



LOCAL

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'New Kuwait'- the country's development strategy to 2035

The government is committed to implementing his Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's visionary strategy of transforming Kuwait into a leading commercial and financial hub in the

30 January, to examine the country's development strategy till 2035 based on His Highness the Amir's guidelines. The short-to-medium terms objectives of the 'New Kuwait' plan envisions positioning Kuwait as

steps were taken over the past few years with the aim of "translating His Highness the Amir's vision to activate development, boost the economy, diversify productivity, press ahead with economic and financial reforms, implement mega projects and develop a leading role for the private sector," said the prime minister.

The premier also reiterated the role of youth in implementing 'New Kuwait'. He urged youth to lead the process of building the aspired modern state that would achieve a honorable living and bright future for them and the next generations.

The government's 'New Kuwait' development strategy pivots around five themes, or desired outcomes, and seven pillars, or areas of focus for investment and improvement. Each pillar has a number of strategic programs and projects that are designed to have the most impact on achieving the vision of a New Kuwait.

This new plan involves improving government administration, developing a sustainable and diversified economy, building advanced infrastructure, providing high-quality health care, advancing

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region, said His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah.

The premier was speaking following the festival 'New Kuwait', which was organized at the Sheikh Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center on

a global hub for the petrochemical industry and increasing direct foreign investment by 300 percent. It also aims to attract more than KD400 million to the information technology, services, and renewable energy sectors. Several necessary



Corruption continues to erode global development

Six years ago the Arab streets resounded with calls for change and anti-government uprisings, which eventually toppled several leaders from power.

At the heart of these protests were deep-seated resentment at entrenched leaders who failed to heed social inequalities, including poverty, unemployment and

corruption. Fast forward to today and we find that the hopes of people in the Arab world of a corruption-free, equitable and egalitarian state remain to be realized. The majority of Arab countries have failed to fulfill the will of the people to build democratic systems

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Harnessing the Politics of Disruption



Mark Leonard
Director of the European Council on Foreign Relations

The United Kingdom's vote to exit the European Union and Donald Trump's election as US president exposed a deep generational divide. Cosmopolitan millennials and nationalist pensioners – what Thomas Friedman calls “Web People” and “Wall People” – seem to have nothing in common. But both point to the same crisis of political representation.

In the UK, for every ‘Leave’ voter under the age of 24, there were three over the age of 65. In the US, Trump won 53 percent of the over-65 vote, but was supported by only 37 percent of 18-29-year-olds.

In both cases, the elderly were attracted by pessimistic rhetoric assailing the damage to their communities brought about by free trade, free movement, free love, and human-free technology disrupting their jobs and economic security. Young people were far more optimistic about the future, their personal prospects, and technology's potential – and far more empathetic toward marginalized groups.

The pessimists won, and now they're feeling pretty hopeful. The former optimists now fear the worst. But, despite their fundamentally



different attitudes toward technology and globalization, the Web People and the Wall People have one thing in common: both are deeply skeptical of existing institutions. They think that representative democracy has broken down, and they see the creative potential of disruption.

The Wall People want to smash the existing system, in the hope that something better emerges – something that looks a bit more like

the familiar world of times past (or at least of their fancy). The Web People, for their part, believe that technology must transform politics and institutions, just as it has transformed newspapers, taxi services, and hotels.

The web mentality is exemplified by Vyacheslav Polonski, a 27-year-old network scientist of Ukrainian origin, who has spent time at Harvard and is currently completing a PhD in social media at Oxford University. “We are dealing with a twenty-first-century world,” he tells me, “but our political system has not evolved since the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.”

Polonski points out that our government institutions were established not just before Facebook and Instagram, but even before television and radio. Whereas our economy is now characterized by choice, customization, and participation, our politics remains stifled by bureaucracy, special interests, and entrenched-yet-declining political parties. “As our government becomes more agile,” he says, “people can vote for specific ideas and agendas, rather than a political party.” As a result, “politics will become more like Uber: more decentralized, more open, more immediate.”

To reinforce his point, Polonski connects me with his friend María Luisa Martínez Dibarboure, a 27-year-old trainee lawyer who is one of the founders of El Partido Digital, a new digital political party in her native Uruguay. “We live in a crisis of representation,” Dibarboure tells me on Skype (how else?). “Once people are in power,” she laments, “they vote according to their own preferences,” not those of the voters who put them there. Dibarboure's solution is to use the Internet to ensure accurate representation. El Partido Digital is currently working to elect a representative to parliament. That representative would use the Internet to poll her constituents before each parliamentary vote, thereby ensuring that she really is a voice for voters.

More intriguing, constituents will be able to delegate their votes to others, perhaps friends with more expertise on particular issues. Fred the economist could vote on my behalf on economic questions, and Anne the scientist could vote for me on environmental matters.

Dibarboure's concept relies on neither elections nor referenda. Instead of representative or direct democracy, it offers what she and Polonski call “liquid democracy” – a system that combines the best of both. “We are about

representation, not ideology,” she clarifies. “We don't represent left or right.... This is about the people.”

Polonski and Dibarboure are members of a community of 6,000 “global shapers,” brought together by the World Economic Forum. These 23-27-year-olds are creative, connected, cosmopolitan, and full of energy. They are crestfallen about recent election results (“2016 was the year in which I lost faith in humanity,” says Dibarboure). But my sense is that they will bounce back soon, and find opportunities in today's political disruptions.

This is not to say that these disruptions are the answer to their problems, or even to the problems of the Wall People. On the contrary, today's political disruptions could make some of the outcomes that these groups favor more difficult to achieve.

The old and young alike hope to recapture the opportunities enjoyed by the post-1945 Baby Boom generation. But those opportunities were enabled by a commitment to collective

action, broad support for redistribution, and strong economic growth – none of which can be counted on today. On the contrary, the backlash against globalization and immigration will likely damage global growth, while the need to build ad hoc coalitions of the willing undermines progress in building new institutions. For many nowadays, redistribution has become a dirty word.

So the politics supported by the Wall People isn't the answer. But nor is the politics of the Web People. While

disruptive, Internet-enabled politics can upend the status quo – the Arab Spring revolutions taught us that – it has not proved particularly effective at creating sustainable alternatives.

The grievances of the old and the young are very real. The economic gains of the last few decades have not been shared widely enough. Political parties are more beholden to themselves than they are to the communities they serve. There is socialism for the rich, and capitalism for the poor. The war on terror is creating more terrorists. And trade and migration systems are losing support.

Rather than defend the status quo from the counter-revolution, the political class should work to create a new system – one that responds to the needs of the people. Both the young and the old have made their demands known. It is time to respond.

“Despite fundamentally different attitudes toward technology and globalization, the Web People and the Wall People have one thing in common: both are deeply skeptical of existing institutions.”




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EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Decent Work or Indecent Politics



Guy Ryder
Director-General of the International Labor Organization (ILO)



The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development commits UN member states to “leave no one behind.” One crucial component of that commitment – encompassed in the International Labor Organization’s own agenda – is decent work for all. At a time when worker frustration and disillusionment is being expressed in elections across the world, this goal could not be more important.

Nowadays, the expectation that each generation will be better off than the previous one, both socially and economically, is no longer automatic. For many, downward mobility has become the new normal.

Little wonder, then, that long-simmering frustration with the way globalization has been handled and resentment at the unfair distribution of its gains have fueled the political backlash sweeping the world of late. This disillusionment arises, at least partly, from people’s own experience of work, whether exclusion from the labor market, poor working conditions, or low wages.

In many parts of the world, including some European countries, unemployment has been persistently high in recent years. But even having a job is no guarantee of financial security: many employed people know that their jobs are vulnerable, and there has been inadequate progress in job quality, even in countries where aggregate economic indicators are improving.

According to the ILO’s global wage report, Wage Inequality in the Workplace, published last month, global wage growth has decelerated since 2012, from 2.5 percent per year to 1.7 percent in 2015 – its lowest level in four years. Remove China, which experienced particularly rapid wage growth, and annual growth in global wages dropped from 1.6 percent to a

mere 0.9 percent.

Workers’ disillusionment is deepened by the knowledge that, as their average wages grow slowly or stagnate, the very wealthy are growing significantly wealthier. As the ILO’s report shows, while wages have climbed gradually across almost the entire income distribution in most countries, they have risen sharply for the top 10 percent, and even more for the top 1 percent of employees.

In Europe, the highest-paid 10 percent of employees account for, on average, 25.5 percent of total wages, while the lowest-paid 50 percent get just 29.1 percent. The share of earnings taken by the top 10 percent is even higher in some emerging economies, such as Brazil (35%), India (42.7%), and South Africa (49.2%). In Europe, the top 1 percent earns about €90 (\$95) per hour – eight times more than median-wage earners, and 22 times the average wage of the bottom 10 percent.

We are now faced with the twin challenges of improving the lot of those at the lower end of the wage distribution, while creating enough

new high-quality jobs for the tens of millions of new labor-market entrants each year. With the global economy having yet to recover fully from the global economic crisis that began a decade ago, meeting these

“Workers’ disillusionment is deepened by the knowledge that, as their average wages grow slowly or stagnate, the very wealthy are growing significantly wealthier.”

challenges will be no easy feat.

Indeed, it is likely that labor-force growth will continue to outstrip job creation. That is why the ILO’s World Employment and Social Outlook –

Trends 2017 projects that just over 201 million people worldwide will be unemployed this year, with another 2.7 joining their ranks in 2018.

The world needs economic growth that is more sustainable, equitable, and job-rich. The key to success will be strong and relevant labor-market institutions, which rely on and advance internationally accepted principles and rights for workers.

Minimum wages and collective bargaining can play an important role here. One remarkable trend of the last few years has been the adoption or increase of minimum wages by countries hoping to mitigate inequality, with Mexico being the most recent example. And the trend is set to continue: South Africa, for one, is also considering adopting a national minimum wage.

This is good news. Recent evidence, including by the Minimum Wage Commission in Germany, shows that well-designed minimum wages – which meet the needs of workers and their families, while also accounting for economic conditions – can make a real difference at the lower end of

the income distribution, without significantly harming employment.

Action can also be taken at the international level, by implementing support systems to help advance key goals relating to decent work and economic inclusiveness.

That is why the ILO and the World Bank have launched a Global Partnership for Universal Social Protection, which aims to ensure that social safety nets – including pensions and parental, disability, and child benefits – are made available to all people, covering the hundreds of millions worldwide who are currently unprotected.

Expanding access to decent work opportunities is the most effective way to increase labor-market participation, lift people out of poverty, reduce inequality, and drive economic growth. It should be at the center of policymaking. The alternative is a dog-eat-dog world in which too many will feel left out. One need look no further than today’s headlines to see the instability and insecurity that can result, and has resulted, from this approach.

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AU Summit discusses issues of major concern



The 28th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union (AU), which was held on 30 - 31 January at the AU Headquarters in Ethiopia's capital Addis Ababa, ended with an unequivocal call for more action to solve the continent's manifold challenges.

Heads of state and government from the 54-member African Union, as well as world leaders and policy makers attended the 28th session, which was organized under the theme of 'Harnessing the Demographic Dividend through Investments in the Youth'.

Newly appointed United Nations Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres was among the world leaders attending and addressing the summit, others included Vice President of Cuba Salvador Mesa, and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas.

African Union, which replaced the former Organization of African Unity (OAU), was established in 2001 in Ethiopia, with the aim of accelerating the process of integration in

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Leaders at the summit also voted to readmit Morocco as a member, after the country formally announced its wish to rejoin the AU six months ago.

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Africa, supporting the empowerment of African states in the global economy and addressing the multifaceted social, economic and political problems facing the continent.

The 28th session of the AU Summit saw the election of a new Chairperson to head the African Union Commission (AUC), the AU's powerful secretariat, which is tasked with executing the Union's activities and dealing with its policies. Chadian Foreign Minister Moussa Faki was elected to take over from South Africa's Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma as the new AUC Chairman. He defeated four other contenders for the seat in a secret ballot cast by Heads of Governments at the summit.

