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# Kuwait-UAE bonds built on fraternal ties between leaders, people

*Kuwait to welcome UAE president with open arms*

By Tareq Yousef Al-Shumaimry

President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Sheikh Mohammad bin Zayed Al-Nahyan and his accompanying delegation is arriving in Kuwait today, 10 November, on a state visit during which he will hold official talks with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

The two leaders are expected to discuss the longstanding fraternal ties between their two countries, and focus on various areas of cooperation, particularly in the economic, investment, and development sectors, as well as in other key areas that support their shared vision of achieving growth and prosperity for their peoples and fostering peace and stability in the region.

Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) share a unique bond of friendship built over the centuries through social and cultural ties



between people of the two nations, their common religious and Arab identities, and shared views on regional and international issues. This relationship was further cemented when Kuwait became one of the first countries to recognize the newly formed United Arab Emirates following its independence in December 1971. The following year the UAE opened its embassy in Kuwait, and this was reciprocated with the opening of the Kuwaiti embassy in Abu Dhabi in 1972.

Much of the credit for the robust diplomatic and political relations that exist between Kuwait and the UAE can be traced back to the first meeting of the Founding Father of the UAE, the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, with the late Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah, back in 1973. The solidarity and friendship struck between the two leaders has been maintained by successive UAE presidents from Sheikh Khalifa to Sheikh Mohamed

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# Japan-Kuwait relations robust in all fields, at all levels

*H.E. Morino Yasunari said that he would miss his Kuwaiti friends, who had shown him great warmth and generosity, and whom he would cherish in his memory and heart forever, adding that the new ambassador, Mokai Kenchiro, would arrive after his departure.*

## The Times Kuwait Report

Ambassador of Japan H.E. Morino Yasunari held a media conference last week at his residence, ahead of the end of his tenure in Kuwait, during which he highlighted the strong relations between Japan and Kuwait in all fields and at all levels, including between the two governments and people.

He added that his three-year tenure in Kuwait has been highly productive, and noted that people-to-people links, in particular, had been boosted during his period working in Kuwait. Ambassador Yasunari also expressed his pride in strengthening bilateral relations and introducing the Kuwaiti people to Japan's rich culture and tourism, pointing out that the embassy's consular section processes about 500 visas for Kuwaitis each month.

The Japanese envoy further stated that Japan and Kuwait enjoy long-standing, deep relations of friendship, which have greatly benefited both countries, pointing out that it has been 63 years since the beginning of diplomatic relations between them. Both countries are

constantly working to strengthen and develop this relationship. He also noted that Japan sincerely appreciates the generous support provided by Kuwait when Japan suffered from the destruction caused by the great earthquake and tsunami in 2011.

He added that oil trade is the cornerstone of bilateral relations. Japan began importing crude oil from Kuwait even before the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1958. That year, the Kuwaiti government granted a concession to the Arab-Japanese Oil Company (AOC) to explore and develop hydrocarbon reserves in the offshore divided area, which led to the discovery of the Khafji field in 1960. Kuwaiti oil has played a major role in subsidizing Japan's rapid economic growth.

Additionally, Japan and Kuwait have great potential to become partners in addressing international problems of common interest. For example, Japan and Kuwait can cooperate to create a sustainable human society, said Ambassador Yasunari, and pointed out that, "Japan and Kuwait can work together to protect the environment, as Japanese companies



possess technologies for recycling various materials and generating energy from waste, which can be applied in Kuwait."

Asked about his thoughts on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the ambassador explained that the only realistic solution to end the conflict was a two-state solution, where Israel and a

future independent Palestinian state live side by side in peace and dignity, achieved through negotiations based on international law and relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

Japan is deeply concerned about the worsening humanitarian situation, which has been deteriorating due to ongoing fighting in Gaza, as well as in other areas, including the West Bank and Lebanon. Japan calls for an immediate ceasefire, the release of hostages, and the delivery of much-needed humanitarian aid to Palestinians across Gaza. He stated that Japan has provided about US\$128 million in humanitarian aid to the Palestinian people since 7 October, 2023.

The ambassador concluded by noting he would leave Kuwait on 19 November to assume his duties as Japan's ambassador to Saudi Arabia. He also revealed that the new ambassador-designate of Japan to Kuwait was Ambassador Mokai Kenchiro, who would arrive in Kuwait soon. He also mentioned that he would miss his Kuwaiti friends, who had shown him great warmth and generosity, and whom he would cherish in his memory and heart forever.

## Indian Embassy holds lively event to mark Diwali



## The Times Kuwait Report

Indian Embassy in Kuwait celebrated Diwali, the Festival of Lights, with a lively event that brought together community members and media representatives. The celebration featured traditional Indian cultural expressions, including captivating dance performances and melodious songs.

The embassy's celebration created a convivial ambiance that strengthened cultural bonds within the Indian community and fostered a deeper appreciation for India's rich cultural heritage among all attendees.

Ambassador of India H.E. Dr. Adarsh Swaika, and his wife, Vandana Swaika welcomed the guests, expressing heartfelt gratitude to everyone who joined the celebration. In his

address to the gathering, Ambassador Swaika emphasized Diwali's significance as a time of joy, unity, and hope, symbolizing the triumph of light over darkness.

The ambassador extended his special thanks to the performers, the Indian Embassy family, and the guests, appreciating their contributions to the event's success and the strong bonds shared between India and Kuwait.

Diwali, also known as Deepavali, is the Hindu festival of lights, with similar celebrations observed in other Indian religions. The festival symbolizes the spiritual triumph of light over darkness, good over evil, and knowledge over ignorance. Diwali is celebrated during the Hindu lunisolar months of Ashvin and Kartika, typically from mid-September to mid-November, with festivities lasting five to six days.



## Telecoms to roll out 5G-A technology to enhance services

In a recent interview on state television, Director of the Spectrum Department at the Central Information Technology Regulatory Authority (CITRA), Tariq Al-Saif, stated that Kuwait is set to evacuate the existing 4G cellular network technology and transition to the new 5G technology within six months. He added that installation of the new network is expected to be completed within the next three months.

Elaborating on the planned roll out of Advanced 5G (5G-A or 5.5G) technology Al-Saif said that this represents a modernization and enhancement of existing 5G services. The advanced technology increases speeds and network capacity, improves response times, and supports a greater number of connected devices without compromising performance.

He however emphasized that 5G-A is not a new generation of technology but rather an upgrade to the current 5G spectrum that helps to achieve speeds of up to 10 GBPS. Al-Saif also revealed that a unified launch date for all telecommunications companies will be announced immediately upon the completion of the evacuation and installation of the 5G-A service, which is set to launch within a maximum period of nine months.

Pointing out that Kuwait had the second-largest 5G telecommunications network in the world at the time of its operation in 2019, Al-Saif added that the global transition from 3G networks is expected to be completed by 2035.

Explaining the technology, Fawaz Al-Burgas, an economic researcher at CITRA said that the 5G-A technology will enhance the performance of both the government and private sectors, as well as industrial establishments, through the use of advanced applications and industrial robots that will serve as alternatives to the workforce in Kuwait. This technology is expected to improve labor market performance by speeding up operations and reducing errors associated with manual labor.

He noted that the new technology will find applications in factories, warehouses, surgical operations, and hospitals, and that future smart cities will be built on 5G-A technology,

utilizing the Internet of Things (IoT) to provide sufficient speed by connecting multiple devices simultaneously.

For his part, M. Ammar Al-Rashidi from the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) stated that the launch of this technology will enhance Kuwait's position in the international community by creating an attractive environment for investments and supporting innovation, research, and development in future industries and smart services, which will increase competitiveness within Kuwait. Regarding the speed of the current fifth generation, tests conducted by the Authority last month showed speeds ranging from 2 GBPS to 3.5 GBPS.



According to the strategic vision of the Communications and Information Technology Commission, the adoption of advanced 5G technology will significantly contribute to the development of the country's digital infrastructure. The technology is expected to support various vital sectors, including healthcare, by enabling robotic surgical operations to be performed remotely and enhancing process automation in the industrial and service sectors, thereby improving productivity and reducing reliance on human labor.

The advanced technical environment serves as an attractive factor for both foreign and domestic investments, as the development of advanced 5G networks will position the country as an open market for investments in areas such as the Internet of Things and smart industries. These investments are expected to play a pivotal role in supporting Kuwait's economic vision by empowering non-oil sectors and creating job opportunities in modern technology fields.





# Italy-Kuwait ties built on shared values, commitment to security, stability

## The Times Kuwait Report

**E**mbassy of Italy held a grand ceremony last week to mark the country's National Unity and Armed Forces Day. The event, which witnessed a large gathering of heads of diplomatic missions and dignitaries, was attended by Undersecretary of the Ministry of Defense, Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Meshal Al-Sabah, and Kuwait's Air Force Commander Brigadier General Pilot Mohammad Al-Hamdan.

Speaking to the media on the sidelines of the celebration, Brig. General Al-Hamdan extolled the deep-rooted military relations with Italy. He added that common military cooperation between the two sides includes exercises on air force military techniques and equipment, in addition to reciprocal training courses in relevant fields. The cooperation also covers e-wars, and means of combating them, along with several military fields aiming to raise readiness of Kuwaiti-Italian forces.

In his address to the gathering, Italian Defense Attache, Col. Michele Rega said 4 November holds deep historical significance for Italy, as we look back on the events of 1918, when Italy's victory in World War I marked the end of a long journey toward the completion of our national unity.

He added, "Since the armistice, this day annually symbolizes the completion of our country's unification and pays tribute to the courage and sacrifices of our

soldiers." Today, we celebrate not only the unity of Italy, but also the bonds of friendship and cooperation we share with our international allies, particularly with the State of Kuwait."

He noted that the relationship between Italy and Kuwait has grown strong and steadfast, built on mutual respect, shared values, and a commitment to security and stability. "This partnership extends far beyond diplomacy; it has been rooted in a deep and enduring alliance within the defense sector for more than 30 years, he pointed out.

"In recent years, our collaboration in defense has become a cornerstone of the relationship between Italy and Kuwait. Through joint training programs, exchange initiatives, and cooperative exercises, our armed forces have strengthened both their skills and their bonds. This cooperation goes beyond symbolic gestures; it represents our shared resolution to confront complex global challenges together.

"Italy and Kuwait share a vision for a secure and peaceful world. We stand together not just as allies, but as true partners, dedicated to fostering peace, development, and prosperity. With Italy's expertise in defense technology and Kuwait's commitment to regional stability, this partnership has become a model of effective and meaningful international cooperation."

Col. Rega also expressed deepest condolences on the recent loss of, "one of our own, Mohammed Mah-

moud Abdulasoul, a courageous military pilot who tragically lost his life on 9 October. To his family, friends, and comrades, we extend our deepest sympathy. His dedication and sacrifice remind us of the profound commitment of those who serve, often at great personal risk, in the pursuit of

peace and security for all."

