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Message of love from Ambassador Christian Nakhle to his friends before leaving the State of Kuwait

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Ministry rubbishes rumors on granting of 'amnesty' to illegals

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## Growth picks up as economic slowdown recedes

### Staff Report

Recent economic slowdown appears to be receding as Kuwait market shrugs off the sluggishness triggered by the slump in oil revenues since mid-2014 and subsequent fiscal adjustments made by the government.

first deficit in over 20 years in 2016. The first-quarter of the year recorded a surplus of KD400 million and the second-quarter nudged the surplus further up to KD600 million.

In its latest prognosis on economic health of Kuwait, the country's leading commercial lender, the National Bank of Kuwait (NBK), said

gradual approach to implementing fiscal adjustments should also see the drag on growth being reduced while ensuring continued progress on lowering the fiscal shortfall.

After recording a deficit of 4.5 percent of GDP in 2016, the indications from past fiscal quarters of 2017 are that Kuwait would record a surplus of around KD1.9 billion, or 5 percent of GDP for the whole of 2017. The turnaround comes on the back of higher oil price, with the Kuwait crude oil price expected to have increased by more than 30 percent between 2016 and 2017. But analysts caution that with oil expected to remain within a narrow range in the immediate future, current account could deteriorate slightly in 2018 and 2019.

Nevertheless, substantial fiscal buffers, including large foreign reserves placed strategically in its sovereign wealth fund (SWF), and the relatively low break-even oil price, means Kuwait has significant elbow-room to move gradually on fiscal adjustment than some of its Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) peers.

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Non-oil activity in 2017 improved to 3 percent and is set to accelerate further to 3.5 percent in 2018 and to 4 percent in 2019. Meanwhile, current account is set to swing back to surplus in 2017, after recording its

that momentum for this nascent growth came mainly from capital spending, especially spending on New Kuwait 2035, the government's revised National Development Plan. The bank added that the more

## Fifty years of distinguished and developed friendship

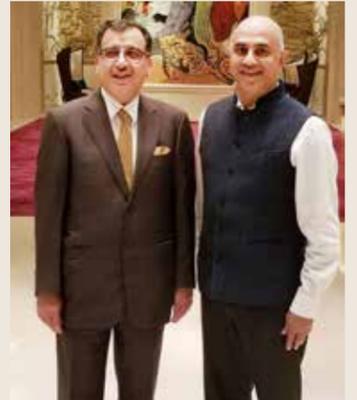
By Reaven D'Souza

Managing Editor

Kuwait and Indonesia will celebrate their golden jubilee of bilateral diplomatic relations next year marking 50 years of distinguished and developed friendship between the two countries, disclosed Kuwait Ambassador to Indonesia H.E. Abdulwahab Al-Sager during an interview with The Times Kuwait in Jakarta recently.

"Relations between the two countries are strong and good, and can be seen through the mutual support and agreements reached in international organisations and in the exchange of high level visits between both countries," Ambassador Al-Sager pointed out.

"I look forward to the convening of the Higher Joint Committee of



H.E. Abdulwahab Al-Sager (Left)

Kuwait and Indonesia slated for next year. The first session is to be held in Kuwait under the chairmanship of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khalid Al Sabah," Ambassador Al-Sager noted.

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## Message of love from Ambassador Christian Nakhle to his friends before leaving the State of Kuwait



Dear Kuwaiti friends, or rather, I should say "Dear Kuwait",

I, actually, address this speech to Kuwait, my friends and to the meetings and gatherings I had with them, as well as the work we accomplished together in four years and three months, which allowed me to discover an extraordinary country in the Arab world that I know quite well. I arrived from Paris on the 15th September 2013 and, literally, I did not know any person here at that time. My diplomacy life has allowed me to visit your country only once about ten years ago and it was a short visit. I was a student in 1990 when, just like everybody else, I was shocked with the invasion of Kuwait and, seven months later, I was happy to know that Kuwait is liberated. In the courses I attended in preparation to the competition of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kuwait has often been mentioned as an example in the administrative

work we had to prepare and submit in the field of international relations and law enforcement. Directly after liberation, a friend of mine, a journalist who was living with me in Cairo at the time, visited Kuwait at the invitation of Kuwaiti authorities to witness the looting and robbery that Saddam Hussein's forces had carried out. He returned with a live testimony that I kept all these years in my personal belongings without ever imagining that one day I shall be among you during my term of office, which is about to end in few days.

