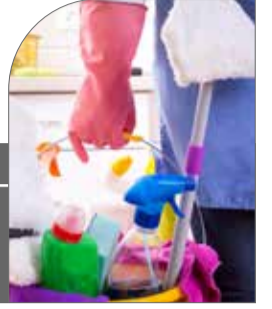




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Over 30,000 requests  
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# Overcoming Kuwait's persistent power crunch

*Kuwait's electric power generation capacity in 2021 was around 20 GW, but a growing population, development of new cities and industries, increase in power intensive water desalination processes, and higher summer temperatures have all combined to raise electricity consumption and strain the ability of existing power stations to cope with the demand.*

## The Times Kuwait Report

Electricity supply breakdowns from grid overload on days of high temperature, and appeals by the Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy (MEWRE), urging the public to reduce and rationalize electricity consumption, especially during peak temperature periods, have become a regular feature of summers in Kuwait.

Recurring power outages in summer are a searing reminder that, despite living in one of the wealthiest countries in the world, inefficient delivery and inadequate quality are the norm when it comes to public services in Kuwait. The almost ritual electricity blackouts



and brownouts each year underscores the fact that existing power stations are largely incapable, and their output insufficient to meet the growing energy demands from new industries, residential cities, and an increasing population.

Officials at MEWRE claim that their recommendations and plans for increasing energy output by commissioning new power plants have been repeatedly ignored by the government. Inability of the ministry to win approval for its new power plants to meet increasing electricity demand, also mirrors the incapability of past governments to gain support from parliament for vital

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# Ukraine marks National Day amid global call for peace, security

On 24 August, Ukraine marks the 33rd anniversary of the restoration of its independence. For Ukrainians, this day transcends being just a national holiday; it is a solemn tribute to Ukraine's thousand-year-old state-building tradition, rooted in the Kyivan Rus, as the oldest recorded mention of the word 'Ukraina' appears in the Kyivan Chronicle under the year 1187. Today, independence is not just a legacy we inherit but a responsibility that requires immense sacrifices.

Every Ukrainian now deeply understands the true meaning of independence because it is something we are actively defending. Independence for us signifies the freedom to choose our own path — one that we see as peaceful, prosperous, and guided by universal human values. This vision aligns closely with Kuwait's approach to national development, which has earned global recognition as a Humanitarian Center. Ukraine is deeply grateful to Kuwait for decades of effective and mutually beneficial cooperation, characterized by mutual support and humanitarian aid in times of need, developing trade relations, legendary



sports ties, and enriching cultural and academic exchanges.

On this occasion, we also extend our heartfelt thanks to the foreign diplomatic

missions accredited to Kuwait and their respective capitals for standing with us in upholding international law, justice and security. Together with foreign partners,

Ukraine has made significant contributions to overcoming the consequences of humanitarian crises worldwide, as Ukrainians are acutely aware of what a humanitarian disaster means.

Thus, in collaboration with several dozen countries and international organizations, we successfully implement the 'Grain from Ukraine' food security program, aimed at helping countries affected by food shortages. To date, the program has dispatched 10 vessels carrying over 200,000 tons of wheat and flour to Somalia, Ethiopia, Kenya, Yemen, Nigeria, Sudan, and Palestine, with the latter recently receiving 1,000 tons of Ukrainian flour — enough to feed 100,000 people in Gaza for a month.

In conclusion, we extend our congratulations to Ukrainians worldwide on the 33rd anniversary of Ukraine's independence. We raise our blue-and-yellow flags in honor of our freedom — something that cannot be taken from us, alongside respect for international law and security, for the benefit of all peace-loving nations. We also wish for peace, security, and stability to prevail throughout the world.



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## Al Ansari Exchange in Kuwait expands its network with the acquisition of Oman Exchange

Al Ansari Exchange in Kuwait, a leading name in foreign exchange and worldwide money transfers in Kuwait, proudly announces the successful acquisition and merger with Oman Exchange. This strategic move expands Al Ansari Exchange in Kuwait's network to 37 branches, securing its position as the fourth-largest exchange company in the country with a robust workforce of over 200 employees.

This acquisition aligns with Al Ansari Exchange in Kuwait's ongoing strategy to broaden its service offerings and enhance customer satisfaction by providing superior solutions tailored to meet diverse financial needs. The integration of Oman Exchange's branches significantly enhances Al Ansari Exchange's footprint across Kuwait, offering customers improved accessibility and convenience.



Vivek Nair, Country Head of Al Ansari Exchange in Kuwait, commented on the merger: "We are delighted to finalise the acquisition of Oman Exchange in Kuwait. This merger

underscores our unwavering commitment to the Kuwaiti market and reflects our strategic intent to expand our operations and offerings in the country. By incorporating Oman Exchange's branches into our network, we have bolstered our presence in Kuwait, enabling us to serve our customers more efficiently and meet their evolving needs."

Al Ansari Exchange stands as the leading exchange and money transfer company with the largest branch network in the UAE, boasting over 250 branches and serving more than 5 million customers with a dedicated team of over 4,000 employees. Renowned for its high-quality services and customer-centric solutions, Al Ansari Exchange maintains a steadfast commitment to excellence in Kuwait.

## Mangaf fire deemed a misdemeanor

The Public Prosecution has deemed the Mangaf fire tragedy that claimed the lives of 50 expatriate workers in June of this year as a misdemeanor, and not a felony, as technical reports presented by the investigation team concluded that the fire was not intentional.

Immediately after the tragic incident, the Public Prosecution had referred the case to the General Directorate of Investigations of the Ministry of Interior for a thorough investigation into the cause of the blaze.

After remanding and investigating all the eight accused for over a month, the Public Prosecution concluded that there was no proof of criminal suspicion or intentions. Accordingly, the judge decided to release the eight defendants, one Kuwaiti, three Indians, and four Egyptians, on a bail of KD300 each.

In legal terms, intent is the mental objective behind an action — whether the action took place knowingly, purposely, recklessly, or negligently. Determination of guilt and punishment for a crime is mainly based on the intent.

Negligence and recklessness often have lesser punishments, because while the action resulted in breaking a law, you were not acting with the intent to break it. However, knowingly and purposely breaking a law has more severe punishments, because you understood what you were doing.



# Leaving with “part of my heart in Kuwait”

French Ambassador H.E. Claire Le Flecher bids goodbye to Kuwait

By Reaven D'Souza  
Executive Managing Editor

In the three years since her arrival in Kuwait, French Ambassador H.E. Claire Le Flecher has left an indelible mark in diplomatic circles, as well as with the government and people of Kuwait for her unique all-round diplomacy and initiatives that have paved a new path of friendship between the two countries and people.

Ambassador Claire not only used diplomacy to strengthen the bonds of friendship between the two friendly nations, but also, in making a real effort to reach out to the people of Kuwait, she strengthened the roots of this friendship at the people's level. In addition, there were many first time initiatives during her tenure, as she undertook the launch of Sorbonne Society in Kuwait, the Women's Diwaniya, and the France-Kuwait Friendship Society among others.

The launch of the Sorbonne Society will go a long way in further bolstering academic and cultural bonds between Kuwait and France, it will help strengthen academic and cultural relations marking a historic moment for all lovers of French culture and education.

She was also optimistic that the launch of the French-Kuwait Friendship Association would become a major platform to bring together prominent actors in the private sector and civil society in both countries and develop meaningful long-term relationships and projects.

On the other hand her pioneering Women Diwaniya initiative was aimed to provide an inspiring and empowering platform for talented women to communicate, share their stories and build strong networks of solidarity. She hoped that this would increase the influence of Kuwaiti



women in all sectors, paving the way for future generations to follow in their footsteps.

The affable ambassador won the hearts of the people of Kuwait with her easy going nature, accessibility and her ever smiling and charming disposition. In her farewell address Ambassador Claire echoed this sentiment stressing that Kuwait will remain in her heart and soul wherever she went. "The unique experience of working in Kuwait as my country's ambassador, was full of inspiring encounters, fruitful challenges and unforgettable memories," she noted.

Her untiring efforts in development of relations between the two countries encompassed various fields, including trade, investment, education and culture. During her tenure she was also able to elevate the French-Kuwaiti strategic dialogue to the level

of a ministerial meeting in continuation of developing the strong bilateral relationship. She emphasized that France and Kuwait are partners in stability and security and share a lot in common and have much to build together on.

In her observations on Kuwait's diplomacy she pointed at the permanency of Kuwaiti diplomacy and its constant emphasis on dialogue, negotiation and the search for solutions. She stated that the French government also highly appreciated the speed and clarity of the positions taken by the Kuwaiti authorities in international forums.

When it came to diplomacy, Ambassador Claire left no stone unturned, she used the Gout de France/Good France initiative of food diplomacy to promote French gastronomy with cooking workshops to promote French cuisine.

There were also other areas of cooperation, ranging from defense, sports, health, climate change to branded French luxury goods.

"As I leave Kuwait, I carry with me countless memories and lasting friendships. I have had the honor of serving as the Ambassador of France to the State of Kuwait for three years, and rest assured that I will always remain an ardent advocate for strengthening French-Kuwaiti friendship, wherever I am."

The ambassador praised the efforts of the embassy team, members, committed partners and all the Kuwaitis who welcomed her and her son with open arms, saying, "You have made this mission more than just a job, you have made it a unique life experience."

