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Public Prosecution busts human trafficking racket in coops

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New drug law brings stricter penalties, enhanced rehabilitation

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Laos, Kuwait nurture close partnership based on mutual trust, shared aspirations



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The GCC Summit in Bahrain: Integration, Cooperation, and Development

A Summit Affirming Steadfastness and Unity of Destiny



By Tareq Yousef AlShumaimry
Former Secretary-General of the GCC Commercial Arbitration Centre

Their Majesties and Highnesses, the leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, will convene for the 46th session of the Supreme Council Summit in Manama, Bahrain, on Wednesday, December 3, 2025.

Chaired by the Kingdom of Bahrain, the summit will focus on deepening strategic cooperation in key sectors and strengthening the



unified position and security of the GCC in light of escalating regional and global geopolitical challenges. Ahead of this crucial summit, I will

review the current priorities of the six-member GCC and the initiatives expected to be included on the summit's agenda for discussion and

approval by Their Majesties and Highnesses, the leaders of the GCC states.

I will also review the agreements reached at previous summits, which are expected to be discussed at the 46th session. The leaders will also discuss regional and global issues of importance to the GCC at the upcoming summit, particularly in light of the growing importance and influence of the GCC states in regional and international affairs. The GCC states are currently undergoing a gradual strategic shift in their global alliances through geopolitical and economic transformations. They are moving from traditional oil- and gas-dependent economies to dynamic global players of strategic importance in the international economic, political, and social spheres. As part of this transformation, the GCC states are working to reduce their reliance on long-term alliances and diversify their sources of income by building global partnerships.

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Public Prosecution busts human trafficking racket in coops

Public Prosecution said that workers in cooperative societies, helping customers to bag and load their purchases, were forced to pay daily 'tolls' to unscrupulous agents, in order to carry out their duties unhindered.

Following recent revelations of exploitation of baggers at cooperative societies, the Attorney-General has ordered the formation of specialized investigation teams from the Capital Prosecution and the Anti-Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Department. These teams are tasked with gathering evidence, hearing witness statements, and coordinating with relevant authorities to ensure protection for the victims.

In a statement on the case last week, the Public Prosecution said that workers in cooperative societies, helping customers to bag and load their purchases, were forced to pay daily 'tolls' to unscrupulous agents, in order to carry out their duties unhindered. This criminal activity not only deprived the workers of their hard-earned cash, but also denied them their legal rights. Additionally, this illegal practice is construed as a case of human trafficking that exploited the vulnerabilities and financial needs of the workers.

The statement noted that the prompt response by the Public Prosecution's office reflected Kuwait's determination to combat these crimes, reinforce protection mechanisms, and establish a strong legal environment that safeguards human dignity and the rights of vulnerable groups.

In total the authorities have launched investigations into nine cases linked to human trafficking and money laundering. The cases revealed that some cooperative societies exploited the workers by demanding daily fees in exchange for allowing them to work, a practice that violates Law No. 91 of 2013 on combating human trafficking and migrant smuggling.

In its statement the Public Prosecution revealed that so far, investigations have included statements from 115 victims and questioned 48 defendants, with further inquiries ongoing to uncover additional details and determine appropriate legal measures.

Acting Undersecretary of the Ministry of



Justice and Vice-Chair of the National Standing Committee to Combat Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants, Awatif Al-Sanad, praised the Public Prosecution's work. She highlighted that the procedures reflect the state's commitment to addressing human trafficking, protecting vulnerable populations, and ensuring accountability.

Al-Sanad emphasized that these efforts

align with Kuwait's National Strategy to Combat Trafficking in Persons and meet international standards for victim protection, prevention, and enforcement. She noted that the strategy is a cornerstone in establishing an effective anti-trafficking system in the country.

The National Committee reaffirmed its full support for ongoing investigations, stressing the importance of continued coordination and follow-up among relevant authorities to ensure cohesive national efforts and strengthen institutional capabilities in combating trafficking.

Authorities assured the public that investigations will continue thoroughly to hold perpetrators accountable and uphold the rights and safety of workers across all cooperative societies. The case underscores Kuwait's commitment to creating a legal and social environment where human exploitation is swiftly identified and addressed, reinforcing the state's zero-tolerance approach to human trafficking.

KFAS, Harvard Partnership a strategic investment in Kuwait's human capital



His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Al-Abdullah said the renewed partnership between the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences (KFAS) and Harvard University's Kennedy School represents a strategic investment in the people of Kuwait.

His Highness was speaking at the Executive Program Participants Forum organized by KFAS last week at the Scientific Center, to mark the 25th anniversary of the launch of the joint Executive Program between KFAS and Harvard Kennedy School with the aim of empowering national leaders and strengthening knowledge-based decision-making in Kuwait.

In his address, His Highness emphasized the vital role of KFAS as a national platform for supporting scientific research, innovation, and capacity building. He described the renewed partnership with the Kennedy School as essential to equipping Kuwaiti leaders with modern scientific tools in leadership, decision-making, and public policy, particularly amid rapid global shifts in economics, governance, and artificial intelligence.

In a statement issued on the occasion, KFAS noted that in line with this long-term strategic direction, the Foundation has built an extensive network of global partnerships with leading academic and research institutions. These include the London Business School, the National University of Singapore, the Wharton School, Cambridge University, the London School of Economics and Political Science, and most recently the European School of Management and Technology (ESMT) in Berlin.

These collaborations, the Foundation added, have played a key role in transferring knowledge and strengthening national capacities, with 1,530 participants benefiting from the programs to date.

The Foundation pointed out that the 'Kuwait at Harvard Program', established in 2000, reflects KFAS's commitment to research-driven innovation and advanced technology. The statement added that the program delivers specialized executive training designed around Kuwait's national priorities, blending world-class academic content with practical applications tailored to local and regional realities.

Since its inception, the Executive Program and the Kuwait Program at Harvard have graduated 770 participants, with 450 currently serving in leadership roles across various state institutions. The partnership has also facilitated cooperation between Kuwaiti researchers and Harvard scholars through joint research projects, academic visits, and specialized fellowships—further enhancing Kuwait's role as an active contributor to global knowledge production.

KFAS reaffirmed its commitment to deepening and expanding its partnership with Harvard Kennedy School in support of Kuwait's ambition to build a diversified, knowledge-based economy. The Foundation underscored that these efforts align with the nation's vision under the wise leadership of His Highness the Emir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, and His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Ahmad Abdullah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah.



LuLu Kuwait launches 'Super Friday' - the Biggest Black Friday Sale of the Year

Lulu Hypermarket has officially unveiled its largest annual shopping event, Super Friday, a mega Black Friday campaign running from November 26 to December 2, 2025.

The launch ceremony took place at the Lulu Qurain branch, attended by prominent Kuwaiti tech influencers alongside Lulu Kuwait's top management.

This year's Super Friday promises an unparalleled shopping experience, offering customers up to 70% off across a wide selection of products. Shoppers can expect weeks of exclusive promotions, exciting deals, and heavy discounts available at all Lulu outlets throughout Kuwait.

One of the major attractions of the campaign is the "Buy 20, Get 20" fashion promotion, giving customers even more value on their apparel purchases.

The hypermarket has announced a record-breaking "Suuuper Sale" across an extensive list of categories, including Mobiles, Tablets,

TVs, Laptops, Electronics, Wearables, IT Accessories, Gaming, Home Appliances, Beauty Gadgets, Fashion, Footwear, Luggage, Fragrances, Eyewear, Makeup, Beauty & Lifestyle Products, Home Furnishings, Toys, and all Supermarket essentials such as Groceries and Fresh Foods.

To enhance convenience, all offers are accessible both in-store and online, supported by value-added services such as extended warranties and easy credit options.

Adding to the festive shopping atmosphere, Lulu has introduced interactive activities such as Digital Spin & Win and a Surprise QR Code Hunt, giving customers additional chances to win exciting rewards throughout the campaign.

With its biggest ever Super Friday event, Lulu Kuwait invites shoppers to enjoy unbeatable deals, exceptional savings, and a vibrant, family-friendly shopping experience across all its stores.



New drug law brings stricter penalties, enhanced rehabilitation

Amiri Decree Law No. 59 of 2025, issued last week is a comprehensive new legislation that merges and updates all previous laws related to combating drugs and psychotropic substances. The decree consolidates Law No. 74 of 1983 on combating drugs and Decree-Law No. 48 of 1987 on psychotropic substances into one modern legal framework.

The unified law, which consists of 84 articles across 13 chapters, will come into force two weeks after its publication in the official gazette. The merger aims to unify concepts, definitions, penalties, and procedures, allowing authorities to address drug-related crimes more effectively and streamline enforcement mechanisms.

Under Article 82, the Minister of Health is mandated to issue the executive regulations required to implement the new law. Article 83 repeals all previous legislation that conflicts with the updated provisions, ensuring a single, coherent legal reference for all drug-related issues.

The law provides comprehensive definitions for narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, chemical precursors, and all forms of handling,

including production, cultivation, smuggling, possession, and promotion. It also defines terms related to treatment, rehabilitation centers, medical prescriptions, and official records.

The legislation introduces severe penalties, including death or life imprisonment and fines ranging from KD100,000 to KD 2 million for crimes such as importing, smuggling, producing, or cultivating drugs with intent to trade. Lesser but still stringent penalties apply to trafficking, possession for trade, and promotion, with fines up to KD500,000.

Establishing or managing a criminal organization involved in drug crimes is punishable by death. The decree also outlines judicial procedures, allowing immediate enforcement of imprisonment rulings. It gives courts the authority to grant exemptions or reduce sentences for offenders who voluntarily report crimes before authorities discover them. The Public Prosecution retains full jurisdiction over investigation and prosecution, while Kuwaiti jurisdiction extends to offenses committed abroad under specific conditions.