Leaders at the summit also voted to readmit Morocco as a member, after the country formally announced its wish to rejoin the AU six months ago. Morocco had left the AU in 1984 after the organization recognized the independence of Western Sahara, an area that Morocco claims as its sovereign territory. Morocco had asked

the African Union (AU) to readmit it and has sought support for its plan to offer autonomy to Western Sahara while keeping it under Moroccan sovereignty.

Other top issues that leaders to the summit addressed were the ongoing conflict in South Sudan, tensions in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and instability in Mali and the Sahel, as well as the current turmoil in Libya and the continuing war on al-Shabaab in Somalia.

In South Sudan the AU agreed to work more closely with the UN regarding the deployment of a regional protection force that had been mandated by the UN to prevent the violence from worsening. The two organizations will also work to revive the stagnated political process intended to restore peace and stability in Africa's newest nation. The AU, UN and several regional actors also agreed to work together to reach a common position on power-sharing and governance.

With regard to the political tension resulting from President Joseph Kabila's prolonged tenure in the DRC, where the failure to hold elections in 2016 has led to violent political unrest in the country, the Summit called on all parties to conform to previously agreed accords. The political accord, mediated by the AU in October last year, which postponed the elections to April 2018, but failed to end the unrest had led to a new deal, which was signed by the governing party and the main opposition parties at the end of 2016. According to the new deal, Kabila agreed to hold elections in 2017 and then to step down as president.

Terrorism and lingering conflicts in the Sahel were also issues of concern at the Summit. The AU is yet to decide on the proposed African force within the UN mission for Mali to combat worsening threats — both in that country and the Sahel more broadly. Meanwhile, various armed jihadist groups continue to take advantage of the limited presence of the government in the north to carry out attacks.

Political instability and turmoil that continues to plague Libya was also a topic high on the agenda of leaders attending the Summit. At the 27th AU Summit in Kigali, Rwanda, AU leaders resolved to convene a national dialogue for reconciliation in that country. However the AU has not yet outlined concrete steps on how to achieve this. National dialogue remains crucial to unite rival governments and leaders.

Regarding Somalia, the AU Summit noted that 2017 could be a decisive year as the organization plans to commence its withdrawal of the African Mission for Somalia (AMISOM) by 2018, with an eventual complete exit planned for 2020. However, if AMISOM is to start pulling out by 2018, the AU would need to work closely with the international community to intensify efforts in curbing al-Shabaab, and consolidating gains that have been made in state-building project through a buy-in from the people of Somalia.

Five female scientists win 2016 Kwame Nkrumah Scientific Awards

Early last week, the African Union honored Africa's top 5 female scientists for the year 2016 with Kwame Nkrumah Scientific Awards at its headquarters in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa. The winners were pooled from all the continent's regions except Central Africa. West Africa had two recipients with East, North and Southern Africa completing the list with one each. The award, which is named after Ghana's first President and celebrated Pan-Africanist, Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, recognizes and awards scientists national, regional and continental levels. The European Union (EU) has sponsored the event since 2009.

Each of the five laureates gets a US\$20,000 cash prize for their efforts. The AU launched the award in September 2008 and since 2009 the program has been sponsored by the European Union (EU), as part of the EU-Africa collaboration in Science, Technology & Innovation (STI), under the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES).

The winners of 2016 awards were:

Prof. Jane Catherine Ngila (Kenya), representing East Africa Region laureate, for her research in the area of Analytical-Environmental Chemistry on water resource management.

Dr. Lamia Chaari Fourati (Tunisia), representing the North Africa Region laureate, for her research activities on conception and validation of new protocols and mechanisms for quality of service provisioning over emerging networks technologies.

Associate Prof. Celia Abolnik (South Africa), the laureate of the South Africa Region, for her research in avian respiratory viruses, especially those that affect chicken and ostrich production in Africa.

Prof. Rokia Sanogo (Mali), as one of the West Africa Region laureates, for her research

in Pharmacognosy with a particular focus on Traditional Medicines.

Prof. Olu-Owolabi Bamidele (Nigeria), as the second laureate of the West Africa Region, for her research on the development of sustainable alternative materials for water treatment.

The Kwame Nkrumah Regional Awards for women 2016 were presented on January, 2017 during the Opening Ceremony of the Gender Pre-Summit, of the 28th AU heads of states and



government assembly in Ethiopia. The event took place in the presence of Dr. Dlamini Zuma outgoing Chairperson of the AU Commission. The EU represented by Ranieri Sabatucci Ambassador of the EU Delegation to the African Union delivered one of the five prizes.

The EU while extending congratulations to the five female laureates also noted that "the participation of women in research, their opportunities to contribute fully and their recognition, as well gender issues in research itself, are also an integral part of good research policy. "The EU strives for the fullest contribution from women to science, by ensuring gender equality and gender mainstreaming in research because encouraging gender diversity supports scientific excellence," an EU statement read.

Botswana, Cape Verde, Rwanda rank as most corruption-free in Africa

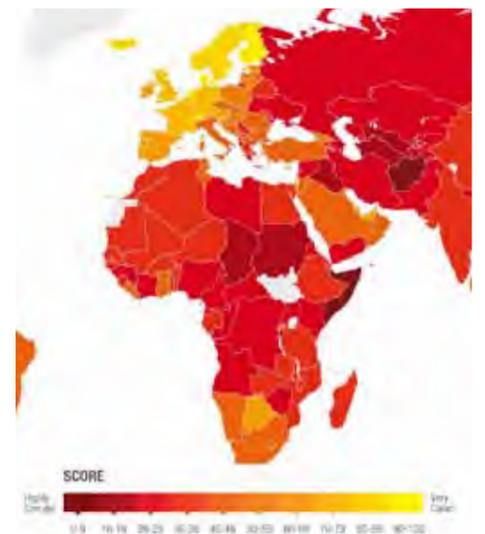
Following corruption scandals during the 1990s, involving misuse of public money or abuse of privileged power by several high-ranking government officials, Botswana has proactively sought to reinforce its legal and institutional frameworks. This has shown results in the form improved rankings on the global Corruption Perception Index. In the index for 2016, Botswana ranked the highest in Africa with a score of 60 and a ranking of 35 worldwide. This was followed by Cape Verde in second place on the continent with a score of 58 and a global ranking of 38.

Rwanda, which has maintained a zero tolerance to corruption as a national policy, has, over the years, been rated among the least corrupt countries in Africa. In the latest index, Rwanda and Mauritius were placed as third least corrupt countries in Africa. The annual report ranked Rwanda and Mauritius, which each scored 54, as the 50th least corrupt country globally.

Reacting to the report, Vincent Munyeshyaka, Rwanda's state minister in charge of socio-economic development at the Ministry of Local Government, said his country's stance on good governance and zero tolerance to corruption remain unchanged. "We still have a long journey to cover; the performance so far is good but our target is to be ranked among the best countries worldwide in the near future," he added.

Marie-Immaculée Ingabire, the chairperson of Transparency International Rwanda, said that although Rwanda has maintained good performance at both regional and continental level there was no room for complacency.

"The further we go, the more efforts are needed. The 2016 Rwanda Bribery Index, launched last month, showed us that corruption reporting is still a big issue. Citizens are still reluctant to report incidents of corruption, we need to mobilize them more," she said. The Corruption Perception Index used 13 data



sources to construct the 2016 report, including the African Development Bank Governance Ratings 2015; World Bank's Country Policy and Institutional Assessment 2015 and Economist Intelligence Unit Country Risk Ratings 2016.

Among other members of the East African Community (EAC), of which Rwanda is a member, Tanzania, which scored 32 was ranked 116, followed by Kenya which scored 26 and ranked 146 worldwide. Meanwhile, Uganda with a score of 25 was ranked 159, while Burundi brought up the rear in the EAC with a score of 20 and a global rank of 159. Pointing out that there was no need for Rwanda to compare itself with its regional neighbors, Ms. Ingabire said, "If scoring higher in Africa is to be like Botswana which scored 61, why can't we aim higher, we can do it but it needs collective efforts and changes in mentality."



Trump's First Victims



Peter Singer

Professor of Bioethics at Princeton University and Laureate Professor at the University of Melbourne; his books include *Animal Liberation*, *The Life You Can Save*, *The Most Good You Can Do*, and, most recently, *Ethics in the Real World*.

When Donald Trump was elected President of the United States, I did not join those who took to the streets in protest. I thought it important to respect the democratic process, no matter how dismaying its outcome may be, and wait until the Trump administration had given us something to protest about.

It did not take long. Eight days after Trump took office, the first identifiable victims of his presidency were on all the major news outlets. Trump's executive order suspending resettlement of Syrian refugees, temporarily barring new refugees regardless of where they are from, and banning all immigration from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen caused immediate harm to people already on their way to the US. The order has also prevented many more people from leaving for the US.

In justifying his policy, Trump said that he would "never forget the lessons of 9/11." But that is exactly what he seems to have done. The 9/11 hijackers came from Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, all countries unaffected by the new



rules. In contrast, a study by Alex Nowrasteh, an immigration policy analyst at the libertarian Cato Institute, concludes that in the 40 years up to the end of 2015, no one has been killed in the US in terrorist attacks by foreigners from any of the seven countries singled out in Trump's executive order.

Iranians, many of whom are legally resident in the US, are especially aggrieved. According to Trita Parsi, president of the National Iranian American Council, the US itself has produced more Islamic State (ISIS) fighters than Iran – not surprising, given that ISIS is a Sunni organization, and regards Shia, who comprise at least 90 percent of Iran's people, as apostates who can justifiably be killed.

The ban on immigrants from the seven countries makes for dramatic television, because the people

it has harmed are able to talk to the media about it. That is not the case with the cut in the total 2017 intake of all refugees from 110,000 to 50,000, and the suspension of the entire refugee resettlement program for four months. In a global refugee crisis, President Barack Obama argued, the US should, in the spirit of Emma Lazarus's words inscribed on the Statue of Liberty, do its fair share in providing a new home for the "huddled masses yearning to breathe free." Trump has turned his back on that vision.

The executive order will provide an early test of the extent to which US courts can restrain the Trump presidency. Judges have temporarily blocked some aspects of the executive order – for example, those detained on arrival in the US under the order may not be deported; but it will be some time before the

courts resolve all the questions the new prohibitions raise. Among those questions, discrimination on the basis of religion will be prominent. The order says that when the refugee program resumes, the Secretary of State shall, "to the extent permitted by law," give priority to refugee claims on the basis of membership of a persecuted religious minority. Although the order itself does not mention any specific religion, Trump said in a television interview that he wanted to give priority to Christians. Given that the US Constitution prohibits the government from establishing any religion, it remains to be seen whether this provision of the order will withstand judicial scrutiny.

Of equal concern is the threat posed to freedom of expression by a provision stipulating that the US "cannot, and should not, admit those who do not support the Constitution." In speaking about the order, Trump said, "We only want to admit those into our country who will support our country and deeply love our people."

I am myself a green card holder – that is, a legal permanent resident of the US without citizenship. I have written about flaws in the US Constitution, and, much as I admire many Americans, I could not go so far as to say that I "deeply love" Americans as a whole. Does that mean that I could be barred from the US? Would that be consistent with belief in freedom of thought?

According to Nowrasteh, Trump's executive order will have virtually no effect on improving US security. Trump has repeatedly said that he will always put the interests of Americans first. But will he give infinitely more weight to Americans' interests than he does to the interests of anyone else? Given the suffering that his executive order is causing, it is beginning to look as if he might just be that unethical – or, what in this case amounts to the same thing, that crazy.

Corruption continues to erode global development

Continued from Page 1

allowing for greater transparency and accountability, says the global corruption watchdog, Transparency International in its annual report for 2016. This year's results also highlight the intrinsic connection between corruption and inequality, which synergize each other to create a vicious circle of corruption, unequal distribution of social power and uneven distribution of wealth.