She added, "Even though it is very difficult for me to leave Kuwait, I feel at peace, and I know that the projects we have started will continue to flourish, with the support of all of you, who are so passionate and committed to the friendship of France and Kuwait." She continued, "So thank you again for these wonderful and unforgettable years. It has been an honor to serve as the Ambassador of France to the State of Kuwait."

In conclusion, as she embarks on her new role in the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Le Flecher noted, "I will return to Paris and leave a part of my heart here, but I will also take a part of Kuwait with me to France and rest assured that wherever I go in the future, I will always keep Kuwait in my heart, my soul and my spirit."

Ambassador Claire leaves behind a legacy not only of strengthened bonds of friendship between the two nations but also of trust, goodwill and loyalty that will hopefully be the new foundations of French-Kuwaiti diplomatic ties.



## New driving test system to examine various driving skills

**T**raffic Education Department at the Ministry of Interior has introduced a new specialized driving test system across all six governorates. The new system includes a comprehensive written evaluation that is prepared by the examiner for each test-taker along with the testing of various driving skills on the road.

Assistant Undersecretary for Traffic and Operations Affairs, Major General Yousef Al-Khuda, is reported to have approved

the specialized test format for driving license applicants. This format covers all types of licenses, including private, public, construction, and motorcycle.

The new test consists of six stages, beginning with the moment the applicant enters the testing area. Examiners will assess various skills, such as seatbelt usage, attentiveness while driving, parallel parking, stopping at red lights, making tight turns, and using a manual transmission.



Each test component is worth 10 points, except for stopping at a red

light and making a tight turn, which are each worth 30 points. To pass the test, applicants must achieve a score of 75 percent or higher out of 100.

Previously, examiners would simply record the pass or fail result on the applicant's form. However, with the new system, the examiner will now fill out a detailed evaluation form, and the results will be verified by both the practical test officer and the head of the testing department.

## Loans of deceased persons do not transfer to heirs

**T**he heirs of deceased borrowers in Kuwait who have consumer, installment or housing loans in their names are exempt from paying any remaining obligations, except in limited cases

To clarify this further, a banking source explained that Kuwaiti banks and local financing institutions, under the direction of the Central Bank of Kuwait (CBK), have activated life insurance procedures with local insurance companies, for all individual clients included in their financing portfolios.

According to the CBK regulatory directive on insuring loans provided by local banks, the customer bears half the value of the insurance, provided that its total cost does not exceed two percent of the total insurance on his loan. This is provided the customer agrees to the procedure, as the matter must be presented to him as a contractual option, which the customer can choose to accept or reject.

There are also banks that have decided to bear the entire insurance cost, thus saving the insurance percentage set for them and the customer to increase their competitive advantage and lure customers from other banks. In this case, even if the customer does not accept his contract to buy insurance, the insurance company will pay the remaining installments of the deceased to the bank.

As a binding result of the insurance procedure followed by the financing parties, the insurance company contracted with is responsible for paying the remaining installments of the customer after his death, regardless of their value, even if the loan is new, and even if the customer has not paid a single installment of it.

The insurance company is not legally entitled to approach the heirs of the deceased customer, as it does in cases of car insurance where the second-party is legally bound to return the value of the insurance premiums it paid. As a result, the loan of the deceased is written off in the books of the financing party and also in the records of the insurance company, which in turn contracts with a reinsurance company to reduce the risks of these exposures.

However, in case the client does not agree to sign the contract to insure the loan, and the



financing bank does not undertake to pay the full value of the insurance, as most financing entities do, then the lending bank has the legal right to freeze the customer's balance, more specifically the value that covers the rest of the loan installments. This procedure includes seizing current accounts, end-of-service gratuity, and deposits, and the bank also has the right to refer to the heirs if the seized balance in the account of the deceased is not sufficient to cover the loan.

In addition, if the loan is granted against a guarantee by the customer, whether it is shares, real estate, or other credit-based mortgages, the bank will take legal measures to liquidate the guarantee, and this is what usually happens, especially if the debt is of significant weight and deserves litigation.

In all cases, the procedures for suing the heirs, "in the event that the loan is not insured," are limited to the money or assets that accrue to them from the deceased, and not to the personal wealth they own. This means that the creditor bank has no right to freeze the heir's balance or seize his personal property in payment of his father's debt or any of his heirs.

If the deceased had nothing to bequeath, the financing entity will delete the loan from its books and build up allocations equivalent to the remaining installments, considering them as bad debts.

offers, including offering zero-interest to cover wedding expenses.

According to this package, the customer will not be obligated to pay any interest on top of his loan value, provided that his salary is transferred to the bank, and that he commits to continuing to transfer his salary for at least two years.

Banks are also offering similar terms for a range of purchases, such as interest-free installments payments on car loans for periods up to 5 years, for specifically qualified customers, on the condition of transfer of salary. On the other hand, some banks are offering cash gifts to new customers, in addition to other benefits such as obtaining credit cards and cashback on purchases, at rates of up to 10 percent.

## Banks lure new customers with irresistible offers

**C**ompetition among banks in Kuwait to attract new customers and expand market share has resulted in a spew of enticing offers for customers. While some banks offer zero-percent interest on loans, others have come out with free credit cards, and cashback on purchases, among others.

The competition to win new customers has compelled banks to create unconventional

## Municipality introduces efficiencies in waste management

**C**olor-coded waste collection bins, new garbage collection trucks, automated cleaning equipment and other initiatives have been introduced by Kuwait Municipality in a bid to enhance cleanliness in public spaces and improve efficiency of its waste management services across all six governorates.

In response to a query from council member Alia Al-Farsi, Municipality Director Saud Al-Dabus revealed that the number of cleaning equipment has been increased based on the specific needs of each area. He added that a notable feature of the new cleaning strategy is the introduction of unique bin colors for each governorate, making waste management more efficient.

He also detailed the various types of vehicles added to the municipality's fleet, including compacting garbage trucks, dual-system sweeping machines, medium-sized graders, vacuum tankers, and specialized bin washing machines.

Recognizing the environmental sensitivity of certain areas, electric sweepers have been specifically introduced in these areas, including at the Mubarakiya area.

To further support waste management efforts, the municipality has also introduced new types of bins, such as 360-liter waste collection bins, 3 cubic meter metal waste collection bins, and manual sweeping carts. A significant step towards promoting waste segregation is the allocation of 19 vehicles for collecting and transporting segregated waste across all performance-based cleaning contracts.



Each of these vehicles is equipped with a compartment divided into four sections to accommodate 240-liter bins. A set of four such plastic bins with different color codes (green for glass, yellow for plastic, blue for paper and cardboard, and black for metals) has been allocated for the collection of non-organic recyclable waste.

These bins will be strategically placed near cooperative societies, their branches, and public markets under the supervision of the Kuwait Municipality. The collected segregated waste will be transported daily to municipal landfills for proper processing and recycling.

Al-Dabus emphasized the municipality's commitment to ensuring that cleaning companies adhere to contract terms. He added that regular field visits, conducted at least three times a week, will be carried out to monitor compliance. Any company found in violation will face penalties as outlined in the contract. A detailed monthly report on inspection findings will be submitted to the Municipality Director.

## Legal action against those responsible for building collapse

**D**eputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Shereeda Al-Mousherji vowed that those responsible for the collapse of a building in Jabriya would be held accountable. The incident occurred while the building was being demolished.

"We are waiting for the final report about the incident," said the minister while expressing appreciation for the efforts by different ministries and competent bodies, which dealt with the incident promptly and efficiently, despite difficult conditions and hot weather.

Al-Mousherji added that a team worked on lifting the rubble to make sure that there were neither victims nor injuries. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Interior said its team, along with the Kuwait Fire Force (KFF), dealt with the collapse.

In a statement on the incident, the Interior ministry's security media and public relations department said that the incident took place due to negligence from the contractor responsible for the demolition. The statement added that the contractor ran away from the



site after the incident took place, and that concerned authorities are searching for those responsible for the collapse to refer them to competent bodies and take legal actions against them.

For his part, Acting Chief of KFF Maj. Gen. Khaled Abdullah told KUNA in a statement that a force rushed to the site of the collapse as soon as they received a report about it. The force finished a 3-hour search operation, and there were no casualties, he added. Earlier in the day, the KFF announced that a six-storey building collapsed in Jabriya while being demolished.

# PAM directives link private sector jobs to academic qualification

Public Authority of Manpower (PAM) has issued new directives that link job titles of workers in the private sector with their academic qualification for renewal of their residency permits.

Under the new directive, a worker with decades of experience and skills in a profession is suddenly denied renewal of their work permit, because they do not hold the appropriate academic qualification for that job title.

Labor market analysts noted the decision by PAM has created confusion in the market and appears to have been taken without proper

study of its impact on private sector companies and the overall economy of the country. Stressing that the decision by PAM is making Kuwait an uninviting environment for skilled workers, they pointed out that many skilled workers would abandon the country and seek employment in neighboring states that did not have such out-dated laws,

Critics of the move also questioned PAM's actions in removing hundreds of professions, previously available to expatriate workers, from the automated system. Tens of thousands of workers were denied residency renewals under

the same titles they had held for years, some for more than 15 years. The PAM initiative led to workers suddenly losing their professional titles without an alternative solution, which not only stripped them of their titles but also jeopardized other privileges, such as driving licenses.

