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# Migration supports robust resilient communities

*Migrant remittances also constitute a significant portion of the GDP of many developing countries, and in some places these transfers now surpass official development assistance (ODA) and foreign direct investment (FDI) flows*

By Reaven D'Souza  
 Executive Managing Editor

Migration has been part of human history ever since the evolution of mankind. Early people migrated from one place to another in search of better food and safer shelter from predators and natural calamities. Although today international and domestic migrations are largely driven by economic considerations, or to escape natural crises or man-made conflicts, at its core, global migration continues to be guided by the basic human instinct to better one's life and that of their families.

In the 2024-edition of its flagship biennial publication, 'World



Migration Report', the International Organization for Migration (IOM), notes that today more than 281 million people live in a country other than their place of birth. To put this figure in perspective, the number of global migrants is more than the entire population of Indonesia — the fourth most populated country in the world.

In recent years the slew of Insinuations, imputations, and accusations against migrants in the media has led to migrants being perceived in a negative light by many in the host country. Discussions in social and political circles on migrants and migration, often center on how migrants are a drain on national resources and a threat to internal security.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

## Discover Investment and Partnership Opportunities in Uzbekistan: Conference and Exhibition in Kuwait

The Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan in Kuwait extends warm greetings to all companies in Kuwait. We are delighted to announce the "Conference and Exhibition on Investment, Commercial, and Tourism Opportunities in Uzbekistan," taking place at Symphony Style Hotel, Kuwait.

Date: May 13 - 14, 2024 | Time: 09:00 am - 10:00 pm

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# Parliament dissolved, specific articles of constitution suspended

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Mishaal Al-Ahmad Al Sabah on Friday 11 May, decreed the "dissolution of the National Assembly and the suspension of certain articles of the Constitution for a period not exceeding four years. The decree added that during this period a thorough review of the democratic process in the country will be undertaken and recommendations submitted to His Highness the Amir for further consideration.

In a televised address to the nation on Friday, His Highness the Amir stated:

"My dear countrymen, during the recent period, Kuwait has faced challenging times that



have had repercussions at all levels, leading to a negative reality. As stewards of this country and its loyal people, we endeavored to provide

advice and guidance to navigate through these circumstances with minimal losses. Unfortunately, we encountered insurmountable difficulties and obstacles, "This leaves us with no choice but to make the difficult decision to save our country, secure its highest interests, and safeguard the capabilities of our loyal people, who deserve utmost appreciation and respect."

"Dear people of my country, democratic governance, as a way of life and work, imposes a high degree of responsibility on public authorities and the clear delineation of their roles within a vision that aims for achievement.

"This vision mandates numerous checks on legislative and executive authorities to ensure their adherence to its provisions. These checks are absolute and cannot be altered or evaded. No party or authority can deviate from them, criticize them within its factions, or attempt to circumvent them. "During past periods, and even just a few days ago, we witnessed behaviors and actions that contradicted established constitutional principles. Some individuals made threats and pledged to initiate inquiries just to reinstate a minister to their position.

"Others objected to the nomination of certain individuals, either out of forgetfulness, ignorance, or deliberate intent, disregarding the fact that the selection of the prime minister and their cabinet members is an exclusive constitutional prerogative of the head of state. No one should breach its boundaries, encroach upon its jurisdiction, or meddle within its domain

I must also emphasize that the sources of national wealth should not be neglected or exploited in a manner that depletes their resources and undermines the nation's interests

through proposals that squander public funds and fail to serve the public good.

"Everyone must understand that no one is exempt from the law. Those who illicitly acquire public funds will face consequences, irrespective of their position or authority. I will never permit democracy to be manipulated to undermine the state, as the well-being of the people of Kuwait, which supersedes all other concerns, is entrusted to us. It is our responsibility to safeguard and defend these interests.

Just as our predecessors were committed to fortifying its principles and passing its legacy to us, our duty and commitment are to pass on the torch of democracy to future generations, proudly soaring in our nation's skies."

"I cannot overlook the actions of certain governments that have committed serious violations and transgressions due to parliamentary pressure or misguided and ineffective efforts, resulting in a negative impact on the public interest. This has led to convicted individuals of treason being set free due to these unacceptable practices. I will never allow such occurrences to repeat under any circumstances."

"A warm greeting to the security personnel who safeguard the interests of the people and bear the responsibility of maintaining security in our country. Their dedication ensures that citizens can rest peacefully, knowing that their security and freedom are being watched over.

"Allow me to be frank: Respect for security personnel is tantamount to respect for the government, and I will not tolerate any compromise to their prestige and respect while they carry out their official duties," His Highness the Amir added in conclusion.

## LuLu Hypermarket brings a taste of the tropics with Mango Mania



LuLu Hypermarket launched the eagerly awaited annual 'Mango Mania' extravaganza at all its outlets across Kuwait. The week-long event, which ran from 8-14 May, was inaugurated on 9 May at the LuLu Hypermarket Fahaheel by Indian Ambassador H.E. Adarsh Swaika, accompanied by Counsellor Mr. Sanjay K. Muluka, along with LuLu Group International, Chairman and Managing Director M.A. Yusuff Ali, in the presence of top management of LuLu Kuwait and a large gathering of shoppers and well-wishers.

Mango King's tropical reign showered the customers with a delicious selection of mango-inspired delights, including fresh refreshing mango juices and smoothies. Shoppers were further indulged with decadent mango halwa and payasam, while exploring a world of savory treats like mango snacks, curries, salads, and pickles. For those with a sweeter tooth, the Mango Mania offered a range of mousse cakes, tarts, trifles, muffins, pastries, and even Swiss rolls made from succulent mangoes.

Mango Mania was more than a rush of sweetness, it had a rush of thrill to offer as well. It was a full-fledged family fun fest with customers capturing their sweetest moments at the selfie booth and unleashing their creativity with the mango cut-out displays. Customers had their mango knowledge put to the test with themed games and puzzles, while children had the opportunity to celebrate the king of fruits with the exciting kids' mango cake decoration competition.

From the vibrant displays of sun-kissed and succulent mangoes to the aroma of freshly squeezed juices, and the playful echoes of children's laughter during the cake decorating competition, Mango Mania was a feast for all senses. With bellies full and hearts brimming with sweet memories, Kuwait bid farewell to what has become a much-anticipated annual tradition in the country's shopping calendars. The event once again underlined LuLu Hypermarket's abiding resolve to provide customers with the best of what the world offers, at the most competitive prices.



All of LuLu's outlets were adorned with a mind-boggling variety of over 50 mango types sourced from seven different countries. Customers were swept away by amazing price discounts on the king of fruits, including the ever-popular Alphonso, Mango Badami, Mallika, Thotapuri, and Rajapuri from India, and the famous Galpatur varieties from Yemen.

But the sweetness did not stop there. The



## Jazeera Airways to launch Kuwait - Krakow direct flights



Embassy of Poland in Kuwait, in collaboration with Jazeera Airways, announced the launch of direct flights from Kuwait to Kraków. The announcement was made during a media conference at the Polish Embassy by the Chargé d'Affaires Anna Godoj-Ciszkowska, in the presence of Jazeera Airways CEO Barathan Pasupathi.

She added that the launch not only signified the start of direct flights but also serves as a bridge that connects the two cultures and strengthens existing relations between two distinct destinations. Ms. Ciszkowska highlighted that despite the miles separating Kuwait and Kraków, there is a common denominator — the richness of history, culture, and heritage in both places.

She stated that from 11 June, Jazeera Airways will operate two direct flights weekly from Kuwait to Kraków, making it an ideal opportunity for tourists and the Polish community visiting family and friends. Currently, the shortest travel option from Kuwait to Kraków takes about 10 hours with multiple connecting flights, whereas Jazeera Airways' flight will cut this time in half.

She thanked Jazeera Airways and its team

for this pivotal initiative to establish a direct link between the countries, hoping it will lead to unforgettable experiences and lasting memories.

For his part, Mr. Pasupathi said, "We at Jazeera Airways are pleased to launch direct flights from Kuwait to the charming city of Kraków, home to the first World Heritage sites registered with UNESCO. The operation of this new route has led to a growing demand for new and quality summer destinations. Kraków is unique in its rich blend of history, architecture, authentic cuisine, culture, and stunning natural landmarks." He revealed the strong demand for the Kraków destination during the summer season and expressed the company's happiness to operate these flights at a time when Poland and Kuwait are celebrating nearly 61 years of strong bilateral relations.

He added that Jazeera Airways currently operates direct flights to 60 destinations with high demand for leisure and religious tourism, business, and short holidays across the Middle East, Central and South Asia, Africa, and Europe, at competitive prices that make it the ideal choice for travel.

# Kuwait emerges as vibrant hub for Nepali job seekers

*The relations between the two countries have blossomed, resulting in substantial advancements across aviation, transportation, tourism, and business sectors.*

By Dil Prasad Paudel  
Special to The Times Kuwait

Kuwait is emerging as a vibrant hub for employment of Nepali nationals, and bilateral relations between Nepal and Kuwait are flourishing. This relationship has yielded significant mutual benefits in various sectors, including aviation, transportation, tourism, and business.

In this context it is valid to examine the coordination and implementation of Kuwait's regulatory body regarding Nepali workers and employment. In 2020, Nepal's Ministry of Labor acknowledged that inter-agency coordination is a primary priority and challenge, calling for a reduction in incoordination among various government agencies. Poor coordination directly impacts workers. An example of such is the signing of significant bilateral labor agreements without planning for diplomatic missions' establishment. The Department of Foreign Employment's ability and efficiency to investigate within the country have long been a concern, with its capacity being disproportionately low compared to identified cases of fraud in Nepal's recruitment industry.

A new agreement between the Department of Foreign Employment and the Police in 2020 was significant. Until then, apart from trafficking cases, migrant workers could not register labor fraud cases at the Foreign Employment Department in Kathmandu, which had a limited workforce and was far for workers to reach.

The labor agreement empowered the police to refer cases related to agencies to the Foreign Employment Department and investigate all other worker-related and unregistered recruitment agency cases. Corruption has greatly hindered the Department of Foreign Employment's investigative capabilities, directly impacting workers' benefits. Several senior officials have faced repeated arrests for allegedly accepting bribes from recruitment agencies to remove them from the government's blacklist.

In recent times, a close relationship has developed between Kuwaiti and Nepali citizens. The Nepali embassy in Kuwait has also highlighted Nepalese interest in Kuwait's man-made physical infrastructures like the Kuwait Tower and the 32 km Al-Jaber Bridge above the sea, although these are not tourist attractions.

Analysts suggest maintaining a strong, harmonious, and vibrant relationship between the two countries is crucial. Moreover, creating a conducive environment for the supply of petroleum products in Nepal is believed to benefit millions of Nepalis. Kuwait's travel operators have also worked to promote Nepal's natural heritage, culture, tradition, and tourism. Nepal views the support and cooperation between the two countries as a significant milestone for the Nepali people.

