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# Reviving tourism sector supports economic goals

**THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT**

Tourism plays a pivotal role in the social and economic development of nations. In many countries tourism is a major source of tax revenue, employment and income. It promotes sustained and inclusive growth, social development and financial inclusion, as well as supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of fostering economic growth, alleviating poverty, and creating productive employment.

Tourism also plays a pivotal role in environmental preservation, sustainable use of resources, protection of biodiversity, and the development of local communities and small businesses. Considering these economic and societal advantages, it is surprising that Kuwait, which in the 1960s and 70s was a major hub for visitors from across the Middle East and the wider world, has over the past decades accorded a low priority to developing tourism



infrastructure and attracting visitors. Since taking office in April 2024, the government headed by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad

Al-Sabah has made reviving tourism a priority, and an integral element in the country's development plan. In the latest measures to advance tourism, the Ministry of Information,

which is responsible for regulating and promoting tourism in Kuwait, announced in early February a new draft law on tourism.

The draft law is part of the government's drive to promote and develop the tourism sector through developing tourism-related activities, encouraging investment, and fostering growth. The law is also in line with the government's broader New Kuwait development plan that seeks to achieve economic diversification, enhance private sector participation in the economy, create gainful employment opportunities for national youth, and develop a sustainable economy.

The tourism law outlines measures to develop a modern tourism development model specific to Kuwait's needs and available resources, as well as to promote tourism projects, and attract local and foreign investments and capital. Importantly, the draft law calls for permitting international investments in the tourism sector without the need for a local agent,

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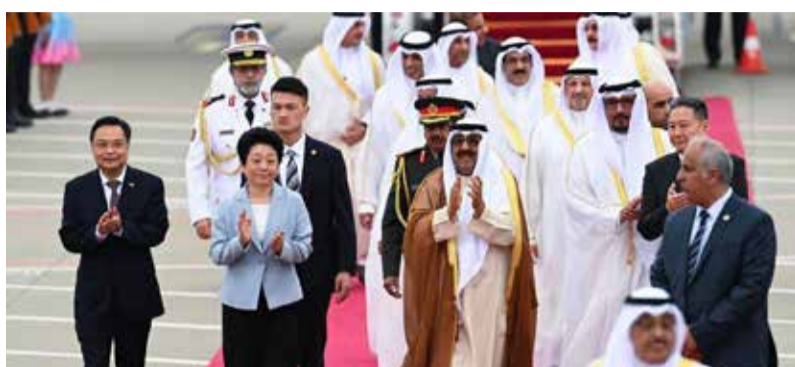
# China, Kuwait mark 60 years of strong partnership and cooperation

By Heba Mohammed Abbas  
Special to The Times Kuwait

In a world of cultural convergence and global connections, Kuwait shines as a diplomatic leader, holding a prestigious role in building bridges of communication with nations worldwide.

Decades ago, this vision began to materialize under the leadership of the late former Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, who laid the foundation for strong cooperation with China—a nation renowned for innovation and sustainable development.

In 1965 Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, then Kuwait's Minister of Finance, Industry, and Trade, visited China from the 12th to the 14th of February, laying the foundation for a strong diplomatic and economic partnership.



The visit was a bold move, making Kuwait one of the first Gulf nations to strengthen ties with Beijing, paving the way for decades of cooperation and mutual understanding. Over the years, Kuwait has shown that economic relations thrive not just on interests but on mutual trust. Trade with China has flourished, like a tree bearing fruit in every season, reflecting the deep and enduring ties between the two

nations.

The strength of these ties was reaffirmed during the recent official visit of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, to Beijing, where he met with Chinese President Xi Jinping. The visit was more than a protocol meeting; it symbolized both nations' commitment to strengthening cooperation in key sectors like energy, infrastructure,



trade, and investment.

A key symbol of this strategic partnership is the Grand Mubarak Port, a major logistics gateway that strengthens Kuwait's position as a regional hub for trade and maritime transport. This ambitious project, in line with Kuwait Vision 2035, not only advances Kuwait's interests but also aligns with China's strategy to expand its regional commercial presence through cutting-edge infrastructure.

The future promises even stronger ties between Kuwait and China, with rising Chinese investments, particularly in renewable energy and major infrastructure projects. This partnership is entering a new, more dynamic phase.

Amid present global economic and energy challenges, Kuwait and China are deepening their

cooperation to tackle obstacles and seize emerging opportunities.

Kuwait-China relations have evolved beyond trade and economic cooperation into a strategic partnership built on shared interests and mutual respect. As this partnership grows stronger, Kuwait and China continue to play vital roles in shaping a more prosperous and stable future for the Middle East and beyond.

**Engineer Heba Abbas** Mohamed Abbas, technical advisor and chairman of the Sustainability Committee. THE KUWAIT WATER ASSOCIATION

The views expressed in this article are those of the writer and do not necessarily reflect those of the publication



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## Korea, Kuwait cooperation expands into new strategic areas

Ambassador of the Republic of Korea H.E. Chong-Suk Park, lauded the strength of Kuwaiti-Korean relations, describing them as a model of fruitful cooperation built on trust, mutual respect, and excellence at all levels.

Addressing a media conference last week, Ambassador Park explained that diplomatic relations between South Korea and Kuwait were officially established in 1979. However, cooperation between the two countries began four years earlier in 1975 in the construction sector, while collaboration in the energy sector dates back to 1964.

Noting that in 2024, the two nations celebrated the 60th anniversary of their energy cooperation, the ambassador added that 2025 marks another significant milestone in bilateral partnership, as it will be the 50th anniversary of Korean companies winning their first construction project in Kuwait. The ambassador highlighted the vital role Korean companies have played in developing Kuwait's infrastructure, contributing to major projects such as the First and Sixth Ring Roads, Highway 30, and most recently the Sheikh Jaber Bridge, which has become a symbol of strong bilateral ties. He emphasized that Kuwait-Korea cooperation is expanding into strategic new sectors in alignment with Kuwait's Vision 2035 development plan. He elaborated by noting that Korean companies are involved in several future projects, including the operation of the (T4) passenger terminal at Kuwait International Airport, the development of new cities, smart farms, fiber optic cable factories, and in the healthcare sector, with expectations for further growth in these fields in the coming years.



Regarding the embassy's plans for this year, Ambassador Park announced its intention to celebrate the 50th anniversary of cooperation with Kuwait in the construction sector by organizing various events to strengthen bilateral relations. These include high-level exchanges, economic activities such as the Smart City Forum, and cultural and sports events like the Ambassador's Taekwondo Championship, the Korean Food Festival, the Film Festival, and cultural competitions. Additionally, activities focused on studying and tourism in Korea will be held to promote mutual understanding between the two peoples.

Concluding his speech, he emphasized the importance of these events in strengthening cooperation and fostering cultural and economic exchange, ultimately advancing bilateral relations to new heights.



# Canada, Kuwait celebrate 60 years of robust bilateral relations

*Ambassador Mawani highlighted that this milestone coincides with both nations assuming key leadership roles—Canada as President of the G7, and Kuwait as President of the Gulf Cooperation Council, and as the Arab Capital of Culture and Media for 2025.*

Canadian Ambassador to Kuwait H.E. Aliya Mawani, emphasized that the 60th Flag Day and the 60th anniversary of Canada-Kuwait relations come at a time of global change and transformation.

Ambassador Mawani highlighted that this milestone coincides with both nations assuming key leadership roles—Canada as President of the G7, and Kuwait as President of the Gulf Cooperation Council, and as the Arab Capital of Culture and Media for 2025.

Pointing out that these leadership roles offer both countries a platform to strengthen their partnership and global engagement, she emphasized their shared commitment to humanitarian action, cooperation, and promoting global security and stability, which were key priorities for economic development and prosperity worldwide.

The ambassador was speaking during the celebration of Canadian National Flag Day, held in the presence of Minister of Trade and Industry Khalifa Al-Ajeel and attended by members of

the diplomatic corps, as well as officers from the armed forces of various countries.

Ambassador Mawani stated that Canada and Kuwait both support a collective approach to problem-solving, emphasizing that greater achievements are possible through cooperation. She added that this principle defines their diplomatic relations and has been the foundation of Canada-Kuwait cooperation since their official ties were established on 27 April 1965.

This commitment was strengthened by Canada's role in Kuwait's liberation during the First Gulf War, with around 4,500 Canadian service personnel participating. It continues through Kuwait's hosting of a Canadian Armed Forces base since 2011, which plays a key role in regional security, stability, and humanitarian efforts.

Ambassador Mawani noted that the celebration is part of a year-long series of events in 2025, focusing on communication and key aspects of Canada-Kuwait relations, including

cultural exchange, trade, healthcare, education, technology, energy, defense, security, sports, and food. She announced the upcoming launch of the 60th anniversary 'Friendship Mix' at the iconic Canadian coffee brand, Tim Hortons, which is blending Canadian and Kuwaiti flavors for Ramadan. She encouraged everyone to follow their social media campaign showcasing influential figures connecting both nations.

The Canadian Ambassador highlighted that the shared history of Canada and Kuwait is one of cooperation, making this year's focus on communication especially fitting. She pointed to the 60th anniversary logo, displayed on the screen, as a perfect reflection of this theme. The design incorporates traditional Al-Sadu weaving, a key element of Kuwaiti heritage, and blends symbols from both nations. It features the Kuwaiti flag and triangle design, alongside the Canadian maple leaf and the Inuksuk, a stone landmark used by Indigenous communities in the Canadian Arctic as a navigational guide and meeting point.

