



**LOCAL**  
 Kuwait set to open  
 embassy in Tajikistan

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**LOCAL**  
 Immediate arrest and hefty  
 fines for 12 traffic violations  
 from April 22 onwards

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**WORLD**  
 Ability of international  
 organizations  
 to contain US tariff impacts

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# Waste to 'Waste-Wise Cities' for a Sustainable Future

**THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT**

From industries to agriculture, from cities to households, human development generates a wake of waste that keeps on growing. Every year, humanity generates around 2.3 billion tonnes of municipal solid waste (MSW), including nearly 931 million tonnes of food waste and up to 37 million tonnes of plastic waste. To put this enormous waste in perspective: If all the MSW produced annually is stuffed into standard 12-meter long shipping containers placed end to end. The container convoy would circle the entire Earth, not just once, but 25 times.

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the UN entity tasked with coordinating responses to environmental issues, warns that without urgent action, annual MSW could rise to 3.8 billion tonnes by 2050, causing significant land, water, and air degradation, as well as exacerbating the economic and health burden of countries. UNEP data shows that in 2020 the



global cost of waste-management, including the hidden costs arising from the improper disposal of waste, such as pollution, poor health, and climate change, was an estimated US\$361 billion.

Unless mitigatory measures to manage global waste are put in place, by 2050 the

annual cost could reach a staggering \$640 billion. Municipal solid waste (MSW), commonly called trash or garbage, refers to the non-liquid waste generated by households, businesses, and institutions. It includes everyday items like packaging, food waste, packaging material,

paper and yard waste, but excludes industrial, hazardous, and construction wastes. MSW is also a major contributor to global GHG emissions that precipitate climate change.

For a small country with a population of less than five million, the amount of waste generated per person in Kuwait is stupendously high. According to figures from the World Bank, Kuwait generates over three million tonnes of solid waste annually. This translates to around 1.7kg of waste generation per capita per day, which is more than double the global per capita average of 0.74 kg per day.

To alleviate the mounting waste problem, the government has been introducing advanced waste management facilities and developing new waste-water treatment plants. However, with limited land available, building more landfills and treatment plants is not a sustainable solution. Along with technological adaptations we also need to introduce social and legislative initiatives that tackle the unsustainable consumption patterns and waste generation practices seen in Kuwait.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



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# Kuwait set to open embassy in Tajikistan

*Ambassador of Tajikistan H.E. Zubaydullo Zubaydzoda stated that 2025 marks a milestone in bilateral relations, as it commemorates the 30th anniversary of diplomatic ties between Tajikistan and Kuwait. He expressed hope that these strong relations will continue to flourish for the mutual benefit of both nations.*

## The Times Kuwait Report

Dean of the Diplomatic Corps and Ambassador of Tajikistan H.E. Zubaydullo Zubaydzoda, stated that ties between Tajikistan and Kuwait have grown significantly over the years, based on mutual respect, shared interests, and international legal principles.

During a press conference marking the 30th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries, Ambassador Zubaydzoda announced the imminent opening of a Kuwaiti embassy in the Tajik capital, Dushanbe, along with the appointment of a Kuwaiti ambassador. He noted that a decree had been issued to this effect and expected the embassy to open within the next few months.

He also disclosed that the Kuwaiti government has allocated land in the diplomatic zone in Mishref for constructing a Tajik embassy, and that construction is set to begin soon. He also revealed that Tajikistan has allocated land for a Kuwaiti embassy in Dushanbe based on the principle of reciprocity.

Expanding on bilateral relations, the Tajik envoy stated that he was satisfied with the achievements made so far, with political relations between the two sides remaining distinguished. He noted that Kuwait will host a conference on foreign affairs for Gulf and Central Asian countries in mid-April, while a leaders' summit will take place in the Uzbek city of Samarkand in May.

Emphasizing on the importance of strengthening economic ties, the ambassador said, "We have signed approximately 30 cooperation agreements and memoranda of understanding

with Kuwait, and have a program in place to further develop economic relations between our two countries." He highlighted the contributions of the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, which has financed six vital projects in Tajikistan.

The Tajik ambassador urged Kuwaiti investors to explore opportunities in his country, emphasizing that Tajikistan offers a favorable climate for foreign investment. He further pointed out that leveraging Kuwait's financial and investment potential, combined with Tajikistan's economic capabilities and natural resources, would greatly benefit the implementation of national development strategies in both countries.



Additionally, he highlighted tourism as a key area of growing cooperation between the two nations, noting that direct flights between their capitals have contributed to this progress. He also emphasized the strategic significance of Tajikistan's location in Central Asia and Kuwait's position in the Middle East along the Silk Road trade route.

The Tajikistan ambassador noted that his country had abolished entry visa requirements for Kuwaitis and that discussions were underway with Kuwaiti authorities to facilitate Tajik nationals' entry into Kuwait. Foreign Minister Abdullah Al-Yahya pledged to address the matter promptly by enabling Tajiks to obtain electronic visas.

On the cultural side, Ambassador Zubaydzoda said ties were exceptionally strong and had witnessed remarkable growth over the past three decades, particularly in the fields of arts and literature. He also added that humanitarian relations between Tajikistan and Kuwait have also expanded significantly.



Looking ahead, he stated that 2025 marks a milestone in bilateral relations, as it commemorates the 30th anniversary of diplomatic ties between Tajikistan and Kuwait. He expressed hope that these strong relations will continue to flourish for the mutual benefit of both nations.



## LuLu Hypermarket marks Autism Day, interacts with autistic children

LuLu Hypermarket Kuwait hosted an event to mark World Autism Awareness Day on 2 April at its Al-Qurain outlet, aiming to raise awareness about autism and lend support to autistic individuals. The event featured a variety of activities, including games and interactive workshops designed specifically for children with autism.

A special highlight of the day was the participation of



students from the Conductive Education School for Special Needs - Kuwait, who took part in the event's activities, further emphasizing the importance of inclusion and understanding. The students engaged in various interactive sessions designed to promote social skills and sensory awareness.

Additionally, the event included a kids' shopping activity, where children with autism were given the opportunity to experience shopping in a supportive and friendly environment. The activity was tailored to ensure a positive experience, with staff offering guidance and support as the children navigated the store.

Several products and services that cater to the unique needs of individuals with autism were also showcased, highlighting LuLu Hypermarket's commitment to meeting the diverse needs of the community.

In a statement on the occasion, LuLu Hypermarket Kuwait reiterated its commitment to social responsibility and community engagement, emphasizing the importance of creating a society that is inclusive and supportive of individuals with autism. The event aimed to promote greater understanding of autism and encourage the public to show support for those with autism.

The event was well-received by the community, with many attendees expressing their gratitude to the hypermarket for providing an opportunity to learn more about autism and connect with others in the autistic community. LuLu Hypermarket Kuwait also confirmed that it plans to continue its efforts to support individuals with autism in the future.

## Mortgage law set to boost housing, construction activities

Council of Ministers is reportedly preparing a new legislation that would allow banks to provide housing finance to citizens for residential purposes, with the property serving as collateral for the mortgage. The cabinet initiative is predicted to transform the financial sector and boost housing and construction project activities in the country.

The move is expected to unlock a market potentially worth over KD20 billion and increase the loan portfolio of banks by more than 40 percent. Mortgages were previously neither permitted nor legally regulated in Kuwait due to concerns over the political repercussions of foreclosures. Instead, the country provided a public housing program, allowing married citizens to acquire a heavily subsidized home or plot of land with a low-interest loan. The long-awaited law aims to expand home financing access for eligible citizens.

Public Authority for Housing Welfare has approximately 103,000 pending housing applications, with wait times of up to ten years, prompting the government to consider major reforms.

Deputy Group CEO of the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK), Shaikha Al Bahar, stated, "This opportunity extends beyond housing financing, given the scale of infrastructure investments needed to develop new residential areas to meet growing demand." Acting CEO of the NBK Abdullah Al-Sumait, added that the long-awaited law could establish a regulatory framework that enhances housing finance access for eligible citizens, marking a significant step. Industry analysts and experts believe that accumulated housing demand means mortgages, even with regulatory constraints, could significantly boost Kuwaiti banks' profitability. This move may also attract foreign investor interest in banking stocks, with current foreign investments in Kuwait's banking sector estimated at KD4.7 billion, or just 15 percent of the total sector.



## Antalya Diplomatic Forum 2025

# Reclaiming Diplomacy in a Fragmented World

*Foreign Minister Abdulla Al Yahya to attend ADF2025 on April 11*

By Reaven D'Souza  
Executive Managing Editor

Making diplomacy the driving force for peace and cooperation will be one of the main objectives of the fourth iteration of Antalya Diplomacy Forum (ADF2025), hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye, that is scheduled to take place on 11-13 April, in Antalya, Türkiye.



The theme for ADF2025, 'Reclaiming Diplomacy in a Fragmented World', reflects the pressing need for diplomacy to reassert itself as a stabilizing force, amid rising global fragmentations.

The forum will aim to make better use of diplomacy to tackle global challenges in the current state of affairs by adopting a novel understanding of

diplomacy, beyond its essential and traditional framework of dialogue.

For that purpose, The Antalya Diplomacy Forum will provide its distinguished participants an interactive and thought-provoking platform to address the challenging issues shaping the global and regional agendas, and to discuss innovative tools to advance diplomacy in times of turmoil. The Forum, held under the auspices of the President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, will bring together heads of states and governments, ministers, diplomats, business leaders, academics, intellectuals, youth and media representatives for an all-encompassing debate on the role of diplomacy in a changing world. Kuwait will be represented at the Forum by Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abdullah Ali Al-Yahya.

Growing geopolitical rifts, deepening global inequalities, surge in violence targeting civilians, intolerance towards divergent views, uncertainties driven by technological disruptions and multidimensional impact of climate crisis have all shaken common sense of justice and eroded trust in international institutions. The inability of the current international system to find solutions to these contemporary challenges has further strained the already struggling cooperation efforts, and undermined



the predictability of the environment in which states operate.

Additionally, the world is faced with ongoing geopolitical turmoils that are leading to structural changes in the global political, economic and security landscape. In this era of heightened instability and unpredictability, marked by complex challenges and multiple crises, the Antalya Diplomacy Forum aims to evaluate the systemic problems of the multilateral order and foster dialogue on reclaiming diplomacy in a rapidly evolving international environment.

Delegates gathering at this year's

Antalya Diplomacy Forum will explore how diplomacy can turn the tide and navigate us through a fragmented world to find a common ground for collective action. The Forum aims to inspire dialogue to redefine the role and core principles of diplomacy in an increasingly polarized atmosphere.

By discussing root causes of various problems, the Forum will encourage policymakers to reconsider how diplomacy can manage these turbulent times, with a focus on innovative tools for conflict resolution, mediation strategies and regional cooperation mechanisms.

To help create a more effective and cohesive international system, the Forum will look for new solutions to address the failures of global governance, by examining the dysfunction and lack of trust in international organisations. The role of non-governmental stakeholders complementing traditional diplomatic efforts will also be elaborated to discover how diplomacy can become more inclusive, adaptable and resilient.

To make better use of diplomacy to tackle global challenges in the current state of affairs, we will need to adopt a novel understanding of diplomacy, beyond its essential and traditional framework of dialogue.

The Forum will provide a forward-thinking platform for participants from all around the world to work on joint strategies to make diplomacy the driving force for peace and cooperation.

