



LOCAL
 Azerbaijan celebrates 30 years of diplomatic relations with Kuwait **3**

INTERVIEW
 Burgan Bank, a legacy of sustainable development, dynamic growth **5**

IN MEMORIUM
 India's Ratan Tata, the man who knew how to 'think big and bold' **14**



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Urban October, commitment to build sustainable, resilient cities

Kuwait's population set to increase from over 4.8 million today to reach 5.3 million by 2030, the Master Plan estimates that, in order to ensure managed urbanization and effective resource distribution, around half the country's population will need to be settled in new urban areas outside of the Kuwait Metropolitan Area.

THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

More than half the world's population of over 8 billion today live in cities, and projections are that this figure will exceed 68 percent by 2050. Figures from the World Bank show that although global cities occupy only around 2 percent of the world's total land area, they account for nearly 80 percent of the global GDP. as well as, for over 66 percent of energy consumption, around 68 percent of waste generation, and more than 70 percent of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Increasing migration of people from rural to



urban areas, often in search of better economic and work opportunities, as well as quality of life, has made cities the future of global living. Given this salience it is important to create economically prosperous, environmentally sustainable, and socially equitable cities and human settlements for present and future generations.

Excessive use of energy, humongous waste production and GHG emission, also make cities pivotal target points to effectively address the increasing repercussions of climate change. Cities are also crucial to achieving 65 percent of the targets of the 17 UN Sustainable

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

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Indian Embassy hosts networking event on tourism

- A Business Networking Event Highlighting India as a Preferred Destination for Kuwaiti tourists
- Sheikha Intisar called on Kuwaiti tourists to discover India as a continent and not just a country

The Times Kuwait Report

Indian Embassy organized a B2B Networking Event titled, 'Exploring Incredible India 2.0' aimed at promoting Indian Tourism in Kuwait, at the Millennium Hotel & Convention Centre on 8 October.

The event was inaugurated by Sheikha Intisar Salem Al-Ali Al-Sabah,

head of the Intisar Charitable Society, along with Indian Ambassador H.E. Dr. Adarsh Swaika.

More than 100 tour operators and travel agents from Kuwait attended the event and interacted with several prominent entities from the Indian tourism industry. During the active B2B interactions, information about the tourism industry in India, tourism-

related products and the opportunity for joint collaboration with their Kuwaiti counterparts in the tourism sector were discussed.

Sheikha Intisar expressed her unforgettable memories and travel experiences to India including Rajasthan earlier this year, praised the bilateral relations between Kuwait and India, which she described as

historical and ancient, noting the two countries' keenness to develop areas of cooperation in various fields. She also reiterated the strong relations between the two countries, as India was among the largest trade partners with Kuwait.

Sheikha Intisar further stated "There are many Indian terms that the Kuwaiti people use in their speech. It is a safe and peaceful country that is distinguished by its diverse culture and people. Its people are beautiful, hospitable and smiling. Its community is dedicated to work and easy to deal with and live with." She called on Kuwaiti tourists to discover India as a continent and not just a country and it deserves to be discovered.

Speaking to the media on the sidelines of the event, Ambassador Swaika highlighted the enormous potential India possesses as a global tourist destination, with sites that range from mesmerizing hill-stations to scenic beaches, historically majestic forts, niche tourism products like cruises, adventure tourism, medical tourism, yoga tourism, wild-life and luxury tourism. He added that India boasts of 43 UNESCO approved World Heritage sites that make a strong case for India.

The ambassador also highlighted India's growing medical tourism sector that offers competitive, quality and affordable healthcare facilities. Over 8,000 multiple-entry tourist visas were issued by the Indian Embassy last year and the numbers are expected to grow this year. India, considered

as the world's largest democracy with a vast diversity, is an attractive, preferred and rapidly growing global tourist destination with 9.24 million tourists in 2023, which is expected to reach 30.5 million by 2028.

The ambassador also pointed out that India welcomed 100 percent foreign direct investment in the tourism industry, tourism related construction projects, including development of exquisite hotels, resorts and recreational facilities.

The Indian delegation comprised of representatives from Maharajas Express - Luxury Train experiences by Indian Railway Catering & Tourism Corporation (IRCTC), Taj Hotels & Resorts, Six Senses Fort Barwara (Jaipur) and Six Senses Vana (Dehradun), Dharana at Shillim (Maharashtra), along with wellness centers such as Prakriti Shakti - CGH Earth Experience Hotels, MEDISAFAR, and Somatheeram Ayurveda, as well as the destination management companies (DMCs) Trail Blazer Tours India (TBI) and Gateway Malabar Holidays.

The 'Exploring Incredible India 2.0' was widely attended by tourism stakeholders in Kuwait, including social media influencers as well as representatives from the print and electronic media.

On a concluding note, the Indian ambassador explained that the tourism B2B networking event is part of the embassy's initiative to highlight India as a preferred destination for Kuwaiti tourists.


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Kuwait boosts partnership with Google Cloud to drive digitalizing initiative

Kuwait aims to boost its partnership with Google Cloud to give further impetus to a national digital drive in line with its strategic 2035 vision.

Revealing this during a one-of-a-kind gathering titled 'Cloud Day' organized by Google, Minister of Communication Omar Al-Omar said that attracting more foreign investment would be a by-product of a full-fledged digital transformation. He also noted that a national training program is already up and running in a bid to further hone the digital skills of youngsters and state body employees alike, giving them the opportunity to keep abreast of the most cutting-edge digital technologies as they foray into the job market.

Underlining the significance of such endeavors, Minister Al-Omar expected a new generation of tech leaders to lead the digital transformation in Kuwait, ensuring that the nation is firmly placed on a path towards a brighter and more prosperous future.

Addressing the gathering, Country Manager for Google Cloud in Kuwait Shaymaa Alterkait said that the tech giant is "dedicated to fostering a thriving digital ecosystem," allowing businesses, government entities and individuals to harness the "power of the cloud and AI" to drive economic growth.

Noting that Google Cloud's expanding network in 40 regions, 121 zones and 187 network edge locations represent the backbone of the global infrastructure, she added that Google has built a dedicated and uniquely skilled team that will contribute towards Kuwait's digital transformation.



Azerbaijan celebrates 30 years of diplomatic relations with Kuwait

Relations between Azerbaijan and Kuwait are founded on deep historical roots and strong cultural and religious ties.

- His Excellency Emil Karimov, Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan

The Times Kuwait Report

Embassy of Azerbaijan held celebrations to mark the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations with Kuwait. Elucidating on the start of diplomatic relations between the two countries, Ambassador of Azerbaijan H.E. Emil Karimov stated that the foundation of relations between Azerbaijan and Kuwait dates back to December 1994, during a summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Casablanca, Morocco, where the late national leader of the Azerbaijan HeydarAliyev, met for the first time with the late Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.

Further meetings to consolidate relations followed in 1995 and 1996 and in 2004 Azerbaijan opened its embassy in Kuwait, and in 2006, the Kuwaiti embassy in Azerbaijan began operations. "The official visit of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, to Kuwait in early February 2009, marked a milestone in the development and strengthening of relations between our two countries, elevating political ties to the highest level," said Ambassador Karimov.

During the visit, and in the presence of the heads of state, a joint committee for cooperation between the governments of Azerbaijan and Kuwait was established, resulting in important agreements aimed at encouraging and protecting mutual investments, preventing tax evasion and double taxation concerning income and property taxes, and fostering cooperation in the fields of trade and tourism.

During the visit, the Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah presented President Ilham Aliyev with the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Medal, the highest honor in Kuwait, while the President of Azerbaijan awarded the late Amir with the HeydarAliyev Medal, the highest honor in Azerbaijan.

Elaborating on bilateral relations, Ambassador Karimov said, "Relations between Azerbaijan and Kuwait are founded on deep historical roots and strong cultural and religious ties. Currently, Azerbaijan and Kuwait enjoy successful cooperation within international organizations and bilateral frameworks, including effective collaboration within OPEC Plus. The steps taken to develop and strengthen bilateral cooperation in the humanitarian field with the Kuwaiti side encompass education, culture, media, family, women, children, humanitarian aid, and other areas."

Kuwait has also consistently supported



- The foundation of relations between Azerbaijan and Kuwait dates back to December 1994, during a summit of the OIC in Casablanca, Morocco, where the late national leader of the Azerbaijani people, Heydar Aliyev, and the late Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, first met.
- Azerbaijan and Kuwait signed key pacts aimed at encouraging and protecting mutual investments, preventing tax evasion and double taxation concerning income and property taxes, and fostering cooperation in the fields of trade and tourism.
- Flights between Kuwait and Baku run almost every day of the week, and simplified visa regulations for Kuwaiti citizens have created favorable conditions for tourism cooperation.

the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, voting in favor of the United Nations resolution "The Situation in the Occupied Territories of Azerbaijan" on 14 March 2008.

The Joint Commission for Cooperation between the governments of the two countries was established in February 2009. The first meeting of the Azerbaijani-Kuwaiti Joint

Intergovernmental Commission took place in 2011, in Kuwait, followed by the second meeting in 2013, in Baku. It was agreed that the next meeting of the Joint Economic Commission would be held in Kuwait, where new agreements on cooperation in various fields such as education, justice, agriculture, culture, sports, and labor are expected to be

signed.

As a result of comprehensive measures taken to develop the tourism industry in Azerbaijan, the flow of tourists from Kuwait to Azerbaijan has rapidly increased, exceeding 20,000 from January to September 2024. Flights between Kuwait and Baku, operated by Kuwait Airways, Jazeera Airways, and Azerbaijani airline AZAL, run almost every day of the week, and simplified visa regulations for Kuwaiti citizens have created favorable conditions for tourism cooperation. Additionally, Azerbaijani airline Silk Way handles cargo transportation to Kuwait.

"Since 2016, the visa process for Kuwaiti citizens has been simplified at Azerbaijan's airports, and since 2017, Kuwaiti citizens have had the option to obtain an electronic visa quickly through the ASANVisa system. I believe that simplifying the visa process for Azerbaijani citizens by Kuwait could positively impact the number of Azerbaijani tourists visiting the country," the ambassador noted.

On the cultural front, efforts are ongoing to enhance cooperative relations between Kuwait University and Baku State University, with plans to sign an agreement for cooperation in education and science between the two countries. Scholarship programs at various educational levels for citizens of OIC and NAM member states have been established in higher education institutions in Azerbaijan through relevant decrees by the President of Azerbaijan.

Currently, one Kuwaiti student is studying in Azerbaijan under this scholarship, and efforts are being made to increase that number in the near future. In Kuwait, seven seats have been allocated for students from Azerbaijan at the Language Center at Kuwait University to study Arabic for one year. Additionally, Kuwait University has allocated four seats for Azerbaijani students to pursue a bachelor's degree.

The ambassador concluded by noting that this year is filled with significant events, coinciding with the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Azerbaijan and Kuwait. Additionally, this year, Shusha, the cultural capital of Azerbaijan, was declared the 'Cultural Capital of the Islamic World'. Furthermore, Azerbaijan will host the UN Climate Change Conference (COP29) next month, leading to the declaration of 2024 as the "Year of Solidarity for a Green World" in our country. "We hope that the Kuwaiti side will be represented at a high level at the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29)," the ambassador added.