The ceremony featured a special performance by Canadian music icon Steve Barakat in honor of Flag Day. To mark the 60th anniversary of Canada-Kuwait relations, Barakat composed a piece titled 'Snow Dunes', which he premiered at the Yarmouk Cultural Centre of the Islamic Antiquities House alongside Kuwaiti pianist Faisal Al-Behairi. The audience was invited to enjoy the piece during the event.

Ambassador Mawani concluded her speech by extending her best wishes to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshaal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and the Kuwaiti people on National Day and Liberation Day, saying, "Long live Kuwait and its people." She also expressed gratitude for the long-standing friendship between Canada and Kuwait, emphasizing the importance of communication, cooperation, and preserving human dignity for a sustainable future. She reaffirmed the commitment to a strong and lasting partnership, working together for peace, security, and prosperity for both nations and future generations.

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# Government to repeal Article 153 on leniency for honor crimes

Minister of Justice, Nasser Al-Sumait, announced that the government seeks to repeal Article 153 of the 1960 Penal Code, which grants "a reduced sentence for men who kill a wife, mother, daughter, or sister caught in adultery."

Al-Sumait stated that this article has no basis in Islamic law and causes more harm than good. He added, "It discriminates between men and women and is considered one of the most problematic legal provisions, drawing criticism from international organizations against Kuwait."

He explained that after the abolition of this article, the killing of women will be treated like any other murder case, with the standard provisions of the Penal Code applied to the

accused. Repealing Article 153 is key to advancing justice, gender equality, and aligning Kuwait's laws with international human rights standards. Al-Sumait disclosed that the proposal to repeal this article will be submitted to the Council of Ministers in its next session for approval.

He further pointed out that the explanatory memorandum states that the repeal aligns with the Constitution, specifically Article 29, which guarantees "equality in human dignity, public rights, and duties, and prohibits discrimination based on gender, origin, language, or religion."

Article 153 of the 1960 Penal Code provided



a mitigating legal excuse for a man who killed his wife, mother, daughter, or sister upon catching her in the act of adultery. Limiting this provision to men constituted gender-based discrimination, as it assumed only men experience such emotions, despite women having similar

feelings. Additionally, reducing penalties contributes to prevalence of this crime

Furthermore, Article 153 contradicts Kuwait's obligations under international agreements, particularly the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Article 153 of the Penal Code states: "Whoever catches his wife in the act of adultery, or finds his daughter, mother, or sister in an indecent situation with a man and immediately kills her, the man, or both, shall be punished by imprisonment for a period not exceeding three years and a fine not exceeding three thousand dinars, or by one of these two penalties."

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights establishes a common standard for states in defining and protecting rights. It affirms that all individuals are equal in rights, and both men and women are entitled to enjoy their rights without distinction based on race, color, or sex. It also guarantees equal rights in marriage, during marriage, and upon its dissolution.



## Najira departs to Iraq after a successful Kuwait experience

Najira Noushi, a solo mom traveler, has once again embarked on another thrilling adventure, adding Iraq to her list of destinations after completing a successful visit to Kuwait.

As she journeyed to Iraq, her departure was marked by a heartwarming farewell organized by members of the Indian community at the Mughal Mahal Hawally restaurant. This event highlighted her remarkable achievements and the admiration she has garnered from the community.

During her month-long stay in Kuwait, Najira made the country her tenth destination in her series of road trips across the Middle East. Her travels have not only been about exploring new places but also about sharing her experiences and adventures with a growing audience. Through her vivid storytelling and captivating content, Najira has inspired many with her tales of exploration and resilience.

The Indian community in Kuwait honored Najira for her extraordinary accomplishments, recognizing the determination and grit required to undertake such a challenging

and arduous journey. Ashok Kalra, managing partner of Mughal Mahal, praised Najira's endeavors, describing them as a shining example of women empowerment and a role model for young women everywhere.

Reflecting on her experiences in Kuwait, Najira expressed her gratitude for the warm hospitality extended to her by both the local Kuwaitis and the Indian community. She felt overwhelmed by the support and welcome she received, which made her stay even more memorable.

On Friday, February 14th, Najira set off for Iraq, concluding her successful visit to Kuwait. This journey marked a significant milestone as she became the first solo Indian woman to undertake such a challenge by car. Najira's story continues to inspire and empower, showcasing the incredible feats that can be achieved with courage and perseverance.

<https://timeskuwait.com/renowned-road-traveler-najira-noushad-completes-10th-country-journey-in-kuwait/>  
Instagram handle: [naajinoushi\\_solo\\_momtraveller](https://www.instagram.com/naajinoushi_solo_momtraveller)



## New law to prevent violations of commercial licenses

Ministry of Commerce and Industry has finalized a draft decree-law to combat illegal commercial operations. The law aims to prohibit foreigners, whether individuals or entities, from conducting commercial activities in Kuwait without the required licenses from the relevant authorities, in line with existing laws.

The new draft decree law prohibits any natural or legal entity from enabling foreigners to violate existing laws through commercial cover-up operations. This includes allowing them to use a trade name, license, official approvals, trade register, or any other means to engage in economic activity illegally.

The Commercial Cover-Up Law also bans any attempt to obstruct or prevent competent

authorities from carrying out their duties, whether by withholding required information or providing false or misleading data.

Article 3 of Chapter III grants the Minister of Commerce—or a designated representative—the authority to appoint certain employees as judicial officers, enabling them to conduct inspections, monitor compliance, and take action against violations in suspected commercial activities.

Article 4 stipulates that, without prejudice to any stricter penalties under the Penal Code or other laws, anyone violating this law will be subject to penalties for fraud under the Penal Law. Additionally, the establishment will be closed, and the violator will be removed. Final judgments against violators will also be published on the Ministry of Commerce's website to ensure transparency and deter violations.

This law aligns with Kuwait's efforts to regulate the business environment, promote fair competition among investors, and protect the local market from illegal practices that harm the national economy.



## LuLu Conducts Comprehensive Medical Camp for Employees in Kuwait

Lulu Hypermarket Kuwait organized a large-scale medical camp for its employees at the Regional Office in collaboration with the Indian Doctors Forum Kuwait and the Indian Nurses Federation of Kuwait (INFOK). This initiative aimed to promote employee well-being by providing essential health screenings and consultations across multiple medical specialties.

The camp featured over 10 specialized departments, including General Medicine, Cardiology, Radiology, Gynecology, ENT, Physical Medicine, Orthopedics, General Surgery, Ophthalmology, and Oncology. More than 30 experienced doctors and over 25 nurses participated, ensuring high-quality medical support for Lulu employees.

Employees benefited from comprehensive health checkups, including blood glucose,



cholesterol, and blood pressure tests, along with advanced diagnostic services such as ultrasound and ECG.

Lulu Kuwait remains committed to prioritizing the health and wellness of its workforce, reinforcing its dedication to employee care and corporate social responsibility.

# Kuwait Steel: Focused on Expansion, Committed to Quality, Safety, Environment

Faisal Al Khaldi

Deputy CEO of United Steel Industrial Company

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In an exclusive interview with Deputy CEO of United Steel Industrial Company, Faisal Al Khaldi, The Business Year (TBY) discussed the company's challenges, its involvement in major development projects in Kuwait, and investments in optimizing production through Artificial Intelligence and robotics, as well as the company's commitment to sustainability

## What have been the main challenges and opportunities for Kuwait Steel in recent years?

Over the years, United Steel Industries Company, also known as Kuwait Steel, has established itself as a reliable partner in the country's construction industry. Our technical expertise has grown through the experience of our personnel and facilities, our workforce consists of substantial Kuwaiti talent, and in the near future rapid Kuwaitization will further strengthen the available in-house Kuwaiti talent.

However, our current challenge lies in the scarcity of metal scrap, a crucial raw material for our operations. In Kuwait, demolition waste, construction and industrial scrap serve as our primary sources. We process magnetized materials in our furnace, melting them to create liquid steel. From this, we produce billets, which are then used to manufacture rebar for construction projects locally, and are also exported overseas. The current dynamics create a challenging situation where Kuwaiti-owned scrap yards generate significant income, but the benefits largely flow to non-Kuwaiti

workers and other countries, leaving the local steel industry at a disadvantage.

## Can you highlight some of the major projects Kuwait Steel has participated in and its partnerships with public-private entities?

We aim to be part of nearly all government projects in Kuwait. Materials from Kuwait Steel can be found in prominent structures like Al Hamra, NBK Tower, Al Tijara, Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah Causeway, the New Kuwait International Airport, Al Shaheed Park, Khiran Mall, Avenues Mall, 360 Degrees Mall, Al Arena Kuwait, RAFA Nadal Academy, Mourouj Food Complex, Al Zour

“Achieving complete green transformation of the steel industry is projected to be at least 50 years away, given current cost constraints”

Refinery, LNG gas terminals, desalination/power plants, and more.

As a major rebar provider, we contribute to the construction of various government projects across the country. The existing projects have been ongoing for years, and we face restrictions in exporting our products. Our only option is to expand our market share. The government and Parliament must recognize the added value of the private sector to address this persistent problem.

## How is the company integrating sustainability into its core business?

We are committed to reducing our carbon footprint in every way possible; however, achieving complete environmental friendliness poses challenges, such as sourcing raw materials globally. Even if we maximize our green efforts, the world may not be fully prepared for widespread sustainability. Legislation is crucial to support and incentivize companies investing in eco-friendly practices. Without government support, the added costs of green initiatives can hinder competitiveness.