This message of friendship, or rather, this message of love, is a testimony of mine to the years I spent with you: a message of love to those friends I met; young and old, women and men, students, artists, businessmen, politicians, ministers, members of the National Assembly and human rights defenders. During my stay in your country, I highly appreciated the spirit of debate that prevails, whether in offices, in press or through social networks. Democracy in your country is not an empty word, but a reality, and your diplomacy is that of peace, just like that in France. Kuwait owes this to its leaders, in particular to His Highness the Amir, who is a true example of wisdom to the region as a whole and a "humanitarian leader" to the entire world.

The family spirit, which I treasure the most, prevails in Kuwait; everyone knows each other and exchanges visits in joyful occasions, such as weddings, and in times of grief at the death of any person. Kuwait is a large family in itself, with a very important trade heritage that is part of the country's fundamentals, in addition to its cultural dimension, with photographers,

painters and musicians. I also learned the art of self-photography "Salafi" and I did notice how distinguished the bloggers are on social networking sites and the activists in the fashion world. Your country is one of the most modern countries in the Arab and the entire world!

I am leaving in Kuwait several friends with whom I spent quality times chatting, exchanging conversations and dreaming with a better future for the region and peace in the world. Of course, as always, HH Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, from the very moment HH received me at Bayan Palace to deliver my credentials on the 4th of November 2013, and while speaking in Arabic with me in a very nice and friendly manner, he just said to me gently and humorously: "Welcome in your second home!"

HH was extremely right! It took me mere few hours after my arrival on the evening of the 15th of September 2013 to feel at home. I knew the Gulf States by then because I worked as the General Consul in Jeddah for many years. I also knew Lebanon, Syria and Palestine, as much as I know Iran and its language, in addition to my knowledge of the Arabic language and the history of this region of the world. What I did not know is that all this, mixed in a high-speed mixer, would make me a friend to many Kuwaitis whom I found enjoying all the above characteristics; all except for the language. I had to get used to the local dialect and the use of feminine and masculine which I missed all the time. There was a friend who used to address me at the beginning of my stay saying "Shlonek" (How are you?), yet I always thought he was addressing the lady behind me, when I found out

that when she spoke to her he used "Shlonech" instead. Here I figured that I obviously have a lot of work on this subject or I shall look stupid in my conversations!

Now that we have become friends, I allow myself to reveal some secrets and perhaps give some advice, in a spirit of humor of course! Please, dear Kuwaitis: Travel less because it is almost impossible for me to know if I can see you at the end of the week except by following up your accounts on Instagram. Stop publishing Snapchat because whenever I am about to open this app the story disappears. Guys, spend less time at the Oxygen Sports Club and more time at the French Institute to get a certificate in French! Also, an advice from a friend about visas: do not submit your requests on Monday the 12th while you would like to travel on Sunday the 11th! You also shall have to find a solution to WhatsApp; this "national epidemic" with the "Selfie" pictures, which hit me as well, since I consult my messages by my right hand while dipping into a glass of hot milk with saffron with my left hand; frankly, I cannot do them at the same time without ending up dipping my iPhone in the milk instead of the biscuits!

Kuwait has been a school for me; a school of working with excellent professionals at all levels, not to mention in foreign affairs and other ministries, as well as the Amiri Diwan. Moreover, in the private sector, I learnt perseverance, patience and taking enough time to think, in addition to friendship in work relations and the desire to share with my country, France, which loves you so much in return.

Continued on Page 8




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# Kuwaiti national receives Franco-German Human Rights award

Abdullah Al Khonaini, a young Kuwaiti civil activist, was awarded this year's Franco-German Prize for Human Rights and the Rule of Law by the French and German ambassadors to Kuwait, at a ceremony held on 10 December.

Germany and France announced the launch of an annual international Franco-German prize for Human Rights and Rule of Law in April 2016 at the Franco-German Council of Ministers, with the first of these prizes awarded later in the year.



This year, the ceremony fell in line with the annual celebration of Human Rights Day on 10 December all over the world.

Born in 1987, Abdullah Al Khonaini has been for the past nine years a part of 'Sout Al Kuwait' – a non-profit organization that aims to promote constitutional awareness in society through the media. A policy researcher for the think-tank 'Rai Institute for Strategic Studies and Research', his

main focus is in the role of civil society and active citizenship in Kuwait.