"In too many countries, people are deprived of their most basic needs and go to bed hungry every night because of corruption, while the powerful and corrupt enjoy lavish lifestyles with impunity," said José Ugaz, Chair of the Berlin-based Transparency International ahead of the release of this year's report. The Corruption Perceptions Index 2016 shows that more countries declined than improved their rankings. Over two-thirds of the 176 countries and territories ranked in the 2016 Index fell below the midpoint of the scale. The index, which ranked countries on a scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean), found the global average to be meager 43. This was a clear indication that endemic corruption continued to erode the public sector in too many countries and that there was an urgent need for committed action to thwart corruption worldwide.

There are a number of steps that countries can initiate to improve their rankings on the corruption index. They could ensure effective transparent systems that allow for accountability in all sectors and put an end to political corruption in all its forms. Governments could protect freedom of expression of their citizens and stop persecuting anti-corruption activists, whistleblowers, and civil society organizations. The independence of the judiciary, as well as auditing bodies, could be strengthened and respected to ensure that the corrupt are prosecuted and stolen assets are returned.

However, very often, it is not the lack of policies but political connivance in corruption, and the absence of any serious commitment on the part of governments, which prevents the effective implementation of anti-corruption measures, and bring about inequality in society.

The interplay of corruption and inequality also feeds populism. When traditional politicians fail

to tackle corruption, people grow cynical and increasingly turn to populist leaders who promise to break the cycle of corruption and privilege. In many places rampant corruption among the elite few, gives rise to discontentment among the masses that spillover into lethal conflicts.

Tellingly, seven out of the ten most corrupt countries in the world – Iraq, Libya, South Sudan, Sudan, Somalia, Syria and Yemen – are currently embroiled in conflicts and wars. These countries are also afflicted with economic inequality, political instability, ethnic conflicts and terrorism, all of which underscores the fact that corruption and in particular political corruption eventually fuels more wide ranging upheavals.

The failure to fight corruption is also behind the sharp drop of most of Arab countries in the Corruption Perceptions Index 2016. Nearly 90 percent of countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region scored below 50, which is a failing grade. Even the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, which managed to remain above the global average, declined in scores relative to 2015.

Among Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, the United Arab Emirates ranked the highest with a score of 66 on the index that earned it a global ranking of 24. This was followed by Qatar with a score of 61 and a ranking of 31. Saudi Arabia with an index score of 46 was ranked 62; Oman with one score lower at 45 was ranked 64 and Bahrain with a score of 43 was ranked 70 worldwide. Kuwait brought up the rear among GCC states with a score of 41 and a ranking of 75 among the 176 countries ranked globally.

Denmark and New Zealand with a score of 90 were placed first on the 2016 Index, followed closely behind by Finland (89), Sweden (88) and Switzerland (86) to finish the top-five rankings. Others that climbed on the top-ten podium of least corrupt countries, included Norway (85), Singapore (84), Netherlands (83), Canada (82) and Germany (81).

Among the countries in the bottom of the Corruption Perception Index were Libya, Sudan and Yemen with a score of 14 and a global ranking of 170. Syria with a score of 13, North Korea with 12, South Sudan with a score of 11 and Somalia scoring 10, were placed respectively among the last five in the 2016 report.

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Kuwait warns foreigners against unruly behavior

Kuwait's interior ministry has warned unruly foreigners celebrating their team's victory would face strict legal responses, including deportation. "The ministry will take the prescribed measures towards any foreigner who breaks the law by taking part in public celebrations following matches, stalling movements, transgressing morals or causing traffic congestion," the ministry said in its warning.

"All legal measures will be taken against violators, including deportation. The Traffic Law clearly

stipulates that vehicles should not take part in processions or in gatherings except in accordance with the legal provisions and following permission from the General Directorate of Traffic. The processions are not allowed if they cause disturbances to others, especially at night."

The ministry urged all foreigners to exercise the highest levels of cooperation in protecting lives and property. The warning was issued hours before the start of the football match between Egypt and Burkina Faso for a place in the African Cup



finals in Gabon. Kuwait's streets and roads on Sunday evening were flooded with football-crazy Egyptians celebrating with great fanfare the victory of their national team over Morocco and their qualification for the semi-finals. Egyptians make up the largest Arab community in Kuwait.

Kuwait applies a zero-tolerance policy regarding the involvement of foreigners in public processions, rallies or street brawls that invariably results in deporting those found guilty of breaking the public order or traffic laws.

IDF presents a visually fantastic DocFest Xpress 2017

The Indian Doctors Forum (IDF) Kuwait celebrated their vibrant and jubilant annual DocFest Xpress 2017 at the Regency Hotel, Kuwait on 27 January, with the patronage of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. During the exciting event, the IDF health guide Volume XIII was released that contains many useful articles written by the Indian doctors in Kuwait with the main topics on cosmetic procedures.



The Under-Secretary at Diwan Al-Amiri H.E. Mazin Al Essa inaugurated the function, and was accompanied by special guests, Indian Ambassador to Kuwait H.E. Sunil Jain, Former Health Minister Dr. Hilal Al Sayer, Kuwait Medical Association President Dr. Mohammad Al Mutairi, Kuwait

University (KU) Dean of Faculty of Medicine Prof. Adel Ayad, and KU Dean of the Faculty of Public Health Prof. Nasser Behbehani and others, who were speakers on the occasion.

Former Health Minister Dr. Al Sayer expressed his appreciation for the Indian Doctors in Kuwait

and highlighted the role of Indian nurses who are doing a lot for the Kuwaiti community. On his part, Mr. Behbehani lauded the support given by the Indian doctors and nurses to Kuwait's healthcare industry, and commended the long lasting legacy of IDF.



A session of entertainment followed that showcased the Indian doctors and their families adorned in vibrant and detailed costumes, presenting an engaging spectral of artistry from rhythmic dances to short plays. Their show portrayed the most creative and lively facets of India through the DocFest Xpress

tour, where the audience glimpsed the beauty of countries from Kashmir to Kanyakumari and culminated in animated visuals of grand Mysore Dasara.

For More Information, Visit:
http://www.timeskuwait.com/Times_IDF-presents-a-visually-fantastical-DocFest-Xpress-2017

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Famed Japanese artist thrills at workshop

As part of the 23rd Qurain Cultural festival, the National Council for Culture, Arts & Letters (NCCAL) in partnership with the Japanese embassy featured the famous Japanese artist Shuichi Seki and his assistant Takashi Kojima. The 3-day event, from 24 to 26 January, occurred at the National Library of Kuwait, and included a presentation of Mr. Seki's famous animations and a tutorial of his favorite characters. Among the large gathering were special guests the NCCAL General Secretary Ali Al-Youha, and the Ambassador of Japan to Kuwait H.E. Takashi Ashiki. All the attendees left home with an autograph by Mr. Seki.



Unified form enforced for all residency transactions

The Interior Ministry's Residency Affairs Department announced that a unified form will be issued for all residency transactions starting from 12 February to ensure smoother procedures for verifying data and avoiding mistakes,

according to an official statement. The form is available on the ministry's website at www.moi.gov.kw. The new service is part of the department's efforts to develop its various systems and make sure all its transactions are processed effectively.

Lulu Financial Group MD speaks on the Indian Union budget

Adeeb Ahamed, Managing Director, Lulu Financial Group, expressed his opinion on the recently released Indian Union Budget, saying: "The Union Budget for 2017-18, presented by Shri Arun Jaitley is a well-balanced budget with greater emphasis on the agriculture sector and increased provisions to uplift economic and social conditions in rural India. The agenda to transform, energise and clean India, will allow the government to lead the country towards a more brighter future.

Adherence to fiscal discipline, with emphasis on growth and development, increased allocation to agriculture credit and other

development schemes, increase in infrastructure spending are this year's key elements.

Ample provision has been given to the development of roads and highways and passenger safety for railways which will not only help develop trade, but also promote tourism and subsequent infrastructure. Development of airports in tier 2 cities on PPP mode and five special tourism zones in partnership with states is also a positive move for domestic tourism."

He added, "Abolishing the FIPB policy is a welcome move to add the continuing efforts of making the India an investor friendly destination, in line with promoting the 'Make In India' campaign. Reduction of taxes for small and medium enterprises indicates the Government's commitment to encourage and promote the entrepreneurial environment in India. The reduction



in taxes for middle income class is likely to have a twin impact of reduction in taxation burden and encourage increased taxpayer base. Furthermore, incentives and steps towards promoting cashless economy and digital transformations announced during the budget will make India a more efficient nation."

Ooredoo celebrates National Holidays with Double Credit for all prepaid customers

Ooredoo, Kuwait's fastest network, is giving its customers prepaid customers double credit throughout the month of February in celebration of the national holidays. The offer comes in alignment with Ooredoo's strategy which is based on caring, connecting and challenging, and which aims to enrich the lives of customers through telecommunication services.

Recharge transactions will be doubled by 100 percent from 1 to 28 February. The additional credit is valid for 5 days, and can be used for local calls, SMS and internet on a pay-as-you-go basis.

Commenting on this, Ooredoo stated its commitment to delivering the best in-class products to our customers, with the highest standards. The company feels committed to enriching the experience of its customers, including the prepaid segment. Ooredoo has recently simplified our prepaid plans to give our customers more flexibility and freedom.

The new plans give customers

more freedom to add the features that suit their needs from different add-ons at different values, whether they are international minutes, local minutes, or internet.



Ooredoo has recently relaunched its Xpress prepaid plans, with streamlined simplified plans at KD 5 for a SIM card. Customers can subscribe to a main bundle that includes internet and local calls, starting at KD 3/month, and have the freedom to subscribe to add-on plans at competitive prices that include internet, international calls or local calls.

Bhavans Winter Carnival draws throngs of merrymakers

The much awaited winter carnival kicked off with dazzling success at Indian Educational School (IES) Bhavans, on January 27. A large gathering enjoyed a whole host of activities on the school premises, making the IES Winter Carnival a special day.

'Blindfold Box', 'Can you Can', 'Drive the Car', 'Hat Me', and 'Kill the Mouse' were played with great enthusiasm. Children had a wonderful time on the slides and bounced on the bouncy rides. The Juke Box played foot-tapping music as children sitting for face painting had their faces

A Mega Cultural Fiesta was the highlight of the day, with the talented Bhavanites showcasing their finest talents in various cultural shows in the IES auditorium. Babies enamored the crowd with their cuteness at the Baby Show. Instrumental Music was one of the much-admired events at the auditorium.

A fusion of eastern, western, string and percussion indulged the music maniacs. Solo dance performances comprised of traditional dance forms, cinematic dance, hip-hop and western folk and modern dance forms bought laurels to the performers and their trainers. The DJ Show set the auditorium ablaze with great sounds, and a large gathering danced to the sprightly remixes and night core versions of the popular pop and rap numbers.

The thrilling events of the day came to an end with the raffle ticket draw. The exciting prizes of the raffle draw consisted of gift vouchers, LED televisions, cameras, Apple products, Samsung Galaxy tablets, Cetrix mobile phones, HP computer peripherals, Samsung cameras, and Kenwood white goods.

T.Premkumar, the Principal, IES congratulated the winners of the Raffle Draw, and thanked the parents, the teachers, and the students for making the carnival a grand success. He also appreciated the sponsors of the IES winter carnival-2017 for their generous contributions.

For More Information, Visit: http://www.timeskuwait.com/Times_Bhavans-Winter-Carnival-draws-throngs-of-merrymakers



N.K. Ramachandran Menon, the chairman, Bhavans Middle East, opened the Winter Carnival in the presence of the principals and the vice principals of all the Bhavan institutions in Kuwait.

A variety of game stalls had been put up with punchy taglines on attractive posters. The students and teachers geared up enthusiastically to invite the visitors to play a slew of entertaining games. Games like 'Guess the Color', 'Float the Boat', 'Pick the Marble',

turned into brightly colored characters, while the youth and the 'young at heart' had their hair dyed magical colors.