Recently, there has been growing government interest in combating corruption related to job creation for migrant workers, especially as instances of human trafficking linked to job creation corruption have surfaced. However, due to uncertainties regarding action against high-ranking officials, there remains ambiguity regarding the government's dedication to addressing such practices.

## Recommendation to the government of Nepal:

- Based on relevant provisions of the Foreigners Act (FAA), it is recommended



to implement the zero-cost immigration model and fully impose fines on job creation organizations that charge more than the legal limit.

- Increase the number of employees and ensure they receive effective training to significantly enhance the research capacity of the Foreign Employment Department (DOFE).
- Following the signing of the 2020 DOFE-Nepal Police Agreement, enhancing cooperation between DOFE and the police administration will ensure police involvement in addressing fraud and abuse is strengthened.
- Allocate more resources to investigate and prosecute corruption within DOFE. Annually disclose information on identified corruption cases publicly, recommend

cases of corruption to the police administration, and hold accountable officials accused of soliciting or accepting illegal payments in government immigration programs.

## Suggestions for the Kuwaiti government:

- Continuously enhance the capacity of labor inspectors to identify serious violations, including non-payment of wages, in employment creation practices. Ensure necessary resources, language proficiency, and research skills for conducting personal interviews with workers during visits.
- Significantly improve public oversight of human resources in job creation organizations to accurately assess worker protection efforts. Require private

employer organizations to transparently report on worker grievances and pay fees.

- Arrange labor inspections at private residences where domestic workers reside, including unannounced visits.
- Adopt active investigation, including criminal prosecution when there is sufficient evidence, in cases of corrupt practices and human discrimination related to job creation by employers and job creation organizations.
- By coordinating with ministries in Nepal and engaging in discussions with Kuwaiti dignitaries, journalists, employers, and tourism businessmen, the Nepali embassy aims to strengthen relations between the two countries. This will foster goodwill and lead to stronger ties between the two nations.





# Long-standing Poland-Kuwait relationship lauded

Anna Marta Godoj-Ciszkowska, Charge d'Affaires of Poland to Kuwait, said, 'Last year, we marked a significant milestone as we commemorated the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Poland and Kuwait, a testament to the exceptional cooperation between our nations.'

### THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

Anna Godoj Ciszkowska, Charge d'Affaires of Poland to Kuwait, affirmed that the two countries have cultivated a robust relationship spanning decades.

During her address at a gathering celebrating Poland's national day on 7 May, she highlighted the historical importance of the Third of May Constitution, a crucial event in Poland's past, dating back to May 3, 1791. She remarked that the constitution remains a lasting symbol of fundamental ideals like liberty, sovereignty, and unity among nations and societies, influencing the collective identity of the region.

Furthermore, she commemorated Poland's accession to the European Union on May 1, 2004, alongside nine other countries, including The Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Lithuania,

Latvia, Estonia, Slovenia, Cyprus, and Malta, noting "Poland's accession to the European Union is certainly one of the most important events in the recent history of our country. This year we also celebrate the 25th anniversary of Poland's accession to the North Atlantic Treaty. 25 years ago, Poland, together with the Czech Republic and Hungary joined NATO and they became the first allies' members from Eastern and Central Europe." She further highlighted the milestone of commemorating the 60th anniversary of diplomatic ties between Poland and Kuwait, underscoring the depth of cooperation and mutual respect shared between the two countries.

She added "It is my great pleasure to announce the opening of a new flight route connecting the vibrant city of Kuwait to the enchanting city of Krakow. Today marks not

just the commencement of a flight, but the bridging of cultures, the opening of doors to new opportunities, and the strengthening of ties between two remarkable destinations."

The Charge d' Affaires highlighted the collaborative efforts between Poland and Kuwait, particularly noting the joint archaeological mission in the Subiya Desert and Failaka Island, which has been ongoing for nearly two decades, yielding significant

discoveries and fostering cultural exchange.

She expressed pride in facilitating a training program for Kuwaiti Coast Guard and Navy cadets in Poland, further enhancing bilateral ties through knowledge sharing and capacity building, conveying optimism about the future prospects of Poland-Kuwait relations, emphasizing the importance of continued collaboration across various sectors for mutual benefit and growth.

## Qatar to provide 200MW of power to Kuwait's national-grid

Qatar has granted approval to the request by Kuwait's Ministry of Electricity, Water, and Renewable Energy (MEW) to provide Kuwait with 200 megawatts of power in June. This increases Kuwait's total energy import from the Gulf Electricity Interconnection Project to 500 megawatts, following Oman's earlier approval

for 300 megawatts.

The ministry received approval from the Gulf Interconnection Authority regarding Qatar's agreement to supply Kuwait with 200 megawatts during June, which can be renewed for the months of July and August, subject to the conditions of the Qatari and Kuwaiti networks.

The additional 500MW would help MEW to overcome the challenges of the summer. It is expected that the Gulf Interconnection Authority will sign purchase agreements with the Sultanate of Oman and Qatar in the coming days, according to what was agreed upon between the concerned parties.

## ITL World wins World Travel Awards for third year running



ITL World has been honored with the title 'Leading Travel Management Company in Kuwait' for the third consecutive year. They were recognized once again for their outstanding performance and excellence at an awards ceremony during the Arabian Travel Mart held in Dubai.

The World Travel Awards is a credible hallmark of the travel and hospitality industry, voted for by professionals worldwide. It showcases the commitment and excellence that ITL World has demonstrated over the years.

During the occasion, Dr. Siddeek Ahmed, Chairman, and Managing Director of ITL World, said, "We are immensely proud to receive this recognition, which reflects our ongoing commitment to excellence and innovation in the travel and tourism sector. This award serves as a testament to the tireless efforts of my team and reaffirms our position as a leader in the industry."

"As an industry leader, ITL World remains committed to advancing the travel sector through innovation, collaboration, and a relentless pursuit of excellence. We are dedicated to staying at the forefront of industry trends, anticipating market requirements, and delivering cutting-edge solutions that drive tangible results," said Rafeeq Mohammed, Chief Executive Officer of ITL World.

Najida Abdulla, Director of ITL World Kuwait, said, "This acknowledgment is a testament to the hard work, dedication, and innovation of every member of our team. It motivates us to continue pushing boundaries, driving

innovation, and delivering unparalleled value to our clients and stakeholders."

Since its official launch in 1998, ITL World prides itself on being a game-changer in the industry. From being rated as one of the powerful Travel Management Companies in the Middle East and a consecutive Superbrand winner, to its strategic and exclusive partnership with the award-winning Global Travel Conglomerate - CTM, not to mention maintaining the regional industry's most consistent client retention rate, the company's commitment to excellence remains steadfast.



**Request for Proposal (RFP) for Appointment of General Sales Agent (GSA) - Passenger in Kuwait.**

**The deadline for submission of RFP is 24 May 2024.**

**For further details please visit:**

**www.drukair.com.bt/RFP**

**Tashi Delek la!**

# Unified GCC visa to enhance regional tourism

Speaking on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum, which was held in Riyadh on April 28 and 29, UAE's Minister of Economy, Abdullah bin Touq Al Marri, said the unified regional tourist visas would be called GCC Grand Tours and it will allow tourists to spend more than 30 days in the six countries that make up the GCC.

The unified Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) visa system is expected to be in place by the end of 2024, and will lead to positive outcomes for regional economies.

Speaking on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum, which was held in Riyadh on April 28 and 29, UAE's Minister of Economy, Abdullah bin Touq Al Marri, said the unified regional tourist visas would be called GCC Grand Tours and it will allow tourists to spend more than 30 days in the six countries that make up the GCC.

"Once it comes into effect, it will make travel to our region more convenient and affordable for tourists, and will contribute to highlighting the diverse tourism destinations in GCC countries, attracting and retaining tourists for longer periods, thus increasing the number of hotel guests and making the region one of the leading destinations for regional and international tourists alike," said Al Marri.

The UAE and other Gulf countries are reportedly working with international tourist



operators, and companies to roll out packages that take care of the entire region.

Talks are said to be underway with hotels and airlines to create partnerships. "As a government, we create the right platform that enables them to create business. So we work closely with the private sector to make it happen," said Al Marri. He added that once the GCC single tourist visa is rolled out, companies and tourist operators will automatically roll out combined packages, including business and leisure packs.

## Taekwondo helps strengthen relations between South Korea, Kuwait



Embassy of the Republic of Korea (South Korea) in cooperation with the Kuwait Taekwondo Federation and the Korean Community Association, jointly hosted the Ambassador's Cup Taekwondo Championship 2024 from 30 April to 2 May at the Jaber Al Ahmad facility of the Kuwait Olympic Committee.

President of the Kuwait Taekwondo Federation, Hani Al Mersahad, and to President of the Korean Association in Kuwait, Jung Sunghee, for their collaboration in organizing the significant event. Special thanks were also extended to the Minister of State for Youth and sports club leaders in Kuwait for their continuous support of Taekwondo.



He also emphasized Taekwondo's impact in fostering values such as courtesy, integrity, perseverance, and self-control among Kuwait's youth. Ambassador Byung-ha pointed out that this championship is particularly significant as it commemorates the 45th anniversary of diplomatic relations and the 60th anniversary of energy cooperation between Kuwait and Korea, marking a partnership that began with Korea's first importation of crude oil from Kuwait in January 1964.



To celebrate this notable occasion, the Korean folk ballet troupe 'The Little Angels' visited Kuwait and showcased the essence of traditional Korean performing arts, celebrating the deep cultural ties between the two nations.

The event also featured the prestigious awarding ceremony, during which Dawood Maarafi, Minister of the State for Youth, was honored with a Black-belt Certificate from Kukkiwon, the World Taekwondo Headquarters. Since its introduction in the 1980s, Taekwondo has attracted over 4,000 practitioners in Kuwait. Through annual Taekwondo events and competitions, it continues to inspire and engage more young people.

Over 200 young male and female athletes from Kuwait competed across nine weight categories, showcasing their skills and dedication to Taekwondo. A gala event held on 2 May, which was attended by high ranking officials from the sports community and over 700 spectators, underscored the widespread popularity and support for Taekwondo in Kuwait.

In his address to the gathering, Ambassador of South Korea H.E. Chung Byung-ha expressed his gratitude to

The Embassy of the Republic of Korea looks forward to further deepening cultural and sports exchanges between Korea and Kuwait, reinforcing the bonds of friendship and cooperation that benefit both nations.



## Ministry launches 'Wajod' app for fingerprint verification

Educational sources have announced the launch of the 'Wajod' application by the Ministry of Education. This app enables fingerprint verification using a mobile phone.

According to sources speaking to Al-Jarida, the Information Systems Department has fully developed the application, which is compatible with iOS and Android devices. The ministry intends to deploy the app to track attendance and departures for workers in the 'Secondary Control' departments covering scientific, literary, and religious education. The sources elaborated that the application, installed on mobile phones, operates

based on geographical coordinates and is Bluetooth-linked to the fingerprint system. This setup allows 'control' officials to monitor taxpayer attendance and departures, ensure adherence to required working hours, and identify absentee taxpayers.