The measure to link academic qualification to job title, is a repeat of a string of illogical and counter-productive measures enacted by PAM in recent years. This includes the one on setting a 60-year age limit to renew residences for those without a university or equivalent academic qualification. This decision forced thousands of experienced professionals and technicians, unable to bear the high fees, to leave the country. The exodus has created a significant gap that remains unfilled to date, as seen in the 'tailors' crisis, which has caused considerable harm to the private sector.

The measures being enacted by PAM also constitute interference in the operations of private sector companies, which have the right to employ the most suited candidate for a job, irrespective of the worker's academic qualifications.

While private sector companies fully support legal reforms that would improve the labor market and enhance the business environment, the unilateral decisions of PAM



are taken without proper consultations and logical thinking.

Individuals and private sector companies are urging Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense, and Minister of Interior, Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef, to urgently intervene to stop this 'overreach' by PAM, which threatens independent economic entities that comply with labor market regulations and the national employment quotas in non-governmental entities.

They urged against overemphasizing academic certificates, especially after this approach has led to widespread certificate forgery and buying promotions in the public sector. The observers expressed surprise that the authority now seeks to introduce this same harmful practice into the private sector.

## New French Ambassador to Arrive on August 27

New Ambassador of France H E Olivier Govin will arrive in Kuwait on Aug 27 from Istanbul. Govin a seasoned diplomat will assume his first time role as ambassador and Ambassador Claire noted that he will do a good and wonderful job to develop bilateral relations between the two friendly countries.

Olivier Gauvin, took up his duties as Consul General of France in Istanbul in September 2020. He was previously Deputy Spokesperson for the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs and Deputy Director of Communication and Press between 2018 and 2020. Between 2016 and 2018, he held the position of Deputy Director in charge of the press at the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs. During his career at the Quai d'Orsay, Olivier Gauvin was also political advisor at the French Embassy in Washington (2013-2016), exchange diplomat at the U.S. State Department in Washington (2012-2013),



political advisor at the French Embassy in Tehran (2009-2012), advisor to the special representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan (2009) and press advisor to the spokesperson of the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs (2006-2009).

## LuLu Hypermarket launches 'Back-to-School' campaign with unbeatable deals

LuLu Hypermarket, the region's leading retailer, launched its 'Back to School Savers' campaign that enables students to kickstart the new academic year with confidence and style.

the perfect tech tools to support their children's learning journey at very affordable prices.

The wide range of school uniforms offered during the campaign also ensured that every student could look sharp and smart as they began their new academic year.

In addition, to complement the back-to-school essentials, LuLu Hypermarket offered a variety of comfortable and stylish school shoes, including renowned brands like Skechers. By providing a comprehensive range of products at competitive prices, LuLu Hypermarket helped parents prepare for the new academic year with confidence.

And, with every need covered under one roof, parents could also complete their children's back-to-school shopping list with ease.

LuLu Hypermarket remains committed to supporting the community and providing exceptional value to its customers. The 'Back to School Savers' campaign serves as a reminder of the retailer's dedication in meeting the needs of its customers throughout the year.



The campaign, which began on 14 August across all LuLu Hypermarket outlets in Kuwait, offered an unparalleled selection of essential school supplies, uniforms, electronics, and footwear at unbeatable prices.

In order to ensure students are well-equipped for the digital age, LuLu Hypermarket presented an impressive range of laptops, tablets, and printers at exclusive discounts. Parents could find

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# Labor market grows as economy begins to revive

Latest quarterly statistics from the Central Statistical Bureau (CSB) show that Kuwait's labor market grew by 3.6 percent by the end of first-quarter (1Q) of 2024 compared to the same period in 2023, with a total of 74,315 workers being added to the labor pool.

The total number of workers in the labor market, excluding household workers, rose from 2,071,333 in 1Q 2023 to 2,147,426 in 1Q2024; while the overall number of workers, including household workers, reached 2,936,459.

The number of Kuwaitis rose to 457,567, representing 21.3 percent of the labor market, including 192,712 males and 264,855 females. This compares to 1,689,859 non-Kuwaitis, who make up 78.7 percent of the labor market and include 1,478,934 males and 210,925 females, marking an increase of 61,570 since 1Q 2023.

The private sector accounted for about

56.8 percent of the total workforce, while the household sector represented 26.8 percent and the government sector accounted for 16.4 percent of workers.

Kuwaiti workers were concentrated in the government sector (83.9%), compared to 16.1 percent in the private sector. Kuwaiti citizens made up 79.9 percent of the total workers in the government sector and 4.4 percent in the private sector, totaling 73,574 citizens. Non-Kuwaiti workers were predominantly in the private sector, with 1,593,360 individuals representing 64.3 percent, and only 96,499 or 3.9 percent non-Kuwaitis in the government sector — a drop of 1.3 percent from 1Q 2023. In addition, 789,033 non-Kuwaitis (31.8%) worked in the household sector.

According to educational level, the vast majority of citizens (213,835) hold university degrees, followed by 93,147 secondary school



certificate holders; and 58,247 with secondary school and lower university certificates. In addition, there are 41,387 intermediate school graduates and 22,928 post-university degree holders.

A total of 19,340 are listed as unaware of their educational status, 8,526 have completed

primary school, 155 can read and write, and two are illiterate.

For non-Kuwaiti workers, the largest number of workers (827,665) are holders of an intermediate certificate, followed by 392,619 with a secondary school certificate, and 255,272 with a university degree. In addition, 126,106 have an elementary certificate and 40,776 have a secondary school or lower university certificate, while 18,010 hold post-university qualifications. A total of 17,966 non-Kuwaiti workers can only read and write, 11,172 are unaware of their education status, and 273 are illiterate.

Statistics reveal that over 54.5 percent of Kuwaiti workers in the private sector are concentrated in just three economic activities — accommodation and food services account for 30.7 percent, financial and insurance activities make up 12.8 percent, and construction comprises 11 percent.

## MNSS unveils the all-new Toyota Camry 2025



Mohamed Naser Al Sayer & Sons (MNSS) and Toyota launched the latest iteration of its iconic Camry model in the region last week. The event was attended by Senior Business Director Toyota Group Sales, Martin Aherne, General Manager of Toyota retail sales, Theo Kruger, Head of Toyota Marketing, Bader Faisal Al Sayer, along with representatives from the media.

Since its debut in 1982 and evolution over nine generations, the Toyota Camry has been embraced around the world for its outstanding performance, alluring design and renowned quality and value. As one of the Middle East's most popular vehicles, it has established an unshakeable presence in the mid-size sedan market and a special place in the hearts of drivers in the region. With its advanced yet seamless technology, modern styling, and an all-new

Toyota Hybrid System, this model introduces a level of refinement that exceeds expectations, further cementing the Camry's reputation as a class-leading vehicle.

In his address to the gathering, Bader Faisal Al Sayer said: "Toyota Camry has established an exceptional presence and position in the mid-size saloon car market, in the Middle East and around the world. It managed to sell nearly 20 million cars worldwide. I would like to extend my thanks to all Toyota customers for their continuous support over the years, and we are always pleased to provide them with Toyota cars of the highest quality."

Noting that Camry has established a reputation for value worldwide and has the highest market share of the medium-size market in the GCC, Mr. Kruger added, "The drivers of Camry are loyal, they are highly satisfied, they

know Camry's unparalleled quality and they buy it again and again."

The new Camry is built around the Toyota New Global Architecture (TNGA-K) platform. This delivers excellent body rigidity and a low center of gravity, guaranteeing a more rewarding driving experience. To achieve a more exciting driving style, the new Toyota Camry comes with a choice of two powertrain options, — a 2.5-liter four-cylinder Dynamic Force engine that produces 201 hp and 240 nm of torque; and an electrified hybrid powertrain, which combines a petrol engine and two electric motors that produce 184 hp and 134 hp respectively. The combined power of the two power sources is 227 hp.

The new Camry's distinctive interior design is complemented by a range of advanced features to enhance every passenger's on-road

experience, including among others, a 12.3-inch touchscreen multimedia system, a 12.3-inch color full-graphic meter or 7-inch color display meter, a wireless charging system for smartphones, a color head-up display (HUD), and a digital rear-view mirror.

As with any Toyota vehicle, safety is a top priority for the new Camry. Drivers can enjoy complete peace of mind, thanks to the Toyota Safety Sense, an advanced safety and driver assistance system that includes a Pre-Collision System (PCS) with an expanded detection range for vehicles, pedestrians, cyclists, and motorcycles. Other new safety features include Intersection collision avoidance support for crossing vehicles, and Acceleration Suppression at Low Speed. The new Toyota Camry also allows customers to express their individuality through a choice of colors and wheel-designs and sizes.

## KOC's soil remediation project gathers pace

Kuwait Oil Company's (KOC) projects to remediate oil-contaminated soil has been picking up speed in recent months. The projects, which come under the Kuwait Environmental Rehabilitation Program (KERP), is considered to be the world's largest environment rehabilitation project. The program aims to treat more than 8.5 million tons of contaminated soil spread over an area of nearly 114 square kilometers, at a cost estimated at USD3.5 billion.

The soil contamination occurred due to Iraqi forces setting ablaze nearly 700 oil wells during their seven-month invasion and occupation of Kuwait in 1990-91. In a media statement last week, head of the Environmental Projects team at KOC, Muthanna Al-Moumen, noted that the

remediating contaminated soil projects in Kuwait are affiliated with the United Nations Compensation Committee set up to help Kuwait address environmental damages caused by the 1990-1991 Gulf War.

