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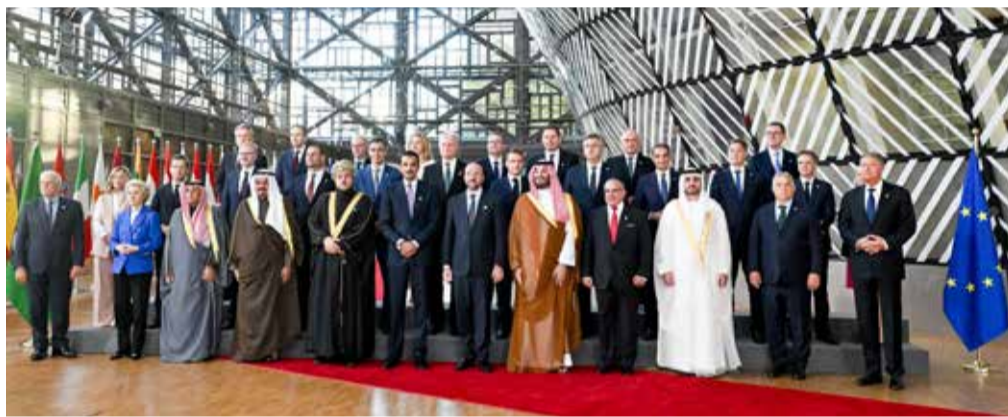
EU-GCC Strategic Partnership aims to address regional global issues

A relationship built on common aims and goals

By Tareq Yousef AlShumaimry

The six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states and the 28-nation European Union (EU) bloc neither share geographic proximity nor cultural affinity, but what they do have in common are similar viewpoints on many global issues, as well as a strategic interest to redefine their relationship. The EU-GCC Summit held last week was an opportunity to build on existing relations and develop prudent measures to effectively address regional and international challenges.

The genesis of both blocs owe a lot to economic and political compulsions prevailing at the time of their formation. The origin of GCC in 1981, while helping to institutionalize kin relationships and religious and cultural ties shared by people in the region for centuries, also stemmed from the need to collectively



respond to the common security and economic challenges. The GCC Charter reflects this need, as it calls for unity, coordination and integration among member states in all fields.

The EU for its part was established in 1992

through the Maastricht Treaty following the disunion of the former Soviet Union, the fall of the Iron Curtain, and the unification of the two Germanies. Although predecessors to the EU pursued different objectives, the EU in its

current form was the first to seek social, political and economic integration and harmony among the growing number of member states.

Economic and geopolitical factors have today pushed the two disparate blocs together. A cooperation agreement signed in 1989 between the GCC and the European Economic Community (EEC)—the immediate predecessor of the EU—led to regular dialogue between the two sides on various issues, including common global challenges, economic cooperation, sustainability, climate change, energy, and people-to-people initiatives. To further advance their cooperation, in May 2022 the European Commission and the EU High Representative issued a joint communication on a 'Strategic Partnership with the Gulf'. The communique outlined an operational roadmap for the EU to develop closer ties with the GCC member states.

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World Bank forecasts modest growth for economies in MENA

The report estimates that GDP per capita in conflict-affected countries in MENA could have been on average 45 percent higher, measured seven years after the onset of conflict. Such a loss is equivalent to the average progress made by the region over the last 35 years.

In its latest report on economies in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, the World Bank Group noted that uncertainties fueled by conflicts in the region are contributing to the subdued growth being witnessed in MENA.

The Bank's semi-annual MENA Economic Update, titled 'Growth in the Middle East and North Africa', forecasts that the region's overall gross domestic product (GDP) growth would rise modestly to 2.2 percent in 2024 in real terms, up from 1.8 percent in 2023. This uptick is driven by Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, where growth is projected to rise from 0.5 percent in 2023 to 1.9 percent in 2024.

In the rest of MENA, growth is expected to decelerate. Oil importers' growth is forecast to slow from 3.2 percent in 2023 to 2.1 percent in 2024, and that of non-GCC oil exporters to decline from 3.2 percent to 2.7 percent.

The report uses an innovative measure—the dispersion of views amongst private sector forecasters—to gauge levels of uncertainty. By this measure, economic uncertainty in MENA is currently twice the average of other emerging markets and developing economies worldwide.



The ongoing conflict in the Middle East has already inflicted a heavy human and economic toll. The Palestinian territories are nearing economic collapse, with their largest economic contraction on record. Gaza's economy shrank by 86 percent in the first half of 2024 and the West Bank is facing an unprecedented fiscal and private sector crisis.

In conflict-affected Lebanon, the outlook remains highly uncertain and will be shaped by the trajectory of the conflict. Meanwhile, other neighboring countries like Jordan and Egypt

have been affected by declines in tourism receipts and fiscal revenues. The report estimates that GDP per capita in conflict-affected countries in MENA could have been on average 45 percent higher, measured seven years after the onset of conflict. Such a loss is equivalent to the average progress made by the region over the last 35 years.

"Peace and stability are the foundation of sustainable development," said Ousmane Dione, World Bank Vice President for the Middle East and North Africa. He added, "The World Bank Group is committed to remaining engaged in the conflict-affected areas of the Middle East and North Africa, and to building a future worthy of all people of the region."

The report also looks at key windows of opportunity where countries can rapidly advance inclusive growth by accelerating reforms. This includes rebalancing the footprint of the public and the private sectors, better allocating talent in the labor market, closing the gender gap, and promoting innovation.

Despite the significant gains in levels of education over the last 50 years, the rate of female labor force participation in the MENA stands at 19 percent—the lowest in the world. Closing gender employment gaps would result in a remarkable 51 percent increase in per capita income in the typical MENA country. For economies to thrive, women must be included, says the report. "Transforming the role of the state would lead to substantial gains in productivity," said Roberta Gatti, World Bank Chief Economist for the Middle East and North Africa. "For example, the region has the largest share of public sector employees in the world, particularly women. But unfortunately, in MENA, a larger public sector does not necessarily correspond to better public goods and services. Mobilizing talent toward the private sector would improve the allocation of resources, with aggregate productivity gains up to 45 percent."

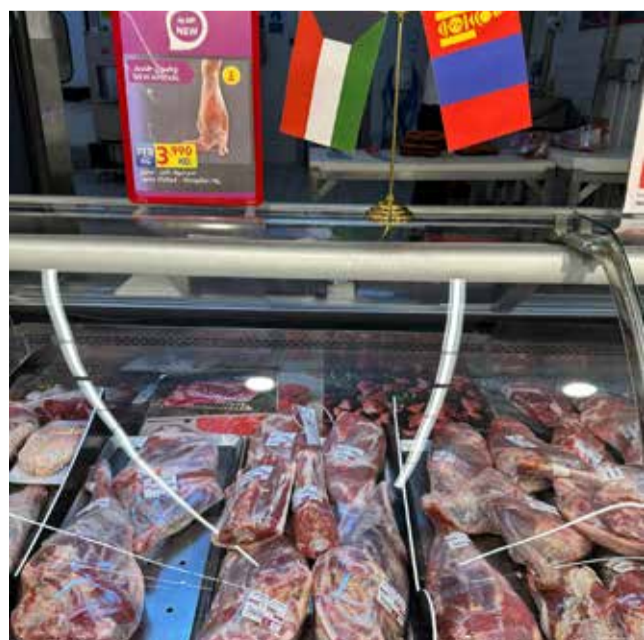
The report adds that tapping into the frontier of global knowledge and technology will also boost growth in MENA. More international trade, leveraging the region's strategic geographic location, can facilitate this process of infusion and innovation. Improving data quality and transparency, which are lagging behind by international standards, is another key lever to facilitate the diffusion of ideas.

High quality Mongolian lamb meat now in Kuwait



After obtaining the Halal accreditation from the GCC Accreditation center based in Saudi Arabia, Mongolia has started exporting around 30 to 100 tons of chilled halal lamb meat on a weekly basis to Kuwait.

For the first time ever, on October 15, Mongolia officially began exporting chilled lamb meat to Kuwait, marking a historically significant moment in its trade relations. The shipment was received by "United Universal Meat Trading & Food Stuff" LLC of Kuwait. The Mongolian Embassy in Kuwait has been steadfastly



working to start the export of Mongolian meat and meat products to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, including Kuwait, since July 2022.

After successfully obtaining the Halal accreditation from the GCC Accreditation center based in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and registering it to the Public Authority for Food and Nutrition of Kuwait, Mongolia has begun its first ever chilled lamb meat export to Kuwait, remarking it as the Mongolia's first ever chilled meat export to the international market.

The importing entity, "United Universal Meat Trading and Food Stuff" LLC has confirmed that they are planning to import around 30 to 100 tons of chilled lamb meat from Mongolia per week. The quantity will increase in due course of time depending on the supply capacity.

This development will have profound economic effects. The meat export from Mongolia to Kuwait opens doors for increased organic agricultural products to other GCC countries and this export of chilled lamb meat from Mongolia will strengthen trade and economic ties between Mongolia and the Kuwait to a large extent. Nonetheless, both countries can benefit from greater cooperation in areas like food security, agriculture and so forth.

The President of Mongolia, H.E. Khurelsukh Ukhnaa has initiated a "Food Revolution" national campaign to ensure food supply and security. This is to implement the goals of sustainable development, and to become an exporting country for organic food products including meat, H.E. Sergelen Purev, Ambassador of Mongolia to Kuwait said on Wednesday.

Importantly, Mongolian meat and meat products are considered as fully organic due to the vast, unpolluted pasturelands of Mongolia, which provide an ideal environment for livestock farming, thereby enabling the production of fully organic, high quality meat products that are well known in international markets.



Municipality approves more land for Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port

Municipal Council at its meeting last week approved a request by the Ministry of Public Works for additional land to expand the Mubarak Al-Kabeer Port. The meeting, chaired by Vice President of the Municipality Khaled Al-Mutairi, approved an area that will now increase the original land provided by tenfold to reach 11,600 hectares.

The additional land will allow the Ministry of Public Works to expand the seaport on Boubyan Island. The port is divided into several zones, with the areas allocated for each zone as follows: Maritime navigation area will cover 2,022 hectares, the first phase of the seaport will occupy 490 hectares, the port services area and connecting road will span 1,047 hectares, and the government use area will cover 206 hectares.

In addition, the free trade zone will cover 165 hectares, the light industries area will span 185 hectares, including a temporary site for excavation and construction waste (823 hectares), and the regional road and railway zone will cover 5,876 hectares.

The expansion of the project area is aimed at implementing large-scale development projects linked to Mubarak Port. This is part of a broader plan to transform the port into a major hub for transit trade and regional transport, leveraging this vital project for economic development and positioning Kuwait as a center for international and regional trade.

The Mubarak Port project is expected to drive a developmental shift, attract more local and foreign investments, diversify national resources, and provide thousands of job opportunities for Kuwaiti youth in port-related roles.

The technical procedures and requirements related to the project, which were reviewed by the Chinese project contractors and relevant authorities in Kuwait, include compliance with Environmental Protection Law No. 42 of 2014 and its amendments, along with all provisions, regulations, and executive decisions for environmental protection.