He also expressed his gratitude to the Italian military personnel and said, "Your dedication and professionalism stand as a testament to Italy's commitment to peace, security, and cooperation, both within our borders and beyond. Your

presence here serves as a reminder of the strength of our armed forces and their essential role in upholding the values we cherish.

To each one of you, we extend our heartfelt gratitude for your service, your sacrifices, and for the honor you bring to our nation."



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## CAIT, Google Cloud, launch digital skills development initiative

**C**entral Agency for Information Technology (CAIT) in collaboration with Google Cloud has launched the first phase of 'Kuwait National Initiative for Digital Skills Development', which aims to enhance skills of government employees, private sector workers, and recent graduates, in areas such as cloud computing, big data, machine learning, and artificial intelligence.

Additionally, the initiative aims to increase participants' understanding of the role of cloud technology in enhancing government and private sector performance. The program also offers free, accredited training and professional certifications from globally recognized Google Cloud.

The training tracks feature programs designed for government leaders, young professionals, and technology specialists, helping them keep pace with the changing times and the modern digital advancements. Another key focus area of the initiative is to empower women in technology, by offering advanced training programs, which will increase employment opportunities in data analysis and Artificial Intelligence.

The initiative intends to train approximately 5,000 individuals from the public and private sectors, offering free licenses for accredited professional certification exams.



# Digital innovations, sustainability, drive growth at Warba Bank

Shaheen Al Ghanem, CEO of Warba Bank

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The Business Year (TBY), recently talked to CEO of Warba Bank, Shaheen Al Ghanem, to learn more about the bank's meteoric rise in Kuwait's financial market that led it to be ranked among the '50 Most Valuable Banks 2023' by Forbes Middle East. The CEO pointed out that the bank's achievements in digital innovation and Islamic finance were instrumental in propelling the bank to new heights. He also outlined the bank's sustainability efforts, which align with Kuwait's Vision 2035 through ESG-focused practices and transparent reporting.

**Warba Bank has been listed among the "50 Most Valuable Banks 2023" by Forbes Middle East. What core elements have been instrumental in securing this recognition for the bank, and how have they influenced its market value and expansion?**

"Launching first of its kind services in Kuwait to offer clients exceptional, simple, and digital financial experience, resilience of our business model, focusing on Islamic digital banking services for individuals, offering Shariah-compliant services through 18 branches in Kuwait, and having a large number of shareholders. All of these influenced our market value and made the Bank close to all members of society, encouraging further expansion."

**With the launch of innovative services like the Digital Wallet 'SiDi' and the first drive-thru teller service in Kuwait, how does Warba Bank plan to continue its trajectory in digital banking innovation? What future digital initiatives can customers expect?**

"Here at Warba Bank, we're incredibly proud of our recent innovations like the SiDi Digital Wallet and the first drive-thru teller service in Kuwait. This is just the beginning of our exciting journey to transform the way clients experience banking. We have ambitious plans to keep pushing the boundaries of digital banking and offer our customers even more seamless,

convenient, and personalized services.

"We are building a digital ecosystem, for example with our Digital Factory. This dedicated innovation hub is constantly churning out new and exciting digital products and services. Think beyond banking apps; imagine platforms that seamlessly integrate into your lifestyle. In terms of enhanced AI, we will offer intelligent AI assistants that understand your needs, offer personalized financial advice, and make managing your money a breeze. Imagine an AI companion reminding you about upcoming bills, suggesting saving plans based on your goals, and even optimizing your portfolio for maximum returns."

**Warba Bank was awarded the 'Most Sustainable Bank in Kuwait 2023'. Could you discuss the bank's approach to integrating ESG practices into its operations? How do these practices align with the bank's business strategy and goals?**

"Warba Bank is committed to fostering a positive impact on society, exemplified by its comprehensive embrace of sustainability across various issues. The bank is dedicated to serving diverse clients from all segments. Aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and Kuwait National Development Goal, Warba Bank has seamlessly integrated sustainability into its overarching strategy.

"Additionally, the bank actively engages in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives that directly contribute to societal well-being. In its pursuit of sustainability, Warba Bank addresses critical issues such as climate change, the decarbonization of economic activities, and financial inclusion. These concerns form the cornerstone of the bank's new sustainability strategy.

"To adhere to international standards, Warba Bank currently reports on various benchmarks, including disclosures from the Global Reporting Initiative, recommendations from the Central Bank of Kuwait, and standards set by Boursa Kuwait and the Capital Markets Authority. In a proactive move, Warba Bank is conducting a thorough assessment of the environmental impact of its current operations to establish a baseline. This baseline will serve as a crucial reference point for achieving the bank's decarbonization target.

"To ensure the seamless integration of sustainability practices, the bank

has instituted a specialized Sustainable Development unit. This unit is entrusted with overseeing the bank's sustainable transformation, guaranteeing alignment with international standards in sustainability. Overall, Warba Bank is steadfast in its commitment to sustainability, embodying responsible banking practices and contributing positively to societal and environmental well-being."

**Warba Bank is committed to consolidating its role in Islamic banking. What are the bank's strategies for enhancing its products and services in Islamic finance?**

"Warba Bank is committed to reinforcing its role in Islamic banking, focusing on developing innovative products and enhancing services to attract and retain the upper affluent and private banking segment. Central to this strategy is the investment in advanced digital services, which is aligned with the bank's vision of creating unique value in banking and beyond. This approach is not only about banking; it's about unlocking opportunities for people and businesses. We strive to deliver exceptional experiences, extending beyond traditional banking, while nurturing top talent and creating sustainable value for shareholders and society."

**In recent years, Warba Bank has expanded its physical branch network and digital offerings. What are the future expansion plans for the bank, and how do you balance the growth between physical branches and digital platforms to cater to diverse customer preferences?**

"The bank focuses on a balanced growth strategy between enhancing our physical branch network through being more present in residential areas and advancing our digital offerings. By investing in innovative digital services, we aim to cater to the evolving needs of our customers who prefer online banking solutions, while also acknowledging the importance of physical branches for those who value face-to-face interactions.

"Our vision of creating unique value in banking and beyond drives our expansion plans. We are dedicated to unlocking opportunities for people and businesses, not just through traditional banking but by offering a blend of digital and



physical banking experiences. This dual approach is part of our mission to deliver the best customer experience beyond the boundaries of banking, nurturing top talents, and creating sustainable value for shareholders and society. This balanced growth between physical presence and digital innovation reflects our purpose of contributing to individuals, businesses, and society, enabling them to achieve their ambitions in an increasingly digital world."

**Shaheen Al Ghanem** holds a master's degree in Business Administration from Maastricht University and a bachelor's degree in Accounting from Kuwait University. He has a broad and long experience of more than 34 years in banking and investment. He began his career in the oil sector from 1988 to 1999, then moved to the financial and investment sector where he served as Assistant Chief Financial Officer in the International Investor Company in 1999. He moved to Kuwait Finance House in 2001 where he held several positions in various departments, the last of which was General Manager of the International Banking Department in 2012 and Acting Chief Investment Officer in 2013. He joined Warba Bank in March 2014 as Deputy CEO for Investment and Treasury then has assumed the position of Chief Executive Officer since 2016 to date.

## Kuwait to lead 198 countries in Ozone Protection activities

Building on over 35 years of dedicated environmental efforts and international trust, Kuwait has assumed the presidency of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer. For the next three years, Kuwait will lead 198 member states in advancing best practices for ozone layer protection.

Kuwait participated and presided over the 13th Conference of the Parties to the Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer (COP13), which was held along with the 36th Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (MOP36), which was held from 28

October to 1 November in Bangkok, Thailand..

During the conference, the parties nominated Yacoub Al-Matouk, Acting Head of the Air Quality Monitoring Department and National Ozone Officer, representing Kuwait's Environment Public Authority, to assume the role of President of the Thirteenth Conference.

Kuwait assumes this presidency at a critical time, as the Convention and the Montreal Protocol enter a transitional phase involving the global elimination of 67.5 percent of ozone-depleting substances, set to take effect in 2025. Countries worldwide are now beginning to reduce hydro-fluorocarbons (HFCs), which contribute to global warming and require extensive international cooperation to achieve



compliance among all 198 parties to the Montreal Protocol.

For over three decades, Kuwait has supported, and allied with friendly nations to

help them achieve the strategic goals in line with the international policies of the Protocol. By holding a primary seat on the Executive Committee of the Multilateral Fund for 2023 and 2024, Kuwait has also advanced numerous projects focused on the gradual reduction of HFCs and the elimination of HCF depleting the ozone layer.

Expressing his gratitude for the international trust placed in him through this high-level position, Al-Matouk said that this was a testament to the global community's confidence in Kuwait's commitment to the goals of the Vienna Convention and the Montreal Protocol for the Protection of the Ozone Layer.





## British Embassy Organises Gulf Road 'Car Rally'

As part of ongoing celebrations to highlight the 125th anniversary of official diplomatic relations between the United Kingdom and the State of Kuwait, the British Embassy organised a "car rally" showcasing a number of the UK's premier automotive brands. The rally, which stretched from Marina Crescent to the Kuwait Towers, drew a diverse crowd of motoring enthusiasts – all of who had the opportunity to enjoy a wide selection of British-made vehicles ranging from vintage classics such as the original Aston Martin DB5

driven by James Bond in the 1964 movie Goldfinger, and the Rolls Royce of His Highness the Late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, to the latest cutting-edge supercars. The rally not only highlighted the remarkable heritage and innovation of the UK's car manufacturing sector, but also its importance to the UK and Kuwait's trade relations – with the UK exporting £286 million worth of cars to Kuwait in the 12 months to the end of Q1 2024. Her Excellency Belinda Lewis, British Ambassador to the State of Kuwait, who drove



a magnetic grey Bentley Continental GT V8 in the rally, said: "Today's car rally was a fun, family-friendly way to showcase British automotive excellence. Cars featured among the top five British exports to Kuwait last year, with discerning Kuwaiti buyers appreciating the style and quality our brands provide. It was great to see a range of beautiful British cars up close, ranging from sleek Bentleys, McLarens and Aston Martins to rugged Land Rovers - and from vintage Rolls Royces to cutting-edge, electric-powered Jaguars."

## Embassy of Indonesia holds Investment forum, outlines commercial opportunities



By Ricky Laxa  
Staff Writer

The Embassy of Indonesia in Kuwait held a three hours investment forum and table top meet with Kuwait investors and Indonesian entrepreneurs Thursday afternoon at the Regency Hotel in Kuwait. Her Excellency Lena Maryana and top officials from the Central Bank of Indonesia and Union of Investment Companies were present in the occasion. In her opening remarks Indonesian Envoy highlighted three features of Indonesia's

current top investment opportunities and their values situated in three different regions of the country among which are the palm oil and tourism projects. The envoy mentioned the strong and stable investment between both countries such include oil and gas sectors. She added that Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Exploration Company (KUPPEC) acquisition of two blocks in recent bid included the Amana Operation Area and Melati Operation Area. Kuwait and Indonesia's trade volume amounted to USD 488.1 M as of 2023 and continues to increase as Indonesia looks on

to Kuwait as a strategic trade partner. Faisal M. Sarkhou, Vice Chairman of the Union of Investment Companies (UIC) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) KAMCO Investment emphasized that Indonesia is a top trade partner in agriculture and that the investment forum can provide to local investors the opportunities Indonesia has to offer. Director of Bank of Indonesia Ms. Iss Hafid, in a brief interview with The Times explained that the forum is an effort to promote investment in the country and considers Kuwait as a potential market. "We do have regional relations unit

where we cooperate with embassies abroad to tap government projects and the bank disseminate information and potential opportunities" explained Hafid. Energy and the opening of the new capital of the country are among investment opportunities possible investors can look into. "We are also providing details and information on three top projects in different regions of the country and we hope that Kuwait investors can look into these projects" added Hafid. Indonesian envoy thanked Kuwait for its strong support to Indonesia and its national in the country.