MoH warns of taking weight-loss medications without prescription

The increase in use of weight-loss medications among people has led to medical specialists at the Ministry of Health (MoH) cautioning against the use of such medications without a prescription and under the supervision of professionals based on established protocols.

Elaborating on the importance of raising awareness among the public about the misuse and abuse of unprescribed drugs, Dr. Adel

Reza, an internal medicine, endocrinology, and diabetes consultant at Sabah Hospital, urged individuals to consult with a doctor before taking weight loss medications.

He explained that decisions to prescribe weight loss medications are made after a comprehensive medical evaluation, including a thorough review of the patient's medical history and a physical examination. Patients also undergo a series of tests before starting treatment, as some weight loss medications can have harmful health impacts.

Dr. Reza warned about potential side effects associated with weight loss injections, such as an increased risk of thyroid cancer, pancreatitis, heart palpitations, high blood pressure, psychiatric



disorders, gastrointestinal disturbances, low blood sugar, nausea, and vomiting.

He emphasized that weight loss medications are suitable for certain individuals, particularly those with a body mass index (BMI) over 30 or those with a BMI between 27 and 30 who have obesity-related health conditions.

Pointing out that stopping the use of weight loss medications often leads to regaining the lost weight, Dr. Reza said that a better option for long-term weight management was to adopt a healthy lifestyle, maintain a balanced diet, and engage in regular physical activity. He also highlighted the importance of behavioral therapy in supporting patients on their weight loss journey.

He explained that patients must demonstrate a commitment to lifestyle changes, including diet and exercise, for at least three to six months before being considered for medication. Dr. Reza concluded by stressing the importance of consulting with a qualified healthcare professional for personalized advice and treatment.

German Embassy holds celebration to mark National Day



Germany and Kuwait aim to further enhance economic relations through a strategic dialogue paper currently being prepared

The Times Kuwait Report

The Embassy of Germany organized a gala event at the Al-Rayah Hall last week to mark the country's National Day and German Unity Day. The event was attended by Minister of Commerce and Industry Khalifa Al-Askar and the Undersecretary of the Ministry of Defense, Dr. Abdullah Mishal Al-Sabah, along with a large gathering of members of the diplomatic corps, top officials and special invitees.

Addressing the gathering, Ambassador of Germany H.E. Hans-Christian Freiherr von Reibnitz, stressed his country's commitment to strengthening bilateral relations with Kuwait in all fields. He also expressed appreciation for the large number of Kuwaiti ambassadors and friends participating in the event.

Regarding efforts to enhance economic relations, he stated that work is currently underway on a strategic dialogue paper between the two countries to build even stronger ties at

all levels. Pointing out that Germany is open to proposals and projects from both the Kuwaiti government and private sector, he expressed hope that economic relations will continue to grow from strength to strength.

Elaborating on the significance of German Unity Day, Ambassador von Reibnitz stated: "Today, we live in a time of worsening crises that cast shadows over many parts of the world, especially in the region surrounding us, at the expense of thousands of human lives, the destruction of livelihoods, and the shattering of future generations' prospects. It seems that the rule of force and revenge now prevails globally."

He added, "We witness acts of violence committed by humans against one another every day. We must ask ourselves: why must we surrender to this vicious cycle of violence and hatred? Should violence and revenge dominate our political analyses and actions?"

He pointed out that the Day of German Unity provides a clear answer to this question. In 1989,

the European people stood on both sides of the Iron Curtain, after long suffering from separation and loss of freedom. The German people rose up to change the world. Germans from East and West tore down the Berlin Wall, dismantling the post-war order. On 3 October 1990, East and West Germany were unified peacefully, without a single shot being fired, in agreement with all neighbors and with full recognition by the United Nations.

He emphasized that on their day of unity, they celebrate peaceful change over war and destruction, remembering the victory of reason and humanity over revenge, and the triumph of cooperation over hostility. This is why this day holds great significance for Germany, Europe, and perhaps for the whole world.

He added that in Europe, they are working together to make the European Union a globally influential player, convinced that internal unity and partnership with others are key to making a difference. He stressed that a unified

Germany strongly supports strengthening relations between the European Union, the State of Kuwait, and other partners in the Gulf Cooperation Council.

The German ambassador stated that the challenges we all face in this world do not disappear. They may be overshadowed by the horrific news from Gaza or Ukraine, but they persist. Climate change, water and energy scarcity, and issues of fair resource distribution are just a few examples. Addressing these challenges within a fair regulatory framework, while upholding the rule of law, remains the cornerstone of German foreign policy and our relationship with our host country, the State of Kuwait.

Ambassador Hans-Christian concluded by saying, "I feel like I am in a German Diwaniya. I hope you won't accuse me of cultural appropriation, as I have come to appreciate this uniquely Kuwaiti custom since I began my duties in this friendly country."



Kuwait City ranked seventh richest in terms of SWFs managed

Kuwait City was ranked the seventh richest in a new ranking by Global Sovereign Wealth Fund (Global SWF), the London-based industry specialist that annually tracks over 400 SWFs and Public Pension Funds (PPF) worldwide. The new ranking released on 8 October, lists cities in terms of capital managed by their Sovereign Wealth Funds (SWFs).

According to this year's data and research by the industry specialist, Abu Dhabi is the world's richest city by SWFs, with US\$ 1.7 trillion as of October 2024. This figure includes assets managed by prominent entities in the city such as the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, Mubadala, Abu Dhabi Authority for Investment and Development, Abu Dhabi Fund for Development, Tawazon, and the UAE Investment Company.

Norwegian capital Oslo came in second with a fortune of \$1.66 trillion, followed by Beijing in third place with \$1.34 trillion, and Singapore in fourth with \$1.13 trillion. The Saudi capital, Riyadh, ranked fifth with approximately \$1.11 trillion in managed capital, while Hong Kong ranked sixth with \$1.1 trillion. Kuwait's \$978 billion in SWF placed it in seventh spot. Together, these cities represent two-thirds of the wealth managed by sovereign wealth funds globally.

For the past few decades, Abu Dhabi, often referred to as the 'capital of capital' has grown an impressive portfolio of institutional investors, which are among the world's largest and most active dealmakers. In addition to SWFs, the emirate is home to several other asset owners, including Central Banks (CBs), Public Pension Funds (PPFs), and family offices linked to royal family members, or Royal Private Offices (RPOs). All in all, Global SWF estimates Abu Dhabi's public capital at US\$ 2.3 trillion, which is projected to reach \$3.4 trillion by 2030.

Renaissance Research holds talk on influence of political narratives

Reconnaissance Research, a leading think-tank in Kuwait, in collaboration with Research Journey, an online research platform on social science and humanities, hosted a roundtable discussion featuring French scholar Dr. Maxime Izoulet, an associate researcher at the European Institute for Development Studies (IEED).



RESEARCH JOURNEY
For Social & Cultural Connections

During the session, Izoulet addressed how political narratives have influenced academic research, citing examples of attempts to dismiss data that offers perspectives on China beyond the Western efforts to demonize it. He highlighted the double standards in dealing with countries like China and how the politicization of academic content undermines decision-making and impairs the public's access to unbiased information.

Izoulet further emphasized that China has become increasingly immune to economic sanctions due to its shift toward a more self-sufficient financial model. He noted that China continues to drive global economic trends and exerts as much influence on Western economies as they do on China, signaling a significant shift in global economic power dynamics.

His visit to Kuwait is part of the HESPRI initiative—Elevating Higher Education Public Policies: An Empowering SPRINGboard—which aims to enrich public policy discussions and further integrate higher education into the global policy landscape.

Dr. Al-Anoud Al-Sabah, founder of Research Journey,



said: "We are pleased to collaborate with Reconnaissance Research, a center that, since its establishment in 2019, has shown a strong commitment to fostering academic and professional engagement. This partnership represents a shared vision for promoting intellectual exchange in Kuwait and beyond."

Abdulaziz Al-Anjeri, founder and CEO of Reconnaissance Research, added: "We are honored to host Dr. Maxime Izoulet and to partner with Sheikha Al-Anoud in organizing this event. Her personal achievements in advancing informed dialogue have created a unique opportunity for collaboration. Together, we aim to build bridges and foster meaningful discussions."

Burgan Bank, a legacy of sustainable development, dynamic growth

Fadel Mahmoud Abdullah
CEO, Burgan Bank



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“Our entire approach is centered around positioning Burgan as the most progressive bank in Kuwait,” said Fadel Mahmoud Abdullah, CEO of Burgan Bank, while emphasizing the bank’s focus on continuous evolution, and delivering value to its stakeholders.

Abdullah’s comments came during an exclusive interview with The Business Year, in which he highlighted the bank’s strategy of strengthening core operations in Kuwait by expanding its corporate client portfolio and retail market share, while enhancing private banking services.

The CEO of Burgan, one of the largest and most well-established banks in Kuwait’s banking sector, also revealed that the bank was planning on further boosting its network of branches to better meet the needs of customers. We began the interview by asking Abdullah:

What core values are at the heart of Burgan Bank’s corporate culture, and how do they influence its relationships with customers, employees, and the community?

“As an organization, we seek to foster a culture of constant evolution and the collective pursuit of excellence. From ownership, transparency, teamwork, and passion comes our incentive to deliver exceptional value to our stakeholders. We are exerting concerted efforts to initiate a long-term transformation plan that ultimately seeks to elevate every facet of

our business; leveraging our legacy and brand equity, and fostering our human connectivity, to strengthen our business proposition.”

Could you elaborate on the core activities that underpin Burgan Bank’s business model and growth strategy?

“In 2023, we rolled out a brand-new vision and strategy, which seeks to build on a decades-long legacy that focuses on achieving sustainable development and dynamic growth across our entire operation. Our vision recognizes that in today’s market and ever-changing economic climate, transformation and proactivity have become musts for any successful business. That is why our entire approach is centered around positioning Burgan as the most progressive bank in Kuwait, constantly in forward motion.

“As a group, we have long maintained a robust regional presence through our network of affiliates and subsidiaries, but today we are focused primarily on strengthening our core Kuwait business. This includes growing and diversifying our corporate client portfolio; expanding our retail market share; building the best-in-class private banking and wealth management facilities; strengthening our liquidity and risk profile; and elevating our quality of service and products portfolio.”

What innovative banking technologies has Burgan Bank adopted or developed to improve customer experience and operational efficiency?

“We all know that the banking world has gone digital, with fervor. Our digital strategy has been a central component of our overall business plan, but the key driver has been evolving the overall

customer journey. We have not restricted our digital transformation efforts to a single department, but have worked to embed digital transformation and the digital-first mindset in the work philosophy that guides our entire team. We are taking a holistic approach to make the Burgan banking experience seamlessly mobile, conveniently personalized, and smart-solution-driven.

“We seek to interweave digital transformation with our ESG commitments to deliver an inclusive, modern experience. We were proudly the first in the market to introduce biodegradable and braille-friendly debit cards to facilitate transactions for visually impaired customers. We were also the first bank in the region to implement a Visa solution allowing cardholders to easily enroll in multiple digital wallets and eCommerce merchants within their mobile banking app.”

Could you walk us through the key elements of Burgan Bank’s sustainability strategy and how they align with Kuwait’s Vision 2035?