The new application's mechanism is expected to address the fingerprint verification challenge faced by teachers assigned to 'control' work, who often encounter difficulties returning to schools to validate their exit fingerprint due to their duties in 'control.'





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# Kuwaitis form less than 16 percent of workforce

*The government sector experienced a 2.4 percent increase in the number of employees to total about 476,000. While the majority of these employees (80.1%) are citizens, non-Kuwaitis in the public sector accounted for 94,800 workers.*

Latest data on the labor market in Kuwait provided by the Central Statistical Bureau (CSB) show that in 2023, the Kuwaiti labor market underwent significant changes with approximately 129,000 new entrants, boosting the total workforce to around 2.9 million. This marked a 4.6 percent increase from the 2.79 million workers recorded at the end of 2022.

The private sector continued to employ more than half of Kuwait's workforce, comprising approximately 56.8 percent of total workers, while the government sector accounted for 16.3 percent and the family sector comprising domestic workers accounted for 31.9 percent.

The largest number of Kuwaiti workers continue to be concentrated in the government sector, comprising 80.1 percent of the total workforce in that sector. Their number in the government sector increased from 370,814 individuals in 2022 to 381,208 individuals by December 2023. The largest proportion of non-Kuwaiti workers remains in the private sector, accounting for 64.3 percent, with their numbers increasing by about 84,000 people, to total 1.58 million at the end of 2023.

According to the CSB figures, the number of Kuwaiti workers increased from 442,600 individuals in December 2022 to 454,000 individuals in December 2023, achieving an annual growth rate of 2.6 percent, bringing their total participation in the labor market to 15.6 percent.



Segregation of Kuwaiti workers based on gender shows that the number of Kuwaiti males in the labor market reached 191,200 citizens, while the number of females in the labor market reached 262,800 citizens.

Meanwhile, the number of non-Kuwaiti workers increased from 1.59 million individuals in December 2022 to 1.67 million individuals in December 2023, marking a 5.3 percent increase. Gender wise the number of males reached 1.4 million, while the number of females reached 187,000.

The government sector experienced a 2.4 percent increase in the number of employees to total about 476,000. While the majority of these employees (80.1%) are citizens, non-Kuwaitis in the public sector accounted for 94,800 workers.

The private sector also experienced growth in employee numbers in 2023, increasing by about 84,500 people. This brought the total

number of employees in the private sector to 1.65 million individuals, marking a 5.3 percent increase over the number of workers in the private sector during 2022.

Despite government encouragement, the number of citizens working in the private sector only marked a sluggish increase, going from 71,800 workers at the end of 2022 to 72,800 workers in December 2023, an increase of 1.3 percent. In the meantime, the number of non-Kuwaitis working in the private sector increased by about 156,400 individuals, bringing their total number to 1.656 million workers.

The number of workers in the family sector (domestic helpers) increased by about 33,000 workers during the past year, bringing the total to approximately 786,231 workers. The percentage of workers in the family sector accounted for approximately 31.9 percent of the total workforce in the country.

Over 56.7 percent of national workers in the private sector are focused on three main economic activities: 32.6 percent work in accommodation and food services, 13.1 percent in financial and insurance activities, and 11 percent in construction.

Meanwhile, more than 60.6 percent of non-Kuwaiti workers are engaged in the private sector, specifically in three economic sectors: 36.6 percent in food and accommodation services, 13.8 percent in construction, and 10.2 percent in manufacturing industries.

Segregation based on nationality shows that India continued to top Kuwait's labor market in 2023, with about 30.3 percent of the total workforce, or around 885,400 workers being Indians. Egypt followed in second place with 477,900 workers, accounting for 16.4 percent of the labor market. Kuwaitis ranked third with 454,000 workers, making up 15.6 percent of the labor market.

Filipino workers occupied 9 percent of the Kuwaiti labor market with 262,800 workers, while Bangladesh accounted for 8.5 percent with 249,400 workers. Sri Lanka had a 4.7 percent share, totaling 137,400 workers of the same nationality.

Other countries contributing to the labor pool in appreciable numbers included workers from Nepal, Pakistan, Syria, and Jordan, with 111,000, 70,000, 46,600, and 28,900, respectively.



## Uzbek Embassy to host investment and tourism exhibition in Kuwait

The Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan in Kuwait announced that it will host the largest and prestigious "Conference and Exhibition on Investment, Commercial, and Tourism Opportunities in Uzbekistan" at the luxurious Symphony Style Hotel in Kuwait. The event will take place on May 13th and 14th from 9:00 am to 10:00 pm.



Around 70 Uzbek companies from the food and beverages sector, textile products industry, pharmaceutical companies, building materials sector, and investment firms involved in entertainment and media production will participate to showcase the high quality Uzbek services and products.

Additionally, electrical engineering industry companies, furniture manufacturers, as well as individuals and businesses in perfumes, children's toys, banks, financial organizations, tourism, human resources, real estate, contracting, and petrochemicals sectors will be present to engage with local Kuwaiti companies interested to do business with Uzbek companies.

## Kuwait reiterates humanitarian role with visit to Chad refugee camp

### THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

Kuwait has reaffirmed its steadfast dedication to supporting humanitarian causes globally, as evidenced by a recent field trip to refugee camps in Chad hosting refugees escaping the conflict in Sudan.

The visit, conducted in collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Kuwaiti Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Abdullah Al-Nouri Charity Association, aimed to evaluate the urgent needs of the Sudanese refugees.

Representative of UNHCR to Kuwait, Nisreen Rubaian, painted a stark picture of the refugee crisis, revealing that 8.5 million people have been displaced within Sudan due to the ongoing conflict. She added that in the past year alone, approximately 100,000 refugees have sought refuge in remote areas of Chad, where basic necessities are severely lacking. "The best way to mobilize support and galvanize action is through direct observation," Rubaian emphasized, underscoring the importance of witnessing first-hand the plight of refugees through the field trip.

The Kuwaiti delegation, led by Hessa Al-Felekawi, director of Development and Cooperation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, voiced Kuwait's steadfast backing for humanitarian endeavors.

Al-Felekawi emphasized Kuwait's commitment to upholding its status as a global humanitarian center, drawing inspiration from the legacy of His Highness the late Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Hamad, a trailblazer in humanitarian efforts. She pointed out, "The participation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in this field visit is a resounding message of Kuwait's unwavering commitment to humanitarian causes." The delegation emphasized the critical necessity of relocating 150,000 Sudanese refugees, with 77 percent being women and children, from unsafe zones to safer areas. This relocation is essential to guarantee their safety and welfare.

Ambassador of the Republic of Chad to Kuwait, H.E. Taher Al-Nazzif, expressed his deep gratitude to Kuwait,



the UNHCR, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Abdullah Al-Nouri Charity Association for their field visit to the refugee camps. He emphasized that this initiative was a direct response to Chad's request for assistance, as the country is struggling to cope with the influx of refugees.

For his part, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Sheikh Abdullah Al-Nouri Charity Association, Jamal Al-Nouri, discussed the organization's initiatives in aiding refugees in Chad. He disclosed that in mid-May, the association, working alongside the UNHCR, conducted a visit to Chad to evaluate the conditions of around half a million Sudanese refugees living there. He warned that the number of refugees is expected to increase if the situation in Sudan continues to deteriorate.

Al-Nouri praised the Kuwaiti government for its unwavering support, highlighting that it is the primary donor to the association's relief efforts. He also emphasized the transparency measures in place to ensure that aid reaches the intended beneficiaries. "We select our partners from international or local organizations with whom we have been working for years. In addition, there are branches of some Kuwaiti charities, and in some cases, there are auditors if the financial aid is large."

"Kuwait's leadership in humanitarian action serves as an inspiration to others, demonstrating that compassion and support know no borders," Al-Nouri added.

# Maltese ambassador underlines strong relations with Kuwait

H. E. Prof. Dr. George A. Said-Zammit, Ambassador of Malta to Kuwait, revealed ongoing discussions with Kuwaiti officials to establish a direct airline route between the two nations, aiming to bolster relations across multiple sectors



## THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

Ambassador of Malta H.E. Prof. Dr. George A. Said-Zammit, highlighted the numerous opportunities to enhance trade volume, cultural exchanges, and sports initiatives between Malta and Kuwait, while emphasizing Kuwait's keen interest in nurturing these relations.

Speaking to media personnel during a celebration marking Malta's twentieth anniversary of joining the European Union, Ambassador Said Zammit stressed on the mutual desire of both nations to expand and deepen their relationship in all fields.

He also revealed that discussions were ongoing with Kuwaiti officials to establish a direct airline route between the two countries, aiming to bolster bilateral relations across multiple sectors. He also emphasized.

The ambassador added that he was working to strengthen cooperation in the sports field, highlighting Malta's renowned tennis, padel, and gymnastics games. He mentioned the interest shown by Kuwaiti clubs in fostering this relationship.

The ambassador also noted that approximately 100 Kuwaiti students are currently studying in Maltese universities, specializing in general medicine, dentistry, and engineering. He

revealed that a delegation from the University of Malta will visit Kuwait within two weeks to introduce Kuwaiti students to the university's various specializations. He also highlighted ongoing cooperation between the American University in Kuwait and institutions in Malta.

He invited Kuwaitis to visit his country during the summer, highlighting its picturesque beaches and ancient monuments. He added that the Maltese people are very friendly and always welcome their guests.

A film screening of the award-winning Maltese film 'Luzzu' was held for an exclusive gathering of guests to commemorate the anniversary and as part of Europe month celebrations in Kuwait.

Ambassador Said-Zammit highlighted that 20 years ago, on May 1, Europe witnessed a significant transformation with the enlargement of the Union to include Malta, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia. This historic date marked the largest single enlargement in terms of both population and countries, signifying the integration of national histories, legal cultures, traditions, and the diversity represented by the ten new Member States. The 2004 enlargement of the European Union marked a constitutional moment, heralding a paradigm shift that unified Eastern and Western Europe into a common constitutional project.

He further indicated that the European Union extended its values and principles to regions of Europe with complex histories. While the ten new Member States joined the EU with a strong determination and hope for freedom, justice, and prosperity, their resolve would face significant challenges. This marked the onset of a new era for Europe. The ambassador also noted that 20 years later, Malta stood honored to have played a pivotal role in this new era for Europe, which led to a stronger Union of

European citizens.

Ambassador Said-Zammit concluded with a poignant reminder that while celebrating this milestone anniversary, Maltese should not only reflect on the achievements of the past 20 years but also look ahead with optimism and determination. Today's challenges, including climate change, digital transformation, and geopolitical uncertainties, necessitate reaffirming their unity, solidarity, and cooperation within the EU and beyond.