## Decree-Law introduces new financing, liquidity law

A new Decree-Law No. 60 of 2025 regarding financing and liquidity was issued on 26 March, setting the public debt ceiling at a maximum of KD30 billion, or its equivalent in major convertible foreign currencies. It also allows the issuance of financial instruments with maturities of up to 50 years. The law is valid for 50 years from the date of its entry into force, establishing a long-term legal framework for regulating public borrowing and liquidity management in Kuwait.

Elaborating on the new law, Minister of Finance and Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Investment, Noura Al-Fassam, commented that it would grant Kuwait greater financial flexibility by allowing the option to tap local and international financial markets to enhance liquidity management. This reflects a strategic approach to keeping pace with global economic developments and ensuring the sustainability of the state's public finances. This law is part of the government's efforts to enhance financial stability and support economic development in line with Kuwait Vision 2035.



Al-Fassam concluded her remarks by emphasizing that this law represents a significant step in the path of financial and economic reforms, aimed at building a more diversified and sustainable economy that serves the interests of both the state and its citizens. Outlining the key objectives of the new decree-law. Director of the

Public Debt Management Department at the Ministry of Finance, Faisal Al-Muzaini, stated that it provides the state with the following:

Access to various types of financial instruments through both local and international financial markets, enabling financing in Kuwaiti dinars or major convertible foreign currencies. This offers multiple options for managing public debt and liquidity.

Contributes to the financing of major development projects, whether in infrastructure or other strategic areas, to drive progress in development.

Stimulates the local economy by boosting the economic cycle, enhancing investor confidence, and attracting more foreign investments that support economic growth. Enhances Kuwait's sovereign credit rating, which positively impacts the state's ability to borrow on competitive terms.

Maintains the liquidity of sovereign reserves, ensuring the country's financial stability and enhancing the government's ability to meet its financial obligations under various economic conditions.



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# Botswana Ambassador bids farewell to Kuwait

*Botswana offers a promising investment environment across various sectors. It is a democratic country with an open economy, and the new government is keen on attracting investments.*

## The Times Kuwait Report

As he prepares to conclude his diplomatic tenure in Kuwait after three years of service, Ambassador of Botswana H.E. Augustine Makgonatsotlhe, spoke about his past achievements, including promising agreements in politics and investment, to ambitious prospects in trade and meat exports, while also indicating his aspirations for the future.

Ambassador Makgonatsotlhe described Kuwait as a hospitable nation and highlighted that Botswana's embassy in Kuwait is the only one in the Middle East and the Arab world, which is a testament to the strong ties between the two countries.

Highlighting some of the key achievements in strengthening relations between Botswana and Kuwait, the ambassador stated: "We have made significant progress in enhancing our bilateral relations, and we are satisfied with what has been accomplished so far, though much remains to be done. Several agreements are under review, and we hope to sign them soon."

"For instance, we have agreements related to political consultations, investment, sports, and culture. There are also ongoing discussions about a labor agreement, which we hope to finalize before the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Botswana and Kuwait."

"In this regard, we have had productive discussions with the Public Authority for Manpower in Kuwait and have proposed signing a labor agreement, which is currently in the drafting and review stage."

Elaborating on bilateral trade between Botswana and Kuwait,



the ambassador said, "Unfortunately, trade between the two countries remains limited due to Botswana's landlocked location in southern Africa, posing logistical challenges. However, efforts are underway to boost cooperation, particularly in meat exports to Kuwait and the Gulf region."

"Currently, we have secured licenses to export meat to the UAE and are now working to obtain approvals from relevant authorities in Kuwait. Several Botswana-based companies are

eager to enter the Kuwaiti market, and we expect progress on this soon."

Turning to investment opportunities that are available for Kuwaiti investors in Botswana, the envoy noted, "Botswana offers a promising investment environment across various sectors. It is a democratic country with an open economy, and the new government is keen on attracting investments. Recently, our Minister of Finance visited Dubai to strengthen economic ties."

Expanding on the tourism potential of his country, Ambassador Makgonatsotlhe said, "The ideal time to visit Botswana is during the winter season when visitors can enjoy the stunning wildlife and natural landscapes. I encourage travelers to explore Botswana rather than focusing solely on Europe and the US. Travelers can fly via Dubai to Johannesburg and then proceed to Botswana. We had hoped to establish direct flights, but that has yet to materialize, and negotiations are ongoing."

Asked about his future plans and what he would miss most about Kuwait after his three year tenure here, the ambassador replied, "I have not been assigned a new post yet, but I will return to Botswana and await my next role. To answer what I would miss most about Kuwait, I can, without any doubt, state that I will miss the spirit of Ramadan in Kuwait—the religious atmosphere and unique traditions. It was a wonderful experience, and I am grateful to the Kuwaiti people for their hospitality."

"I would like to add that my time in Kuwait has been a wonderful experience. I have met incredible people and will carry cherished memories with me. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to everyone for their support and friendship during my tenure here."

## Al-Muzaini Exchange Company opens new branch in Mubarakhiya



Al-Muzaini Exchange Company, the number one money exchange company in Kuwait, recently opened its newest branch in Mubarakhiya, Al Qibla area, Block 8, Ahmed Al Jaber Street, Ground Floor – Shop 17 on 25 March.

Opening of the new branch, which is part of the company's rapid expansion plan, reflected Al Muzaini Exchange Company's ongoing endeavor to always be near its customers. It also reinforced the company's commitment to providing the highest quality of financial services such as money transfers, foreign currency exchange, and bill payments with convenience, comfort, and safety at the most competitive prices, seven days a week.

General Manager of Al Muzaini Exchange Company, Hugh Fernandes, along with the company's department managers and various senior personnel, inaugurated the new branch. Addressing the gathering, Mr. Fernandes

stated: "We take great pride in strengthening our leading position in the local market and always place focus on ensuring that we provide the best financial services experience to our customers in order to meet all their money transfer needs. We always want to stay true to our mission—to always be near to our customers and to add to their convenience—and the opening of our new branch is another step in that direction."

The company always strives to make its financial services accessible to all. In addition to its strong network of branches, the Al Muzaini application provides simple and safe financial solutions and is packed with plenty of valuable features such as: availability on all digital platforms, new customer registration, the ability to add a new beneficiary, and benefits from Western Union and Visa Direct services, making it possible for customers to transfer anywhere, anytime.



## Future Eye Theatre and Film Club Celebrates World Theatre Day with Iftar

Future Eye Theatre and Film Club marked World Theatre Day on March 27 with a special Iftar gathering at Mangaf Kalasadan Hall. The event began with a warm welcome from Secretary Unni Kaimal, followed by a Ramadan message delivered by Ismail Valliyoth. The evening's chief guest, P.N.J. Kumar, CEO of Caesars Travel Group (Kuwait and India), highlighted the importance of theatre in addressing contemporary issues and fostering meaningful dialogue with society. A large number of artists, cultural enthusiasts, and theatre professionals attended the Iftar, reflecting the vibrant artistic community in Kuwait.

The club also paid tribute to Dr. Prasanthi, a dedicated member of Future Eye Theatre, who recently passed away. President Santhosh Kumar Kuttath delivered a heartfelt condolence message, honoring her contributions to the team. As part of the celebration, Future Eye Patron Shemej Kumar read this year's World Theatre Day message by renowned Greek playwright Theodoros Therzo Poulos, emphasizing

the role of art in promoting harmony and cooperation. Additionally, a video message from Dr. Samkutty Pattom Kari and Dr. Sreejith Ramanan was screened for the audience.

The event also featured felicitation speeches from Abdul Aziz Mattuvayil, Assistant General Manager of Joy Alukkas Exchange, and Nash Varghese, Manager of Fly World Travels.



A lively open forum on violence in cinema encouraged active audience participation, with Shemej Kumar moderating the discussion. The cultural performances included a micro drama by Aneesh Adoor and his team, delivering a powerful message against drug abuse, and the one-act play "Traffic", presented by Govind Santha's theatre group, Street Dogs, which captivated the audience.

The evening was elegantly hosted by Smt. Shatabdi Mukherjee, while Smt. Meera Vinod expressed gratitude with a vote of thanks.



## Indonesian Ambassador hosts grand Eid al-Fitr celebration in Kuwait

The Ambassador of Indonesia to Kuwait, H. E. Lena Mariana, organized a grand Eid al-Fitr celebration in traditional Indonesian style at the Sheikh Ahmed Al-Dawood Chalet in the Doha region.

The Eid al-Fitr ceremony was attended by a significant number of heads of diplomatic missions and their families, as well as members of the Indonesian community in Kuwait and some Kuwaiti citizens with their families, adding a unique cultural touch to the event's atmosphere.

Ambassador Mariana, in her speech during the ceremony, expressed her delight in organizing the event, highlighting that such gatherings provide diplomats with a welcome break from the pressures of daily work, especially during the month of Ramadan. She also emphasized the opportunity to introduce guests to the customs and traditions of Eid in Indonesia.

Furthermore, Ambassador Mariana said that they have succeeded in bringing together diplomats and various communities in Kuwait for a celebration that reflects the spirit of Eid and the values of coexistence and cultural exchange, ensuring that this day remains a beautiful memory in the hearts of all attendees.

The ceremony featured a showcase of traditional Indonesian dishes, expertly prepared by volunteer women from the Indonesian community. The dishes were well-received by the audience, who delighted in the diverse flavors of Indonesian cuisine.

The celebration also featured competitive sports and entertainment contests for both adults and children,

creating an atmosphere of fun and lively interaction among all participants.

The atmosphere was filled with art and music, as attendees enjoyed unique musical performances, including a popular karaoke session that received widespread participation and approval, adding even more energy and joy to the occasion.

### Ambassador of Djibouti to Kuwait named as country's Foreign Minister

President of the Republic of Djibouti, Ismail Omar Guelleh, appointed a new government member under Presidential Decree No. 2025-082, issued on 1 April, naming Abdoukader Houssein Omar as Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and Government Spokesperson.



Veteran diplomat Omar, who is currently the ambassador of his country to Kuwait, will succeed his immediate predecessor, Mahmoud Ali Youssouf. Confirming his new appointment, Ambassador Omar said he plans to depart Kuwait immediately to take his constitutional oath before President Guelleh, and then return shortly to bid farewell to his colleagues in Kuwait.

### Credit Bank disbursed KD 37 million in real estate loans in March



In March 2025, the Credit Bank disbursed a total of 37.2 million dinars in real estate loans, supporting a wide range of beneficiaries including families and individuals. In addition to real estate lending, the bank also issued 155 thousand dinars in portfolio loans. These figures reflect the bank's ongoing commitment to providing financial support through

various channels such as women's loans, social loans, and grants aimed at enhancing housing stability and community welfare.

According to Credit Bank statistics, a total of 731.7 thousand dinars was allocated for building private plots in March 2025, while loans for government plots reached 32.1 million dinars.

House purchase loans amounted to 1.95 million dinars. Additionally, loans for expanding and renovating government homes totaled 488.9 thousand dinars, and 395.3 thousand dinars were issued for similar work on private housing. Grants supporting people with disabilities amounted to 1.53 million dinars. Meanwhile, portfolio loan applicants received 155 thousand dinars, with 140 thousand allocated for expansion and renovation, and 15 thousand dinars for renovation only.