Serbia and Kuwait share strong friendship and partnership

EU membership is a priority for Serbia and is a crucial step towards economic progress and regional stability, and Serbia is making significant strides to meet the necessary criteria.

The Times Kuwait Report

In a recent interview with The Times Kuwait, Chargé d'Affaires at the Serbian Embassy, Filip Katic, spoke on the long standing relations with Kuwait while also emphasizing Serbia's key international priorities, with a primary focus on European integration. He also spoke about the elaborate preparations taking place ahead of the global EXPO 2027, which is slated to take place in the Serbian capital Belgrade.

He began by highlighting that Serbia shares excellent relations with Kuwait, and that this year marks 61 years of diplomatic ties between the two countries.

The long standing friendly relations has seen many areas of cooperation, including in the construction sector, where companies from Belgrade have helped build many landmark buildings, including the iconic Kuwait Towers, the Ministries Complex, several military bases, and hospitals over the years. He added that Serbian companies have also more recently expressed interest in participating in the Kuwait Vision 2035 development plan.

On the volume of trade between the two countries, the envoy said that although bilateral trade between Serbia and Kuwait had improved in recent years, there is still a huge potential to increase trade in various sectors in the coming years. In particular, he pointed to the tourism sector, where the imminent reopening of direct flights between Kuwait and Belgrade could witness a dramatic increase in the number of tourists from Kuwait, as Serbia has so much to offer visitors.

The charge d'Affaires pointed out that the Serbian community numbering around 500 persons in Kuwait comprise doctors, engineers, professors and sports coaches.

On EU membership, he said it was a crucial step towards economic progress and regional stability, noting that Serbia is making significant strides to meet the necessary criteria. Economic development, foreign investment attraction, and infrastructure improvement continue to be top priorities for the Serbian government, which aims to secure long-term stability and prosperity for its citizens.

The chargé d'affaires stated that despite Serbia's strong commitment to European integration and its focus on economic growth and stability, the ongoing issues in Kosovo and Metohija often slow down this process by diverting attention from the country's key priorities. He emphasized that maintaining peace and stability in the region is of vital importance to Serbia. He also pointed out that resolving the Kosovo issue remains one of Serbia's key national interests, with the country standing firm in its defense of territorial integrity and sovereignty.

Head of Serbian Embassy Katic highlighted that Belgrade insists on a return to the status quo in Kosovo and Metohija, followed by the resolution of the issue in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and the Brussels Agreement. The violation of human rights in Kosovo

and Metohija is causing significant political and social problems.

The Serbian diplomat further emphasized that his country seeks the consistent implementation of the Brussels Agreement, especially concerning the formation of the Association of Serb Municipalities, which is crucial for protecting the rights of the Serbian community.

He also addressed the challenges faced by Serbs in their daily lives, such as the closure of Serbian institutions, restricted access to public services and economic resources, and security threats due to unilateral actions by Pristina. Issues like the closure of Serbian institutions and the undermining of daily life for Serbs in northern Kosovo and Metohija remain central to Serbian diplomacy.

Simultaneously, the chargé d'affaires stressed that Serbia takes great pride in its efforts to enhance its economy and international cooperation. He noted that currently, a major focus of Serbia is on preparations for World EXPO 2027, which Belgrade will host in two years time.

This event represents a crucial opportunity for Serbia in terms of economic and cultural development, offering additional avenues to attract foreign investment and promote its potential on the global stage. The organization of EXPO 2027 is a significant source of pride for Serbia, aiming to showcase its progress and innovations to the world.

Charge d'Affaires Katic noted that his country hopes EXPO 2027 will become a symbol of the country's economic and social advancement. It is expected to attract a large number of business and tourist delegations from around the world, further boosting the development of various economic sectors.

He revealed that several significant infrastructure projects are planned to enhance Belgrade's capacity and service quality for EXPO 2027. One of the main projects is the construction of a national football stadium, expected to be completed by the end of 2026.

Additionally, an exhibition complex is being built, designed to host over 2.5 million visitors. Other planned developments include an aquatic center for water sports and a new railway and metro line connecting Zemun Polje and Nikola Tesla Airport.

Moreover, the modernization of Nikola Tesla Airport includes expanding terminals and constructing new parking facilities, which will significantly improve transportation infrastructure.

All these projects are set to be completed by the start of the exhibition, which will run from 15 May to 15 August 2027. It is anticipated that around seven million tourists and representatives from approximately 100 countries will visit Belgrade during EXPO 2027, further elevating the event's importance. The expected revenue from tourism and business arrangements is estimated at around six billion euros.

Additionally, Serbia has achieved a BBB- credit rating, reflecting stability and positive prospects for future economic growth. This success is the result of responsible economic management, which has led to significant GDP growth, a reduction in public



debt, and an increase in foreign currency reserves. Furthermore, the stability of the financial system and a steady inflow of foreign direct investment contribute to strengthening Serbia's economic resilience to external shocks. These positive trends are expected to continue fostering economic growth in the coming years, supported by new investment projects and structural reforms.



GBCK signs MoU with The Business Year to publish economic review on Kuwait

German Business Council Kuwait (GBCK) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with The Business Year (TBY) for publication of TBY's eighth iteration on Kuwait's economy titled, 'The Business Year: Kuwait 2025'.

The Business Year, a global media group that has been delivering first-hand insights into the world's most dynamic markets for over fifteen years, continues to serve investors, businesses, and governments with crucial market intelligence.

The memorandum of understanding (MoU), which renewed GBCK's ongoing partnership with TBY, was signed last week in Kuwait City by GBCK board member Frederic AbouSaada and TBY's Country Manager for Kuwait, Agustina Dal Fabbro.

The agreement strengthens the foundation for the production of The Business Year: Kuwait 2025, which will feature insights from key political and business leaders. The

publication aims to provide accurate information, objective analysis, and strategic advice on the major economic trends shaping the State of Kuwait.

TBY's team in Kuwait is already conducting interviews with leaders from companies under the German Business Council, as well as key figures across major sectors such as finance, energy, and industry. With its eighth edition, TBY aims to highlight Kuwait's role as a regional player and attractive investment destination, focusing on opportunities across various sectors.

The edition will reach a targeted global audience through its print version and will also be available on multiple digital platforms, including Bloomberg Terminal, Dow Jones Factiva, FactSet, and Refinitiv Eikon, as well as on PressReader, Google Books, and at thebusinessyear.com. The Business Year: Kuwait 2025 will be published in the first quarter of 2025.

Private sector vital to employ, energize, youth in national economy

Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research and Acting Minister of Education, Dr. Nader Al-Jalal, stressed the important role of the private sector in providing employment opportunities to Kuwaiti youth and investing their energies and skills in the labor market. He added that this would enable youth to contribute meaningfully to the development of the country and society.

In a press statement made after sponsoring the opening of the third edition of the 'My Job' exhibition on 17 October, Minister Al-Jalal said that the exhibition serves youth who recently graduated, allowing them to identify job opportunities in the largest national institutions and companies. He also praised the private sector for their role in attracting and absorbing youth in companies and making the most of their energies.

The exhibition, which is one of the largest gatherings of job opportunities locally, was held over three days to provide youth with the widest opportunity to explore the prevailing job market and examine potential job opportunities in their selected sectors.

In his speech, the minister also extended an invitation to high school students to visit the exhibition, in order to identify the needs of the labor market in the coming periods to choose the required specialization and get the right job for them.

He praised the distinguished organization of the exhibition and the support extended by state institutions and entities to the show. He expressed hope that the exhibition will result in the acceptance of the largest number of applicants to work in the private sector, and the start their careers successfully.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Director General of Public Authority of Manpower, Najat Al-Yousef, expressed happiness with the Authority's supervision of this exhibition. She shared her keenness to support young people looking for



work in the private sector and the importance of guiding young people in this regard.

Al-Yousef called on the private sector to provide more employment opportunities at a time when "the latest statistics of the Authority monitored about 7,900 job seekers," indicating the importance of employing young people, developing their skills and investing their ideas and creativity.

For his part, the Director General of the General Authority for Youth, Nasser Al-Sheikh, stressed in his speech at the opening ceremony of the exhibition the Authority's keenness and interest in enhancing the capabilities of young people and providing them with opportunities for success and excellence.

He also stressed upon the need to provide job opportunities for youth, especially in the private sector to help them secure a regular source of income, which would guarantee them with a decent life and consequently enable them to develop a career for a better future.

Al-Sheikh said that the Youth Authority is working in partnership with the relevant state institutions through its programs and projects to provide young people with the appropriate

skills. These would help them compete in the labor market and provide the state with the talents of the national cadres.

He pointed out that the Authority has recently provided about 70 jobs in the field of health services and 50 other jobs in the field of insurance whose contracts will be signed soon. It also provided job opportunities in multiple other fields through its program (labor makers), which it evaluates periodically in coordination with the Public Authority of Manpower.

He also mentioned that the Authority is developing a national agenda for the skills needed by the state in the future in all relevant sectors. This comes at a time when its strategy seeks to harmonize the country's needs for specializations and link them to the labor market in coordination with state institutions.

He stated that the Authority will soon launch a comprehensive career guidance program for high school students to draw career paths for them, starting with choosing a specialization and receiving guidance from experts to start in the early educational stages and succeed in their career in line with the country's directions, obligations and the needs of the labor market.

Banks to open accounts for low-income groups

Central Bank of Kuwait to local banks, to remove obstacles in opening bank accounts for the low-income groups. Appreciating this initiative by the Central Bank, the Ministry of Justice said the gesture will contribute to enhancing efforts by the Permanent National Committee for Combating Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants.

In a note of thanks to the Central Bank signed by Dr. Mohammad Ibrahim Al-Wasmi, the Minister of Justice, Minister of



Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, and Chairman of Permanent National Committee for Combating Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants, and members of the committee expressed their gratitude for this historical humanitarian step.

This initiative will enable people employed in low-paying jobs, including domestic workers to open accounts with local banks, which will contribute to guaranteeing the rights of these groups by transferring their monthly payments directly to banks, as well as protect employers from applicable laws related to work in the private and domestic work sectors.

Indian Embassy clarifies optional services and charge at ICAC

Embassy of India in a clarification last week stated that additional services offered by Indian Consular Application Centers (ICAC) is optional, and that the charges for these services are fixed and clearly displayed at the ICACs.

The embassy noted that it has authorized BLS International Services to manage the four Indian Consular Application Centers (ICACs)



located in Kuwait City, Fahaheel, Jleeb Al-Shuwaikh, and Jahra. The centers provide services such as passport processing, visa applications, and consular attestations.

In addition to handling applications and delivering processed documents, BLS is authorized to offer optional services at fixed rates set by the embassy. These additional

services are optional and not mandatory, and no extra fees should be paid beyond the authorized charges. They are offered solely for the convenience of applicants seeking assistance.

Elaborating on the additional services offered by BLS, the embassy pointed out that the courier service offered by BLS International Services is entirely optional for applicants who want their processed documents or passports delivered to a specified address. It is not mandatory. The embassy added that in fact applicants can collect their passports or documents from the same ICAC one to two days earlier than they would receive them through courier delivery.