In Kuwait, we employ various sustainable practices, utilizing local scrap and adopting eco-friendly measures, such as recycling water and minimizing paper usage. While we strive for sustainability, a more mature approach and government support are essential for a broader impact in Kuwait. The Ministry of Environment needs to advocate for more environmental initiatives, despite the challenges. Our factory, a testament to government assistance, is just a fraction of our capabilities.

## How have Kuwait Steel's investments in technology supported its goal of becoming an industry leader?

AI and robotics play a significant role in streamlining production processes, particularly in handling tasks that involve high temperatures and hazardous conditions. Collaborating with industry leaders, we aim to enhance technology in Kuwait, focusing on reducing human intervention in complex processes. In terms of steel production, our recipe involves blending 17 components, including iron ore, DRI, HBI, limestone, and carbon, to meet stringent standards. AI is integral to optimizing this recipe, minimizing human involvement.

In the broader context of environmental



sustainability, the industry is exploring alternatives like hydrogen to replace natural gas. However, achieving complete green transformation in the steel industry is projected to be at least 50 years away, given current cost constraints.

Drawing a contrast with older technologies, such as coal-based melting used by certain steel producers, our approach at Kuwait Steel involves using electricity for melting. The emissions from this process are efficiently managed through a back-of-house dust system, converting gases into usable materials for cement companies or extracting raw materials like zinc. Our commitment to sustainability ensures that nothing goes to landfills, contributing to a circular economy.

[Faisal Al Khaldi is Deputy CEO Chief & board member of Kuwait Steel. He is a business administration graduate and started his career in Kuwait Steel 15 years ago, rising through the ranks before being appointed to his current position. He is considered a stalwart in the GCC steel fraternity.]

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## Luncheon reception hosted for diplomats, business people

Dr. Haila Al Mekaimi, professor of political science at Kuwait University and a prominent member of the Advisory Committee for the Supreme Council of the Leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries, held a luncheon reception last week. The event attracted a distinguished gathering of diplomats and businessmen who engaged in significant discussions about the political and economic landscape of Central Asia.

The luncheon took place in Dr. Al Mekaimi's

Diwaniya, a traditional Kuwaiti gathering space known for its warm and inviting atmosphere. The Diwaniya was adorned with a culturally rich décor that reflected the heritage and sophistication of the host. The ambiance was set to foster open dialogue and intellectual exchange among the guests.

A major highlight of the luncheon was the in-depth discussions on the politics and economy of Central Asia. The region, known for its strategic importance and abundant



natural resources, was analyzed from multiple angles.

The luncheon was a resounding success, bringing together a remarkable group of individuals dedicated to the advancement of global diplomacy and economic development. The event not only facilitated high-level discussions but also reinforced the importance of cultural and intellectual exchanges in addressing the complexities of international relations.

## Reviving tourism sector supports economic goals

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and providing access to allocation of state-owned lands and real-estate for tourism development. The draft also includes developing comprehensive plans for tourism promotion, marketing the Kuwaiti tourism products globally, creating a domestic tourism market, and increasing tourist arrivals in the country. Additionally, the draft calls for adoption of an annual state plan for hosting festivals, events, exhibitions, and tourism conferences, with the aim of attracting visitors and generating economic, social, and cultural benefits for Kuwait.

Significantly, the draft law calls for amending visa regulations to encourage tourist arrivals and improve Kuwait's global image as a secure and welcoming destination. In this regard, it is noteworthy that in January the Ministry of Interior announced the streamlining of visa and residency processes with the aim of attracting visitors and boosting tourism in the country.

In addition to citizens of 52 countries being able to obtain visas upon arrival in Kuwait, the restructured visa procedures allow residents of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states who meet certain eligibility criteria, to apply for tourist visas at border crossings. The new visa regulations also simplify the processes involved in applying for family, tourist, and commercial visas.

Additionally, the upcoming Unified Tourist Visa, also known as the Grand Tours visa, is expected to further enhance tourism in Kuwait and the region. The unified visa, which is expected to launch this year, will allow residents

and tourists in any GCC country to visit the other five states and stay for 30 days or more, without the need for separate visas. Besides enhancing tourism, this initiative will benefit businesses, boost economic diversification, and promote sustainable growth in the region.

By demonstrating its commitment and administrative capacity to implement the draft tourism law, the government will encourage the private sector and foreign investors to confidently make investments in the tourism sector, based on the knowledge that their operations will receive the backing of the state. The lack of such a guarantee in the past has been considered a major stumbling block to tourism investments in the country.

According to the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), travel and tourism is one of the world's biggest economic activities, driving the creation of wealth, employment and development. The tourism sector is supported and complemented by several tourism focused industries, including hotels and other accommodations, restaurants and dining venues, air, land and sea transport, retail trade, travel agencies, as well as cultural, sports, and recreational activities.

Besides contributing to the holistic growth and development of its economy as well as environmental sustainability of the nation, travel and tourism also helps in building the country's brand value, image and identity. As a founding member of the UNWTO, now branded as UN Tourism, and in line with its interest to develop the tourism sector, Kuwait is keen to cooperate with the UN entity to foster inclusive socio-

economic growth and development.

As a highly urbanized state, Kuwait offers many built attractions and services to tourists and visitors. It offers a world class experience in hospitality with its small yet strong hotel industry, a large number of world-class shopping malls, arcades, restaurants, museums, theaters, and cultural centers. In addition, the country has a famed corniche dotted with beaches and marinas, as well as extensive parks, entertainment venues, and beach resorts.

While the built attractions in Kuwait are similar to those available in neighboring states, what differentiates the country is its distinctive cultural and archeological heritage. With adequate government support and appropriate promotion, Kuwait could leverage this unique characteristic to attract local and international tourists, and also encourage investments in this sector.

Kuwait has a rich history of archaeological discoveries that underline the ancient civilizations that settled its land throughout history. These excavations highlight the country's strategic location that enabled it to play a crucial role in facilitating transport, communication, and cultural exchange between people and civilizations eons ago.

Failaka Island, lying 20km off the coast of Kuwait City, is one of Kuwait's most prominent archaeological sites. Believed to have been settled around 2000 BCE following a fall in sea level, the island has been linked to the Sumerian city-state of Ur in the third millennium BCE. From the third to the middle of the first millennium, Failaka, known as 'Agarum' in ancient Sumerian

texts, was also a hub for the Dilmun civilization. The island has also been closely linked to Classical Greece and Hellenistic dynasties, and served as an outpost for armies of Alexander the Great.

Archeological evidence also highlights an even more ancient site in Al-Sabiya, located in northern Kuwait. International excavations there have uncovered evidence of civilizations dating back to the Ubaid period (4500-5500 BCE), including settlements with adjacent chambers, burial mounds, as well as arrowheads, axes, and other Neolithic stone tools. Notably, the discovery of a mud model of a sea-vessel, believed to be the oldest known in archeology, indicates significant maritime activity and trade with nearby civilizations.

More recent excavations around Kuwait City, have revealed three-century-old settlements, including ancient neighborhoods with rare artifacts such as coins, pottery, and remains of houses, along with traces of Kuwait's second defensive wall, offering insights into the city's historical development. The country's rich cultural heritage as evidenced by the ancient archeological findings offer the potential for Kuwait to develop a differentiated tourism experience for visitors.

By clearly defining its ambitions and positioning itself globally as a desirable destination, Kuwait can develop a comprehensive and resilient tourism strategy, which supports the enacting and implementation of policies and initiatives that promote tourism. This will also support the country's Vision 2035, and Kuwait's renaissance as a cultural center that attracts people from the region and beyond.

## AmCham Kuwait, NCHL spotlight telehealth's role in healthcare

AmCham Kuwait, in partnership with the National Center for Healthcare Leadership (NCHL), successfully hosted 'Navigating the Future of Healthcare in the GCC and Kuwait', highlighting telehealth innovations and healthcare digitization.

Building on the success of Kuwait's 2022 healthcare conference, this year's discussions delved deeper into the transformative role of telehealth in healthcare delivery. Esteemed speakers from around the world shared insights on cutting-edge technologies, presented successful case studies, and explored future opportunities in the field. The event served as a vital platform for examining how telehealth is revolutionizing healthcare accessibility, enhancing patient outcomes, and addressing ongoing challenges in healthcare delivery.

Featured speakers were Sales Manager at Oracle Health, MEA, Ali Alassy; Executive Director for Microsoft Cloud Solutions, Ashraf Khader; Senior Director of Strategic and International Initiatives at NCHL, Jarrett Fowler; Head of Healthcare at Amazon Web Services (AWS) for EMEA, Jens Dommel; Medical Director of Global Services at Children's National Hospital and Practice of Medicine Coach at George Washington School of Medicine, Dr. Karen Louise Smith, MD, MEd, SFHM; Solutions Architect at CISCO, Mohamed Al Khatib; and Operating Partner at Deerfield Management in New York, Dr. Mussaad Al-Razouki.

The event concluded with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between AmCham Kuwait and the National Center for Healthcare Leadership (NCHL), underscoring



their commitment to strengthening ties between American healthcare institutions and Kuwait.

A delegation of leading US hospitals attended the ceremony, expressing keen interest in supporting Kuwait's healthcare digitization efforts. The event served as a pivotal platform for fostering partnerships and shaping

the future of healthcare in the region, marking a significant step toward enhancing accessibility and quality across the GCC, particularly in Kuwait.