Chapters 12 and 13 detail inspection powers, granting judicial officers the right to enter



licensed institutions to ensure compliance. The law also establishes the Supreme Council for Combating Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, tasked with setting a national strategy for prevention, treatment, enforcement, and coordination among state bodies.

A major component of the law focuses on rehabilitation and treatment. The Ministry of Health will establish independent addiction treatment and rehabilitation centers, including separate facilities for individuals under 21. The private sector may also operate licensed medical units under ministry supervision.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Interior will set up specialized reform centers for imprisoned drug users, separate from other prisons, and offering medical, social, and vocational programs.

The law emphasizes confidential treatment, stipulating that addicts who voluntarily seek help before any complaint is filed will not face criminal charges. Treatment centers must keep all patient information strictly confidential and hand over any surrendered substances to authorities. The legislation sets strict controls on production, import, trade, and possession of narcotic and psychotropic substances. No entity may handle these substances without a license from the Minister of Health. Pharmaceutical factories may manufacture drugs only with approval, and all dispensing, storage, and destruction procedures will be governed by ministerial decisions.

Finally, the law regulates the cultivation of prohibited plants, allowing licenses only for government entities, research centers, universities, and specialized institutions. These provisions aim to prevent abuse while supporting scientific and medical research under strict state supervision.

Kuwait's population crosses 5 million

Kuwait's population registered a significant rise during the first nine months of 2025, increasing by 3.6 percent—equivalent to 181,000 people—to reach 5.169 million at the end of the third quarter in September.

This marks the highest population growth rate since 2021, compared to 4.988 million population recorded at the end of December 2024. According to quarterly data issued by the Central Bank of Kuwait, based on figures from the Public Authority

for Civil Information, Kuwait's population grew by 4.44 percent year-on-year, adding 223,000 people compared to 4.946 million at the end of September 2024.

The population also increased by 1.37 percent from the second quarter of 2025,

rising from 5.099 million to 5.169 million—an addition of approximately 70,000 people. The statistics further show that population growth has remained consistent since 2021, registering 2.3 percent in 2022, 2.59 percent in 2023, and 2.6 percent by the end of 2024.



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Laos, Kuwait nurture close partnership based on mutual trust, shared aspirations

Embassy of Laos celebrated the 50th anniversary of the founding of the People's Democratic Republic of Laos with a colorful ceremony on 2 December. In a statement on the occasion, Ambassador of Laos H.E. Boun Inthabandith noted that 2 December 1975, remains a proud and historic milestone for the Lao people, as it was on this day that our nation achieved full independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity after many decades of struggle for self-determination and freedom.

The Times Kuwait Report

Under the leadership of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party, the Lao people of all ethnicities gained true ownership of their nation and began a new chapter in building peace, unity, and prosperity. Over the past 50 years, under the Party's steadfast and visionary leadership, Laos has achieved remarkable progress in all fields. The country has undergone profound transformation politically, economically, and socially while maintaining stability, unity, and independence.

Laos is a landlocked country, located in Southeast Asia with a total area 236,800 Km² and a population of around 7.5 million with 49 ethnicities consisting of over 160 ethnic groups. Since the country is surrounded by five countries—China, Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia, and Myanmar—we have a policy to move our nation from a land-locked nation into a land-linked country to develop the economy and society.

The express railway line that has been constructed is being used to transport goods and people across the country and it will soon be expanded to connect with railways in Vietnam and Thailand thereby enhancing trade and movement of people across borders, and strengthening the role of Laos as a trade and logistics hub in the region. Furthermore, Laos is an agriculture and livestock production country that offers immense potential for investors and businesses from Kuwait.

Over the past five decades Laos has witnessed a journey of perseverance and collective strength. The Lao PDR has consistently upheld its Comprehensive Transformation Policy, focusing on economic modernization, social equity, and sustainable development. Political stability and national security have been maintained, ensuring social safety and internal unity across the country.

The Lao PDR has met criteria for graduation from Least Developed Country (LDC) status in 2018, 2021 and 2024, and is currently in the transition phase towards official graduation by 2026. Economic growth averaged approximately 5 percent per year, which is below the initial target of 7.5 percent. However, GDP per capita is projected to reach US\$2,200 by 2025, up from the \$1,700 in 2015, an increase of roughly 30 percent.

In addition, Lao PDR has successfully upgraded

and developed several key infrastructure systems, including national highways, expressways, railways, dry ports, and other facilities. These improvements have enhanced the country's connectivity with regional and global markets and contributed to economic expansion.

Notably, the Laos-China Railway has become a vital symbol of regional connectivity and prosperity, facilitating the transport of over 30 million tons of freight and enabling more than 260 million passenger journeys between Laos and China. The ongoing expressway expansion and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project in Vientiane further demonstrate Laos's commitment to modern, sustainable infrastructure development.

Thanks to consistent efforts, the national poverty rate is expected to decline to 15 percent by 2025, down from 23 percent in 2013, and all districts are now accessible by road and connected through telecommunications networks. Access to education, healthcare, and clean water has expanded nationwide, contributing to higher living standards and life expectancy.

Lao PDR has also prioritized the development of tourism infrastructure, services and activities across high-potential provinces. These efforts included upgrading tourist sites, improving service quality and promoting private sector engagement in tourism development. From 2022 to 2024, the country welcomed approximately 8,832,826 international tourist visits, equivalent to 58.8 percent of the five-year target of 15 million visits, and generated \$2.64 billion in revenue, reaching 69 percent of the five-year target of \$3.81 billion. In terms of spatial planning, 22 tourism zones were surveyed, designated, certified and demarcated, achieving 73.33 percent of the five-year target (30 zones), with projections to complete two additional zones by 2025.

There are several interesting places in each province of Laos from North to South.

Laos also has three UNESCO World heritage sites namely: the former royal capital Luang Prabang, Wat Phou Champasack Temple, and the Mysterious Pain of Jars in Xiengkhuang Province. These sites are of significant archaeological, historical and natural values.

Additionally, Laos has many cultural, historical, and natural tourist sites such as natural waterfalls, caves, mountains, and forests. The Lao government prioritizes green tourism and local



community involvement. We also have many golf courses, rock climbing, and trekking, as well as the facility to spend a night or two in the houses of local ethnic people, to familiarize with the way of living of various ethnic groups. Lao food is also distinct in the sense that we eat a lot of vegetables, spicy food and sticky rice that Kuwait people, once they have tasted it, will want more.

In foreign affairs, the Lao PDR has established diplomatic relations with 151 countries in the world; has ties with 146 political parties from 82 countries, cooperates with three international and regional organizations of political parties in the world, has 20 friendship associations with foreign countries and 1 Lao Peace and Solidarity Committee with Foreign Countries. In today's changing and uncertain world, the Lao PDR continues to follow a foreign policy based on peace, friendship, cooperation and independence.

Laos seeks to build good relations with all countries on the basis of mutual respect and benefit, and actively contributes to promoting peace, stability, and sustainable

development in the region and beyond. In this context, Laos highly values its warm and friendly relations with the State of Kuwait. Since the establishment of diplomatic ties in 2008, the two countries have nurtured a close and cooperative partnership grounded in mutual trust and shared aspirations.

The Lao Government and people deeply appreciate the continued friendship, development cooperation, and humanitarian assistance extended by the State of Kuwait through the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development and other channels. We are confident that in the years ahead, our two countries will continue to strengthen collaboration in areas such as trade, investment, tourism, education, and human resource development for the mutual benefit of our peoples and in the spirit of cooperation.

The year 2025 carries special significance for Laos. It marks the 50th Anniversary of the Founding of the Lao PDR, the 70th Anniversary of Laos's membership in the United Nations, and the final year of implementing the 9th Five-Year National Socio-Economic Development Plan. Moreover, it represents a decisive step toward our goal of graduating from the category of Least Developed Countries by 2026.

Laos continues to play an active and constructive role in regional and international affairs. The country reaffirms its strong commitment to promoting unity, resilience, and sustainable development within the ASEAN family and beyond. In this spirit, Laos also values the growing partnership between ASEAN and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), and stands ready to work closely with member states to further enhance cooperation in trade, investment, energy, and people-to-people exchanges for mutual benefit and shared prosperity.

With continued support from friendly nations and international organizations, together with the dedication and self-reliant spirit of the Lao people, I am confident that we will successfully realize these national aspirations and advance toward a future of lasting peace, prosperity, and sustainability. On this auspicious occasion, I wish to convey the Lao Government's and people's sincere appreciation to the Government and people of the State of Kuwait, as well as to all our friends around the world, for their continued support, goodwill, and cooperation with Laos.

Your friendship remains an invaluable contribution to our journey of national development and integration. As we look toward the future, may the bonds of friendship and cooperation between the Lao People's Democratic Republic and the State of Kuwait continue to flourish and bring prosperity to our two nations.

Kuwait begins reviewing previous cases of citizenship renunciation

Kuwait has begun a comprehensive re-examination of all past citizenship renunciation cases to determine whether previous decisions were legally sound and whether each case involved dual nationality or constituted forgery.

The distinction between dual citizenship and forgery is critical. Dual citizenship applies when the name on an individual's Kuwaiti nationality certificate matches that on their second nationality, whether it is Gulf, Arab, or foreign, including the same structure of the father's, grandfather's, and family names.

Forgery, however, is established when there is a clear discrepancy between the Kuwaiti name and the name on the second nationality, particularly in the father's and family names, indicating intentional alteration or concealment of identity.