## Ministry of Education to open seven new schools in Al-Mutlaa



In readiness for the upcoming academic year, the Ministry of Education has finalized arrangements to inaugurate seven new schools in Al-Mutlaa residential city.

Simultaneously, the Jahra Educational District has opened applications for transferring educational and administrative staff to these schools, with the deadline set for Thursday, May 30th.

The region identified schools as follows: one kindergarten for Kindergarten, one school each for boys and girls in primary, middle, and secondary levels.

The ministry called on those interested in transferring from the district general office or Al-Jahra schools at all levels and kindergartens to Al-Mutlaa Al-Sakina city schools exclusively 'whether educational or administrative staff' to submit a transfer request available via the link: (<https://forms.office.com/r/FYIKuVT7d7>).

The ministry is urging everyone to ensure the completion of all required data in the electronic link to prevent the exclusion of their application. It noted that the deadline for submitting applications is the end of the working day on May 30.

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# Europe Day underlines strength of Kuwait's relations with Europe

*Abdullah Al-Yahya, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, stated that the event symbolizes the commitment to fruitful progress between Kuwait and its friendly European partners across various fields of cooperation.*



## THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdullah Al-Yahya was the chief guest at the annual celebration of Europe Day in Kuwait held on 9 May. The event was attended by heads of missions from European Union member states, as well as members of diplomatic missions and international organizations accredited to Kuwait.

In her address to the gathering, Ambassador of the European Union to Kuwait, H.E. Anne Koistinen, expressed her deep gratitude to the Kuwaiti government, especially the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for its exceptional cooperation over the past five years. She noted that their partnership has flourished, enabling them to lay a solid foundation for continued success and prosperity under the wise leadership of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al Sabah.

Ambassador Koistinen added that they have made joint efforts to cooperate in many fields,

including influential projects in sectors such as the just green transition, renewable energy, and women's empowerment, in accordance with the sustainable development goals of the United Nations. Additionally, they have initiated joint initiatives related to youth, the academic sector, investment, and human rights.

The ambassador continued that while the EU maintains its position as Kuwait's second-largest trading partner, there is

a lot of untapped potential for further cooperation. They stressed their commitment to strengthening the partnership with Kuwait in order to achieve our common goals, as the EU remains a close and reliable partner, contributing to the implementation of Kuwait Vision 2035.

She also expressed her happiness that the European Union (EU) has granted Kuwaiti citizens preferential rules related to the

Schengen visa. Kuwaiti citizens are now given multiple-entry visas for up to five years, with the goal of achieving complete exemption from the Schengen visa for Kuwaiti citizens.

The ambassador extended her gratitude to the 16 embassies of the European Union member states in Kuwait for their collaborative efforts with the EU delegation. Together, they have showcased the spirit of 'Team Europe' through a range of events and activities to commemorate Europe Month in Kuwait.

In a statement on the occasion, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs noted that the celebration highlights the strong and friendly relations between the State of Kuwait and friendly European countries. It also signifies a dedication to the fruitful progress between the two sides in various fields of cooperation.

The ministry underlined that this occasion also reflects the common aspiration to expand and deepen these relations, reaching broader and wider horizons, and achieving all common goals between the two sides.



## AlSayer Group holds ceremony to commemorate 70th year anniversary

*Faisal Bader Al Sayer, Chairman delivers the keynote during the event*



A grand celebration was recently held to mark the 70th anniversary of Al-Sayer Group in Al Yasmin Ballroom at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel - Kuwait. The event reflected the remarkable success story of the Group dating back to 1954. It has been a journey spanning seven decades of achievements and successes facing several obstacles and challenges. The foundation of the business was laid by Mr. Naser Mohamed Al-Sayer and his brother Mr. Bader Mohamed Al-Sayer with a big dream that was enhanced by an insight into the future, ambitious steps, and unlimited passion.

The first milestone was in the Al Qibla area as the first Toyota showroom in Kuwait and was part of the Mohammed Naser Al-Sayer family home. Since the very beginning of that journey, the wheel of development and innovation has been continuous, as the pioneers of automotive sector in Kuwait with Japanese brand Toyota, followed by Lexus,

and of course service centers and spare parts outlets, then, sectors of car rental, animal feed, tires, heavy equipment, oil and paint, insurance, and others. During the past 10 years, the group began further expanding and investing in new areas such as real-estate, education, and healthcare.

The commemorative ceremony witnessed distinguished and unprecedented attendance that included: Diplomats, Officials from Ministries, Government agencies and institutions, team of principals representing brands, and senior Management from press and media. The ceremony was also attended by high-level delegation from Toyota Motor Corporation.

Mr. Faisal Bader Al Sayer - Chairman of ALSAYER Group, Mr. Musaed Bader Al Sayer - Vice Chairman, Mr. Mubarak Naser Al Sayer - Chief Executive Officer, and Mr. Mohamed Naser Al Sayer - Board Member accompanied by members of the Al Sayer family and members

of the senior management of ALSAYER Group received the VIPs and guests of the ceremony at the entrance of the hall with a special atmosphere of hospitality and welcome.

On this occasion, Mr. Faisal Bader Al Sayer said: "First, we ask God Almighty to protect our beloved country Kuwait and protect the leader of the nation, His Highness the Emir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, who leads us to safety and takes us to new horizons of glory and prosperity. We belong to this beautiful land of Kuwait and are an integral part of the fabric of its authentic society. We will not hesitate to support the economic development in the country by contributing to the growth in the private sector. We are confident and certain that the future is more beautiful, and that Kuwait is coming to stages of comprehensive renaissance, growth and prosperity in various fields."

"On this occasion dear to all our hearts, I would like to thank our valued customers,

ministries, government agencies, business partners, banks, insurance companies, leasing, press and media. Thank you to our brand representatives who have shared our success for many years" added Faisal Al Sayer.

According to a top Toyota Executive: "Allow me to congratulate you on the 70th anniversary of ALSAYER Group and for its significant contribution to Toyota's success over the past 70 years. I would like to mention how the founder of Naser Mohamed Al Sayer spent more than 45 hours traveling through several countries to reach Japan, from where our 70-year relationship began, the second longest partnership in the world."

The ceremony included the screening of 3 documentaries about Al-Sayer that keep pace with the stages of the Group's development reflecting its 3 core pillars: "Heritage - Leadership - Growth". Towards the end of the ceremony, the attendees witnessed a special entertainment before the dinner banquet.



# Reusing used tires as industrial fuel

*The project aims to achieve a dual benefit by reducing industrial energy usage while also addressing the issue of used tire accumulation, thereby contributing to solving the tire crisis.*

In line with initiatives by the government to lower local energy consumption rates, authorities are exploring the utilization of used tires as an alternative energy source to fuel industrial furnaces. This initiative will not only reduce the use of fossil fuels in industries, but also address the issue of safely disposing the millions of used tires that accumulate in Kuwait annually.

The plan involves shredding the used tires and converting them into fuel-quality products that can be used in factory furnaces in place of fossil fuels (oil or coal), which will also significantly benefit the environment.

According to studies on global experience, factories capable of burning solid waste can initially consume alternative fuels at a rate of 40 percent, with the goal of reaching 100 percent within five years.

A related study conducted in 2020 showed there were 2.26 million registered vehicles in Kuwait, including 1.86 million small cars and 364,000 trucks/buses, totaling 9.5 million tires.

The study assumes that if 50 percent of used tires are replaced annually, there will be 4.7 million tires per year, equating to 13,000 tires daily. Using used tires as fuel for factories helps significantly reduce the accumulation of waste tires, with the effectiveness depending on the level of reliance on them.

The tire-shredding process, which began in Kuwait in 2019, has resulted in the shredding of over six million tires within a two-year time period. A new study revealed that the daily production of locally shredded tires amounts to 10,000, totaling 250,000 per month and three million annually. It also highlighted several logistical needs for the success of this trend, which can be summarized in two scenarios.

A recent report by the Environment Public Authority regarding the optimal handling of the used tires storage site in the Salmi area, showed that the issue poses one of the largest challenges for the Authority due to their detrimental impact on the environment and the environmental issues that arise from



their accumulation.

The Environment Agency recommended swift removal and disposal of these damaged and used tires, alongside proposing radical solutions to tackle the problem.



## British delegation aims to increase import of Palestinian products to Kuwait

*The two embassies hosted a delegation from the British Consulate in Jerusalem along with the UK-funded 'Tasdeer' team, aiming to strategize ways to increase the export of top-tier Palestinian goods and services to Kuwait.*

A collaborative initiative launched by the British and Palestinian embassies in Kuwait witnessed the visit to Kuwait last week of a delegation from the British Consulate in Jerusalem along with the UK-funded 'Tasdeer' organization. The successful visit aimed to strategize ways to increase the export of top-quality Palestinian goods and services to Kuwait.

During their visit the delegation held meetings with representatives from the ministries of Foreign Affairs, and Commerce and Industry, as well as with the Kuwait Direct Investment Promotion Authority (KDIPA), the Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry, LuLu Hypermarket and other private companies specializing in logistics, food and drink, stone

and marble, and telecommunications.

Elaborating on the delegation's visit, the British Ambassador H.E. Belinda Lewis said: "This visit from our colleagues in Jerusalem was extremely valuable and warmly received. Kuwait shows a strong interest in high-quality Palestinian products, especially in food, textiles, stone, and marble.

Therefore, the UK-funded Tasdeer team is diligently working on logistics, customs requirements, and other practical aspects to boost exports efficiently. This joint effort between the British and Palestinian Embassies to support the Palestinian economy is a top priority for my team, and we anticipate signing several commercial contracts with Kuwaiti companies in the near future."



## 'Kuwait champions moderation and solidarity in foreign policy'

THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

His Excellency Awadal-Karim Al-Rayah Balla, the Sudanese ambassador to the country, affirmed that Kuwait's foreign policy is characterized by moderation and solidarity with its allies. He highlighted Sudan's appreciation for these principles and its keenness on maintaining strong relations with Kuwait. He noted that Kuwait stands out as one of the few countries worldwide that offer support and aid unconditionally, without a political agenda or interference, making it advantageous for engaging in economic projects and assisting countries in need.

His Excellency stated during a press conference with representatives of local media at his residence, "We have witnessed many conflicts and seen Kuwait's mediation in them, emphasizing Kuwait's status as a reconciled country with itself and its surroundings. Therefore, Sudan places great importance on its relations with Kuwait."

Ambassador Al-Rayah Balla pointed out that Sudan was one of the first countries to recognize Kuwait's independence and contributed to its consolidation. In return, Kuwait acknowledged this contribution. Additionally, Sudan was the first country to receive a loan from the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development, specifically for the expansion of the railway in Sudan.