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## Diwanias in Kuwait and the Gulf

# A Heritage Renewed Through Generations

*As part of strengthening cultural and diplomatic communication, Sheikha Suhaila Fahad Al-Sabah, Managing Editor of The Times Kuwait, held a special women's diwaniya during the holy month of Ramadan. The diwaniya was widely attended by women from the diplomatic corps, who enjoyed the authentic Kuwaiti diwaniya experience in an atmosphere that blends heritage and modernity.*

**By Sheikha Suhaila Al-Sabah  
Managing Editor**

Diwanias have long been a male-dominated forum where local issues, political developments, and social affairs are discussed. The diwaniya is a fundamental pillar of social life in Kuwait, strengthening community ties, facilitating the exchange of views, and facilitating dialogue.

My diwaniya was widely welcomed by female diplomats, both ambassadors of countries accredited to Kuwait and the wives of ambassadors present, who welcomed this opportunity to promote cultural exchange and communication between different cultures. The diwaniya brought together women from diverse backgrounds, who shared their experiences and perspectives on international and societal issues, enriching collective knowledge and fostering a spirit of unity and solidarity among the attendees. The diwaniya also provided an opportunity to introduce the guests to Kuwaiti Ramadan customs, as traditional Kuwaiti cuisine was served amidst an atmosphere of intimacy and authentic Arab generosity. Discussions were not limited to cultural aspects.

The diwaniya is considered one of the oldest and most important social traditions in Kuwait and the Gulf region. It is a place where men gather to exchange conversations and discuss daily, political, and economic matters, often in



the home of a family member. The beginnings of the diwaniya in Kuwait and the Gulf date back to the eighteenth century (circa 1700 AD), with the beginnings of settlement and urbanization in the region. In Kuwait specifically, the emergence of the diwaniya is linked to the beginning of the settlement of Kuwaiti families and the development of commercial and maritime activity, as diwanias were a place for exchanging business and political news.

In modern times, some diwanias have begun organizing educational lectures and seminars, hosting specialists in various fields, with the aim of raising awareness and educating the community. Some diwanias have also become platforms for supporting ambitious youth, offering them advice and guidance in

their fields of study and work, enhancing their role as incubators of ideas and talent.

Diwanias have long been a venue for discussing humanitarian initiatives and supporting charitable projects, where businessmen and philanthropists meet to plan social and charitable contributions. Many successful charitable projects in Kuwait and the Gulf states began within a diwaniya, whether campaigns to support needy families, educational initiatives, or health projects aimed at improving the lives of the less fortunate. Diwanias have also helped unify volunteer efforts and organize relief campaigns during crises and disasters, playing a pivotal role in promoting the values of social solidarity and cooperation among members of society.

Throughout the ages, diwanias have provided a free environment for political debate, where national issues were raised and views on local and international political events were exchanged. In Kuwait, in particular, diwanias were an essential part of the political landscape, where voters met with National Assembly candidates to discuss their electoral platforms and ask questions about their vision for the future.

Today, diwanias continue to play an important role in promoting political awareness among citizens, contributing to the dissemination of a democratic culture and encouraging open dialogue on various issues. With rapid social and technological changes, diwanias face new challenges in preserving their traditional identity while keeping pace with modern developments.

On the one hand, some families and tribes seek to preserve the traditional character of diwanias, reflecting the values and authenticity of the past. On the other hand, there is a trend toward modernizing these councils by introducing modern technologies such as interactive screens, digital forums, and live streaming of their sessions online. While diwanias continue to evolve, their essence remains rooted in promoting social dialogue, intergenerational communication, and preserving the customs and traditions that are an essential part of the identity of the Arabian Gulf.



# Kuwait first country in region to get WFAT accreditation

The General Assembly of the World Federation of Administrative Tribunals (International Conference of Administrative Judges) has given the nod for the State of Kuwait's membership in the Union.

The Ministry of Justice in a statement on Friday said, the ministry during the discussions, presented Kuwait's legislative framework highlighting the provisions of the former



Judicial Organization Law No. 19 of 1959, which empowered civil courts to adjudicate compensation claims arising from unlawful administrative decisions and granted them jurisdiction over administrative contracts.

This legal framework evolved further with the issuance of Law No. 20 of 1981, as amended

by Law No. 61 of 1982, which led to the establishment of administrative departments within courts of first instance, appeals, and cassation, where thousands of cases are now heard annually.

The ministry emphasized that Kuwait is among the first countries in the region whose Constitution explicitly addresses the organization of administrative dispute resolution in Articles 169 and 171. The Union's discussions also covered key issues related to the administrative judiciary, including mechanisms for handling administrative cases, procedures for filing and adjudicating lawsuits, implementation of rulings, the permissibility of administrative judges taking on executive roles, the concept of legal standing, conflict resolution between administrative and ordinary courts, and efforts to harmonize judicial practices among member states.

The 15th session of the General Assembly was held in Santiago, Chile, from April 2 to 4, with the participation of 62 member states and observer delegations from across the globe.

Kuwait was represented by a delegation led by President of the Supreme Judicial Council, Counselor Dr. Adel Bouresli, and included Counselor Najib Al-Majed, Undersecretary of the Court of Cassation; Counselor Dr. Nayef Al-Mutairi, Undersecretary of the Court of Appeal; Fahd Al-Dhabiri, Chargé d'Affaires of Kuwait's Embassy in Argentina; and Walid Mansour, Director of the Office of the Supreme Judicial Council President.



## Salmiya tops list as Kuwait's most densely populated area

Recent data from the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) highlights that Salmiya, Farwaniya, Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, Hawalli, and Mahboula are the most densely populated areas in Kuwait, emphasizing the need for enhanced infrastructure and public service development in these regions.

According to the statistics, Salmiya ranks as the most densely populated area in Kuwait with 321,190 residents, followed by Farwaniya, Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh, Hawalli, and Mahboula, which holds fifth place with a population of 218,153.

The statistics indicated that Kuwait's population reached 4.9 million last year. Among Kuwaiti citizens, the gender distribution was nearly equal; 49 percent male and 51 percent female. In contrast, non-Kuwaitis showed a significant gender gap, with males making up 66 percent and females 34 percent.

The data revealed that, individuals under the age of 15 made up 17 percent of Kuwait's total population, while those between 15 and 64 years constituted the majority at 80 percent.

Seniors aged 65 and above accounted for just 3 percent.

Kuwaitis make up 31 percent of the total population, while the largest non-Kuwaiti communities are Indians at 20 percent and Egyptians at 13 percent. Labor market data revealed that the total number of workers in Kuwait's public and private sectors reached 2,247,029. Of these, around 517,022 individuals or 23 percent were employed in the public sector, while 1,730,007 individuals or 77 percent worked in the private sector.

In the government sector, Kuwaitis made up the majority of the workforce, accounting for 77.52 percent. Among non-Kuwaitis employed in this sector, Egyptians formed the largest group, representing 7.25 percent of the total, followed by Indians at 4.42 percent.

In the private sector, Indian nationals made up the largest share of the workforce at 31.1 percent, followed by Egyptians at 25.4 percent, while Kuwaitis represented just 4.1 percent of the total private sector workforce.



## Delusion saved my life



Samira Jafar  
Exclusive to The Times Kuwait

I think when I was born, I must have imagined myself in a place that was different from where I actually was; some sunny field where the sky was a backdrop for a colorful rainbow and ponies frolicked in thick green grass. Not a cold hospital. My detachment from reality needed to have started somewhere. As a child, I was always asked by friends and teachers: why are you smiling? My daydreams were (and are) so vivid that it often feels like they are being played out in real time. I am not me: I am a character in some story so much more vibrant than the one I am living, and I have trouble closing the book.

One of the reasons why I think I was born this way was because it was somewhat written out. My birth chart analysis reads that I will only ever be happiest in my dream world. In said dream world, events are unpredictable and otherworldly. Some days, I am a mother coddling my children. On others, I am a famous actress. Rarely, I am a doctoral student sitting in an old library in front of a stack of books, my reading glasses held delicately behind my ears. But my favorite daydream is the one where I have it all: the New York Times bestselling novel, the kids, the dream house, the degree. This is the one that gets played out most often.

I used to view my fictitiousness as a crutch. As I grew up, I noticed some cracks in my dream worlds. One: reality is very different; colder, more austere. This can make embracing reality so difficult. I am kind of like a petulant child. I do not want this to be real. Get me out of this nightmare. Second: the people I was crafting were not the same ones that existed in my plane of reality. This led to me romanticizing certain people who did not deserve it and maybe villainizing people who also did not deserve it. For a long time, I wanted to lock my dream worlds away for good. I thought my dreams were keeping me infantile and held back by delusions that would never come true.

But they did come true. Not all of them, of course. But I found that the less I fought my dreams and the more I embraced them, the more I could create the life I wanted for myself. So often, we are told to reduce

or shrink ourselves. Things we want to do are seen as unlikely and unnecessary. We shove our aspirations aside to fully embrace the monotony of everyday life. Then we reach age 50 or so and wonder why we are miserable and nothing happened the way we thought it would. We blame the world when yes, it is partially to blame. But we are also to blame. We are the ones who reduce ourselves so drastically that what is left behind is basically an empty shell with discarded passions and purpose. We fail ourselves. We fail the version of us that wanted to be embraced and nurtured.

So I decided to be delusional. I am so delusional that I do things without thinking of how they will be received. I published two books of poetry and spoke about events that happened in my life because I created a reality where people's reception of my work meant nothing. But I want to re-write that. I did not 'create' that reality. That is the reality. It is my life. Whatever I want to accept and reject within it is part of my power. Take your free will back. Use it to imagine a world with a big blue sky and rolling hills and waterfalls and endless possibilities at your fingertips. If not, we run the risk of not only becoming nihilistic about the world, but also about ourselves. We doubt the possibilities because we do not believe we can make it happen or we are afraid of what people will say about us if we're seen trying.

Something important to note: the 'trying' is key. I will not ever be delusional without putting in the work. On Substack, for example, I hope to have more readers and connect to more people, but I do not expect that to happen without any substantial effort. That is why I post at least weekly. The same thing for my writing: I seek out feedback and courses and advice and improvement because I actually want to put in the work necessary to achieve my goals. But after all that is said and done, I know that any work I put into anything will be futile if I do not believe. It is like the universe can smell the negativity coming off of you. If you do not believe in yourself, why should anyone believe in you?

Now when I catch myself being held back by doubt or even jealousy, I remember that some day I will be in the position I want to be in because I have what it takes to make it happen. A good manifestation for this: I will not be afraid to be seen trying. I have done it before and I can do it again. If I never push myself and never actively try, I will probably never know. I will not be afraid of being seen as delusional for believing in my dreams. In fact, I will proudly wear the label of delusion. As someone once said: "You are only cringe until you are successful."

Samira Jafar is an English instructor at Kuwait University. She is the author of two collections of poetry. You can reach her at @samirawritesstuff on instagram or samirajafar.substack.com

# Immediate arrest and hefty fines for 12 traffic violations from April 22 onwards

*Jail terms and Community Service introduced as new punishments*

Ministry of Interior announced on 1 April that the new traffic law will come into effect from 22 April, and stressed on the public of the need to adhere to all traffic regulations from April 22, stressing the importance of adhering to traffic regulations and instructions or face heavy fines and severe penalties.