Indicating that the projects are expected to be completed within the scheduled time frame of 2027-28, Al Moumen added that the completion rate in the project packages currently stands at about 54 percent. So far the various projects have cleared an area of approximately 55 square kilometers of unexploded ordnance, and an area of more than 25 square kilometers of contamination. He noted that the projects are expected to shift to large-scale cleanup operations before end of 2024.

As part of the KERP program KOC



announced the signing of five contracts to treat the soil contaminated by crude oil in late July of 2021. The three-decade delay since the end of the Gulf War in 1991 to award the rehabilitation contracts has been attributed to various factors, not least of which is the unique nature of the work.

The project involves remediating nearly 114 square kilometers of land filled with wet and dry oil lakes and swamps filled with crude oil. Some of these areas pose an additional challenge as it involves clearing unexploded ordnance from the Gulf War.

Nevertheless, over the past couple of years there has been increased activity with the issuance of several tenders and contracts related to the program. Kuwait Environmental Rehabilitation Program also involves reforestation of the affected area, and KOC is reported to have offered four large reforestation contracts to four separate contractors to cover the rehabilitated area with greenery. Ten species of grasses and shrubs have been approved for the project, in addition to two types of trees.

# Over 30,000 requests for domestic visa transfer

In the wake of the decision by the government in July, allowing the transfer of domestic worker residency permits (Article 20) to the private sector (Article 18) residency permit, the General Administration of Residency Affairs has reportedly received over 30,000 transfer requests over a one-month period from mid-July to mid-August, with around 10,000 requests being completed so far.

The 'Residency Affairs' department at the Ministry of Interior is said to be coordinating with the Public Authority of Manpower to accelerate the pace of transferring workers between the

two sectors, before the transfer deadline ends on 12 September.

The transfer initiative has given domestic workers a fresh impetus to upgrade their financial status, as well as fill the labor shortage in the labor pool, due, among other reasons, to the deportation of over 80,000 residency violators in the past several months. The initiative is expected to revive the labor market, especially in the construction sector, which is witnessing growth in terms of building new residential cities.

On a related note, the 'Residency Affairs' department issued about 70,000 entry visas,



distributed between commercial, tourist and family visas, over the past six months. The new visas are in line with the decision of the First Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef and his call to consider the humanitarian aspect in reuniting families of residents.

The number of those who were issued a 'family joining' visa for the wife, and children under the age of 15 reached about 12,000, among those who met the stipulated conditions for a family visa. A further 20,000 applications are said to be still under review.



## Outgoing French ambassador hosts 'Women's Diwaniya'

French Ambassador H.E. Anne Claire Le Flécher hosted a 'Women's Diwaniya' at her residence last week at the end of her diplomatic tenure in Kuwait. The diwaniya was attended by distinguished women from various sectors, including from politics, economy,

education, health, media, and the arts.

The gathering, which underlined the strength and significance that women play in reinforcing cultural and social relations between France and Kuwait, provided a platform for a relaxed and fruitful exchange

of ideas and insights on a range of current issues.

Addressing the gathering, Ambassador Le Flécher said that the initiative to launch the 'Women's Diwaniya' during her tenure had turned out to be extremely successful,

and helped build mutual understanding and boosted ties between people.

The diwaniya was well received by the attendees, and much appreciated especially as it went a long way in promoting the exchange of constructive ideas.

## Deal signed to include Kuwait's Failaka Island in UNESCO World Heritage List

• The National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters and International Fund for Landmarks are preparing a file to list Failaka Island on the World Heritage List, with submission to UNESCO in the coming years.

• The Failaka Island witnessed five successive civilizations and was inhabited until 34 years ago, when the Iraqi invasion of the country occurred in 1990.



The National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters has signed a memorandum of understanding with the International Monuments Fund to include Failaka Island on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

The memorandum was signed by Dr. Mohammed Al-Jassar, Secretary-General of the council in Kuwait, with H. E. Sheikha Al-Zain Al-Sabah, Kuwait's Ambassador to the United States. Meanwhile, Benedict de Montlor, President and CEO of the International Fund for Landmarks, signed the

memorandum at the organization's headquarters in Manhattan. On this occasion, Al-Jassar emphasized in a statement to KUNA the significance of Failaka Island, which has a history spanning 4,200 years, to Kuwait, the Gulf region, and the world.

Al-Jassar added that the island witnessed five successive civilizations and was inhabited until 34 years ago, when the Iraqi invasion of the country occurred in 1990.

He pointed out that the council is preparing the file for listing Failaka Island on the World

Heritage List in cooperation with the International Fund for Landmarks. This involves preparing a comprehensive study on the island and submitting the file to UNESCO in the coming years.

He explained that the study will be conducted in several stages. The first stage involves a comprehensive survey of the island's heritage sites, followed by the preparation of a file on how to utilize these sites for cultural tourism in Failaka, and then submitting the file to the organization.

He emphasized the importance of this stage

for the country to have a registered site on the World Heritage List, noting that the goal of this registration is to enhance Kuwait's global cultural profile and to develop "sites that can be leveraged for cultural tourism as part of the country's future development efforts."

Al-Jassar added that this type of registration preserves and validates these historical sites for future generations, emphasizing that preserving heritage on the island is a proactive step toward sustainable cultural tourism in Failaka.

# Deportees to be shifted to new facilities

General Administration of Correctional Institutions has opened the new Department of Deportation and Temporary Detention Affairs building in Sulaibiya and has begun the phased transfer of detainees awaiting deportation from the current location at Talha Prison to the new facility.

In a statement announcing the shifting of deportees, the Security Media Department at the Ministry of Interior said last week, "This step reflects the commitment of Sheikh Fahd Al-Yousef, the Minister of Interior, to continuously support projects



that address the needs of inmates in correctional institutions.

The new building is notable for adhering to all international standards for respecting human rights and includes numerous service facilities."

The statement added, "This initiative is part of a series of development projects aimed at improving the work environment in correctional institutions, enhancing inmates' rights, and continuing to modernize and develop correctional facilities in line with international standards, ensuring the necessary care is provided."

# Overcoming Kuwait's persistent power crunch

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

infrastructure and utility projects, due to political exigencies. Power shortfalls not only impair the daily life of people, they also significantly impact the economy. Businesses and investors have long lamented the lack of priority accorded to power projects and pointed out how continued insufficiency in power supply could discourage investments in the country. It is not that the country lacks resources or technological access to address the energy situation, it is just that utility projects, along with all other project activities in Kuwait, have for far too long suffered from an 'implementation inertia'.

There is clearly a dire need to increase electricity and water output to meet growing demand. Although Kuwait currently has sufficient electricity capacity, its peak demand during the hot summer months is reaching close to the country's available capacity, and could soon strain the power system. Many of the existing utility plants also need to be replaced, as they have reached the end of their operational life, and continuing to operate and maintain them is increasingly becoming unviable.

Kuwait's electric power generation capacity in 2021 was around 20 GW, but a growing population, development of new cities and industries, increase in power intensive water desalination processes, and higher summer temperatures have all combined to raise electricity consumption and strain the ability of existing power stations to cope with the demand. Industry experts say that utility projects shelved in the past would have together added around 13GW to the national grid.

Over the last few years, international developers have proposed several initiatives

to expand current production capacity and efficiently address the country's persistent power shortages. Many of the proposed projects were for constructing highly efficient combined-cycle natural gas-fired power generation units, while a few were for using solar energy to power electricity generation.

However, despite their significance to expanding power production, all of these proposals have been shelved by successive previous governments for various reasons, including lack of funds during economic downturns, regulatory and legal issues, bureaucratic hurdles, political stalemate in the National Assembly, or due to social and environmental concerns.

Most recently, media reports and industry sources indicated that several international companies had submitted initiatives to MEWRE under the independent water and power producer (IWPP) model. The proposals offered to produce energy and water at no cost to the state, and at a competitive price rate to consumers. However, no decisions have been made in this regard so far.

Many countries worldwide rely on IWPP schemes to build and operate utility projects that generate water and power to meet growing demand. Under the IWPP model, an international or local company receives approval from a public sector entity to finance, design, construct, own, and operate a utility facility for a set period of time, after which the facility returns to the public entity. IWPP developers make their money by selling the water and power produced, either directly to consumers, or to the public entity that commissioned the project, at pre-fixed stipulated rates. The IWPP model is cost-effective and ensures sufficient power and water supplies to meet local demand without any upfront expenses to the state. IWPP

projects also attract international developers and investment to a country.

Several Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states have successfully launched IWPP projects in the past to meet their growing demand. Kuwait has been slow to follow suit, with the country continuing to rely on the traditional Engineering, Procurement, Construction (EPC) model for its infrastructure and utility projects. Although legal mechanisms for purchasing water and energy supplies from global investors and developers have existed since 2008, it is only in recent years that they have been actively pursued in Kuwait.

Some of the legal frameworks that govern the formation of Kuwaiti joint-stock companies for the development of water and power utility projects include BOT law No. 7 of 2008, which was replaced by the public-private partnership (PPP) law No. 116 of 2014, and the IWPP law No.39 of 2010, which was amended in 2012. The Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA) is also authorized through Law No. 116 of 2013 to attract global IWPP developers.

More recently, degree No. 207 of 2023 and Cabinet Resolution No. 995 of 2023, specifically authorizes MEWRE to purchase energy from external sources using IWPP schemes. Despite the support of these legal frameworks, the only IWPP venture in Kuwait so far has been the Az-Zour North IWPP phase 1 project. A second project using the PPP model was used to procure the USD1.6 billion Umm Al Hayman wastewater treatment plant.