“Our sustainability commitment has long been a core part of our strategy. In 2023, we instituted a dedicated framework and roadmap for implementing our ESG efforts and took major steps forward in the implementation of that framework. One of our most important ESG undertakings in the past year focused on acquiring the LEED certification for Burgan’s head office building in Kuwait, a certification that verifies compliance with sustainability standards in architecture.

“We also continued to roll out an expansive program of ESG best practices within our organization, promoting positive operational and behavioral change. Moreover, on our mission to serve

customers in an ever-more sustainable manner, we introduced several digital products and services that primarily aim to reduce Burgan’s operational carbon footprint.

“Among these digital initiatives launched in 2023 was the introduction of a virtual card: an eco-friendly alternative that combines the security and utility of traditional bank cards with the convenience and versatility of a digital experience. We continue to embed sustainability in all aspects of our business model, ensuring it remains a bedrock for all our efforts, from retail to human capital development to social responsibility.”

Fadel Mahmoud Abdullah will play an integral role in designing, implementing, and steering the new strategic direction of the bank in the coming years to enhance its market share in Kuwait and help drive higher profitability. He brings 34 years of HR, finance, investment, and corporate banking experience to his new appointment. He has held multiple key leadership roles during his 25-year long career with Burgan Bank since 1998. Abdullah holds a bachelor of science degree in mathematics from Kuwait University.

Kuwait reiterates commitment to women’s empowerment

Kuwait remains fully committed to the empowerment of women and to ensuring their rights, said Raheeq Al-Abad, diplomatic attaché at the Kuwait Mission to the United Nations. Her comments came during a speech she delivered on behalf of Kuwait, during a special session of the UN General Assembly on the advancement of women, which was held on 11 October.

Al-Abad pointed out that Kuwait has enacted numerous laws and regulations that guarantee women’s social, economic and political rights in accordance with the constitution. “Proof of this is perhaps best reflected in the percentage of women currently in the labor force. More than 58 percent of workers in the public sector and 48 percent in the private sector, are women,” she said.

Kuwait’s attaché added that more than 70 percent of students and researchers in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics in Kuwait are women and girls. Moreover, Kuwaiti women participate



effectively in decision-making processes at various levels: in executive and legislative institutions, including ministries and municipal and legislative councils, she said.

Al-Abad also indicated that 88 female public prosecutors and 19 female judges were appointed this year and, in a precedent-setting move in Kuwait, four women were appointed as directors of the Public Prosecution departments. She further revealed that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has 144 female diplomats, about 22 percent of the total diplomatic cadre.

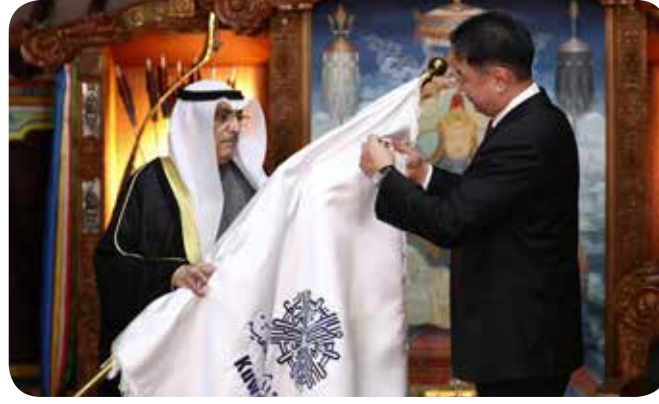
In addition, women proudly and efficiently constitute 54 percent of the workforce in the oil sector, the country’s main economic artery, and in the military sector where women occupy 47 percent of managerial and supervisory positions. She also pointed out that in the security sector, the number of female police officers has risen to more than 900. In addition, the Amir Guard recently recruited 19 women for the first time.

The Kuwaiti diplomat commended the central role of the UN in promoting gender equality worldwide through its efforts and the global standards it has set to achieve this goal. She affirmed Kuwait’s keenness to achieve this

goal through enacting laws, regulations and policies that ensure the implementation of these standards in line with all international agreements ratified by Kuwait and the relevant UN mechanisms.

Al-Abad also recalled the ‘Jeddah Document’, which was issued by the Jeddah International Conference on Women in Islam in 2023. She noted that this document represents a basic reference for all women’s rights, and aims to achieve a balance between women’s rights and duties while respecting their dignity and enhancing their role in public and private life.

Reiterating Kuwait’s commitment to promoting and protecting women’s rights, Al-Abad said that real progress and development cannot be achieved without the effective participation of women in all areas of life. She called on the international community to intensify efforts for more tangible and sustainable achievements in promoting women rights and empowerment.



Mongolia awards state honor to KFAED

President of the Republic of Mongolia, Ukhnaagiin Khurelsukh, awarded the 'Friendship' State Honor to the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) in recognition of the Fund's significant contributions to strengthening relations and cooperation between Mongolia and Kuwait.

The medal was presented to Acting Director of KFAED, Waleed Albahar, during a ceremony held at the State Palace in the Mongolian capital Ulaanbaatar, on 7 October. Following the award ceremony, the Mongolian President discussed with Albahar plans to collaborate on infrastructure, renewable energy, and construction projects in the new city of Kharkhorum, Mongolia.



The cooperation between KFAED and the Government of Mongolia began in 1998. Since then, the two sides have successfully implemented various infrastructure, energy, and construction projects in Mongolia, utilizing concessional loans and grants from the KFAED.

These projects include a \$58.26 million concessional loan from 1996-2010 for the construction of a 742 km paved road; a \$19.78 million concessional loan for the construction of the Taishir hydropower plant in 2004; an \$8 million grant for the construction of the National Burn Center of Mongolia in 2017; and a \$3.5 million grant for the renovation of Undurkhaan Airport in Khentii Province, Mongolia.



EPA-EU holds Green Skills Summit to promote sustainable development

Environment Public Authority (EPA) and the European Union (EU) delegation in Kuwait held a high-level event last week to promote sustainable development of the Kuwaiti economy.

The event titled 'Green Skills Summit' was organized for EPA and the EU by MERAS and Fifty Shades Greener, two organizations that seek to develop and promote green skills education and sustainable development in Kuwait and the Gulf region. Among the sponsors of the innovative summit were American University, IKEA, and the Gulf Bank.

The summit brought together high-level speakers from both Kuwait and the European Union, including leading private sector companies, civil society organizations and



public institutions. The summit served as an important platform for discussing the urgent need to integrate green skills into Kuwait's education and training sectors as the nation transitions towards a greener economy.

Speakers at the summit shared their experiences and best practices in the fields of green skills and sustainability. Acting Director General of the Environmental Public Authority, Eng. Samira Al-Kandari, stated: "Adopting green skills is no longer an option but has become an urgent necessity to face the current environmental challenges. I believe that this conference is a valuable opportunity to exchange ideas and experiences on how to integrate these skills into various government sectors, the private sector, and civil society institutions. And transfer knowledge from partner countries, especially from the European Union."

She added, "At the Environment Public Authority, we support cooperation efforts with all government and civil bodies to lay the foundation for a more sustainable future and economy. Through this, we ensure the prosperity of our planet for future generations. By preserving and protecting our environment through our daily behavior we can instill environmental awareness among generations of tomorrow."

For her part, European Union Ambassador to Kuwait, H.E. Anne Koistinen stated: "I am proud to see prominent Kuwaiti and European institutions, companies and civil society organizations joining hands to exchange best practices and raise awareness about the importance of building a greener and more sustainable future for all." The top EU envoy in Kuwait added that "the European Union stands ready to continue working with Kuwait on greener and more sustainable solutions. This initiative builds on our previous excellent cooperation on just, green transition and sustainability with Kuwaiti institutions, including the EPA, Kuwait's private sector, civil society and universities."

Samia Alduaij, sustainability associate at MERAS Consulting, observed: "The Green Skills Summit marks a critical step in preparing Kuwait's workforce for the green transition. With the rapid growth of green jobs worldwide, our workforce must be ready to seize these opportunities and drive Kuwait's leadership in the green economy. We at Meras Consulting are proud to have partnered with Ireland's Fifty Shades Greener to organize this event and deliver educational programs at the secondary and university levels. These programs will equip students with the foundational green skills essential for a sustainable future."

Raquel Noboa, founder of Fifty Shades Greener commented that "I am incredibly honored to have had the opportunity to deliver this event in Kuwait with the amazing team at MERAS Consulting. Sustainability is all about collaboration and finding shared solutions. At Fifty Shades Greener, we are deeply committed to the mission of integrating green skills education across sectors, empowering individuals, and preparing societies for the green economy. Our partnership with MERAS Consulting now offers us the opportunity to help build Kuwait's green economy."

The event highlighted the need for collaboration among the government, private sector, academia, and civil society to foster a shared vision for sustainable economic development. Lama Jamalaldin, co-founder and managing partner of MERAS Consulting in her closing remark encouraged participants to sign up for the Alliance and help shape a sustainable future for the country.

Firms in non-compliance with FATF disclosures face penalties

Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) has warned companies that fail to disclose the actual beneficiary's data, in line with disclosures recommended by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), that they had been issued with a warning and could now face more punitive measures unless they comply with the FATF regulations.

Additional measures against firms in non-compliance with FATF rules include imposing a financial penalty, which could reach up to KD500,000, as stipulated by Law No. 106 on combating money laundering and terrorist financing. Media reports indicate that between 15,000 and 20,000 companies of various types out of the 314,000 companies obligated to disclose their actual beneficiary, received the MoCI alert last week. According to the decision driven by the instructions and recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the procedure for identifying the actual beneficiary must be implemented in all unlisted closed joint-stock companies and individual institutions, regardless of whether they are known and previously recorded in the ministry's records or not previously authorized.



According to the MoCI notice posted on the portal of the Anti-Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Department, a unified message was sent to all violating companies through a user-friendly application.

The message stated that "a penalty has been issued—an order that includes compliance with specific procedures—for failing to disclose the actual beneficiary's data. If the violation continues, a fine will be imposed within two weeks from the date of this notice."

The actual beneficiary refers to any natural person who possesses or exercises direct or indirect final control over the client, the person on whose behalf the transaction is carried out, or the natural person who exercises ultimate effective control over a legal entity or legal arrangement specified in the decision.

The sources pointed out that implementing this measure assists state regulatory bodies, financial institutions, and certain non-financial businesses and professions in verifying, identifying, and obtaining accurate data and information about the legal entity conducting financial or commercial operations, whether directly or indirectly.

The ministry will reportedly later scrutinize the statements regarding the actual beneficiary until a complete, accurate, and reliable database on this matter is established. Legal measures will be taken if the data is found to be incorrect, which will help to combat money laundering and terrorist financing, as well as enhance monitoring of suspicious practices.

Mexico-Kuwait trade soars as relations solidify

During the celebration of the 214th anniversary of the Mexican Independence Movement, Mexican Ambassador Edward Peña Haller highlighted the strengthening ties between Kuwait and Mexico, noting that high-level visits have resulted in twenty-five treaties and agreements.



The Times Kuwait Report

Mexican Ambassador H.E. Eduardo Peña Haller highlighted the strengthening ties between Kuwait and Mexico in recent years, and that next year would mark the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries. Noting that high-level visits have resulted in twenty five bilateral treaties and agreements, he added that trade between the two countries has grown at an impressive annual rate of 28.5 percent.