AmCham Kuwait and NCHL extended special thanks to their sponsors, Platinum Sponsor, Al Hajery Pharmacy, Kuwait; the Gold Sponsor Mass General Brigham from the US.

# Kuwait a reliable friend, trusted partner of Uzbekistan

*Diplomatic relations between the two countries were established in July 1994. In 2001, the Embassy of the State of Kuwait was opened in Tashkent, and in November 2004, the Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan was opened in Kuwait. To date, there have been two high-level visits – in 2004 to Kuwait and in 2008 to Uzbekistan.*

By H.E. Ayub Khan Yunusov  
 Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Kuwait

Kuwait is a reliable friend and partner of Uzbekistan in the Middle East, and was one of the first countries to recognize the independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan on 30 December 1991, said Ambassador of Uzbekistan H.E. Ayubkhan Yunusov.

He added, "Since then friendly relations between the two countries have been based on a shared desire for peace, economic development, and the prosperity of both peoples. The shared cultural, historical, and religious values, customs, and traditions are also of considerable importance, acting as a natural catalyst that accelerates cooperation between the two states,"

He pointed out that the legal framework for cooperation between the two countries includes Intergovernmental Agreements on the Promotion and Mutual Protection of Investments, on Cooperation in the Fields of Culture and Art, on Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation, on the Avoidance of Double Taxation, and on Cooperation between the State Customs Committees of Uzbekistan and Kuwait. The Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the two states work together on the basis of a Memorandum of Understanding, and the Diplomatic Academy of Kuwait and the University of World Economy and Diplomacy of Uzbekistan work together on the basis of a Partnership Memorandum.

Diplomatic relations between the two countries were established in July 1994. In 2001, the Embassy of the State of Kuwait was opened in Tashkent, and in November 2004, the Embassy of the Republic



of Uzbekistan was opened in Kuwait. To date, there have been two high-level visits – in 2004 to Kuwait and in 2008 to Uzbekistan.

In addition, a delegation headed by Sheikh Ahmed Nasser al-Muhammad al-Sabah, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs, participated in the international conference 'Central and South Asia: Regional Connectivity. Challenges and Opportunities', which took place in Tashkent in July 2023. During the delegation's visit, Sheikh Ahmad Nasser al-Muhammad al-Sabah, was received by the President of Uzbekistan, Sh.M. Mirziyoyev.

A joint intergovernmental commission (IGC) on trade, economic, scientific, and technical cooperation is in operation. At the IGC meeting last November in Tashkent, measures were agreed to expand the range of goods traded, sign a Preferential Trade

Agreement, expand cooperation in e-commerce, remove barriers, and hold "Made in Uzbekistan" and "Made in Kuwait" exhibitions on a mutual basis. A Program of Industrial Cooperation and an Agreement on Bilateral Investment Treaties are being developed.

Both countries understand the importance of strengthening trade and are consistently moving in this direction. The main items of trade turnover, which has grown almost seven times since 2020, are services, mineral fuels, food products, and chemical products. Nevertheless, and this is recognized at the highest level, there is still enormous untapped potential for increasing interaction in this area.

A similar situation is observed in the field of investment cooperation. There are seven enterprises operating in Uzbekistan with the participation of Kuwaiti capital.

Kuwait fully supports Uzbekistan's reforms, and with the financial and advisory support of the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED), major social projects in healthcare, education, and various infrastructure sectors are being implemented in Uzbekistan. In total, 10 credit agreements have been signed with KFAED for a total of \$213.2 million and four technical assistance agreements for \$2.5 million.

Expert opinion is unanimous—despite the distance, the two countries have significant potential for increasing trade and investment partnership, and industrial cooperation. Analysis shows the effectiveness of using mutual trade opportunities to organize trade supplies, joint ventures, and access to large regional markets.

A meeting of leading entrepreneurs from Uzbekistan and Kuwait is expected in the very near future, which means that new trade contracts and investment projects will not be long in coming, said the ambassador in conclusion.



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**THE HONORABLE PRESIDENT OF UZBEKISTAN  
 SHAVKAT MIRZIYOYEV**  
 TO THE STATE OF KUWAIT

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# Uzbekistan and Kuwait: Towards Mutually Beneficial Cooperation

*Foreign policy concepts of the two countries are very similar. Both Uzbekistan and Kuwait see their development prospects as being closely connected with the countries of their respective regions.*

**By Aziz Karimov,**  
Leading researcher at the Institute for Strategic and Regional Studies under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan

In recent years, within the framework of its renewed foreign policy concept, Uzbekistan has been strengthening its external relations with traditional partners, enhancing its activities in international organizations, and expanding its partnerships' geography. This trend is particularly evident in Uzbekistan's efforts to elevate its relations with the Gulf Arab states to a new level. An important aspect is that relations with these countries are developing both multilaterally and bilaterally. This is reflected in establishing the 'Central Asia – Gulf Arab States Council Strategic Dialogue' and successfully hosting the first high-level summit in this format in 2023. Tashkent places special emphasis on developing bilateral relations with the region's countries, with Kuwait being a priority.

Recently, Uzbekistan has intensified political dialogue with Kuwait. In April 2024, Kuwait's Foreign Minister, Abdullah al-Yahya, was received by the President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev. In 2024 alone, five rounds of negotiations were held between the two countries' foreign ministers. The dialogue between economic agencies and business circles has also been strengthened. Last year, over 100 Uzbek entrepreneurs visited Kuwait City. In May and August 2024, two business forums and 'Made in Uzbekistan' exhibitions were organized in Kuwait. In turn, business forums were held in Uzbekistan with the participation of a 31-member Kuwaiti business delegation. Prominent Kuwaiti companies also visited Uzbekistan.

It is important to note that the activation of relations in this manner is not without reason. Kuwait is a comprehensively beneficial partner for Uzbekistan. This is due to several factors.

First, the foreign policy concepts of the two countries are very similar. Both Uzbekistan and Kuwait see their development prospects as being closely connected with the countries of their respective regions. Just as Uzbekistan plays a crucial role in the integrity and stability of Central Asia, Kuwait holds a significant position in the development of regional cooperation among Gulf states. In this context, it is worth recalling that the late former Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Jaber al-Ahmad al-Sabah, was one of the founders of the Gulf Cooperation Council. Similarly, at the modern stage, the President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, has fulfilled a historical mission. His election as President of Uzbekistan positively influenced the political situation in Central Asia. Uzbekistan chose the path of rapprochement with its neighbors and jointly building the region's future. The Consultative Meetings of regional leaders, initiated by the President of Uzbekistan, now serve as a key mechanism for ensuring intensive cooperation.

Second, the countries share common approaches within their participation in international organizations. For instance, Kuwait and Uzbekistan present similar views and proposals on platforms such as the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. Both countries advocate for joint efforts to address international security issues



and promote stable, inclusive development. Tashkent and Kuwait City have supported each other's initiatives, providing political backing to these organizations.

Third, the two countries have aligned economic development strategies. Uzbekistan and Kuwait have placed economic modernization and diversification at the center of their domestic agendas. These goals are reflected in the New Uzbekistan 2030 and New Kuwait 2035 strategies. Both countries are undergoing a similar historical stage of development, namely a period of profound transformation. The success of this process depends not only on internal factors but also on creating a favorable external environment. Therefore, both countries are interested in



expanding their circle of external partners, attracting investments, and accessing new markets. Establishing constant coordination in these areas would be mutually beneficial.

Fourth, developing bilateral economic relations is equally advantageous for Uzbekistan and Kuwait. This is closely linked to the two countries' international and regional financial and geographical significance and strategic goals. Uzbekistan holds a strategically important geographical position in Central Asia, as it is the only country in the region that shares borders with all other Central Asian states. Uzbekistan also provides access to Eurasian markets. Moreover, the country is at the crossroads of major international land routes. This means that Uzbekistan, and Central Asia as a whole, is strengthening its

position in the new global economy model, restoring its role as a traditional transport corridor connecting East and West. Kuwait's location is also of strategic importance, both regionally and globally. While Uzbekistan is at the crossroads of land routes, Kuwait is at the intersection of maritime trade routes. Additionally, the country is located in the heart of the Middle East region.

The above factors indicate that industrial cooperation between Uzbekistan and Kuwait would create favorable opportunities for both countries to access third-country markets. Central Asian markets could serve as a platform for diversifying Kuwait's economy and reducing the dominance of fuel products in its trade. In turn, Uzbekistan could solve the



problem of accessing maritime trade routes by strengthening economic cooperation with Kuwait. The two countries could serve as logistical hubs for each other.

Another factor worth noting is the economic significance of the two countries. Uzbekistan has the second-largest economy in Central Asia. In recent years, the country's economy has shown high growth dynamics. Over the past seven years, Tashkent has doubled the country's GDP. By the end of 2024, Uzbekistan's GDP grew by 6.5 percent compared to the previous year, reaching \$115 billion. On the other hand, Kuwait is a country of significant importance for the global and Middle Eastern economies. The country holds a unique position in the current global energy security architecture. Kuwait is one of the world's top

ten oil-exporting countries, ranking second in the Gulf and sixth globally in oil reserves. Due to its rich resources, the country has one of the largest economies per capita in the world.

Considering the above factors, several areas of cooperation can be highlighted as particularly beneficial for Uzbekistan and Kuwait.

**Trade:** Over the past five years, trade turnover between Uzbekistan and Kuwait has increased fivefold. Currently, seven enterprises with Kuwaiti capital operate in Uzbekistan. However, this does not fully reflect the economic potential of both sides. In 2023, Kuwait's trade in goods and services with other countries amounted to \$164 billion, while Uzbekistan's figure reached \$63 billion. The agreement signed in 2024 to simplify trade processes could be a significant step in increasing trade dynamics.