The announcement underlined 12 traffic violations that would allow any member of the police force to arrest the perpetrator in accordance with Decree-Law No. 5 of 2025 amending some provisions of Decree-Law No. 67 of 1976 regarding traffic. They are as follows:

- Driving a motor vehicle under the influence of alcohol, drugs or psychotropic substances.
- Committing a traffic accident that resulted in injury or death to a person.
- Participating in a motor vehicle race on the roads without a permit or in violation of the permit.
- Attempting to escape in the event of an accident that harms the safety of an individual or in the event of failure to respond to an order issued by members of the police force to stop.
- Exceeding the speed limit by more than 50 km/h.
- Driving buggies in places not designated for them.
- Running a red light.



- Using the vehicle for a purpose other than that for which it was intended.
- Using the vehicle to transport passengers for a fee without a permit.
- Driving a motor vehicle recklessly or negligently, or using it in a manner that exposes the driver or others to danger to their lives or property.
- Driving a motor vehicle without a driver's license, or one that

has been withdrawn or suspended, or with a license that does not permit driving such a vehicle, or without a permit required by this law or its executive regulations.

- Driving a vehicle without the plates issued by the General Traffic Department.

The ministry republished the awareness campaign on traffic violations and the new fines that will be applied. It also announced that "the court may sentence the convict to one or more alternative penalties instead of the original penalty for the crime committed."

The Ministry stated that the alternative penalties were:

- Working in community service: The convict shall be assigned to perform good work for one of the entities without compensation. The work shall be appropriate to the convict's profession, if possible, for a period not exceeding one year, and not exceeding eight hours per day.
- Redressing the damage resulting from the crime, by obligating the convict to restore the property to its original state, redress it, or compensate it."
- Attending awareness, rehabilitation, and training programs and lectures: The convict shall be subject to one or more of these programs, and the implementation procedures shall be determined by a ministerial decision in coordination with the relevant authorities.

## Adjustment to The Main Traffic Violations

Following the Issuance of Decree-Law No. 5 of 2025 Amending Certain Provisions of Decree-Law No. 67 of 1976 Regarding Traffic Regulations.

Violation	Immediate Fine Payment	Penalty After Court Referral
Running a red traffic light	<b>150 K.D</b>	Imprisonment from 1 to 3 years, a fine between 600-1,000 KD, or either of these penalties
Participating in a race on public roads	<b>150 K.D</b>	Imprisonment from 1 to 3 years, a fine between 600-1,000 KD, or either of these penalties
Reckless driving	<b>150 K.D</b>	Imprisonment from 1 to 3 years, a fine between 600-1,000 KD, or either of these penalties
Parking in spaces designated for disabled individuals	<b>150 K.D</b>	Imprisonment from 1 to 3 years, a fine between 600-1,000 KD, or either of these penalties
Operating a vehicle for passenger transport without a permit	<b>150 K.D</b>	Imprisonment from 1 to 3 years, a fine between 600-1,000 KD, or either of these penalties
Driving quad bikes or motorcycles other than the designated areas	<b>150 K.D</b>	Imprisonment from 1 to 3 years, a fine between 600-1,000 KD, or either of these penalties
Exceeding the specified speed limit	<b>70 - 150 K.D</b>	Imprisonment from 1 to 3 years, a fine between 600-1,000 KD, or either of these penalties
Driving while using a hand-held phone	<b>75 K.D</b>	Imprisonment for up to 3 months, a fine of 150-300 KD, or either of these penalties
Driving a vehicle without a license, or suspended license	<b>75 K.D</b>	Imprisonment for up to 3 months, a fine of 150-300 KD, or either of these penalties

Failing to give way to government vehicles (police, ambulance, fire services, civil defence) and official convoys	<b>75 K.D</b>	Imprisonment for up to 3 months, a fine of 150-300 KD, or either of these penalties
Driving on the hard shoulder	<b>75 K.D</b>	Imprisonment for up to 3 months, a fine of 150-300 KD, or either of these penalties
Accelerating rapidly and causing loud tyre screeching sounds	<b>75 K.D</b>	Imprisonment for up to 3 months, a fine of 150-300 KD, or either of these penalties
Driving a vehicle that emits disturbing noise	<b>75 K.D</b>	Imprisonment for up to 3 months, a fine of 150-300 KD, or either of these penalties
Driving a vehicle carelessly or inattentively	<b>75 K.D</b>	Imprisonment for up to 3 months, a fine of 150-300 KD, or either of these penalties
Allowing a child under the age of 10 to sit in the front seat, failing to secure the child in the rear seat while driving, or leaving the child unattended in the car without an adult	<b>50 K.D</b>	Imprisonment for up to 2 months, a fine ranging from 100-200 KD, or either of these penalties

Violation	Immediate Fine Payment	Penalty After Court Referral
Failing to comply with road markings or traffic signs	<b>50 K.D</b>	Imprisonment for up to 2 months, a fine ranging from 100-200 KD, or either of these penalties
Violation of window tinting regulations	<b>50 K.D</b>	Imprisonment for up to 2 months, a fine ranging from 100-200 KD, or either of these penalties
Breach of home detention conditions	<b>50 K.D</b>	Imprisonment for up to 2 months, a fine ranging from 100-200 KD, or either of these penalties
Driving a vehicle without the owner's consent	<b>30 K.D</b>	Imprisonment for up to 1 month, a fine ranging from 50-100 KD, or either of these penalties
Reckless weaving at high speed between vehicles on the road	<b>30 K.D</b>	Imprisonment for up to 1 month, a fine ranging from 50-100 KD, or either of these penalties

Violation	Immediate Fine Payment	Penalty After Court Referral
Driving below the minimum speed limit on highways or ring roads	<b>30 K.D</b>	Imprisonment for up to 1 month, a fine ranging from 50-100 KD, or either of these penalties
Driving or parking on pavements or pedestrian-designated areas	<b>30 K.D</b>	Imprisonment for up to 1 month, a fine ranging from 50-100 KD, or either of these penalties
Failure to wear a seat belt	<b>30 K.D</b>	Imprisonment for up to 1 month, a fine ranging from 50-100 KD, or either of these penalties
Violations of traffic regulations by pedestrians and cyclists (including bicycles or electric bikes)	<b>20 K.D</b>	Fine ranging from 45 - 75 KD.
Driving without carrying a vehicle registration or driving license	<b>20 K.D</b>	Fine ranging from 45 - 75 KD
Intentionally obstructing or impeding traffic flow	<b>20 K.D</b>	Fine ranging from 45 - 75 KD
No Parking zone	<b>15 K.D</b>	Fine ranging from 30 - 50 KD

**A fine of 1000 - 2000 KWD** Anyone who, by using a device or means of communication or otherwise, captures one or more pictures, or a video or audio clip, or publishes any of them during the commission of any of the crimes stipulated in this law.



# Ability of international organizations to contain US tariff impacts



*Trump's recent decision has not gone unnoticed, as the WTO quickly moved to assess the legality of the US move, especially after China filed an official complaint, claiming that the decision violated fair trade rules and threatened the principle of free exchange that the organization was founded to protect.*



By Tareq Yousef Alshumaimry

The recent comprehensive additional tariffs announced by US President Donald Trump on imports from 185 countries under the banner 'Liberation Day' has instilled fears in the global economy sparking widespread international debate over the legality of the decision and its potential catastrophic effects on global markets.

This crisis has cast a shadow on the vital role of three international organizations that serve as the backbone of the global economic system—the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Since the end of World War II, these organizations have played a crucial role in the post-war era reconstruction and in regulating economic relations between nations. The World Bank, established in 1944, has played a vital role to help eliminate poverty and achieve sustainable development through funding infrastructure projects in developing countries.

The IMF, also established in 1944, has focused on maintaining global monetary stability by providing financial and advisory support to countries facing economic crises.

Meanwhile, the WTO, founded in 1995 to replace the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), is regulating international trade and resolves trade disputes.

Trump's recent decision has not gone unnoticed, as the WTO quickly moved to assess the legality of the US move, especially after China filed an official complaint, claiming that the decision violated fair trade rules and threatened the principle of free exchange that the organization was founded to protect.

At the same time, the IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva has warned of "significant risks" to global economic stability, particularly given the global slowdown and rising debt levels. While the World Bank has refrained from direct commentary, the analysts suggest that the rise in tariffs will negatively impact developing nations that rely on exports, thus



complicating the Bank's mission to achieve developmental goals.

From a legal point of view, Trump's actions may violate WTO agreements, especially if the tariffs are not justified by national security or public health concerns—exceptions that the WTO permits for imposing trade restrictions.

However, the deeper issue lies in whether these institutions can effectively enforce their decisions or put pressure on the US—the world's most powerful economic and political player, which is also a key contributor to these organizations.

The WTO can review complaints and take

legal decisions against the US, but it lacks the executive power to force Washington to comply. The IMF can exert political and economic pressure through its reports and its status as a global economic advisor.

The World Bank's role in this issue is relatively limited, but it may reassess its funding priorities for countries affected by these measures.

It seems the world is now facing a new test of the credibility of the global economic system and the ability of its organizations to regulate the behavior of major powers. Trump's decision to raise tariffs on 185 countries not only challenges trade but also

mutilates multilateral cooperation upon which international institutions were built after World War II.

Now the experts ask: Can these three institutions restore balance and protect the global economy from the waves of this decision? Or will the US move create a long-term rift in the structure of international trade? Only time will tell, but it is certain that the role of these institutions has become more crucial than ever. In this context, reports from the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) suggest that such policies could lead to a sharp global growth decline of up to 1.4 percent over the next two years if not addressed diplomatically.

The OECD warns that the 'America First' US policies could expose the global economy to sharp fluctuations in supply chains and trade, raising the cost of living and weakening competitiveness, especially for emerging and middle economies.

Meanwhile, the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) has issued a statement expressing "deep concern" over the US tariff decisions, calling them "a violation of the spirit of the global trading system based on openness and cooperation." The ICC has called on governments and international organizations to take "collective and coordinated" actions in response to any unilateral decisions that threaten trade stability. The ICC also urged reopening dialogue channels between Washington and affected nations to prevent further trade escalation.

In light of this, the IMF has begun coordinating with several countries impacted by the US decision to conduct urgent assessments of its effect on their balance of payments, particularly those heavily reliant on exports to the US market.

Reuters reported that IMF experts are working on providing an 'emergency' package of recommendations, including technical support and temporary financial assistance for some emerging economies, to mitigate the impact of the decision and prevent the crisis from widening.

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



# Kuwait plays vital role in enhancing GCC-NATO ties

*Ambassador Al-Enezi pointed out that, Kuwait was the first Gulf state to join the Istanbul Convention Initiative and has played a pioneering role in strengthening relations between NATO and the GCC and in participating in NATO-led initiatives focused on cyber defense strategies, and countering hybrid threats.*

Relationship between Kuwait and NATO is characterized by close cooperation, both in traditional security and in confronting emerging security threats, particularly in cybersecurity, counterterrorism, and energy security, said Kuwait's Ambassador to Belgium and Head of Mission to the EU and NATO, Nawaf Al-Enezi.

Speaking to state media last week, Ambassador Al-Enezi pointed out that, Kuwait was the first Gulf state to join the Istanbul Convention Initiative and has played a pioneering role in strengthening relations between NATO and the GCC and in participating in NATO-led initiatives focused on cyber defense strategies, and countering hybrid threats.