There is an urgent need to expedite the development of new utility projects using the IWPP model, and to create a business climate more attractive to global IWPP developers and investment. But Kuwait is yet to achieve the level of success in attracting IWPP developers

as neighboring Saudi Arabia or the United Arab Emirates. And, there is no wonder why Kuwait has lagged others in this regard.

Recently, a local daily reported that the Norwegian company Scatec, an independent water and power producer which specializes in renewable energy, submitted an initiative to build a 1.3GW solar power station at no cost to the state. However, the proposal from Scatec did not elicit any positive response from the relevant authorities. After their initiative was ignored, Scatec withdrew its proposal and the country lost yet another global developer and investor.

On a related note, early last year reports emerged that the cabinet had endorsed a plan by MEWRE to restructure the ministry to an autonomous corporation with the mandate to establish separate companies for water, power, and renewable energy. The ministry also obtained necessary clearance from the Central Agency for Public Tenders to invite global consultancies to implement the restructuring plan.

The planned entity would be tasked to increase efficiency and streamline services, as well as work to lower costs, slash government subsidies, and aim to reduce and rationalize consumption of water and power. But since then, there has been no update on the status of this corporation. Executive and legislative authorities have blamed each other over the years for the delay in power project activities.

Irrespective of who is responsible for failing to address the energy deficit in the past, the new government in office needs to prioritize long-term solutions to the country's persistent power crunch and prioritize the launch of new utility projects, so as to ensure that citizens and residents will no longer need hand-fans to cool themselves in summer.

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# London witnesses an exodus of millionaires



By Hermoine Macura-Noble  
Special to The Times Kuwait

A new study has revealed that nearly half of the UK's millionaires are considering leaving the country over fears the new Labour government will hike taxes and introduce unnecessary regulations.

A total of 47 percent of millionaires said they were now more likely to leave the UK than before the general election, according to a survey of 262 UK residents with net assets of at least £1 million by Arton Capital.

Historically a hub for global wealth and a preferred residence for millionaires, London has recently seen an exodus of its affluent residents. This shift is primarily attributed to the Labour Party's recent political victories and policy proposals, which have raised concerns among the wealthy about potential changes to taxation, property regulations, and broader economic policies.

According to the study, around 83 percent stated that they were concerned about potential regulatory changes that may negatively affect their business, while 89 percent said they were worried about the future of the UK economy. One of the primary reasons millionaires are

leaving London is the fear of increased taxation under a Labour government.

The Labour Party has traditionally advocated higher taxes on the wealthy to fund public services and reduce income inequality. Their proposals often include higher income tax rates for top earners, increased capital gains tax, and the introduction of wealth taxes. While popular among a significant portion of the electorate, these measures have caused concern among high-net-worth individuals who see their financial positions being threatened.

"It's clear that wealthy UK citizens are now

looking overseas for their business and lifestyle needs... The new British government has its work cut out to reassure wealthy citizens that it does not wish to create a hostile regulatory and tax regime for its most upwardly mobile citizens," explained Armand Arton, the founder of investor migration consultancy Arton Capital.

London's property market, one of the most expensive in the world, is another factor driving millionaires away. Labour's plans to introduce more stringent property taxes, including a potential 'mansion tax' on high-value homes,

have made property ownership in London less attractive to the wealthy. The fear of falling property values and increased ownership costs are prompting many to sell their assets and relocate to more tax-friendly environments.

Beyond financial concerns, quality of life issues are also influencing the decision to leave London. Many people are now considering other cities or countries that offer a better lifestyle. Cities like Geneva, Monaco, and Dubai, which provide favorable tax regimes and high living standards, are increasingly attractive to London's wealthy elite.

The exodus of millionaires from London following Labour's recent political successes highlights the complex relationship between politics, wealth, and urban dynamics. While Labour's policies may resonate with many voters, they also prompt many high-net-worth individuals to reconsider their future in the UK. This trend poses challenges for London, a city that has long prided itself as a global financial center and it raises crucial questions about the future of wealth and inequality in the UK.

**Hermoine Macura-Noble**

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## KISR to build new desalination plant using latest technology

Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) plans to build a new pilot seawater desalination plant in Doha using advanced technology and with a capacity of 50 million imperial gallons per day. The new plant will be the country's ninth desalination plant, and the first of its kind globally to harness wasted and dissipated energy to power the desalination process.

A statement from KISR indicated that the purpose of establishing the new plant is to meet the rising demands driven by population growth, government projects, and commercial and agricultural needs. This ensures that



the production capacity of desalination plants remains aligned with future increases to secure the supply of freshwater in the country. A separate report by the institute stated that Kuwait ranks second worldwide in the scarcity of natural freshwater resources but the third in per capita water consumption. It noted that Kuwait's eight desalination plants currently produce 695.1 million imperial gallons of fresh water per day, with the Doha West plant leading at 170.4 million imperial gallons, followed by the Al-Zour South plant at 145.2 million, and the rest contributing the balance.

EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT



# Climate Adaptation

## Is as Imperative as Mitigation



**Clemens Fuest and Maria Waldinger**

*Clemens Fuest, President of the Ifo Institute, is Professor of Economics at the University of Munich.*

*Maria Waldinger is a climate economist at the Ifo Institute in Munich.*

Climate-policy debates tend to focus on reducing greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions. This makes sense, given that GHGs are the primary cause of climate change. But global warming is expected to continue even under the most optimistic scenarios, implying an urgent need for comprehensive strategies to minimize the economic costs, public-safety risks, and health threats associated with the escalating climate crisis.

While some experts argue that full adaptation is impossible, owing to the significant risks posed by global warming, this view is misleading. Admittedly, adaptation alone cannot offset the worst effects of climate change, and current efforts to reduce global GHG emissions must be ramped up. But overlooking the need to develop, implement, and invest in strategies aimed at protecting businesses, households, and communities from the inevitable consequences of a warming planet would be profoundly irresponsible.

Flood protection is a prime example. As inundations become more frequent and severe, restoring floodplains and other proactive measures have become increasingly important. Long-term adaptation should also play a central role in post-disaster reconstruction projects. Instead of repeatedly repairing damaged houses, for example, it might be more prudent to rebuild them in less flood-prone areas.

Adaptation efforts are only as effective as the mechanisms to finance them. While many taxpayers understandably support funding reconstruction efforts, doing so can create incentives for construction in vulnerable areas. Instead, these funds would be better spent on measures that protect communities against

countries like Germany are still reluctant to invest in air conditioning systems and other cooling methods. But such systems do not require fossil fuels; they can be powered by solar energy, which is abundant during hot periods.

Extreme heat is especially risky for outdoor workers, highlighting the need to update occupational health and safety laws. Companies must be required to have measures in place to protect their employees, such as providing shaded areas and access to drinking water.

Given that low-income earners often work in high-risk conditions, climate adaptation offers far-reaching social benefits. The ability to implement such measures is, however,

investment decision. Instead of pursuing every option, they should focus on those that offer the greatest value, similar to how an entrepreneur would evaluate various expenditures.

To be sure, adaptation efforts face numerous obstacles, including uncertainty about the future trajectory of climate change and the high costs associated with modifying existing structures and processes. Moreover, the scarcity of information on effective adaptation measures and how they could be implemented within current legal frameworks could drive up costs. All of this could depress investment in adaptation, especially since the benefits may be realized only in the medium to long term.

Nevertheless, both governments and the private sector must make climate adaptation a top priority. By anticipating risks and taking proactive steps to adjust their operations, companies could reduce implementation costs. Meanwhile, policymakers must invest heavily in building resilient infrastructure, supporting research and innovation, and disseminating vital information to households, businesses, and local authorities to help them prepare for various climate-related challenges, including floods, heat waves, and other extreme weather events.

Adaptation is not just a practical necessity; it is a moral imperative. While reducing GHG emissions is necessary, adaptation is equally important to ensuring that the world's most vulnerable populations do not bear the brunt of the most devastating effects of climate change. By placing adaptation measures at the heart of climate policies, alongside mitigation, we can create a future that is both resilient and equitable.

“ Without adequate adaptation strategies and financing mechanisms, impoverished individuals and communities will disproportionately bear the brunt of climate change, deepening economic and social disparities locally and globally. ”

future flooding, not just building new houses in safer areas, but also investing in targeted research and innovation aimed at helping sectors affected by climate change, particularly agriculture, adapt to the threat.

Increasingly dangerous heat waves also underscore the urgent need for adaptation measures. Although record-breaking temperatures pose significant health risks, particularly for the elderly, pregnant women, and people with pre-existing conditions,

largely restricted to households, municipalities, regions, and countries with sufficient financial resources and technical expertise. Without adequate adaptation strategies and financing mechanisms, impoverished individuals and communities will disproportionately bear the brunt of climate change, further deepening economic and social disparities both locally and globally.

In principle, households and companies should approach adaptation like any other

EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

# To Google or Not to Google



**Katharina Pistor**  
Professor of Comparative Law at Columbia Law School, is the author of *The Code of Capital: How the Law Creates Wealth and Inequality*



When confronting the choice between truth and power, Shakespeare's Hamlet poses his famous existential question: "To be or not to be?" The search for an answer will confront heroes and villains alike with the prospect of death or despair.