The henna stall adorned hands with beautiful designs as did the tattoo stall where children received pretty tattoos. The food stalls selling mouthwatering delicacies witnessed long queues of onlookers who relished Arabic, Chinese and Indian cuisine, while the food kiosks offered very satisfying homely dishes.

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THE TASTIEST FRENCH TOAST

Start with some bread, a few eggs, and butter and voila, you have French toast. Well, maybe not so fast. French toast has few ingredients, and it is a quick-cooking recipe, so it seems like it should be pretty straightforward. But for a dish so common, it is not that hard to make poorly. There is the burnt-outside-and-raw-insides problem, that unpleasant-center-layer-of-un-eggy-bread issue, and the over-soaking-until-the-bread-falls-apart conundrum.

The real trick to making classic French toast is to pay close attention while you soak and cook. Here are some tips on how to do it well you always have the French toast you deserve.

Dry bread is your friend:

The original point of French toast was to use up leftover bread. This is why the bread should always be dried out as dry bread helps the eggs soak in without the entire



piece collapsing. The bread can be a few days old, but you should watch out for mold and the excessive hardening of crusts, which often happens in just a few days with fresh breads. Drying is the key, no matter its age.

Oven-drying of cut slices — super-lightly toasting it — works best of all, but in a pinch, you could also cut the bread the night before and let it sit on a cooling rack until morning, or simply lightly toast in the toaster. The key is to dry the outside while leaving the inside moist.

To dry out the bread, arrange a rack in the middle of the oven and heat to 285°F. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper. Place a wire rack on top. Arrange the bread on the rack in a single layer and bake for 12 to 15 minutes. This will not toast or brown the bread, but it will dry out the tops and bottoms. Then, remove the baking sheet from the oven.

Pick your bread thoughtfully: To make classic French toast, you need bread without a hard crust. Look for a brioche, challah, or pullman loaf. The conventional wisdom of using one-day-old bread is best, but once you get the hang of what the bread looks like when it's soaked just right, you can be flexible, as long as it's not brick-like and stale through the center.

Eggy versus milky batter: This issue is a matter of taste rather than function. Some folks prefer a milkier, custard-like soaking liquid for the bread, which results in a creamier French toast. While others like an eggier soak, which leaves French toast firmer and somewhat richer. What that comes down to is the ratio of eggs to milk or cream. If you



fall into the camp of milky-lovers, use only four eggs and add half a cup of whole milk to this mixture. From there, you can build in flavor through classic French toast flavors such as the addition of vanilla and cinnamon. Most people avoid adding sugar to the batter as it tends to take your golden toast to blacken in a matter of minutes.

Use a mix of butter and oil: Beautifully cooked French toast has this deep-brown lacy appearance on its exterior.



That is a sign it has been properly cooked and there are a few things that will help you achieve that. Oil and butter have long been used together to regulate the smoke point of butter. And while the mechanism behind

this occurrence might have more to do with diluting the flavor of darkened butter rather than its actual smoke point, it is a combination that serves people well when they cook French toast. The oil helps to slow down the browning of the butter, but doesn't stop it all together. As you cook the French toast, bits of that nutty brown-butter flavor slowly develop — much slower than they would if you cooked with just butter alone — so the French toast has time to cook evenly without burning. A neutral oil, like canola, is the way to go since it won't disrupt the flavor of the butter.

Opt for medium-low heat: Medium-low heat is best for French toast; it won't cause it to burn, but it's aggressive enough for pan-frying. Add the butter and oil mixture to the pan and let it heat through before adding the French toast. Upon touching the surface, it should immediately sizzle and bubble. Use the spatula often and lift up the French toast to check it as it cooks. Reduce the heat if it you find it getting too dark. When in doubt, reduce the heat. If you choose not to keep the French toast warm in the oven, you can place it on a rimmed baking sheet or platter and cover lightly with foil. Just know that if you want to keep the outside crisp, the oven — or serving immediately to half the guests — is the right option.

Knowing when French toast is done: Some people like a wetter center; some like it cooked through. This is all about your personal preference. Taking note of the changes of the bread during the cooking process can ensure you cook it as you like it every time.

Sweet toppings for French toast: Maple syrup is classic, but you can branch out into other kinds of syrups, fruit sauces, or jams. Fresh fruit and powdered sugar are very popular with people.

For savory French toast: As it turns out, you can make your favorite breakfast the savory way as well. If you are up for a morning meal change-up, you can try a twist on the traditional French toast feast. Indulge in Savory Feta French Toast that has a tangy bite of feta complemented by fresh thyme, or relish a savory cherry tomato butter spread. Alternatively, a combination of dark chocolate, vanilla, ricotta and cream combine to create the ultimate post-brunch dessert. The topping options are endless.



Rahul Wavare wows at Bhavan's GCC Spell Bee for the second time

By Christina Pinto
Staff Writer

Rahul Wavare, an intelligent seven-year old, was triumphant at the Bhavans GCC Spell Bee 2017 with a perfect score for the second time in the grand competition in Category II.

The first time he entered the intense competition last year, Rahul persevered through intense rounds to emerge victorious in Category I. The Grade 2 student from the British School of Kuwait (BSK) was beaming with pride and happiness as he held



five categories; Category 1 - Grade 1; Category 2 - Grades 2 & 3; Category 3 - Grades 4, 5 & 6; Category 4 - Grades 7, 8 & 9 and Category 5 - Grades 10, 11 & 12. The competition is comprised of four rounds: School Level, National Level, Knockout Round and Grand Finale.

On whether any genre or specific books helped him be a good speller, he stressed that it was his general interest in different books and his fascination with reading and absorbing more knowledge that proved beneficial when he decided to compete in the professional spelling bees.

He elaborated on the various ways his mother was a source of inspiration and encouragement, saying, "Bhavans provided all participants with a word-bank around 1500 words, and my mother helped me prepare by testing me during regular sessions each day on the spelling and usage of the words."

Expanding on his entire preparatory process, he pointed out, "We studied the meanings, usage, and pronunciations of different words each day. Transcription has a significant weight in several rounds of the competition. For example, you have words like beret that is pronounced as berei, so knowing the pronunciation is very important."

Thinking about the time he felt the most pressure during the competition, he shared, "The Knockout round this year was particularly tough as the students who had cleared the national round were very proficient in spelling. I had to compete against more

than 85 students before I could represent Kuwait in the final stage." While he has gained experience the first time, he states that the second time proved to be harder and competitive, he recalls, "The first time I ran against Grade 1 students and worked hard to achieve perfect scores in most rounds. This time it was far more challenging with Grade 2 and Grade 3 students who were from the best schools across the Middle East. Also, there was a more advanced choice of words and many new words to learn."

Regarding his favorite word from the competition, he decides on "catastrophe" as it helped him finish the tie-breaker in the Knockout round.

He offers motivation to all budding spellers to give it their best and enter any Spelling Bee competitions should the opportunities arise, he advises, "Students should practice daily and have fun with the entire process."

Rahul sees a bright future ahead of him, and is very excited about his big plans; he wants to dedicate himself to his training to one day be a great spelling bee champion with many shining trophies, while pursuing his dream of being a scientist.

For More Information, Visit:
http://www.timeskuwait.com/Times_Rahul-Wavare-wows-at-Bhavan-s-GCC-Spell-Bee-for-the-second-time

the trophy at the grand finale of the Bhavan's GCC Spell Bee 2016-2017 held at Indian Educational School (IES), Jeleeb Al-Shuyoukh. As part of his first prize, he received a trophy, certificate and Rs. 50,000.

Bhavans GCC Spell Bee is a spelling contest organized in four GCC nations viz. Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, and UAE. The spelling bee is divided into

The budding speller extraordinaire sat down for an interview with The Times where he discussed his hobbies and future plans. In his introduction, he comments that he is a curious person by nature, and an avid reader with a passion for encyclopedias and non-fiction books. However, he admits that his favorite subject in school is Math rather than English.

ASSE and SIMC organize Blood Donation Drive



American Society of Safety Engineers-Kuwait (ASSE) Chapter as part of its community outreach plans in collaboration with Shuaiba Medical Industrial Center (SIMC) and Central Blood Bank organized a Blood Donation Drive to help replenish supplies held for hospitals across the country on 28 January 2017 at Shuaiba Industrial Medical Center, Shubaiba. The

blood donation drive Titled 'Donate Blood Save Life', comprised of 100 plus donors including employees of Agility, Gulf Dredging Company, Al Muntazer Trading Company, Integrated Service Company (ISCO) and ASSE members.

SIMC Director Dr. Shaikha Al-Fajjam appreciated the efforts of ASSE Kuwait Chapter and hospital staff for making the event successful.



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Famed Mexican guitarist enthralls crowd

The Embassy of Mexico in cooperation with the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters organized a spectacular concert by popular Mexican classic guitarist Paco Renteria at the Abdulhussein Abdulredah Theater in Salmiya

on Thursday, 26 January. A large gathering comprised of the Mexican Ambassador to Kuwait H.E. Miguel Ángel Isidro, other diplomats, Kuwaiti officials and enthusiastic music lovers filled the auditorium. His energetic and intense

performance received sound applause, and the audience were in awe of his riveting spectacle of classical Mexican music.

Mr. Renteria is on a 'One Concert around the World' music tour where he is scheduled to

perform at Theaters and Cultural Centers in 70 countries covering the 5 continents.

For more Information, Visit:
http://www.timeskuwait.com/Times_Famed-Mexican-guitarist-enthralls-crowd

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CRIME

Kuwait Egyptian salesman caught peeping at female diplomat

Police have arrested an unidentified Egyptian salesman for spying on a female diplomat while trying new clothes inside a change room of a shop at an unidentified location. When the woman saw the man spying on her, she complained; the Egyptian was arrested and taken to the area police station. The diplomat is said to have withdrawn the complaint to save her efforts of being forced to go to the police station every now and then. However, the Egyptian who was wanted by law has been handed over to the Sentences Enforcement Department and is expected to be deported after serving the sentence.

51 persons nabbed during traffic campaigns

During traffic campaigns launched in all areas of Kuwait from 22-28 January, officers from General Traffic Department issued a total of 32,237 traffic citations, seized 116 vehicles, detained 51 individuals in traffic custody and referred some expatriates for deportation after they were caught driving vehicles without driving licenses. According to a press statement issued by Ministry of Interior, the patrol teams seized 31 vehicles that were involved in cases. The General Traffic Department affirmed continuation of 24/7 traffic campaigns in all governorates for ensuring safety of road users.

Nepalese maid dies in police custody

The remains of a Nepalese maid who died in police custody have been referred to Forensics. The maid was arrested after the sponsor filed a missing persons report on her.

The daily added, the 37-year-old Nepalese maid was arrested one week ago in Salmiya and taken to the police station. After she fell ill, she was rushed to the Mubarak Al-Kabir Hospital where she died. A report is expected to be issued to identify the cause of death.

Arrest orders, travel ban on 900,000 Kuwaitis and Expats

General Department of Execution at Ministry of Justice issued 900,000 orders for arrest, detention and travel ban against some Kuwaiti and expatriate debtors against whom several financial-related cases running into millions of dinars were registered.

According to a source, the department issued 89,854 travel ban orders, as well as arrest and detention orders against 90,178 debtors. This is in addition to execution of detention of 605,241 people who were indebted to individuals.

Cars belonging to 110,948 people were impounded over similar cases. The source said the department received 112,812 travel ban requests out of which 89,854 were approved.

It declined similar requests against 22,958 debtors because they either started or completed the procedures for payment of debts before any action could be taken on the cases. He indicated that 59,890 out of the total 110,948 seized cars were released after the owners settled the debts.



9 - 12 February



Cats the Musical

Based on T. S. Eliot's Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats, the show is set amongst a larger-than-life junkyard playground and is alive with some favorite feline characters including Rum Tum Tugger, Mr. Mistoffelees, Macavity, Jennyanydots, Old Deuteronomy, Grizabella and Skimbleshanks.