**Investment:** Kuwait has significant investment potential. The Kuwait Investment Authority ranks second in the Gulf and fifth globally regarding financial capabilities. Its current assets are estimated at nearly \$1 trillion. Another fund, the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, is a prestigious organization that provides concessional grants and loans to developing countries. In turn, Uzbekistan is becoming a significant investment destination with vast opportunities. Since 2017, Tashkent has attracted nearly \$80 billion in foreign investments. From this perspective, Uzbekistan could be a promising direction for Kuwaiti investors.

**Tourism:** In 2022, nearly half (47%) of Kuwait's service imports were related to tourism. Kuwaiti tourists spent over \$10 billion abroad. With its rich cultural heritage, Eastern science, and historical centers of Islamic culture, Uzbekistan could become an important tourism destination for Kuwaiti travelers.

**Digital Economy:** Both Uzbekistan and Kuwait are rapidly introducing modern digital technologies into their economies. Kuwait's information and communication technology market currently exceeds \$22 billion, while Uzbekistan's digital economy is worth nearly \$4.5 billion. Therefore, Kuwait could share its extensive experience in successfully integrating digital infrastructure into the economy with Uzbekistan. This aligns with the priority goals of the Digital Uzbekistan 2030 Strategy.

**Agriculture:** Kuwait's agricultural capabilities are limited. The country imports nearly

94 percent of its food needs. With its high potential in food production, Uzbekistan could be a promising partner in ensuring Kuwait's food security. This cooperation could develop through the establishment of joint production enterprises. It is worth noting that Kuwait has significant experience in this area, having financed 45 agricultural projects in 21 African countries in recent years to ensure food security.

In conclusion, economic and political cooperation between Uzbekistan and Kuwait will be a significant step in ensuring the steady development of both countries. Strengthening bilateral relations between the two states will provide another strong impetus for enhancing interregional cooperation.



# Diplomatic Relations Between Uzbekistan and the State of Kuwait Are Reaching a New Level

By **Ozodbek Nazarbekov**  
 Minister of Culture of Uzbekistan

Friendly relations with foreign states play an invaluable role in the development of any country. Especially in today's era of globalization, when the system of international relations is becoming increasingly complex, protecting national interests and enhancing a country's reputation on the global stage have become extremely important issues.

The level of development of a particular country is closely linked not only to its industrial or export potential but also to its ability to showcase its rich culture to the world. From this perspective, effectively organizing cultural diplomacy as a key component of foreign policy is a significant matter.

Today, Uzbekistan is actively working to develop its cultural diplomacy through productive cooperation with foreign states. The State of Kuwait, located on the Arabian Peninsula along the northwestern coast of the Persian Gulf, has been strengthening its multifaceted ties with Uzbekistan in recent years.

Diplomatic relations between Uzbekistan and Kuwait were established on July 8, 1994. Since then, cultural events, exhibitions, festivals, and scientific conferences have been organized to further develop cultural ties between the two nations.

To further enhance cooperation in the field of culture, permanent dialogue and experience exchange have been established between the relevant cultural organizations of both countries. Organizing joint cultural events and facilitating visits by representatives of art and culture have become a growing tradition.



“Today, Uzbekistan is actively working to develop its cultural diplomacy through productive cooperation with foreign states. The State of Kuwait, located on the Arabian Peninsula along the northwestern coast of the Persian Gulf, has been strengthening its multifaceted ties with Uzbekistan in recent years.”

When examining the current state and dynamics of cultural cooperation with Kuwait, numerous collaborative efforts can be observed, including:

From December 15 to 22, 2017, “Uzbekistan Culture Days” were held in Kuwait City, featuring an exhibition dedicated to Uzbekistan at the “Al-Adwaniya” gallery, along with concert programs.

Kuwaiti representatives participated in the international cultural forum “Central Asia at the Crossroads of World Civilizations” in Khiva (September 14-16, 2021), the “Lazgi” International Dance Festival in Khiva (April 25-30, 2022 and 2024), the III International Bakhshi Art Festival in Gulistan (May 5-8, 2023), and the II International Maqom Art Forum in Zomin (June 27-30, 2024).

From February 9 to 13, 2024, a creative group from

the Uzbekistan State Conservatory was sent on a tour to Kuwait. From August 26 to 30, 2024, famous Kuwaiti journalist and blogger Abdulkarim Al-Hindal Al-Hashimi, who has more than 20 million followers, participated in the “Sharq Taronalari” International Music Festival in Samarkand. During his visit, he shared video footage of Uzbekistan’s sacred sites, historical monuments, local traditions, and cultural values on his social media pages, which deserves special recognition.

To further strengthen bilateral cooperation and showcase Uzbek culture and art to the people of Kuwait, plans are underway to organize “Uzbekistan Culture Days” in Kuwait in 2025. Additionally, practical steps will be taken to develop cultural tourism and implement joint educational programs between cultural and artistic institutions in both countries.

Furthermore, opportunities exist to expand cooperation in areas such

as preserving and promoting national culture, launching joint projects, fostering partnerships between cultural institutions, and developing cultural tourism. Important documents are expected to be signed to solidify cultural collaboration and deepen mutual understanding and friendship between the peoples of the two nations.

I believe that cultural ties between Uzbekistan and this Arabian Peninsula country will continue to grow stronger.



WELCOMING  
 THE HONORABLE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN  
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# Uzbekistan conquering new frontiers in the field of Smart City Planning And Territorial Development

**By Tulaganov Baxrom Abdukabilovich**  
*PhD, dotsent Toshkent arxitektura-qurilish universiteti rektori*

The educational and scientific-technical cooperation between the Republic of Uzbekistan and Kuwait is strengthening year by year and expanding into new directions. Along with collaboration in traditional fields such as Arabic language and literature, Islamic studies, medicine, tourism, and economics, the two countries are now actively establishing cooperation in implementing "Smart City" projects. This is opening doors to new opportunities not only in the sphere of education and science but also in the realm of innovation and technology. The implementation of large-scale projects for the collaborative establishment of modern scientific and technological complexes, business incubators, and startup accelerators in Uzbekistan, involving leading Kuwaiti manufacturers, is of crucial importance for developing and commercializing innovative ideas, inventions, and technologies. These initiatives play a significant role in enhancing the effectiveness of scientific research, improving the personnel training system, and introducing advanced technologies into strategic sectors of the economy.

In Uzbekistan, the role of science in the socio-economic development

of regions is invaluable, and the implementation of the "Smart City" concept in this process is of strategic importance. Significant attention is being paid to enhancing the innovative potential of regions through scientific research and experimental design work, introducing digital technologies, and developing modern infrastructure. The collaboration between higher education institutions and regions involves developing scientifically-based proposals for socio-economic development and implementing them in practice. This, in turn, enables the advancement of "Smart City" projects and the organization of effective management based on modern technologies and data analysis.

As a result of research and analysis conducted this year, the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation has developed hundreds of proposals aimed at increasing the socio-economic potential of the regions. Also, specific plans are being developed in such areas as the development of "Smart Mahalla" projects based on innovative technologies, the creation of a digital services platform, and the rational use of resources.

In the sphere of regional development, Uzbekistan is working on a number of projects based on the experience of cooperation with Kuwait. Kuwait has implemented several large-scale projects to create smart cities, which are mainly aimed at combining



digital technologies and green infrastructure. Smart cities often rely on energy-efficient systems, solar panels, and energy-saving devices. For this reason, significant work has been done in Kuwait to effectively utilize renewable energy sources, especially solar energy.

Currently, the safety, environmental sustainability, and efficiency of cities remain among the most important factors for the comfortable life of people. Therefore, the "Smart City" concept has been developed in Uzbekistan, and experiments are being conducted to implement the project. At this point, the question may arise: why are "smart cities" needed?

Today, the population of the world is growing sharply. In such conditions, smart technologies play an important role in solving problems related to urbanization, improving

the ecological environment, and ensuring safety. "Smart cities" not only solve a number of problems but also find solutions for them, for example: Traffic and transport problems in this case, controlling roads through artificial intelligence and reducing traffic jams, increasing the efficiency of public transport. In addition, smart surveillance cameras, analytical programs, and artificial intelligence play an important role in crime prevention. In addition, it can control the environment, that is, control air quality, develop directions in waste recycling and energy efficiency.

Through the digital management system, public services, urban infrastructure, and utility systems will be automated. As an example, we can take Kuwait city. The city of Kuwait is entirely controlled by smart security

systems. This city has managed to ensure the safety and convenience of the population using artificial intelligence and IT technologies. Traffic is regulated, public places are under video surveillance, and emergencies are detected and promptly responded to through artificial intelligence.

A number of proposals have been submitted by the Tashkent University of Architecture and Civil Engineering for the implementation of a similar system in Uzbekistan. The university has engaged a group of specialists for the "Smart City" project, and experiments are being conducted on the project.

As a result of the experiment, specialists, relying on technologies, implemented the first stage of the "Smart City" project in an artificial intelligence system, that is, a systematized approximate view of the territory was developed, in which a digital control system and the use of solar energy were established. In addition, the project pays special attention to the installation of surveillance cameras, security systems, transport and parking lots, business centers, waste processing, energy efficiency, as well as the sustainable development of the green economy in order to safely protect the territories. Uzbekistan's "Smart City" project is a big step towards sustainable urban management.