He added that the NATO-Istanbul Initiative Center in Kuwait plays a pivotal role in organizing specialized workshops and courses on defense strategy, counterterrorism, women's empowerment, crisis management, and cybersecurity.

Kuwait and NATO have agreed on a regional action plan for 2025, which includes more than 21 sessions and events, enhancing cooperation and capacity-building initiatives, said Ambassador Al-Enezi. He added that NATO and Kuwait cooperate on several training programs and capacity-building measures aimed at enhancing interoperability, modernizing military capabilities, and addressing evolving security threats.

He noted that in September 2024, Kuwait organized a high-level celebration at the UN General Assembly to mark the 20th anniversary of the initiative, under the patronage of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

NATO Secretary General's Special Representative for the Southern Neighborhood, Javier Colomina, said on 1 April that the NATO-Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) Regional Centre, which is hosted in Kuwait, provides a platform for political dialogue between NATO and its Gulf partners.

Since its inauguration in January 2017, the center has become an important regional hub for cooperation on security issues between NATO and the region through political dialogue, education, training, and public diplomacy, said Colomina in a statement to the official state media. He added that the NATO-Istanbul Initiative Center in Kuwait plays a pivotal role in organizing specialized workshops and courses on defense strategy, counterterrorism, women's empowerment, crisis management, and cybersecurity.

Pointing out that the center has conducted 101 events under



political dialogue (events, conferences, and visits) and 56 military training courses, Colomina noted that in 2024 alone, the center addressed topics such as climate change, food security, maritime security, and more with participation from NATO and Kuwait. The meetings included participation by NATO Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs and Security Policy, Ambassador Boris Ruge, and Director General of Kuwait's Coast Guard, Commodore Sheikh Mubarak Ali Al-Sabah.

Colomina noted that one of the center's objectives is to target youth, as the center hosted the 'Young Ambassadors' program in February 2025 in cooperation with the British and Canadian embassies as well as the United Nations. He emphasized that the bilateral partnership between Kuwait and NATO includes political dialogue and practical cooperation, especially in cybersecurity and counterterrorism, as agreed in the 'Partnership Program' in 2024, which continues until 2027.

He added that Kuwait participates in multilevel political consultations to exchange views on peace and security issues in the Gulf and the Middle East. Kuwaiti civilians and military personnel also participate in courses and training programs provided by NATO in areas such as civil emergency planning, counterterrorism, defense

reform, and nuclear nonproliferation.

Mentioning that Kuwait was the first country to join the Istanbul Initiative in 2004, which reflects mutual interests between NATO and its Gulf partners, Colomina emphasized that this initiative has two main pillars: political dialogue and practical cooperation, and that currently, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and the UAE are involved.

Colomina also referred to the visit made by former NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg to Kuwait in 2019 to mark the 15th anniversary of the initiative, as well as the special celebration of the initiative's 20th anniversary organized under the patronage of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

He explained that at the NATO Washington Summit in July 2024, alliance leaders approved an action plan to expand NATO's strategic and effective approach toward the Gulf, the Middle East, and Africa, focusing on strengthening the use of existing mechanisms such as the NATO-Istanbul Initiative Center. Therefore, he expected that 2025 is scheduled to be the most active year since the establishment of the center, with courses delivered to participants from all GCC countries on a range of topics.

He added that the NATO Secretary-General has appointed a special representative for the Southern Neighborhood to be the central point of contact for the alliance in the region, enhancing NATO's vision and partnership with Gulf countries. Kuwait was the first Gulf country to join the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, which has since played a pioneering role in advancing relations between NATO and the GCC countries.

Kuwait has hosted three high-level meetings between NATO foreign ministers and the GCC in 2006, 2017, and 2019, with the NATO Secretary-General's participation. The 2006 meeting was the first NATO Council meeting held outside member countries, titled "NATO and the Gulf: Facing Common Challenges through the Istanbul Initiative." Kuwait is also the first country in the initiative to adopt the 'Individually Tailored Partnership Program', a four-year framework (2024-2027) that enhances cooperation with NATO in various fields.

In September 2024, Kuwait organized a high-level celebration at the UN General Assembly to mark the 20th anniversary of the initiative, under the patronage of His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. A similar celebration took place in 2019 for the 15th anniversary.



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# Thought<sup>“</sup> for the week

Sometimes your joy is the source of your smile, but sometimes your smile can be the source of your joy.

- Thich Nhat Hanh

## Myth of Weight Loss on Caffeine

Ask Mira : Eating Right to Live Happy & Healthy



Are you one of those who lost weight on caffeine? Or maybe thinking that it was the caffeine effect while you were trying to control your food quality and quantity.

I personally never think of using those methods to lose some weight or fat. I always adapt the natural way, by eating a balanced diet and exercising.

But, what is the direct relation between caffeine and weight loss? And why are a lot of fat burning pills made of caffeine?



I will start by saying that caffeine may slightly boost weight loss or maybe prevent weight gain, but there is no clinical evidence that increased caffeine consumption can lead to permanent weight loss.

When I say caffeine, it does not mean only the caffeine from the coffee we drink, but also from different beverages that contain caffeine such as tea and energy drinks.

So what does caffeine do in the body? For starters, it stimulates thermogenesis; one of the ways your body generates heat and energy from digesting food.

Thermogenesis is a basal metabolic rate reaction, that means the metabolism of your body at rest, when you are not doing any effort. So it is a minimal reaction. And there is no evidence that long-term coffee consumption aids in

weight loss.

Caffeine also acts as a diuretic, which means it increases the amount of urine you excrete. So you end up losing the water more than the fat; That is what makes you lose weight!

Additionally, caffeine acts as a natural appetite suppressant. Caffeine lovers, those who drink more than three cups of coffee a day, may end up eating less throughout the day. Caffeine gives a feeling of satiety, especially when the caffeine consumption is accompanied by smoking.

Coffee contains antioxidants, which fight against cancer problems, but too much caffeine might cause nervousness, insomnia, nausea and increased blood pressure.

It contains 'cafestol' which increases blood cholesterol levels, so it is not recommended for people with cholesterol problems.

My advice is that drinking up to two cups of coffee daily is healthy due to their high antioxidant levels, but not more than this. Remember, caffeine causes irritability, addiction and hypertension.

Eat like Mira

Create healthy habits, not restrictions

To subscribe to my diet programs,  
don't forget to log in to:  
[www.eatlikemira.com](http://www.eatlikemira.com).



Mira is a go-to source for nutrition and wellness and has joined The Times Kuwait team in a new weekly column discussing nutrition and answering queries. You can send in your questions to [infotimeskuwait@gmail.com](mailto:infotimeskuwait@gmail.com)

### RECIPE

## Pistachio Kunafa Phyllo Cups with Three-Milk Drizzle



This dessert is a modern twist on the classic Middle Eastern kunafa, served in crispy phyllo cups for an elegant bite-sized treat. The crunchy phyllo cups are filled with a rich, creamy pistachio-kunafa and topped with a luxurious three-milk mixture. Each bite offers a delightful balance of textures and flavors—crispy, nutty, creamy, and sweet, making it a perfect dessert for any special occasion.

Yield: 12-15 cups

Total Time: 40 minutes

Ingredients:

- For the Phyllo Cups:
- 200g phyllo dough (thawed if frozen)
- 50g unsalted butter, melted
- For the filling :
- 1.5 cups Kataifi (shredded phyllo dough)
- 2 tbsp. butter
- 1/4 cup crushed pistachio (powder)
- 1/2 cup sweetened condensed milk
- Few drops green food color (optional)
- 1 tbsp rose water
- For the garnish:
- 1 tbsp sliced pistachios
- Few rose petals
- For the Three-Milk Drizzle:
- 1/2 cup sweetened condensed milk
- 1/2 cup evaporated milk
- 1/2 cup heavy cream



Chef Chhaya Thakker

Instructions:

- Preheat the oven to 180°C (350°F)
- Cut phyllo dough into small squares, layering 3-4 sheets together with melted butter in between
- Press the layered squares into a muffin tin to form cup shapes
- Bake for 10-12 minutes or until golden brown and crispy
- Meanwhile, shred the Kataifi (phyllo dough) over a cutting board.
- Place 2 tbsp. of butter in a pan over medium heat
- Add the shredded kataifi to the pan
- Roast the kataifi for a few minutes while stirring continuously until golden brown
- Turn the heat off and then add the crushed pistachios and few drops of green color Add in the sweetened condensed milk and rose water
- Mix everything together to combine
- Scoop portions of the mixture into each phyllo cup
- Whisk together condensed milk, evaporated milk, and heavy cream in a bowl
- Drizzle the smooth three-milk mixture generously over the phyllo cups
- Garnish with extra sliced pistachios and rose petals
- Serve warm and enjoy the crispy, creamy, and indulgent dessert.



Indian Chef Chhaya Thakker, who has a huge following online on WhatsApp and YouTube will be sharing her favorite recipes and cooking tips with readers of The Times Kuwait. For feedback, you can write to [editortimeskuwait@gmail.com](mailto:editortimeskuwait@gmail.com)

# Two Models for Agentic AI



**Daron Acemoglu**

A 2024 Nobel laureate in economics and Institute Professor of Economics at MIT, is a co-author (with Simon Johnson) of *Power and Progress: Our Thousand-Year Struggle Over Technology and Prosperity*.

EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT



Artificial Intelligence (AI) 'agents' are coming, whether we are ready or not. While there is much uncertainty about when AI models will be able to interact autonomously with digital platforms, other AI tools, and even humans, there can be little doubt that this development will be transformative, for better or worse. Yet despite all the commentary (and hype) around agentic AI, many big questions remain unaddressed, the biggest being which type of AI agent the tech industry is seeking to develop?

Different models will have vastly different implications. With an 'AI as adviser' approach, AI agents would offer individually calibrated recommendations to human decision-makers, leaving humans always in the driver's seat. But with an 'autonomous AI' model, agents will take the wheel on behalf of humans. That is a distinction with profound and far-reaching implications.

Humans make hundreds of decisions every day, some of which have major consequences for their careers, livelihoods, or happiness. Many of these decisions are based on imperfect or incomplete information, determined more by emotions, intuitions, instincts, or impulses. As David Hume famously put it, "Reason is and ought only to be the slave of the passions." Humans may make most decisions without systematic reasoning or due attention to the full implications, but as Hume recognized with the 'ought' part of his statement, this is not all bad. It is what makes us human. Passion reflects purpose, and it may also play a key role in how we cope with a complex world.

With AI advisers that provide customized,

reliable, context-relevant, useful information, many important decisions can be improved, but human motives will remain dominant. But what is so bad about autonomous AIs making decisions on our behalf? Could they not improve decision-making even further, save time, and prevent errors?

There are several problems with this perspective. First, human agency is critical for human learning and flourishing. The very act of making decisions and contemplating outcomes—even if the inputs and advice come from nonhuman agents—affirms our own sense of agency and purpose. Much of what humans do is not about computation or collecting inputs to decide on an optimal course of action; rather, it is about discovery—an experience that will become increasingly rare if all decisions are delegated to an AI agent.

Moreover, if the tech industry mainly pursues autonomous AI agents, the likelihood of automating more human jobs will increase substantially. Yet if AI becomes primarily a means of accelerating automation, any hope of widely shared prosperity will be dashed.

Most importantly, there is a fundamental difference between AI agents acting on behalf of humans and humans acting for themselves. Many settings in which humans interact have both cooperative and conflictual elements.