The Jellicle Cats come out to play on one special night of the year - the night of the Jellicle Ball. One by one they tell their stories for the amusement of Old Deuteronomy, their wise and benevolent leader, who must choose one of the Cats to ascend to The Heaviside Layer and be reborn into a whole new Jellicle life. Book your tickets now online <https://kuwait.platinumlist.net> to see the famed Cats Broadway musical live at the Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Cultural Centre.

9 - 11 February



A gathering of fascinating, curious people who enjoy learning and who love sharing what they can do. From engineers to artists to scientists to crafters, Maker Faire is a venue to for these "makers" to show hobbies, experiments, projects. We call it the Greatest Show (& Tell) on Earth - a family-friendly showcase of invention, creativity, and resourcefulness. Glimpse the future and get inspired. The event will be held at Kuwait International Fairgrounds. See here: <http://kuwait.makerfaire.com> for more information.

10 February

Hala Kite Flying and Funfair Festival 2017

A time packed event full of exciting entertainment promising an unforgettable experience. Are you looking for a place where you could find the tradition and culture of the beloved

land Pakistan? It is all here.

Join us from 7 am to 7 pm at the Camping Area, Road No. 40 (Stay tuned for the update on the location) for fun, entertainment and thrills including kite flying, various competitions, food stalls, and fun rides for kids. Please contact us on the following whatsapp numbers: 97 698661/55953824/96697719/66217434

10 February



12th Sabha Aanandam

Sabha presents 12th Sabha Aanandam, an evening of celestial music and dance. The Veena concert will be performed by Shri. Anantha Padmanabhan, Mrudangam by Perunna Harikumar and Ghatam by Ragesh V Ramakrishnan. The event will take place at Indian Community School Kuwait (ICSK) Senior Branch Auditorium, Salmiya from 4 to 7:30 pm.

For details, contact 97978286 / 55556907 and email: SabhaKuwait@hotmail.com

24 February

KDNA Malabar Mahotsavam competitions

Kozhikode District NRI Association (KDNA) is ready for mega program 'Malabar Mahotsavam 2017' to be conducted during the auspicious days of National Day celebrations in Kuwait on 24 February on the premises of Indian Central School Abbasiya.

There will be special competitions such as the cooking competition in the 'biryani category' for ladies, and those interested, please contact: 51331533, 99486782.

Another highlight of the mega program is a Henna competition for all ladies residing in Kuwait. For registration, please contact: 96005768/ 90981219. In addition, face painting competition and fancy dress are organized for children. For registration, face painting please contact (51127953, 66474996, 65929139) and Fancy Dress, please contact 96960985, 65842243 and 90981219. All these competitions will be conducted from 9 am. The deadline for registration is 18 February. See more information here: http://www.timeskuwait.com/Times_Registration-open-for-KDNA-Malabar-Mahotsavam-competitions

Expatriate health insurance disputes 'solved': MoH

Recent disputes faced at the health insurance centers have been sorted out in efforts to boost healthcare services in the country, an official in the Ministry of Health (MoH) said on Thursday.

In a statement to the press after inspecting various health insurance centers, the MoH's Assistant Undersecretary for Legal Affairs Dr. Mahmoud Al-Abdulhadi said that the ministry has conducted a study to facilitate expatriates' access to health insurance. On 18 December, Minister of

Health Dr Jamal Al-Harbi announced that the ministry had terminated the contract of a public service company dealing with health insurance for expatriates.

Moreover, the Minister of Health had noted that the company would be held liable for any financial losses incurred before the contract was terminated. He also pointed out that a new government insurance company will begin operating within the next three years, after several planned hospitals are built.

Kuwait Airways receives 4th new Boeing 777-300ER aircraft

Kuwait Airways, the official national carrier, on Saturday announced the arrival of its fourth aircraft of a family of long-range twin-engine jets, the Boeing 777-300ER named Kubbar, which is part of a 10-planes deal expected to be completed by the third quarter of 2017.

Kuwait Airways Chairperson and CEO Rasha Al-Roumi said in a press statement that the new plane represented a clear success story which supported plans for development adopted by the



government of Kuwait to become an attractive financial and commercial center for investment.

She added that the aircraft's name Kubbar came from one of the most significant islands in the country, which lies south of the capital Kuwait.

Al-Roumi also attributed recent progress to the diligence of Kuwait Airways' workforce, adding that the company aimed to earn the trust of Kuwaiti citizens.

One of the oldest airlines in the Gulf region, the Kuwaiti government acquired full ownership of Kuwait Airways in 1962.

Over 2/3 of expats earn less than KD180/month

Recent data released from the Central Statistics Bureau revealed that more than two-thirds of the expatriate workers, which constitute about 59.29 percent of all the expatriates in the country, earn less than KD 180 per month.

The data indicated 24.2 percent of the expatriates earn monthly salary of KD 180 – KD 360 while those who receive monthly salary of KD 360 and above form 16.51 percent of the expatriate population.

In the private sector, 1.52 percent of expatriates earn less than KD 60 per month, 43.19 percent earn KD 60 – KD 120 per month and 14.58 percent of expatriates receive a monthly salary varying from KD 120 to KD 180.

Expatriate workers in the private sector with salaries ranging from KD 180 to KD 420 form 27.3 percent. Those earning KD 420 and



above constitute 13.48 percent of the expatriate population.

Reacting to the information, several citizens and expatriates expressed serious objection to the idea of imposing tax on money transfers made by expatriates. They said such a move will constitute extra burden on low income earners who work in the fields of construction, cleaning, teaching, representative (mandoub), driving and other such fields.

Gulf Bank Reports Net Profit of KD 43 million, up 10 percent from 2015

Gulf Bank K.S.C.P. announced on 30 January its financial results for the year ending 31 December 2016. The Bank recorded a net profit of KD 43 million (earnings per share of 15 fils), an increase of 10 percent over the previous



year. The Board of Directors has recommended a cash dividend of 7 fils per share, an increase of 75 percent compared with 4 fils per share in the prior year.

Loan quality continued to improve; gross credit costs (specific provisions plus write-offs) declined by 16 percent to KD 72 million compared to KD 85 million

in 2015. Non-performing loans (NPLs) declined to KD 93 million or 2.4 percent of total loans, levels that have not been seen since 2007. Commenting on the results, Omar Kutayba Alghanim, Gulf Bank's Chairman said: "These past three years have marked significant milestones in the transformation of Gulf Bank, moving it solidly forward on the path of growth, and meeting a number of key strategic objectives. Today, I am pleased to announce that Gulf Bank has again achieved double-digit net income growth in a very competitive

industry and challenging economic environment."

Gulf Bank continues to enjoy an "A" rating from the top three international rating agencies: Moody's Investors Services (A3); Fitch Ratings (A+); and Standard & Poor's - S&P (A-). During this year, all three rating agencies affirmed the Bank's ratings and its stable outlook and revenue generating ability.

Gulf Bank's growth and soundness was strongly acknowledged by the financial services and banking industry on both regional and international levels.

AIS students enjoy the magic of Paco Renteria

American International School (AIS) students witnessed an amazing performance by world renowned Mexican guitarist Paco Renteria.

Mexican Ambassador to Kuwait H.E. Miguel Isidro and Samera Al Rayes, Director/owner of the school along with management and staff attended the concert. The children experienced a once in a life time performance by the maestro who has composed over 300 pieces and performed with the likes of Carlos Santana and Luciano Pavarotti. His music has been featured in films such as Desperado and Legend of Zorro.



For more information, visit: http://www.timeskuwait.com/Times_AIS-students-enjoy-the-magic-of-Paco-Renteria



LuLu Hypermarket launches spate of promotions for Hala February



LuLu Hypermarket, the leading hypermarket in the country, launched its month-long Hala February promotions.

The main activities and promotions during Hala February celebrations include attractive low prices on a range of products, exclusive prices on selected 'product of the day' and 'brand of the week' items, and exciting raffle draws so that one can 'win big' with purchases made at the hypermarket.

The Hala February promotions, which run

at all outlets of LuLu Hypermarket from 1 to 28 February, is offering something for everyone during the country's month-long festivities. Children can avail of the coolest toys at the 'Toys Fest', while digital aficionados can peruse and purchase the latest electronic gadgets during the 'Big Screen Majlis' and 'LuLu Digital Connect' promotions.

An inauguration ceremony will be held at LuLu's Al-Qurain outlet to commemorate Kuwait's National and Liberation Day.

'New Kuwait' - the country's development strategy to 2035

Continued from Page 1

innovative and creative manpower, encouraging sustainable living environment and creating distinguished international status for the State of Kuwait.

The 'New Kuwait' festival included several presentations, lectures and discussions. One of the presentations, made by the Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah, briefed attendees about the foundations of the development plan. He said: "Today we launch initiatives that will transform our economy, create jobs, attract foreign direct investments and facilitate knowledge transfer in the fields of renewable energy, information technology, and the services sector.

The minister of Cabinet Affairs' presentation was followed by a discussion involving Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and Minister of State for Economic Affairs Hind Al-Sabeeh, Minister of Commerce and Industry Khaled Al-Roudhan, Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs and Minister of State for Municipal Affairs, Mohammad Al-Jabri.

A second session focused on themes such as building a sustainable living environment and developing advanced infrastructure, with presentations made by Minister of Public Works Abdulrahman Al-Mutawaa, Minister of Housing and Minister of State for Utilities Yasser Abul and Minister of Oil and Minister of Electricity and Water Essam Al-Marzouq.

For his part, the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad al-Sabah, spoke about Kuwait's international and historic status. In conclusion, a documentary was screened on projects envisaged as part of the long term strategy ending by 2035.

The presentations and statements from the ministers made clear that among other things the 'New Kuwait' plan aims to develop the country's tourism sector to generate additional revenue streams and create a new jobs market and plans to further develop the country's transportation and power sectors by building on the recent success in Public Private

Partnership schemes such as the Integrated Water and Power Producer (IWPP) project Az-Zour North.

According to the statements, 'New Kuwait' will build on the recent momentum in urban development and housing with the introduction of new master plan developments and cities while introducing social and economic empowerment programs targeting youth, women, SMEs, and the elderly.

Built into the plan are 20 key global indicators, and additional sub-indicators, each tracking and measuring Kuwait's progress with the plan and its performance compared to other countries, the statement added.

During the event, Kuwait's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance Anas Al-Saleh outlined the country's budget for Fiscal Year 2017-2018 (FY17/18). Projected expenditure in the budget amounted to approximately KD21.2 billion and estimated income stood at KD13.3 billion, with a KD7.9 billion deficit. Figures in the budget were estimated on a forecast oil price of US\$45 per barrel. Based on this price for oil, the revenue from oil sales in FY17/18 amounted to some KD11.7 billion – a 36 percent rise compared to fiscal year 2016-17.

Total cost of construction ventures, including increasing passenger capacity of Kuwait International Airport and implementing advanced infrastructure of roads and other key facilities are expected to reach KD20.5 billion. This cost would be liability for the state throughout the project execution period, noted the finance minister.

He further indicated that government spending would be curtailed by halting the establishment of any new public authorities or institutions, and the jurisdictions of these institutions would instead be included in existing authorities, as well as merging departments that had identical tasks, objectives and functions.

The 'New Kuwait' strategy clearly outlines the path to follow in order to guide, power and drive Kuwait's economy into the future; what is now required is willingness on the part of both the executive and the legislative, together with the public, to implement the plan successfully.

Humanitarian assistance required for Filipino child in ICU

Ricky Laxa
Staff Writer



Jason told The Times that his family had approached the Philippine Embassy regarding their situation and that travel documents have been issued for his two children and wife, but financial assistance is not available. "I don't know where and who to turn for help anymore and hospital calls me every day asking for payments," added Jason.