He stated that Kuwait has very large and significant investments in Sudan across various sectors such as agriculture, agricultural processing, animal production, construction projects, and the communications sector. Additionally, there are substantial investments by individuals and companies from Kuwait in Sudan, and the volume of trade exchange before the war reached about 500 million dollars. He highlighted that Kuwait has contributed to large-scale projects that have not only economic but also political dimensions. He also mentioned that Kuwait is Sudan's largest creditor outside the Paris Club, with total Kuwaiti debts to Sudan exceeding 15 billion dollars.

The ambassador stated that in 2013, massive development projects took place in Sudan, transforming it from a consumer to an exporter of services such as electricity. This was achieved through the construction of four dams, which increased electricity production and expanded the agricultural area. These efforts helped Sudan move towards achieving Arab food security. He emphasized that these vital projects were supported by Kuwait without any political agenda, aiming only to strengthen the Arab security system and foster bonds of brotherhood and friendship with Arab countries.

His Excellency pointed out that Kuwait supported the "Jeddah Platform," which called for the militia to vacate the civilian objects it



had occupied. This included hospitals, schools, universities, homes, as well as electricity and water facilities. The platform was proposed after more than 1,000 factories were destroyed, along with universities, museums, and public libraries. He stressed that after the Sudanese army successfully eliminated a large portion of the Rapid Support during the first month of the war, the Rapid Support turned to occupying civilian objects. He added, "I say it unequivocally: If it weren't for regional interventions and the involvement of some neighboring countries, this war would have ended in the first month."

### Kuwait home to 20,000 Sudanese

Ambassador Al-Rayah Balla mentioned that Kuwait is home to about 20,000 Sudanese and their families, with the majority being doctors, university professors, and accountants, along with some workers in agriculture and herding. The embassy provides them with all necessary services.

He further added, "We currently have a team of five officers from the Ministry of Interior specialized in passport issues. They arrived about a year and a half ago and in approximately four months, they processed around 3,000 passports. This was possible after rebuilding the new passport factory in the new administrative capital in Port Sudan, following the destruction of the old factory in Khartoum by militias." In response to a question about the largest Kuwaiti investments currently affected in Sudan, the ambassador explained, "There is a very large Hilton hotel in the center of Khartoum that is now under the control of militias."

Additionally, the Zain Telecommunications Company suffered significant damage due to the destruction of cables, towers, and stations. I want to commend the company, Zain, because it is one of the few, if not the only one, where thousands of employees continue to receive their full salaries to this day, despite the war continuing for more than a year. Through you, I salute Engineer Badr Al-Kharafi for his humanitarian and noble stance, and for his commitment to keeping the company operational in Sudan despite the immense challenges."



## German Embassy celebrates 60 years of diplomatic relations with Kuwait

### THE TIMES KUWAIT REPORT

German Embassy celebrated 60 years of diplomatic relations with Kuwait with a melodious musical ensemble at the prestigious Jaber Al Ahmad Cultural Centre recently.

The 'Jacaranda Ensemble' comprising five accomplished musicians played to a packed hall of music lovers with some enchanting new sounds. Ambassador of Germany H.E. Hans-Christian Freiherr in his address to the guests applauded the 60-year historical milestone of diplomatic relations between the two countries

and said the year long celebrations would continue with a series of events.

The Jacaranda Ensemble, who are principal members of the Brandenburg Symphony Orchestra came together to perform an extraordinary ensemble driven by their desire to explore new sounds. Bringing together diverse

instruments from distant regions, they connect cultures through the universal language of music. The evening witnessed mesmerising sounds and melodies that resonated with people of all tastes and generations, seamlessly blending classical and jazz elements while also uniting fans of rock and folk music.

## Kuwait's population soars towards five-million milestone

Kuwait's population is on the verge of surpassing five million, currently standing at 4.91 million, marking a rise of approximately 120 thousand compared to figures from a year ago.

A recent statistic from the Central Administration of Statistics showed that the population on January 1, 2024, amounted to

4,913,271, compared to 4,793,568 in January 2023. The number of citizens reached 1,545,781, compared to 1,517,760 a year ago, marking an increase of 28,705. As for the number of non-Kuwaitis, it reached 3,367,490, compared to 3,276,492 a year ago, indicating an increase of 90,998.

The data showed that the number of citizens

is 758,716, with females totaling 787,065 and males outnumbering non-Kuwaitis (2,262,500 compared to 1,104,990).

Youth constitute the overwhelming majority of citizens, with their number reaching about 650,000, distributed across age groups as follows: 135,811 (Aged 20-24), 131,084 (Aged 25-29), 115,946 (Aged 30-34), 105,058 (Aged 35-39), 88,195 (Aged 40-44), and 75,591 (Aged 45-49).

The remaining numbers are distributed as follows, around 650,000 for age groups ranging from less than one year to 19 years old, and approximately 245,000 for age groups from 50 years old to over 80.



## BSK celebrates achievements with glittering graduation ceremony



The British School of Kuwait (BSK) hosted an impressive graduation ceremony at the Four Seasons Hotel on April 17, to celebrate the achievements of their Year 11-13 students.

Following the national anthems of Kuwait and the United Kingdom, Year 12 student Omar Saad delivered a reading from the Holy Quran. This was followed by the first speech of the evening, delivered by BSK Chairman Mr. Sadiq Al-Mutawa during his Welcome Address, focusing on the sentiment: "Our sons and daughters are not just graduates but part of the school family."

The first Guest of Honour was Dr. Bassm Alfeeli, Founder and General Manager of Orbital Space, who delivered a wonderful speech encouraging careers in science and fostering a love for knowledge.

The school also had the privilege of including a speech from Guest of Honour Dr. Salman Al-lafi, Assistant Undersecretary for Private and Qualitative Education, in the event program. Dr. Al-lafi congratulated the graduates and spoke highly of the school, stating, "The British School is a cornerstone of Kuwait's educational system."

The roll of honour included 235 recipients across graduation tiers, along with details of subject prizes and commendations awards. For Year 11, this

*Having moved to a new venue this year to accommodate the increased number of graduates, the Festival of Achievement and Graduation remained a highlight of the British School of Kuwait calendar*

was announced by Year 11 Year Lead Mr. Eric Tang, Assistant Phase Coordinator Miss Sophie Rees, and Assistant Head Teacher Mr. Stephen Peacock. The Year 12 roll of honour was presented by Assistant Head Teacher Mr. John Leonard, and the Year 13 students were announced by Assistant Head Teacher Mr. Kenneth Price.

Another highlight of the evening was the music provided by the BSK Orchestra under the guidance of Director of Performance Music, Miss Emily Jeffcott. This included the playing of "Semper Fidelis" during the graduates' entrance and Johann Strauss' "Radetzky March" as they exited the ballroom following their graduation, as well as their excellent rendition of "Superstition" by Stevie Wonder.

In her address, the Principal of BSK, Ms. Emma Bowie, described the diverse educational journeys of our students, emphasizing the importance of a student-centered approach to learning. She also acknowledged the invaluable

contributions of school teachers and leaders in maintaining the high standards of education and care at BSK, and expressed gratitude to parents for their ongoing trust and support.

The special awards section provided an opportunity to recognize outstanding individual achievements. Academic Excellence Awards were conferred upon the highest-achieving students in each year group: Emanuella Maria Nistor in Year 11, Farbod Farrokhi Derakshandeh in Year 12, and Luaidh Williams in Year 13.

The Student Leadership Award was given to Nupur Gupta. The prestigious Head Teacher's awards were also presented to one student from each of the three year groups: Maryam Abu Rouss (Year 11), Daniel Al-Begain (Year 12), and Head Boy Omar Badr (Year 13).

In her address, BSK Founder and Director, Madam Vera Al-Mutawa MBE, warmly congratulated all graduates on their

achievement and spoke passionately about the pride we hold as both teachers and parents. She also expressed her gratitude to parents and families for their continued support and to the entire staff of The British School of Kuwait for their tremendous efforts. Her speech was followed by the awarding of the most coveted award of the evening, the Founder's Medal of Honour, which was bestowed upon Year 13 student Luaidh Williams, who will be attending the University of Cambridge to study Mathematics later this year.

The penultimate item on the program was the much-anticipated Head Students' Address, with Head Girl Navika Tewari and Head Boy Omar Badr expressing their gratitude and reflecting on their time at BSK on behalf of the student body. They also shared their hopes and aspirations for the future.

Having moved to a new venue this year to accommodate the increased number of graduates, the Festival of Achievement and Graduation remained a highlight of the school calendar. The rousing finale of the event was the presentation of the Class of 2023-24 by Head Teacher Mr. Simon Amura – a fitting end to celebrate the achievements of an exceptional graduating class.

# GoMedii plans to expand its footprint in Kuwait

S A H RIZVI  
TIMES KUWAIT BUREAU, NEW DELHI

Asia is taking the lead in the flourishing medical tourism sector, with the Medical Tourism Index 2023-24 forecasting a notable revenue upswing in Asian healthcare services. GoMedii, an AI-powered technology platform, has pioneered an innovative ecosystem to optimize the entire patient journey within the healthcare domain.

With robust operations across Africa, India, Thailand, Turkey, Dubai, and now Saudi Arabia, GoMedii is strategically positioned to meet the increasing demand for streamlined healthcare services across borders.



As per Rohit Singh, Chairman of GoMedii, the latest ecosystem has been intricately designed with a technology-driven platform to streamline the complete patient journey for Medical Travel. This holistic approach encompasses discovery, treatment planning, the treatment process itself, and post-treatment follow-up, ensuring patients receive an exceptional experience.

Crucially, it grants patients numerous options to travel to their

chosen country for medical treatment, whether it is India, Turkey, Thailand, Dubai, or Saudi Arabia.

He highlighted a significant issue within the unorganized medical travel industry, emphasizing the lack of information and options, along with transparency, and the absence of a single platform offering all necessary services.

Despite these challenges, he noted that the industry has continued to flourish, driven by increasing demand. The current global market is estimated to be approximately USD110 billion, underscoring the resilience and growth potential of the medical travel sector despite existing shortcomings.

Mr. Singh emphasized that GoMedii's technology solution, combined with its integration with insurance companies in respective countries and the provision of value-added services such as investigations, travel arrangement, accommodations, forex services, medicines, taxis, and more, will enhance transparency, inspire confidence, and drive competitiveness in the market.

He stressed that the primary beneficiaries will be the patients, who will experience significant cost reductions and have access to multiple hospitals across various countries.

Syed Farman Haider, Vice President and Head of Overseas Operations, highlighted GoMedii's extensive presence in African, Far East, and Gulf Nations. He stated, "Currently, the Middle East contributes 30 percent of the global market share in medical value travel."

Kuwait's strategic importance in medical travel due to the longstanding partnership between India and Kuwait, viewing both nations as progressive partners. With a large population of expatriates, GoMedii is focusing particularly on Kuwait, aiming to provide tailored solutions for travel to India, Thailand, and neighboring Saudi Arabia, an emerging destination for medical tourism.