The embassy-authorized charges for services are clearly displayed at each ICAC, including at the service counters. Applicants should also verify the charges for optional services on the receipt provided by BLS.

The optional services at the center include passport form filling for 0.300 KD, visa form filling for 0.100 KD, photograph service for 0.300 KD, typing in English/Arabic for 2.000 KD, passport courier delivery for 1.500 KD, visa courier delivery for 4.500 KD, photocopy for 0.100 KD, online birth registration for 1.500 KD, web printout for 0.150 KD per page, and an internet kiosk for self-service form filling at 0.100 KD.

The applicants can contact the center at +965 22211228 or through email info.indkwi@blsinternational.net, or visit the website at <https://www.blsindiakuwait.com>.



IWG celebrates beauty, strength, resilience, of women

International Women's Group (IWG) hosted a lively event celebrating the beauty, strength, and resilience of women. Themed 'Celebrate Your Sparkle & Inner Beauty', the gathering encouraged women to embrace both their inner and outer grace.

IWG President Polina Dalmini, welcomed ambassadors and guests with an inspiring message about the importance of self-acceptance and supporting one another. "Today, we come together to celebrate not only our outer beauty but also our inner grace, courage, and individuality," she said. Her speech set the tone for an uplifting day focused on women's empowerment.

The event featured a lively bingo game with empowering phrases such as "You are enough" and "Strength is beauty," encouraging participants to embrace their inner strength while enjoying moments of laughter and excitement. Guests were also treated to beauty services, including makeup, perfume, and hairstyling by professionals. A luxurious nail service and a showcase of beauty products further enhanced the glamorous experience. The professional photoshoot captured the radiant glow of each



woman, adding a special touch to the day.

IWG Honorary Advisor, Vera Al Muttawa, took the stage to reflect on the strength of women in all aspects of life. She emphasized that every woman is the CEO of her own life, skillfully balancing personal, family, and professional roles. Her words resonated deeply, reminding attendees of their power in managing life's many demands.

The event concluded with a joyful sing-along to 'I Will Survive', symbolizing the resilience of women, followed by a sumptuous buffet. Mrs. Dalmini expressed her gratitude to all contributors who made the day special, celebrating a shared spirit of empowerment and femininity.

Spanish Kuwait relations rooted in shared values, cultural affinities



His Excellency Manuel Hernández Gamallo emphasized the strong ties between the two nations, noting that their relationship is rooted in shared values and cultural similarities.

The Times Kuwait Report

Spanish Ambassador H.E. Manuel Hernández Gamallo, emphasized the strong relations between Spain and Kuwait and pointed out that this relationship is rooted in shared values and cultural similarities.

In his first public event since taking over as top envoy of his country in Kuwait, Ambassador Gamallo praised Kuwait as a "strong defender of international law and a significant contributor to humanitarian issues in the Middle East and beyond".

The ambassador was addressing guests at the embassy gathered to celebrate the National Day of Spain. The event was attended by Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Al-Jaber, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Defense Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Al-Meshaal, and numerous heads of diplomatic missions.

Ambassador Gamallo noted that the visit by Spanish King Felipe VI to Kuwait last December, to offer condolences on the death of the former Amir Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad, was a distinctive sign of the brotherly relations between the two royal families.

He further stressed that the political

consultations held at the level of deputy foreign ministers of the two countries in Kuwait last July, represented a significant development at the diplomatic level. He added that over the years, Spain and Kuwait have signed agreements and memorandums of understanding regarding economic cooperation, infrastructure, transport, and tourism.

The ambassador also indicated the keenness of Spanish companies to contribute to Kuwait's progress and prosperity in various fields, including civil infrastructure, energy, water management, high-speed railway systems, transportation, health, food security, defense, maritime capabilities, communications, radar detection, and other areas outlined in Kuwait's Vision 2035.

He noted his intention to stimulate cooperation between relevant bodies in the realm of joint investments, anticipating that a joint economic committee will convene in Kuwait next year, which will certainly facilitate progress in these areas. He stated, "We are confident that our cooperation with Kuwait will increase in the coming years."

The ambassador mentioned that approximately 450 Spaniards currently reside

in Kuwait, forming an integrated community involved in education, business, sports, health, engineering, and other sectors. Highlighting that around 150,000 people traveled from Kuwait to Spain in 2023, the Spanish envoy pointed out that among Gulf citizens, Kuwaitis lead in investments in the real estate sector in Spain.

He expressed his aspiration to reestablish direct flights between Kuwait and Madrid by 2025, which would complement the existing direct route between Kuwait and Barcelona. He also extended best wishes to Kuwait for a successful tenure next year as the rotating chairman of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

Regarding the occasion, Ambassador Gamallo stated that Spain is one of the oldest nation-states in the world, "with a history of union spanning more than five centuries between countries with different languages and cultural characteristics, which have strengthened our common national identity today."

He added that Spain also shares a historical link with the Arab world. The Arab heritage is embedded in our language, history, and cultural legacy. This historic bond forms the foundation of the good relations that Spain has consistently maintained with Arab countries, independent

of political changes and historical emergencies.

He pointed out that in the face of bleak visions of a clash of civilizations and pessimistic speculations about a chaotic world ruled by the law of the strongest, Spain advocates for the common coexistence of civilizations, the rule of international law, and the principles of the United Nations Charter.

Commenting on ongoing conflicts, the ambassador said, "We live in a world facing serious challenges. In Ukraine, Gaza, Sudan, and other parts of the globe, Spain defends peace based on relevant United Nations resolutions." He further stressed that in the pursuit of peace, there can be no double standards. On 28 May, Spain—along with other like-minded countries—recognized Palestine as a state and a member of the United Nations, taking an irreversible step toward a two-state solution.

He stated that Spain is located at the crossroads of different cultural regions, between the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, and between the Old World and the New World, and between North and South. "Being 'at the crossroads' is not just a geographical concept; it also holds significance in our foreign policy and diplomacy," said the ambassador in conclusion..

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Improving logistics key to strengthening supply chains

Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan, the Minister of Public Works, said Kuwait is working on sustainable railway connectivity projects that support global logistics expansion through the GCC train project and the Kuwait-Riyadh linking train in Saudi Arabia.

Kuwait seeks to connect its seaports with the proposed rail networks to enhance the country's logistics services, improve efficiency, and support land transport projects, as part of its ambitious Vision 2035 development plan that aims to make the country a financial and commercial center in the region, and globally.

Reiterating this vision, Minister of Public Works, Dr. Noura Al-Mashaan, stated that sustainable logistics services are one of the priorities of Kuwait's National Strategy for 2035. The minister made this remark during her speech at the ministerial meeting of the inaugural World Logistics Forum 2024, which was held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia from 12-14 October.

In her address, Minister Al-Mashaan explained that Kuwait is working on sustainable railway connectivity projects that support global logistics expansion through the GCC rail network project and the Kuwait-Riyadh railway link. She added, "Our projects are not just at the international level but also address local initiatives, such as the expansion of the land freight line to northern Kuwait, including Mubarak Port."

The minister also pointed out that the diversity of shipping methods creates an elaborate network that requires effective management to ensure the availability of flexible services. "The world is increasingly harnessing artificial intelligence (AI) to optimize the management of the transport process, as seen in passenger transport, where optimal and alternative routes can be easily selected through this process," said Al-Mashaan.



For his part, the Saudi Minister of Transport and Logistics, Eng. Saleh Al-Jasser, in his speech at the two-day forum, stated: "There is no better time than now to hold this forum, as the global logistics sector stands at a crucial point. Global challenges underscore the need to ensure the safety and security of supply chains and the continuity of logistics services, which are the backbone of global trade."

"The World Logistics Forum is an opportunity to strengthen, transform, and protect global logistics networks that connect us all, fostering prosperity for economies and ensuring that goods reach their destinations."

Al-Jasser emphasized the need to accelerate the transformation in the transport and logistics sectors, positioning them as a global center for trade and logistics services. He reaffirmed that the Kingdom continues to develop its

logistics infrastructure in alignment with Vision 2030, supported by significant government investments aimed at enhancing the efficiency of supply chains and linking global markets.

He pointed out that the National Transport and Logistics Strategy, launched by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in mid-2021, aims to invest more than one trillion riyals by 2030. Of this amount, 200 billion riyals have already been allocated, enabling the Saudi logistics sector to progress prominently and contributing to improved global rankings.

The minister concluded his speech by emphasizing the importance of working together over the next two days to discuss the challenges we face and to shape a sustainable future that promotes prosperity for all.

The forum witnessed the presence of numerous ministers, senior officials, leaders of international organizations, industry federations, as well as experts, academics, and analysts, featuring participation from 130 speakers and eighty exhibitors from

thirty countries. Notably, the forum saw wide participation from leaders in the logistics sector, including representatives from the public and private sectors, experts, senior executives, and pioneers from around the world. It also included discussion sessions aimed at enhancing international cooperation and stimulating joint efforts to promote logistics and strengthen their developmental role in the global economy.

The forum discussed several pivotal topics in the transport and logistics sector, including empowering global markets, investing in logistics infrastructure, and enhancing logistics resilience in response to unrest in the Red Sea region. In addition, the forum sought ways to enhance efficiency of the logistics sector, highlight economic growth, develop local, regional, and international connectivity for trade networks and global supply chains, and strengthen partnerships between the public and private sectors, as well as to increase job opportunities in the sector.

Kuwait expresses commitment to fostering human rights

MoFA patronizes and Assistant Foreign Minister for Human Rights Affairs, Sheikha Jawaher Ibrahim Al-Duaij Al-Sabah, highlighted Kuwait's ongoing efforts to promote human rights and enhance Gulf, regional, and international cooperation during her speech at the 50th Conference of the International Organization for Women Empowerment and Capacity Building (IWECEB), on 13 October.

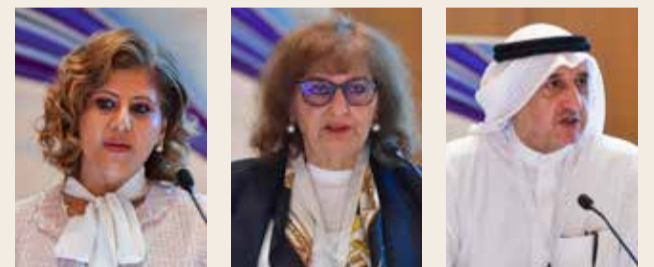
Held under the patronage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the Sabah Al-Salem University Conference Center, the conference brought together experts, academics, and civil society representatives from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states and Arab nations.

The event, held in collaboration with Kuwait University's College of Social Sciences and IWECEB, focused on addressing key challenges in implementing human rights standards across the region.

Sheikha Jawaher emphasized Kuwait's dedication to fostering constructive dialogue on human rights, noting that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' sponsorship of the conference demonstrates the country's commitment to advancing human rights principles. She reiterated Kuwait's leading role in promoting a culture of human rights and strengthening cooperation at the local,

Gulf, and international levels.

Highlighting Kuwait's transparent approach to human rights, she pointed to the country's recent election to the UN Human Rights Council with 183 votes. As part of its membership, Kuwait has made 11 pledges, including enhancing children's rights through free education and healthcare, improving expatriate labor conditions, and advancing women's empowerment in the economic and social sectors, all aligning with Kuwait's Vision 2035.