Ambassador Haller made these comments during celebrations held by the Mexican Embassy to mark the 214th anniversary of the start of the Mexican Independence Movement. The event, which was attended by Assistant Foreign Minister for Americas Affairs, Nawaf Abdullateef Al-Ahmad as also witnessed the participation of a large gathering of diplomats and special invitees.

Pointing out that the common worldviews between the two countries are not a coincidence, but rather the result of similar historical experiences, the Mexican envoy stated that the close ties between the two countries are based on shared values such as respect for international law, a strong belief in multilateralism, the promotion of peaceful coexistence, and a commitment to international cooperation as key tools for building a more just and equitable world. He emphasized that violence, militarism, and armament do not solve the challenges facing humanity; instead, they only serve to exacerbate differences.



Elaborating on the celebrations being observed, he said: "I am honored to celebrate with you the beginnings of the Mexican independence movement that took place 214 years ago in the small town of Dolores Hidalgo, when Father Miguel Hidalgo called on the people to rise up against the Crown of New Spain and, along with Father José María Morelos, called for a new path for Mexico—one that would defend the dignity and freedom of the entire people.

"Their vision focused on unity and inclusion, and they advocated for reforms that would ensure fair opportunities for all, especially indigenous peoples. They sought to establish a republic based on equality, universal suffrage, and the right to freedom of expression and association—values that have underpinned Mexico's founding as an independent nation ever since."

Noting that 1 October of this year opened a new chapter in Mexico's history, the Mexican envoy explained that for the first time the

country is being led by a woman, Dr. Claudia Sheinbaum Pardo. This historic event continues the constitutional reform of 2019, which guarantees gender equality in the Federal Congress, the Congress of States, and municipal councils in all 32 states of the Republic. This moment reflects significant political, economic, and social importance and will undoubtedly have a lasting impact on the future of Mexico.

Speaking about the small Mexican community in Kuwait, the ambassador revealed that a total of 150 Brazilians—80 women and 70 men—work to promote ethics, social responsibility, and dedication to their work, representing the best of Mexico abroad. He added, "From this standpoint, we take this opportunity to honor two remarkable Mexican women for their contributions to both Mexican and Kuwaiti society."

Ambassador Haller then invited engineer Diana Suárez Esquivel to the podium to receive an honor for her tireless work in removing sulfur, a harmful environmental pollutant, from

oil refining. She currently works at the Az-Zour plant in Kuwait, where she has succeeded in reducing this pollutant. He also presented Esperanza Zuzuarregui with the Ohtli Award, given to individuals who have made significant contributions to strengthening Mexican communities abroad.

He noted that for more than 40 years, Ms. Esperanza has dedicated herself selflessly to organizing the Mexican community in Kuwait, ensuring that newcomers receive the support they need to settle in and enjoy a network of friendships that enhances their families' stay in Kuwait. Revealing that many Kuwaitis visit his country through the United States, he added that those who have a US, Schengen, Canadian, or British visa do not need a visa to enter Mexico. He further indicated that discussions were being held to open a direct line of travel between Kuwait City and Mexico, as this would greatly facilitate meetings between business travelers from the two countries to foster investment.

Mentioning that currently only a small number of Kuwaitis are studying in Mexican universities, he stressed that he would work to improve these numbers, as well as encourage more Mexican students to come to Kuwait to master the Arabic language.

Referring to the 25 agreements concluded between his country and Kuwait in various fields, he expressed his intention to work on implementing these agreements. He added that the joint committee meeting between the two countries is scheduled to convene next year in Kuwait.

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Kuwait appreciates role of teachers in nation building

Dr. Nader Al-Jalal, Minister of Higher Education, Scientific Research, and Acting Minister of Education, says education serves as the foundation for Kuwait's vision of a knowledge-based society, which in turn supports the country's sustainable development.

Minister of Higher Education, Scientific Research, and Acting Minister of Education, Dr. Nader Al-Jalal, emphasized Kuwait's deep appreciation for the contributions of those in the educational sector. Pointing out that education is a national priority and a vital pillar of the nation's renaissance, the minister appreciated the role of teachers in molding young minds and preparing them to contribute effectively to society and the country.

Minister Al-Jalal made these comments in a statement published on the ministry's website last week on the occasion of World Teachers' Day. The statement went on to note that, "Kuwait's commitment to education is clearly evident in the strong support of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, may God protect him and grant him peace, who gives teachers his full attention and appreciation."

He added, "The official annual recognition

held by the Ministry of Education for teachers embodies His Highness's dedication to overseeing their affairs and supporting them in all local and international forums. This significant interest motivates those in the educational field to give more and to perform their noble mission with sincerity."

Extending his congratulations and appreciation to all teachers on the occasion of World Teachers' Day, the minister added, "Teachers put in tremendous effort to elevate students' levels, they instill the values of science and knowledge and pass down national constants from generation to generation, preserving and enhancing our national identity in the hearts of young people and preparing them to contribute effectively to the development of their society and country."

Minister Al-Jalal continued, "Through you, minds are shaped, capabilities grow, talents are refined, and ambitions are realized. Teachers



are the ones who instill hope, patriotism, and a belief in noble values in students. You are the leaders and role models, teaching them that knowledge is the most powerful tool that enhances their ability to face the challenges of our time. You are the ones who prepare

generations for the renaissance of our beloved nation and lay the foundation for its future. This is what makes your role the cornerstone of building a strong and prosperous nation."

At the end of his speech, Al-Jalal emphasized, "In the Ministries of Education and Higher Education, we recognize that education is a national priority, and we understand the importance of this vital sector as one of the most significant strategic investments for our country's future. The success of this investment is closely tied to our educational system, beginning with empowering teachers and enabling them to carry out their mission in the best possible way. We believe that a skilled and motivated teacher is the key to the success of our educational system, and we are working diligently with you to sustain the teaching profession, preserve its value, and elevate its status so that we can achieve our collective path towards progress and development."

Ahmadi's historic St. Paul's Anglican Church celebrates 75th anniversary



Representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, attended a ceremony marking the 75th anniversary of the inauguration of St. Paul's Anglican Church, in Ahmadi on 11 October.

The Amiri representative was welcomed on arrival by Reverend Sean Semple, the Bishop of the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf, and,

Archdeacon Dr. Michel Mbona, parish priest of St. Paul's Anglican Church.

In a speech delivered on the occasion, Dr. Mbona extolled Kuwait under the leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and the Kuwaiti people for their tolerance, hospitality, support, and peaceful coexistence throughout history.

The Anglican chaplaincy was established in 1948 and moved to its current premises in 1956,

when it was built by the Kuwait Oil Company as part of its commitment to meet the spiritual needs of its Christian workforce. The church was consecrated and dedicated by the then Bishop of Jerusalem Weston Henry Stewart on 16 November 1956. St. Paul's Church was chosen as the name for the new church because St. Paul was the only apostle who is named in the New Testament as having spent time in Arabia.

Over the years, the community of St Paul's

has witnessed the changing fortunes of Kuwait. Today, the Church serves as a spiritual home to a diverse community of members from the Anglican and Protestant traditions. In addition, the Church hosts twenty other congregations from a variety of denominations and languages who use the facilities throughout the week. St Paul's Anglican Church in Ahmadi is part of the Diocese of Cyprus and the Gulf, and the worldwide Anglican church.

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Jahra municipality committee approves land for various projects



Jahra Governorate Committee of the Municipal Council has approved the Kuwait Municipality's request to allocate nine million square meters in northern Al-Mutlaa for a desert adventure zone. The Adventure Zone is described as an entertainment project serving northern Kuwait, featuring a heritage neighborhood, camping and skiing areas, resorts, a safari area, an international village, and race car tracks.

During its regular meeting, chaired by Municipal Council member Abdullah Al-Dhalal, the committee also approved the Ministry of Transport's request to allocate a site for the major fiber optic network project for the third phase in the Salmi area. It also approved the Public Authority for Roads and Transportation request

to set aside sites for open basins and open water channels, including sections with underground water links and connecting paths between the basins to collect and drain rainwater around the South Saad Al-Abdullah housing area."

The committee also approved the request from the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs to deduct part of agricultural plot No. 22 in the Abdali agricultural area, block 2, to expand a mosque and parking lots.

It also adopted Council of Ministers Resolution No. 269 of 2024, based on the report from the Government Performance Follow-up Authority, regarding the provision of strategic storage areas for the establishment of warehouses for food storage and other purposes in the Laayoune area.

UAE ambassador stresses strong economic ties with Kuwait

UAE Ambassador H.E. Dr. Matar Al Neyadi

A gathering of United Arab Emirates (UAE) companies operating in Kuwait was held last week under the aegis of the Embassy of the UAE. In his address to the gathering, UAE Ambassador H.E. Dr. Matar Al Neyadi, expressed optimism about the potential for further growth in bilateral trade between the two countries,

He also highlighted the attractiveness of the Kuwaiti market for Emirati businesses, noting that two major companies, the Abu Dhabi Ports Group subsidiary 'SAFEEN' and a classification company, have established a presence in Kuwait this year.

He emphasized the UAE embassy's commitment to fostering economic

ties between the two countries, pointing to the April 2024 forum and exhibition that showcased Emirati companies and products.

He noted that the participation of 21 UAE companies from various sectors, including food security, artificial intelligence, infrastructure, logistics, aircraft maintenance, and shipbuilding, is a testament to the growing interest in the Kuwaiti market.

The ambassador underscored the strong and ongoing relationship between the private sectors of both countries, attributing the significant growth in bilateral trade to these connections. He expressed pride in the current trade volume, which reached approximately 23.6 billion

UAE dirhams (KD2 billion) in the first half of this year. He also noted that there was significant interest among UAE companies to participate in Kuwait's infrastructure development projects.

Ambassador Al Neyadi highlighted the supportive investment environments in both the UAE and Kuwait, noting that the recently signed double taxation avoidance agreement will further boost mutual investments and business activities. He also mentioned the comprehensive economic agreements that the UAE has signed with countries like Jordan, Serbia, Turkey, India, Indonesia, Australia, and Costa Rica, which are expected to facilitate market access, reduce



trade barriers, and promote fair competition.

Pointing to the business facilitating stance of Kuwait to UAE companies seeking to enter the Kuwaiti market, Ambassador Al Neyadi acknowledged the attractiveness of

the Kuwaiti market and the supportive role played by Kuwaiti government entities, including the Kuwait Foreign Investment Development Authority, the Kuwait Authority of Partnership Projects, and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.



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Sustainable Solutions for Urban Development

The Times Kuwait Report

World Urban Forum (WUF) is an international platform that brings together representatives of national governments, academics, development experts, urban planners, businesses, communities, and civil society organizations, to explore sustainable solutions to urban development issues.

The WUF is convened every two years by UN-Habitat, the United Nations Programme for Human Settlements and Sustainable Urban Development, in different cities around the world.

The 12th iteration of the forum, which is co-organized by the Government of Egypt, is scheduled to be held from 4–8 November in Cairo, Egypt. The choice of Cairo, with its city expansion projects that aim to keep pace with needs of a growing population, to host the forum reflects the desire by UN-Habitat to highlight the challenges and opportunities that cities in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region face.