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# Kuwait to host 46th ENT and Head and Neck Surgery conference on November 12

The Ministry of Health is organizing the 46th Conference on ENT and Head and Neck Surgery, which will be held from the 12th of November under the patronage of Minister of Health Dr. Ahmed Al-Awadhi. The



three-day event will feature global participation and discussions on the latest surgical techniques.

Dr. Mutlaq Al-Sihan, the head of the Board of ENT Departments and the head of the ENT

Department at ZainCenter, stated in a press release that the conference will kick off with discussions on the latest surgical techniques in head and neck surgeries, including the use of surgical robots.

Dr. Al-Sihan pointed out that the second day of the conference will focus on sinus and tonsil surgeries, emphasizing that this year's event pays special attention to the latest international scientific research and surgical advancements in these fields.

He also mentioned that the third day will feature a workshop on the endoscopic treatment of salivary ducts, with practical training sessions. The conference will include lectures from global experts, with Arab and Gulf participation, and will cover over 40 scientific and research papers in various specialized discussions.

He stated that this year's conference offers 23 continuing medical education points, in addition to workshops on balance and hearing disorders, as well as speech difficulties. Several major operations will be performed in various specialties

of head and neck surgeries, sinus endoscopy, and sleep surgeries by visiting consultants.

He emphasized that the Ministry of Health is committed to supporting continuing medical education and enhancing the research and technical capabilities of doctors in both the public and private sectors. The ministry also strives to

provide ongoing opportunities to learn and apply the latest international surgical techniques.

He added that this year's conference demonstrates the Ministry of Health's dedication to improving the medical expertise of doctors, which will contribute to delivering exceptional medical services to patients in the State of Kuwait.

## ALSAYER Group Promotes Sports and Well-being in Kuwait Through Partnership with Kuwait Modern Pentathlon Club and Kuwait Rides



In an effort to promote sports and well-being in Kuwait, ALSAYER Group has renewed its sponsorship contract with the Kuwait Modern Pentathlon Club for the third consecutive year and entered new sponsorship contract with Kuwait Rides for Cycling at ALSAYER Group headquarters.

The signing ceremony was attended by Mr. Faisal Badr Al-Sayer Chairman of ALSAYER Group, Mr. Mubarak Naser Al-Sayer CEO, Mr. Bashar Abdullah the Acting Director of the Public Authority for Youth and Sports, Sheikh Sabah



Fahad Al-Naser Al-Sabah the Secretary General of Equestrian Club, Mr. Naser Al-Waleed the Chairman of the Kuwaiti Modern Pentathlon Club, and Dr. Mubarak Al-Hajri the founder of Kuwait Rides for Cycling along with a large number of officials.

Mr. Mubarak Naser Al-Sayer delivered a speech emphasizing ALSAYER Group's commitment to supporting youth to engage in sports and developing their talents to create a generation capable of achieving many accomplishments globally. He highlighted that the partnership with the Kuwait Modern Pentathlon Club has achieved its goals over the past two years by winning numerous achievements in external championships held in the Philippines, Egypt

and Portugal. ALSAYER latest partnership with Kuwait Ride for cycling will enhance cycling, sports participation and environmental awareness. He stated: "We are committed to supporting young athletes believing in our community role and creating an environment that motivate youth succeed and excel locally and internationally."

Mr. Naser Al-Waleed, Chairman of the Kuwait Modern Pentathlon Club, presented a visual presentation showcasing the stages of the partnership between the club and ALSAYER Group, and the achievements made over the past two years. Al-Waleed mentioned that many achievements have been accomplished in the recent short period, including attracting over 300 players from various age groups and organizing a modern pentathlon championship under the patronage of the Minister of Information and Culture and Minister of State for Youth Affairs, Mr. Abdulrahman Al-Mutairi.

Dr. Mubarak Al-Hajri, the founder of Kuwait Ride for Cycling, stated that this agreement aims to promote the culture of cycling to develop sports, provide environmentally friendly transportation, and promote a healthy lifestyle. Our team will ride bicycles every Saturday morning with over 100 cyclists covering a distance of over 120 km. "ALSAYER Car Rental & Leasing Company" will provide two cars to support our community activities and programs for three months. This initiative will undoubtedly contribute to enhancing sports participation, safeguard safety of the participants, and spreading environmental awareness.

This collaborative partnership between ALSAYER Group, the Kuwait Modern Pentathlon Club, and Kuwait Ride represents a shared vision to promote a healthier and more active Kuwait in the fields of sports, fitness and sustainability.

## LuLu Kitchen: Signature Dishes by Corporate Chef Deepraj Singh, Now on Deliveroo

LuLu Hypermarket, the regional leader in retailing, has delved into the culinary world through their LuLu Kitchen. The concept launched by the retailer aims to provide food lovers in Kuwait with an eclectic menu of freshly prepared items delivered right to their doorstep through the food delivery services of Deliveroo.

LuLu Kitchen offers a diverse menu of global flavors that spans Arabic, Indian, Oriental, and Continental cuisines. With this exciting launch, the retail giant brings the world's flavors directly to customers' doors, making ordering from LuLu Kitchen a perfect option for parties and home gatherings, or for those times when you feel the need for a change in your daily cooking routine.

Whether in the mood for a hearty combo meal, a refreshing smoothie, or a comforting soup, LuLu Kitchen has it covered. The extensive menu includes breakfast, lunch, dinner, and everything in-between, from appetizers to satisfying main dishes, specialty sandwiches, vibrant salads, and indulgent desserts.

Under the culinary expertise of Chef Deepraj Singh, LuLu Kitchen introduces signature dishes that promise an authentic experience. Try the velvety Dal Makhani, the



rich Chicken Tikka Masala, the flavorful Kaday Paneer, the mouthwatering Biryani's, and the aromatic tikkas & kebabs. Chef Singh, a respected member of the World Association of Chefs Societies and Emirates culinary guild brings his passion for flavor to every dish.

LuLu Kitchen also offers a variety of combo meals and special deals, making it even easier to explore a range of flavors without leaving home. Now available on Deliveroo Kuwait, LuLu Kitchen invites you to discover its expansive menu and elevate your dining experience with every order.

## Indonesia night highlights authentic cuisine and traditional folk dances



By Ricky Laxa  
Staff Writer

The Embassy of Indonesia in Kuwait showcased its country's authentic and world renowned cuisine and traditional folk dances Thursday evening at the Regency Hotel. The event was attended by invited guests and nationals.

The event featured variety of folk dances from different regions of Indonesia showcased elaborate and remarkable colourful costumes. Tourism videos were also shown on the huge screen exhibited the different locales and tourist attractions of the country. In her brief speech The Ambassador of Indonesia Her Excellency Lena Maryana expressed her gratitude to everyone who came to grace the occasion and special mentioned the embassy

staff for the hard work and dedication to ensure that the series of events are successful.

Director of the Central Bank of Indonesia Ms. Iss Hafid also delivered a brief summary of the Investment Forum held earlier among Kuwaiti investors and businessmen from Indonesia. The highlight of the evening was the presentation of the traditional cuisine from the country served individually to the guests. Among the dishes were "Gado Gado" mixed vegetables with peanut sauce, "Soto Ayam" chicken soup, "Nasi Goreng" fried rice topped with chicken satay, beef rendang and fried egg and "Es Campur" fruit cocktails with shaved ice, syrup and condensed milk.

Traditional scents, textile and accessories were also displayed in the foyer of the hotel among which was "Niwa Pearls" popular jewels from Lombok.



# Kuwait hosts fourth Dushanbe Conference on Combating Terrorism

The Fourth Dushanbe Conference was inaugurated on 4 November, under the patronage of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and with the attendance of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

The two-day conference, held under the banner of 'Strengthening International Counter-Terrorism Cooperation and Building Agile Border Security Mechanisms – The Kuwait Phase of the Dushanbe Process', was attended by the President of Tajikistan, Emomali Rahmon, Under-Secretary-General of UN Office of Counter-Terrorism, Vladimir Voronkov, and more than 450 participants, including 33 ministers from member states.

In his keynote address to the gathering, His Highness the Crown Prince affirmed that the Dushanbe process would help solidify the global framework aimed at creating a fruitful and prosperous future for all, where the rule of law was supreme regardless of race, religion, or gender.

Terrorism, he indicated, was harmful in all aspects, and the use of advanced technology and finances to serve the insidious purposes of terrorist organizations and transnational organized crime syndicates, threatened international peace and security.

In the time of political, economic, and social disagreements, the world must set aside differences and unite to face terrorism and extremism and all that would lead to such



outcomes, His Highness the Crown Prince stressed. He also reiterated the importance of safeguarding international law and bolstering human rights to set the basic bloc that would prevent terrorism and extremism of all shapes and forms, adding that such must be an institutional principle agreed by all governments, civil societies.

In similar terms, transnational organized crimes should be countered with drying up illegal financial resources to prevent criminals from spreading mischief and wrongdoing, he affirmed.

His Highness the Crown Prince also highlighted 'state terrorism', indicating that any country carrying out such heinous acts must be stopped through systematic and pragmatic means via finding a unified definition of what

constitutes terrorism.

Reflecting Kuwait's support of the crucial role played by the UN in counterterrorism and securing borders regionally and internationally, His Highness the Crown Prince noted that border security is essential for every countries' stability and peace, preventing many crimes such as smuggling of narcotics and weapons in addition to human trafficking. He further hoped that this would be reflected in the final conference communique, the 'Kuwait declaration'.

He added, in this regard, Kuwait's commitment to the security exchange protocol of 2008 reflected keenness to counter terrorist groups and transnational organized crime along the yet-to-be-drawn maritime borders with Iraq, reiterating his country's calls for

Baghdad to resume cooperation within this field to achieve both countries' mutual interest.

His Highness the Crown Prince also reflected Kuwait's keenness to hold a high-level conference for border security and administration in June of 2026, an event dedicated to reviewing results of the Dushanbe process. He further reiterated Kuwait's support of all efforts to counterterrorism and crime whether through security efforts, political coordination through the UN, or drying up the financial means to carry out heinous terrorist acts.