The two-day conference explored innovative solutions to regional human rights challenges and aimed to foster collaboration to build a just and equal society.

Acting Dean of the College of Social Sciences, Dr. Ali Al-Zoubi, praised the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for its active role in advancing community initiatives related to human rights and stressed the importance of developing practical frameworks to address challenges in both governmental and non-governmental sectors.



Al Muzaini Exchange Company expands with new branch in Farwaniya



Al Muzaini Exchange Company, one of Kuwait's leading money exchange providers, marked the opening of its newest branch in Farwaniya on 10 October. The strategic expansion highlights the company's ongoing commitment to being easily accessible to its customers.

presence in the local market, Mr. Fernandes said, "We are committed to maintaining our leadership by providing an unparalleled financial services experience for our customers. Our mission is simple: to always be near to our customers and to offer convenience in every transaction."

In addition to its vast network of branches, Al Muzaini also offers innovative financial solutions through its user-friendly mobile application. The app provides secure, convenient access to services such as money transfers and foreign exchange. Self-service kiosks, strategically placed across Kuwait, further enhance accessibility, allowing customers to carry out transactions with ease.

Customers can also participate in the exciting ongoing 'Transfer to India and Win' campaign, which runs from 15 September to 15 November. By using any of Al Muzaini's services to transfer money to India, customers stand a chance to win incredible prizes totaling up to INR 2,000,000, with prizes being awarded daily, weekly, and monthly, with the grand prize reaching INR1,000,000.



The new branch further reinforces the company's dedication to offering top-tier financial services, including money transfers, foreign currency exchange, and bill payments, with a focus on convenience, safety, and competitive pricing that are available seven days a week.

The branch was inaugurated by Al Muzaini's General Manager, Hugh Fernandes, alongside department managers and senior executives. Expressing pride in the company's growing

K-Land and K-Yard prepare to welcome visitors in November

Divided into two sections, the project will be located on Blajat Beach, covering over 9,000 square meters, and is currently in the final stages of preparation ahead of its official opening in November 2024.

The K-Land entertainment project, which is currently in the final stages of preparation ahead of its official opening in November 2024, has a revamped vision encompassing new ideas, designs, and a business model. Divided into two sections, 'Keyland' and 'Kyard,' the project will be located on Blajat Beach, covering over 9,000 square meters.

This year, the project continues to offer a new entertainment experience for families through Kuwait's largest soft play area, covering 2,000 square meters with a detailed design that immerses children in a world of imagination and creativity. Other facilities include the largest 'Zazalak' in Kuwait, featuring 24 tracks that provide various kinetic experiences for skating and climbing, along with a giant 'Nattiya' of unprecedented size.

The project emphasizes the importance of encouraging motor activities while strengthening children's connection with nature and fresh air during Kuwait's most beautiful seasons, following the long summer months.

Director of Marketing and Public Relations at Tourism Projects Company, Abdullah Al-Omani stated: "We are proud to launch the Keyland entertainment project. This distinguished initiative results from our successful partnerships with private sector companies, which significantly contribute to enhancing the entertainment and tourism sectors and improving the visitor experience."

Al-Omani added: "We are excited about the launch of the 2024-2025 season, where K-Land,



along with other projects in development, will represent a qualitative leap in providing innovative entertainment experiences that add unique value for Kuwaiti families and our visitors."

On the shore of the Arabian Gulf, a distinctive selection of carefully curated restaurants and cafes awaits you, catering to diverse tastes and ages in a space separate from K-Land's entertainment facilities. The design blends interior and outdoor spaces with coastal seating.

Keyland 2024 was designed to emulate the style of Scandinavian glass houses, enhancing the connection to nature and providing a sense of comfort for families and children visiting the project. The design also incorporates a combination of colors, shapes, and lighting that add joy and fun to the atmosphere.

Regarding the project design, the Executive Director of Lines Decoration Contracting, Engineer Ahmed Al-Baghli, stated: "The project is designed

to create spaces similar to greenhouses, utilizing maximum transparency to connect the interior spaces with the exterior, enriching visitors' experiences of enjoying the sea view." It is worth mentioning that Lines is a specialized design company with a rich portfolio in creating ideas that support the retail, entertainment, restaurant, and resort sectors in Kuwait and the Gulf countries.

Keyland Advanced Company, the owner and

developer of the project specializing in premium entertainment experiences, has developed a new business model for the second season, introducing the "Gold Ticket." This ticket grants children unlimited access to all facilities with just one purchase for an indefinite period. Visitors this season can also enjoy the offerings of the restaurants and cafes without needing to buy an entrance ticket.

In this context, Partner and Managing Director of K-Land, Fahad Jassim Al-Baghli, stated: "I thank Tourism Enterprises Company for its strategic partnership, which reflects the support of the political leadership for the entertainment sector in the State of Kuwait."

The Keyland project is set to welcome visitors in November 2024, with reservations available on the project's website, www.visitkland.com, and through the Tourism Enterprises app. The featured dining establishments include: Milanzani, Meat at Tony's, Toby's Estate, Aqni, Chocomelt, Tikka and Lomi, and Lunch Room.

KCCI holds virtual forum to enhance trade with Malta

Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) hosted a virtual meeting last week to explore potential commercial cooperation between Kuwait and Malta.

Attending the virtual forum were Ambassador of Malta H.E. Prof. George A. Said-Zammit, President of the Malta Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Chris Vassallo Cesareo, and the Assistant Director General and Director of the Department of International Organizations and Chambers, along with representatives of several prominent Kuwaiti companies.



The aim of the virtual meeting was to strengthen the trade partnership between Kuwait and Malta, as well as to explore and develop business partnerships with a focus on enhancing cooperation, driving innovation, and creating mutual opportunities across various sectors between the two countries.

The chamber emphasized that Kuwait offers its strategic geographical location and established economy as key opportunities for innovation and expansion, while Malta is known for its vibrant economy, adaptability, technological innovation, and skilled workforce, making it a hub for technology, financial services, tourism, and education.

It was further highlighted that, to promote genuine bilateral trade flows and investments between the two friendly countries, efforts should focus on diversifying mutual goods, increasing foreign direct investment, implementing joint projects, and promoting the conclusion of multiple economic agreements. These initiatives are essential to explore new sectors and effectively enhance cooperation between Kuwait and Malta.

The chamber highlighted three main areas where significant benefits can be achieved: innovation and technology, sustainable development and energy, and tourism and cultural exchange. Additionally, it emphasized the importance of focusing on education and skills development, as well as financial services and investment.

For his part, the Maltese ambassador stated that the meeting is the result of a long-standing relationship between the two countries, stressing that the symposium aims to explore opportunities and possibilities for cooperation between them.

For his part, Mr. Cesareo emphasized that the relations between the two countries are exceptional, calling for the activation of trade relations and efforts to attract investors to the available opportunities. He pointed out that Malta focuses on education, innovation and technology, logistics, and healthcare activities.

During the symposium, a visual presentation was given by the Gozo Chamber, an island in Malta, showcasing opportunities in the digital and healthcare sectors. Additionally, the Malta Economic Development Agency presented a visual overview of their tax system, support for medium and small enterprises, advanced industries, life sciences and medical devices, digital innovation, navigation and logistics, financial services, and aviation.



KOC eyes increasing oil production from potential fields

Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) is in the process of developing the Mutriba oil field discovered in 2009, which is expected to yield as much as 30,000 barrels of oil per day. Developing the Mutriba oil field is part of efforts by KOC to ramp up production as it seeks to achieve the production target of 4 million barrels per day by 2035.

The proposal by KOC to develop Mutriba oil

field, which lies in north-west Kuwait adjacent to the existing Rawdatain oil field in the north, is said to have received approval from the Higher Purchasing Committee of the state-owned Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC), the parent holding company of KOC.

Four international companies have reportedly been invited to participate in the development of Mutriba oil field, production from which is expected to enhance Kuwait's oil and gas reserves and, more importantly, raise Kuwait's status as a reliable oil-producing country in global markets.

On a related note, KOC has successfully completed the three-dimensional (3D) seismic survey project in the West Kuwait field area, and in the Mutriba area during the fiscal year 2023-24, covering an area of 1,275 and 1,414 square kilometers, respectively. In addition, a 4D seismic survey project in the Manaqish field over an area of 110 square kilometers was also undertaken successfully. This is being done with a clear focus to monitor the changes that are occurring in the geological reservoirs in the surrounding area over time.

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Spending on e-commerce on the rise in GCC

A hotspot in e-commerce activity, Kuwait has taken a giant leap from \$600 million in 2018, to a staggering \$1.5 billion in 2023, indicating a compound annual growth of 19.6%.

A new report on the retail sector in Kuwait shows that changing consumer behavior in the country has led to significant growth in the country's e-commerce industry, which has more than doubled over the past five years, jumping from \$600 million in 2018 to \$1.5 billion in 2023, marking a compound annual growth rate of 19.6 percent. Additionally, the sector's contribution to the GDP reached 0.9 percent as of 2023.

The rise in e-commerce transactions has been attributed to the very high penetration of mobile phones and the Internet, and primarily due to increase in the number of young people, in addition to the shift of many retailers to digital platforms during the COVID-19 pandemic and customers embracing this format.

Despite the small retail sector in Kuwait

compared to other Gulf countries, the country has one of the highest levels of international retail presence, largely due to the vast number of modern shopping malls and online platforms. Other factors contributing to the growth of the retail market in Kuwait include high population growth (with a CAGR of 1.4% between 2018 and 2023), as well as a strong expatriate base, rapid urbanization, and a high per capita GDP of \$52.8 thousand in 2023.

In addition, individuals aged between 20 and 39 years constitute about 45 percent of the country's population. This is a strong segment of the workforce that is highly inclined to spend on retail in malls and buy international brands. The demographic dynamics has spurred a change in lifestyle and contributed in making Kuwait a prominent destination for a number



of global luxury brands. As a result, consumers in Kuwait are now keeping pace with their regional counterparts in terms of tastes with a growing demand for luxury goods and global

brands. The report also stated that the modern retail market (supermarkets/ hypermarkets) in Kuwait is witnessing a transformation with operators expanding to open many branches in the country. In addition, many major stores have started offering e-commerce services in the country, with electronic distribution channels, which have witnessed an amazing annual growth that not only encourages the entry of new players into the market, but also enhances the competitiveness of the retail sector.

On a related note, as of 2023, there were 1.7 million square meters of leasable space in Kuwait, which is up from 1.5 million in 2022, with further plans to build 173,050 square meters of retail space during 2024. In addition, mall occupancy levels were relatively stable at 81.6 percent across existing inventory as of 2023.

Japan to strengthen cooperation in defense field

Embassy of Japan hosted a gathering and dinner banquet on 16 October at the ambassador's residence to highlight the friendly relations and growing defense cooperation between both nations.



The event was attended by representatives from Kuwait's Armed Forces, which included Commander of the Kuwait Air Defense Force, Major General Khaled Al-Sheryaan, along with a number of former commanders of Kuwait's Armed Forces, as well as several defense attachés

at embassies accredited to Kuwait, and a number of foreign military officers.