Discussion during the WUF12 will center around sustainable urbanization in the region, with the focus on issues such as affordable housing, public transportation, and resource management. Additionally, exploring the role of technology in improving urban services and enhancing community engagement, and developing strategies to reduce environmental impacts and enhance urban resilience, are also set to feature largely during the forum.

To gather more information on the World Urban Forum (WUF) and its important role in supporting and promoting sustainable growth of future cities, The Times Kuwait spoke with the Head of UN-Habitat Mission in Kuwait and the Gulf, Dr. Amira Al-Hassan.

She began by underlining the significance of the WUF as



H.E. Dr. Ameera Alhassan
Head of UN-Habitat GCC Kuwait Office

a unique platform that is “distinguished by its inclusiveness, bringing together all stakeholders in urban development. It offers an opportunity to exchange ideas and innovations, and it enhances our understanding of shared challenges. Through open dialogue, we can develop solutions that meet the needs of every community”. Noting some of the main challenges facing cities in the Gulf region, Dr. Al Hassan said: “Gulf cities face challenges such as a heavy reliance on private vehicles, the need for economic diversification, and dealing with harsh climatic impacts. Despite these challenges, there are significant opportunities to leverage technology and innovation to enhance sustainability.

“In particular the WUF brings together experts and decision-makers who can assist in developing joint strategies. The forum

also provides access to the latest research and global best practices that can help apply innovative solutions to challenges facing cities.”

Indicating her aspirations for the upcoming Twelfth World Urban Forum in Cairo, Dr. Al-Hassan stated: “I look forward to the forum being a platform for enhancing regional cooperation, especially in areas such as improving quality of life, promoting the green economy, and developing resilient infrastructure. Cairo, with its rich history and cultural diversity, will be an ideal place for such discussions.”

Among the prominent topics to be discussed at the forum is the role of technology in improving urban life. Technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT) that enhance resource and service management; Artificial Intelligence mediated data analyses that support more effective decision-making; Promoting sustainability and reducing emissions by adopting renewable energy.

Successful and role-model cities abound across the globe, including Barcelona, Spain, which adopted a smart city model to improve transport and waste management. Vancouver, Canada, which aims to be the greenest city by 2025 through the promotion of renewable energy. Msheireb, Qatar, which achieved a new concept for a smart and sustainable city lifestyle, enhancing quality of life and entertainment.

The upcoming WUF also emphasizes the importance of the participation of civil society and youth in shaping the future of cities. Through local initiatives and small projects, communities can have a significant impact on the urban environment.

As the Twelfth World Urban Forum in Cairo approaches, hopes are rising that this event will be a turning point in the path of urban development in the region and the world. Through open dialogue and international cooperation, we can build cities that are more sustainable, inclusive, and prosperous for all.

Future of Technology will be showcased in Dubai at Gitex 2024

Get set for groundbreaking innovations, expert insights, and networking opportunities that will reshape industries and define the future of technology

The world's largest technology exhibition, Gitex Global returns for its 44th edition from October 14 to 18, 2024, in Dubai. This year, the event will be hosted across two mega venues — the Dubai World Trade Centre and Dubai Harbour — offering an expansive exhibition space that showcases innovations across various sectors. With over 44 halls dedicated to tech giants and emerging startups, the five-day exhibition promises to provide an unparalleled glimpse into the future of technology and its real-world applications.

Spotlight on Artificial Intelligence

Artificial Intelligence (AI) will take centre stage at Gitex Global 2024. Over 3,500 leading brands will gather to showcase their AI solutions, from ethical AI development to practical applications in finance, healthcare, and education. The discussions will focus on the implications of AI, including regulation, data privacy, and the evolving job market.

With the rapid emergence of AI technologies, the need for ethical frameworks and guidelines has never been more critical. Attendees can expect discussions on how organisations can navigate these challenges while leveraging AI for competitive advantage.

Showcasing AI breakthroughs

Over 3,500 of the world's leading brands investing in AI solutions will converge at the Dubai World Trade Center from October 14 to October 18 for the world's largest tech and startup event, Gitex Global 2024. The exhibition and conference will bring together the biggest tech community in the world, from experts, founders and investors to government leaders and senior executives, to showcase their breakthrough AI technologies, discuss mutual synergies, and forge key collaborations to catalyze future advancements in the industry.

The event will spotlight the opportunities and challenges surrounding the AI global economy, including ethical development, quantum computing, large language models (LLM), policies and regulations, real implications of AI in edtech, health, and finance, and the future of work and employment. The rapid AI emergence still impacts the job market according to recent studies. In 2022, Deloitte estimated that there were only 22,000 AI specialists in the world while, last year, it was predicted that only half of all AI-related jobs could be filled.



Emphasising Cybersecurity

In an increasingly digital world, cybersecurity remains a top concern for businesses across sectors. Gitex Global 2024 will feature live AI-driven hacks, CISO debates, and discussions on corporate board engagement strategies to enhance cybersecurity adoption. As organisations become more digitised, the importance of robust cybersecurity measures cannot be overstated. The event aims to equip attendees with knowledge and tools to mitigate risks effectively.

Focus on Startups and Investment Opportunities

Gitex Global 2024 is particularly committed to fostering innovation through its Gitex Editions platform, which aims to accelerate high-growth startups. With a lineup featuring eight start-ups from various countries, the platform seeks to enhance global governance and strategy-building efforts for budding entrepreneurs.

Expand North Star 2024, running from October 13 to 16, will be a key highlight, showcasing over 2,000 startups. This year, European participation is set to reach new heights, with more than 400 startups from the continent, including a significant delegation from the UK. This influx of talent will create a vibrant atmosphere for collaboration and networking, as startups showcase innovations in sectors such as fintech, AI, sustainability, and health tech.

The investment landscape is also booming. Recent trends indicate a 31 per cent increase in funding for European startups in second quarter of 2024 alone. With over 1,200 global investors expected to attend, Gitex will provide a crucial platform for startups to connect with potential investors and explore expansion opportunities, particularly in emerging markets in Asia and Africa.

Sustainable Urbanism & Future Cities

Gitex Global 2024 will also delve into Future Urbanism, showcasing how technology can foster sustainable and livable cities. The focus will be on smart city initiatives, exploring how IoT and AI can optimise urban planning, energy consumption, and waste management. As cities worldwide face increasing pressures from population growth and climate change, the insights gained at Gitex will be vital for shaping resilient urban environments.

Who Will Be There?

Expect to see leading tech giants such as Adobe, Microsoft, IBM, Google, Meta, and many others at Gitex Global 2024. These companies will showcase their latest technologies and innovations while engaging with attendees to discuss future trends and collaborations. As Gitex Global 2024 approaches, it promises to be a monumental event that will significantly impact various sectors. From AI and cybersecurity to fintech and sustainable urbanism, the advancements showcased will highlight not only the technologies of tomorrow but also the collaborative spirit required to drive meaningful change.

At the exhibition, Huawei will unveil and showcase a range of flagship products and solutions for the global enterprise market. Huawei will also showcase its reference architecture for intelligent transformation and innovative practices in digital and intelligent transformation across various industries worldwide. In addition, Huawei will host the Industrial Digital and Intelligent Transformation Summit, along with dozens of forums, hundreds of talks, and numerous speeches to facilitate idea exchange with thought leaders, industry professionals, technical experts, and partners from around the world to discuss a wide range of topics related to the pan-enterprise market, industry intelligence trends, and practices. Attendees will leave with valuable insights, connections, and inspiration to navigate the complexities of an ever-evolving technological landscape. Gitex Global 2024 is more than just an exhibition; it is a catalyst for innovation, investment, and the future of technology on a global scale.

Human rights training program for media professionals launched



The National Institution for Human Rights, in collaboration with the Embassy of the Netherlands, aims to develop a strategic action plan to promote human rights culture among society and to strengthen relationships with stakeholders and human rights defenders.

The Times Kuwait Report

The National Institution for Human Rights is hosting a training program on human rights standards and principles for journalists and media professionals, in collaboration with the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The first activities of the training program on human rights standards and principles for journalists and media professionals, organized by the National Institution for Human Rights in cooperation with the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands accredited to Bahrain, were launched as part of the foundation's action plan and strategy to promote human rights culture among various segments of society and to strengthen relationships with stakeholders and human rights defenders.

During his speech, Mr. Khalid Abdulaziz Al-Shaer, Vice President of the National Foundation of Human Rights, expressed his gratitude to the participants in the training program organized in cooperation with the Embassy of the Netherlands. He highlighted the remarkable progress in human rights in Bahrain under the leadership of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and the follow-up of His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince and Prime Minister. He praised the fruitful cooperation with the United Nations and relevant civil society institutions in enhancing the knowledge of journalists and media professionals regarding human rights principles, emphasizing the vital role of media in supporting democracy and freedom of expression.

Mr. Al-Shaer concluded his speech by

thanking the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands for strengthening cooperation to protect and promote human rights, hoping that the program will contribute to sustainable development in the Kingdom.

H.E. Lawrence Westhoff, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Bahrain, expressed his sincere thanks to the National Institution for Human Rights for organizing this training program, which aims to enhance the knowledge of journalists and media professionals about human rights and their effective role in applying these principles during press and media coverage.

The program spans two consecutive days and includes six sessions, featuring Ms. Ishraq bin Al-Zain, Coordinator of the Training and Education Unit at the United Nations Centre for Training and Documentation in the Field of

Human Rights for Southwest Asia and the Arab Region; Dr. Ali Hassan Al-Tulaba, Member of the Advisory Council of the Bahrain Observatory for Human Rights Monitoring Association; and Ms. Zahra Habib Al-Mushiqri, Chairman of the Freedoms Committee of the Bahrain Journalists Association. The sessions will cover the general framework of freedom of opinion and expression from the perspective of international human rights law, international mechanisms to promote it, the role of media in promoting human rights, Bahraini national legislation protecting freedom of opinion and expression, the rights and duties of journalists, legal protections for them, and Bahrain's role in safeguarding their rights during media coverage, along with regulations governing freedom of opinion and expression and combating hate speech.

Urban October, commitment to build sustainable, resilient cities

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Development Goals (SDGs) that the world set for itself in 2015. It is apparent that any sustainable development cannot be realized without significantly transforming the way urban spaces are designed, developed, and managed today. Goal 11 of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals aims to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable by 2030. However, a synthesis report on SDGs published in 2023 shows that the world is still far off-track in achieving SDG 11. Considering the importance of achieving this goal, the world needs to urgently implement and scale up policies, investments and various social, political, administrative, and economic initiatives on urbanization.

If well-planned, managed and executed, urbanization can be a powerful tool for sustainable development in both developing and developed countries. But many cities, especially in the developing world, are struggling to cope with the rapid pace of urbanization, as it outpaces the development of housing, infrastructure, and other essential public services. This inability has resulted in the emergence of slums or slum-like living conditions around cities in many places.

An estimate by UN-Habitat, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, placed the number of urban residents worldwide living in slums or slum-like situations at over a billion in 2020. Over the next 30 years, an additional two billion people are expected to live in such decrepit areas and conditions, mainly in developing countries. The lack of easy access and ready availability to basic requisites for a decent life such as affordable housing, quality education, good food and healthcare,

as well as adequate supplies of water, sanitation, transport and other public utilities, which prevail in shanty settlements worldwide, exacerbate existing inequalities and increase urban poverty.