This fourth Dushanbe conference was a follow-up to the 'Dushanbe Process for Combating Terrorism', launched by Tajikistan in May 2018. The fourth high-level international conference, which was held in Kuwait, was preceded by three conferences that were hosted by Tajikistan in 2018, 2019 and 2022.

The conference, which represents a platform to enhance regional and international cooperation on border security to combat terrorism, provides an opportunity to exchange experiences and visions, discuss lessons learned from common challenges, and discuss ways to confront the threats arising from terrorism and its consequences.

The conference, which concluded on 5 November adopted the 'Kuwait Declaration', which reflects the discussions, opinions and viewpoints of the participants, and will serve as a guiding document for efforts to combat terrorism in future.

## Business Councils host networking event to help drive growth

The collaborative initiative highlights the commitment of ABCK and its partners to empower members through networking and professional development, helping to drive growth within Kuwait's dynamic business community.

ABCK – AmCham Kuwait, in collaboration with several business council partners, including the British Business Forum-Kuwait, Canadians in Kuwait, French Business Council, German Business Council, Indian Business and Professional Council, Lebanese Business Council-Kuwait, and Portuguese Business Council-Kuwait, held a lively 'Speed Networking' event last week at The Courtyard by Marriott Hotel.

The event, which was the third in a series of such networking sessions, brought together members and associates from diverse industries, creating an excellent platform for building connections and engaging in meaningful professional exchanges.

Professionals and leaders from diverse sectors attended the event, participating in structured networking sessions designed to spark productive conversations and expand business networks. Attendees appreciated the opportunity to engage with peers, gain insights

into local industry trends, and build valuable relationships.

The event was a resounding success, offering an energetic and effective approach to professional networking. Both members and non-members enjoyed the chance to connect with businesses across Kuwait's vibrant market, sharing knowledge and discovering new avenues for growth. This collaborative initiative highlights the commitment of ABCK and its partners to empower members through networking and professional development, helping to drive growth within Kuwait's dynamic business community.

Partners who contributed to the success of the event and greatly enhanced the experience for attendees, included Union Trading Company (UTC), Sultan, Al Shaya, Muji, Courtyard by Marriott, Towell International Holding, PepsiCo, Wazzan Catering, Holiday Inn, and GeneveBeauty.



## Al Muzaini Exchange Company expands with new branch in Bayan Co-Op 2

Al Muzaini Exchange Company, Kuwait's leading money exchange service provider, celebrated the grand opening of its latest branch in the Hawally Governorate at Bayan Co-Op 2 on October 31, 2024.

This new location reflects the company's dedication to being close to its customers and enhancing accessibility across Kuwait. With a commitment to providing top-tier financial services, Al Muzaini offers money transfers, foreign currency exchange, and bill payment services with a focus on convenience, security, and competitive pricing, available seven days a week.

The branch inauguration was led by Al Muzaini's Head of Operations, Mr. Hugh Fernandes, alongside department managers and senior staff. Mr. Fernandes commented on the expansion: "We take great pride in strengthening our leading position in the local market and always place focus in ensuring that we provide the best financial

services experience to our customers in order to meet all their money transfer needs. We always want to stay true to our mission; to always be near to our customers and to add to their convenience."

In addition to an extensive network of branches, Al Muzaini provides convenient digital services through its mobile app, offering simple and secure financial solutions with various features for a seamless user experience. For added convenience, customers can also complete transactions at Al Muzaini's self-service kiosks placed strategically throughout Kuwait.

To celebrate customer loyalty, Al Muzaini has introduced the Transfer to India and Win Campaign, which gives customers the chance to win incredible prizes totaling up to 2,000,000 INR. Prizes include daily rewards of 10,000 INR, a weekly prize of 50,000 INR, and a grand prize of 1,000,000 INR. The campaign runs from September 15, 2024, to November 15, 2024.



# Italian ambassador holds exhibition to highlight a message of peace and unity



• His Excellency Lorenzo Morini, the Italian Ambassador to Kuwait, highlighted the strong ties between Kuwait and Italy, emphasizing their foundation of mutual trust and fruitful cooperation across various fields, particularly in their shared cultural heritage.

## The Times Kuwait Report

His Excellency Lorenzo Morini, the Italian Ambassador to Kuwait, highlighted the strong and distinguished relations between Kuwait and Italy, emphasizing their foundation of mutual trust and fruitful cooperation across various fields, particularly in

their shared cultural heritage.

He added in a statement to reporters on the sidelines of the art exhibition, titled "A Dawn of Peace", organized by the Italian Embassy as part of the "Journey to Italian Creativity" festival, which showcases the calligraphy masterpieces of renowned Kuwaiti artist Farid Abdul alongside the inks of Aurora.

He noted that this exhibition represents a union between two civilizations, delivering a powerful message that, in these challenging times, words and dialogue are essential tools for connecting people and finding peaceful solutions to differences and conflicts. He continued, "Let's discover how the elegance of Arabic calligraphy and Italian craftsmanship

unite to celebrate the beauty of words as tools for harmony and understanding."

At the exhibition, artist Farid Abdul presented a new masterpiece created with Aurora's pens and inks. Drawing inspiration from the company's name, "Aurora"—meaning "Fajr" or "dawn" in English—he conveyed a message of peace and unity.

## Agricultural production contributes to food security efforts

Latest data from the Central Statistical Bureau show that during the first nine months of the year, Kuwait produced agricultural products worth over KD24 million. The total production of more than 20,500 tons included vegetables and fruits.

A break-up of production from the start of January to the end of September shows that agricultural production recorded 98,850 tons, valued at KD9.14 million in the first quarter of the year. This figure decreased by 23.9 percent to 75,225 tons, worth KD9.06 million in the second quarter,



and then declined significantly in the third quarter to 10,744 tons valued at KD4.87 million, a drop of 64.8 percent in value.

Tomatoes topped the list of the highest produced agricultural products in Kuwait during the first nine months of 2024, with

about 68,066 tons valued at KD5.04 million. Cucumbers followed with approximately 40,887 tons worth KD4.48 million, and then potatoes with 15,660 tons valued at KD 2.173 million.

Peppers ranked fourth with 12,341 tons

worth about KD2.42 million, followed by eggplant with 15,833 tons valued at KD2.09 million. The total quantities of these five items amounted to approximately 15,280 thousand tons, which constituted about 76.2 percent of the total quantities produced in nine months, with a total value of KD16.212 million, accounting for about 72.38 percent of the total value of agricultural products.

The total Kuwaiti production of various agricultural products is as follows: lettuce amounted to 10,660 tons worth KD945,400, permours totaled 6,124 tons worth KD588,200, okra reached 1,160 tons worth KD530,000, cauliflower was 4,812 tons worth KD415,766, zucchini came to 2,400 tons worth KD403,760, beans were 9,337 tons worth KD329,700, cabbage was 4,863 tons worth KD252,390, and corn totaled 1,321 tons worth KD218,200, in addition to a few other products.

## BSK Celebrates Excellence at Middle Phase Awards Evening



The British School of Kuwait (BSK) hosted its prestigious Middle Phase Awards Evening at the Crowne Plaza Al Thuraya City, celebrating the outstanding achievements of 200 students from Years 6 to 8 for the 2023-24 academic year. The event, attended by a large number of family members of the award winners along with the Chairman Sadiq Al Mutawa and BSK Founder and Director Madam Vera Al-Mutawa MBE, unfolded in a wonderful celebratory atmosphere that made the evening all the more memorable.

Diplomats from around the world, along with honored guests, presented Special Awards across various categories; F1 in Schools, Model United Nations, Music, Drama, Core Values, and Housepoint Awards. The Core Values Awards were given to students who exemplify the school's values of Resilience, Respect, Honesty, Courage, and Empathy. The Performing Arts

Awards recognised outstanding achievements in school productions and music, while the Formula 1 in Schools Awards celebrated student STEAM skills and teamwork. Additionally, the Housepoint Awards were presented to students who achieved the highest housepoints in their year group, further highlighting their dedication and involvement in school activities.

Guest speaker, Dr Anwar Al-Ibrahim, Assistant Professor in the Civil Engineering Department at the College of Engineering and Petroleum at Kuwait University, addressed the students, encouraging them to believe in themselves, respect others, and embrace their unique qualities that help them to excel.

In her Principal's Address, Ms. Emma Bowie emphasised the importance of a well-rounded education, encouraging students to make the most of the extracurricular and leadership opportunities that BSK offers. She highlighted

that these experiences are essential for preparing students for future challenges and fostering personal growth, reinforcing BSK's mission to help students to achieve academic excellence whilst at the same time developing strength of character and leadership skills through involvement in the wider life of the school.

A key highlight of the evening was the presentation of the prestigious Head Teacher's Award. This year, the award was presented by Madam Vera Al-Mutawa MBE, BSK's founder, alongside Principal Ms. Emma Bowie, guest speaker Dr. Anwar Al-Ibrahim, and Ms. Sophie Gore, Head Teacher of the Middle Phase. Together, they honored one student in each year group, who best exemplified the achievements and attitudes valued at BSK. This year the Head Teachers awards were presented to Retaj Abdellatif (Year 6), Tareq Hashem (Year 7) and Walid Ashqar (Year 8).

The evening concluded with a lively reception, filled with laughter and joyous conversations as students, proud parents, and staff members gathered to celebrate the students' remarkable accomplishments. Families beamed with pride as they celebrated their children's achievements, fostering a sense of community and belonging.

The atmosphere was vibrant, with heartfelt congratulations exchanged and memories created among friends and families. The Middle Phase Awards Evening truly highlighted BSK's commitment to nurturing excellence within its diverse and dynamic community, showcasing the school's dedication to preparing students for a bright future. This celebration of success not only recognised individual achievements but also strengthened the bonds between students and their families, reinforcing the supportive environment that BSK fosters for all its learners.



# New strategies to combat human trafficking, reform visa system

**P**ermanent National Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants has submitted twelve recommendations to address human trafficking and migrant smuggling, as well as measures to reform the employer-based visa system.

The committee headed by Minister of Justice and Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, Dr. Mohammed Al-Wasmi, made the recommendations to the Council of Ministers during the cabinet session held on 22 October. Following the minister's presentation, the Council of Ministers urged government members to cooperate with the committee and provide full support to strengthen Kuwait's position in relevant international indices on human rights and trafficking in persons.

The recommendations included measures to ensure victims are not penalized for acts committed as a result of trafficking, increased inspections of both registered and fraudulent recruitment agencies, improved handling of complaint by domestic workers to identify



potential trafficking cases, stricter penalties for passport confiscation to deter perpetrators, the abolition of recruitment fees imposed on workers, and the punishment of offenders.

Reforms to the visa system that were suggested by the committee include allowing workers to change employers freely and leave

the country without the employer's approval. The recommendations by the permanent committee reflect Kuwait's commitment to addressing the global issue of human trafficking and migrant smuggling, in all its forms and manifestations.