The New Tashkent project is expected to be one of the key stages in the development of smart cities in the country.

Heartily Welcomes

His Excellency

Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev

President of the Republic of Uzbekistan

To Kuwait

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# Stringent scrutiny of money transfers made by exchange company

Regular or recurring transfers through money exchanges to individuals or establishments and irrespective of the transferred amount, will be strictly scrutinized and may require justification, without which, future transfers could be denied.

Regulatory authorities have recently tightened their oversight of exchange companies to ensure the identification of the actual beneficiary in financial transfers, even for amounts below KD50. The increased regulatory scrutiny of fund transfers from Kuwait is part of



the Central Bank of Kuwait's efforts to combat money laundering and terrorist financing, in line with Financial Action Task Force (FATF) requirements.

The FATF has emphasized the need to enhance regulatory controls on financial transfers to and from Kuwait. This includes verifying customer and beneficiary information, maintaining transaction records, including documents related to completed transactions or attempted transactions for at least five years from the date of transaction, and regularly updating collected data, documents, and

information as part of due diligence measures.

Additionally, exchange companies must ensure the accuracy of Financial Control Transactions (FCT) data submitted to the Central Bank of Kuwait, particularly for money transfers to and from Kuwait that meet or exceed KD3,000 (or the equivalent in foreign currency) within a single day.

Furthermore, exchange companies are required to assess the effectiveness of their procedures for reporting suspicious transactions. They must conduct research, investigations, and gather relevant information when there is suspicion that a transaction involves proceeds of crime or is linked to money laundering or terrorist financing. This includes scrutinizing all parties involved and ensuring that the findings of such investigations are documented in writing and retained for reference.

The Central Bank also underscores the importance of applying due diligence measures based on the risk level associated with each customer (low, medium, or high). This is to be verified by reviewing a selected sample of customer files and transactions, with a particular focus on high-risk customers.

Notably, the Central Bank of Kuwait mandates that exchange companies under its supervision engage an audit firm affiliated with an international office to assess their compliance with Law No. 106 of 2013, with special attention paid to unusual transactions or those lacking clear economic justification. This audit process must be conducted semi-annually, with reviews scheduled for June 30 and December 31 each year.

As part of the due diligence procedures followed by exchange companies in processing money transfers, an automated system is used

to verify names listed in transaction freezing decisions. These include names on sanction lists issued by the UN Security Council Sanctions Committee, as well as those designated by the local committee formed within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This measure aims to ensure compliance with regulations on combating

terrorism and preventing the financing of weapons of mass destruction.

Additionally, under regulatory directives, exchange companies are prohibited from providing any financial or related services to individuals, entities, or groups listed in fund-freezing decisions.



## Piano concert entrenches Canada, Kuwait relations

To commemorate 60 years of diplomatic relations between Canada and Kuwait, the world-renowned Canadian composer and pianist Steve Barakatt performed a piano concert at the Yarmouk Cultural Centre on 9 February. The event, which celebrated the enduring bonds and cultural connections between Canada and Kuwait, highlighted the unifying power of music.

For his first-ever performance in Kuwait, Barakatt presented his acclaimed *Néoréalité World Tour*. Audiences embarked on a magnificent musical journey through his most celebrated compositions, including a live performance of *Lullaby*—anthem of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)—which premiered from the International Space Station (ISS) to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

To mark his milestone performance in Kuwait, Barakatt composed 'Dunes of Snow', a special piece dedicated to the historic 60th anniversary celebrations. The world premiere of this evocative composition was the highlight of the evening, featuring a unique duet with renowned Kuwaiti pianist Faisal Al-Bahairi. This meaningful collaboration beautifully reflected the enduring friendship and cultural connection between Canada and Kuwait.

Barakatt expressed his excitement at performing in Kuwait, stating, "It was an honor to take part in this historic celebration, commemorating six decades of friendship between Canada and the State of Kuwait. Music has the unique ability to transcend borders and unite people, and I am thrilled to share this meaningful moment with the people of Kuwait."

In her address on the occasion, Ambassador of Canada H.E. Aliya Mawani, highlighted the significance of the event, saying, "This concert serves as a profound tribute to the enduring partnership and friendship between Canada and Kuwait. Over the past 60 years, our nations have fostered a relationship built on shared values, mutual respect, and collaboration. We are proud to partner with Dar Al Athar Al Islamiyyah, an organization dedicated to building bridges through culture. Through the universal language of music, this celebration underscores the strength, depth, and importance of our relationship."

Steve Barakatt, a Canadian artist of Lebanese heritage, is an award-winning composer,

pianist, music producer, and creative director with a career spanning over three decades. He has collaborated with leading artists, record labels, studios, brands, and organizations on hundreds of global projects.

As a concert pianist, Barakatt has performed more than 500 live shows across five continents, captivating audiences with his emotive and intricate compositions. His music has been featured in numerous TV programs and international sports broadcasts, including the FIFA World Cup and Formula 1 Grand Prix.



A prolific recording artist, Barakatt has sold over five million albums worldwide, and his music catalogue has garnered over 250 million views on YouTube. He is a Knight of the National Order of Quebec and has been recognized by several heads of state. Barakatt is a Universal Music MENA artist, with his music catalogue represented by Universal Music Publishing Group.

This historic event was presented in collaboration with the following partners and sponsors: Al Ghanim, Canadian College Kuwait, Equate Petrochemical Company, Gulf Insurance Group/Fairfax, KDD, Kuwait Chemical House Co., Stratejem, CAE, Al Mulla International Exchange, General Dynamics Land Systems-Canada, Packers Plus, and Qatar Airways.

## Turkish ambassador holds condolence meet



Turkish Ambassador H.E. Tuba Nur Sonmez received condolences on the recent passing of her beloved father.

Government officials, ambassadors, diplo-

mats, residents and media representatives expressed their heartfelt condolences to the ambassador during a condolence meeting held on 10 February.

# Azerbaijan's foreign minister to visit Kuwait for high-level talks in April

*Jeyhun Aziz oglu Bayramov will be accompanied by Azerbaijani business owners and institutions to meet their Kuwaiti counterparts, providing a platform to explore practical solutions for boosting trade between the two countries.*

Deputy Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan, Yalchin Ilkar Rafiyev, announced last week that his country's Foreign Minister Jeyhun Aziz oglu Bayramov will visit Kuwait at the end of April to participate in the Joint Commission meetings and discuss key initiatives and commitments of mutual interest.

The Azerbaijani minister was speaking during a media conference held at the conclusion of his meetings in Kuwait with Deputy Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Al-Jaber and several officials, and in the presence of the Ambassador of Azerbaijan H.E. Emil Karimov,

Rafiyev stated that "Azerbaijan and Kuwait are brotherly countries, and we consider Kuwait one of our closest friends worldwide. Whether bilaterally or within international organizations, we have excellent cooperation and a strong record of mutual support. At the same time, we believe that this strong political partnership must be complemented by economic and trade collaboration."

He continued, "At present, we need to further strengthen our trade and economic partnership. I am confident that our visit, followed by the meeting of the joint committee between the two countries, will contribute significantly to this goal. Additionally, we have



strong cooperation in humanitarian efforts, education, and fostering communication between our peoples, which is essential."

Rafiyev added, "Last year, we welcomed approximately 31,000 Kuwaiti tourists to Azerbaijan—a remarkable number considering Kuwait's population. There are currently three daily flights between Kuwait and Azerbaijan operated by different airlines, which reflects

the growing interest of Kuwaitis in visiting Azerbaijan, as well as Azerbaijanis in visiting Kuwait."

"The exchange of high-level visits is crucial for strengthening our bilateral relations. Today, we met at the level of deputy ministers, and our Foreign Minister, Jeyhun Bayramov, is scheduled to visit Kuwait on April 29-30. Furthermore, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev

has extended an invitation to His Highness the Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and we hope His Highness will visit Azerbaijan this year."

The Deputy Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan also encouraged Kuwaiti businessmen and investors "to explore investment opportunities in Azerbaijan's energy sector, particularly in clean and renewable energy, which can be highly profitable. Major Gulf companies, such as ACWA Power from Saudi Arabia and Masdar from the United Arab Emirates, have already begun investing in Azerbaijan. We have also invited Kuwaiti companies to participate in renewable and green energy projects."

He further emphasized that "agriculture is another sector with great potential in Azerbaijan, as we are actively working to develop our non-oil industries. The growth of the non-oil sector is largely driven by advancements in agriculture, presenting significant opportunities for companies to invest in Azerbaijan's agricultural sector."

Regarding food security, Rafiyev emphasized, "There are Azerbaijani companies ready to supply food products to the Kuwaiti market. We are currently working on identifying the most efficient logistical solutions."

## Business-Women in Kuwait shine in Forbes Middle East Power List

Business-women in Kuwait have once again earned recognition on Forbes Middle East's prestigious list of the 100 most powerful female business leaders in the Middle East for 2025. The magazine emphasized the significant and ongoing impact these women have across diverse sectors. Their leadership within prominent local and international companies demonstrates their influence in the region's business landscape.

**Shaikha Khaled Al Bahar:** Ranking 2nd on the list is Shaikha Khaled Al Bahar who assumed her current role as CEO of National Bank of Kuwait Group (NBK Group) in 2014, where she leads the NBK Group in 13 countries. In the first nine months of 2024, the group reported profits of \$1.6 billion and had \$128.5 billion in assets. In November 2024, it launched the second edition of NBK RISE, to help empower women in leadership. Al Bahar's board memberships include the board of trustees of the Al-Ojairi Scientific Center and the Egyptian Kuwaiti Cooperation Council. She is also the vice chairperson of the Turkish Bank in Türkiye.