In Kuwait, there are no slum areas as such, but many expatriate workers continue to live in poor conditions. Using bulldozers to erase such settlements is not an effective solution, as it only forces inhabitants of these areas to shift to other residential locations. More appropriate and sustainable solutions are required to tackle this challenge. In this regard, the government's plans to build greenfield cities for workers is certainly a step in the right direction, and will contribute significantly to the country's larger urbanization plans.

Urbanization in Kuwait began in the Fifties, with the country being among the first in the region to prepare an urban development plan. In 1952, a town planning strategy was developed by the municipal council detailing self-sufficient neighborhoods expanding beyond the old city walls and separated by radial ring roads. Following independence in 1961, when the Municipality was designated as nodal agency for developing urban areas in Kuwait, the earlier plans were revived and expanded.

Today, the urbanization rate in Kuwait is among the highest in the world with nearly 100 percent of the population living in urban areas. The average 4 percent annual growth rate in urban population has led to acute shortages of housing and adequate infrastructure, traffic congestion and environmental pollution. In recent years, utility services such as electricity and water have also persistently struggled to catch up with the growth in urban population.

In an attempt to address the challenges posed by this rapid urbanization, the

municipality developed its strategic Third Kuwait Master Plan (KMP-3). The plan, which covers developments in the Kuwait Metropolitan Area (KMA) for the period from 2005-2030, aims to realize the country's vision of becoming a financial and commercial hub in the region. The KMA, which extends along a north-south stretch that follows the coastline, and widens to the west to encompass other urban areas, hosts most of the population.

But, with Kuwait's population set to increase from over 4.8 million today to reach 5.3 million by 2030, the Third Master Plan estimates that, in order to ensure managed urbanization and effective resource distribution, around half the country's population will need to be settled in new urban areas outside of the KMA.

KMP-3 has accordingly allocated land to develop new cities and related infrastructure in Kuwait's northern and north-eastern parts (North Al Mutla, Al Abdali, Subiya, North Subiya and Umm Qasr) up to the Iraqi border, as well as in the southern and south-eastern parts (Arifjan, Az-Zour, and Wafra) up to the Saudi Arabia border. Provisions have also been made for road and rail networks to link the new cities to KMA. A fourth Kuwait Master Plan for the 2030-2040 period, currently under view, is designed to meet Kuwait's future urbanization needs.

In view of the importance that urbanization has for so many aspects of sustainable development, every year UN-Habitat organizes activities, events, and discussions on urban sustainability throughout the month of October. Known as Urban October, the month features World Habitat Day on the first Monday of October, and concludes with World Cities Day on 31 October. Global observance of World Habitat Day this year took place on 7 October in

Querétaro, Mexico, with the focus on the theme 'Engaging youth to create a better urban future'. The theme encourages younger generations to engage in planning their urban present and future through participatory processes and local leadership opportunities.

On 31 October 2024, World Cities Day will take place in Alexandria, Egypt, with focus on the theme 'Youth leading climate and local action for cities'. The Day will aim to harness the innovative and enterprising ideas on tackling climate change and ambitious targets for urbanization being promoted by youth, and transform them into tangible achievements.

Urbanization presents some of the most significant opportunities for economic growth and development worldwide. However, the rapid pace of urbanization also brings with it a host of demographic, economic, social and environmental challenges. Urban October is an opportunity for everyone to be part of the conversation about the challenges and opportunities created by the rapid rate of change in our cities and towns.

Only by engaging with all stakeholders in the sustainable urbanization process, including national and local governments, academics, civil society organizations, communities and individuals, can cities harness transformational change and ensure a better life for all in a rapidly urbanizing world. It is also only through cooperation and coordination locally, regionally, and internationally that we can build the urban resilience crucial to mitigate or avoid natural calamities and 'man-made' crises.

By choosing to act sustainably we can build cities where all citizens enjoy a decent quality of life, and form a part of the city's productive dynamic, creating shared prosperity and social stability without harming the environment.



Kenya's 'Mazingira' day takes center stage at FAIPS (DPS)

The Kenyan Embassy in Kuwait celebrated the event with enthusiasm, aiming to raise awareness about environmental issues and promote sustainability among students, the future stewards of the environment.

The Times Kuwait Report

The Embassy of the Republic of Kenya in Kuwait celebrated 'Mazingira' (Kenyan Environment Day) on October 10, in collaboration with UN Habitat, Kuwait, and Fahaheel Al-Watanieh Indian Private School in Ahmadi.

The event was marked by great enthusiasm and aimed to raise awareness about environmental issues while promoting sustainability among students, who are the future stewards of the environment.

The event, held in the school auditorium, featured a galaxy of esteemed ambassadors and dignitaries united in their commitment to protecting our planet.

Guests who graced the occasion included H.E. Dr. Zubaydullo Zubaydov, the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps and Ambassador of Tajikistan to Kuwait, H. E. Karen Hideko Sasahara, Ambassador of United States of America to Kuwait, H.E. Abdoukader Houssein Omar, Djibouti, H.E. Dr. Sied Muhumed Jibrill, Ethiopia, H.E. Dr. Abdullahi Mohamed Sheikh Abdullahi, Somalia, H.E. Dr. El-Anrif Said Hassane, The ambassador of Comoros to Kuwait, H.E. Nkululeko Horace Dlamini, Eswatini, H.E. Sman Manan, Cambodia ambassador to Kuwait, H.E. Filip Katic, the ambassador of Serbia to Kuwait, H.E. Mr. Ali Ben-Aissa, Morocco, H.E. Mrs. Haja Ishata Thomas, the ambassador of Sierra Leone to Kuwait, Nisreen Al-Rubaian, UNHCR Representative in Kuwait, H.E. Marh Zhooock Issane Daniel, Central African Republic, H.E. Younos Abdul Karim, Malawi ambassador to Kuwait, H.E. Mohammed Habib Idris, Ghana, H.E. Hummad Yahia Hali, Eritrea, H.E. Mohamed Saad Ouro-Sama, Togolese Republic, H.E. Murtala Jimoh, Nigeria, and Mr. Arun Chaudhary, CFO and Head Strategist of Al-Rayan Holding Company.

Mrs. Mammako Mary Mohale Lerata (Lesotho), Mr. Marwan Alhaddad (USA), Mr. Moiba Ansumana Fofana (Liberia), and Mr. Alhassane Cisse (Guinea) were also present as special invitees. The program began with the recitation of "Tahe-al-Kuwait" and the Kuwait National Anthem, followed by the recitation of the Holy Quran. The welcome address was delivered by the head boy and the head girl.



In his formal address to the gathering, Principal Mr. Ravi Ayanoli emphasized the importance of environmental stewardship and the role each individual plays in creating a sustainable future.

He expressed his intention to approach issues from a global perspective rather than viewing them solely as national concerns, nurturing students to become responsible global citizens of tomorrow.

H.E. Halima Abdille Mahmoud, Ambassador of Kenya to Kuwait, appreciated her fellow guests for their presence and involvement in the program. She also expressed her high regard for the Principal and the FAIPS team for making the Mazingira event outstanding.

Explaining the origin and importance of 'Mazingira' (the Swahili word for environment), the ambassador highlighted the significance of environmental conservation and the negative factors affecting the planet, such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. Dr.

Ameera Al Hassan, Head of UN-Habitat Kuwait & GCC Mission, reiterated the importance of environmental protection and praised the flawless organization of the event.

In her remarks on the occasion of the tree planting exercise at Fahaheel Al-Watanieh Indian Private School (FAIPS) on October 10 - "Mazingira Day" 2024, the Ambassador of Kenya thanked the school's management and UN-Habitat for their excellent collaboration in organizing the event.

The ambassador stated, "I am pleased that we have been able to dedicate time today for such a worthy cause. Conserving the environment is not only central to our existence but also key to improving our natural habitats and quality of life. The tree planting exercise we are undertaking today is an important gesture by this school, encouraging all of us to take positive action towards environmental conservation."

She added, "Every year in Kenya, on 10 October,

we celebrate 'Mazingira Day' (Environment Conservation Day). It is a public holiday during which Kenyans participate in various activities to protect and conserve the environment. As part of this effort, our President has launched a nationwide campaign aimed at planting 15 billion tree seedlings, with the goal of increasing the nation's forest cover to 30% by 2032."

"As you know, our world today is confronted with three major crises that threaten our existence on planet Earth: climate change, nature and biodiversity loss, and pollution. Trees play a vital role in mitigating the adverse impacts of these crises by absorbing carbon dioxide, restoring environmentally degraded areas, and supporting biodiversity. Trees are essential for our survival and well-being as they provide the fresh air (oxygen) we breathe," said the Kenyan ambassador. The ambassador added, "As an Embassy, we are honored to be part of this important tree-planting exercise to advocate for and promote environmental preservation. I encourage each of us, in our own small ways, to continue taking action to improve our environment and surroundings."

The Kenyan ambassador and the UN Habitat representative presented a memento to the principal of FAIPS DPS for his contribution to this noble cause. The special assembly culminated with a vote of thanks by the head boy, followed by a tree nurturing activity, where all dignitaries and special guests planted a sapling in the campus to emphasize the importance of Mazingira.

A plethora of cultural activities included a melodious English song in reggae style titled "Back to the Earth," performed by the Kindergarten "Eco Kids," and a unique ramp walk by the primary students, which not only entertained the audience but also conveyed an important message. A rhythmic dance by the senior students on "Echoes of Earth" was also well received by the audience. A video compilation by the Kenyan Embassy of Kuwait highlighted the government's strategic policy to increase forest cover in Kenya.

Overall, it was an insightful and valuable event crafted in an engaging and creative manner, providing a remarkable experience for the student body present. The program was unique in its aim to inspire students to become advocates for the environment.



Digitalization of Human Resources Management System in Uzbekistan

Over the past three years, the Republic of Uzbekistan has witnessed remarkable growth in the establishment of training centers dedicated to fostering IT competencies. The number of such centers has surged to over 300 across the country.



By Kozimbek Gafurov

Head of Information Security Division, Agency for the Development of Public Service under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan

In the era of rapid advancements in information technology, Uzbekistan places high priority on the automation of public administration. Recognizing the significance of digital technologies, the government is dedicated to enhancing the efficiency of public administration and delivering high-quality public services. This commitment stems from the understanding that the effective utilization of digital technologies plays a vital role in ensuring transparency and effectiveness in public administration.

Modern digital solutions have revolutionized the collection and analysis of extensive personnel data, enabling management to make informed decisions based on big data analytics. This includes evaluating employee performance, forecasting staffing requirements, optimizing salary structures, and other essential aspects of HR management.

Over the past three years, the Republic of Uzbekistan has witnessed remarkable growth in the establishment of training centers dedicated to fostering IT competencies. The number of such centers has surged to over 300 across the country. This expansion reflects the government's commitment to equipping its youth with the necessary skills for the digital age.

One notable initiative, the 'One Million Uzbek Coders' project, was launched in 2019. As part of this program, a staggering 1.2 million young individuals have successfully completed training and obtained certificates. This achievement underlines the significant strides made in developing a large pool of skilled programmers who can contribute to the country's digital transformation.

According to the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the strategy 'Uzbekistan - 2030', a key objective is to boost the volume of IT services and software product exports to USD 5 billion.