In his address to the gathering, Ambassador of Japan H.E. Morino Yasunari, reflected upon the longstanding Japan-Kuwait ties and the strengthening cooperation in the field of defense. The ambassador also offered his deepest condolences on the tragic loss of Captain (Pilot) Mohammed Abdulrasoul, who bravely dedicated himself to serving his country and its people.

Ambassador Yasunari specifically highlighted the deep friendship and robust cooperative ties between Japan and Kuwait in security matters, including the dispatch of ships from Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force, after the liberation of Kuwait to clear sea mines off the country's coast.

He also pointed to the deployment of personnel from Japan's Air Self-Defense Force in the Ali Al-Salem Air Base, meant to contribute humanitarian and reconstruction efforts in Iraq. In particular, the ambassador expressed his deep gratitude for the support and valuable assistance provided by the Kuwaiti armed forces at that time.

The occasion allowed participants to share and exchange perspectives of regional and international affairs and to deepen their friendship



Kuwait to support the Middle-East Green initiative

Acting Director General of the Environment Public Authority, Samira Al-Kandari, reaffirmed Kuwait's support for the 'Middle East Green Initiative' (MGI), which aims to boost regional cooperation in reducing land degradation, promoting vegetation, and managing it sustainably.

The MGI is a regional effort led by Saudi Arabia to mitigate the impact of climate change on the region and to collaborate to meet global climate targets. By increasing regional cooperation and creating the infrastructure needed to reduce emissions and protect the environment, MGI can amplify impact in the global fight against climate change, whilst creating far-reaching economic opportunities for the region.

The initiative aims to plant 50 billion trees across the Middle East and support regional efforts to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, contributing to a greener future for the region.

The first session of the Ministerial Council on the Middle East Green Initiative, was held in Jeddah and chaired by Saudi Arabia's Minister of Environment, Water, and Agriculture, Abdulrahman Al-Fadhli. Speaking on behalf of Kuwait at the session,

Al-Kandari emphasized that the initiative is a groundbreaking step towards a sustainable environmental future by reducing carbon emissions and increasing green spaces in the region.

She highlighted the importance of collective efforts to drive environmental transformation, contributing to the fight against climate change by preserving natural resources for future generations.

Al-Kandari noted Kuwait's progress in ratifying the initiative's charter and launching several key projects, including the cultivation of mangroves, the establishment of a specialized seed bank for fungal plants, and the expansion of green spaces through increasing nature reserves. Additionally, she mentioned projects aimed at rehabilitating contaminated and degraded soils.

She expressed her gratitude to those responsible for organizing the session and praised the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for its excellent preparation for this important meeting. She also praised the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development for its role in supporting the initiative through financing projects outside the State of Kuwait.

Kuwait mandates GCC flag displays to celebrate national holidays

The Council of Ministers has instructed relevant state authorities to continue raising the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) flags during national holidays, following the established protocol.

Saleh Al-Mulla, the Secretary-General of the Council of Ministers, stated in a letter addressed to the municipality, that "The council reviewed, during its meeting on September 17, the letter from the Minister of Municipality, which inquired about the decision authorizing the Kuwait Municipality to oversee the ornamental work in Al-Mubarakiya markets and to raise the flags of



GCC countries annually in celebration of each nation's National Day, while continuing with the previous protocol for raising the flags of brotherly countries."

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Kuwait named Capital of Culture and Arab Media 2025

Kuwait's cultural significance, both locally and regionally, is evident in the success of its institutions in revitalizing creative initiatives and preserving the nation's heritage.

In celebration of Kuwait being named the Capital of Culture and Arab Media 2025, the Ministry of Information and the National Council for Culture, Arts, and Literature hosted a panel discussion on 14 October. The event focused on underlining Kuwait's prominent cultural role, which led to its nomination as Culture Capital for 2025.

The event served to highlight Kuwait's multitude of cultural institutions, including the Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre, the Abdullah Al-Salem Centre, Dar Suad Al-Sabah, the Writers' Association, the National Council for Culture, Arts, and Letters, and the Kuwait National Library. These establishments play a crucial role in enlightening the new generation and encouraging a love for culture.

Kuwait's cultural significance, both locally and regionally, is evident in the success of its cultural institutions in revitalizing creative initiatives and preserving the nation's cultural heritage. They highlight the civilizational and cultural value of Kuwait, which has become a beacon of Arab culture. This legacy led to Kuwait being named the Capital of Arab Culture in 2001 and re-selected as the Capital of Culture and Information for 2025.

Kuwait's association with culture is not a recent phenomena; it dates back to the early establishment of the state. After some cultural developments in the 1950s, the most significant cultural shift occurred with the launch of the magazine 'Al-Arabi' in 1958. This marked the beginning of a flourishing cultural scene, leading to the establishment of the Writers' Association and subsequently the National Council for Culture, Arts, and Literature.

Recently, cultural and heritage centers that are akin to pearls have opened in Kuwait, such as the Kuwait National Library in 2011, which houses approximately 335,000 books and volumes.

In November 2011, the American Center affiliated with the Islamic Antiquities House was inaugurated. In 2013, the Beit Al-Othman Museum opened in the Hawally area, and in March 2015, Martyr Park was established as a cultural, educational, and entertainment center. Subsequently, the Sabah Al-Ahmad Heritage Village was launched as a tourist and heritage landmark.

In 2016, the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Centre opened, recognized as one of the most important cultural centers in the Arab region. In 2018, the Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Centre was inaugurated, regarded as one of the greatest cultural development landmarks.

Cultural institutions play a vital role in enlightening the new generation and promoting the importance of culture in building societies. It is essential to direct young people towards cultivating their cultural and intellectual growth, especially since culture is the most significant and profound aspect of Arab youth unity.

In this context, writer Ibrahim Al-Khaldi told 'Al-Anba' newspaper that Kuwait's selection as the Capital of Culture and Arab Media 2025 reflects its commitment to the cultural and media landscapes. He noted that this occasion serves as a fulcrum for establishing cultural institutions.

Al-Khaldi remarked that directing young people towards the cultural scene is currently a very challenging task. He stated, "The temptations faced by the generation of the nineties were far



fewer than those we encounter today. The options available in the eighties were limited. Now, convincing young people to engage with cultural matters is undoubtedly a significant challenge. This must be addressed by institutions, civil initiatives, and personal efforts aimed at rekindling interest in reading, encouraging public attendance at cultural events, elevating the importance of books, and diversifying cultural activities. I believe the key lies in giving a modern twist to cultural activities."

For her part, Taghreed Al-Daoud, a member of the Board of Directors of the Writers' Association, emphasized that one of the most important factors in Kuwait's appeal to Arab intellectuals is the integration experienced by its people, as well as their love for others and active role in spreading Arab culture. It is, therefore, fitting that Kuwait has been chosen as the capital of culture and media.



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Kuwaiti firm eyes joint ventures in Uzbekistan's chemical industry

The virtual meeting, organized with support from Kuwait's embassy, focused on enhancing investment exchanges between the two nations and exploring opportunities for joint ventures.

During the meeting, Uzbekistan presented its trade, economic, and

investment potential to the Kuwaiti side. EPSCO's Board Chairman, Alaa Hassan, expressed the company's interest in partnering with Uzbekistan, particularly in producing ethanol for the medical industry, as well as sanitary and disinfectant products. EPSCO also conveyed its broader interest in



collaborating within Uzbekistan's chemical industry.

Following the discussions, the parties agreed to arrange a working visit for an EPSCO delegation to Uzbekistan. The visit aims to further explore the proposed joint projects and solidify partnerships.

Canadian Embassy organizes sapling planting event



Embassy of Canada held a sapling planting event last week at the Shamiya Reserve to mark Canadian Thanksgiving and 'Urban October'— an annual month-long initiative by the United Nations to promote sustainable urbanization and improve the lives of people.

UN-Habitat, the UN programme for sustainable development of human settlements, joined hands with the Canadian embassy to launch 'Urban October for Young Citizens and Families' with a children's event on the occasion under the banner, 'Come Plant With Us'.

Canadian Embassy and UN Habitat are coordinating efforts to encourage individuals,

communities, cities and governments, at every age and every level, to participate in activities that take steps toward addressing change in our climate and urban environments.

The sapling planting initiative, which coincided with the start of the agricultural season in Kuwait, saw the participation of the volunteer development team at Shamiya Reserve, the people of Shamiya, and the Canadian community in Kuwait, with all coming together for the event.

The initiative was designed to educate and inspire youth and their families through interactive activities, reinforcing the significance of climate action and sustainable, inclusive cities.

The day involved both fun and educational activities for children and their families, including a 'Sustainable Scavenger Hunt', a 'Green Thumb' project, and 'Our New Planet - Art & Craft Corner', as well as 'Community Narrative'.

The objective of the unique collaboration was to offer enriching activities that stimulate the imaginations of young citizens and their families, laying the foundation for more sustainable and inclusive urban futures.

In a statement on the occasion, Canadian Ambassador H.E. Aliya Mawani said, "We are proud to be guests, for the third consecutive year, of the volunteer development team at 'Shamiya

Reserve' affiliated with the Public Authority for Youth. This team is dedicated to greening and recycling, and is considered a role model to be emulated in Kuwait.

"This event is an ideal way to mark Canadian Thanksgiving, which is celebrated in October every year as a time to focus on gratitude, kindness, and care and stewardship of our environment. On this occasion, the Canadian Embassy thanks the Volunteer Development Team of 'Shamiya Reserve' for providing this special opportunity for the Canadian community and friends of Canada to celebrate Canadian Thanksgiving and take care of our environment."

EU-GCC Strategic Partnership aims to address regional global issues

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Since unveiling the roadmap, the two sides have worked collaboratively in various fields in line with this framework. During the same two-year period, ongoing geopolitical changes in Europe and the Middle East have emphasized that instability in their respective neighborhoods has far-reaching global consequences, in particular, for countries in the two blocs. The developments also underscored the growing significance and influence of GCC countries, within the Middle East as well as on the global stage.

Acknowledging the geopolitical transmutations and recognizing the importance of further strengthening strategic ties between the two sides, the EU and Qatar, which currently holds the GCC Presidency, hosted the first-ever EU-GCC high-level summit in Brussels, the EU administrative capital, on 16 October. The summit, held under the theme of 'Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity', aimed to deepen ties between the two sides, harmonize viewpoints and create effective and cohesive strategies to address ongoing crises and potential challenges to global security.

In his address at the EU-GCC Summit, the representative of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad, stated, "We meet today with hopes that our meeting will contribute to strengthening our relationship, which is vital to achieve mutual interests in the face of global challenges caused by climatic change, economic pressures, energy sector developments, geopolitical tension and regional conflicts." Referring to the dangerous escalation in the Middle East, Kuwait's premier called for an immediate cessation of the aggression carried out by the Israeli occupation and renewed the State of Kuwait's principled stand in support of the Palestinian people and their just cause aimed at establishing an independent state in line with 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Touching on Kuwait's relations with Iraq, His

Highness the Prime Minister urged Baghdad to take tangible measures to tackle pending files namely the demarcation of the marine borders beyond the point 162, in line with international laws and charters, to resolve the file of the prisoners and the missing, as well as to return Kuwaiti properties, including the national archive."