A Filipino worker who has been undocumented since 2014 is appealing for financial assistance for his child currently hospitalized in the Intensive Care Unit of a local hospital, while his wife, a former house helper, also undocumented from same year takes care of their other son at home.

Jason, a twenty years old Filipino and former house helper in a local household, finished his contract and was given a release by his employer. Unfortunately, he was cheated by a company that promised him employment and so he found himself undocumented. His wife Belinda, thirty three years old and house helper who ran away from

her employer's home, gave birth to their two children. The family has been living in a small rented space with no source of income and to worsen situation, the youngest child is currently hospitalized and in an ICU

with medical case of blood infection.

"The bill piles up every day and I just don't know where to get the money to pay for these bills, I have been going around begging for financial assistance from friends and people,

but every day gets tougher to find sources," said Jason. He added that he could not find a regular job since he has no legal papers and often settled for part-time jobs. His spouse Belinda takes care of the children at home.

"I would like to ask for help from anyone out there to help me raise the amount to pay for my child's piled up bills and funds to bring my family home safe to Philippines, I'll work for anyone to pay for their help extended to my family. I also appeal to the Philippine government and Philippine President to help me find solution to this problem for the sake of my young children," said Jason.

Feast of the East, one bite at a time at MKP food festival

The Fourth Eastern India Ethnic Food Festival, which was held at Ras Salmiya on 27 January, 2017, was a resounding success with hundreds of participants and visitors eagerly thronging the venue. Organized by Maurya Kala Parisar (MKP), a leading Indian socio-cultural association

with gifts and prizes.

There were many traditional dishes from Eastern India, along with some which were a variation or mix of two traditional dishes. Some of the special sweets presented for the competition included 'Kaddu laddu' and Rasgulla Cake, which were offered in the

Non-Vegetarian Dishes category:

1st prize Murg Nawabi Butter Cheese, Garlic Naan and Rice by Neelika Raza Khan, 2nd prize Bihari Chicken Boti, by Rahila Anwar and 3rd prize Raan E Khas by Sana Abdul Hamid

Dessert category:

1st prize Gujiya by Suchitra Deo, 2nd prize: Besan Ladoo by Shruti Katiyar and 3rd prize: Lauki ke Ladoo by Shweta Shruti

Street Food category:

1st prize: Katori Chaat by Radhika Mishra, 2nd prize: Khasta Puri and Bhaji by Nazia and 3rd prize: Chhole Chaat by Pinky Sinha

Now in its fourth iteration, MKP's annual Ethnic Food Festival has been growing in popularity with every passing year. Restaurants and food menus in Kuwait are generally short on cuisines from eastern regions of India;



commenting on this, the General Secretary of Maurya Kala Parisar, Abhay Kashyap said that the event provided a window of opportunity for families to present special dishes from the region and also for the general public to taste and appreciate cuisines from Eastern India.

For more Information, Visit:
http://www.timeskuwait.com/Times_Feast-of-the-east-one-bite-at-a-time-at-MKP-food-festival



in Kuwait, the event saw husbands joining wives along with their kids in decorating and arranging the food for display in the competition

While the Food Competition was the highlight of the event, there were a variety of food offerings from Eastern India for the audience to feast on at the stalls. Guests and participants were also entertained with games and spot quizzes loaded

Innovation Category.

Mr. Reaven D'souza, Managing Editor of Times Kuwait was the chief guest and gave away the prizes to winners of the competition. A total of 12 prizes were given in four categories.

Vegetarian Dishes category: 1st prize Veg Pulao by Rohina Tanweer, 2nd prize Moong Crunchy Poori by Preeti Nitin and 3rd prize Dahi Vada by Shweta Kumari



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Flirty Flushed Cheeks

This season is all about flushed cheeks that contain a hint of feminine charm. Like when someone you admire compliments you and a light rosy pink dusts your cheeks, or when you step outside into the cold air and the apples of your cheeks go pink. That is exactly what this trend is trying to emulate in a glam kind of way. Here is how to make this pretty look work for you.

Find the perfect blush shade: The right shade of blush is very important — you want to choose a color that works well with your complexion. If you go with a shade that doesn't respond well to your skin tone, it may not show up properly on your cheeks. For example, some colors look chalky on girls with darker complexions, and others are way too bold for girls with fairer ones. Warmer skin tones should go for warmer blush shades, and cooler shades work best on cooler complexions. Warm/olive undertones will look best in mauve, berry, and brick shades. Cool/pink undertones will look best in baby pink, light plum, and peach shades.

Choose your formula: You can achieve different looks based on the type of formula you choose: Matte blush, which can come in a cream or powder formula, gives you a non-shimmery finish and eliminates shine. Luminous blush, which is powder or cream

with sparkles, has a subtle glow and slightly highlights your cheeks. Cream blushes, whether matte or luminous, are long-lasting and super easy to blend. Depending on the kind of flush you want, make your choice. Though a radiant, youthful glow is easier to achieve with luminous cream blush.

Even out your skin tone: Using a foundation brush, apply a liquid foundation from the center of your face (where your skin should be the lightest), working your way outward to the perimeter. A liquid or cream formula creates a smooth base that the cream blush you are about to put on will glide over and fuse with.

Apply cream blush to the apples of your cheeks: Clean off the foundation brush you used in step one and run it over a cream blush formula. Then smile and blend the color on the rounded part of your cheeks first, and then outward toward your temples.

With a large, fluffy brush, dust on a bright powder blush: Choose a bright powder blush that complements your cream blush, and apply it with a fluffy blush brush.

Diffuse your cheek color with concealer: Draw an outward-facing flag shape with a cream concealer pen on each side of your nose, with the flagpole part alongside your nose. Next, with the clean foundation brush used in steps one and two, blend the concealer over the innermost edges of the blush. Then, with whatever concealer that is still on the brush, lightly sweep the rest of the formula over your cheeks to create a 'lit from within' flushed effect.

Pro tip: When there is a pop of color on the cheek, it's best to keep the rest of the face seemingly bare. Choose soft or nude lips, neutral (if any) eye shadow, and a subtle application of mascara.

Foundation tips



Just because you wear foundation, doesn't mean you have to wear it like a mask. Here are three of the best ways to apply liquid foundation—targeted at your skin's needs.

Mixed with moisturizer: Need a BB Cream effect in a pinch or on a dime? For a tinted moisturizer that evens out discoloration without weighing down skin, try this: on the back of your hand, mix a pea-sized amount of creamy foundation with a dollop (about half the size) of your favorite face cream. This is a perfect option for those who are less prone to blemishes, have dry skin, or simply don't require much coverage. Mixing yourself allows you to control the coverage which means you can go lighter on your cheeks and heavier on problem spots.

Spot applied: For many women, only certain spots may benefit from foundation camouflage. For instance, you don't need to cover up all over your face just because you have enlarged pores across your nose or are prone to acne on your cheeks. With a properly matched foundation, you can pat on a heavy coverage in problem areas and then apply it in lighter strokes elsewhere. You will hide what you want without covering up the beautiful areas of skin. Dust all over with powder to blend makeup-heavy areas with bare spots. Tip: foundation that clots in the bottle cap makes a pretty convincing concealer.

Worn all over: There are times when wearing a full face of foundation is essential, but that is



mostly reserved for performances and photo shoots. A severe case of acne or redness can have you layering on the product in order to face the day, but up close, heavy foundation can look mask-like—especially in the day light. So, experiment with a full face of foundation if you will be appearing on a stage, if you are having important photos taken, or if you are playing with more extreme makeup looks. Full foundation is essential for surreal looks and makeup where the skin becomes a canvas for color and line. Set this look with powder to ensure it stays put.



Home Centre's latest catalogue features new style inspirations

Home Centre, the region's leading home retailer, has released its latest 140-page catalogue that showcases an extensive collection of furniture and home accessories, both classic and contemporary. With over 850 new inspiring styles, this catalogue promises to let customers rediscover the joy of shopping for their homes.

The catalogue offers customers a preview of Home Centre's latest range of interior products, with a new addition this year being the modular and mix-and-match solutions like the Blend table and Infinity wardrobe, which enable customers to select components that perfectly suit their space and personalities.

This year, Home Centre has introduced three breathtaking collections - Arabesque, Marrakesh and Majestic - each of them inspired by distinctive styles. The new catalogue also features 'Great Deals', offering customers a selection of the best priced products.

Designed to meet the customers' evolving style and design requirements, the catalogue offers home design tips, style advice and practical suggestions for the discerning homemaker.

The print catalogue will be available at all Home Centre stores, while the interactive catalogue can be viewed online at homecentre.com.

For more Information, Visit:
http://www.timeskuwait.com/Times_Home-Centre-s-latest-catalogue-features-new-style-inspirations





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SRI LANKA

Timeless Beauty

Sri Lanka offers an array of breathtaking experiences and activities. An island country located in the Indian Ocean, Sri Lanka is physically breathtaking, boasts countless picturesque beaches, tropical rainforests, wildlife and ancient ruins.

The country's 2000-plus years of culture can be discovered at ancient sites where legendary temples are adorned with beautiful details. Safari tours of its pleasantly relaxed national parks encounter leopards, water buffaloes, all manner of birds and a passel of primates. Escape the tropical climate of the coast and lowlands, and head for the hills, with their temperate, achingly green landscape is charming. Verdant tea plantations and rainforested peaks beckon walkers, trekkers and those who want to enjoy the view on a spectacular train ride. And then there are the beaches, dazzlingly white and considered sandy gems for surfing and diving in some world-class sites. Sri Lanka is spectacular, and here are some of its best sights to visit.



Kandy: Established deep in the impenetrable hills at the heart of the island, the city is a bastion of Sinhalese culture and religion, home to the island's most revered Buddhist temple, the Temple of the Tooth, its most sacred relic and par of the city's most magnificent festival, the Esala Perahera. The city is also the undisputed arts and crafts capital of the island, filled with a myriad of temples and palaces built in the distinctive Kandyan architectural style. The area immediately west of the Temple of the Tooth are three of the city's four principal devales, or temples (the fourth devale is in the city center on Kotugodelle Vidiya). The four gods worshipped in these four devales were traditionally believed to protect Kandy, and processions in their honor



are still a major part of the great Esala Perahera festival. West of the city are the Royal Botanic Gardens that contain more than 4000 species of plants, including orchids, spices, medicinal plants and palm trees.

Despite now being the island's second-largest city, Kandy retains a surprisingly small-town feel. The center's modest grid of low-rise streets is lined with characterful colonial-era buildings and preserves a certain old-fashioned, countrified charm.

Colombo: The commercial capital and largest



city of Sri Lanka, the legacies of Colombo's colonial roots are very much intact and evident among its potpourri of races, religions and cultures. The oldest districts of the city, which are nearest the harbor and north of Beira Lake, are known as the Fort and the Pettah.

Fort is in the midst of widespread historic restoration of its landmark colonial architecture, while Pettah brims with markets and rampant commerce. Colombo's cosmopolitan side supports ever-more stylish eateries, galleries and museums. Surprises abound in its old quarters where you can find great local food and discover a characterful shop or tiny, convivial cafe. Particular grand sights are its significant buildings like the Secretariat, the Town Hall, the Clock Tower, St. Lucia's Cathedral, and the Galle Face Hotel. Other distinctive buildings that pique the interest of tourists in the city are the Wolvendahl Church, built by the Dutch in 1749; a complex of hospitals; the University of Colombo (1921); several Buddhist and Hindu temples; and the residences of the head of state and of the prime minister.

Negombo: Negombo is a modest beach town located close to Bandaranaike International Airport. With a stash of decent hotels and restaurants to suit all pockets, a friendly local community, an interesting old quarter and a beach. The main thoroughfares of the town have a very touristy look, and has enough



restaurants and clubs to indulge in entertaining evenings. Tourists will find plenty of fascinating sights such as the Angurukaramulla Buddhist Temple situated at Temple Road, which is more than 200 years old and is a great place to visit if you love culture and architecture. There is also the Dutch Clock Tower and the canal.