In order to meet the challenges and demands of the digital age, Uzbekistan has taken proactive measures and remains committed to continually improving its educational initiatives. By providing ongoing training and development opportunities for civil servants, the country aims to equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to adapt to the digital landscape effectively.

Uzbekistan's President Shavkat Mirziyoyev

emphasized the importance of embracing digital technologies for the development of Uzbekistan, stating that every industry must keep pace with digital advancements.

Under the visionary leadership of President Mirziyoyev, Uzbekistan has made significant strides in embracing digital technologies to enhance public administration in various sectors such as education, healthcare, and transport. This digital transformation necessitates civil servants to acquire new skills and competencies to effectively utilize digital tools.

With a \$2 billion investment, including \$700 million in direct funding, the country has created 14,000 well-paid jobs and supported 43,000 self-employed professionals. The my.gov.uz portal offers 570 online services used by over 8 million citizens, improving accessibility and efficiency.

In the rapidly evolving information society, where technological innovations are reshaping interactions and work processes, the development



Under the visionary leadership of President Mirziyoyev, Uzbekistan has made significant strides in embracing digital technologies to enhance public administration in various sectors such as education, healthcare, and transport.

of digital competence among civil servants is crucial. Uzbekistan, like many other nations, faces the pressing challenge of aligning public services with the requirements of the digital era.

The emergence of modern digital technologies has led to widespread digitalization across society, necessitating civil servants to adapt to new modes of work, communication, and service delivery. Artificial intelligence is increasingly employed in HR management to automate processes, forecast staffing requirements, and streamline workflows, enabling more precise adaptation to personnel needs and more effective staff management.

Government services with high digital competence aim to provide citizens and businesses with convenient, accessible, and secure online services for interacting with the government. These services include electronic portals, applications, and online forms.

Several resources that exemplify this commitment to digitalization are: the official

website of the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan 'gov.uz', the electronic tax services portal 'my.soliq.uz', License Information System 'license.gov.uz', an online auction platform 'e-auksion.uz', portal for the statistical data 'stat.uz', the portal for vacancies of civil service positions 'vacancy.argos.uz', 'online-mahalla.uz' is the portal of online services related to local communities (mahallas), and 'yoshlardaftari.uz' platform that provides resources related to youth development, educational opportunities, and various initiatives for young people.

Today, the Agency for the Development of Public Service under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan has achieved successful integration of HR information systems. This integration enables seamless data exchange between various levels of the government structure, resulting in the establishment of a unified information space. This unified space facilitates effective HR management, streamlines

business processes, and enhances overall productivity.

Integrating HR information systems offers several benefits to organizations, including centralized HR records, data duplication reduction, process automation, enhanced analytics and reporting, informed management decisions, increased efficiency and productivity. These benefits contribute to optimizing HR operations, enhancing organizational effectiveness, and supporting strategic HR initiatives.

The integration of HR information systems offers numerous benefits, including centralized storage and management of an organization's HR records, reduced data duplication, process automation, and improved analytics and reporting. This centralized access to data enhances the accuracy and informativeness of analytics and reporting, enabling informed management decisions.

Furthermore, in line with the recently

adopted Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan titled 'On measures to improve the system for assessing the performance of republican and local executive authorities, as well as business associations', the Agency for the Development of Public Service under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan oversees the timely and high-quality input of performance indicator information into the electronic platform 'samaradorlik.uz'. This platform generates a performance rating for managers and their deputies. The utilization of electronic documents and digital signatures in place of traditional paper processes simplifies and expedites work processes while enhancing trust and information security.

In Uzbekistan, as in many other countries, the implementation of digital platforms is increasingly crucial for the digital transformation of public administration. The effective delivery of public services through digital technologies improves the quality and accessibility of these services for citizens and businesses. Digitized information empowers civil servants to collect, analyze, and utilize data for informed decision-making, process optimization, and enhanced administrative efficiency. It is also worth noting that automating processes, improving monitoring and reporting, and increasing transparency in government activities contribute to the reduction of corruption.

Consequently, the priority areas of the Agency for the Development of Public Service under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan include ensuring a transparent and equitable procedure for the selection and placement of HR through modern information and communication technologies, providing equal opportunities for career advancement based on objective assessments of work activity, moral and volitional qualities, abilities, and skills of government employees, monitoring and analyzing trends and prospects in the development of the civil service, and introducing innovative HR management and development methods based on principles of openness, professionalism, and accountability.

By overcoming challenges and successfully implementing these initiatives, Uzbek civil servants can develop in accordance with the modern requirements of the digital era, thereby ensuring a stable and innovative development of the civil service. It is important to emphasize that the digitalization of the HR service in Uzbekistan is not a standalone project but an integral part of the strategy for modernizing public administration and fostering the digital economy in the country.

India's Ratan Tata, the man who knew how to 'think big and bold'

Tata, who passed away on 9 October, was known for his humility and his expansive vision.

A few years ago, a graying, slightly bent man asked for a table for two at the Sea Lounge, the iconic coffee shop at the Taj Hotels' flagship hotel in Mumbai. The restaurant was buzzing with customers vying to sit by the windows and watch the sun melt into the Arabian Sea outside.

"There were no free tables, could he give his name for the waitlist," asked the young hostess. The man put his name down, 'Ratan Tata', and disappeared into the hotel's corridors before hotel staff could come looking to find the chairman emeritus of the Tata Group, which also owns Taj Hotels.

Tata, who passed away in Mumbai on Wednesday, 9 October was known as much for his humility as he was for his expansive vision that vaulted the group from US\$5 billion to more than \$128 billion in revenue in 2022, in addition to ownership of celebrated brands such as Jaguar Land Rover and Tetley Tea.

The 86-year-old was mourned as one of the most beloved Indians for helping Indian businesses reach that scale, including on foreign shores, making the brand emblematic of the newly liberalizing Indian economy.

Tata was "a visionary business leader, a compassionate soul and an extraordinary human being", Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted soon after Tata's demise in a Mumbai hospital.

Tata took over the group's reins in 1991, just as India began shedding its socialist-era protectionist policies. He set about transforming the more than century-old industrial group into an innovative, cost and labor-efficient, global conglomerate.

"I think his legacy will be how to think big and bold," said Ravi Kant, who served as chief executive and then vice chairman of Tata Motors until 2014. "There may be something not even existing, but he could think of such an opportunity and make it happen." Indeed, Tata navigated India's fractious politics, its regulatory hurdles and protectionist-era mindsets to chart a new course for the group.

When Tata was named chairman of the group, at 54, it was a loosely held and fractious group of companies that he struggled to put his stamp on. After studying architecture at Cornell University, he joined Tata Steel in Jamshedpur, one of the flagship units, as a junior executive. Later, he had mixed success at the group's electronics venture, National Radio and Electronics (Nelco), and Empress Mills.

"Those were trying years, but he was gentle, soft-spoken and he stayed that way even later," said Jehangir Jehangir, who was Tata's executive assistant at Nelco.

Tata Sons, the group holding company, had stakes in many group companies as low as 3 percent or 13 percent, opening them up to hostile takeovers. Tata began consolidating his hold over the group without personally increasing his small shareholding.

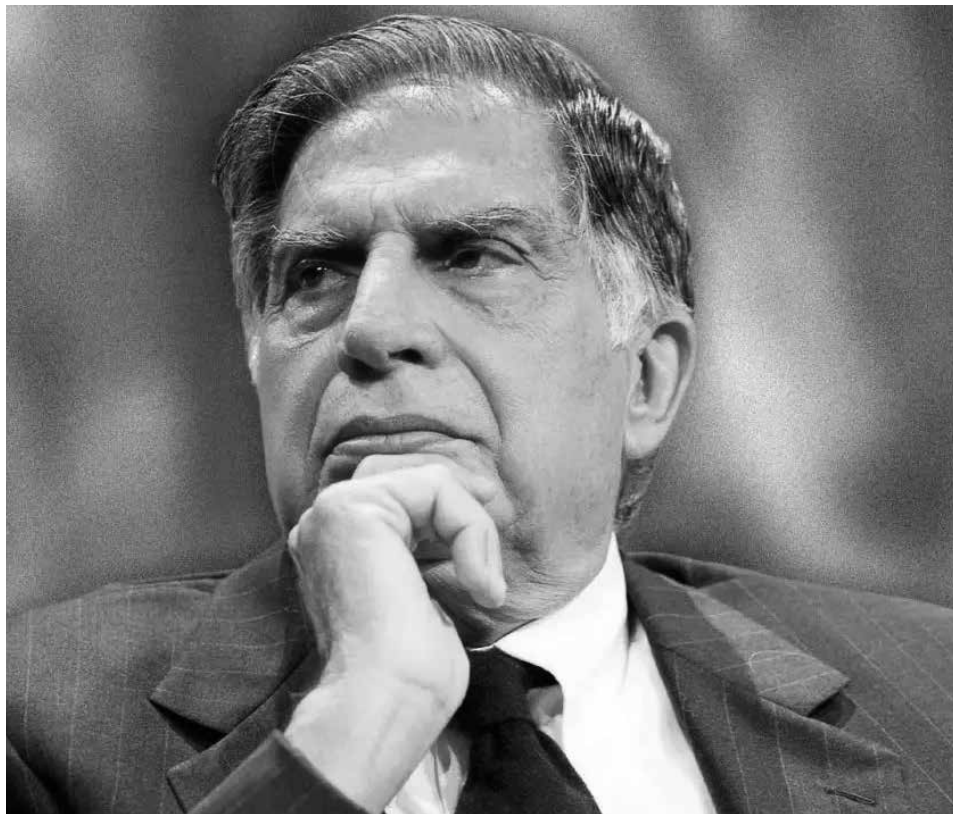
In 1991, then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh began dismantling India's long-held Licence Raj, which scuttled competition and required foreign companies to

have a domestic partner. Many Indian companies asked for protection against foreign competition. But Tata began telling executives the opposite. "We should not restrict our thinking to India. We should think globally," said a former senior Tata group executive, who had worked closely with Tata and did not want to be named. This thinking helped group companies emerge unscathed from the Indian economic downturn of the early 2000s.

"We started buying coal globally rather

set. "By then, we had relationships with international bankers, and we were able to raise \$10-12bn on our own," said the former Tata executive.

Months later, Tata Motors acquired the celebrated but ailing British carmaker, Jaguar Land Rover (JLR), from Ford Motors. "When we saw the strengths of Tata Motors and the strengths of JLR, we thought we were on to something big," Kant, who was then the chief executive of Tata Motors, recalled.



“Tata was “a visionary business leader, a compassionate soul and an extraordinary human being”, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted soon after Tata’s demise in a Mumbai hospital.”

than just mining coal domestically, as we had done," said the Tata group executive about Tata Steel. Tata Motors began making molds for Jaguar, Ford and Toyota. "We went from a 500 crore rupees loss to a 500 crore rupees profit in just a few years," Kant recalled about Tata Motors. It also set the stage for the group's global acquisitions.

In 2000, Tata Tea acquired the much-loved British tea brand Tetley for \$431m, bringing it to global prominence. But Tata had just begun. In 2004, Tata Motors bought the South Korean Daewoo Motors' commercial vehicle arm for \$102m.