The cabinet noted that the crime of

trafficking in persons is considered a violation of Islamic Shariah principles and human rights. The implementation of Law No. 91 of 2013 on combating trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, along with relevant international conventions, requires concerted efforts from all ministries, bodies, and institutions of the state.

The Council of Ministers reiterated its support for the committee's efforts to enhance Kuwait's standing in international organizations. The committee has developed an action plan based on four main objectives with strategic priorities: prevention, protection, prosecution, and comprehensive issues.

The permanent committee's presentation to the cabinet was delivered by the Ministry of Justice's Assistant Minister of State for Human Rights Affairs, Sheikha Jawaher Al-Sabah, and the Assistant Undersecretary for Legal Affairs, Riya Al-Rashidi. The video presentation covered Kuwait's assessments from 2001 to 2024 in the US Report on Combating Trafficking in Persons and Migrant Smuggling.



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## Farewell reception held for Japanese, Cuban and Togo ambassadors

### The Times Kuwait Report

Dean of the Diplomatic Corps and Ambassador of Tajikistan H.E. Dr. Zubaydullo Zubaydzoda held a farewell reception for ambassadors of Japan, Cuba and Togo on the occasion of the completion of their tenure in Kuwait. Ambassador Zubaydzoda praised efforts by the ambassadors to further relations between their respective countries and Kuwait. He also lauded the cooperation and support they extended to the diplomatic corps during their tenure in Kuwait.

Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador of Cuba H. E. José Luis Noriega Sánchez, said: "Beautiful bonds of brotherhood and friendship were formed with Kuwaiti colleagues, and ambassadors from other countries, with whom we worked diligently for a year." He further expressed pride in learning about Kuwait's rich culture through personal connections and visits, and discovering the deep love for Cuba in Kuwaiti society.



He said he was overwhelmed with a sense of gratitude that words alone cannot fully express. "I leave with unforgettable memories of Kuwait, a humble and generous country that holds a special place in the hearts of those who know it, especially those who have had the privilege of living here for several years," said Ambassador Sánchez. For his part, Ambassador of Togo, H.E. Mohamed Said Ouro-Sama, in his address to the diplomatic gathering stated: "We must continue our efforts

to promote peace, strengthen our regional and international institutions, and actively contribute to resolving the crises affecting some of our nations." He further added that diplomats must harness assets, amplify African voices globally, and defend common interests with unity and strength.

"It is with great honor and gratitude that I address you as my tenure as Ambassador of Togo and Dean of the African Diplomatic Corps comes to a close. "Serving alongside all of you for several



years has been a privilege, and I leave this position with deep respect for our collective work and admiration for your unwavering commitment," the ambassador said.

Ambassador of Japan H.E. Morina Yasunari also expressed deep appreciation to the leadership of Kuwait for their continued support and cooperation. He thanked his fellow diplomats for their friendship and cooperation during his tenure in Kuwait.

## Kuwait-UAE bonds built on fraternal ties between leaders, people

### CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and by the amirs of Kuwait including the current Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Meshal Al Ahmad. The bond of friendship was further strengthened during the 1990-91 invasion and occupation of Kuwait by Iraqi forces. The UAE immediately opened its doors to thousands of Kuwaitis fleeing Iraqi forces and then joined the international coalition to liberate Kuwait, sending troops and aircraft to join the fight. The memory of Emirati soldiers who lost their lives in the battle to liberate Kuwait are etched forever in the hearts of people in Kuwait.

Relations between the two countries have gone from strength to strength in various fields over the decades since independence of both nations, and even before. In 1952, following a visit to the then separate emirate of Sharjah by the late Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Abdullah Al Salem Al Sabah, an educational mission was sent to support education in the emirate. This was followed by a medical mission in 1962, at a time when hospitals and medical care were still in their infancy in the seven emirates. In 1969, Kuwait Television also set up a station in Dubai.

High level visits between the two countries have further consolidated relations. In particular, the visit of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, to the UAE in March of this year, highlighted the strength of bilateral relations, and culminated in a joint statement affirming their commitment to furthering cooperation for mutual benefit.

During the visit, President Sheikh Mohamed awarded Sheikh Meshal the Order of Zayed during his state visit to the UAE, a reflection of the strong ties between the two countries, and Sheikh Meshal's efforts to build them further. In particular, the citation praised Sheikh Meshal's work to build solidarity among members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), of which both countries have been members since it was founded in Abu Dhabi in 1981.

Additionally, Crown Prince of Dubai and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense, Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, made an official visit to Kuwait on 8 October, following a nearly month-long visit by Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Saud Al-Sabah, First Deputy

Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, and Minister of Interior of the State of Kuwait, to the UAE.

In his comments ahead of the UAE president's visit to Kuwait, the country's Consul-General in Dubai, Ambassador Ali Al-Thaidi stressed the importance of the upcoming visit saying that it would add strength to the long illustrious ties between the two nations. He added that relations between the UAE and Kuwait are exemplary, and that people in both countries shared similar views when it came to boosting relations on all possible domains. He further stated that the two leaders would also discuss recent developments in the Middle East in addition to regional challenges that would require coordination to overcome.

In addition to the strong bonds at the leadership level, relations between the two nations encompass various fields, including political, economic, trade, military, security, cultural, and educational cooperation, resulting in dozens of agreements and joint memoranda of understanding. In 2006, a Joint Committee for Bilateral Cooperation was established between the UAE and Kuwait, meeting first in Kuwait City and two years later in Abu Dhabi.

Subsequent meetings have since seen numerous agreements, from diplomatic training and industrial cooperation to culture, arts and sciences, and a Memorandum of Understanding for cooperation in oil, gas and renewable energy in 2014. The following year saw the first session of a Consular Committee, to explore joint areas of diplomacy. The UAE-Kuwait Joint Higher Committee exemplifies the commitment of the two countries to bolstering bilateral relations and advancing cooperation and coordination across various fields.

The UAE is the world's largest destination for Kuwait's non-oil exports, accounting for 22 percent of Kuwait's total exports. UAE also ranks third among the most significant import markets for Kuwait after China and the United States. "Our bilateral non-oil trade has seen significant growth in recent years, reaching its highest levels in history in 2023, with a total value exceeding \$12 billion," said Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed, in September at the opening of the new Kuwaiti Embassy in Abu Dhabi.

In September of this year, business and

commercial ties between Kuwait and UAE received a further boost with the promulgation of a new Federal Law by the UAE President, which decreed that citizens of States of the Gulf Cooperative Council (GCC), shall be treated the same way as citizens of the UAE are when practicing economic activities and professions in the State. More than 50 Kuwaiti companies now invest in the UAE, while over 400,000 Kuwaiti tourists visited the UAE in 2023—nearly double that of the previous year. In the other direction, around 50,000 Emiratis visited Kuwait last year, with the country now hosting over 130 UAE companies.

That emphasis on building trade saw a number of key agreements in 2024. At the fifth UAE-Kuwait Joint Higher Committee meeting in Abu Dhabi last September, no less than eight MoUs were signed, covering areas including telecoms and information technology, education, sports, cyber security, defense and culture.

The agreements were described by Sheikh Abdullah as embodying "the depth of the fraternal relations between the two countries".

Cooperation in culture and education reflects the close ties and commonalities between the two countries and their peoples. The UAE and Kuwait have signed numerous bilateral agreements in culture, education, and the arts, aiming to exchange expertise and enhance cooperation for the benefit of both countries. The number of Kuwaiti students studying at UAE universities reached 1,725, and Kuwait has issued decisions encouraging more students to study in the UAE, which will contribute to enhancing educational collaboration. An international studies program developed by both countries seeks to encourage students to choose colleges and universities within the GCC countries rather than further overseas.

In the tourism sector, the number of Kuwaiti tourists staying in UAE hotels in 2023 exceeded 381,000, compared to 250,000 in 2022, while the number of Emirati tourists in Kuwait from January to September 2024 was 42,236. National carriers operated 122 weekly flights to Kuwait during the first half of this year, while the total flights from Kuwait to the UAE reached 53 weekly.

Both countries are keen to maintain high-level coordination on all bilateral, Arab, and international issues that serve their mutual

interests and enhance the unity and cohesion of the Gulf and Arab houses. They share a common vision for peace and stability in the region and actively promote diplomatic dialogue, advocating for diplomatic means to resolve regional disputes, adhering to international law, and preventing further escalation in the region. The two countries also share a significant role in supporting peaceful solutions to current conflicts in the region, in collaboration with the regional and international community.

The UAE and Kuwait continue to expand their economic cooperation and partnership, seizing available opportunities in both countries and exploring economic prospects in light of the 'We the UAE 2031' vision and 'Kuwait Vision 2035'. Both countries recognise the importance of joint economic and trade cooperation and the need to enhance it through increased trade exchange and strengthening economic relations in industrial, commercial, and investment sectors.

The depth and width of relations between Kuwait and the UAE can be best expressed by the words of the UAE Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed, who said, "What most distinguishes the UAE-Kuwait relations, and their continuous development, are the social and cultural bonds that unite the two brotherly peoples, including the ties of brotherhood and friendship, shared heritage, history and common values."



**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



EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

# Unleashing Solar Power's Bright Future



**Fatih Birol and Ajay Mathur**

*Fatih Birol is Executive Director of the International Energy Agency.*

*Ajay Mathur is Director General of the International Solar Alliance.*



Solar power has been the star of the clean-energy transition, delivering major benefits for the climate, the cost of living, and energy security. With an average annual growth rate of almost 30 percent over the last decade, the market for solar power has undergone a rapid transformation. What was once a heavily subsidized renewable-energy technology is now a readily available mainstream solution—whether one needs to power skyscrapers in large cities or deliver electricity to small businesses in rural areas.

Solar has become an increasingly attractive option for electricity producers and consumers alike. In 2023, additions to the world's renewable power capacity grew by 50 percent, and most of that was solar PV. With supportive policies already in place in more than 130 countries, solar power looks set to continue playing its starring role for the rest of this decade. Compared with the previous five years, solar PV deployment through 2030 is expected to more than double in major economies such as the United States, China, the European Union, India, and Brazil.

Falling costs have been a key driver of this growth, with solar-panel prices declining by almost 50 percent in 2023. The combination of lower costs, scalable manufacturing, and quick installation means that solar PV is cheaper than new fossil-fuel power plants in most markets.

up investments in solar and other renewables, electricity storage, and grid infrastructure; cut red tape and remove administrative barriers; and improve access to finance, particularly for projects in emerging and developing economies.

Fortunately, even high inflation and tightening supply chains have not prevented the cost of solar PV from falling dramatically. But since this trend is largely due to China's massive investments in solar-panel production, the international solar supply chain has become highly concentrated. As the growth of solar PV continues, manufacturing will need to become more diversified to ensure resilient supply chains. Initiatives such as the US Inflation Reduction Act, India's Production-Linked Incentive, and the EU's Net-Zero Industry Act will be crucial to building and revitalizing homegrown clean-energy industries.