Like Shakespeare's tragedy, battles over the infrastructure that everyone uses to search the internet are also steeped in intrigue and abuse of power. The villain is Google, which is not only a search engine, a company, and a brand, but also a verb. "To search is to Google," noted a witness in the recent antitrust case brought by the US government and 38 state attorneys general against Google.

On August 5, a federal judge handed down a verdict of 'liable'. Google was found to have engaged in unlawful conduct as a monopoly in two markets, including, most critically, the one for general-search services. The remedies have yet to be announced, but commentators are already speculating that the case will reshape internet search.

The finding that Google dominates internet search hardly came as a surprise. Most people start queries for information or products by plugging their terms into Google's general search engine (GSE). They understand that when they use Google on their computers, phones, or tablets, they are 'googling'. But many users fail to appreciate that they are also googling when they use Apple's Safari or Mozilla's Firefox browser, because these companies have made Google's GSE the default search engine, albeit garnished with

use, the links they click, the products they buy, and so forth. Scale is key to the success of the service. More information about user behavior enables better search results, better results bring more searches, and more searches bring in more revenue as advertisers flock to Google to boost their sales by 'funneling' products to end users.

Few dispute that Google's GSE is the first among equals, with Microsoft's Bing representing the only plausible alternative. It rivals Google's GSE in quality and speed when accessed on a desktop, but not on mobile devices. The numbers presented in the trial are telling. As of 2021, over 89 percent of queries flowed through Google, and only 6 percent through Bing. This translates into \$146 billion in ad revenue for the former, and less than \$12 billion for the latter.

A company that achieves a monopoly by dint of offering better products or services has not broken any law. But the situation changes when it willfully acquires or maintains monopoly power, and, according to the court, the evidence established that Google crossed this line.

Google realized early on that commanding information at scale would lead to market domination and monopoly profits. Unlike Microsoft, which tried to gain dominance in the 1990s by bundling a browser with its operating system, only to be stopped by antitrust enforcers, Google used carrots rather than sticks to deal with potential competitors.

Its relationship with Apple is a case in point. Back in 2002, it offered Apple a deal that was hard to refuse: make Google's GSE the default on Safari and get a cash reward. What started with a flat \$10 million fee plus 50 percent revenue sharing evolved, by 2022, into an estimated \$20 billion annual payment to Apple. Along the way, the terms of the contract tightened as Google demanded exclusivity for its GSE, turned down requests to give Apple more flexibility, and made it impossible for Apple to terminate the contract unilaterally.

Just as Hamlet's mother had some good reasons to marry her husband's killer, Apple's deal with Google made sense, owing to the high up-front costs of launching a new GSE and maintaining and managing the ad business. Even switching to another GSE has

become economically impossible. As one top manager at Apple put it, there was "no price that Microsoft could ever offer to Apple" to make the switch to Bing. Google, of course,

understood this. In a 2020 internal study, it found that losing its exclusive status on Safari would cost the company between \$28.2 and \$32.7 billion in revenue.

Moreover, Google maintains similar relations with Mozilla and DuckDuckGo, and it has entered revenue-sharing arrangements with all the leading cell carriers in the US: Verizon, AT&T, and T-Mobile. The carriers get Google's Android technology but must pre-install 11 Google applications on the phones they sell. Six of these cannot be deleted by the end users.

All told, Google pays more than \$26 billion annually to other tech companies to ensure that its GSE remains effectively the only game in town. It is the spider overseeing all the threads of a sprawling web of contracts.

But we should not pity these other companies. The real victims are internet users. The more Google expands its grip over the internet, the less incentive it has to innovate, much less to care about end-users rather than advertisers. The internet library is not a public repository, but rather a private, profit-seeking enterprise that pays off handsomely for companies in Google's orbit. Internet users may believe that they are able to search for facts and truths like no previous generation could, but they have no voice in this game and can only take what they get or leave it.

It took a lawsuit launched by the US Department of Justice to challenge Google's monopoly, and we have yet to hear what might replace it. One hopes for a better ending than the one Shakespeare gives Hamlet, whose last words are: "The rest is silence."

“A company that achieves a monopoly by dint of offering better products or services has not broken any law. But the situation changes when it willfully acquires or maintains monopoly power, and, according to the court, Google crossed this line.”

some privacy screens.

For its part, Google argued that its dominance is the result of superior products and services. It likened the web to an "ever-growing library with billions of books and no central filing system." These treasures can be accessed only with a GSE that crawls the internet, indexes sites, ranks them, and presents the results to users almost instantly.

The critical input for GSEs comes from the users: the topics they search, the terms they

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# Protecting Informal Workers from Extreme Heat



**Laura Alfery and Christy Braham**

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Today's escalating climate crisis disproportionately affects the world's two billion informal workers. As heat waves become increasingly frequent and intense, the absence of global occupational safety and health (OSH) protections against climate-related risks leaves these workers dangerously exposed. Forced to labor in record-breaking temperatures, their health

and even lives are in jeopardy.

In 2022, the International Labor Organization (ILO) declared a 'safe and healthy working environment' a fundamental right. But although many countries have recognized extreme heat as an occupational hazard and implemented

workplace-safety protections, these measures rarely extend to the world's most vulnerable workers: those working informally in fields, landfills, street markets, and homes.

More than 2.4 billion workers worldwide are exposed to extreme heat annually. With heat stress projected to increase rapidly over the next few decades, the international community must urgently reform labor-protection frameworks to ensure workers' health, safety, and livelihoods. Without decisive action, millions will continue to suffer needlessly, trapped in a cycle of rising temperatures and hazardous working conditions. This danger is particularly acute in low- and middle-income countries, where informal jobs account for roughly 90 percent of total employment. While data on these workers' health and safety are limited, a growing body of research suggests that extreme heat has a profoundly negative impact on their well-being and livelihoods.

For example, research by Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) and the University of Sheffield found that 85 percent of waste pickers in Brazil experienced heat stress in 2022 and 2023, resulting in serious health risks and reduced productivity. In Delhi, where temperatures breached 50° Celsius in May, the death of a 53-year-old laborer prompted the lieutenant governor to issue new guidelines adjusting laborers' working hours and expanding access to drinkable water. As a recent World Health Organization editorial notes, the severe effects of extreme heat on informal workers include an increased risk of skin cancer.

While discussions about protecting informal workers from heat stress often focus on outdoor laborers such as farmers and street vendors, extreme heat also affects those who work indoors in poorly ventilated spaces with limited access to potable water. In Brazil, a waste picker told WIEGO researchers that "the heat is sometimes unbearable. Being inside a shed, which has a zinc roof, affects everyone." Finding sustainable cooling solutions is also important for domestic workers and caretakers, most of whom are women.

But despite recent advances on establishing global OSH standards, policymakers face significant challenges in addressing the issue. Notably, 64 percent of informal workers are self-employed. Without employers to finance essential safety measures, economically vulnerable workers must use their limited resources to protect themselves. As Yuleina Carmona, WIEGO's Mexico City coordinator, observed, "Those who work on the street buy their own water, carry their umbrellas, wear

hats, and mitigate the effects of the heat with their own resources."

This weakness reflects a disconnect between local and national policymakers. In urban areas, informal workplaces are typically regulated by municipal authorities that rarely coordinate with national labor agencies responsible for workplace safety. Moreover, informal workers are often stigmatized and seen as an undesirable source of crime and urban blight.

Even when national and local authorities manage to coordinate their efforts, significant gaps remain. India's heat action plans, for example, aim to tackle climate-related risks across multiple levels of government. But these plans overlook the realities of informal work and the need for targeted interventions at the municipal level, particularly in densely populated urban areas.

While establishing global norms and standards is necessary, they must be translated into concrete measures that protect informal workers in the regions most affected by rising temperatures. In particular, local and municipal authorities must adopt inclusive labor regulations and invest heavily in appropriate infrastructure, including expanded access to potable water, shade, indoor ventilation, and high-quality occupational health services. To prevent the rise in morbidity and mortality rates associated with heat stress, these services must be affordable, adequately funded, and accompanied by structural shifts at the national level to provide vital income support to workers grappling with climate-related displacement.

Informal worker organizations are already leading the way. In Zimbabwe, informal traders have convinced Masvingo's city council to approve public investment in critical urban

**“** In low- and middle-income countries, where informal jobs account for roughly 90 percent of total employment, extreme heat has a profoundly negative impact on the well-being and livelihoods of these workers. **”**

infrastructure. In India, the Self-Employed Women's Association, one of the world's largest worker organizations for women in informal employment, recently launched its own insurance program that enables beneficiaries to avoid working during dangerous heat waves.

In addition to such worker-driven solutions, OSH protections must be integrated into climate policies. As heat-related hazards continue to evolve and intensify, a staggering number of workers, including those in informal employment, face the risk of chronic illness, death, and disability. Without coordinated action, the future of work will be increasingly dangerous and uncertain, leaving millions of workers to face the brunt of the climate crisis.



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# Territorial Integrity Means Everything



**Carl Bildt**  
*A former prime minister and foreign minister of Sweden.*

Since 2014, Russia has brazenly violated Ukraine's territorial integrity with incursions, illegal annexations, and a full-scale invasion. And now, Ukraine is violating Russia's territorial integrity with its own incursion into the Kursk region.

There is, of course, a substantial difference between the two cases. The Russian Federation has officially, albeit illegally, absorbed Crimea and conquered territory in Ukraine's Donbas region, and Vladimir Putin makes no secret of his intention to subjugate all of Ukraine. By contrast, Ukraine has made no territorial claims on any Russian land.

