and structured has been one of the greatest scientific challenges of the last century. With GROVER, a new large language model (LLM) — machine learning models that can comprehend and generate human language text) trained on human DNA — researchers can now attempt to decode the complex information hidden in our genome.

Since the discovery of the double helix nature of DNA in 1953, scientists have sought to understand the information encoded within it. Today, it is clear that the information hidden in the DNA is multilayered. Only 1-2 percent of the genome consists of genes — the sequences that code for proteins.

DNA has many functions beyond coding for proteins. Some sequences regulate genes, others serve structural purposes, most sequences serve multiple functions at once. Currently, we do not understand the meaning of most of the DNA. When it comes to understanding the non-coding regions of the DNA, it seems that we have only started to scratch the surface.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and LLMs such as ChatGPT have transformed our understanding of language. Trained exclusively on text, the large language models developed the ability to use the language in many contexts. Since DNA is the code of life, GROVER treats it like a language, and scientists could use it to extract biological meaning from the DNA.

GROVER learned the rules of DNA, which in language terms would be equivalent to learning the grammar, syntax, and semantics of a language. In the case of DNA this means learning the rules governing the sequences, the order of the nucleotides and sequences, and the meaning of the sequences. Like GPT models learning human languages, GROVER has basically learned how to 'speak' DNA.

Not only was GROVER able to accurately predict the DNA sequences but could also extract contextual information that has biological meaning, e.g., identify gene promoters or protein binding sites on DNA. GROVER also learns processes that are generally considered to be 'epigenetic' (regulatory processes taking place on top of the DNA rather than being encoded).

DNA resembles language. It has four letters that build sequences and the sequences carry a meaning. But, unlike a language, DNA has no defined words, instead, it has four nucleotide bases — Adenine (A), Cytosine (C), Guanine (G), and Thymine (T) — that function as the fundamental units of the genetic code comprising a gene.

To train GROVER, the team had to first create a DNA dictionary. They used a method employed in data compression algorithms, by analyzing the whole genome and looking for combinations of letters that occur most often. They started with two letters and went over the entire DNA, again and again, to build it up to the most common multi-letter combinations. In this way, in about 600 cycles, the scientists were able to fragment the DNA into 'words' that let GROVER perform the best when it comes to predicting the next sequence.

GROVER promises to unlock the different layers of genetic code. DNA holds key information on what makes us human, our disease predispositions, and our responses to treatments. Understanding the rules of DNA through a language model could help uncover the depths of biological meaning hidden in the DNA, advancing both genomics and personalized medicine in future.



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