Previously, those individuals found to hold a second nationality were summoned and

given the choice of relinquishing either their Kuwaiti citizenship or the other nationality. However, this process was a contravention of the law, which clearly states that acquiring another nationality automatically leads to the loss of Kuwaiti citizenship—without involving a 'choice' process.

Authorities are now conducting a full audit of all previous dual citizenship cases where the individual opted for Kuwaiti citizenship, applying strict legal and technical standards to verify each individual's identity and determine whether their case involved duplication or forgery. Those found to have falsified information will face full legal action, including citizenship withdrawal and referral to the competent authorities.

The review has already uncovered cases where the Nationality Department previously classified files as dual nationality, even though audits show they were outright forgery. Such errors represent a double legal



violation, the sources said.

The earlier 'choice' mechanism was also merely a customary practice. Many individuals simply signed a statement declaring their intention to renounce their foreign nationality, without completing formal procedures or providing proof.

This allowed some dual nationals and forgers to keep and even use the second nationality despite signing renunciation

documents. The current review involves a detailed comparison of all renunciation files, with emphasis on cases where Kuwaiti and foreign names do not match—an indicator of potential forgery.

Authorities are also looking into whether the second nationality was acquired voluntarily, as the law requires, or involuntarily, such as through birth or through decisions made by a foreign parent without the individual's consent.

Cases involving involuntary acquisition—such as children granted their mother's foreign nationality or nationals who acquired another citizenship by birth—are being evaluated with care and fairness. These individuals have the right, upon reaching adulthood, to renounce the foreign nationality and retain their Kuwaiti citizenship. Each case will be examined with precision to ensure the law is correctly applied before any action is taken.

South Korea, Kuwait deepen collaboration in green infrastructure

The Times Kuwait Report

Embassy of South Korea, in coordination with Korea's Ministry of Climate, Energy and Environment, organized the 8th Korean Smart Cities Forum at the Mövenpick Hotel Al Bida'a, on 26 November. The forum, held under the theme 'Addressing Urban Challenges through Smart Environmental Infrastructure', reflected the growing strength of partnership between the Republic of Korea and Kuwait. The event also helped highlight advanced Korean solutions in waste and water management, and explored new avenues for cooperation in sustainable urban development.

The forum underscored Kuwait's growing commitment to enhancing environmental infrastructure and advancing circular economy initiatives. Senior representatives from multiple Kuwaiti government bodies attended, reinforcing the strategic importance of Korean expertise in this field.

Affirming that the Ministry of Public Works maintains several active contracts with Korean companies across various sectors, Acting Assistant Undersecretary for the Control and Auditing Sector at the ministry, Engineer Ayman Al-Mousawi, noted that ongoing project

challenges in infrastructure development are natural and unrelated to Korean partners. Adding that Kuwait possesses the capability to overcome obstacles and continue progress, he stressed that in recent years, Korean technology has significantly supported major infrastructure and modernization work in Kuwait.

From the Public Authority for Housing Welfare, For his part, Deputy Director General for Planning and Design at the Public Authority for Housing Welfare, Nasser Khuraibet, highlighted the standout collaboration with Korea Land and Housing Company, which designed South Saad Al-Abdullah City.

He described the Korean smart city model as one that leverages technology to improve quality of life—an approach Kuwait seeks to adopt in other upcoming projects. Khuraibet added that South Saad Al-Abdullah City has now fully completed its design phase and entered implementation, with further discussions ongoing for future development stages.

Speaking on the occasion, Chargé d'Affaires at the South Korean Embassy, Hyejin Kim, emphasized that the forum marks an important step toward deepening cooperation in sustainability and environmental innovation. She noted that Korean eco-friendly



technologies can greatly support Kuwait's Vision 2035, particularly in waste management and water treatment.

Kim called for moving "from talk to actual achievement" through joint projects that deliver tangible impact. She added that limiting contract awards to price competition reduces opportunities for high-quality Korean firms,

stressing that Korea offers durable solutions aligned with Kuwait's long-term goals.

Kim also reaffirmed her country's commitment to supporting Kuwaiti projects through innovation, citing the 'Green Business Partnership' events organized by the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency to strengthen ties between companies in both countries.

For his part, Chee Myung-kyu, head of the Korean delegation and Director of Foreign Cooperation at Korea's Ministry of Energy, Climate and Environment, stated that their participation aims to reinforce collaboration in sustainability and waste management—key pillars of future Kuwait-Korea cooperation. He also revealed plans for a meeting with the Housing Authority to explore advanced waste treatment and recycling facilities, essential for upcoming joint initiatives.

Kyu added that the visiting delegation includes representatives from major Korean ministries, environmental associations, water partnerships, and leading smart city companies. He stressed that South Korea views Kuwait as a strategic partner and looks forward to "deeper and clearer cooperation" in green infrastructure and sustainable development projects.

Kuwait to establish new postal company in partnership with private sector

As part of its strategic plans to involve greater private sector participation in the economy and enhance public services, Kuwait is looking to establish a Kuwait Postal Company under public-private partnership. Accordingly, the Ministry of Communication announced last week that it had floated a public tender to select a specialized consulting firm to prepare the technical, financial, and legal studies necessary for the establishment of Kuwait Post Company.

The initiative, carried out in cooperation with the Kuwait Authority for Public-Private Partnership (KAPP), is part of the communication ministry's broader efforts to modernize and develop the postal sector, so as to enhance services to the public and increase government revenues



Acting Undersecretary at the Ministry of Communication, Meshaal Al-Zaid said the ministry has finalized the general and specific guidelines for contracting with the consulting firm, which will undertake all preparatory work required for establishing the new company.

The tender, announced on 23 November in the official gazette, invites specialized consulting firms and alliances to submit technical and financial proposals to prepare the feasibility study and tender documents, in line with Law No. 116 of 2014 on public-private partnerships.

The deadline for bid submissions is 23 February, 2026, while a preliminary meeting to discuss inquiries will be held on 23 December at the ministry's headquarters in the Communications Complex Building, Liberation Tower.

Al-Zaid emphasized that applicants must meet strict requirements, including at least eight years of experience in technical, financial, and legal consulting, and a minimum of five years in environmental consulting for regional or international PPP projects. Firms must also submit official documentation, including clearance certificates, a commercial license, registration with the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry, tax certificates, and other required approvals.

The project aims to deliver a qualitative transformation in the postal sector by improving service quality, expanding operational and distribution capabilities, and widening the range of services available to citizens and residents, ultimately enhancing the overall user experience.

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Kuwait fast becoming a regional hub for trade, finance

Recent transformative changes taking place in the country have moved Kuwait closer to realizing its ambitious 'Vision 2035' strategy of becoming a financial, commercial, and cultural hub in the region.

The country is undergoing a profound transformation, driven by political will and a series of reforms, particularly in foreign direct investment and capital market development. Amid shifting global geopolitical and economic landscapes, Kuwait is emerging as a major new player on the international investment stage.

This momentum has caught the attention of major international institutions. After years of stagnation, global credit rating agencies and investment giants are reassessing Kuwait's potential. The recent upgrade of Kuwait's credit rating by Standard & Poor's (S&P), alongside

the historic entry of institutions like BlackRock, signals that the country is on the brink of an unprecedented wave of investment and enhanced competitiveness.

S&P's decision to raise Kuwait's sovereign credit rating to 'AA-' with a stable outlook further underscores the robustness of the country's finances and the government's capacity to sustain financial and structural reforms. Kuwait's performance in global competitiveness rankings reflects this progress. According to the 2025 IMD Global Competitiveness Index, Kuwait rose to 36th globally from 37th, achieving the largest leap among Gulf countries. Notably, it is the only Gulf state to improve across all four key pillars: economic performance, government efficiency, business efficiency, and infrastructure.



The most significant gains came in the "Economic Performance" pillar, boosted by structural reforms such as the development of the capital market, the establishment of the central intermediary, and the upgrading of the Kuwait Stock Exchange. These reforms have positioned Kuwait as a preferred destination for global index funds, including MSCI and FTSE.

Foreign investors increasingly value local talent, and Kuwait has made remarkable progress in this area. The country climbed to 28th globally in the 2025 Global Talent

Competitiveness Index, moving up three places and surpassing markets such as China, Japan, and the UK.

Other key highlights that reflect Kuwait's positive changes include the country's ranking 9th globally in the "Investment and Development" axis. Kuwait was also ranked 11th globally in the participation of university-educated women in the workforce. High educational spending of \$20,000 per student per year.

The change from 53rd place in 2015 to 28th today—is the greatest improvement among Gulf countries over the past decade, signaling Kuwait's evolution into a regional platform for talent development.

Kuwait's strides are not limited to finance. The country advanced three places in the 2025 Digital Competitiveness Index, showcasing its growing role as a regional technological hub. Thanks to accelerated reforms, improved credit ratings, and confidence from global investment giants, Kuwait stands on the threshold of a historic transformation—moving steadily from a hydrocarbon-reliant economy to a diversified regional hub for finance, technology, and talent.

FAIPS–DPS Kuwait celebrates Middle School Annual Day



FAIPS–DPS Kuwait celebrated its Middle School Annual Day on 20 November, with Grade 6 students transforming the school auditorium into a vibrant showcase of talent, creativity, and cultural expression.

Themed around global cinema, the event offered an engaging blend of performances that captivated the audience from start to finish. The celebration was graced by the chief guest, Ambassador of Croatia H.E. Amir Muharemi, along with other distinguished guests.

The Indian traditional ceremonial lamp, symbolizing divinity, wisdom, and enlightenment, was lit by Ambassador Muharemi alongside the school's Principal Ravi Ayanoli and Headmistress Deepa Elizabeth George, marking the auspicious commencement of the program.