Though Sri Lanka is a predominantly Buddhist country, Negombo has a very high population of Christians. Some of the churches of architectural value to be visited are St. Mary's and St. Anne's.

Ella: Welcome to everyone's favorite hill-



country village where many leisurely days can be spent resting in some of the country's best guesthouses. The views through Ella Gap are stunning, and on a clear night you can even spy the subtle glow of the Great Basses lighthouse

on Sri Lanka's south coast. The charming village of Ella may be nestled in the middle of world-famous tea plantations, but it is also locally renowned for something else: delicious home cooking. The town offers foodies the chance to dig deep into the country's culinary traditions and learn to eat – and cook – like a local.

Jaffna: Slowly but surely reemerging as a



bastion of Hindu tradition, art and creative culture, Jaffna is once again welcoming visitors. It's an intriguing and a thoroughly rewarding place to invest a few days discovering Sri Lankan Tamil culture. The city is surprisingly green and leafy, with attractive palm-shaded colonial-era suburbs and beautiful temples and churches. In addition, the city is also an ideal base for forays to the idyllic islands just to the west, and trips along the coastline and lagoons of the surrounding peninsula.

The Ancient Cities: Crumbling temples, lost cities and sacred sites are reason enough to head up country to the cultural heartland of Sri Lanka. It was here on the hot central plains that ancient Sinhalese dynasties set up their capitals



and supported massive artistic and architectural endeavors. Eventually these kingdoms fell, giving nature a chance to reclaim the land.

For more than a century archaeologists have been slowly shedding the many layers of history from this overgrown landscape. The rock fortress at Sigiriya, the monumental dagobas of Anuradhapura and refined carvings of Polonnaruwa are but a few of the sites now considered national treasures.

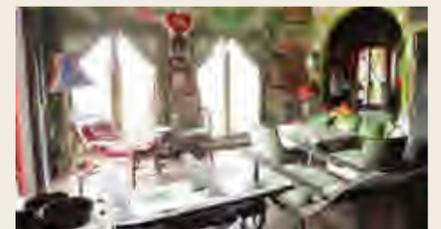
This region is commonly called the 'Cultural Triangle'. Besides the amazing ruins, save time for the national parks, which teem with elephants and outstanding birdlife.



Sights not to miss

Colombo, Jaffna and Galle captivate visitors, as do Sri Lanka's national parks with leopards; beautiful B&Bs and exotic street foods with a real kick. Read on for a list of experiences you do not want to miss.

Sri Lankan gothic: Have tea, dinner or cocktails in Helga's Folly, a fabulously spooky gothic mansion in the midst of jungle flora with to-die-for views of the historic city of Kandy. Every inch of the place is covered in paintings, photographs, mirrors and dripping candles.



Lipton's Seat in Haputale: For a magical free view to rival that from Adam's Peak, take a trip from Haputale in the tea plantations out to the near 2,000-metre-high Lipton's Seat. The fun is in climbing up the mountain through the tea plantations, past schools and hospitals. At the very top is a panoramic view as far as the southern Sri Lankan coast and a tiny cafe selling magnificent short eats, tea and jaggery.

Tropical architectural guru: Sri Lanka's celebrated architect, Geoffrey Bawa, coined a tropical modernism style based on Sri Lanka's multi-ethnic traditional and colonial influences. His buildings blend seamlessly with their surroundings – their interiors, too. A splendid way to learn about the man, his work and his art collection is to visit his house just off Bagatelle Road in Colombo. Many consider it one of the best cultural experiences in Sri Lanka.

Bentota: This is still one of the top places in the country to enjoy diving and snorkeling. Glimpse the country's thriving coral reefs and their myriad of multi-hued inhabitants, explore underwater caves and lose yourself among barnacled shipwrecks. Kite-surfing, water-skiing and a host of other water sports are also available here.



Pinnawala Elephant Orphanage: This orphanage for Asian elephants is one of the most popular tourism attractions in Sri Lanka, but it's not everyone's cup of tea. There are ample opportunities to feed the beasts and watch them bathe in a nearby river.

Kitulgala: Sri Lanka's adventure capital is tucked away amid the ravines of the hill country. It offers an array of activities for adrenaline junkies, including kayaking, mountain biking and rainforest trekking. For a real rush, book yourself onto a beginner level or advanced white-water rafting experience on the wild Kelani River.

Human skin printed from 3-D printers

Scientists at the University Carlos III de Madrid (UC3M) in Spain have presented a prototype for a 3D bio-printer that can create totally functional human skin. This skin has been found to be adequate for transplanting to patients or for use in research or the testing of cosmetic, chemical, and pharmaceutical products.

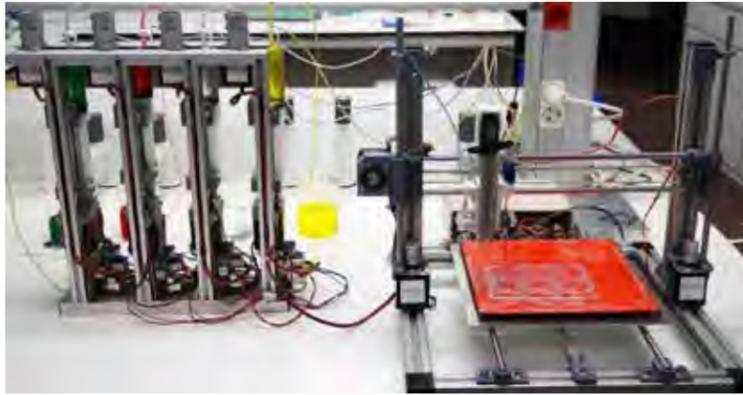
It is for the first time that a research team has demonstrated a workable prototype capable of using 3D printing technology to produce proper human skin.

The 3-D skin replicates the natural structure of the skin, with a first external layer epidermis that acts

as protection against the external environment, together with another thicker, deeper layer, the dermis. This last layer consists of fibroblasts that produce collagen, the protein that gives elasticity and mechanical strength to the skin.

In the 3-D bio-printers, ink cartridges are replaced with biological components in conditions that ensure the cells do not deteriorate while being printed. The 'bio-inks' are then deposited in the right place and in the correct thickness by a computer program that deposits them on a print bed in an orderly manner to then produce the skin.

"We use only human cells and



components to produce skin that is bioactive and can generate its own human collagen, thereby avoiding

the use of the animal collagen that is found in other methods," noted the scientists. There are several

advantages to this new technology as it allows skin to be generated in a standardized, automated way, and the process is less expensive than manual production.

Currently, this development is in the phase of being approved by different European regulatory agencies to guarantee that the skin that is produced is adequate for use in transplants on burn patients and those with other skin problems. In addition, these tissues can be used to test pharmaceutical products, as well as cosmetics and consumer chemical products where current regulations require testing that does not use animals.

Patient tardiness adds to wait time at clinics

Waiting is one of the most common complaints about outpatient clinics. Understanding patient and doctor behavior is a key to ensuring patients get more face-to-face time with their doctors and physicians are able to deliver high-value care to their patients.

A recent study on patient and doctor behavior in the United States found evidence that physicians spend more face-to-face time with patients when appointments are kept on schedule and less when the schedule is back logged.

Researchers involved say their study confirms for health care services what is generally observed in grocery store checkouts and bank teller lines — once lines get backed up, service providers become less



consistent in their behaviors and cut short the time spent with customers in order to catch up.

The research team examined a total of 23,625 patient-doctor interactions, gathering data on patient appointment time, patient

arrival time, patient interactions in the clinic and physician-patient interaction at different clinics.

While many physicians believe that all patients receive the same level of service, analysis of the data revealed that the average time that

physicians spent with patients varied depending on whether the clinic was running on schedule or not.

While intuition may suggest that adapting behavior to catch up with the clinic's schedule will help the clinic run smoother, the researchers found that it harms the efficiency of a clinic by adding unpredictable time variability to the system. Researchers say that one way to ease the trade-off between wait time and face time is to reduce uncertainty in the overall system by ensuring doctors are more consistent in the amount of time they spend with each patient. This not only results in wait times going down, but it also put less pressure on the doctor to make up for lost time by rushing.

Neck check for thyroid abnormalities



With the number of cases of thyroid diseases increasing worldwide, specialists are recommending regular self-exams that could help detect the disease.

According to medical sources, about 200 million people worldwide are estimated to have thyroid disease but only around 40 percent are aware they have the disease. Doctors point out that patients who have had significant exposure to radiation or have first-degree relatives with a history of thyroid cancer need to be especially concerned as they are at higher risk. If undetected and untreated, thyroid disease can cause depression, constant exhaustion, joint pain, muscle aches, weight gain and hair loss.

To perform a thyroid self-exam, use a mirror to view the lower middle area of the front of your neck, above the collarbones, and on either side below the laryngeal prominence (Adam's apple). This is where the thyroid is located.

While focusing on this area, tip your head back, take a drink of water and swallow. As you swallow, watch for any bulges or protrusions. If you detect any clear bulges or protrusions in this area, you should probably consult with your physician. You may have an enlarged thyroid or a thyroid nodule, only a specialist can determine if cancer is present or if you require treatment for thyroid disease.

Forward thinking helps reduce back pain



Back pain is common but not inevitable. Roughly eight out of 10 people will suffer significant back pain at least once in their lifetime — but there are ways to reduce the risk, say orthopedists.

Muscle, ligament or tendon strains (soft tissue injuries) are the most common causes of back pain. These injuries can occur from falls or activities involving lifting, twisting or bending. When pain strikes, you can ease it with anti-inflammatory drugs and muscle relaxants.

Physical therapy can also help reduce the risk of back pain becoming chronic by giving you techniques to lessen your symptom in the short term. In the

intermediate to long term, therapy can also strengthen the core muscles that support the spine, which could decrease the likelihood of having another episode in the future.

Though it is not always possible to prevent back pain, certain things can reduce your risk, including regular exercises that strengthen the core muscles, maintaining a healthy weight, and avoiding tobacco products.

Specialists point out that people in jobs that subject them to vibrations, such as commercial drivers and heavy machine operators need to pay special attention as they are at increased risk for back pain. So are people

with mental health disorders, such as depression. Doctors say that when people have chronic back problems, there is a large psychological component to it.

Being depressed causes pain, and being in pain makes you depressed. If you lack coping mechanisms and do not have the ability to handle pain and stress well, that can feed into your anxiety and cause even greater back pains.

Some studies have found that cognitive behavioral therapy, which attempts to change the patterns of thinking or behavior linked to people's pains and difficulties, and thereby change the way they feel, can help with that type of back pain.



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Australia Day celebrations highlight country's vibrancy

The Australian Embassy, headed by the country's ambassador to Kuwait His Excellency Warren Hauck, organized a colorful event at the Jumeirah Messilah Beach Hotel on 29 January to mark Australia Day. The function was attended by Kuwait's Deputy Foreign Minister H.E. Khalid Al-Jarallah along with a large gathering of members of the diplomatic corps, distinguished guests and media personnel.

Welcoming guests to the evening's celebration, Ambassador Hauck said: "Australians are immensely proud of our country but it tends to be a quiet pride — a reflection of our understated and laid-back approach to life. But tonight is a chance for us to celebrate the country loudly."

Saying that Australia today is amongst the most open, tolerant and welcoming societies in the world, the ambassador added, "We are a nation that draws its strengths from the best of all nations and religions in the world — one in four Australians was born overseas."

On the economic front the envoy noted that the Australian economy was in its 26th year of continuous economic growth. "We are the only developed economy in that time to achieve such growth and, if it continues to the end of this year, it will have become the longest run of economic growth in modern history."

Many of you will have seen some of the Australian companies and products on display and if you didn't, I would encourage you to have a look on the way out. We really wanted to give you some idea of the breadth of Australian products, services and companies here in Kuwait or on offer in the region, from food, to construction, to education, to air travel," the envoy pointed out.