Haider stressed the importance of strong collaboration with the hospital industry in various countries to offer genuine, effective, and transparent information regarding treatment, costs, and overall procedures. This comprehensive approach aims to benefit patients traveling from Kuwait by providing them



Rohit Singh

Farman Haider

with a reliable and seamless experience under one umbrella.

According to estimates by Niti Aayog of India, the Indian economy has the potential to earn an additional USD9 billion by 2026 from Medical Value Travel (MVT) and Wellness tourism combined. This projection highlights the significant economic opportunity presented by these sectors, reflecting the growing recognition of India as a preferred destination for medical treatment and wellness services among international travelers.

With Saudi Arabia rising as a key destination for medical tourism, GoMedii is currently extending its hospital network within the kingdom, said Mr. Haider.

High level significant investments in cutting-edge medical facilities, exemplified by institutions like the renowned King Faisal Specialist Hospital & Research Centre, highlight Saudi Arabia's dedication to medical advancement and exceptional patient care.

Being close to Kuwait, Saudi Arabia's prominence in medical tourism provides patients in the region with an appealing option for accessing top-tier healthcare closer to their homes. This trend reflects the growing accessibility of high-quality medical services in the Gulf region, enhancing patient experiences and enriching the healthcare landscape of the area.

## Migration supports robust resilient communities

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Their presence and practices are seen as infringements on traditional cultures, social mores, and religious values of the host nation.

Migrants are also often blamed for rising criminal activity in society. While it is true that many migrants may follow different faiths or display cultural practices that are at variance from the larger host population, the accusation that migrants are responsible for an increase in law-breaking activities is unfounded. Numerous studies and security records show that migrants are no different than local citizens in this regard.

Migrant remittance volumes are also a source of contention with critics of migration often calling for curbing or taxing foreign remittances. However, proponents point to the multiple benefits that accrue from remittances to both the host country and the recipient nation. Globally, remittance flows are estimated to have reached USD 860 billion in 2023, marking a 3 percent increase from a year earlier.

On average, nearly 7 percent of the annual global remittance amount goes to individuals and entities in host countries as transfer fees, in addition to providing employment to locals and boosting the economy. Also, the estimated \$860 billion remittance in 2023 is likely on the lower side, as it does not account for unofficial transfers. According to the World Bank, global remittances through official channels to Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMIC) touched \$669 billion in 2023.

Migrant remittances also constitute a significant portion of the GDP of many developing countries, and in some places these transfers now surpass official development assistance (ODA) and foreign direct investment (FDI) flows. In 2023, the top five recipient countries for remittance inflows among LMICs were India (125 billion), Mexico (67 billion), China (50 billion), the Philippines (40

billion), and Egypt (24 billion). India has been the largest recipient of remittances since 2008.

Negative perceptions aside, international migration remains one of the main drivers of human development and economic growth worldwide. Most migrants arriving in a new country contribute to the local economy and help build robust, resilient, and productive communities through their input of knowledge, networks, and skills, as well as contributions to social welfare.

Global studies on migration by the World Bank and other entities highlight the net positive impact of migration on the world economy— in 2023 migrants are estimated to have contributed nearly 10 percent of the global GDP. On a more microeconomic level, a 2021 survey by the Boston Consulting Group of senior executives across several countries and industries, found 72 percent of the executives considered migration to benefit their companies and countries.

In Kuwait, despite policies that seek to replace expatriate workers with citizens in the labor market, and amid calls to realign the demographic imbalance, the country's economy continues to rely heavily on its migrant workforce. This dependence was driven home during the COVID-19 pandemic when a significant number of migrant workers left the country. The lack of foreign workers in the labor market severely impacted Kuwait's post-pandemic economic recovery efforts.

Although nearly two-third of the country's population are foreigners, and empirical evidence points to their indispensability to the economy, Kuwait is yet to address some of the challenges faced by migrants, or seize the opportunities presented by the vast number of migrants in the country. It is true that in recent years Kuwait has initiated a series of laws and policies aimed at protecting the rights of migrant workers.

For instance, Private Sector Labor Law 6 of 2010 and its amendments now govern employer-employee relations in the private sector. In 2015, Kuwait also enacted Law No 68 and Ministerial Decision No 2194 of 2016 to protect the rights of domestic workers in Kuwait. Until then, the more than 700,000 domestic workers in the country had no legal framework to protect their labor rights.

In 2017, Kuwait joined IOM as an observer state, and the IOM office in Kuwait, which was established in 1991, has worked in close partnership with Kuwait to strengthen the capacity of relevant national counterparts and ministries tasked with the protection of migrants and victims of trafficking. In 2018, Kuwait also adopted the Global Compact for Migration (GCM), indicating its commitment towards achieving safe, orderly and regular migration.

Implementation of the non-binding GCM helps states to improve the governance of migration, to address the challenges to human mobility without compromising their sovereignty, or the human rights of people, and to strengthen the contribution of migrants and migration to sustainable development in a way that increases benefits for individuals, communities and countries, and reduces its risks for all.

However, implementation of the GCM in its entirety, in both letter and spirit, has been challenging for Kuwait. For its part, the IOM organizes awareness campaigns on the topic of human trafficking and the rights of domestic workers. IOM also continues to share technical expertise with government and civil society organizations on migrant protection, and protection to potential victims of trafficking, as well as on implementation of the GCM.

By 2017, Kuwait had ratified nearly a dozen international human rights instruments and labor conventions, including on forced labor, minimum age for work, and the ILO Domestic Workers

Convention. Despite the signing of multiple international covenants and treaties, as with the GCM, it is in the adoption of these international principles within the Kuwaiti national legal system, and in its implementation at the grass-root level that Kuwait has struggled.

As the UN entity for migration, the IOM has an obligation to demystify the complexity and diversity of human mobility. Misinformation and politicization of migrants and issues related to migration have often strayed far from a balanced and accurate depiction of migration. It is against this background of migrant bashing that the 'World Migration Report - 2024' gains added salience.

The report presents a clear and accurate picture of the changes occurring in migration and mobility globally, so that policy- and decision-makers, as well as civil society organizations and individuals can better understand and adapt to the changes. Speaking at the launch of the report, IOM Director General Amy Pope stated: "In a world grappling with uncertainty, understanding migration dynamics is essential for informed decision-making and effective policy responses... We hope the report inspires collaborative efforts to harness the potential of migration as a driver for human development and global prosperity."

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# Australian ban on live sheep exports to affect Kuwait market

Australia is to ban the export of live sheep from the country by sea from May 2028, fulfilling a pledge to end a practice long opposed by animal welfare advocates. The ban could affect the Kuwait sheep market, where there is a strong demand for live Australian sheep meat.

In a statement announcing the ban, Australian Agriculture Minister Murray Watt said, "We are giving certainty to sheep producers and the supply chain by legislating the date." The announcement makes good a commitment from the Labor government to phase out the controversial practice, despite pushback from farm groups that say the move will put people out of work and destroy farming communities.

Watt said A\$107 million would be offered as a transition package over five years to support people, including sheep farmers, affected by the industry wind-down.

The phase out does not apply to other livestock export industries, such as live cattle exports, nor does it apply to live sheep exports by air.

Australia's live sheep trade, centered in the country's vast Western Australia state, shipped about five million sheep a year in the 1990s and early 2000s, but that number has gradually declined. Last year, Australia exported 684,000 sheep, worth about \$50 million, Australian trade data show. Most sheep are shipped to the Middle East, around two weeks' sailing away. The main export destinations are Kuwait,



Israel and the United Arab Emirates.

Animal rights groups have for years pushed to end those shipments from Australia, where public outcry in 2018 over the death of 2,400 sheep from heat stress prompted calls for stricter welfare standards. In January, a ship carrying about 14,000 sheep and 2,000 cattle bound for Israel became stranded off the coast of Australia in sweltering heat after it was forced to abandon a trip through the Red Sea, causing renewed outcry from people concerned about animal welfare in the industry.

## More than one million passengers passed through Kuwait Airport in April

*The Civil Aviation Directorate General announced on Thursday that the total number of passengers who passed through Kuwait International Airport, last April, exceeded 1.1 million.*

Abdullah Al-Rajhi, the deputy director general for aviation safety and air transport, said in a press statement that the airport had witnessed rise of the number of passengers by 11 percent, aircraft movement by 13 percent, while air cargo activity climbed by 10 percent in April, compared to last year's same month.

Al-Rajhi added that the number of arrivals, in April, reached 564,638 while those who departed Kuwait via the airport amounted to 618,242.

The number of aircraft that departed or landed at the air facility reached 10,113, compared to 8,983 in last year's April. As to the air cargo, it was estimated at 18.2 million kilograms. Destinations of top demand were Dubai, Cairo, Jeddah, Istanbul and Doha.



## 'TASTES OF MEXICO' buffet launches at Safir Fintas



Safir Hotels in Fintas has unveiled a brand new culinary experience guaranteed to tantalize your taste buds. Every Wednesday evening, from 7pm to 11pm their Flavors Restaurant transforms into a vibrant fiesta with the 'Tastes of Mexico' Buffet.

"It gives me immense pleasure to launch the Tastes of Mexico Buffet Night at Flavors Restaurant," said General Manager of Safir Fintas Hotel, Saif Edeen Mohamad, while inaugurating the 'Tastes of Mexico Buffet Night' on 8 May. He added, "Following the resounding success of our Korean Authentic Experience (K-night) last season, we're thrilled to offer our guests a chance to explore the rich culinary heritage of Mexico, a cuisine proudly recognized by UNESCO."

"I extend my sincere gratitude to our culinary team, led by Chef Binu Joseph, and all our hotel colleagues for their dedication in making this special evening a success story. If you're seeking a fun and flavorful adventure, look no further than the Safir Fintas Hotel," said Mr. Mohamad.

The lavish buffet promises an authentic



Mexican experience for the whole family. Dive into a world of unique flavors, starting with an appetizing selection of homemade side dishes like Esquite (corn salad) and Pico de Gallo (salsa fresca). Refreshing salads like Gazpacho (chilled tomato soup) and Ceviche (marinated seafood) prepare your palate for an explosion of Mexican dishes.

A variety of cheeses and appetizers like savory Empanadas (pastries) and flavorful Molotes (fried dough balls) await your selection. The main courses are a true celebration of Mexican



cuisine, featuring Birria (stew), Veracruz-style fish, and Aroz con Moriscos (Moorish rice). Seafood enthusiasts can delight in a dedicated paella station, while meat lovers will find a selection of succulent cuts. Do not miss the live cooking station, where skilled chefs prepare fresh tacos, quesadillas, and burritos according to your preferences, or the dedicated bread station offering an array of choices.

For dessert, a selection of sweet treats awaits, including traditional Empanadas, creamy Mexican Rice Pudding, and Torrijas (French toast with a Mexican twist). Cheese cakes, ice creams, and even a touch of French toast round out the delectable options. And for those with a preference for Arabic flavors, a dedicated oriental selection ensures something for everyone.