Principal Ayanoli, in his welcome address, expressed gratitude to the chief guest, dignitaries, parents, and teachers for their unwavering support. He highlighted the meticulous preparation behind the event and emphasized the role of parents and educators in nurturing resilience and confidence, and in exploring and unfurling the hidden talents of students.

The cultural extravaganza featured over 400 students, bringing the stage alive with energy and infectious enthusiasm. A thought-provoking skit on women empowerment, inspired by India's Women's Cricket Team victory at the ICC Women's World Cup, set the tone with messages of courage, determination, and teamwork.

Performances then journeyed through the golden eras of Bollywood and Hollywood, featuring a Retro Tap Dance, soulful medleys of classic songs, and a lively 1980s–90s dance showcase that enthralled the audience. Adding to the spectacle, students recreated famous film scenes through Live Posters, while a sparkling fashion show brought iconic global cinema characters to life.

A highlight of the event was the Transformation Dance, depicting the evolution of Indian and Western cinema with dynamic choreography, expressive performances, and electrifying music. The celebration reached its peak during the Grand Finale, where students united on stage for a high-energy tribute to global cinema.

Addressing the gathering, Ambassador Muharemi lauded FAIPS–DPS Kuwait's holistic educational approach and the Grade 6 students for their talent and spirited performances. He praised the teachers for their guidance, acknowledged parents' pride, and underscored the enduring importance of education in a rapidly evolving world driven by artificial intelligence and technology.

In her Vote of Thanks, Headmistress Elizabeth George recognized the dedication and teamwork of all involved, highlighting collaboration as the foundation of the school's success. She also thanked the Chief Guest for his presence and warmth. The event concluded on a cinematic note with the iconic line from *The Truman Show*: "In case I don't see you: Good afternoon, good evening, and good night."



Culinary dreams take flight at Masterclass 2025 Graduation Ceremony

By Ricky Laxa
Staff Writer

Masterclass Lifestyle Workshops commemorated the achievements of its diligent students with a graduation ceremony held at their studio in Salmiya, marking the successful conclusion of the 2025 academic year. This momentous event brought together students, instructors, and culinary enthusiasts to celebrate the culmination of hard work, creativity, and passion in the culinary arts and lifestyle workshops.

The ceremony witnessed twenty-eight students receiving certificates of completion across various courses, including Baking, Japanese Cuisine, Essentials of Bread Making with Voice Course, Floral Arrangement, and Perfume Making. Each of these programs not only empowers students with practical skills but also ignites their creativity, encouraging them to explore their culinary passions further. Regrettably, a few students were unable to attend the ceremony due to personal commitments.

The event was graced by Masterchefs Jay Dan Belleza, Mariel Macalalad, Zhan Robles, and Workshop Trainer Rose Ann De La Cruz. Their presence added an invaluable touch to the ceremony, as they handed out the certificates and shared their insights on following one's passion in the culinary world.

Masterchef Belleza emphasized the importance of pursuing culinary dreams, particularly as many students aspire to seek new ventures within Kuwait. Masterchef Macalalad echoed this sentiment, inspiring students to remain dedicated to their culinary ambitions, regardless of their current jobs.

As part of the celebration, culinary students delighted attendees by sharing

a collection of beautifully crafted baked goods that showcased their hard work and creativity. Trainer Rose Ann De La Cruz took the opportunity to connect with students and guests, offering heartfelt gifts to all attendees as a token of appreciation for their hard work and commitment throughout the courses.

Among the graduates was Vanissa Resurrection, a household service worker in Kuwait, who expressed her gratitude: "This is one culinary experience that can totally change how I envision my future plans. My gratitude goes to the Masterchefs for their dedication in sharing their knowledge and skills with us." Her words reflected the transformative power of education in the culinary arts, underscoring how passion for cooking can inspire individuals to aspire for more in life.

Another graduate, Rosebelinda Arsua, a mother married to a Kuwaiti with two children, shared her sentiments: "It is never too late to learn, and I am so empowered by these culinary experiences to go on and discover more about culinary and lifestyle courses with Masterclass." Her journey showcases that the pursuit of knowledge and skills in the culinary field can commence at any age, promoting a fulfilling lifestyle and enriching family life. Administrator of the school, Ricky Laxa, also announced its line-up of classes for the year 2026.

The graduation ceremony at Masterclass Lifestyle Workshops not only celebrated the accomplishments of the graduating students but also served as a reminder of the rich, transformative experiences that culinary education can offer. As these graduates embark on their new culinary ventures, Masterclass remains a beacon of inspiration and knowledge, encouraging the next generation of culinary and lifestyle workshops enthusiasts to follow their dreams.

Tourism in Uzbekistan soars as Tashkent opens doors for Kuwaiti visitors



The Times Kuwait Report

Tashkent is opening its doors to Kuwaiti travelers, with Uzbekistan's tourism sector witnessing significant growth, says the Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Kuwait, H.E. Ayub Khan Yunusov.

Since June 2025, Kuwaiti citizens have been allowed to enter Uzbekistan visa-free for up to

one month, a move aimed at facilitating travel and boosting tourism between the two nations, the Uzbekistan envoy said.

The announcement came during a tourism event hosted by the Uzbek Embassy in Kuwait, attended by Timur Khojaev, director of Uzbek travel agency "Asia Lux," and Gonca Akca, commercial director at Jazeera Airways, alongside representatives from more than 40

travel agencies and tour operators, as well as Kuwaiti influencers and bloggers.

Ambassador Yunusov thanked those present at the event and highlighted Uzbekistan's rich tourism potential, from historical sites and natural landmarks to a deep cultural heritage.

He praised "Asia Lux" for presenting a detailed overview of the country's top destinations and travel opportunities. "There is always more to discover in Uzbekistan," the ambassador said, noting that the Ministry of Tourism continues to enhance its offerings and programs to attract visitors from across the region. Gonca Akca emphasized that Jazeera Airways partnered with "Asia Lux" to organize the event and noted that the airline operates 3 to 4 weekly flights to Tashkent during the winter season, in addition to regular flights to Namangan and Samarkand.

She said the airline began flights to Tashkent in 2021 and to the Fergana region in 2019, with

occupancy rates reaching around 80 percent.

Gonca Akca added that Uzbekistan has become a popular destination for Kuwaiti and Saudi families and youth, thanks to its scenic mountainous landscapes, rich history, availability of halal food, warm hospitality, and proximity—flights take just about three hours.

Timur Khojaev explained that his visit to Kuwait aims to further promote Uzbek tourism, highlighting that Uzbek companies are running extensive campaigns across GCC markets in response to increasing interest in Uzbek destinations year after year. "Uzbekistan always welcomes Kuwaiti tourists," Khojaev said, addressing travelers directly: "Welcome to Uzbekistan... enjoy our culture, history, and cuisine."

Last year, Uzbekistan hosted 10 million tourists, a number that has already risen to 15 million this year, with over a million additional visitors arriving each month.

Canadian envoy marks diplomatic milestone by celebrating Kuwait's Canadian Alumni



The Times Kuwait Report

In a gathering rich with symbolism, gratitude, and renewed purpose, Canada's Ambassador to Kuwait, H.E. Tara Scheurwater, welcomed the distinguished guests, community partners, and dozens of Canadian-educated Kuwaitis to a warm reception at the Official Residence on Tuesday evening.

The event coincided with the Ambassador formally presenting her Letters of Credentials to His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, marking the official start of her mission in Kuwait. Ambassador Scheurwater described the reception as especially meaningful, not only as her first public event since assuming her post, but also as a celebration of the people she called "true ambassadors of Canada."

Addressing alumni and friends in English, French, and Arabic, she praised the leadership and achievements of the Canadian-educated community in Kuwait, noting that their continued engagement strengthens the deep and enduring ties between the two nations.

In a creative touch, guests were greeted with colored ribbons corresponding to Canadian provinces and territories — yellow for Alberta, gray for British Columbia, blue for Quebec, red for Ontario, and others — encouraging alumni to reconnect with peers who studied in the same regions. The gesture created immediate connections and conversations, evoking memories of university life across Canada's diverse academic landscape.

The ambassador highlighted Canada's status as a top global destination for higher education, hosting nearly one million international students and generating an estimated \$37.3 billion in economic impact while supporting more than 360,000 jobs. She emphasized that Canadian institutions remain global leaders in artificial intelligence, engineering, health sciences, and

environmental research, and noted that nearly 89% of international graduates who stay in Canada find employment within three years.

These strengths, she said, are reflected in the accomplishments of Kuwait's Canadian alumni, who hold key positions across sectors including healthcare, finance, education, engineering, energy, arts, and government.

Year 2025 marks a major milestone — the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Canada and Kuwait. Throughout the year, the Embassy has organized cultural and educational initiatives under Kuwait's anniversary theme, "Collaboration and Connection," a message that Ambassador Scheurwater said perfectly captures the spirit of the bilateral relationship.

She highlighted one of the year's signature cultural projects: a mural created under NCCAL's Al Fenn Al Thalith public art program. The artwork is being developed collaboratively by renowned Canadian artist Bryan Beyung — who attended the reception — and Kuwaiti artist Yousef Saleh. The mural's public unveiling is scheduled for Saturday, November 29, at the Sharq 52 building.

The ambassador extended heartfelt appreciation to the Embassy's partners whose support helped bring the anniversary programs to life, including all sponsors.