The award recognizes his active role in civil society and his work with several non-governmental organizations (NGO) in Kuwait. Along with his position as a trainer and facilitator of 'n-mu youth', which is an empowerment program that targets the youth to take an active interest in their society and community, Khonaini is the founder of 'Meem3' – a social movement that lobbies for more relaxed censorship policies. He is also a co-founder of the online, non-profit website which allows for transparency of parliamentarians work and voting records, called 'Raib50'.

Abdullah Al Khonaini, who is the first individual from the Middle East to receive the award, expressed his elation at being presented with prize and dedicated the award to all Kuwaitis and human rights defenders and rule of law loving people in the country. Giving credit for the award to the support of his NGO colleagues, he emphasized his continued commitment to promoting human rights and the rule of law and hoped he would inspire others along the way.

Speaking on the occasion, H.E. Karlfried Bergner, the German Ambassador to Kuwait, stated that Khonaini was awarded the prize for his embodiment as a defender of human rights and rule of law in Kuwait. For his part, the French Ambassador to Kuwait, H.E. Christian Nakhla, shared that it came as no surprise that a Kuwaiti was among the recipients of the award, given the country's penchant for humanitarian endeavors.



## Bangladeshi Embassy pays tribute to historical 1971 speech



The Embassy of Bangladesh in Kuwait celebrated on 7 December, the inclusion of the historic 7 March 1971 Speech by the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman as part of the world's documentary heritage of the UNESCO Memory of the World International Register.

On the occasion, the embassy organized a discussion program and a screening of the historic 7 March speech by the Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Some eminent expatriate Bangladeshi nationals including embassy officials, officials of Bangladesh Military Contingent (BMC) and official of Biman

Bangladesh Airlines participated in the lively discussion on the significance of the speech and its inclusion in UNESCO Memory of the World International Register. Ambassador of Bangladesh to Kuwait H.E. S M Abul Kalam summed up the discussion and reiterated that the historic speech will continue to enthral the Bangladeshi people and will continue to inspire generations to attain a happy and prosperous 'Sonar Bangla', which was a dreamed by the Father of the Nation.

The program was widely attended by a large number of expatriates, Bangladeshi nationals, including civil society representatives, media representatives and others.

## ICSK organizes 43rd Annual Sports Meet



The Indian Community School, Kuwait, (ICSK) organized its 43rd Annual Sports Meet on 8 December at Qadsiya Sports Club, Hawally. This Sports Day was a special occasion as the oldest school in Kuwait celebrated its record sixteenth CBSE Kuwait Clusters Annual Athletic Championship.

Raj Gopal Singh, DCM, Embassy of India to Kuwait was the Chief Guest of the event. The presence of Shaikh Abdul Rahman, Hon. Chairman, Vinukumar Nair, Hon. V. Chairman, Amar Mohammed, Hon. Secretary, Mr. Agnello Fernandes, Hon. Jt. Secretary, all the branch Principals, Vice Principals and the other invited

distinguished personalities of the Indian diaspora in Kuwait. The stars of the day were the athletes of ICSK, who won the CBSE Kuwait Clusters Athletic Championship for a record sixteenth time.

Dr. V. Binumon, Principal and Senior Administrator in his felicitation address congratulated the CBSE Kuwait Cluster winners and encouraged students to place equal importance on academics and sports to develop an all-round personality.

The Chief Guest, the Members of the Board of Trustees and the Principals gave away trophies to the CBSE Kuwait Cluster champions and other sporting event winners of all the branch schools.



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## Reception held on National Day of Romania

Ambassador of Romania to Kuwait H.E. Daniel Tanase hosted a reception on Sunday, 10 December at the Sheraton Hotel on the occasion of his country's National Day.

Assistant Foreign Minister for European Affairs Ambassador Waleed Al Khubaizi was the Chief Guest at the function, which was attended by members of the diplomatic corps, Kuwaiti officials, special invitees and media personnel.

In a statement to the gathering, Ambassador Al-Khubaizi hailed the strong relations between the two countries which began 55 years ago. He said, "Kuwait and Romania are cooperating in various domains and have 22 cooperation agreements covering a wide array of fields, including in healthcare, defense, tourism and investment." He pointed out the joint Kuwaiti-Romanian committee will hold a meeting early next year to draw a roadmap for further developing bilateral relations, and that the Romanian foreign minister is expected to visit Kuwait next month.



He expressed appreciation for Romania's support to Kuwait's nomination to a non-permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council for 2018-2020, adding that Kuwait would back Romania's



nomination for the same post for the next term. Al-Khubaizi estimated Kuwaiti exports to Romania at US\$5.2 million and imports from Romania at US\$ 80 million.