Still, for Europeans, territorial integrity is key, and Ukraine's counteroffensive has brought the issue back into focus. While countries may have different reasons for supporting Ukraine in the conflict, defending the principle of territorial integrity is a shared imperative. After all, most of Europe's borders were drawn in blood, and allowing them to be redrawn now would invite even more bloodshed. For decades, the current borders have been sacrosanct, because everyone understands that territorial integrity is the foundation underpinning peace on a continent that, until 1945, had been ravaged by centuries of war.

When the multinational, polyglot state of the Soviet Union broke up more than three decades ago, this principle was fundamental to achieving a mostly peaceful transition. In drafting the Belavezha Accords in December 1991, the leaders of key Soviet republics agreed that existing borders must be fully respected, even though many of them did not follow any ethnic or geographic logic. Uzbekistan's Fergana Valley might be the most obvious example, and a dangerous insurrection did erupt there three decades ago. Similarly, Crimea was a highly controversial territorial issue at the time.

“ For Europeans defending the principle of territorial integrity is a shared imperative. After all, most of Europe's borders were drawn in blood, and allowing them to be redrawn now would invite even more bloodshed. ”

Nonetheless, those overseeing the post-Soviet transition were keenly aware that the alternative to accepting existing borders would be widespread mayhem. Thus, despite opposition from more ardently nationalist voices, the Russian parliament duly ratified the accord and accepted all the borders outlined therein.

Meanwhile, leaders of what was then the European Community had organized a commission of eminent jurists, led by the Frenchman Robert Badinter, to draw up

principles for managing the emerging crisis in Yugoslavia. Once again, borders were the central issue. The Balkans had always been a linguistic, ethnic, and confessional mosaic of peoples, and the borders established over the course of the preceding centuries did not reflect these distinctions. The Badinter Commission concluded that they must be respected nonetheless, lest the region descend into chaos and bloodshed.

European leaders duly accepted the commission's recommendation and made territorial integrity a cornerstone of their effort to manage the breakup of Yugoslavia. There

would still be complications, of course. The status of Kosovo was contested, since it had not quite been a full republic along with the others. If it had been granted a status similar to the other former Yugoslav republics back in 1991, recognizing its independence would have been straightforward.

But that did not happen. Not until 2008, following several extensive diplomatic efforts both within and outside the United Nations, did some countries accept that recognizing Kosovo's independence was the only realistic

way forward. Even here, though, borders were deemed sacrosanct.

To be sure, some borders were redrawn without violence during this period, such as when Czechoslovakia harmoniously divided into the Czech Republic and Slovakia. But this process followed a mutual agreement among all concerned, and the principle of territorial integrity remained paramount.

Similarly, when large-scale rebellions broke out in Chechnya in the mid-1990s and again in 1999 — resulting in two extremely bloody wars — European leaders never even hinted that they would recognize any declarations of independence by those hoping to break away from the Russian Federation.

But then, in 2008, Russia itself violated the principle of territorial integrity by recognizing, and militarily supporting, declarations of independence from Georgia by Abkhazia and South Ossetia. This redrawing of borders fooled no one, with not even Belarus recognizing the breakaway regions' independence. But it was a sign of what was yet to come in Ukraine in 2014 and 2022. It is all too easy to dust off an old map and lay claim to some territory that might have flown a different flag once upon a time. In Europe, this impulse has been the source of many wars. In the case of Kursk, the region was once part of the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth, which dominated the area for centuries. But that is irrelevant now, as is Catherine the Great's annexation of Crimea from the Ottoman Empire in 1783.

Respect for territorial integrity is the base on which European peace, security, and prosperity stand. If this principle no longer holds, neither will the world we take for granted.

## RECIPE

## Crispy Bread Pockets



A popular North-Indian snack, crispy bread pockets involve a filling of cooked chickpeas, tomatoes, onions and spices stuffed inside crispy bread pockets. They are often served as an appetizer before a meal or as a snack at tea-time. The crispy outer crust of the bread and the soft filling inside gives a sensational contrast with each bite.

**Total cooking time:** 35 minutes

**Serving:** 8 pockets

## Ingredients

## For the bread pockets:

- 8 slices of bread
- Pinch of salt
- 1/4 cup all purpose flour
- 1/2 cup water or as per need to make thin slurry
- 1/2 cup bread crumbs
- For the filling:
- 1/2 cup onion, roughly chopped
- 1/2 cup tomato, roughly chopped
- 1/2 inch ginger, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, sliced
- 1 cup chickpeas soaked overnight
- 2 tbsp oil
- 1/4 tsp cumin seeds
- Salt to taste
- 1 tsp spice powder
- 1/2 tsp red chili powder
- 1/2 tsp coriander powder
- 1/8 tsp turmeric powder
- 1 cup of water
- 1/4 tsp. dried mango powder
- 2 tbsp chopped coriander leaves
- For garnish:
- 1/4 cup salted yogurt (whisked to drizzle)
- 1 cup julienne of capsicum, onion, tomatoes
- 2 tbsp chopped cilantro.

## Instructions:

## For the filling:

- Mix onion, tomato, ginger, and garlic to a smooth paste in a blender jar
- Heat oil in a pressure cooker on medium heat
- Add cumin seeds to the cooker and let them sizzle a bit
- Then add the prepared onion-tomato puree and a little salt. Let it cook until it becomes a thick paste and oil separates from the masala
- Add salt, turmeric powder, red chili powder, coriander powder, spice powder. Mix well and cook for a minute.
- Add the soaked chickpeas and water, place the lid and cook over medium-heat for 10-15 minutes.
- Let the pressure go down on its own
- in a bowl take flour, salt and water and make a thin slurry.
- For the bread pockets:
- Place two bread slices on top of each other and roll them together thinly. Cut with a round-cutter and seal; the edges
- Dip in prepared slurry and coat with bread crumbs. Deep fry them. Cut in half to form two pockets
- Open the cooker lid, add dry mango powder and mix well
- Fill each bread pocket with a scoop of the filling, garnish with julienned onion, capsicum, tomato and chopped cilantro. Drizzle with salted yogurt and serve hot or the bread will become soggy.



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** “Your self-worth is determined by you. You don't have to depend on someone telling you who you are.

for the week

— Beyoncé

## Fight Bloating Naturally

Ask Mira : Eating Right to Live Happy & Healthy

**B**loating, the uncomfortable feeling of fullness and swelling in the abdomen, is a common issue that can affect anyone. It often results from gas buildup, water retention, or digestive difficulties. While occasional bloating is typically not a big concern, chronic bloating can indicate underlying health issues. Fortunately, there are several natural strategies to alleviate bloating and improve digestive health.

Before delving into solutions, it is important to understand the common causes of bloating:

- **Dietary Choices:** Certain foods and drinks can cause bloating. High-fiber foods, carbonated beverages, and foods high in sodium can all contribute.
- **Food Intolerances:** Lactose, gluten and other intolerances can lead to bloating.
- **Eating Habits:** Eating too quickly, overeating, or not chewing food properly can cause gas and bloating.
- **Digestive Disorders:** Conditions such as irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), constipation, and small intestinal bacterial overgrowth (SIBO) can lead to chronic bloating.
- **Hormonal Changes:** Many women experience bloating due to hormonal fluctuations during menstruation.

Below are a few natural remedies to alleviate bloating:

- **Stay hydrated:** Drinking plenty of water is crucial for overall health and will reduce bloating. Water aids digestion, helps move waste through the intestines, and can prevent constipation, a common cause of bloating. Aim for at least eight glasses of water a day.
- **Eat mindfully:** How you eat is just as important as what you eat. Eating slowly, chewing food thoroughly, and avoiding talking while eating can reduce the amount of air swallowed, which in turn reduces gas and bloating. Small and frequent meals can also be easier on the digestive system compared to large meals.

Choose bloat-reducing foods: These include among others:

- **Ginger:** Known for its anti-inflammatory properties, ginger can help relax the gastrointestinal tract and reduce bloating. Try sipping ginger tea or adding fresh ginger to meals.
- **Peppermint:** Peppermint has been shown to relieve symptoms of IBS, including bloating. Peppermint tea can be a great natural remedy.
- **Probiotic and prebiotic rich foods:** Foods like yogurt, kefir, pickles, kombucha, tempeh and miso soup contain beneficial bacteria that promote a healthy gut, which can reduce bloating. Prebiotic foods like garlic, onions, and bananas feed beneficial gut bacteria, and so combining both, probiotic and prebiotic foods will do magic for your stomach.!

Limit gas-producing foods: Certain foods are more likely to cause gas and bloating. These include:

- **Legumes:** Beans, lentils, and chickpeas contain oligosaccharides that can be difficult to digest.
- **Cruciferous vegetables:** Broccoli, cauliflower, and cabbage can produce gas.
- **Carbonated drinks:** Sodas and sparkling water can introduce extra gas into the digestive system.
- **Exercise regularly:** Physical activity helps keep the digestive system moving and can prevent constipation,



which is, as discussed earlier, a common cause of bloating. Activities like walking, cycling, and yoga and Pilates are very beneficial

- **Avoid artificial sweeteners:** Sugar alcohols found in many sugar-free foods, such as sorbitol and xylitol, can cause digestive issues including bloating. Check labels and try to limit intake of these sweeteners.
- **Manage stress:** Stress can negatively affect digestion and lead to bloating. Practices such as deep breathing, meditation, and mindfulness can help reduce stress levels and improve digestive health.