Closing her remarks, Ambassador Scheurwater introduced Dr. Ali Akbar, President of the Canadian Alumni Association of Kuwait, praising his leadership and his central role in uniting the alumni community. The evening's program also included reflections from two distinguished graduates, Dr. Abdulaziz AlJassim AlShareef and Dr. Razan AlJasem, who shared stories of their educational journeys in Canada.

The reception was both a milestone and a message—celebrating 60 years of friendship while ushering in a new chapter of collaboration, cultural exchange, and people-to-people connection between Canada and Kuwait.

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Two Kuwaiti women scientists win prestigious UNESCO award in science

Two Kuwaiti women scientists, Dr. Fatemah Bahman and Dr. Intisar Al-Hatlani, are the recipients of this year's L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science International Awards. Created in 1998, the awards aim to improve the position of women in science by recognizing outstanding women researchers who have contributed to scientific progress.

Dr. Bahman, who works at the Dasman Diabetes Institute (DDI), was recognized for groundbreaking research on the genetic links between diet, inflammation, and metabolic diseases, with the award's 2025 Middle East Regional Young Talents Program.

Dr. Al-Hatlani, professor of chemistry at Kuwait University, was honored with the 2024 Middle East Award for Women in Science, for her pioneering work in deep ultraviolet Raman spectroscopy and its applications in forensic science and materials detection.

In a statement on their scientist winning this year's award, DDI emphasized Dr. Bahman's dedication, scientific excellence, and contributions to advancing metabolic and genetic research continue to inspire the scientific community and strengthen



Kuwait's position in medical innovation. The statement went on to congratulate Dr. Bahman by noting, "your achievements are a source of immense pride for all of us at Dasman Diabetes Institute".

The awards were presented during a ceremony in Dubai honoring distinguished women scientists from across the Middle East.



The regional program highlights exceptional Arab women in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) whose work addresses pressing scientific challenges and inspires future generations.

L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science International Awards has so far honored more than 4,700 female researchers from

over 140 countries, including 63 from the Gulf Cooperation Council, with over AED 3.8 million in regional endowments.

Guided by the principle that 'the world needs science, and science needs women', the program continues to promote inclusivity and empower women's indispensable role in shaping a sustainable scientific future.

Thai Textiles: An Enduring Legacy Harmonised with Modern Lifestyles

Thailand's traditional textiles reflect the country's rich cultural diversity, with each region offering distinctive designs. From Phrae Wa silk in the Northeast to Na Muen Sri fabrics in the South, the handwoven textiles are renowned for their meticulous patterns, versatility, and use of natural materials.

The Times Kuwait Report

On 24 October 2025, the Kingdom of Thailand mourned the passing of Queen Sirikit The Queen Mother. However, her lifelong dedication to promoting Thai culture leaves an enduring legacy on many aspects of Thai heritage. In particular, her role in the preservation of the Kingdom's traditional textiles has earned the crafts a worldwide recognition.



In addition to its high-quality textiles, Thailand also boasts beautiful traditional dresses or Chud Thai that harmonise cultural identity with modern practicality. Under Her Majesty's

There are altogether eight styles of royal-inspired Thai costumes for ladies: (1) Thai Ruean Ton, (2) Thai Chitralada, (3) Thai Amarin, (4) Thai Boromphiman, (5) Thai Chakri, (6) Thai Dusit, (7)



gracious commission in the 1960s, experts researched into women's attire from all periods of Thai history from Sukhothai, the first Thai Kingdom in the 13th century, to Rattanakosin (modern era) and designed attires that represent Thailand's national identity and were suitable for formal wear on different occasions. Her Majesty's initiative led to Thai costumes, referred to as "Chud Thai Phra Rajaniyom."

Thai Siwalai, and (8) Thai Chakraphat.

The style has gained popularity among Thai ladies and remained an important part of the nation's identity. Moreover, Thailand has also submitted "Chud Thai: The Knowledge, Craftmanship and Practices of the Thai National Costume" for the inscription by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). At present, the proposal

is under review by the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, and is expected to be considered in 2026.

After the passing of Her Majesty The Queen Mother, her granddaughter, Her Royal Highness Princess Sirivannavari Nariratana Rajakanya has been devoted to continuing the vision and disseminating the knowledge about the costumes through exhibitions and activities both in Thailand and abroad.



What began as a royal initiative has matured into a national symbol and a vivid reminder of Thailand's cultural roots. When someone wears a Thai costume or uses a piece of Thai fabric, they help to preserve not only the graceful artisanal crafts, but a heritage of the Thai nation.

Foreigners who are interested in Thai culture and textiles are welcome to try wearing Thai costumes at various locations in Thailand including the famous Wat Arun temple (temple of Dawn), Bangkok. For those who want to immerse in the textiles' history, both local "woven dialects" from all regions of Thailand and traditional dresses are displayed at the Queen Sirikit Museum of Textiles in Bangkok. Visitors can appreciate the beauty of the garments and buy unique and meaningful souvenirs at the museum's shop.

EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Outlook for the US Economy in 2026



Nouriel Roubini

Professor Emeritus at NYU's Stern School of Business, is the author, most recently, of *MegaThreats: Ten Dangerous Trends That Imperil Our Future, and How to Survive Them*

This has been a bumpy year for the US economy. Although there was a massive boom in AI-related investments, uncertainties caused by President Donald Trump's tariffs and other policies curtailed growth in the second half of the year, and disruptions to official employment and inflation data as a result of the longest-ever government shutdown have further clouded policymakers' perceptions. The big question now is what 2026 will bring.

There are three possible scenarios. In the baseline case, the US will suffer a growth recession (meaning below-trend GDP growth) for a few months, followed by a recovery and a gradual decline in the inflation rate toward the US Federal Reserve's 2 percent target. Think of this as the Goldilocks scenario. In the second scenario, the economy experiences a shallow recession for a few quarters, followed by a slower return to growth than in the first scenario. And the third scenario features a 'no-landing' outcome in which growth remains strong but inflation does not fall toward the target rate.

The Goldilocks scenario is the baseline because market discipline, good advisers, and a still-independent Fed (notwithstanding Trump's periodic threats) have already forced the White House to blink and climb down from the high tariffs announced on April 2. Since then, the administration has negotiated various trade deals and frameworks featuring more modest tariff increases (often in exchange for commitments to invest in the United States). As a result, US and global growth have slowed somewhat, but inflation has risen only modestly.

If there is a strong recovery by the middle of next year, it will be driven by several factors: further monetary easing by the Fed; fiscal stimulus that is still in the pipeline (most of the recently legislated spending cuts will not occur until after the 2026 midterm election);



strong household and corporate balance sheets; easy financial conditions (owing to high equity prices, low bond yields and credit spreads, and a weaker dollar); and the strong tailwinds from capital expenditures (capex) relating to AI. Moreover, inflation may peak and then start to fall next year as the base effects of tariffs wane, and as technology-

economy" in which high-income households thrive and lower-income households struggle. Business confidence also could take a hit, especially if concerns about an AI bubble lead to a large equity-price correction and softer capex. But even in this gloomier scenario, the recession would be short and shallow, because the Fed would cut rates more aggressively, and

from new or recently adopted technologies. Tight product and labor markets would lift wages and promote overall growth, and core price inflation (excluding food and energy) would remain closer to 3 percent. In this case, those on the interest-rate-setting Federal Open Market Committee who worry about overheating would have the upper hand, and the Fed may refrain from cutting rates as long as above-potential growth and above-target inflation persist.

That said, this last scenario is not the baseline (most likely) because other recent indicators do point to economic weakness. Moreover, various geopolitical headwinds—such as a worsening of Sino-American trade tensions and overall relations, or a new conflict that causes oil prices to spike—could always push the economy into the recession scenario. Fortunately, such shocks have largely been contained, and one must hope that they will remain so.

If the US economy stages a recovery in 2026, and if the Chinese economy remains resilient and maintains growth close to 5 percent, the global outlook will improve. Advanced economies and emerging markets alike would be on track for stronger growth compared to what we saw in 2025. Even if important downside risks remain, one can be cautiously optimistic heading into the new year.

“Various geopolitical headwinds—such as a worsening of Sino-American trade tensions and overall relations, or a new conflict that causes oil prices to spike—could always push the economy into the recession scenario.”

driven productivity gains start to reduce costs and unlock new efficiencies.

While the second scenario (a short, shallow recession with a slower recovery) cannot be ruled out, it is less likely than the baseline. The effects of tariffs tend to appear with a lag, which means that US trade policies could still push up inflation, thereby eroding real wages and further weakening consumer confidence. There is already talk of an emerging “K-shaped

fiscal authorities may intervene with additional stimulus to support economic recovery.

Finally, the upside, no-landing scenario cannot be ruled out, because some recent indicators suggest that the economy is more resilient than many previously thought. For example, the apparent slowdown in hiring may be driven by a fall in labor supply, owing to the Trump administration's crackdown on immigration, and early productivity gains

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EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

How Trump Could Fix the G20



Jim O'Neill, Rami Kiwan

Jim O'Neill is a former UK Treasury minister and a former chairman of Goldman Sachs Asset Management.

Rami Kiwan is a former head of the Policy Strategy and Planning Unit for Saudi Arabia's G20 Presidency in 2020

On December 1, the G20's rotating presidency will pass from South Africa to the United States, putting its agenda under President Donald Trump's control. But it remains to be seen what this passing of the baton will mean for the world's premier multilateral economic body. While Trump's presence at the helm could further reduce the G20's effectiveness, as many expect will happen, this need not be the case. In fact, if Trump wants to, he can breathe new life into the organization.