Solar will be essential to meet growing energy demands, not least in emerging and developing economies, where policymakers are seeking to help their citizens realize their economic aspirations while limiting greenhouse-gas emissions. For many countries, renewables like solar can also reduce reliance on energy imports, limit exposure to global supply disruptions, and improve energy security over the long term. But as technologies and consumer behavior evolve, the need for more sophisticated energy infrastructure will grow.

As matters stand, investments to expand grid infrastructure are not keeping pace with the growth of clean-energy technologies, and this is delaying the rollout of new projects, including for solar. New electricity networks often take 5–15 years to plan and complete, whereas new renewables projects take only 1–5 years. Making matters worse, investment in grids—which needs to reach more than \$600 billion per year by 2030—is not flowing to the regions that need it most. Grid investments in many emerging and developing economies have been well below the levels needed to meet robust growth in electricity demand and to expand access.

This shortfall represents an opportunity that must not be squandered. Solar PV has enormous potential to provide electricity to the many millions of people who currently lack it, most of whom are in Africa. But access to finance is crucial. Many emerging and developing economies (with the exception of China) are missing out on the current wave of clean-energy investments because of the high costs of capital for new projects. The risk premium that investors demand to enter less-established markets is directly undermining solar power's competitiveness.

Removing this obstacle requires action from

governments, multilateral development banks, and others to bring down the cost of capital in these markets. The situation is urgent. To limit global warming to 1.5°C, we must more than triple annual clean-energy investment in emerging and developing economies within the next decade.

Solar's growth shows what is possible. If

policymakers can overcome the remaining technological, regulatory, and financial barriers, the COP28 goal of tripling renewable-energy capacity by 2030 will be well within reach—with solar leading the way. But if these barriers remain unaddressed, the energy transition will leave many countries behind, and it will fall far short of what the world needs.

“Solar will be essential to meet growing energy demands, not least in emerging and developing economies, where policymakers are seeking to help their citizens realize their economic aspirations while limiting greenhouse-gas emissions.”

Moreover, the benefits of solar can be amplified when paired with energy storage such as batteries or connected to larger, flexible systems via grids to deliver reliable power supplies.

Still, despite the unprecedented growth of solar power in recent years, the world needs to triple its renewable-energy capacity by 2030. At the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Dubai (COP28) last year, all countries agreed that meeting this goal is necessary to keep the 1.5° Celsius target for global warming within reach. The task for policymakers is to provide regulatory certainty for the private sector; ramp

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# Global Freshwater Supplies in the Balance



**Mariana Mazzucato and Johan Rockström**

*Mariana Mazzucato, Founding Director of the UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose, is Co-Chair of the Global Commission on the Economics of Water and Co-Chair of the Group of Experts to the G20 Taskforce for a Global Mobilization Against Climate Change.*

*Johan Rockström, Director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research and Professor of Earth System Science at the University of Potsdam, is Co-Chair of the Global Commission on the Economics of Water.*

While the world's attention has been on the US election, the rising number of extreme weather events—from disastrous flooding in Spain to southern Africa's worst drought in a century—highlights the need to remain focused on climate change, biodiversity loss, and a changing water cycle.

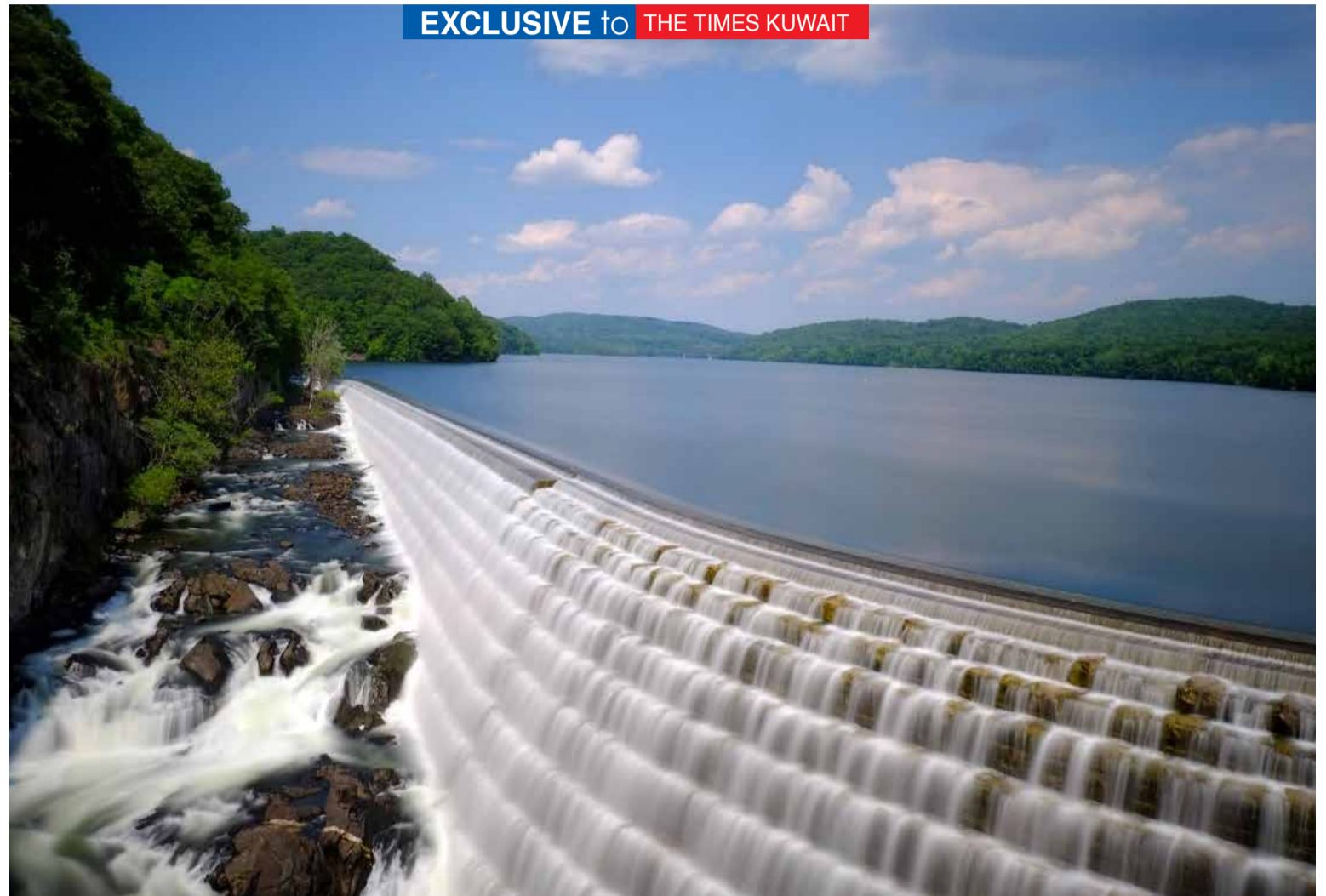
These crises are related, and the symptoms are getting worse. When drought kills crops, millions of people suffer; and when water extremes (too much or too little) hit vulnerable societies, the resulting displacements, migration, and conflicts can affect everyone.

Yet no one is listening. The recent COP16 biodiversity summit in Cali, Colombia, received little international attention, and failed to produce a roadmap to ramp up funding for species protection. Instead, delegates merely celebrated their decision to charge private companies for the use of genetic biodiversity information, and to establish a new working group for indigenous peoples.

While important, these developments are marginal in relation to the task of halting biodiversity loss. Worse, they could serve as a smokescreen for global inaction, just as we have seen over the years in global climate negotiations, where long sessions on trade and 'loss and damage' obscured the lack of action on phasing out fossil fuels. Although the Global Biodiversity Framework, adopted in Montreal in 2022, established ambitious targets to protect 30 percent of the planet by 2030, over 158 countries still have not submitted formal plans on how they will do their part.

This inaction cannot continue. Human activities are threatening the stability of the climate and the natural systems upon which human well-being depends. Food security, human health, and social stability are all on the line. The COP16 negotiations are supposed to continue "at a later date"; but the world cannot afford to let COP16 pass without significant progress toward protecting our planet's biodiversity and ecosystems.

Without urgent, systemic, collective action,



the effects of climate change, biodiversity loss, and the water crisis will only intensify. Biodiversity and nature are central to maintaining stable climate patterns and the hydrological cycle. Wetlands and forests, which store huge amounts of carbon, rely on stable water cycles and thriving biodiversity to function effectively.

Similarly, terrestrial ecosystems currently absorb 25% of carbon dioxide emissions, helping to prevent atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> from rising beyond 420 parts per million. Yet extreme

Celsius, with dire consequences for vulnerable communities worldwide. In our final report for the Global Commission on the Economics of Water, we show how interconnected our world is not just through the blue water in our rivers and lakes, but also through 'green water' in soil moisture. Moreover, we are all connected through 'atmospheric rivers'—moisture transported from the soil, through plants and forests, to the atmosphere, where it flows between regions to provide essential rainfall.

Healthy vegetation is the backbone of this

We can still turn the tide on the global water crisis, but only by protecting and restoring declining ecosystems. As the commission's report notes, a good starting point is for governments to adopt a clear set of mission-driven policies to "conserve and restore natural habitats critical to protect green water." Mission-driven policies that recognize the interdependencies between water and biodiversity are needed to foster the all-of-government and economy-wide responses that planetary sustainability requires.

For example, a mission to "restore at least 30 percent of degraded forest and inland water ecosystems globally by 2030" would require sectors as diverse as agriculture, forestry, construction, and information and communication technologies (to name a few) to work together. A mission to restore forests is not just for the environment ministry, but also for the finance, agriculture, and science and technology ministries, among others. Governments have a chance to demonstrate this level of ambition and make meaningful progress when COP16 negotiations resume. First, they must submit formal plans on how they will meet the Global Biodiversity Framework targets. Second, national biodiversity strategies and action plans that set priorities and direct financing streams must recognize the importance of green water.

Third, governments must do more to recognize the rights of indigenous peoples, who are stewards of one-quarter of the planet's land and about 40 percent of the remaining natural lands worldwide. While COP16 delegates did agree that companies should compensate local and indigenous communities for the use of genetic information drawn from the biodiversity they help safeguard, the compensation thresholds should be more ambitious. Tokenistic smokescreens are not evidence of a successful summit. We cannot afford to lose a decade of action on biodiversity. The world's access to freshwater depends on governments doing more right now.

“ A destabilized hydrological cycle implies far-reaching economic damage. Changing precipitation patterns, rising temperatures, reduced water storage, and declining access to clean water augur significant GDP losses. ”

hydrological events—droughts and floods, combined with heat during the 2023 'super El Niño' cycle—eroded this massive carbon sink substantially. This was a serious warning sign. Unchecked biodiversity loss alone could cause us to exceed the Paris climate agreement's target of limiting global warming to 1.5°

process, transpiring water into the atmosphere to generate clouds. Some countries benefit disproportionately from these atmospheric rivers, while others, like India and Brazil, are significant exporters of moisture. Almost half of global rainfall depends on neighboring land use, underscoring the importance of conserving healthy ecosystems worldwide. The costs of inaction are enormous. A destabilized hydrological cycle implies far-reaching economic damage. Changing precipitation patterns, rising temperatures, reduced water storage, and declining access to clean water augur significant GDP losses. High-income countries face an average GDP contraction of 8 percent by 2050, and lower-income countries could suffer drops of up to 15 percent. At the same time, over half (55%) of the world's food production is now in areas with dwindling freshwater supplies.