Consider the case of one company providing an input to another. If this input is sufficiently valuable to the buyer, a trade between the two companies is mutually beneficial (and typically also benefits society).

But for there to be any exchange, the price of the input must be determined through an inherently conflictual process. The higher the price, the more the seller will benefit relative to the buyer. The outcome of such bargaining is often determined by a combination of norms (such as about fairness), institutions (such as contracts that will impose costs if violated), and market forces (such as whether the seller has the option of selling to somebody else). But imagine that the buyer has a reputation for being completely uncompromising—for refusing to accept anything but the lowest feasible price. If there are no other buyers, the seller may be forced to accept the low-ball offer.

Fortunately, in our day-to-day transactions, such uncompromising stances are rare, partly because it pays not to have a bad reputation and, more importantly, because most humans have neither the nerve nor the aspiration to act in such aggressive ways. But now imagine that the buyer has an autonomous AI agent that does not care about human niceties and possesses nonhuman steely nerves. The AI can be trained always to adopt this uncompromising

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Much of what humans do is not about computation or collecting inputs to decide on an optimal course of action; rather, it is about discovery—an experience that will become increasingly rare if all decisions are delegated to an AI agent.

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stance, and the counterparty will have no hope of coaxing it toward a more mutually beneficial outcome. By contrast, in an AI-as-adviser world, the model might still recommend an uncompromising position, but the human would ultimately decide whether to go down that path.

In the near term, then, autonomous agentic AIs may usher in a more unequal world, where only some companies or individuals have access to highly capable, credibly hard-nosed AI models. But even if everyone eventually acquired the same tools, that would not be any better. Our entire society would be subjected to 'war-of-attrition' games in which AI agents push every conflictual situation to the brink of breakdown.

Such confrontations are inherently risky. As in a game of 'chicken' (when two cars accelerate toward each other to see who will swerve away first), it is always possible that neither party will cave. When that happens, both drivers 'win', and both perish.

An AI that has been trained to win at 'chicken' will never swerve. While AI could be a good adviser to humans—furnishing us with useful, reliable, and relevant information in real time—a world of autonomous AI agents is likely to usher in many new problems, while eroding many of the gains the technology might have offered.

## Waste to 'Waste-Wise Cities' for a Sustainable Future

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

A survey conducted a few years back by Kuwait Environment Public Authority revealed the low-level of public awareness on waste and its environmental consequences. This lack of knowledge highlights the need to increase consumer awareness on waste generation, as well as introduce the topic of rationalizing consumption and managing waste through public seminars and school curricula.

International Day of Zero Waste, observed annually on 30 March, underlines the importance of promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns, and highlights the vital role of zero-waste initiatives to accelerate the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Day calls for fostering sound waste management practices, minimizing and preventing waste generation, and implementing policies and infrastructure that promote waste reduction, reuse, and recycling, thereby contributing to a circular economy that advances environmental sustainability.

In a linear economy, which is the traditional economic model, raw materials are extracted, processed and transformed into products that consumers use until discarding them as waste, with no concern for their ecological footprint and consequences. In contrast, a circular economy promotes sustainability, it reduces material use, redesigns materials, products, and services to be less resource intensive, and recaptures 'waste' to manufacture new materials and products.

According to the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the UN agency that promotes socially and environmentally sustainable living habitats, cities play a crucial role in achieving zero waste. Although global cities occupy only around two percent of the world's total land area, they account for over 70 percent of global GDP, 66 percent of energy consumption, 70 percent of GHG emissions, and more than 70 percent of waste.

The financial power and economic growth of cities in recent decades is driving a massive migration of people from rural to urban areas, especially in many developing countries. Today, more than half the world's population of over 8.2 billion people live in cities; this figure is projected to reach nearly three-quarters of the population of 9.6 billion by 2050. The rapid urbanization and the concomitant increase in energy use, GHG emissions, and waste generation, makes urban agglomerations pivotal to effectively address waste-generation and -management.

Urbanization remains one of the most influential factors in twenty-first century developments. If well-planned and well-managed, urbanization can be a powerful tool for sustainable development in both developing and developed countries. Rather than being a major contributor to the global waste crisis, cities can be the source of solutions to its challenges, and a force towards achieving the Sustainable Development Agenda, and the Paris Agreement on Climate. Given the rapid pace of global

urbanization and the need to address the waste crisis, UN-Habitat launched 'Waste-Wise Cities', a comprehensive resource on best practices that help cities to manage waste more efficiently. While the initiative emphasizes that each city must deal with waste management issues based on their own context, it also encourages learning from the experience of other cities.

UN Habitat recommends several strategies that cities can promote and incorporate to become 'Waste-Wise', starting with assessing the quantity and type of waste generated by residents, establishments and businesses. Once waste is quantified, cities can then ensure that collection, transportation, and disposal of waste takes place in an environmentally safe and efficient manner. Cities should also empower and work with all waste stakeholders, public, private, and informal sectors, civil society organizations, and households to ensure successful waste management.

Other 'waste wise' strategies include promoting the reduction, reuse, and recycling of waste to derive maximum value from this source, as well as introducing a 'rethink on waste' through education and awareness efforts designed to change public attitudes towards waste. Meanwhile, policymakers can initiate long-term strategic plans and policies for urbanization with a focus on solid waste generation and treatment, as well as regular review of progress on these plans.

Additionally, to become 'waste wise', cities should consider providing financial and other incentives for proper disposal of

waste at the individual and business level; and implementing innovative recycling techniques and technological alternatives, such as waste-to-energy schemes, with the focus being on eventually transitioning towards a circular and sustainable economy.

In Kuwait, considering the steady increase in population, and a nearly 100 percent rate of urbanization, the continuing population growth not only increases MSW generation, but also creates an explosion in demand by citizens for housing. Tardy responses to housing crises by authorities in the past, has led to a backlog of nearly 100,000 applications, and a waiting period of over 15 years, for subsidized housing.

In a bid to ameliorate the residential logjam, the current government has made development of greenfield residential cities around the country a major plank of its Master Development Plans. More than half a dozen new urban settlements covering an area of over 500 sq.km, including South Al-Mutlaa City, Jaber Al-Ahmad City, South Sabah Al-Ahmad City, and South Saad Al-Abdullah City, are now in various stages of project implementation.

Developing the mega urban agglomerations coming up in the country in alignment with strategies outlined in 'Waste-Wise' cities and in line with a circular economy will ensure that Kuwait transitions to becoming a regional and global leader in environmentally sustainable, economically resilient, socially equitable and financially prosperous living habitats, that benefit present and future generations.

EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

# UN Debt Initiative with a Difference



**Mahmoud Mohieldin, Paolo Gentiloni, Trevor Manuel, Yan Wang**

Mahmoud Mohieldin, UN Special Envoy on Financing the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, is Co-Chair of the Expert Group on Debt.

Paolo Gentiloni, former European Commissioner for Economy, is Co-Chair of the Expert Group on Debt.

Trevor Manuel is a former minister of finance of South Africa and Co-Chair of the Expert Group on Debt.

Yan Wang, a former senior economist at the World Bank, is Senior Academic Researcher at the Boston University Global Development Policy Center and Co-Chair of the Expert Group on Debt.



and prohibitively high political and economic costs. As a result, indebted countries prioritize their creditor obligations over their own development, as ballooning debt-service payments crowd out vital investments in infrastructure and human capital, stifling growth and delaying climate action. Today, 3.3 billion people live in countries that spend more on debt servicing than health care and education, the vast majority of them in middle-income economies.

If left unaddressed, current liquidity constraints could quickly morph into a full-blown solvency crisis. Urgent intervention is therefore needed to avert a wave of defaults and put indebted countries on the path to economic independence.

In response to the escalating debt crisis in the Global South, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres established the Expert Group on Debt in December 2024. Its members are tasked with identifying and advancing policy solutions to help developing economies, particularly African countries and small island developing states, break free from the vicious cycle of debt distress.

Although previous UN working groups have tackled sovereign debt issues, several factors set this initiative apart. The first is timing: successive economic shocks have forced developing countries to borrow, typically at high interest rates, severely restricting their fiscal space. With just five years left until the 2030 deadline for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), developing countries—impeded by a persistent \$4 trillion annual financing gap—are on track to meet less than one-fifth of the SDG targets.

Second, while previous initiatives focused on developing countries' ability to repay and service their debts, the Expert Group aims to ensure that any proposed solutions support sustainable development.

Third, the Expert Group aims to identify and promote solutions that can gain political and public support at the global, regional, and national levels. While bold and ambitious measures are essential to addressing the current debt and development crisis, we cannot afford to pursue proposals that stand little chance of achieving the support required to drive meaningful change. With this in mind, the Expert Group seeks to develop comprehensive strategies. If solutions apply only to new debt or fail to foster economic growth, stabilizing debt dynamics could take years. Trade-offs must also be carefully considered; increased reliance on guarantees, for example, might mobilize more private capital but could reduce access to concessional financing and grants for sovereigns.

Lastly, the Expert Group's composition and outreach make it uniquely positioned

to address these issues. Supported by UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and other international bodies, the Group brings together former and current officials, policymakers, and leading academics, combining technical expertise with high-level influence.

The Group's strong ties to key institutions and networks, including international financial institutions, the G20, Jubilee 2025, and various regional and national organizations and agencies, create valuable opportunities to engage policymakers, scholars, civil-society representatives, and other stakeholders. By fostering coordination among UN member states, the Group can help mobilize political will and refine emerging proposals.

Three upcoming gatherings, in particular the Fourth International Financing for Development Conference in Spain in July, the G20 Summit in South Africa, and November's UN Climate Change Conference (COP30) in Brazil, could serve as critical platforms to promote realistic and practical policy solutions.

To be sure, no single reform will resolve the developing world's debt crisis overnight. But the crisis has laid bare the limitations of conventional approaches, underscoring the urgent need to rethink the structure and purpose of sovereign debt so that countries are no longer forced to choose between repaying their creditors and securing their future.

Given the stakes, any solution must be both swift and capable of uniting a broad coalition of stakeholders. But speed cannot come at the expense of long-term progress. To break the cycle of debt distress, solutions must go beyond short-term fixes and serve as a foundation for sustainable development.

Economic development requires financing that is affordable, accessible, and has maturities matched to development outcomes. Yet, for most developing countries, none of the above apply. Instead, an escalating 'debt disaster' is unfolding across much of the developing world, exacerbated by a series of cascading global crises.

The urgency of the current crisis cannot be overstated. Over half of the 68 countries eligible for the International Monetary Fund's Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust (PRGT) are now facing debt distress—more than double the number in 2015.

But even this figure fails to capture the scale of the problem, as many countries outside

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Today, 3.3 billion people live in countries that spend more on debt servicing than health care and education. If left unaddressed, current liquidity constraints could quickly morph into a full-blown solvency crisis.

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the PRGT framework are also grappling with crippling debt burdens and liquidity challenges. Between 2017 and 2023, developing countries' average debt-service costs surged by nearly 12 percent per year—more than double the growth rate of their exports and remittance earnings. Consequently, external debt sustainability deteriorated in two-thirds of developing countries over this period, including in 37 of 45 African countries with available data.