**Wadha Ahmad Al-Khateeb:** Ranking 4th on the list is Wadha Ahmad Al-Khateeb who joined Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) in 1994 and assumed her role as CEO in 2022. KNPC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Kuwait Petroleum Corporation, owns subsidiaries like the Kuwait Aviation Fueling Company and the Kuwait Aromatics Company.

It recorded \$41.2 billion in revenues for the fiscal year 2023/24 ending March 2024. Wadha Al-Khateeb is also the acting CEO of the Kuwait Integrated Petroleum Industries Company, and vice chairperson of the Gulf Downstream Association. Before her current position, she was



the deputy CEO of Mina Abdullah Refinery.

**Dana Nasser Al Sabah:** Ranking 5th on the list is Dana Nasser Al Sabah who joined Kuwait Projects Company (Holding) KIPCO in 2004 and has been a board member since 2020. She was appointed group CEO in January 2022. The company generated profits of \$205.7 million in the first nine months of 2024 and had \$41.6 billion in assets. In April 2024, KIPCO's subsidiary, the OSN Group, closed a deal to combine OSN+, OSN's content streaming platform, with Anghami, after acquiring 55.45% of Anghami. Dana Al Sabah is also the founder and chair of the board of trustees of the American University of Kuwait, and the chairperson of the United Education Company, Jordan Kuwait Bank, and the OSN Group.

**Nadia Bader Al-Hajji:** Ranking 17th on the list is Nadia Bader Al-Hajji who joined Petrochemical Industries Company (PIC), a subsidiary of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation, in 2019 and assumed her current role in 2022. PIC recorded a net profit of \$127 million in the financial year ending March 2024.

Al-Hajji is also the chairman of the EQUATE Group and the Kuwait Olefins Company. She is a board member at the Canada Kuwait Petrochemicals Company, and a board member and treasurer at the Gulf Petrochemicals and Chemicals Association. She is also head of the Diversity and Inclusion Council at the Kuwait Petroleum Company and its subsidiaries, among other roles.

**Henadi Al-Saleh:** Ranking 22nd on the list

is Henadi Al-Saleh, Chairperson of Agility who joined the firm in 2007 to lead investor relations, financial planning, and analysis. She was appointed to her current role in 2014. Agility employs over 65,000 people, with a footprint across six continents. In the first nine months of 2024, it generated \$3.7 billion in revenues and had \$13.3 billion in assets. In January 2024, its subsidiary Menzies Aviation acquired a 50% stake in Jardine Aviation Services Group in Hong Kong. In May 2024, Agility Global was listed on the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange. Al-Saleh is also a board member at GWC and part of the Global Board of Advisors of the U.S.-based Council on Foreign Relations.

**Elham Mahfouz:** Ranking 54th on the list is Elham Mahfouz of Egypt who assumed her current role as CEO of Al-Tijari in 2014. In February 2024, Al-Tijari announced a partnership with Network International to aid its ongoing digital transformation, including fraud detection and prevention, tokenization, and cardholder self-serve application. In the first nine months of 2024, the bank had \$15.2 billion in assets and recorded net profits of \$290.6 million. Mahfouz has held multiple senior executive positions at Al-Tijari since joining the bank in 2000, including general manager in its New York branch.

**Donna Sultan:** Ranking 58th on the list is Donna Sultan who has been at KEO International Consultants since 1985, becoming CEO in 1991, then eventually president and CEO in 2016. The company launched OPTIMA, a facility management consultancy, in October 2024, and inaugurated its Jordan office in September 2024. In June 2024, the Kuwait Center for Nephrology and Kidney Transplant, which KEO International Consultants designed, became operational.





# Outstanding students honored at IBPC Meritorious Awards ceremony

Indian Business and Professional Council (IBPC) Kuwait hosted its seventh Meritorious Award Ceremony, honoring outstanding Indian students in Kuwait. The event celebrating academic excellence, was attended by Ambassador of India H.E. Dr. Adarsh Swaika, senior embassy officials, educators, parents, and IBPC members.

The ceremony was expertly hosted by young students serving as Masters of Ceremony from various Indian schools, showcasing the enthusiasm and brilliance of the student community. A total of 141 students who scored 96 percent and above in their 2024 Class X and Class XII board examinations were honored for their academic excellence.

Additionally, the Best Performing School Awards were presented to Indian Educational School (Bhavans Kuwait) as the Best Performing School for Class X and Indian Community School Kuwait as the Best Performing School for Class XII.

In his keynote address, IBPC Chairman CA Kaizar T. Shakir delivered a powerful and

motivating speech, urging students to embrace perseverance, continuous learning, and ethical values as the true drivers of success. He emphasized that while academic excellence is a great milestone, character and resilience are what truly shape future leaders.

Ambassador Swaika congratulated the awardees and praised their dedication, emphasizing the role of education in strengthening India-Kuwait ties and shaping a brighter future. The event was formally opened by IBPC Hon. Joint Secretary Sunit Arora, who welcomed the esteemed guests and later delivered the Vote of Thanks, acknowledging all stakeholders who contributed to the ceremony's success. The program was efficiently coordinated and supported by the IBPC Executive Committee members, Hon. Vice Chairman Gaurav Oberoi, Hon. Secretary Suresh K.P., and Hon. Treasurer Krish Suryakant.

IBPC extended its heartfelt gratitude to all participating schools, parents, and students. A special thanks was also rendered to all the sponsors—City Centre, Caesars Restaurant, Al

MailemCo., and Kuwait Swedish Co.—for their invaluable support, and to IBPC partners, the IIT/IIM Alumni Association, for their continued collaboration in fostering academic excellence.

IBPC Kuwait said it remains committed to

engaging, encouraging, and empowering Indian professionals, businesses, and students in Kuwait, further strengthening Indo-Kuwait relations in education, trade, and cultural exchange.

## Heavy fines, jail terms for parking in disabled parking areas



Ministry of Interior has announced a fine of KD150 for parking in spaces designated for people with disabilities if a reconciliation order is approved, emphasizing the importance of adhering to the law to avoid penalties.

The ministry announced that, starting from 22 April, the fine for parking in spaces designated for people with disabilities will be KD150. The ministry added that if referred to

the court, the penalty includes imprisonment for over one year and up to three years, a fine between KD600 and KD1,000, or one of these two penalties. The Ministry of Interior's notice regarding the violation of parking in spaces designated for people with disabilities is part of a campaign by the General Department of Public Relations and Security Media on the new traffic law, featuring awareness brochures in multiple languages.



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# Importance of Self-Love for Overall Health and Wellness

*Self-love encourages a healthy relationship with food and fitness—moving away from restrictive diets and harmful workout trends. Instead, it fosters a mindset that values holistic well-being, where nourishing the body becomes a form of self-respect rather than a means of achieving unattainable beauty standards.*



**By Hermoine Macura-Noble**  
Special to The Times Kuwait

The conversation around health and wellness is more expansive than ever in 2025, moving beyond physical fitness to mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being. At the core of this evolving perspective is a vital concept: self-love. While self-care practices like skincare routines or fitness regimens have gained popularity over the years, self-love is not just another wellness trend; it is the foundation for a balanced and fulfilling life.

"When we talk about self-love, we often relate it to self-care. The two are connected since self-care comes from a place of self-love... I believe that self-love begins at home. When I say 'home', I mean you are your home. We often see that gratification, affection, and love should come



Personal  
Identity Coach  
Carina Harvey

from a place outside of ourselves. This is where we start to give our power to other situations, aspirations we may hold, and even to other people. Yet to truly love yourself begins with you," explains personal Identity Coach Carina Harvey, host of the popular podcast, 'All Things Identity'.



Self-love is not about narcissism or selfishness; it is about caring for and respecting oneself. It involves recognizing your worth, accepting your imperfections, and setting boundaries to prioritize your well-being. As societal pressures, mental health struggles, and fast-paced living become more challenging, self-love is being acknowledged as a crucial element for achieving optimal health and wellness.

"Learning to love yourself without question requires commitment. When we struggle with comparison and self-criticism, it is usually based upon deep-seated habits that we initiated many years ago and have continued to affirm through repetitive action towards ourselves. Understanding how and why this habit was formed gives great insight into being able to reflect and reposition a person's thinking. This gives us a platform to implement new habits that serve a person's mindset and compassion for themselves," adds Harvey.

While it is easy to think of physical health as separate from mental or emotional well-being, the two are intrinsically connected. When we practice self-love, we prioritize our bodies through proper nutrition, exercise, and rest. It means respecting your body's needs and recognizing the signs it gives when it is time to

slow down or seek medical care.

Self-love encourages a healthy relationship with food and fitness—moving away from restrictive diets and harmful workout trends. Instead, it fosters a mindset that values holistic well-being, where nourishing the body becomes a form of self-respect rather than a means of achieving unattainable beauty standards.

The ability to love and respect yourself is foundational to building healthy relationships. We become more authentic versions of ourselves when we set boundaries and honor our needs. This contributes to more nutritious, more supportive connections with family, friends, and partners. Self-love also creates a space for individuals to become more in tune with themselves. It encourages self-reflection, self-awareness, and continuous growth.