**Thought**  
for the  
**week**

“ When you face difficult times, know that challenges are not sent to destroy you. They're sent to promote, increase and strengthen you. ”



# Albania: A strategic gateway to productive investments

*Foreign investors can establish 100 percent fully-owned companies without needing an Albanian partner. Importantly, the registration fees are as low as 'One Euro' and setup times of just half an hour; making Albania an accessible and attractive choice for international entrepreneurs. Foreign investors can fully own properties, including buildings, villas, or residential land, without the need for an Albanian sponsor, offering permanent ownership rights.*

With its strategic location, robust economic potential, competitive labor costs, thriving tourism industry, business-friendly climate, expanding energy sector, and strong government incentives, Albania presents an ideal landscape for forward-thinking investors.

Situated in south-eastern Europe within the Balkans, Albania boasts a unique geographical position along the Adriatic and Ionian Seas in the Mediterranean.

Surrounded by geographically picturesque locations, Albania shares its borders with Montenegro to the northwest, Kosovo to the northeast, North Macedonia to the east, and Greece to the south.

Albania also enjoys proximity to Italy across the Adriatic Sea to the west. Covering 28,748 km<sup>2</sup>, Albania features a remarkable variety of climates, landscapes, and natural resources, ranging from coastal beaches to rugged mountains, making it an intriguing destination for both investment and tourism.

Albania's investment landscape also offers opportunities in agriculture, real estate, tourism, energy, and manufacturing.



**H.E. ILIR HYSA**  
Ambassador of Albania, Kuwait

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When it comes to Kuwaiti investors; they are encouraged to explore opportunities in Albania's tourism sector. With its pristine coastline stretching approximately 400 kilometers along the Adriatic Sea, Albania offers prime locations for resort and hotel development, especially along its beaches.

Positioned close to Italy, Greece, and Montenegro, Albania provides a strategic location for tourism investment. Additionally, all necessary facilities, licenses, and fees can be processed online, making the investment process seamless and efficient.

Regarding acquiring Albanian citizenship; investors in Albania are eligible for a step-by-step residency process, starting with a

one-year residency, followed by two years, and then permanent residency. Additionally, investors who contribute over 10 million Euros are considered as 'Strategic Investors' with the right for Albanian citizenship.

One of the most important investment opportunities in Albania comes from the real estate market, as it is closely linked to tourism and the country's growing demand for infrastructure development. This emerging real estate market in Europe offers more than just reasonable prices; it features a growing economy and a stunning coastline that is attracting increasing international attention.

The legal processes for real estate transactions are also favorable for foreign buyers, making it an ideal destination for investment plans. Discover the potential of Albanian real estate and take the first step towards a successful and growth-oriented investment.

In case someone is keen to purchase property in Albania, it is essential to understand the current trends and developments. The combination of affordable prices and growing demand for properties in popular tourist areas makes it a compelling option. Moreover, one can capitalize on the increasing property values, particularly in cities like Tirana and along the picturesque coastline.

In addition, Albania's infrastructure has seen significant improvements in recent years, enhancing its appeal to foreign buyers. Upgrades to roads, airports, and public services make it easier to invest, and also manage properties. This combination of economic growth and infrastructure development creates an ideal environment for real estate investments.

The economic growth is a very prospective and key driver attracting foreign buyers to Albania's real estate market. The country has experienced significant development, with positive growth indicators and a rise in foreign investment. This suggests that property values are likely to increase in the future, offering strong potential for returns on investment.

Additionally, with a growing youth population and expanding middle class, demand for housing is on the rise, further boosting the market's potential.

Furthermore, several government initiatives are focused on boosting the economy and stimulating investment, which is a positive sign for the stability and continued growth of the real estate sector.

Staying informed about economic trends will help one make well-guided decisions and maximize the potential of one's real estate investment in Albania.

More importantly, when purchasing property in Albania, it is crucial to understand the various legal aspects that apply to foreign buyers. Considering various legalities, it is highly advisable to hire a local lawyer or a real estate expert for guidance for the process of purchasing property in Albania. They can help verify essential documents and ensure the purchase is legal and secure.

In addition, when investing in a property in Albania, it is important to understand where the most promising opportunities lie. The country offers a diverse range of locations, each with its own unique advantages. From



charming coastal towns to rapidly developing urban areas, there are numerous options that hold great potential for foreign buyers.

The Albanian coast offers unmatched appeal to both tourists and property investors. Coastal towns like Dhërmi and Vlorë are flourishing, with stunning beaches and a growing tourism infrastructure that supports rising property values. By investing in coastal properties, one can capitalize on the strong demand for holiday rentals while enjoying the sun-and-sea lifestyle. In recent years, Albania has focused heavily on urban development, particularly in the capital, Tirana. The city has launched numerous projects to improve infrastructure and create new housing, resulting in a significant rise in property prices.

Additionally, the Albanian government is offering more subsidies and initiatives to encourage foreign investment. This makes it an exciting time to invest in urban development, as one can expect strong financial returns while contributing positively to the country's growth and modernization.

Investing in Albanian property, offers foreign buyers an appealing range of benefits. One of the most notable advantages is the accessible property market, with purchase prices often lower than in other European countries. This allows one to invest on a relatively modest budget in a country that is gaining popularity.

In addition to affordable property prices, Albania's natural beauty and rich cultural heritage add significant value to any investment. With its breathtaking coastline, historic cities, and diverse landscapes, real estate in Albania offers more than just financial returns, it also provides a personal connection

to a unique culture.

One of the biggest advantages of living and investing in Albania is the low cost of living. Everyday expenses such as groceries, utilities, and transportation are significantly lower than in Western Europe, making Albania an attractive destination for both investors and tenants.

As a foreign buyer of real estate in Albania, one can take advantage of several tax benefits that can significantly reduce investment costs. The Albanian tax environment is favorable for investors, offering advantages such as; lower transfer taxes and real estate taxes compared to other European countries.

However, it is important to stay informed about specific tax rules, as some benefits may be temporary or subject to certain conditions.

A major tax benefit for investors in Albania is the reduction of corporate tax rates for foreign companies operating in the real estate sector.

By establishing a company meant for real estate ventures, one can take advantage of these lower tax rates, which help maximize net returns. Additionally, there are initiatives aimed at creating tax-free zones, offering even more favorable tax conditions for investors.

The Albanian government offers several incentive programs to encourage foreign investment, particularly in the real estate sector. These include grants for specific types of real estate projects, which can help finance renovations or property developments.

As a foreign buyer in Albania's real estate market, it is crucial to be aware of potential pitfalls and challenges. Being well-prepared and understanding the local market condition is essential in overcoming these obstacles and successfully achieving investment goals.



## Thriving with Diabetes

# A Journey to Wellness



By Dr Jibin John Thomas MD  
Internal Medicine -Specialist  
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Diabetes is one of the most common chronic conditions worldwide, impacting millions of individuals. While it requires consistent management, diabetes does not have to define your life. With the right strategies, you can lead a healthy, balanced, and fulfilling life, even in the face of the challenges that come with diabetes.

Diabetes, once considered a condition primarily affecting older adults, has become increasingly prevalent among children, adolescents, and young adults in recent years. This shift reflects changes in lifestyle, dietary habits, and other risk factors that young people face in today's world. Understanding how diabetes affects youngsters and the steps that can be taken to manage their health is critical for ensuring they lead healthy, fulfilling lives.

World Diabetes Day is observed annually on 14 November, to raise global awareness about diabetes, its impact, and the importance of prevention and management. Established by the International Diabetes Federation and the World Health Organization in 1991, the day highlights the need for coordinated efforts to combat this growing health challenge. It also serves as an opportunity to educate the public about early detection, treatment, and lifestyle changes that can help prevent or manage diabetes effectively. The theme for World Diabetes Day 2024 is Diabetes & Well being.

Living with a chronic condition like diabetes can take a toll on emotional health, often leading to stress, anxiety, or depression due to the daily demands of managing the condition. However, there are ways to enhance emotional and psychological well-being while living with diabetes. These include:

- **Stress Management:** Chronic stress

can elevate blood sugar levels, making diabetes more difficult to control. Practicing stress-relief techniques such as mindfulness meditation, deep breathing exercises, or yoga can help alleviate stress and promote relaxation.

- **Support Systems:** A strong support network plays a crucial role in managing diabetes. Whether it is family, friends, or a healthcare team, having people to share the challenges of living with diabetes can help reduce feelings of isolation and stress.
- **Psychological Counseling:** When diabetes-related stress becomes overwhelming, seeking professional support from a counselor/psychologist or psychiatrist can provide valuable emotional guidance and practical coping strategies. Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is especially effective in managing anxiety and depression related to diabetes.

For individuals living with diabetes, preventing long-term complications is a key priority. This requires regular check-ups, blood sugar management, and making healthy lifestyle choices. Other health risks associated with diabetes include:

- **Cardiovascular Health:** Diabetes also significantly increases the risk of heart disease, making cardiovascular health a top concern. Engaging in regular physical activity, eating a heart-healthy diet low in saturated and trans fats, controlling cholesterol and blood pressure levels, avoiding smoking are ways in which cardiovascular well being can be achieved.
- **Eye Care:** Diabetic retinopathy, caused by damage to the blood vessels in the retina, can lead to vision loss if untreated. Regular eye exams and early intervention are crucial for preventing severe complications.
- **Foot Care:** People with diabetes are more prone to foot infections due to nerve damage and reduced blood circulation. Regular foot inspections and proper care can help prevent ulcers and infections, which could lead to more serious issues.
- **Kidney Health:** Diabetes can cause kidney damage over time. Regular urine tests, along with maintaining good blood pressure and blood sugar control, are essential for protecting kidney function.

Understanding diabetes is fundamental to self-management. Learning to monitor



blood sugar, adjust insulin or medication, and make lifestyle changes empowers people with diabetes to take control of their health.

Advances in technology have also made diabetes management more precise and convenient. Tools like continuous glucose monitors (CGMs), insulin pumps, and smartphone apps allow for real time blood sugar monitoring. These technologies help individuals make informed decisions about diet, exercise, and insulin use.

While healthcare providers play a vital role, much of diabetes management happens in daily life. Taking personal responsibility for self-care whether it is monitoring blood sugar, maintaining a healthy diet, or staying physically active is essential for long-term well-being.

Dietary management is essential for controlling diabetes, particularly in Type 2 diabetes, where lifestyle choices significantly impact blood sugar levels. A well-planned diet not only helps regulate blood sugar but also maintains a healthy weight and prevents complications.