And then, in 2007, Tata Steel acquired the Anglo-Dutch steelmaker Corus, in what was one of the biggest acquisitions in its time. The British government did not help with fundraising for the acquisition in the United Kingdom, making it a formidable challenge. But Tata's mind was

Tata and other company executives worked to bring out new models and efficient manufacturing and returned the company to profitability in a couple of years. However, a few months later, the waters turned choppy for the group. The 2008 global financial crisis meant demand for steel came down and the Corus acquisition became a difficult one.

One of Tata's great dreams was to make the world's least expensive car at Tata Motors. "His favorite part of the job was to spend time at the research center at Tata Motors looking into car design," said Jehangir.

He worked closely on developing the car. But mounting protests on the acquisition of land to set up the manufacturing plant in West Bengal state meant the project had to be abruptly abandoned midway. After meetings with chief ministers of several states, Tata Motors decided to relocate its

plant in October 2008 to Sanand in Gujarat, cementing then-Chief Minister Narendra Modi's investor-friendly image.

While the plant was being moved across the country, Tata was determined to meet timelines for the car's launch. "We had one factory being dismantled, one being set up and one producing the car," Tata Motors' Kant recalled. "I don't think it has ever been done before."

At the launch of the Tata Nano in March 2009, Tata said, "A promise is a promise." He had met his launch date and the 100,000-rupee (\$2,000 then) price tag. In the end, the car was not a success and had to be discontinued.

In 2009, India's Open Magazine released leaked tapes of Tata talking to lobbyist Nira Radia about obtaining telecom licenses for the group's telecom company. The tapes included him speaking informally about ministers and the auction process.

Tata asked the courts for an injunction to prevent the further spread of the tapes.

Open's editors approached dozens of lawyers for assistance in the case, but each one "would convey his regrets because he did not want to take on Ratan Tata", editor Manu Joseph recalled in a piece in HuffPost. "I am certain of one obvious quality of Ratan Tata, which is that he is formidable," Joseph wrote in the 2016 piece.

It was a quality that also underscored his battle with his chosen successor Cyrus Mistry. Tata had retired in 2012, leaving the group in Mistry's hands. But relations between the two had soon soured and in 2017 an executive search team brought in N. Chandrasekaran as group chairman. He had been the chief executive of the group's software services business, Tata Consultancy Services.

Increasingly frail, Tata switched his focus to charitable work through Tata Trusts, which holds nearly two-thirds of the shares of Tata Sons, and correspondingly, the group. In 2018, he called Jehangir, his former executive assistant, and asked him to join the board of Tata Trusts.

"He wanted to keep up the values and the culture of the group," Jehangir recalled. "He really wanted the culture of the group to remain when he was no longer there."

In the last few years, Tata retreated from public view for the most part. He worked on building a network of cancer hospitals and a pet hospital, and he supported research on sustainable development at the Oxford India Centre for Sustainable Development.

Jan Royall, principal of Somerville College, where the center is housed, met Tata several times over the last few months including online when they could not meet in person. "He was especially keen on research on health and technology and always showed deep knowledge on cutting edge research in this area across many disciplines," Royall recalled. Even through his last months, Tata kept up their meetings. "He was a real academic at heart as well as a visionary leader."

Tata was never married and had no children. He had a great love for dogs. Once, when asked what his greatest luxury had been, Tata had replied that it was making a swimming pool for his dogs.

Capella Bangkok

Ranked among the best hotels in the world



By Noura Khan
Travel writer
The Times Kuwait

The experience of staying in a hotel, ranked among the best hotels in the world, is certainly different from any other hotel experience.

Recently I had the opportunity to stay in a hotel that was rated as the best in the world, by the London-based 50 Best organization. So let us take a tour and get to know the luxurious hotel services provided by Capella Bangkok Hotel, which qualified it to win the top position.

In addition to being the best hotel in the world, Capella Bangkok has also been named Asia's Best Hotel of the Year 2024. Hotels from around the world participated in the second edition of the World's 50 Best Hotels competition in London.

Imagine that you are waking up every day to golden sunlight reflecting off the serene Chao Phraya River, as the rhythmic hum of Bangkok gently stirs beneath you—this is the reality at Capella Bangkok.

Imagine also that the soothing aroma of Thai jasmine fills the air as you enter your villa, where plush, silky linens invite you to unwind while watching the sun dip into the river.

Can you also imagine yourself lounging by the infinity pool as it seamlessly merges with the river's horizon—this is where luxury meets serenity.

Capella Bangkok enjoys an enviable position along the Chao Phraya River, offering guests stunning panoramic views of the iconic waterway. The hotel's architecture is designed to highlight the riverfront, with floor-to-ceiling windows in most rooms and suites. Waking up to the sight of boats gliding across the water, framed by Bangkok's skyline, is a surreal experience that sets the tone for a stay steeped in serenity and elegance.



Capella Bangkok takes wellness seriously, offering a range of bespoke treatments at the Auriga Wellness spa. Rooted in ancient healing techniques and inspired by the lunar cycles, the spa's treatments are customized to each guest's needs, ensuring a rejuvenating and holistic experience. From traditional Thai massages to modern therapies, every treatment is designed to promote relaxation and well-being.

The hotel also features a stunning infinity pool that appears to merge with the river, providing a perfect escape from the city's bustle. Yoga and meditation sessions, guided by expert instructors, offer guests a chance to reconnect with themselves in the tranquil environment.

One of the standout features of Capella Bangkok is the level of personalization it offers. From the moment you arrive, a dedicated Capella Culturist is assigned to curate your stay. Whether you wish to explore hidden gems in the city, partake in private river cruises, or immerse yourself in the local culture, the Culturist ensures your experience is tailored to your preferences.



The service at Capella Bangkok is meticulous, with staff going above and beyond to cater to every whim. The attention to detail is extraordinary, from the carefully prepared welcome amenities to the intuitive way the staff anticipate guests' needs.

One of Capella Bangkok's greatest draws is its award-winning culinary offerings. The hotel is home to Côte by Mauro Colagreci, a signature restaurant helmed by the world-renowned chef Mauro Colagreci, who has earned three Michelin stars for his work in France. The restaurant blends French-Italian coastal cuisine with local Thai ingredients,

offering an exquisite tasting menu that reflects the chef's innovative spirit and passion for flavors.

In addition to Côte, Capella offers Phra Nakhon, a riverside restaurant that presents authentic Thai cuisine in an elegant yet relaxed setting. Here, guests can savor traditional Thai dishes made with the freshest local ingredients, all while enjoying the cool river breeze.

While Capella Bangkok is a sanctuary in itself, its prime location means you are just steps away from some of Bangkok's most historic and vibrant neighborhoods. Guests can easily explore nearby attractions such as the Grand Palace, Wat Arun, and the bustling markets of Chinatown. For a more leisurely experience, the hotel offers private long-tail boat tours, allowing guests to discover the city's waterways and hidden treasures.

Staying at Capella Bangkok is not just about luxury—it is about creating unforgettable memories. Every aspect of the hotel, from its striking design and world-class dining to its wellness offerings and personalized service, is crafted to provide an unparalleled experience. Whether you are visiting for a special occasion or simply seeking a retreat from everyday life, Capella Bangkok delivers an extraordinary stay that lives up to its title as the world's best hotel for 2024.

Returning to the question about how different is the experience of staying in a hotel ranked as a first best hotel in the world from other hotels, my answer will definitely be very big difference, and it is worth every amount you will pay for this experience.

From the extraordinary services provided by the hotel, the pampering you receive from the moment of arrival, and the treatment that make you feel like a queen, to waking up in the morning to a legendary majestic view of the river in a luxurious room with floor-to-ceiling windows that give you a wonderful panoramic view, a stay at Capella is a totally different experience.

All of the above, plus the attention to every detail of your desires and daily needs, even before you ask for them, makes the hotel worthy to be ranked at the top of your wish list of experiences that you should try at least once in a lifetime.

Capella Bangkok is not just a hotel—it is a journey into the heart of luxury, where every detail is designed to inspire awe. From the moment you arrive to your last serene glance at the river, it is an experience that stays with you long after you leave.

Noura Khan, a travel influencer and content creator, is a Kuwaiti national, holds a degree in law from Kuwait University and has worked as a journalist prior to taking up a position in the government. In 2018 she started blogging on travel and visited more than 57 countries since. She has more than 105k followers on her blog post @nourajtraveller is well appreciated for content and travel information. Noura writes exclusively for The Times Kuwait on her travel visits.

Uzbekistan-Kuwait Business Forum aims to increase trade

His Excellency Dr. Ayubkhan Yunusov, the Ambassador of Uzbekistan to the country, invites Kuwaiti businessmen to the October 16-22 forum in Tashkent, Fergana, and Syrdarya and assures full embassy support for inquiries.

The Times Kuwait Report

Ambassador of Uzbekistan H.E. Dr. Ayubkhan Yunusov invited Kuwaiti businessmen to participate in the Uzbekistan-Kuwait Business Forum, scheduled for 16-22 October in the Uzbek cities of Tashkent, Fergana, and Syrdarya.

The ambassador delivered this invitation during a statement he issued to the media in Kuwait, ahead of the forum next week. He further pointed out that Jazeera Airways has scheduled direct flights from Kuwait to Tashkent on 14 and 15 October, with return flights from Tashkent to Kuwait on 22 and 23 October.

He added that the trip will include attending the forum in Tashkent, a tour of the city's landmarks, and many other events, which can be explored in detail on the forum website.

Ambassador Yunusov highlighted the facilities and benefits offered to Kuwaiti businessmen



attending the forum, including covering internal transportation costs in the cities of Tashkent and Kokand, located in the provinces of Fergana and Syrdarya, as well as lunch and dinner during the

trip for those registered through the forum's website. So far, more than sixty participants, including individuals and various Kuwaiti companies, have signed up.

He stated that around 1,000 Kuwaitis visited Uzbekistan this year, and that Kuwaiti citizens do not need an entry visa for visits of up to ten days. However, those wishing to stay longer must obtain a visa from the embassy, which is available within three days of application. He also encouraged Kuwaitis to explore the vast tourism potential of Uzbekistan.

The ambassador noted that Uzbek fruits have entered Kuwaiti markets for the first time this year, with around ten tons of cherries, peaches, currants, and cantaloupes arriving. Additionally, coordination is underway with local companies to import nuts from Uzbekistan.

He also revealed that Uzbekistan has achieved significant success in attracting foreign direct investment(FDI), which increased by 93 percent in 2023, with total foreign trade reaching a record \$62.6 billion. He noted that the country aims to reach \$250 billion by 2030.

DDI recognized for excellence in radiology safety

Radiology Department at the Dasman Diabetes Institute (DDI), was last week honored with the prestigious 2023 Safety Star Award by the Ministry of Health.

The recognition acknowledges the department's dedication to enhancing radiation safety during CT scans. By integrating a cutting-edge tool known as 'DoseWatch', the department has significantly improved its ability to precisely monitor and minimize radiation exposure for patients, ensuring that it remains well below the safety limits set by the Ministry of Health's Radiation Protection Department.



Dr. Abdulmohsen bin Nakhi, the department's director, emphasized the collaborative efforts of the Ministry of Health, Dasman Diabetes Institute, and the support of Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences, in achieving this remarkable accomplishment.

Attributing the institute's clinical excellence and subsequent recognition to this fruitful partnership, Dr. bin Nakhi further emphasized the department's commitment to providing "the best radiology services in a safe environment" for both patients and staff.

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