Despite their unsustainable debt burdens, many countries are reluctant to default, owing to inefficient debt-resolution mechanisms

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# Tashkent as a center of parliamentary diplomacy

*Uzbekistan is enhancing its role in the international parliamentary sphere, with the hosting of the 150th IPU Assembly in Tashkent from 5 to 9 April, marking a significant recognition of the country's parliamentary reforms and democratic development. António Guterres said, "Parliamentarians, through laws, can make a significant contribution to achieving sustainable development."*

By Prof. Akmal Saidov  
Special to The Times Kuwait

In April 2025, Tashkent will host the 150th IPU Assembly, marking the first time the event is held in Central Asia. The assembly will bring together over 2000 parliamentarians from more than 100 countries to discuss global issues.

This event highlights Uzbekistan's growing influence in international parliamentary diplomacy and its commitment to democratic reforms. The IPU's focus on parliamentary oversight aligns with Uzbekistan's efforts to strengthen legislative transparency and expand the powers of deputies. President Shavkat Mirziyoyev emphasizes the importance of the parliament as a driver of democratic reforms, marking the assembly as a historic milestone for Central Asia.

Founded in 1889, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is the world's first multilateral political platform promoting peaceful conflict resolution and parliamentary diplomacy. Over 135 years, it has grown into a global institution with 181 national parliaments and 15 inter-parliamentary organizations, representing 6.5 billion people.

The IPU plays a vital role in strengthening democratic institutions, human rights, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), while also improving parliamentary effectiveness in areas like the rule of law, climate action, and socio-economic development. Its legacy is honored through the Cremer-Passy Prize and the UN-designated International Day of Parliamentarism on June 30.

Today, the IPU is the largest global inter-parliamentary organization, representing over 46,000 parliamentarians. It serves as a vital platform for dialogue, parliamentary diplomacy, and international cooperation, integrating the experiences and practices of national legislatures to develop common strategies for addressing modern challenges. The IPU plays a crucial role in fostering international cooperation and promoting democratic principles, with its main areas of activity including:

The IPU provides a platform for dialogue between the parliaments of different countries, fostering discussions on global challenges and seeking solutions. It supports parliaments in developing and implementing legislative initiatives to strengthen democratic principles, transparency, and accountability in governance.

In response to increasing geopolitical challenges, the IPU is enhancing its role in conflict resolution, the development of international law, and peacekeeping efforts. The organization advocates for parliamentary engagement as a tool to prevent crises and build trust between nations. It places special emphasis on protecting human rights in conflict zones, preventing violence, and providing humanitarian assistance.

Democracy cannot be sustained without protecting human rights and the rule of law. The IPU actively supports free and fair elections, safeguards the rights of parliamentarians, and

combats the restriction of political freedoms, persecution of opposition leaders, and threats against deputies. The organization also works on developing recommendations to ensure electoral transparency and increase trust in state institutions.

Promoting women's participation in legislative activities remains a key priority for the IPU. Since 1997, the Target Program for Gender Equality has monitored the proportion of women in parliaments worldwide. In 2024, this figure was approximately 26.7 percent, though significant disparities remain between countries. The IPU urges parliaments to implement effective mechanisms to increase women's representation, such as quotas, mentoring programs, and creating supportive conditions for women's political participation.

Young politicians are still underrepresented in most parliaments, with only 17.5 percent of deputies under 40. The 'I Say Yes to Youth in Parliament' campaign aims to encourage young

**Martin Chungong (Cameroon)**  
– Secretary-General of the IPU

Martin Chungong, with over 30 years of experience in the IPU, became its first African Secretary-General in 2014. Formerly serving in Cameroon's National Assembly, he has led major reforms to boost parliamentary cooperation, empower women and youth, fight corruption, and strengthen oversight of global commitments. Named among the 100 most influential Africans in 2022, Chungong has transformed the IPU into a key force in global parliamentary diplomacy and sustainable development. The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) plays a key role in engaging parliaments worldwide in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), urging them to provide legislative support, budget oversight, and accountability.

Despite their importance, only a third of parliaments are involved in national SDG reporting, and a global funding gap of \$2.5 – 4 trillion remains. IPU President Tulia Ackson

role in addressing global challenges – from ensuring peace and security to protecting the environment and sustainable development.

Uzbekistan aims to be a key center of parliamentary diplomacy, actively contributing to international initiatives and offering new solutions to global challenges.

The 150th IPU Assembly in Tashkent, under the theme "Parliamentary action for social development and justice," will address a wide range of issues impacting the global community. Among the key themes are:

In the context of global instability, parliaments play a key role in peacekeeping processes, promoting dialogue, diplomatic negotiations, and the resolution of international crises.

Parliamentary oversight of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), legislative regulation of environmental initiatives, and the transition to a "green" economy will be at the center of discussions.

Increasing women's representation in legislative bodies, overcoming barriers for women in politics, and implementing strategies for gender equality.

The introduction of digital solutions in legislative activities, the development of e-parliament, and data protection in the context of cyber threats.

Strengthening inter-parliamentary cooperation in the field of security, developing legislative initiatives to combat global threats, and protecting human rights in cyberspace.

In addition, the Global Forum of Young Parliamentarians and the International Women's Parliamentary Forum will be held on the sidelines of the Assembly, demonstrating the IPU's commitment to inclusivity and the involvement of youth and women in decision-making processes.

**Tashkent IPU Assembly marks a new page in the history of parliamentary diplomacy**

Uzbekistan is enhancing its role in the international parliamentary sphere, with the hosting of the 150th IPU Assembly in Tashkent from 5 to 9 April, marking a significant recognition of the country's parliamentary reforms and democratic development. António Guterres said, "Parliamentarians, through laws, can make a significant contribution to achieving sustainable development."

The event highlights Uzbekistan's commitment to openness, sustainable development, and parliamentarism. By actively participating in the IPU and hosting key international forums, Uzbekistan strengthens its position on the global stage, fostering new opportunities for cooperation and advancing parliamentary diplomacy.

**Academician Prof. Akmal Saidov**, is Deputy of the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis (Parliament) of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Vice-President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (2020-2023)



leaders and support their active participation in legislative activities.

The IPU continues to serve as a vital platform for inter-parliamentary dialogue and global governance, emphasizing the need to strengthen its role in international security and human rights to achieve sustainable development and global peace.

**Tulia Ackson (Tanzania) - President of IPU**

Tulia Ackson, elected IPU President in 2023, is the first African woman to hold the position. A seasoned politician and legal expert, she previously made history as Tanzania's first female Speaker of Parliament. Ackson is a strong advocate for gender equality, human rights, and youth inclusion in politics. Her leadership emphasizes transparency, parliamentary oversight, and inclusive governance, marking a major milestone for global parliamentary diplomacy and showcasing Tanzania's rising role in international cooperation.

emphasized the need for greater parliamentary leadership during the 2025 UN Parliamentary Hearing. Uzbekistan has become increasingly active in international parliamentary diplomacy, contributing to major forums such as the IPU, OSCE, and CIS assemblies. It initiated a UN resolution highlighting the role of parliaments in achieving the SDGs, supported by 80 countries. The country's institutional cooperation with the IPU, including participation in key committees and forums, reflects its commitment to democratic reforms and SDG integration.

Secretary-General Martin Chungong commended Uzbekistan's progress, and Tashkent's selection as the host of the 150th IPU Assembly signifies global recognition of its growing influence in parliamentary diplomacy and democratic governance.

**Main Themes of the 150th IPU Assembly in Tashkent**

Parliaments can and should play a decisive



# EXECUTIVE HOUSE ZEN

## A Sanctuary of Luxury and Serenity in the Heart of Tokyo

By Nourah Khan  
Travel Writer  
The Times Kuwait

As someone visiting Japan for the first time, I found myself instantly captivated by Tokyo's unique energy. It is a city of striking contrasts—where futuristic skyscrapers coexist with centuries-old shrines, and where the fast-paced rhythm of urban life is balanced by moments of deep tradition and quiet reflection. From the very beginning, Tokyo felt both exhilarating and unexpectedly serene—a place that invites you to explore, then pause, then fall in love.



My most recent trip was made even more special by my stay at Executive House Zen, the exclusive luxury wing within the iconic Hotel New Otani Tokyo.

I was searching for a retreat that offered both indulgent comfort and an authentic Japanese experience. So I chose to begin my journey with a few nights at Executive House Zen, followed by additional nights in the hotel's main tower, known as The Main. This seamless transition between the two gave me a comprehensive experience: the calm sophistication of Zen and the vibrant pulse of The Main.

The hotel is ideally located in Nagatacho, one of Tokyo's most prestigious and tranquil neighborhoods—known as Japan's political center with government buildings and ministries nearby.



Despite the calm surroundings, the hotel's location is remarkably central. It is just a short walk to Akasaka-Mitsuke Station, offering direct access to Tokyo's extensive metro network. This made it effortless to reach popular districts like Ginza, Shibuya, and Harajuku. Additionally, Yotsuya Station, which connects to JR lines, is also close by, offering convenient routes for day trips or exploring further afield.

My suite at Executive House Zen was a serene sanctuary. The design blended soft earthy tones, refined wooden floors, and

minimalist décor with subtle, luxurious touches. The panoramic windows offered a mesmerizing view of the hotel's famous Japanese gardens, stretching out below like a living, breathing painting.

One of the highlights was the traditional Japanese bath experience in my room. A deep soaking tub, paired with aromatic oils, handcrafted bath amenities, and a warm cup of tea, turned each evening into a soothing ritual. It was a moment of stillness—a true immersion into Japanese culture and relaxation.