A balanced diet is crucial for achieving better glycemic control, improving overall health, and reducing the risk of complications. Balancing the diet could include:

- Carbohydrates have the most significant effect on blood sugar levels, so understanding how different types affect the body is vital for effective diabetes management.
- Consuming foods with a low glycemic

index raise blood sugar levels more gradually than high-GI foods. Opting for low-GI options can aid in managing blood sugar levels effectively. Low GI Foods include whole grains, legumes, lentils, beans, fruits and vegetables, lean proteins, and low-fat dairy products. These help maintain muscle mass and promote satiety.

- Being mindful of portion sizes to avoid overeating. Measuring cups or a food scale can assist in controlling portions. Visualize portions using the plate method: fill half your plate with non-starchy vegetables, a quarter with lean protein, and a quarter with whole grains or starchy vegetables.
- Distributing carbohydrates evenly across meals and snacks, rather than consuming large amounts at once, can help maintain stable blood sugar levels.
- Opting for healthy fats found in avocados, nuts, seeds, and olive oil. Limiting saturated fats from fatty cuts of meat and full-fat dairy products, and avoiding trans fats present in many processed foods.
- Including sources of omega-3 fatty acids, such as fatty fish (salmon, mackerel), flaxseeds, and walnuts, which are beneficial for heart health.
- Staying hydrated by drinking plenty of water (3 liter/day) and avoiding any sugary drinks. Be careful of consuming fruit juices, fresh or processed, both types of fruit juices have high GI

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# Insta-Trapped: The Hidden Dangers of Social Media for Kids

*Social media often creates a distorted reality, where kids constantly compare themselves to idealized images and lives. This endless comparison can lead to feelings of inadequacy, isolation, and low self-worth, which are all significant contributors to depression.*



By Hermoine Macura-Noble  
Special to The Times Kuwait



In today's digital age, social media has become integral to modern life, offering a platform for connection, entertainment, and information sharing. While it offers many benefits, the widespread use of social media among children and adolescents has raised serious concerns about its impact on their mental, emotional, and physical well-being.

"In my home country, I used to see my child playing outside, laughing with friends, and enjoying the simple things. Now, they're glued to a screen, checking for likes and followers. They're more anxious, comparing themselves to people they don't even know, and it breaks my heart. It feels like social media is taking away their confidence and innocence," said Gulf-based parent, Amina Ahmed.

As children increasingly turn to platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat, examining the potential harms that excessive social media use can inflict on their development is crucial. Most social media apps require users to be at least 13 years old. But according to the US Surgeon General, nearly 40 percent of children aged between 8-12 years, and 95 percent of children aged between 13-17 years old use social media apps.

One of the most significant negative effects of social media on children is its impact on mental health. The constant exposure to curated images of other people's lives can lead to unhealthy comparisons, where children begin to measure their worth based on the number of likes, followers, or comments they receive. This can trigger feelings of inadequacy, anxiety, and low self-esteem. The US Surgeon General released an advisory on how social media affects children and teenager's mental health. One scary statistic? Teens who spend more than three hours a day on social media double their risk of depression and anxiety.

Other studies have also shown a correlation

between high levels of social media usage and increased rates of depression and anxiety in children. The 'fear of missing out' (FOMO) phenomenon is particularly pronounced, as children may feel left out or excluded when they see peers attending events or engaging in activities without them, leading to loneliness and emotional distress.

"Social media often creates a distorted reality, where kids constantly compare themselves to idealized images and lives. This endless comparison can lead to feelings of inadequacy, isolation, and low self-worth, which are all significant contributors to depression. "We're seeing more young patients struggle with these issues as social media becomes a bigger part of their lives," shares Psychiatrist, Dr. William Jones.

The anonymity of the internet has also given rise to a troubling increase in cyberbullying, a form of harassment that can profoundly affect young people. Unlike traditional bullying, which typically occurs in a physical setting,

cyberbullying follows children into their homes and invades their private spaces. According to one report from the US Cleveland Clinic, harmful language, as well as images and videos are prevalent, with 64 percent of teens reporting they are often or sometimes exposed to hate-based content online. Children targeted by online bullies may struggle with depression, anxiety, and sometimes much worse.

A Texas child died by suicide during an online game following cyberbullying in late 2023. According to local Houston authorities, a juvenile suspect in Michigan allegedly harassed the victim online until the child committed suicide. Amanda Todd, a 15-year-old Canadian student and victim of cyberbullying, hung herself at her home in British Columbia. A month before her death, Todd posted a video on YouTube sharing her experience of being blackmailed, bullied, and physically assaulted. There are thousands of cases worldwide in which parents disclose the dangers of social media, sometimes when it is too late.

Experts also say that social media use, especially before bed, can negatively impact children's sleep patterns. The blue light emitted from screens interferes with melatonin production, the hormone responsible for regulating sleep. In addition, the addictive nature of social media can cause children to stay up late, endlessly scrolling through content, leading to sleep deprivation.

A lack of sleep can negatively affect a child's cognitive functions, mood, and academic performance. Over time, chronic sleep deprivation can contribute to mental health issues like depression and anxiety, creating a vicious cycle that is difficult to break. A growing number of children are also experiencing eating disorders, low self-esteem, and body dysmorphia as a result of trying to meet unattainable beauty standards

they see on social media.

Additionally, prolonged exposure to fast-paced, bite-sized online content can reduce children's attention spans. They may become accustomed to quick, easily digestible information and struggle to focus on more complex tasks, such as reading or problem-solving.

Excessive use can also reduce children's ability to form meaningful, face-to-face relationships. As they become more reliant on digital communication, children may struggle with developing critical social skills, such as reading body language, maintaining eye contact, and engaging in active listening. This can lead to difficulties in forming deep, authentic relationships in the real world, as children may find it easier to communicate behind the safety of a screen than in person. Over time, this can result in social isolation and an inability to connect meaningfully.

"My husband and I used to always allow our kids to use social media and the internet to learn about the world and keep busy when we were out in public or had guests over. However, we noticed that after increasing social media usage and replacing real-life relationships with online ones, our 7-year-old son became slightly more aggressive. We decided to stop his iPad access after this," shares one mother.

While social media can provide opportunities for connection and creativity, its negative effects on children cannot be ignored. From mental health issues and cyberbullying to addiction



and body image struggles, the potential harms of excessive social media use are far-reaching. Parents, educators, and policymakers must work together to ensure that children use social media healthily, promote digital literacy, and teach children the importance of maintaining boundaries online.

In an era of ever-present technology, it is essential to prioritize the well-being of children and ensure that social media does not hinder their growth and development.

**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*





# The Case for Solidarity Levies



**Emmanuel Macron, Mia Amor Mottley, and William Ruto**

*Emmanuel Macron is President of France*

*Mia Amor Mottley is Prime Minister of Barbados*

*William Ruto is President of Kenya*

*The authors co-chair the Global Solidarity Levies Task Force.*

From Bridgetown to Nairobi to Paris, no country is immune to the worsening effects of the climate crisis. With each passing year, we witness more climate-related destruction. In 2024, we have set a number of new records: wildfires in Chile have destroyed more than 14,000 homes; extreme rainfall in Brazil has devastated 478 cities and left nearly two million people stranded in Bangladesh; and in July the world experienced its hottest day ever.

Africa has contributed only 3% of historical greenhouse-gas emissions, yet it endures some of the most severe climate-related disasters. These now cost the continent \$15 billion per year, with climate-induced droughts and floods in 2023 causing food insecurity for more than 40 million Africans.

Convinced that no country should have to choose between fighting the climate crisis and combating poverty, we have decided to contribute to an ambitious reform of the international financial architecture. The Paris Pact for People and the Planet, the Bridgetown Initiative, and the Nairobi Declaration each seek to provide one piece of the puzzle. Current

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An annual levy of 0.1 percent on stock and bond trades could raise up to \$418 billion. A shipping levy of \$100 per ton of CO<sub>2</sub> could raise \$80 billion per year. A levy on fossil-fuel extraction of \$5 per ton of CO<sub>2</sub> could raise \$210 billion per year.

”

international dynamics give us hope: many reform tracks have been opened up, and some have delivered results. That said, many more efforts are needed, and no options should be overlooked.

One key piece is still underused: ‘solidarity levies’. Such policies are necessary to ensure that everyone contributes their fair share to what should be a global effort. There are swaths of the economy which are largely under-taxed yet polluting the planet. This applies to maritime shipping, aviation, and, of course, the fossil-fuel industry, which enjoys low effective tax rates due to government subsidies (totaling an estimated \$7 trillion in 2022, according to the International Monetary Fund).

These levies can contribute by allocating a share of the revenues to developing countries.



EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

A global levy of 0.1 percent on stock and bond trades could raise up to \$418 billion per year. A levy on shipping of \$100 per ton of carbon dioxide could raise \$80 billion per year. A levy on fossil-fuel extraction of \$5 per ton of CO<sub>2</sub> could raise \$210 billion per year. Even a partial redistribution through solidarity levies would guarantee a large source of predictable climate finance for these countries, thus complementing flows of official development assistance without amplifying existing debt burdens.

The benefits would be significant. Despite Africa’s climate vulnerability, its vast potential to leverage renewable energy and critical minerals, and its role as a global carbon sink, the continent receives far less climate finance than it needs. Solidarity levies could provide the funding needed to drive green development in Africa and around the world, especially in vulnerable low- and middle-income countries and small states with little fiscal room for building resilience or climate action.

These levies already exist. More than 30 countries currently implement a financial transaction tax, and at least 21 have a levy on airplane tickets. Moreover, even small-scale initiatives such as the International Oil Pollution Compensation Funds demonstrate the feasibility of an international redistribution mechanism. To replicate and scale up these models requires further international cooperation to limit market distortions and preserve a level playing field.

To that end, we launched the Global Solidarity Levies Task Force last year at COP28. With 13 member countries already, the task force has been examining the potential of levies across shipping, aviation, fossil fuels, and financial transactions, as well as exploring options like levies on plastic or cryptocurrency. In early 2025, we will publicly launch a handful of concrete proposals with rigorous impact assessments. These will be scalable—raising at least \$100 billion per year—and accompanied by clear assessments of potential externalities.

As we head toward COP30 in Belém, Brazil, next year, political leadership will be essential to the initiative’s success. COP29 this month will provide the right opportunity to discuss our options and get on track for success. Our plan is to hold a special event for heads of state and government to marshal further support for our solidarity-levies coalition. This is a crucial opportunity to ensure that the United Nations’ New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance incorporates solidarity levies and unlocks climate-finance flows that are both ambitious and equitable.

When it comes to additional sources of finance, experts often allude to “innovative finance.” In the case of global solidarity levies, the only innovation required is ambitious leadership across a sufficient base of countries. Let the tenth anniversary of the Paris climate agreement next year be remembered as the moment when we came together as a global community to implement solidarity levies, providing the financial tools necessary to meet the great challenge of our time. Ahead

of COP29, we call on all governments to join our coalition, and we welcome the support of

civil society, business leaders, and multilateral institutions.

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