"A lot of our negative thoughts stem from past versions of ourselves. During self-discovery, we learn whether our relationship with 'self' has broken down. Just like with any relationship, this gives us an insight into what needs to be repaired and worked on. Every individual is different. Some people may require therapy in certain areas," shares Harvey.

Experts suggest other practical ideas, such as practicing self-compassion, setting boundaries,

engaging in mindful practices, prioritizing rest and recovery, and seeking professional help if needed. From therapy apps to wellness retreats and online communities, finding tools to develop self-love is more accessible than ever.

"Don't be afraid, that would be the biggest piece of advice I could give you. Whilst it may feel uncomfortable and intimidating not feeling connected to who you are now, this is an opportunity for you to reconnect with yourself—and in my experience, this usually means an exciting transformation is coming. You've got this," concludes Harvey.



Self-love is the cornerstone of better mental health, improved physical well-being, stronger relationships, and personal growth. We create a healthier, happier, and more fulfilling life by embracing self-love. As we move forward, let us remember that loving ourselves is not a luxury—it is a necessity for achieving true wellness.

## 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



## LuLu Hypermarket Launches Ramadan Souq

LuLu Hypermarket officially launched its much-awaited "Ramadan Souq" at the Al-Rai outlet, On February 12, 2025, marking the beginning of an exciting and impactful Ramadan. The event was graced by esteemed representatives from prominent charity groups, including Namaa Charity, Mabarrat Kafel, Islamic Care Society, Baladal Al Khair, and Humanitarian Charity, who joined the celebration and symbolized the spirit of generosity and unity that defines the holy month of Ramadan.

The launch of the "Ramadan Souq" sets

the stage for LuLu's month-long Ramadan campaign, which aims to provide attractive offer, exceptional shopping experiences while making a positive impact on the community. As part of this year's campaign, LuLu Hypermarket has introduced a series of charity card initiatives designed to bring joy, support, and convenience to its customers throughout Ramadan.

LuLu Hypermarket has rolled out Festive Ramadan Gift cards and available in denominations of KD 5, KD 10, KD 25, and KD 50. These cards offer a simple and effective way

for shoppers to spread joy and support during Ramadan. To make Ramadan shopping even more convenient, LuLu Hypermarket is offering exclusive Ramadan kits in two options: a kit priced at KD 10 and KD 15. These kits contain a selection of Ramadan essentials, catering to the diverse needs of customers. Additionally, Iftar meal counters will be available throughout the store, offering ready-to-serve meals for those who are fasting.

This year's Ramadan campaign also brings exciting experiences to the store, including the

"Dates Festival," "Big TV Majlis," and "Ramadan Home," each catering to different tastes and preferences.

Through the launch of the "Ramadan Souq" and its upcoming Ramadan campaign, LuLu Hypermarket continues to strengthen its commitment to community, offering a unique blend of tradition, generosity, and modern shopping experiences. This year's initiatives reflect the spirit of Ramadan, providing customers with opportunities to give back, celebrate, and enjoy the holy month with loved ones.



# Fairmont Riyadh

## blending tradition with opulence

By Nourah Khan  
Travel Writer  
The Times Kuwait

During my stay at Fairmont Riyadh, I enjoyed a seamless blend of luxury, exceptional service, and elegance. From stylish accommodations to diverse dining and attentive hospitality, every detail showcased excellence. Whether you are visiting for business or leisure, Fairmont Riyadh stands as the ideal choice for those seeking both comfort and luxury.

During my visit, I stayed in a two-bedroom suite with a separate living area, making it an ideal choice for those who value privacy, relaxation, and modern luxury. The suite featured two elegantly designed bedrooms with plush beds and premium linens, a spacious living room with stylish décor perfect for unwinding or entertaining guests, and a dedicated dining area for in-room dining. The lavish marble bathroom included a deep soaking



tub, a rain shower, and high-end bath amenities, while floor-to-ceiling windows offered panoramic city views, adding a sense of grandeur to the stay. The thoughtful design and luxurious details of the suite made for an exceptional experience.

The restaurants at Fairmont Riyadh are among the hotel's standout features, offering a variety of gourmet dining experiences to suit all palates.

House of Grill is one of the top steakhouses in Riyadh, serving a premium selection of grilled meats and seafood. The restaurant's elegant lighting and refined décor create the perfect setting for an intimate and luxurious dining experience.

For those who appreciate authentic Italian cuisine, Che Figata, the hotel's signature Italian restaurant, is a must-visit. The dining experience offers a delightful fusion of traditional flavors with a modern touch. A visit to Fairmont Riyadh would not be complete without indulging in Afternoon Tea at Savoy Lounge,



an experience inspired by classic British traditions in an elegant setting. The ambiance and attention to detail made this a truly luxurious and relaxing experience.

For a complete relaxation experience, I visited the Fairmont Spa, where I enjoyed a signature massage that helped relieve tension and rejuvenate my energy. The spa's sauna, steam room, and relaxation lounge created an ideal atmosphere for unwinding after a busy day.

One of the standout aspects of my stay at Fairmont Riyadh was the exceptional level of service. Every staff member I encountered was professional, welcoming, and always ready to assist. Their attention to detail made me feel like a truly valued guest throughout my stay.

My experience at Fairmont Riyadh was nothing short of outstanding. The luxurious suite, exquisite dining, elegant afternoon tea, rejuvenating spa treatments, and world-class service all contributed to an unforgettable stay.

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



# AI Summit calls for global framework to reshape AI landscape

The Times Kuwait Report

The Artificial intelligence (AI) Summit held in Paris last week witnessed the launch of new partnerships, foundations, and projects. The two-day summit brought together global leaders, technology industry executives, and scientists to discuss AI's impact on international security, economics, and governance. The summit, co-chaired by French President Emmanuel Macron and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, took place as countries such as the US and China race for AI dominance.

Speaking at the Paris summit, Prime Minister Modi said India has one of the world's largest AI talent pools and it is developing artificial intelligence applications for public good. Saying that the world is at the "dawn of the AI (Artificial Intelligence) age", the Indian premier called for collective efforts to establish a global framework for AI that upholds shared values, addresses risks, builds trust and ensures access to all, especially the Global South. Co-chairing the AI Action Summit with French President Emmanuel Macron in Paris, Modi underlined the need for open-source systems that enhance trust and transparency, and building data sets "free from biases". He also offered to host the next summit in India.

Several major announcements were made ahead and during the AI Action Summit.

A group of 20 major European corporations, firms, and startups rallied behind a plan to invest €150 billion in European AI over the next five years. The initiative, led by venture capitalist firm General Catalyst, wants to bridge the gap between investors and startups to "unlock Europe's full potential in AI".

The group will also be working with the European Commission to "create a drastically simplified AI regulatory framework," with a



discussion set with "a select group of CEOs," to start strategizing on accelerating AI adoption. "By seizing this moment, working with greater intention, and embracing deep collaboration, Europe can seize a generational opportunity by leading in applied AI, integrating it into our industrial base to boost productivity, resilience, and economic sovereignty," Jeannette zu Fürstenberg, managing director of General Catalyst, said in a statement. More than 60 European companies have signed on to the initiative, including chipmaker ASML, Airbus, Mistral AI, Siemens, Spotify, Volkswagen, and L'Oreal Group.

President Macron launched a public interest foundation, Current AI, at the summit with an initial investment of €387 million from the French government, philanthropists, and industry partners. The foundation aims to reshape the AI landscape by expanding access to datasets, investing in open-source tools to make AI more transparent, and measuring AI's social and environmental impact.

"We have a critical window to shape the future of artificial intelligence," Martin Tisné, the founder of Current AI, said in a statement. "AI has the power to transform access to jobs, healthcare, and education for the better, but only if we act now. Current AI will drive a shift towards open, people-first technologies".

Eleven state governments, including EU members France, Germany, Slovakia, Finland, and Switzerland, are backing the project. According to a statement, the initiative brings together tech leaders to develop and provide free, open-source safety tools to public and private organisations.

The initiative will also make it easier to report online child sexual abuse material and will use the large language models that train AI systems to put in place "safety infrastructure". The NGO has support from the founders of Discord, OpenAI, Roblox, and other foundations. At the end of the summit, six data authorities signed a joint declaration to share information and work together to develop clear legal standards around how personal data

is collected and used by AI systems. It also asks that anyone building an AI system should include data and privacy protections in its design. The data authorities note that risks to personal data and privacy include algorithmic discrimination, disinformation and AI hallucinations.

A new partnership was also announced at the summit between French start-up Mistral AI and Helsing, a European defence technology company, who will work together on AI systems in defence. The joint project will work on so-called vision-language-action models that will help defence platforms "understand their environment, communicate naturally with operators, and allow for faster, more reliable decisions in complex scenarios".

Helsing already uses AI in its military technology, including in strike drones deployed in Ukraine. "Europe needs to assert its strength as a geopolitical actor, and AI leadership is the key to that strength," Gundbert Scherf, co-founder of Helsing, said in a statement.

Ahead of the summit, President Macron announced that the AI private sector in France will receive a dedicated €109 billion in the coming years. He added that the investment is the "equivalent for France of what the United States announced with Stargate," referring to US President Donald Trump's \$500 billion (€484.5 billion) AI private investment project announced in his first few weeks on the job.

Part of this funding includes a previously made deal with the United Arab Emirates to foot the bill for an amount between €30 and €50 billion to build a data centre campus that would be the largest in Europe. Canadian investment firm Brookfield also announced a €20 billion investment in AI infrastructure in France. French companies, including telecommunications firms Iliad and Orange, and Thales, an aerospace and defence group, are also contributing.



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