In a joint statement issued at the end of the summit, EU and GCC leaders stressed the desire of the two blocs to build their Strategic Partnership, based on mutual respect and trust, for the benefit of people in the two regions and beyond. The statement noted that the partnership is anchored on the international rules-based order that fully respects international law, including the United Nations (UN) Charter, international humanitarian law, and the promotion and protection of universal human rights.

The two sides agreed to work together to promote global and regional security and prosperity, including preventing the emergence and escalation of conflicts, and resolving crises. Additionally, they acknowledged the need to foster multilateral, regional, bilateral frameworks with a view to further strengthen cooperation. The statement also called for holding a summit every two years, and agreed to hold the next Summit in Saudi Arabia in 2026, and to organize the 29th Joint Council and Ministerial Meeting in Kuwait in 2025. To push forward sustainable prosperity and security, the two blocs also consented to boost trade, investment, and cooperation; enhance energy cooperation and the fight against climate change; strengthen connectivity between the two regions; and to step up engagement on development and humanitarian aid. The statement also called for reinforcing joint efforts to address key global issues, and to build bridges between peoples of the two regions.

To support long-lasting stability and peace in the two regions and globally, the two sides reaffirmed their respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, and called on all states to refrain from threats or use of

force to seek territorial acquisition against the territorial integrity and sovereignty or political independence of any state.

In line with the various resolutions adopted at the UN General Assembly, the statement underscored the need to reach, as soon as possible, a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine in line with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The document also reaffirmed the commitment of the two sides to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

On ongoing conflicts in the Middle East, the two sides expressed utmost concern over developments in Israel, Gaza and the West Bank, and called for an immediate and complete ceasefire, release of hostages, exchange of Palestinian prisoners, as well as immediate and unimpeded humanitarian access and assistance throughout the Gaza Strip to all Palestinian civilians.

The statement reaffirmed unwavering commitment to the realization of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination through the Two-State solution where Israel and Palestine live side by side in peace within secure and recognized borders, along the 1967 lines, consistent with international law and relevant UN resolutions and the 2002 Arab Peace Initiative. "

On Lebanon, the document stated its extreme concern over the escalation and affirmed support for the Lebanese people. The two sides called for an immediate ceasefire and to intensify international and regional efforts to provide urgent humanitarian aid to Lebanon to alleviate the suffering of civilians and protect them from any war repercussions. The statement also insisted on restoring the Lebanese government's authority over the country and implementing economic reforms.

On Iran, the document emphasized the importance of adherence to international law, including the UN Charter. In this respect, the statement called on Iran to end its occupation of the three islands of the United Arab Emirates, Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb, and Abu Musa, which

constitutes a violation of the sovereignty of the UAE. The statement also stressed the importance of ensuring the peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear program, and called on Iran to pursue regional de-escalation.

Turning to Iraq, the joint statement called for the complete demarcation of the Kuwait-Iraq maritime boundary and stressed the importance of full implementation of the 2012 Kuwait-Iraq Agreement to regulate maritime navigation in Khor Abdullah. The document also renewed support for UNSC Resolution 2107, which instructed relevant UN entities to enhance efforts regarding the repatriation of all Kuwaitis and third country nationals, including missing persons or their remains, and return Kuwaiti property, including national archives.

While there was skepticism among political analysts about the pragmatic results that could be achieved from the summit, the joint statement makes clear the deep understanding on both sides that a strategic partnership is vital to advance mutual interests and address existing and future global challenges.



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

Gitex Global sets new benchmarks in innovation and opportunity

Dubai's reputation as Global Hub endorsed

GITEX GLOBAL 2024 concluded on Friday, underscoring AI's pivotal role as a transformative tool that will continue to reshape industries and drive business and economic growth globally.

For the final time this week, 6,500 exhibitors, 1,800 startups, and 1,200 investors, alongside governments from more than 180 countries—marking the highest-ever international participation—gathered in Dubai, solidifying the city's reputation as a premier global hub.

The unparalleled event brought together the most influential names in technology from every corner of the globe, further cementing its position as the world's largest and most impactful tech gathering.

This 44th edition of GITEX GLOBAL, held under the theme of 'Global Collaboration to Forge a Future AI Economy', not only set new benchmarks for innovation and business opportunities but also reinforced the event's critical role in shaping a technology landscape increasingly defined by AI adoption.

Over the five days, numerous Memorandum of Understanding agreements were announced, with these strategic deals set to accelerate the growth of the global AI market, projected to reach USD \$1,339.1 billion by 2030, according to Markets and Markets.

With the inclusion of over 40% new nations – including South Africa, Puerto Rico, Vietnam, alongside Europe's largest-ever presence – GITEX GLOBAL has paved the way to forge new cross-regional partnerships between leading and emerging tech nations that will accelerate the growth of the AI ecosystem even further.

Each day of the mega event focused on different themes – investment, cybersecurity, data centres, futuristic tech, and AI, reflecting the central pillars of the digital economy.

With the UAE welcoming the global ecosystem, GITEX GLOBAL has enhanced its position of being at the forefront of redefining the world's digital landscape with many organisations praising the impact of the event and its focus on key trends.

Catalysing Change Through Strategic Dialogues on Global Digital transformation

This edition of GITEX GLOBAL served as a strategic platform to address pressing challenges and opportunities of AI, focusing on its application across critical sectors that shape the global digital future.

The event featured the first-ever World Future Economy Digital Leaders Summit and the debut of GITEX Editions, spotlighting innovation, connecting top global unicorns, and fostering dialogue on AI regulation, economic strategies, and digital finance.

Cybersecurity emerged as a key topic, emphasising the need to secure digital infrastructure amid evolving cyber threats. Future mobility took centre stage, showcasing next-generation innovations like autonomous vehicles, electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft, and AI advancements in the auto-tech industry.

AI's role in the development of hyperscale, modular, and edge data centers was a significant focus, reflecting the burgeoning demand for scalable solutions and the region's rise as a hub for AI-powered data infrastructure. GITEX DIGI HEALTH 5.0 also gathered industry leaders to explore how AI is revolutionizing patient care and reshaping the future of healthcare, highlighting the technology's transformative potential in delivering improved outcomes.

Other discussions revolved around 5G and intelligent connectivity, EdTech, digital cities, and energy transitions. Together, these



conferences showcased critical dialogues shaping the future of digital transformation on a global scale

What's Next?

GITEX GLOBAL is seamlessly connecting the world's largest network of tech events. with

upcoming GITEX AFRICA Morocco from 14-16 April and GITEX ASIA Singapore on 23-25 April. Following these, GITEX EUROPE Berlin will take place from 21-23 May 2025, leading to the debut of GITEX NIGERIA in September 2025, all part of its expanding portfolio. Each of these events will foster collaboration and drive innovation,

shaping the tech landscape of tomorrow.

Looking ahead, GITEX GLOBAL is set to take place from 13-17 October 2025, promising another year of heightened innovation and cross-collaboration within the tech industry. In 2026, GITEX GLOBAL will relocate to Expo City Dubai, further expanding its reach and impact.

Huawei dazzles with digitalisation at GITEX GLOBAL 2024



Zhang Lin,
President
of Partner
Development,
Commercial
& Distribution
Business
Department,
Enterprise Sales
Department,
Huawei



Wei Xianbin,
Director of
Distribution
Business
Department,
Enterprise Sales
Department,
Huawei

At GITEX GLOBAL 2024, Huawei successfully hosted the HUAWEI eKit Forum under the theme "Together for Growth, Digitalization for Success."

The event served as a platform to launch over 30 new HUAWEI eKit products and showcase upgraded scenario-based solutions designed to bolster the competitiveness of Huawei's distribution partners and accelerate digital transformation for SMEs across various industries. Furthermore, Huawei underscored its commitment to partner success by highlighting its end-to-end strategic investment in its distribution business, spanning R&D, marketing, sales, supply, and services.

This commitment was further reinforced through joint marketing initiatives, comprehensive training programs like the HCSX-distribution professional certification and Golden Seed Plan, and robust after-sales support.

Zhang Lin, President of Partner Development and Commercial & Distribution Business Department, Enterprise Sales

Department, Huawei, stated, "Distribution is a key strategy for Huawei's enterprise business growth. Through continuous end-to-end investment, we aim to cultivate a thriving distribution partner ecosystem that empowers SMEs to embrace digital and intelligent transformation."

Echoing this sentiment, Wei Xianbin, Director of Distribution Business Department, Enterprise Sales Department, Huawei, added, "HUAWEI eKit leverages innovative products, joint marketing efforts, and dedicated partner enablement to unlock new opportunities in the SME market. We are committed to working closely with our partners to shape the future of distribution."

The new HUAWEI eKit product line-up includes the Datacom SOHO S220S and S310S series GE & 2.5G converged access switches, the flagship triple-radio Wi-Fi 7 product AP 673, the IdeaHub Board 2 Pro for intelligent collaboration in offices and classrooms, the MiniFTTO large-capacity five-in-one optical gateway F1002-AC-H1, and the Wi-Fi 7 optical AP F700C-36-1GH. These offerings cater specifically to the SME market, elevating small businesses' path to success in the digital era.

Recognizing the diverse needs of SMEs,

Huawei also showcased enhanced solutions tailored for micro, small, and medium-sized businesses. These solutions address specific requirements in sectors like hospitality, office environments, and education.

For instance, budget hotels can leverage the all-in-one wall plate AP, GE & 2.5G converged access switch, and all-optical core switch for large-scale network upgrades.

Similarly, SMEs can opt for the Wi-Fi 7 AP, 2.5GE switch, and 10G core switch, to enhance office bandwidth. The forum also provided a platform for successful HUAWEI eKit partners to share their experiences.

Ansar KV, co-founder of Green Zone, a UAE-based SME network distribution partner; and Tahir Kiziltas, CEO of Frontline Solutions, an intelligent collaboration distribution partner from Saudi Arabia, both shared their positive experiences collaborating with HUAWEI eKit.

HUAWEI eKit remains dedicated to empowering distribution partners and SMEs with original products and solutions that drive digital transformation across industries.

For more information about HUAWEI eKit, please visit: <https://ekit.huawei.com/ekit/front/#/ekit/home?countryCode=Global&lang=en>.

EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Financing Food Security Will Yield High Returns



Gelsomina Vigliotti and Maurizio Martina

Gelsomina Vigliotti is Vice President of the European Investment Bank.

Maurizio Martina is Deputy Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.



Although enough food is produced to feed the global population, hunger and malnutrition due to conflict, poverty, economic slowdowns, and climate change still threaten millions of lives. In 2023, around 2.3 billion people faced moderate or severe food insecurity and more than 730 million people suffered from hunger, with undernutrition linked to almost one-half of deaths of children under age five.