Several distinguished guests and media personnel were invited to taste the Mexican experience for themselves at the launch of the restaurant. The Tastes of Mexico Buffet is more

than just a culinary journey, it is an opportunity to immerse yourself in a Mexican ambiance with lively Mexican music adding a touch of authenticity to your dining experience. At only KD13,900 per person, this buffet offers exceptional value for a memorable evening.

To secure your spot at this exciting culinary adventure, call +965 60070257 for reservations. Do not miss out on your chance to experience the authentic flavors and festive spirit of Mexico at the Safir Fintas Hotel every Wednesday evening.



EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

# Fertilizers Will Not Fix Africa's Food Crisis



**Silke Bollmohr and Harun Warui**

*Silke Bollmohr, Founder of EcoTrac Consulting, is Senior Policy Adviser for Global Food Policy and Agriculture at INKOTA netzwerk. Harun Warui is Project Lead of the Route to Food Initiative at the Heinrich Böll Foundation office in Nairobi.*

The world is confronting an unprecedented food crisis, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, Russia's war against Ukraine, and worsening climate conditions. But the problem is most acute in Africa, where 61% of the population faced moderate or severe food insecurity in 2022. And at a moment when effective solutions are urgently needed, policymakers are once again coalescing around the misguided belief that increased use of mineral and synthetic fertilizer is the key to boosting agricultural productivity and ending hunger on the continent.

This approach can be traced back to the Abuja Declaration on Fertilizer for the Africa Green Revolution that African Union leaders endorsed in 2006. The goal was to reverse the continent's poor yields by boosting fertilizer use from eight to 50 kilograms per hectare within a decade. Spearheading this effort was the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), an initiative backed by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and other major donors. Working closely with large agribusinesses like the Norwegian-based chemical company Yara, AGRA championed the idea that distributing

synthetic nitrogen fertilizers would solve Africa's agricultural challenges.

But this singular focus on synthetic fertilizer use has failed to address the complex realities of farming in Africa. A recent assessment of AGRA's projects in Burkina Faso and Ghana found no evidence that providing chemical inputs and high-yield seeds resulted in increased production and higher incomes for smallholder farmers. Instead, many are now more vulnerable and indebted after coming to rely on expensive synthetic pesticides and fertilizers, the prices of which soared following Russia's invasion. These farmers have become locked in a cycle of dependency, while companies like Yara reap substantial profits.

Zambia is a good example. Despite being one of the largest consumers of synthetic

beneficial microorganisms, such as mycorrhizal fungi, which are essential for nutrient cycling and plant health. When these symbiotic relationships are disrupted, soil resilience and fertility decline. According to the World Bank, Africa is already estimated to be losing around 3% of GDP per year due to nutrient depletion and general soil degradation.

In addition to undermining crop productivity, and thus dealing a devastating blow to the livelihoods and food security of millions of smallholder farmers, excessive fertilizer use also has far-reaching environmental consequences. It contributes to nitrogen pollution in water bodies, causing biodiversity loss in aquatic systems and pushing the planet past safe limits for humans. Perhaps most worryingly, research indicates that the production and application of synthetic ni-

It is true that using green hydrogen to produce fertilizer can mitigate GHG emissions. But while the production process may be less carbon-intensive, it is still highly energy-intensive. And applying fertilizer can release huge surges of nitrous oxide – a potent GHG – into the atmosphere, and can still cause soil degradation and water pollution, regardless of how it is produced. By promoting "green fertilizer" as a panacea, the industry is engaging in greenwashing – using the veneer of sustainability to protect its interests.

This week, the AU's Africa Fertilizer and Soil Health Summit in Nairobi will address soil degradation and food insecurity. The involvement of industry giants like Yara and organizations like AGRA suggests continued adherence to a flawed model that has consistently failed to alleviate hunger and malnutrition, a concern shared by the Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa, which represents more than 200 million stakeholders. But instead of focusing on boosting short-term soil fertility, substituting one chemical with the other, and thus endorsing the fertilizer industry's self-serving narratives, the summit should consider longer-term goals, such as improving soil health and soil life, strengthening the resilience of farming communities, and ensuring the sustainability of food systems.

Productivity can be maintained without industrial nitrogen fertilizers, as shown in long-term trials across Africa. Alternatives include diversifying cropping systems, producing organic fertilizer, and planting legumes. Policymakers and stakeholders must move beyond the simplistic promotion of synthetic fertilizers, even those labeled as "green," and embrace a more transparent and evidence-based approach. Only then can we truly address the root causes of hunger and malnutrition in Africa and around the world.

“ In addition to undermining crop productivity, and thus dealing a devastating blow to the livelihoods and food security of millions of smallholder farmers, excessive fertilizer use also has far-reaching environmental consequences. ”

nitrogen fertilizer in Africa, the country has not experienced a corresponding reduction in hunger and malnutrition. The view that more fertilizer means less hunger fails to address the systemic barriers to food security, such as affordability, and exacerbates existing challenges, such as soil degradation.

Specifically, synthetic nitrogen fertilizers disrupt the delicate balance of the soil ecosystem – the very foundation of sustainable agriculture. These inputs have been shown to reduce the abundance and diversity of

trogen fertilizers accounts for roughly 2% of total global greenhouse-gas (GHG) emissions.

As a result, chemical companies like Yara are switching to 'green fertilizers', which are produced using hydrogen derived from renewable-energy sources, rather than fossil fuel-based inputs. This allows them to continue advocating for the use of synthetic fertilizers as a solution to food insecurity in Africa (and, by extension, maintaining and expanding the market for their products), even as research points to the shortcomings of such an approach.



## Thought for the week

“To ask what causes poverty is like asking what causes cold. It is the absence of energy. Similarly, poverty is the absence of wealth. We should ask, "what are the causes of wealth?"

- Madsen Pirie  
British Researcher and Author

## Ways to Suppress Your Appetite Naturally

Ask Mira: Eating Right to Live Happy & Healthy



Many people wonder what can be the best way to decrease their appetite, and have no doubt tried a lot of diet pills and potions. However, besides the side effects caused by them, most of these pills only work for a few days before they stop producing the desired results.

Personally I love food, but I also have a strong control over my appetite. I have tried over the years a few successful means of suppressing my appetite, without the aid of any diet pill. It worked for me and it should work for you as well.

Below are some of the ways that have helped me suppress my appetite, naturally and effectively:

**Tea and Camomile:** Those are the best appetite suppressants that worked for me. Usually I try not to eat anything after my dinner which is usually between 8 and 9pm. So a better alternative to foods is camomile at night. I keep tea (mainly green) for the afternoon because of the caffeine content which will not help me to sleep at night. I sweeten it with a pack of Splenda

The best thing about hot tea is that it works well with almost every diet, and has no calories.

**Water:** Water is a great natural appetite suppressant. My all time advice for everyone is to drink two glasses before each meal, especially in the morning before having breakfast. Well this is usually what I do everyday. It decreases my appetite before each meal. Your body does not ask for water unless you are completely dehydrated. So it always mixes up between being thirsty or hungry. Try that tip, it works.

**Working out:** For some people exercise is just a way to burn calories and eventually lose weight. But when you workout, your body releases natural endorphins that suppress your appetite while exercising.

**Proteins:** Proteins take a long time to be digested and do not affect your blood sugar in the way that carbohydrates do. I am not telling you to shift to a protein diet, you can have a pure protein breakfast for example if you have a long day and you will feel full.

Personally, whenever I have a long day, I try to take

for breakfast some cheese and lettuce, boiled eggs with vegetables, with a cup of skim milk. The protein will keep me satisfied longer.

**Vegetables:** I always tell my clients to eat their salads before their main meals, not within or after. Why? If you eat a salad with a low fat dressing at the start of every meal you will become full faster. It keeps you from eating a lot of calories at a meal as you normally would. It is low in fat, high in fiber (which gives you the satiety feeling). Chew your food well. Sometimes the simple motion of chewing can trick your brain into feeling full.

**Coffee:** Coffee is a natural appetite suppressant as well as a diuretic. Hot or cold, coffee is a great way to curb your appetite in the morning or afternoon. But be careful not to add cream to it. Just have it black.

**Popcorn:** Unlike most people I think, popcorn is a very healthy snack. It is very rich in fiber which keeps you feeling full longer. It might make you feel bloated but that is just due to its high fiber content. So whenever you feel a bit hungry, a cup of popped popcorn can be the solution.

Increase your metabolism and curb your appetite naturally.

*Eat like Mira*  
Create healthy habits, not restrictions

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



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

### RECIPE

## Kunafa Thandai Mousse



Preparation time: 45 min.  
Servings: 5 to 6

A totally different take on the traditional Arabic Kunafa, this crunchy, creamy Kunafa Thandai Mousse tastes terrific and makes it an Arabic dessert fusion that is certainly worth creating.

#### Ingredients:

- For Thandai powder:
- 2tbsp almond
- 2tbsp cashew
- 2tbsp pistachio
- 1 tbsp melon seeds
- 1 tbsp poppy seeds
- 1 tbsp rose petals
- 1 tbsp fennel seeds
- 15-20 saffron strands
- 10 green cardamom
- 2 big cardamom
- 10-15 black peppercorn

#### For the Kunafa layer:

- 1 cup, shredded kunafa
- 2tbsp unsalted butter
- 1/4 tsp.cinnamon powder
- 3tbsp sweet condensed milk

#### For the Thandai Mousse:

- 1cup whipping cream
- 1/2 cup fresh cream
- 1/2 cup chopped white chocolate
- 1 tsp. saffron dissolved in 2tbsp warm water
- 4tbsp thandai powder

#### For the garnish:

Chopped pistachios, few saffron threads and rose petals.

#### Directions:

- For making Thandai powder:
- Blend all ingredients for powder in the mixer on pulse mode.
- Sieve the powder to extract fine powder
- Store in an airtight container

#### For making Kunafa layer:

- Melt butter in a pan, add Kunafa shreds and roast till crispy and golden brown.
- Add condensed milk, cinnamon powder and mix well
- Turn off the flame and remove the kunafa from pan to a bowl.

#### For making Thandai Mousse:

- Pour fresh cream into a saucepan, bring to a boil on low flame immediately turn off flame. Add saffron water and chopped chocolate.
- Keep stirring until mixed evenly and no lumps of chocolate are seen.
- Keep chilled in a refrigerator until required.
- Take whipping cream in a large bowl, add thandai powder and little saffron water Whip until stiff peaks form.
- Add the chilled ganache and whip at speed one until combined well.
- Place mousse mixture in a piping bag.

#### Layering the dessert

- In a serving bowl or individual glasses
- Place one layer of the kunafa mix and pipe the Thandai mousse mixture on it and top it with a few drops of saffron water.
- Add another layer of kunafa mix and Thandai mousse and saffron water.
- Garnish with dry rose petals, pistachio slices and caramel almonds.
- Chill and serve .