Although the G20 was founded in the late 1990s, it was not operationalized until 2008, when US President George W. Bush awakened it to coordinate inter-governmental responses to the global financial crisis and put a floor under the world economy. The baton then passed to the United Kingdom, where British Prime Minister Gordon Brown's government leveraged the G20's convening and coordinating power fully, producing what was widely seen as a successful response to the crisis.

Owing to that success, it initially seemed as though the G20 would play a more permanent role in world affairs. But by the early 2010s, well before Trump's first term, the G20 had already



begun to lose its way. The one big exception came during the COVID-19 pandemic, when it helped coordinate governments' responses and convened an urgent summit on stabilizing markets and supply chains.

In principle, the G20 still holds much promise. Unlike the G7, which previously sought to play a similar role, it includes the original BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) and other emerging economies, such as Saudi Arabia. Representing more than 80 percent of world GDP, it has a much stronger claim to global legitimacy than any other economic grouping.

But the past decade has underscored the G20's shortcomings. With more than 20 countries and other organizations, there are often too many cooks in the kitchen. As a result, every agreement and communiqué reflects the lowest common denominator, which often means that it has been diluted and drained of

all ambition. Making matters worse, each host country brings its own urgent priorities, turning the agenda for every annual summit into an aspirational laundry list with no chance of being implemented.

Given these problems, many countries have often defaulted back to smaller groupings. The G7 continues to meet regularly to discuss global issues, and the BRICS have recently expanded to include five more emerging economies (Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates). But since neither of these groups can mobilize truly global responses without the other, the G20 remains the only game in town. Restoring its effectiveness should be our top priority.

Despite his skepticism of multilateralism, Trump is nothing if not unpredictable. Now that he will be officially presiding over the G20, he could win praise from around the world by making it work better. If this sounds fanciful,

remember that the G20 did reach a consensus at its March 2020 summit, during Trump's first term, on addressing the pandemic.

A good starting point for this US G20 presidency would be to focus less on compromise—the source of the lowest-common-denominator outcomes—and more on conciliation. For the organization to be effective, it must be capable of making hard choices that could upset some governments.

Specifically, we see two areas where Trump could make a real difference. The first concerns how the organization thinks about representation. It is important to recognize that not all members are equal. Global policy coordination would be more successful under the leadership of a tighter group comprising only the major economic powers.

On most issues, whatever the US, China, India, and the European Union decide should carry the greatest weight. And in some narrower areas, such as energy production, it makes sense for countries like Saudi Arabia to have more of a say.

The second area concerns how economic goals are set. Trump could continue what former US Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner started when he tried to persuade systemically important G20 members to commit to balance-of-payment and current-account targets, in the interest of reducing global imbalances. Given his preoccupations, Trump should jump at this proposal, especially as it becomes more obvious that his tariffs are doing damage to the US economy.

What about other major global challenges, from climate change to antimicrobial resistance? It may be prudent to pause any new initiatives until the G20 presidency passes to a government that is more aligned with the broad international consensus. Since coalitions of the willing can still work within existing frameworks on these issues, the agenda should aim to avert divisive debates and allow all members to focus on making the G20 fit for purpose again

The GCC Summit in Bahrain: Integration, Cooperation, and Development

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

On the economic front, the GCC states are making significant progress in their internal integration. The GCC's intra-regional trade reached US\$1.5 trillion in 2024, ranking it sixth globally in terms of trade volume and representing 3.2% of total global trade.

The GCC countries collectively ranked third globally in terms of trade surplus, reaching US\$110 billion, while intra-regional trade reached approximately US\$146 billion in 2024, registering a growth rate of 9.8% compared to 2023.

Economic integration is pivotal to achieving the GCC's objective of consolidating its position as a cohesive entity, enhancing its financial influence, and building economic blocs to mitigate the effects of global instability.

Given the ongoing strategic transformation of this six-nation Gulf bloc, strengthening foreign policy coordination to amplify its collective voice in international forums and global diplomacy is crucial and is expected to be a key item on the agenda at the GCC summit in Manama.

Prioritizing enhanced economic integration will lead to a review of progress made in this direction over the years, including the current status of the Gulf Common Market, the Customs Union, and the long-awaited Gulf Monetary Union. Other initiatives could include cross-border investment flows, private sector participation, and unified regulations covering trade, taxation, and competition, as well as addressing global economic volatility and expanding investment in innovation, artificial intelligence, and advanced industries.

The summit agenda is expected to include items that promote trade and foreign investment,

skills development, food security, and resilient supply chains, in addition to strengthening public digital infrastructure, deepening cooperation and progress on joint Gulf projects in electricity networks, railways, and logistics corridors, and aligning the business environment to attract foreign investment to the region.

Other key topics include enhancing financial stability, building economic resilience, forming a united front against global economic fluctuations, macroeconomic stabilization measures, and fiscal sustainability planning.

Establishing a regional investment fund to promote innovation and industrial diversification, as well as enhancing the viability of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) through incentives for startups and procurement opportunities among GCC countries, are also expected to be among the priorities of discussion.

In light of the frequent fluctuations in global oil and gas demand and prices—the primary source of revenue for the GCC countries—a key topic of discussion among the Gulf states will be building economic resilience by diversifying their economies away from over-reliance on oil and gas revenues. Accelerating development in the non-oil sector will be essential to this diversification strategy.

Given the importance of the environment, climate action, and sustainable development for the GCC countries, the summit is expected to assess collaborative projects in the areas of clean energy, water security, climate adaptation, environmental conservation, and the GCC Green Economy Initiative.

Given the reliance of Gulf economies on a large migrant workforce, discussions are also expected to focus on current market dynamics,

labor mobility, skills development, strategies to support youth, and future industries.

In addition, the summit discussions are expected to cover regional security and maritime protection through enhancing joint defense capabilities, strengthening the Peninsula Shield Force to counter emerging threats, and bolstering maritime security in coordination with international partners to ensure the safety of energy routes in the Gulf waters.

They will also address current political and humanitarian developments in the region and reaffirm the GCC's common positions on key regional and international issues.

Furthermore, economic diversification is expected to accelerate the implementation of a comprehensive travel system that facilitates the integration of mobility, travel, and tourism within the GCC countries, including a unified tourist visa, joint tourism initiatives, and cultural cooperation programs. A unified tourism promotion strategy will also be emphasized, aiming to attract investment and innovation in the regional tourism sector, thereby positioning the GCC countries as an attractive destination for local, regional, and international visitors.

In light of the rapid developments in global digital systems, the summit is likely to endorse a unified digital infrastructure, with a focus on accelerating the cross-border e-governance agenda. This integrated approach will align with the broader objectives of the GCC, namely improving public services, enhancing interoperability, and boosting efficiency. Emphasis will also be placed on common regulations for financial technology (FinTech), data-sharing frameworks, and artificial intelligence (AI) that balance innovation and

regulation, ensure data privacy and AI ethics, and promote digital inclusion.

The summit is also expected to review institutional reforms at the GCC level that strengthen the capabilities of ministerial committees, enhance the legal, procedural, and operational mechanisms of the General Secretariat, improve the monitoring and implementation of joint decisions, and assess the status of decisions, statements, and resolutions issued at previous meetings.

Furthermore, the summit is expected to address the challenges and pressures arising from escalating geopolitical tensions, increasing disruptions to global trade, and prevailing regional conflicts that could threaten the region's security.

These circumstances, which necessitate strengthening joint defense mechanisms, improving maritime surveillance in the Gulf waters, developing early warning and crisis response frameworks, and coordinating foreign policy to amplify the GCC's voice in international forums and global diplomacy, will be a key focus for the leaders during the summit.

The Supreme Council meeting of the GCC leaders is scheduled to conclude with the issuance of the Bahrain Declaration, which will outline the agreed-upon decisions, cooperative initiatives, and follow-up mechanisms to ensure effective implementation, including the formation of follow-up committees and the establishment of implementation timelines.

The handover ceremony to the next host country will conclude the 46th session of the Supreme Council, which is expected to witness further integration, cooperation, and communication among the GCC states.

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EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Serf Music and Its Alternatives



Jacques Attali

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For a glimpse of what our AI-driven future could be, consider what is happening in the music business. It was through music that the market for non-rare products and services began, where remuneration for the works of the mind was first imagined. J.S. Bach had to hold coffeehouse concerts to support his vast family, but with the Industrial Revolution, mass production, and the extreme division of labor that it brought, much larger markets became available.

The digital economy took this further. Musicians who once relied on the lords who commissioned them, then on the bourgeois consumers who bought concert tickets, and finally on the record companies that paid them royalties, today are remunerated by streaming services and other online platforms.



Now, AI is turning the industry on its head. Generative AI tools can produce music without human composers, using the immense catalog of existing works to train themselves. The virtual band The Velvet Sundown passed the one-million mark in streams on Spotify in a matter of weeks, and "Heart on My Sleeve,"

posted to TikTok by an anonymous user who "used AI to make a drake song ft. the weekend," has racked up millions of views.

One can also find artificial DJs capable of hosting a party like a human, complete with speeches and playlists, as well as AI-generated film soundtracks and voiceovers that imitate artists' voices and styles. In each case, pretty much anyone can generate low-cost music and audio for use across a broad range of applications.

The evolution is dizzying. The International Confederation of Societies of Authors and Composers (CISAC) expects the market for music and audiovisual content created by generative AI to skyrocket, from around €3 billion (\$3.5 billion) currently to €64 billion by 2028, with generative AI music possibly accounting for approximately 20% of streaming platforms' revenues. CISAC also notes that creators' revenues are at risk; for music, the total could fall by about 24% by 2028.