Drawing focus on the country's wide diversity and cultural heritage, he said, "We have in Australia one of, if not the, oldest continuing cultures in the world in our indigenous population which is some 50,000 years old. Both the Government and the people of Australia are also very much focused outward, including our ties to the Gulf and to Kuwait," continued the ambassador.

Elaborating on bilateral relations between Australia and Kuwait, the ambassador said, "Australia and Kuwait are close friends. In May last year our Head of State, the Governor-



General of Australia, visited and there is no stronger sign of the strength of the bilateral relationship than a visit by a Head of State. It was an opportunity to take stock of the relationship and look to what else might be possible.

Kuwait looms large for Australia. By the middle of last year, Australian exports to Kuwait were around A\$800 million — around 30 percent more than the same time in 2014. Australia also welcomes Kuwait investment into Australia, which puts Kuwait around the 20th largest investor in Australia. We continue to look for ways to boost our economic relationship — and as our Trade Minister has said publicly, Australia remains keen to resume negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement with the GCC.

Our education ties are also important. You may have seen Box Hill College Kuwait and the Australian College of Kuwait here. We also have around 1,400 Kuwaiti students who study in Australia and are looking to

secure more links in this sector.

We are very supportive of our defence engagement. During his visit to Kuwait, the Governor-General visited the Al-Qurain Martyr Museum, site of one of the last battles before the liberation of Kuwait. As we walked around the building, still riddled with bullet holes, it struck me how far Kuwait has moved on in the last 25 years. I was particularly proud to be there with the Governor-General, recognising Australia's contribution to the liberation of Kuwait."

Australia has long been a supporter of regional security. We are one of the largest contributors to the coalition to combat terrorism. Australia is proud of the role we played during our time on the United Nations Security Council on humanitarian support to Syria and the positive effect we had on the council is one of the reasons we're seeking a position on the Human Rights Council for 2018. On such international issues Australia is very proud to work



with Kuwait who has led the world's generosity in its support to Syrian refugees.

When I talk about the bilateral relationship I tend to focus on the big items, trade, security, investment. But the real strength of a bilateral relationship often sits behind this, in the multitude of smaller exchanges, visits, and cooperation that goes on with or without our involvement.

It is reflected in things like having a media intern in Kuwait for a first time who arrived last week, or one of our students studying Arabic here, or some

those students to discover Australia.

Here in Kuwait, Australia Day comes at a time when Kuwaitis themselves are beginning celebrations for the 11th anniversary of the coronation of the Amir, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the 26th anniversary of liberation, and the 56th anniversary of independence. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate His Highness the Amir on the anniversary and to the Government of Kuwait for their appreciation and support of our bilateral relationship.

Last year I commented on Kuwait's



of our artists doing 3D drawings here. Equally it's having Kuwaiti academics go to Australia to help us know more about the region, or individual Kuwaitis choose to visit Australia.

I'm also pleased we've had the chance to reach out recently to Kuwaiti schoolchildren with our 'Colours of Australia' drawing competition. We were overwhelmed with the response from Kuwait — with thousands of entries. And I hope this is just the first step for

light display on the Kuwait Towers, congratulating us on our National Day. In response, our Head of State attended the Kuwait National Day celebrations in Canberra last year. Again this highlights the genuine warmth of the relationship between Australia and Kuwait.

For more information, visit:
http://www.timeskuwait.com/Times_Reception-marks-Australia-Day

Albanian Philharmonic Orchestra gives an extraordinary performance

The Albanian Embassy in collaboration with the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters (NCCAL), and the Albanian National Theatre of Opera and Ballet, organized a concert at the conclusion of the 23rd Al-Qurain Cultural Festival.

The concert, which showcased the Albanian Philharmonic Orchestra, enthralled a large audience at the Abdul Hussain Abdulredha Theatre in Salmiya on 28 January. Members of the diplomatic corps, officials from NCCAL and other dignitaries attended the event. The highlight of the show was a rendering of the song 'Margjelo' by famed Albanian mezzo-soprano Vikena Kamenica, accompanied by the talented orchestra.

For more information, visit:
http://www.timeskuwait.com/Times_Albanian-Philharmonic-Orchestra-gives-an-extraordinary-performance





Indian embassy celebrates Republic Day



The 68th Republic Day of India was celebrated with traditional enthusiasm and patriotic fervor in Kuwait at the Embassy premises with the unfurling of the National tri-color flag by the Ambassador of India to Kuwait H.E. Sunil Jain. More than 4,000 Indian nationals joined the gathering to show their support for this momentous occasion in Indian history.

Following the singing of the National Anthem and the reading out the message of the Hon'ble Rashtrapatiji by Ambassador Jain, several patriotic songs were sung to emphasize the spirit

of national pride. The performances of the Bohra Band received due appreciation, as did the enthusiastic participation of students from various Indian Schools whose various performances became the highlight of the event. The program ended with a grand reception that allowed all Indians to share in the positive feelings of brotherhood and nationalism.

For more Information, Visit:
<http://www.timeskuwait.com/Times-Indian-embassy-joyfully-celebrates-country-s-Republic-Day>



Indian ambassador hosts reception for Republic Day



On the occasion of India's 68th Republic Day, the Indian embassy held a reception on 26 January at the JW Marriott hotel, Kuwait City. Assistant Foreign Minister for Asia Affairs Ambassador H.E. Ali Al-Saeed was the chief guest at the gathering that included members of the diplomatic corps, Kuwaiti officials, Indian businessmen and nationals. Traditional Kerala drummers welcomed the gathering. The Indian Ambassador to Kuwait H.E. Sunil Jain made a speech on the occasion lauding the cordial relations between India and Kuwait.

Traditional live music was part of the entertainment, with the highlight of the evening being the well-known Kuwaiti singer Mubarak Al Rashed who rendered popular Hindi songs.

For more Information, Visit:
<http://www.timeskuwait.com/Times-Indian-embassy-commemorates-country-s-Republic-Day>



Youth play a key role in development process

Speaking at the 6th UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Youth Forum, which convened in New York on 30 January, Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Mansour Ayyad Al-Otaibi, acknowledged the efforts of Kuwaiti youth in many international and local events.



The ambassador lauded the UN for taking the youth under its wings and encouraging them to promote the organization's, and that of its subsidiaries', goals towards sustainable development. He called for gearing the energy of Kuwaiti youth towards achieving the country's sustainable development goals for 2030, in addition to realizing the United Nations' conventions and laws. Following in the steps of the UN, Kuwait has strived to promote the role of its youth in all domains. It established the Ministry of State for Youth Affairs in 2013 to combine efforts exerted in this field, and to encourage initiatives that guarantee young adults' participation in mapping their country's future policies.

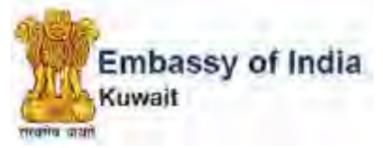
Some of the initiatives implemented by the Ministry of Youth Affairs included the launch of two e-portals: one for encouraging volunteerism and the other for youth training. The goal behind creating these e-portals is to invest in their time and to raise the level of their competence, the Kuwaiti diplomat said.

The country has other strategic plans geared toward revising international laws, legislations and agreement related to youth in order to create a supportive environment for this segment of the society, he added.

Al-Otaibi also said that the Youth Ministry has been active in many international youth forums and events and has signed many local, regional and international agreements related to youth.

The Youth Forum is held annually by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) since 2012. It offers young people an opportunity to voice their opinions, share ideas, and think together about what they can do to achieve sustainable development.

Kazakhstan - Devolution of powers promises another step in development



Indian embassy announces changes to visa charges

From the very beginning of Kazakhstan's journey as an independent nation it had followed its own pace of democratic reforms. Believing that no model of government is universally applicable, Kazakhstan has pursued its own, often unique, political and social solutions based on its own experience and the needs of the nation.



It is in this context, of an evolutionary form of government model that one should view the recent administrative reforms proposed by President Nursultan Nazarbayev.

In a televised address to the nation on 25 January, President Nazarbayev revealed several reforms intended to transfer a slew of presidential powers to the Kazakh Parliament and the Government.

Since assuming office in 1991, President Nazarbayev has on more than one occasion made it clear that while prosperity and social stability were the country's initial priorities, it remained committed to democratic reforms.

"The speed and complexity of social processes taking place in Kazakhstan and

around the world has made it imperative to think about how to respond to future global and regional challenges," said the president. He added that the proposed program will help to ensure stability of the political system for years to come, while increasing the role of the Government and the Parliament so that they could provide a more effective mechanism of response to modern challenges.

As part of the new measures proposed, the parliament would now have greater responsibility for appointing or dismissing the Prime Minister and Government, including the right to pass a vote of no confidence. In turn, government ministers are to be handed control of large areas of economic and social policy where decisions up to now have been taken by the President.

The devolution of power will allow the president to focus on the critical challenges of foreign affairs, security and defense. The blueprint also suggests that it would be the president's role, if needed, to intervene in a case of deadlock between the various branches of government.

The new reforms are intended to strengthen both parliament and the government and provide a new measure of accountability, while helping create a more effective, stable and sustainable government system equipped for an increasingly complex and challenging world.

By decentralizing power, sharing responsibility and making accountability more transparent, the aim is to deliver better, more responsive decision-making, stronger institutions and accelerate democratic reform.

The reforms underline the country's positive outlook on the future and reflect the determination to build on all that has been achieved while ensuring opportunity and prosperity continues to spread across the country. With these reforms Kazakhstan is poised to take another decisive step in its development.

Saying that the reform program is an answer to the question in what direction Kazakhstan will move, the president added, "The answer is clear and consistent: we will move in the direction of democratic development."

India has further liberalized grant of visas to nationals of USA, Canada and Japan. Fee structure is as below:

- I. Visa fee for USA nationals:
 - (i) Tourist visa : Multiple Entry of ten years duration - KD 36
 - (ii) Business visa: Multiple Entry of one year duration - KD 51
 - (iii) Business visa: Multiple Entry of ten years duration - KD 76

- II. Visa fee for Canadian and Japanese nationals:
 - (i) Tourist visa : Multiple Entry of six months duration - KD 14
 - (ii) Tourist visa : Multiple Entry of one year duration - KD 22
 - (iii) Tourist visa: Multiple Entry of ten years duration - KD 42
 - (iv) Business visa: Multiple Entry of one year duration - KD 39
 - (v) Business visa: Multiple Entry of ten years duration - KD 64

- III. Visa fee for Kuwaiti nationals:
 - (i) Tourist visa: Multiple Entry of six months duration - KD 14
 - (ii) Business visa: Multiple Entry of One year duration - KD 39
 - (iii) Business visa: Multiple Entry of ten years duration - KD 64

All applicants may visit Passport and Visa Centres of CKGS at (a) 17 Floor, Behbahani Building, Sharq, Kuwait : Tel. No. 22440392 (e-mail: indiavisa.kuwait@ckgs.com) or ; (b) Complex Kais Alghanim, 4 Floor, Mecca Street, in front of Annod Complex, Fahaheel, Kuwait: Tel. No. 22909229 (e-mail: indiavisa.kuwait@ckgs.com). (c) Jleeb Al Shuyoukh (Abbasiya) 2nd Floor, Jleeb Al Shuyoukh Block 1, Street 1, Xcite building, Kuwait Tel. No. 24342428 (e-mail: indiavisa.kuwait@ckgs.com). CKGS's website is <http://www.kw.ckgs.in>. In emergency cases, Indian Embassy accepts visa applications directly at its Visa Wing from applicants.

Uzbek ambassador hosts luncheon reception



Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Kuwait H.E. Bakrom Alov held a luncheon gathering at the chancery to commemorate the birthday of the late president of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov. Karimov was the first president of Uzbekistan since its

independence on 1 September 1991. Under his 25 year rule, Uzbekistan prospered economically and developed into a stable political entity within the region. The luncheon was attended by representatives from the media and academicians.



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