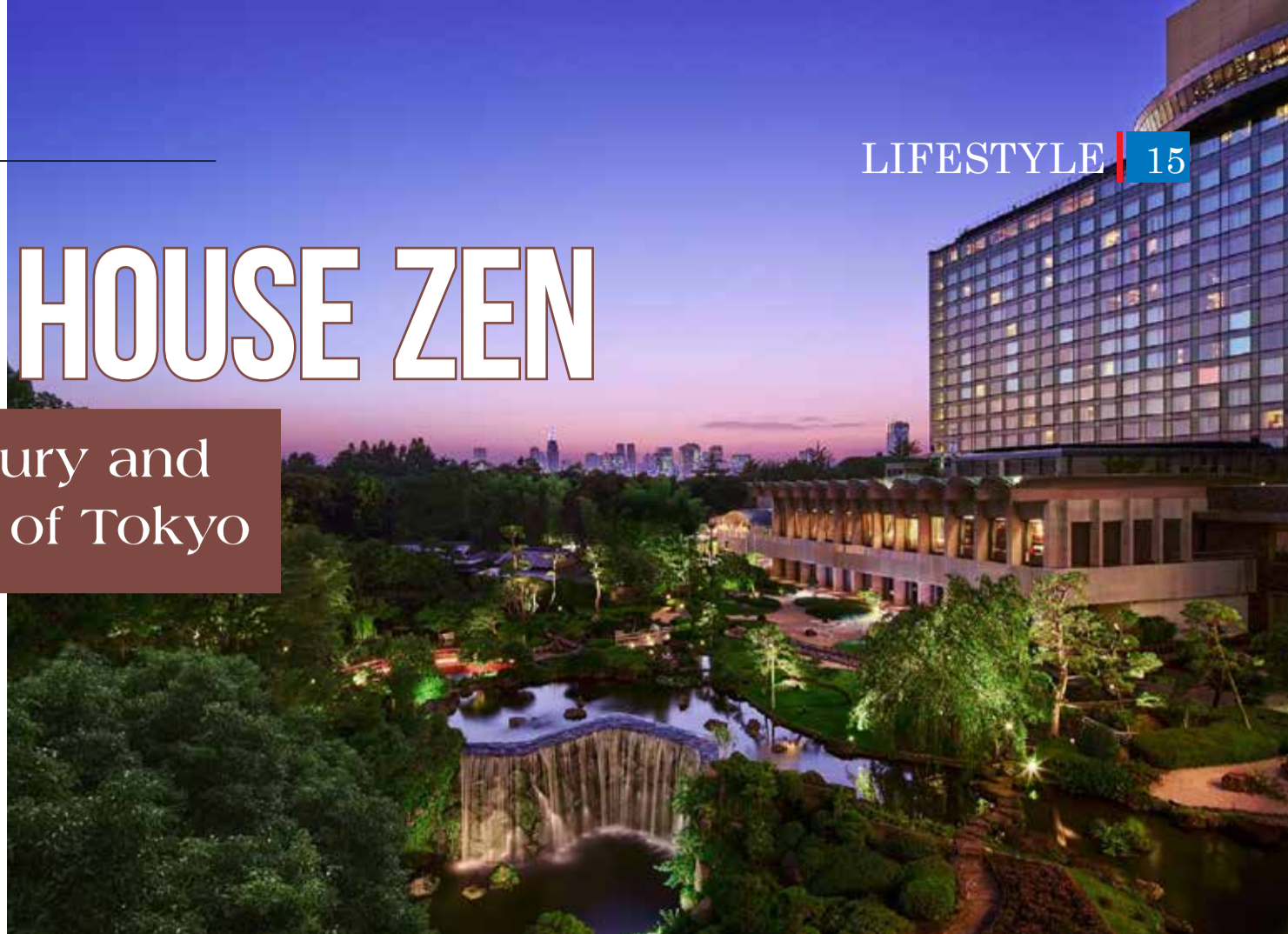
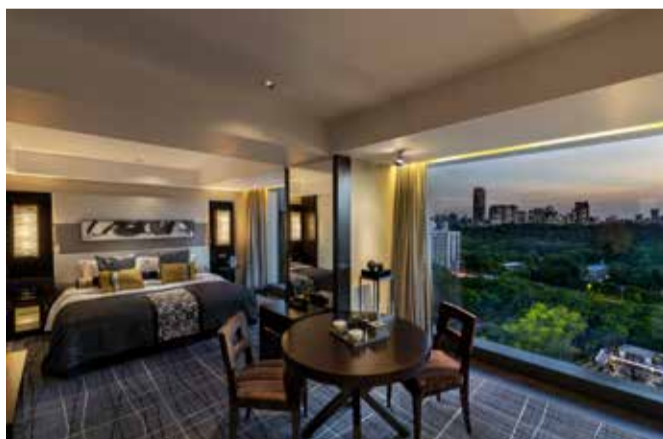
What sets Executive House Zen apart even further is the dedicated concierge service—a personalized offering where guests can request tailored itineraries, make exclusive restaurant reservations, and enjoy seamless assistance with any needs. It added an extra layer of ease and attentiveness to my stay, elevating the sense of being truly cared for.

Another memorable feature is the Executive Lounge, which offers curated selections of food and beverages throughout the day: a refined breakfast, elegant afternoon tea, evening cocktails, and late-night bites. While every detail was carefully considered, the view from the lounge was unforgettable—on clear days, you can even see the majestic Mt. Fuji in the distance, a sight that adds magic to every moment.

One of the hotel's greatest treasures is its historic Japanese garden, dating back over 400 years to the Edo period. Originally designed as part of a samurai lord's estate, the garden reflects centuries of Japanese landscaping tradition. With koi ponds, stone lanterns, waterfalls, and wooden bridges, it's hard to believe such a tranquil oasis exists in the middle of Tokyo.

Every morning, I made it a habit to walk through the garden, taking in the seasonal flowers, the rustle of the trees, and the serene sounds of running water. It felt meditative—not just a place of beauty, but a place where history, nature, and mindfulness meet.

After my peaceful nights at Zen, I moved to a suite in The Main, which offers a livelier, more socially active atmosphere while still



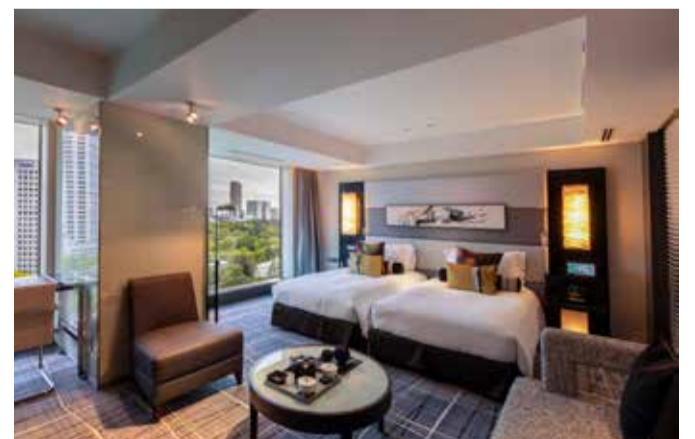
upholding the same level of refined service. The room I stayed in was a newly renovated Shin-Edo Suite, a beautiful expression of modern Japanese design. One of its standout features was the cypress wood bathtub, evoking the warm, relaxing vibes of a traditional onsen experience—even though the water itself is not from a hot spring.

What truly amazed me was how much the hotel complex has to offer. With over 30 restaurants and cafés, the New Otani is practically a culinary destination of its own. From traditional kaiseki and sushi to French, Italian, and modern Japanese cuisine, there is something for every palate.

There are also several boutiques and luxury shops within the hotel, offering everything from handcrafted Japanese souvenirs to designer fashion and art galleries. It is entirely possible to spend a day just exploring what the hotel has to offer—without ever leaving the property.

Everything I have ever heard about Japanese hospitality came to life here. The service is discreet yet attentive, thoughtful yet never intrusive. Every request, every gesture, was met with a genuine smile and an almost intuitive understanding of comfort.

My stay at Executive House Zen, followed by time in The Main, offered me a deeply enriching, luxurious, and culturally immersive experience in Tokyo. It is not just a hotel stay—it's a journey into the heart of refined Japanese living.



*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.*

# Ensuring COP30 Succeeds Where COP29 Failed



**Montek Singh Ahluwalia**

A former Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission of India, is Distinguished Fellow at the Centre for Social and Economic Progress in New Delhi.

Last year's United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29) in Baku ended with developed countries agreeing to mobilize \$300 billion annually for climate finance in developing countries. But while this figure is three times higher than the previous \$100 billion target, it falls far short of what is needed to close the climate funding gap.

The challenge today is more complex than when the Paris climate agreement was signed in 2015. Back then, the \$100 billion figure was largely arbitrary, not based on a full analysis of actual investment needs. By contrast, COP29 had to estimate real costs and determine how much external financing would be required.

A report by the Independent High-Level Expert Group on Climate Finance (IHLEG), of which I am a member, finds that developing countries (excluding China) will need \$2.4–3.3 trillion in climate investments by 2035. About 60 percent of this could be financed domestically through higher savings and reduced public deficits. Even so, after reallocating existing investments toward the green transition, a \$1 trillion shortfall by 2030—rising to \$1.3 trillion by 2035—remains. Closing this gap will require external funding.

While COP29 acknowledged the scale of the financing gap, it failed to agree on how to close it. Developing countries pushed for wealthier economies to cover the shortfall with public funds, but developed countries offered only \$300 billion annually—and even that came with a caveat: they would only 'take the lead' in mobilizing funds rather than guaranteeing direct provision.

The IHLEG report suggests that \$650 billion of the funding gap by 2035 could be met through private investment, including equity and debt. But this exposed a deep divide. Developed countries favored private capital to ease budget pressures, while developing countries, aware of its volatility, insisted on public funding for accountability and predictability.

Skepticism around private finance is warranted. Many developing countries struggle to attract



EXCLUSIVE TO THE TIMES KUWAIT

private investment, relying instead on grants and concessional long-term loans. Shifting these limited public resources to low-income economies means middle-income countries will have to rely even more on private capital, despite investor uncertainty.

Private climate finance will grow from \$40 billion in 2022 to an estimated \$650 billion by 2035, according to the IHLEG. But most investment remains concentrated in a few markets, making access unequal and uncertain. Falling renewable-energy costs could boost green projects over fossil fuels, but the transition's pace remains unclear.

Even when private capital is available, domestic policies often discourage investment. Many governments artificially lower energy prices for political reasons, making electricity providers financially unviable. Foreign investors understandably see this as a fundamental risk and hesitate to invest. If private finance is to play a bigger role, governments must reform energy pricing, strengthen regulations, and cut bureaucratic red tape to attract investment.

Public-sector support remains crucial. Multilateral development banks (MDBs) and bilateral institutions can lower risks for private investors through risk-sharing mechanisms while helping governments create stable, investment-friendly environments.

COP29's failure to secure a stronger funding deal means a renegotiation is unlikely until the next global stocktake in 2028. However, gaps can

still be bridged. Expanding MDB lending, which has lagged behind climate needs, could provide much-needed capital while countries work on long-term policy solutions.

COP29's final statement pointed to an opportunity to make real progress ahead of COP30 in Belém, Brazil. But one key factor will determine success: developed countries' willingness to commit more financial resources.

This has become even more uncertain with Donald Trump's return to the White House. His administration's hostility to global climate efforts, and its push for fossil-fuel expansion, will likely weaken international climate finance. The US is already scaling back existing commitments, further delaying climate negotiations.

Given how slow and bureaucratic these discussions have become, it is worth asking: Are massive annual COP meetings still the right approach? With tens of thousands of government officials, business leaders, and NGOs gathering each year, the urgency of the climate crisis demands more focused, results-driven decision-making.

One alternative is to delegate key financing negotiations to smaller, specialized groups. The G20, for example, lacks universal representation but includes all major economies, developed and developing, accounting for 80 percent of global GDP and emissions, and two-thirds of the world's population. More importantly, its members control the world's largest multilateral

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Tens of thousands of government officials, business leaders, and NGOs gather each year for the COP meetings, but the urgency of the climate crisis demands smaller, more focused, results-driven decision-making.

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development banks, making it a natural platform for driving climate finance.

Another option is BRICS, which has positioned itself as a counterweight to Western-led financial institutions. With China, India, Brazil, and other key developing countries playing a central role, the BRICS could mobilize alternative sources of green finance, reducing dependence on Western funding and pushing for fairer access to carbon markets.

If either the G20 or the BRICS were to take the lead in climate finance, the focus would need to be on expanding MDB lending capacity, leveraging private capital, and incentivizing large-scale investments in climate adaptation and mitigation.

With COP29 failing to secure an adequate funding framework, developing countries are left with more questions than answers. As the financing gap continues to grow, incremental pledges are no longer enough. The real question now is whether the COP process is still the best place for these negotiations.

If major economies keep delaying real commitments, India, Brazil, and South Africa may have little choice but to push for climate finance talks to shift to platforms like the G20 or BRICS.

For COP30 to succeed where COP29 failed, it must move beyond vague pledges to secure clear, enforceable financial commitments. Otherwise, the world will once again gather, negotiate, and leave with little progress, while the climate crisis continues to escalate.



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