To protect artists' copyrighted material, policymakers in some jurisdictions are beginning to take legislative action. The European AI Act requires those who publish and distribute AI-generated material to be transparent about its sources. There are also several European projects exploring watermarking and blockchain-based solutions to identify source material and automatically pay out micro-royalties. But such protections will likely prove illusory. The artists of tomorrow will have to be remunerated in other ways. The arrival of a new kind of economy means everything must change.

After all, anyone with a computer or mobile phone can create, arrange, mix, master, and produce a music video, or adapt their own works for video games, interactive advertising, marketing campaigns, and other uses. One possibility, then, is that generative AI will further enable some artists to forego arrangements with record companies and other traditional intermediaries. In doing so, they may try to maintain a personalized dialogue with their fans, whom they can offer customized experiences.

Sensing the changes that are coming, music distribution platforms are trying to get ahead of the game by allying themselves with legacy record companies, which are themselves in grave danger of extinction.

For example, Spotify has signed an agreement with three major record companies promising to use AI with and for human artists, thus guaranteeing them transparency, consent, remuneration, and protections against cloned voices. But these legacy players will be unable to keep their promise, because

the remuneration mechanisms provided for in these agreements will be largely illusory: too small and without real control. Thus, if artists are not careful, the upheaval introduced by AI will amount to a change of master: after the feudal lord, the bourgeois, and the all-powerful record company will come the triumph of the algorithm.

Copyright protections will evaporate, and musicians will become mere employees of the algorithm, if not its slaves. The only way that artists can escape this fate is by becoming entrepreneurs of their own creations, harnessing AI's formidable potential themselves, and also capitalizing on the irreplaceability, already visible and lasting, of the in-person concert performance.

Meanwhile, consumers, who could become passive subjects of algorithmic control, could assert themselves. They could become co-

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After all, now anyone with a computer or mobile phone can create, arrange, mix, master, and produce a music video, or adapt their own works for video games, interactive advertising, marketing campaigns, and other uses.

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composers, determining the form to be given to the work they listen to (by choosing the music style, the instruments, and the singers) and, like the artist, privileging the actual, direct, living, irreplaceable exchange of the concert performance.

The only true freedom, in music as elsewhere, is to create and control the fruit of one's creation. AI could amplify this freedom if we act now by focusing on the development of creativity at school and elsewhere. But as matters stand, it seems well on its way to doing the opposite.



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Europe Must Stop Squandering the Power of Its Purse



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Public procurement accounts for about 14 percent of the European Union's GDP, making it one of the bloc's most powerful tools for shaping markets and advancing its policy goals. But a recent evaluation by the European Commission confirms what many governments and businesses already suspected: the current framework has fallen short of making public spending simpler, more strategic, and greener. With over 75 percent of public contracts still lacking environmental criteria, it is no wonder that spending is so poorly aligned with the EU's stated industrial and climate objectives.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has made procurement reform a central part of the EU's new strategic agenda, linking it to the proposed Industrial Accelerator Act and the goal of creating 'Made in Europe' markets for clean technologies. In her latest state of the union address, she emphasized the need to boost domestic production and decarbonization together, not at the expense of one another. Similarly, Stéphane Séjourné, a European Commission executive vice-president, has highlighted public procurement's potential as a lever for ensuring competitiveness, resilience, and economic security.

But to promote competitiveness and meaningful climate leadership, sustainability must become a requirement in public tenders, not an optional add-on. Otherwise, companies building clean steel plants or producing low-carbon cement will still lose out to cheaper, higher-emissions competitors.

These heavy industries are central to Europe's competitiveness and job creation, and they are doing exactly what Europe's strategies demand: decarbonizing supply chains, investing in innovation, and creating skilled local jobs. But they need a stable incentive that

rewards decarbonization and fosters reliable markets for clean products. As the German Steel Association warns, Europe risks losing competitiveness unless public procurement creates reliable demand for low-carbon materials.

While many public buyers are trying to incorporate green criteria, the current legal

rose from 24 percent in 2011 to 42 percent in 2021, while the recent Commission evaluation shows that large contracts still attract strong participation. Simplification is needed, not to lower standards, but to make green procurement easier and more consistent.

Other economies have moved more decisively. Under President Joe Biden's

“ Procurement reforms could unlock more competitive, consistent, and resilient public spending without raising budgets. That means awarding contracts based on real value for money and making green public procurement the default. ”

framework remains too fragmented and complex to facilitate the mainstreaming of strategic, climate-aligned procurement. This leaves cleaner firms facing inconsistent demand and unclear expectations. Public procurement should be a strategic instrument that rewards performance, not just compliance. But outdated habits and administrative caution still hinder innovation, benefiting higher-emissions competitors.

Making matters worse, competition in EU procurement has declined overall, especially for smaller tenders. The European Court of Auditors found that single-bid contracts

administration, the US Inflation Reduction Act used public spending to promote clean manufacturing and domestic resilience. And in the United Kingdom, a new procurement act embeds 'social value' and climate considerations into public tenders, creating clearer incentives for innovation and sustainability. Both show how procurement can create 'leading markets' for clean materials, a goal that is central to the Industrial Accelerator Act.

While that act aims to boost domestic demand for low-carbon technologies, the procurement directive should ensure coherence with sectoral legislation and

translate these ambitions into consistent, implementable rules. Done right, this can promote a shift to procurement that rewards quality and innovation. Europe risks falling behind not for lack of technology, but for lack of alignment between its industrial, climate, and procurement policies.

If implemented well, procurement reforms could unlock more competitive, consistent, and resilient public spending without raising budgets. That means awarding contracts based on real value for money and making green public procurement the default, thus sending a clear market signal that quality, life-cycle costs, and wider societal benefits matter more than the lowest initial bid.

It also means agreeing on common environmental criteria and robust standards across the single market, so that buyers and suppliers adhere to the same rules, making implementation easier and competition fairer. And it means harmonizing requirements in key sectors, reducing complexity for public buyers, and giving companies the certainty they need to plan and invest.

Some countries are already showing what is possible. Lithuania scaled green procurement from 5 percent to over 90 percent of contract value in just three years, combining clear criteria with training and oversight. Portugal has introduced binding environmental standards in high-priority sectors. And Ireland uses embodied carbon targets to procure cleaner, higher-performance public buildings. The first Irish tender using the CO2 Performance Ladder—a best-practice tool for green public procurement—cut emissions by 21 percent compared to a conventional approach, offering proof that the right criteria can drive measurable results.

The EU already has the tools to do better. Using them can unlock benefits that extend beyond driving clean industrial innovation. Consider, for example, that air pollution costs Europe an estimated €600 billion (\$696 billion) per year. According to the consultancy Carbone 4, aligning procurement with sustainability could cut carbon dioxide emissions by 34 million metric tons annually, mobilize €86 billion for green industries, and create 384,000 high-quality jobs. And the same dynamic occurs locally: when the French city of Dinan added green and social criteria to its cleaning services contract, it cut costs by 20 percent, reduced water use, and created jobs for unemployed residents.

At a time when demands on constrained public budgets are rising, strategic procurement can strengthen businesses, reduce emissions, protect public health, and promote economic growth at the same time. Why not reform the rules to make it the norm?



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Thought[“] for the week

The world will not be destroyed
by those who do evil, but by
those who watch them without
doing anything.

— Albert Einstein

The consequences of emotional eating

Ask Mira: Eating Right to Live Happy & Healthy



For many people, their eating habits fluctuate based on their emotions. They binge in excess or sometimes on unhealthy foods when they are sad, angry, frustrated and even when they are in a good mood, or want to celebrate. It is even a kind of punishment, you feel bad about yourself and you eat in excess to punish yourself even more. Or, you follow a strict diet to lose weight, but something triggers a relapse so you binge on fried foods. Then you feel guilty because you have strayed from your diet restrictions in a minute. This behavior makes sense with the term called emotional eating.

What is emotional eating?

Eating when you are emotional, rather than when you are hungry is something most people do occasionally including me. It starts to be a problem when it becomes abnormal and you feel that it is out of your control. You start to feel that you cannot stop eating or indulging in your favorite unhealthy snacks. This type of eating



is a major reason why some people gain weight and become overweight. The most common emotional triggers for overeating are boredom, anger, sadness, happiness, anxiety, loneliness, stress, low self-esteem, disappointment and frustration. Ask the question, "Am I hungry now or Am I eating for another reason?"

Usually, when you eat because of your emotions, you are too happy or sad to feel whether you are actually hungry or not, so you find it difficult to recognize the feeling of fullness, because you are under the effect of the emotions of this specific moment.

Here are some ways to exert self-control over your

emotional eating.

Keep a food diary: When you feel that you are eating too much and often because of your emotions, keep a food diary for a week. Include the time you eat, the reasons for eating and evaluate your emotions after eating. It is a hard exercise, but a food diary can give you an idea of how often you eat for reasons other than hunger.

Look for an activity that helps channel your emotions: Find an activity that brings you the mental and psychological comfort that you would otherwise find in food, whether its sugary or salty items.

For example, you can run on the treadmill when you are angry or stressed. Any intense activity can secrete endorphines, and these hormones will make you feel relaxed and eventually will block your cravings.

If you are eating because you are happy, replace that with activities that bring you feelings of joy about yourself like shopping, friendly outings or calling a friend.

Break your dependence on unhealthy food items: When you think happiness, it is chocolate. When you think sadness, and stress it can be chips. You can change all these habits by turning your snacks into healthy ones.

If you want something sweet, you can try a fruit salad, yogurt with some fruits or breakfast bar for example, instead of chocolate cakes or doughnuts.

Also, a small amount of nuts and almonds gives you the feeling of fullness for a longer time, even more than biscuits. What about a whole grain toast, with jam on the top? It is a great option to have as well as it is sweet and nutritious.