Consider herbal remedies: Certain herbs have been traditionally used to reduce bloating:

- **Chamomile:** Chamomile tea can help relax the digestive tract and reduce gas.
- **Dandelion:** Dandelion tea is a natural diuretic and can help reduce water retention.
- **Monitor and address food intolerances:** If you suspect food intolerances might be causing your bloating, consider keeping a food diary to track what you eat and how you feel afterward. Remove suspected foods and then gradually reintroduce them, can help identify triggers.

Bloating can be uncomfortable and frustrating, but by understanding its causes and implementing natural strategies, you can reduce its occurrence and severity. Staying hydrated, eating mindfully, choosing the right foods, staying active, and managing stress are all effective ways to combat bloating. If you experience chronic or severe bloating, it is important to consult with a healthcare professional to fix any underlying health conditions.

By making these changes, you can support your digestive health and enjoy a more comfortable, bloat-free life.

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# Dietary sugar intake hastens biological aging

*Researchers found that a higher quality diet would slow signs of epigenetic aging, while sugar consumption would do the opposite. They also found that the effects of a healthy diet showed a far more significant response compared to sugar intake. This finding shows that it would be wiser to focus on the overall quality of the diet rather than just reducing sugars.*



Excess sugar consumption is known to cause weight gain and to increase the risk of chronic diseases including obesity, type 2 diabetes, dyslipidemia — an abnormal level of lipids in the bloodstream — which poses a significant risk factor for cardiovascular (CV) diseases. Now, it also appears that high sugar intake speeds up signs of aging at a cellular level.

In a first-of-its-kind study, scientists at the University of California San Francisco (UCSF) found a direct link between the intake of dietary sugar and epigenetic aging. Also known as biological aging, epigenetic aging refers to an individual's degree of aging based on patterns of DNA methylation — a normal biological process by which methyl groups are added to the DNA molecule to change its activity but without altering the sequence. DNA methylation (DNAm) is associated with an array of factors including diet, lifestyle, genetics, and disease.

The researchers also examined the impact of a healthy diet on the epigenetic markers and found the opposite effect — a higher-quality diet slowed the signs of aging. The inverse effects on aging found in the study also appear to be independent of one another, so diet and sugar consumption needs to be evaluated in a dietary context for their effects on health and aging.

The new findings appear to fit well with studies on nutritional epidemiology which show added sugars to be related to chronic diseases such as cardiometabolic conditions and cancer and related processes such as inflammation. These chronic diseases are also linked to aging and reflect one aspect of the wear and tear on our bodies as we age.

For their study, the researchers investigated a cohort of 342 women in midlife. The participants were specifically selected as they were part of the US National Growth and Health Study (NGHS) conducted in the 1980s. The previous study examined the development of obesity in 9 and 10-year-old girls, as well as the effects of obesity on cardiovascular risk factors. The same group was then recruited again between 2015 and 2019 when all of the women had entered midlife.

To assess the role of diet and sugar on epigenetic age, researchers at UCSF first utilized

a number of indices to gauge diet quality, based on how closely it adheres to the Mediterranean diet, and the US Alternative Healthy Eating Index, among the participants. Researchers then compared scores from these dietary indices to a novel epigenetic clock known as GrimAge2, which like other epigenetic clocks, relies on interpreting DNA methylation, which is a reliable indicator of epigenetic age, as these patterns in DNAm have been observed to accumulate over time.

Researchers found that a higher quality diet would slow signs of epigenetic aging, while sugar consumption would do the opposite. They also found that the effects of a healthy diet showed a far more significant response compared to sugar intake. This finding shows that it would be wiser to focus on the overall quality of the diet rather than just reducing sugars.

The study is part of a growing field known as geroscience, which seeks to understand in scientific terms how aging, disease, and biology are all related. One of the important distinctions made in this field is between chronological age and biological or epigenetic age. When you celebrate your birthday each year, that is a celebration of your chronological age; one year is the same amount of time for everyone. However, epigenetic age indicates the health of your body at a cellular level, and it does not move at the same rate for everyone.

The epigenetic age of someone who eats healthy and exercises every day may increase more slowly than someone who is sedentary and consumes high amounts of sugar. Epigenetic changes are also reversible, which means that positive changes to behavior, diet, and exercise can affect the aging process.

Epigenetic age reflects modifications of our genetic material or DNA that can result in changes in our gene and protein expression. These modifications end up turning genes on or off, which can have health implications depending on how the biological functions and physiology of our cells and systems are impacted.

In brief, the study found that sugar intake and diet quality were predictors of epigenetic aging. A healthy diet appears to slow the body's biological 'clock', while consuming sugar does the opposite.

## Fat cells could help treat weight problems, other diseases

Adipose tissue, otherwise known as body fat, is a connective tissue that extends throughout your body. It is mainly found under your skin (subcutaneous fat), between your internal organs (visceral fat), and in the inner cavities of bones (bone marrow adipose tissue). Adipose tissue is primarily known for storing and releasing energy and providing insulation.

Fat cells, or in scientific terms adipocytes or lipocytes, are the main constituents of adipose tissue, and come in three colors, white, brown, and beige. The white fat cells store fat in our body as an energy reserve, provide insulation from extreme temperatures and build cushioning around soft organs. We need these cells, but having too many creates health problems.

Brown fat cells are particularly active in infants. They produce heat and thus maintain the baby's body temperature. However, the amount of brown adipose tissue decreases over a person's lifetime, with adults having very little of it. Beige fat cells can also produce heat, albeit somewhat less well than brown fat cells. Beige fat cells occur in adults as well, lying scattered throughout the white fatty tissue, especially in the neck and shoulder area, they help in using up excess energy.

Now an international research team, hailing from universities and institutes in Switzerland, Germany and the United States, as well as scientific centers around the world, has discovered and described a new type of beige fat cells, which differ from the ones that were already known. The new fat cells play an important role in energy metabolism in the human body and have a positive effect on metabolic diseases and obesity.

The beige fat cells that researchers were already familiar with generate heat in the same way as brown fat cells: via a protein called UCP1. This protein is located in the inner of two membranes that surround the mitochondria, the 'powerhouse' of the cell. As part of their normal function, mitochondria pump protons into the space between the two membranes. Protons are electrically charged elementary particles that generally play an important role in energy conversion processes in cells.

Brown fat cells and the classic beige fat

cells described earlier have the protein UCP1, which forms a very narrow channel in the inner membrane through which the protons flow back into the mitochondria, thereby generating heat from friction. The beige fat cells found in the new study were found to be without the UCP1 protein, but these cells also consumed energy and produced heat.

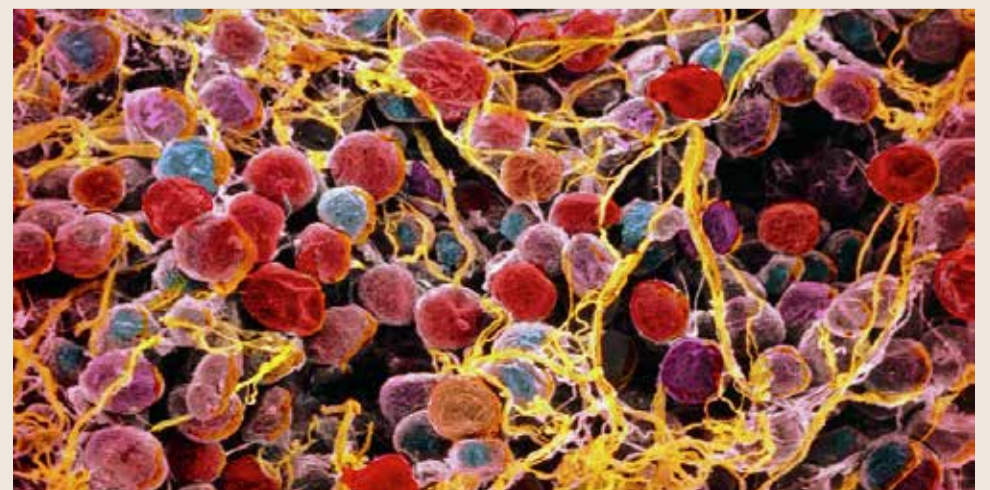
The researchers explained that all biochemical processes that take place in cells always generate some heat. The new class of beige fat cells takes advantage of this and allows individual processes to run back and forth, seemingly without purpose. This primarily involves two conversion processes. In the first process, the cells break fats down into their components (fatty acids) at full speed and then assemble them into new fats just as quickly.

In the second process, these cells apply an enzyme to convert molecules of creatine into creatinine phosphate, a related molecule, only to immediately convert it back into creatine. Scientists call these back-and-forth processes 'futile cycles', as they do not add anything to the biochemical budget overall, but they consume energy and generate heat.

While less than half the population has the previously known type of classical beige fat cells, almost all humans have the new futile-cycle type, albeit in differing amounts. People with a high number of beige fat cells — of either the previously known type or this new type — are slimmer and tend to have better metabolic health. That makes them less prone to obesity and metabolic disorders such as diabetes.

The new findings could in future be used for medical purposes, such as by transplanting the beige fat cells into people who have only a few of them and suffer from metabolic diseases or weight problems. It would also be conceivable to develop drugs that activate the beige fat cells, which are often inactive.

Such drugs could be used to treat people with high blood sugar levels or formerly overweight people who have reduced their weight through surgery or other means. Activating their beige fat cells could help them to maintain their lower body weight over the long term.



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