Beyond the profound human toll, hunger costs developing countries billions of dollars in lost productivity and consumption. With such staggering costs, food insecurity is at the top of the agenda at this week's World Food Forum in Rome. We urgently must address the roots of hunger and malnutrition, and one of

the most effective ways to do that is to invest in making our agrifood systems more efficient, fair, and sustainable. That means improving the infrastructure and services that help farmers access markets; mobilizing investments to enhance storage and port facilities, irrigation systems, and other sources of productivity; and expanding the use of climate-conscious production techniques. Each would have a huge impact on food security, both now and in the future.

But every component of this agenda requires more financing. According to The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World, a regular report produced by the five leading UN agencies working on this issue, trillions of dollars are needed to end hunger and malnutrition. Given the complex links between hunger, poverty, and development, the latest report calls for a more efficient use of innovative financing tools such as green or social bonds, and for reforming how we finance food security more broadly. We must do more to ensure that marginalized groups – such as women, indigenous peoples, and small-scale farmers and agribusinesses – have access to finance.

The European Investment Bank, the bank of the European Union, has deep experience in financing investments all the way down the agriculture and bioeconomy value chain. Each year, it lends about €5 billion (\$5.5 billion) to the sector globally.

For example, the EIB recently invested in infrastructure in Tunisia to strengthen food-storage systems and mitigate the risk of cereal shortages triggered by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. It works with local banks to support smallholder farmers and provide microfinance in countries such as Uganda. It has deployed risk-sharing facilities in Malawi and Zambia, and provided guarantees to financial institutions that lend to companies sourcing raw materials from smallholders. And it is supporting a social enterprise in Madagascar that will help promote environmental sustainability and food security, while ensuring that farmers get decent incomes.

The problem is that countries with the highest levels of food insecurity often have the hardest time accessing financing. Among the biggest obstacles are high transaction costs, fragmented agriculture markets, insecure land rights, poor administrative capacity, weak governance, and political instability.

One of the keys to overcoming these hurdles is to pursue stronger international partnerships. That is why the EIB, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and other international organizations are working together closely to promote

food security, environmental sustainability, and climate resilience. By pooling resources and experience, especially in Sub-Saharan Africa, we can overcome the chronic financing challenges.

For example, by drawing on the expertise and convening power of FAO, we can provide more funding for agrifood and bioeconomy activities. In 2023 alone, the FAO Investment Centre helped mobilize \$6.6 billion in new investment by designing 38 public investment projects backed by financing partners in 26 countries. And this came on top of implementation support to ongoing projects, representing a total of around \$46.7 billion.

But scaling up such financing requires the right kind of tools, not least financial products that reduce risk for the private sector. For example, blended finance— which combines public and private funds—and innovative

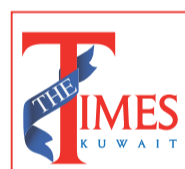
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financing mechanisms like climate bonds can make these investments more attractive to capital that is still sitting on the sidelines.

Feeding the world is not just a moral responsibility; it is a strategic imperative. Hunger is an immediate global crisis that demands massive investments. Fortunately, the potential rewards are well worth it. Sustainable agrifood systems do far more than simply reduce poverty and hunger. They also create jobs, promote economic growth, reduce gender inequality, improve health, and build stronger communities. The return is enormous,



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Luxury Redefined

Step into Elegance at

Waldorf Astoria Kuwait



The hotel boasts 200 rooms and suites, each carefully designed to ensure ultimate comfort. Floor-to-ceiling windows offer stunning views of Kuwait City, while plush furnishings, high-end finishes, and state-of-the-art technology provide a seamless blend of luxury and functionality. The suites, especially the Presidential Suite, are a hallmark of grandeur, featuring spacious living areas, private terraces, and personalized services.



Waldorf Astoria Kuwait offers a range of exquisite dining options. From international cuisine to traditional Middle Eastern dishes, guests can indulge in a culinary journey led by world-class chefs. Roka, the Japanese robata-ya restaurant, brings a contemporary twist to Japanese cuisine with signature dishes such as robata-grilled seafood and expertly crafted sushi. Peacock Alley, a hallmark of the Waldorf Astoria brand, serves as a sophisticated lounge perfect for afternoon tea, light bites, or evening cocktails.

The hotel's luxurious Waldorf Spa is a sanctuary for relaxation, offering a range of treatments designed to rejuvenate the mind and body. With private treatment rooms, a hammam, and a serene indoor pool, the spa is perfect for guests seeking tranquility amidst the urban bustle. A state-of-the-art fitness center and personal training services are also available for those looking to stay active during their stay.

With its central location and proximity to Kuwait's business district, Waldorf Astoria Kuwait caters to both leisure and business travelers. The hotel offers extensive meeting and event spaces, including a grand ballroom ideal for weddings and corporate events. Each space is equipped with modern audiovisual technology and designed with elegance, ensuring



every event is executed flawlessly.

Waldorf Astoria Kuwait sets a new benchmark for luxury in the region, offering a perfect blend of timeless elegance, modern amenities, and exceptional service. Whether visiting for business, leisure, or a special event, guests are treated to an unforgettable experience in one of the most vibrant cities in the Middle East. This urban retreat, with its prime location and world-class facilities, ensures that Waldorf Astoria Kuwait stands out as a top-tier destination for travelers seeking the pinnacle of luxury and comfort.

My stay at Waldorf Astoria Kuwait was an exceptional blend of luxury, comfort, and personalized service. Whether it was the stunning design, world-class dining, or the tranquil spa, every aspect of the hotel contributed to an unforgettable experience. I look forward to repeat this experience as soon as possible to pamper myself a little bit more.

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.



By Noura Khan
Travel writer
The Times Kuwait

Waldorf Astoria Kuwait, a sophisticated and stylish addition to the Middle Eastern hospitality scene, offers an opulent experience at the heart of Kuwait City. Opened in 2022, the hotel is located in the prestigious Avenues Mall complex, one of the largest shopping destinations in the Middle East, providing direct access to high-end retail, dining, and entertainment options.

My recent stay at the Waldorf Astoria Kuwait was nothing short of extraordinary. From the moment I arrived, the hotel's impeccable service, luxurious atmosphere, and attention to detail made it an unforgettable experience.

The warm welcome from the staff was a perfect start. The grand lobby, with its elegant chandeliers and polished marble, instantly set the tone for the level of luxury that awaited me. Check-in was swift and seamless, and I was personally escorted to my room, which provided a taste of the signature Waldorf Astoria hospitality.

Waldorf Astoria Kuwait combines timeless elegance with modern Arabic influences, creating a welcoming and luxurious ambiance. The hotel's design features grand chandeliers, marbled floors, and a soothing neutral color palette accented with gold and bronze touches, all contributing to a sophisticated, opulent atmosphere. Each space, from the lobby to the dining areas, exudes luxury while maintaining a comfortable, inviting feel.



Recycling plastics to make more plastics

Once in the blood, the metabolites act on the immune cells outside the epithelial lining and influence their functioning, including by triggering irritation and inflammation, potentially leading to a wide variety of health issues, including something as simple as gas formation and stomach bloating to more potent autoimmune conditions, mood disorders, and chronic illnesses.

Take a look around at the things you use on a regular basis, whether at home, at school, or in the office, chances are that many of those products will have plastic in them. It is not just the products around us, plastics, in the form of pollution, are now found everywhere, on land, in rivers, seas and oceans, as well as in the air we breathe, the food we eat and the liquids we drink.

Our planet is choking on plastics; they have become not only an environmental challenge, but also pose a serious threat to our health and well-being. Plastics degrade over decades and centuries into smaller micro- and nano-plastics that could enter our bodies leading to several negative health impacts, including cancers, lung disease, and birth defects. In addition, toxic chemical additives in plastics can alter hormone activity, which could disrupt reproduction, growth, and cognitive function.

We urgently need a rethink on how we produce, use and dispose of plastics. Recycling has been the recommended route to reduce plastic production and disposal, but studies conducted over the years show that less than 10 percent of the more than 8 billion tons of plastic produced since the 1950s has been recycled so far. Most of the plastic recycling that occurs today is a type known as mechanical recycling.

Mechanical plastic recycling involves collecting, cleaning, sorting, shredding and then melting the plastics into pellets that are sold to producers of recycled plastic products. However, this recycling process is difficult due

to the multiple polymers now used in many plastics, as they do not mix well when melted and can degrade the quality of recycled products. It is estimated that only less than 14 percent of all recycled plastics can be used to make new products.

A new chemical process, developed by researchers at the University of California in the United States, has been shown to effectively vaporize plastics that dominate the waste stream today and turn them into hydrocarbon building blocks for new plastics. The catalytic process works equally well with the two dominant types of post-consumer plastic waste: polyethylene, the component of most single-use plastic bags; and polypropylene, the stuff of hard plastics, from microwavable dishes to luggage. It also efficiently degrades a mix of these types of plastics.

Polyethylene and polypropylene plastics constitute about two-thirds of post-consumer plastic waste worldwide. About 80 percent ends up in landfills, is incinerated or simply tossed into the streets, often ending up as microplastics in streams and the ocean. The rest is recycled, or rather, down-cycled as low-value plastic, becoming decking materials, flowerpots and sporks.

To reduce this waste, researchers have been looking for ways to turn the plastics into something more valuable, such as the monomers that are polymerized to produce new plastics. Researchers behind the new chemical process say their method works



by cleaving stable carbon-carbon bonds of polymers to create monomers, which allows the polyethylene and polypropylene to be recycled

The new process uses two cheaper, readily available catalysts to achieve the cleaving and conversion process. First, a sodium on alumina catalyst broke or cracked the polyethylene polymer chains, leaving one of the two pieces with a reactive carbon-carbon double bond at the end. A second tungsten oxide on silica catalyst then linked the carbon atom at the end of the chain to ethylene gas, which is constantly streamed through the reaction chamber, to form a propylene molecule. The second process leaves behind a double bond that the catalyst can access again and again until the entire chain has been converted to propylene.

A similar reaction occurs with polypropylene

to form a combination of propene and a hydrocarbon called isobutylene, which is used in the chemical industry to make polymers for a range of higher value products, including cosmetics and high-octane gasoline additives. An analogy to the new chemical process would be to think of a string of beads with knots at the end to prevent them falling out. The new process repeatedly clips the string between the beads allowing individual beads to fall out.

The process, if scaled up, would create a circular polymer economy for plastics by converting plastic waste back into the monomers used to make more useful polymer plastics. While this reduces the need to make new plastics from petroleum, which contributes to greenhouse gases, the recycling of plastics to make more plastics is not a sustainable or permanent solution to our growing plastic pollution.

Our humongous use of plastic makes the recycling processes largely an exercise in futility. Today, around the world, one million plastic bottles are purchased every minute, and up to five trillion plastic bags are used worldwide every year. In total, half of all plastic produced is designed for single-use purposes—used just once and then thrown away, resulting in over 400 million tons of plastic waste every year.

With plastic use projected to increase threefold to over 1,100 million tons by 2050, strategies to recycle plastics will increasingly become difficult and unsustainable. The only viable option for a sustainable planet is to reduce using plastics. Period.



Eating right and right eating time helps lower BMI

In 2018, participants in the study answered questionnaires about their weight and height, eating habits including meal times, other lifestyle habits and socioeconomic status. In 2023, after five years, more than 3,000 participants made a follow-up visit to the research team, where their measures were registered again and new questionnaires were completed.