Before you go sleep, have a cup of skim milk or low-fat plain yogurt. It will calm you down at night.

Feel hungry: People, who are emotional eaters, often lose the sense of hunger. They are always full because they tend to snack a lot.

Feeling the hunger before meals is an excellent factor that contributes to weight loss or weight maintenance. So eat your main meals when you are hungry and let your snacks be light and healthy.

And, when you feel that you are losing control towards food, be sure to ask yourself this pertinent question: 'Am I still hungry or Am I eating for another reason?'

Eat like Mira
Create healthy habits, not restrictions

To subscribe to my diet programs,
don't forget to log in to:
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

RECIPE

Broccoli-Potato Soup



This is a thick and creamy soup with chunky pieces of broccoli and potatoes that is made with absolutely no cream, making it a great and healthy way to eat your veggies..

Preparation Time: 30min.

Serving: 3

Ingredients

- 1tbsp olive oil or other vegetable oil
- 1tsp.chopped ginger
- 1 large potato
- 1 L vegetable stock
- 250 g broccoli
- 1 tsp onion/garlic powder
- 1 pinch black pepper
- 1 tsp vinegar

For garnishing:

- Fried potato sticks and broccoli florets,
- Chilli flakes/ sesame seeds

Directions

- Heat up olive oil in a pan. Add chopped ginger and sauté well before introducing small cubed potatoes.
- Add half a litre of vegetable stock. Bring everything to boil and simmer for 10 minutes.
- Add broccoli and the other half liter of vegetable stock. Let it simmer for approximately 10 minutes
- Transfer your soup to a blender.
- Add onion/garlic powder followed by salt and vinegar with a dash of black pepper powder.
- Blend until perfectly smooth.
- Garnish the blend with fried potatoes sticks and fried broccoli florets. Sprinkle a few chilli flakes and sesame seeds before serving with accompaniments such as bread, salads, corn breads, biscuits...etc.



Chef Chhaya Thakker



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

New material to repair, regenerate tooth enamel

Dentistry in the near future is set to witness a remarkable transformation with the recent development of a new material that could repair and regenerate tooth enamel, potentially paving the way for more effective and longer-lasting dental care. Tooth decay is the most common noncommunicable disease worldwide, affecting billions of people across all age groups. It is estimated that 2.5 billion people currently have tooth decay in permanent teeth and 621 million children have early childhood dental caries (tooth decay or dental cavities).

Tooth enamel is the hardest substance in your body and shields the inner layers of tooth from damage. Despite their strength, bacteria, plaque, and gastric acids in the mouth can erode or demineralize the enamel, making them vulnerable to sensitivity, decay, tooth loss, and other dental problems. If left untreated, progressive damage to the enamel is irreversible, in that, once it is gone, it does not grow back. Dental erosion happens when acids from food and drinks or conditions like acid reflux softens and dissolves the tooth enamel.

Researchers from the University of Nottingham in the United Kingdom now say they have developed an innovative bioinspired compound designed to restore enamel that has been eroded or demineralized. The same material can also reinforce existing enamel and help prevent future decay. The new gel can be quickly applied to teeth in much the same way as standard fluoride treatments. Unlike traditional products, it contains no fluoride. Instead, it is made from proteins that imitate those naturally responsible for guiding enamel



formation early in life.

Once applied, the gel forms a thin yet durable layer that seeps into the surface of the teeth, filling in tiny cracks and holes. It then acts as a scaffold that captures calcium and phosphate ions from saliva. These minerals are carefully organized into new enamel through a process known as epitaxial mineralization—where a specially designed material acts as a template to guide orderly, crystal-by-crystal growth of new minerals.

This process allows the regenerated enamel to integrate seamlessly with the existing tooth structure, restoring both strength and appearance. The material can also be used on exposed dentine, creating an enamel-like coating that helps reduce tooth sensitivity and

improves how restorations, such as fillings or veneers, bond to the tooth surface.

Enamel damage plays a major role in tooth decay, which affects nearly half of the global population. When enamel is lost, the teeth become more vulnerable to infections, cavities, and even tooth loss. These issues have also been linked to broader health conditions, including diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Since enamel cannot naturally regenerate once it is lost, dental care has long focused on prevention or temporary protection. Existing treatments like fluoride varnishes and remineralization products can help relieve symptoms but do not actually rebuild enamel.

The researchers explained the process of enamel restoration using the new product.

Dental enamel has a unique structure, which gives enamel its remarkable strength and properties that protect the teeth throughout life against physical, chemical, and thermal insults. When the new material is applied to demineralized or eroded enamel, or exposed dentine, the material promotes the growth of crystals in an integrated and organized manner, recovering the architecture of natural healthy enamel.

The researchers tested the mechanical properties of the newly regenerated tissues under conditions simulating 'real-life situations' such as tooth brushing, chewing, and exposure to acidic foods, and found that the regenerated enamel behaves just like healthy enamel. The team indicated that since the technology has been designed with the clinician and patient in mind, it is safe, can be easily and rapidly applied, and it is scalable.

Moreover, the technology is versatile, in that it opens the opportunity to be translated into multiple types of products to help patients of all ages suffering from a variety of dental problems associated with loss of enamel and exposed dentine. The team has since established a start-up company called Mintech-Bio and hope to have a first product out by next year, potentially helping patients worldwide.

With its ability to mimic natural enamel formation and strengthen teeth without fluoride, this new gel could redefine modern dentistry. If commercialized successfully, it may offer a simple, safe, and lasting solution for restoring enamel and preventing decay, helping people maintain stronger, healthier teeth for life.

Bio-markers, stem cells offer early detection, treatment of glaucoma

Glaucoma is a group of eye conditions that damage the optic nerve, which can lead to irreversible vision loss and blindness in older adults. The optic nerve is vital for good vision as it sends visual information from the eye to the brain. Damage to the optic nerve from glaucoma is often caused by build-up of high pressure from the fluid inside the eye called aqueous humor.

Aqueous humor usually drains through a tissue called trabecular meshwork, located at the angle where the iris and cornea meet. When the eye makes too much of the fluid or the drainage system does not work properly, eye pressure may increase and eventually damage the retinal ganglion cells (RGCs) and their axons, which bundle together to form the optic nerve.

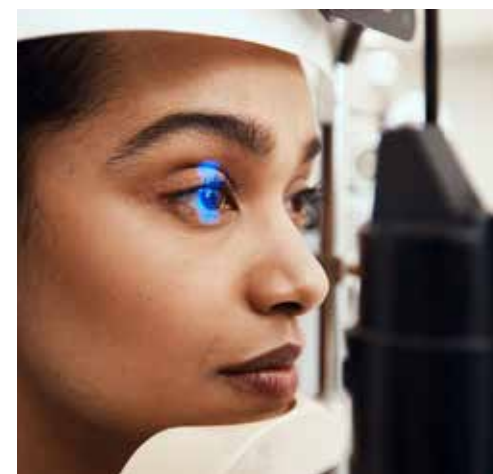
Once the delicate nerve cells deteriorate, vision loss begins, but often this goes undiagnosed until significant vision loss has already occurred. Currently available treatments for glaucoma aim to lower the eye pressure through eye drops, laser treatment, or surgery, as vision once lost to glaucoma cannot be restored. None of the prevailing treatments effectively protect RGCs from harm. This gap

in treatment highlights the urgent need for neuroprotective strategies that can preserve these critical nerve cells.

Scientists are now closer to identifying a biomarker that may allow doctors to detect the disease much earlier and develop new ways to protect the eye.

Researchers at the University of Missouri in the United States recently discovered that glaucoma patients have lower levels of two naturally occurring molecules, agmatine and thiamine, in their aqueous humor, compared with individuals without the disease. These small molecules, known as metabolites, may serve as early signs that can be detected through testing, offering hope for new glaucoma therapies.

Pre-clinical research by the team suggests that agmatine and thiamine may help protect RGCs and maintain visual function, offering neuroprotective potential. These molecules could eventually be developed into treatments, possibly in the form of eye drops or supplements, that slow or prevent vision loss from glaucoma. While more work needs to be done, the researchers are excited about



the immense potential that their findings could trigger in future.

In an unrelated research but on the same topic of preventing the development of blindness from glaucoma, scientists have developed a novel approach that allows stem cells to be turned into retinal ganglion cells (RGCs) that are capable of migrating and surviving in the eye's retina. This approach presents a promising new glaucoma treatment strategy as the loss of RGCs have been identified as the main cause that leads to the irreversible vision loss in glaucoma.

Earlier studies have looked at replacing RGCs through cell transplants, but this process is still in the research and development stage

and fraught with limitations that highlight a need for a more precise manner of effectively repopulating these cells in the retina. Now, a multidisciplinary team led by researchers at the Schepens Eye Research Institute at Harvard Medical School in the US has identified a promising new strategy for glaucoma cell replacement therapy.

One limitation that prevents the success of current stem cell transplantation strategies in retina studies is that the majority of donor cells remain at the site of injection and do not migrate where they are most needed. To overcome this, researchers behind the new study changed the microenvironment in the eye in a way that enabled them to take stem cells from blood and turn them into RGCs cells that were capable of migrating and surviving into the eye's retina.

The researchers created RGCs out of stem cells, then tested the ability of various signaling molecules known as chemokines to guide these new neurons to their correct positions within the retina. The research team utilized a 'big data' approach to examine hundreds of such molecules and receptors to eventually find 12 that were unique to RGCs. They found that 'stromal derived factor 1' was the best performing molecule for both migration and transplantation. The study, which was conducted on adult mouse retina, has implications that could one day be applied to the human retina.





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