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



Chef Chhaya Thakker

# Extreme temperatures, pollution raises risk of cardiac arrests

Many people feel sluggish or experience difficulty in breathing while carrying out routine work in extreme hot or cold conditions, or on days of heavy pollution. Now a new international study confirms that everyday activities such as lifting, carrying moderately heavy items, and walking up an incline, are significantly more taxing in extreme temperatures and pollution.

The study also suggests that the increased stress during extreme temperatures could even trigger a cardiovascular event and raise the risk of fatal heart attacks. A global analysis estimated that heat could be responsible for 490,000 excess deaths each year. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), as climate change continues to worsen if no adaptation is undertaken, the heat-related excess mortality is expected to almost triple between 2030 and 2050.

A study that looked at more than 202,000 heart attack deaths in the Chinese province of Jiangsu between 2015 and 2020, noted a 'significantly associated' risk that a person would die from a heart attack if temperatures were extremely hot or cold, or there were high levels of pollution from particulate matter (PM) — particles of solids or liquids in the air, such as smoke, dust, or dirt.

The study classified extremely hot weather as temperatures significantly above the average for a given area and season, consistently greater than the 90th percentile. Extremely cold weather, on the other hand, is characterized by temperatures significantly below the average for a given area and season, consistently below the 10th percentile.

Extreme heat triggers physiological responses to help the body adapt and survive — notably, sweat and dilation of blood vessels close to the skin's surface. This causes the heart to work harder and faster to maintain adequate blood flow to vital organs, which consequently places increased workload and additional stress on the heart.



In hotter temperatures, people can also become easily dehydrated, which can increase the risk of heart attack. Dehydration can lead to a syndrome known as syncope, where a person loses consciousness due to lack of blood to the brain. Extreme heat, particularly dehydration, can exacerbate issues of syncope. Additionally, dehydration can indirectly make blood more prone to clotting, potentially leading to blockages in coronary arteries, thus triggering a heart attack.

Cold weather is also tough on the heart, but for different reasons. Cold weather induces vasoconstriction — narrowing of the blood vessels — and consequently raises blood pressure levels and reduces the oxygen supply to the heart. As your body works to keep you

warm, it adds increased stress on your heart. Similar stress is also placed on the heart under heavy air pollution.

Although air pollution risks are often centered around the lungs and respiratory health, healthcare providers say it can also affect the heart, largely because the body's vital organs work together. What affects one can affect another. The WHO has recognized air pollution as a risk factor for noncommunicable diseases such as ischaemic heart disease, stroke, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, asthma and cancer.

Clean air is fundamental to good health, says WHO, noting that 6.7 million deaths each year are attributable to exposure to ambient and household air pollution. Data from the

health organization also showed that in 2021, more than 2.3 billion people continued to rely primarily on polluting fuels and technologies for cooking.

PM2.5 particles are tiny particles that float in the air, risking inhalation deep into the lungs or entrance into the bloodstream. Once in the body, these particles can cause inflammation and oxidative stress, leading to damage to blood vessels and the heart. PM2.5 exposure is also associated with the development and progression of atherosclerosis — the buildup of plaque in arteries, which increases the risk of heart attacks.

High pollution days may be classified as those where PM2.5 levels, often measured in micrograms per cubic meter ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ), exceed specific guidelines set by health organizations. According to the WHO, around 99 percent of the world's population live in places where air pollution levels exceed WHO guideline limits of annual mean concentrations of PM2.5 not exceeding  $5\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ .

Specific cohorts of the population are at a higher risk for a fatal heart attack during extreme heat or cold or when there are high levels of air pollution. These include people with pre-existing cardiovascular conditions, like coronary artery disease and hypertension, pregnant women; people with diabetes; elderly individuals, and the very young.

However, doctors advise everyone to take precautions during extreme weather or if there is a high amount of air pollution. To protect yourself in extreme heat, experts recommend staying hydrated by drinking plenty of water; seeking shade or air-conditioned environments, when possible; modifying workouts; and avoiding peak heat, which is usually hottest between 10am and 4pm, as the risk of overexertion and stress on the heart is highest during this period.

Most importantly, listen to your body, rest in a cool place if you experience warning signs like dizziness or weakness, and seek medical help if symptoms persist or worsen.

## Health benefits of climbing stairs

*The benefits of exercise are well-known, from better heart health and lower blood pressure to improved emotional state.*

*There are many ways to be active on a regular basis, from workouts at the local gym to participating in sports and games, or engaging in activities as mundane as working in the garden, doing household chores, or using the stairs.*

A new study by researchers at the University of East Anglia and Norfolk, and Norwich University Hospital Foundation Trust, in the United Kingdom, show that climbing stairs is associated with improved heart health and longevity. For their study, the researchers conducted a meta-analysis, examining nine studies with 480,479 participants in total. Study participants included healthy adults ages 35 to 84 and adults with a prior history of heart attack or peripheral arterial disease.

Following the analysis, researchers found that stair climbing was linked to a 24 percent reduced risk of death from any cause and a 39 percent lower risk of death from heart disease. Climbing stairs was also associated with a reduced risk of cardiovascular events, such as heart attack, heart failure, and stroke.

The new study did not make a specific recommendation for

stair climbing frequency. However, an earlier study in 2023 had suggested that aiming for three to six flights of stairs per day — assuming each flight is 10 to 15 steps — is a good goal for overall health. Another study recommended that climbing more than five flights of stairs (or around 50 steps) daily may reduce the risk of cardiovascular diseases, such as stroke, heart attacks, and blood clots.

The amount of time spent climbing stairs and the rate of engaging in this activity may largely depend on the individual's motive, whether as a form of physical exercise or from a need to remain fit. Researchers behind the new study said that the next phase of their research aims to focus on objectively evaluating the optimal number of stairs people should be climbing each day and at what intensity.

Aerobic exercises such as walking, running, biking, and swimming have been shown to help strengthen the heart and improve its ability to pump blood more efficiently, reducing the risk of heart failure. Climbing stairs briskly is a form of vigorous aerobic exercise, which provides numerous heart health benefits. Climbing stairs is considered to be a vigorous physical activity.

Cardiovascular disease affects the heart and blood vessels. Previous studies have shown that exercise strengthens the heart muscle and improves vascular function. Other positive effects from regular exercise include improved nitric oxide production, improved vascular endothelial function, and reduced cardiovascular risk factors.

Regular aerobic exercise helps lower blood pressure over a 24-hour period, which increases flexibility in the blood vessels and reduces the risk of high blood pressure (hypertension). Exercise also increases levels of 'good' HDL cholesterol, which



helps reduce 'bad' LDL cholesterol and the risk of atherosclerosis. In addition, exercise helps regulate blood sugar and improve insulin sensitivity, which helps reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes and related blood vessel damage.

The results of this study is a reminder on the need to encourage people to incorporate more physical activity into their daily lives, and influence policy makers and health care professionals to promote physical activity, including stair climbing.

EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

# What TikTok Got Wrong About America



**Nancy Qian**

*Nancy Qian, Professor of Economics at Northwestern University, is Co-Director of Northwestern University's Global Poverty Research Lab and Founding Director of China Econ Lab.*



TikTok is now one of the biggest stories in business and geopolitics. US President Joe Biden has just signed a law that will ban the massively popular app in nine months if its Chinese owner, ByteDance, does not sell it to a non-Chinese entity.

TikTok, for its part, has called the law "political theater," and it is probably right: there is always some theatrics in politics, and bashing China is currently one of the most popular shows in town. Almost no other issue can unite the two major parties. But, given the arrogance TikTok exhibited in the weeks and months leading up to the bill's passage, the company's leadership clearly has a fundamental misunderstanding of America and Americans.

Compared to policymakers in other countries, US lawmakers are usually reluctant to regulate business, and many had previously opposed a forced sale of TikTok for fear that it could create a perception of corruption, reduce business and investor confidence, and undermine free speech. Most agree that when regulation does happen, it should clear the relatively high bar of serving the public interest.

Until a month ago, the main public-interest concern was data privacy. Questions such as who can access user data, and whether that data can be put to malign uses, are pertinent to all large social-media platforms. Over the past decade, Congress has held many hearings on the issue, often targeting large US companies such as Meta

and Google. But these concerns are amplified in TikTok's case, because many US lawmakers assume that the Chinese government can force TikTok to hand over its American users' data. Under laws China enacted in 2017 and 2021, all Chinese organizations are required to assist the government's intelligence-gathering and counterespionage work, if asked.

TikTok promised that it would store Americans' data on servers outside China. That did not satisfy US lawmakers and security officials, who continued to worry about "backdoors," an issue that contributed to the US Federal Trade Commission's decision two years ago to ban equipment made by Huawei.

Still, at one point, there was hope for a workable solution whereby US regulators would conduct detailed examinations of the company's technology. Since data privacy is an industry-wide concern, TikTok could have played the

issue to its advantage, such as by investing in data safeguards and supporting independent research of its own platform. It could have met US lawmakers halfway, and approached the issue proactively, transparently, and in the spirit of collaboration. TikTok could have been a positive force for change in the US tech industry.

Instead, TikTok adopted an aggressive stance, hired expensive lobbyists, and in a catastrophic misstep, even mobilized its (predominantly young) American users to call their representatives in Congress. Pop-up messages urged users to, "Let Congress know what TikTok means to you and tell them to vote NO." Some congressional offices received more than 1,000 calls in the space of a day.

On the surface, this may have seemed like a savvy strategy, given Uber's earlier success in mobilizing its users to lobby against legislation it opposed. But TikTok overlooked a crucial

difference: Uber is an American company. By intervening in the US political process, TikTok made the situation much worse for itself, highlighting a second major threat that its critics say it could pose to the public interest.

Over the past decade, ordinary Americans and lawmakers have grown increasingly concerned about social media's undue influence on users' beliefs, behaviors, and voting decisions, and on how hostile foreign actors can exploit the major platforms for their own purposes. This risk strikes at the heart of American democracy, and it is not just hypothetical. We already know that Russia and other governments regularly try to interfere in US and European elections.

Given this context, TikTok's mobilization of its users wasn't just an annoyance to elected officials' staffers; it was an alarm bell. Many of those who responded to the call seemed not even to know what they were protesting. A foreign-owned company had brazenly demonstrated just how easy it is to manipulate its users to serve its own interests, confirming that it knew all along how much political influence it could exert. Suddenly, and understandably, the focus in the US shifted from Russian voter manipulation to Chinese voter manipulation.

Perhaps nothing could have saved TikTok from the forced-sale legislation, given the current geopolitical climate. We will never know what could have been. But it is clear that the company's aggressive strategy backfired. TikTok launched what many saw as an attack on American democracy, and ended up ensuring the majorities that were needed to push the bill through Congress.

TikTok's future in America is now uncertain. Before it weighs its next moves, the company should fire its lobbyists and consultants, who should have advised it to be more respectful of Americans' legitimate concerns about data privacy and threats to democracy. And all other non-US firms should learn from TikTok's recent missteps on what not to do.



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