The results, which were in line with recent previous studies, suggests that extending the overnight fast could help maintain a healthy weight if accompanied by an early dinner and an early breakfast. The researchers postulated that this could be because eating earlier in the day is more in line with circadian rhythms and allows for better calorie burning and appetite regulation, which can help maintain a healthy weight.

Analysis of the data by gender showed that, compared to men, women generally showed lower BMI, higher adherence to the Mediterranean diet, lower propensity to consume alcohol, poorer mental health, and were more likely to be responsible for household or family supervision.

The team used a statistical technique called 'cluster analysis' to group individuals with similar characteristics. From the results

of this analysis, the authors were struck by a small group of men whose first meal of the day was after 14:00 and who, on average, fasted for 17 hours. Compared to the rest, this group of men tended to have less healthy lifestyles (more likely to smoke, drink alcohol, less physical activity, less adherence to the Mediterranean diet), and had lower levels of educational attainment and were more likely to be unemployed. These patterns were not observed in any group of women.

There are different ways of practicing what is known as 'intermittent fasting' and this study relates to one of them, which is overnight fasting. What we observed in a subgroup of men who do intermittent fasting by skipping breakfast is that this practice has no effect on body weight. Other intervention studies in participants with obesity have shown that this tactic is no more effective than reducing calorie intake in reducing body weight in the long term.

The latest research is part of an emerging field of research known as 'chrononutrition', which focuses not only on analyzing what we eat, but also the times of day and the number of times we eat. At the basis of this research is the knowledge that unusual food intake patterns can conflict with the circadian system, the set of internal clocks that regulate the cycles of night and day and the physiological processes that must accompany them.

However, the research team cautioned that it was too soon to draw definitive conclusions, so recommendations will have to wait for more robust evidence.

Nevertheless, the study provides continuity to a line of research on chrononutrition, which in recent years has observed that eating dinner and breakfast early was associated, respectively, with a lower risk of cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes.



Mysterious Madrid

A City of Timeless Charm



By Hermoine Macura-Noble
Special to The Times Kuwait

The capital of Spain, Madrid seamlessly blends its rich history with vibrant modernity. Known for its grand boulevards, world-class museums, and buzzing nightlife, this Spanish gem offers an intoxicating mix of culture, art, and passion. Whether you are a history buff, art lover, foodie, or night owl, Madrid has something for everyone. With a Mediterranean climate, Madrid experiences hot summers and mild winters, making it a great year-round destination.

Walking through Madrid is like stepping into a living history book. The city's heart, Plaza Mayor, with its stunning architecture and bustling cafes, has been the backdrop for centuries of history. Nearby, Puerta del Sol serves as the symbolic center of Spain, marked by the famous Kilometer Zero, from where all the country's roads are measured.

A visit to the Royal Palace of Madrid is where you will get to experience a true immersion into Spain's royal heritage. Though no longer the home of the Spanish monarchy, its opulent interiors and vast art collection provide a glimpse into the nation's regal past. The palace's manicured gardens, including Sabatini Gardens, are perfect for a peaceful stroll after the grandeur indoors.

Madrid is also home to one of the greatest collections of art in Europe, if not the world. The golden triangle of art, which includes the Prado Museum, Reina Sofía, and Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum, is a must-visit for any art enthusiast who loves Spanish masters like Velázquez and Goya. The Prado Museum, for instance, houses an extensive collection of European art, while the Reina Sofía is known for its modern and contemporary art, including Picasso's famous 'Guernica.'

When it comes to food, Madrid is a gastronomic paradise. From humble tapas to gourmet dining, the city is brimming with flavors. Mercado de San Miguel, a historic food market near Plaza Mayor, is the perfect place to sample local delights like jamón ibérico, patatas bravas, and croquetas. For a traditional sit-down meal, head to Sobrino de Botín, the world's oldest restaurant according to the Guinness World Records, where their famous cochinillo asado is a must-try.

No visit to Madrid is complete without



indulging in churros con chocolate. A local favorite is Chocolatería San Ginés, which has served this sweet treat since 1894. Another 'must' in Madrid is to watch a Flamenco Show. You can experience authentic Spanish culture by watching a performance at popular venues such as Corral de la Morería and Cardamomo.

When it comes to accommodation, Madrid offers a wide range of options, from luxury hotels to budget-friendly stays, each with its own unique charm. For those looking for luxury, the Madrid Edition is the perfect choice—combining the signature style of Ian Schrager's Edition Hotels with the rich culture of Spain's capital: this hotel offers an exceptional blend of modern luxury, timeless elegance, and an unbeatable location.

Located in the city's heart, The Madrid Edition is a landmark in itself. Opened in 2022, the hotel is an architectural marvel, combining modern design with classical Spanish elements to reflect the city's history and contemporary vibrance.

The sophisticated lobby features polished

limestone and soft wood accents, large-scale modern art pieces, and floor-to-ceiling windows that flood the space with natural light. The mix of contemporary furniture and rich textures adds to the refined ambiance, which is a hallmark of the Edition brand, emphasizing luxury without pretension.



Other great places to stay include the Ritz-Carlton near the Prado Museum. Originally opened in 1910 as the Hotel Ritz by King Alfonso XIII, it has long been a symbol of opulence, hosting royalty, celebrities, and dignitaries over the years. The hotel underwent a meticulous renovation, reopening in 2021 as the Mandarin Oriental Ritz. With a state-of-the-art spa, impeccable service, and a prime location, the Ritz-Carlton Hotel in Madrid remains one of the city's most iconic and desirable accommodations.



Part of the Rosewood Hotel Group – Villa Magna is another great choice for Gulf travellers, offering understated luxury in the exclusive Salamanca district. The hotel features spacious rooms with elegant decor, a high-end spa, and multiple dining options, including traditional Spanish cuisine.

Madrid is not just a destination; it is an experience. Whether you are savoring churros in a historic café, watching the sunset over the rooftops, or dancing until dawn, Madrid will captivate your heart with its endless vitality and warmth. So pack your bags, bring your appetite, and get ready to fall in love with Madrid's timeless charm.

Hermoine Macura-Noble

The first Australian English speaking News Anchor in the Middle East. She is also the Author of Faces of the Middle East and Founder of US-based 501c3 charity – The House of Rest which helps to ease the suffering of victims of war. For more from our Contributing Editor, you can follow her on Instagram, @hello_hermoine

Promise and Peril of Water Markets



Eduardo Araral

An associate professor, former vice dean for research, and former co-director of the Institute of Water Policy at the National University of Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy.

In a landmark report, the Global Commission on the Economics of Water recently identified water markets as a fundamental solution to the world's escalating climate-driven water crisis. The logic is simple: When something is scarce, it becomes more valuable. By pricing water



EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

appropriately and creating markets to allocate water based on demand, we could promote more efficient use and incentivize

conservation. Yet while the concept of water markets appears promising, Chile, Australia, the United States, and other countries'

experiences show that implementation can prove challenging.

Water markets have been heralded for their ability to allocate water more efficiently. When individuals or organizations are allowed to trade water rights, water is allocated to those who value it most. In Chile, one of the first countries to implement a national water market, agricultural producers can purchase water from other regions or industries that have a surplus. Owing to this flexibility, the system allows for high-value crops to flourish even during droughts.

By helping to reduce inefficient water use, Chile's water market boosted agricultural productivity over time. Between 1985 and 2018, water-intensive agriculture in the Atacama and Coquimbo regions grew significantly as water markets allowed for more flexible allocation to high-demand areas.

The same principle has been applied in Australia's Murray-Darling Basin, where farmers trade water rights to adapt to fluctuating water availability. As Bloomberg reports, the water trade in Australia is about AU\$4 billion per year (\$2.7 billion) and has made Australia the ninth-largest food exporter in the world. The same markets can also incentivize water conservation. California's Central Valley also allows agricultural water trading, enabling farmers to cope with periodic droughts by purchasing water from more resource-rich regions.

But Chile's experience also highlights the pitfalls of water markets. Far from being a panacea, Chile's water market has led to significant inequalities. Large agribusinesses have acquired substantial water rights, leaving smaller farmers and communities with little access. With wealthier players dominating the market, marginalized communities are priced out.

Such outcomes raise serious equity concerns. Water is not just an economic commodity; it is a basic human right. A system that allows the wealthiest to buy up the most water risks undermining access for those who need it most. After water rights in northern Chile's Limarí Valley were consolidated among a few large agricultural companies, smallholders lacked sufficient water during dry years. And similar trends have been observed in California, where a small proportion of water-rights holders control a significant amount of available water, disproportionately benefiting large-scale agriculture.

Moreover, water markets can lead to environmental degradation. In Chile, diverting water to agricultural use has at times compromised the ecological health of rivers and wetlands. In Australia, over-extraction of water has led to severe environmental consequences, including the collapse of river ecosystems and the depletion of surface water and groundwater resources, threatening biodiversity. California has encountered similar challenges. Although water trading has helped balance supply and demand in some regions, it has also exposed deep inequities. The Central Valley's small-scale farmers struggle to compete with larger agribusinesses for water, while poorer urban communities face higher water prices. In times of drought, the market-driven system tends to favor those who can afford to pay, leaving behind the most vulnerable populations.

Speculative water hoarding is also a growing problem. In California, some entities have withheld water from the market, waiting for prices to rise, effectively turning water, a vital resource, into a financial asset. This has contributed to localized shortages and driven up prices in already water-stressed areas.

Beyond market failures, there are deeper issues of equity and justice to consider. Wealthier entities' ability to buy up rights means that water markets are prone to monopolization. This has been a persistent issue in Chile, where large agribusinesses and mining companies corner the market, especially in drought-prone areas.

Another challenge is that water markets often clash with traditional or prior water rights, leading to legal and social conflicts. In Chile, prior rights holders, including indigenous communities, have suffered displacement as water rights have been commodified and sold off to larger entities. Such injustices raise fundamental questions about the ethics of commodifying a resource that many communities view as a public good.

More broadly, implementation of water markets is a fraught, complex process. Transboundary water conflicts—where water sources cross regional or national borders—are a growing concern. Markets that allow one region to trade away water that is needed downstream risk sparking conflict between jurisdictions. For example, the Colorado River Basin, shared by seven US states and Mexico, has become a source of rising tensions as upstream water trading affects downstream users. Strong regulatory frameworks are essential to prevent such conflicts, but creating them requires significant political will and resources.

The promise of water markets lies in their potential to address scarcity by incentivizing conservation and efficiency. But the risks they pose, especially to equity and environmental sustainability, cannot be ignored. Chile, Australia, and California provide valuable lessons on the limits of market-driven water management. Monopolization, speculative hoarding, and environmental degradation are all significant risks when water is treated purely as a commodity.

The key is to devise a balanced approach. Water markets must be carefully regulated to ensure fair access, prevent market concentration, and protect ecosystems. Hybrid systems that combine market mechanisms with robust public oversight and community management could offer a more equitable and sustainable solution. Governments should also uphold the rights of vulnerable communities and recognize water as a public good, not just a tradable asset.

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