## Behbehani Motors Company hosts annual staff open day



Behbehani Motors Company, one of the leading automotive companies in Kuwait and the exclusive dealer for Porsche and Volkswagen since 1957, recently held its annual staff open day at the Seashell Julaia Hotel & Resort for employees and their family members.

The day-long event was organized with the goal of building positive employee relations and extending the company's sincere appreciation to

employees' efforts and dedication over the past year. More than 370 members joined with their families to spend a fun-filled day, where they got the chance to relax and participate in different entertaining activities.

Behbehani Motors Company will continue to show its utmost appreciation and recognize employees' efforts by regularly hosting similar events throughout the year.

## Ethiopian voted 2017 Middle East and Africa Airline of the Year

Ethiopian Airlines Group, the largest airline group in Africa, is pleased to announce that it has been recognized as Middle East and Africa Airline of the Year 2017 by Airline Economics, the largest aviation finance and leasing print publication in the world, at a Gala Dinner held in Dubai on October 3, 2017.

Winners in the Middle East & Africa Aviation 100 Awards Category have been chosen among the airlines in the Middle East and Africa through customer survey conducted by Airline Economics Magazine. Ethiopian outperformed major airlines in the Middle East and Africa to win this prestigious award.

The Group CEO of Ethiopian Airlines, Tewolde



GebreMariam, remarked; "It is a tremendous honour to be recognized as Airline of the Year and to stand out from among the major Middle East and African carriers through a vote of the readers of one of the most renowned aviation magazines, Airline

Economics.

Ethiopian Airlines Group is among the very few airlines in the world which has shown leadership in both of the most technologically advanced airplanes in the world today which are the B-787 Dream liners and the Airbus A-350s."

## Kuwait receives Thales turret and surveillance system

Thales, the French multi-national defense services company, has delivered a state-of-the-art remotely operated turret and surveillance system to the Kuwait Ministry of Interior for use on eight armored patrol vehicles. All vehicles are expected to be ready for operations by the end of 2017.

The advanced turret is to be integrated on eight existing 4x4 vehicles which will be used for

maintaining internal security, public safety and surveillance missions. The vehicles will be operated by the Kuwaiti Security Shield department.

The system includes an array of sophisticated optronics equipment, including high definition day and night thermal commander's sight, main gunner thermal camera, local situation awareness sensors and acoustic shot detection system.

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## Ambassador holds reception on Kazakhstan Independence Day



**O**n occasion of the 26th Independence Day of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan to Kuwait H.E. Almas Abdramanov hosted a reception on Wednesday, 13 December, at Crowne Plaza. Members of the diplomatic corps, Kuwaiti officials, special invitees and media personnel attended the function.



## FOCC organizes 20th ABK CRYcket 2017



**F**riends of CRY Club, Kuwait (FOCC) successfully conducted the 20th 'ABK CRYcket' tournament on 17 November at the KOC Al-Ahmadi Stadium.

'CRYcket' is an annual softball cricket tournament, played in a 7-over match format, for children in two age groups of under 12 (U-12) and under 14 (U-14). At the close of the tournament, this year, the 'Dashing Knights' clinched the winners' trophy in the U-14 category, whereas 'CCC' became the runner-up. The winner of the Under-12 trophy were 'IISM' and the 'MG Cricket Coaching Camp' came in second place. The best player awards went to Amer Noushad of 'IISM' in the U12 category and Jude Saldhana of 'Dashing Knights' in the U-14 category. Stewart Lockie, GM Retail Banking from ABK and Kamal Kumar, Regional Head, from DNV-GL graced the occasion as the Chief

Guests and presented the trophies, medals and certificates from CRY India to the winning teams and participating children.

FOCC is proud to be partners with CRY in a joint mission to help the underprivileged children. FOCC also organizes two other annual events, the CRYchess and CRYwalk for children.



## LuLu Hypermarket marks International Day for People with Different Abilities

**U**nder the elegant banner of 'Lulu with Differently Aabled Artists', LuLu Hypermarket in Kuwait marked International Day for People with Different Abilities by creating a platform to exhibit the creative expressions of artists with different abilities.

Artists with different abilities from various Special Education Schools and Institutions in Kuwait were invited to submit their artwork, which was then displayed on 3 December at the Al-Qurain outlet of LuLu Hypermarket. The exhibition of creative talent by differently abled artists, which is scheduled to continue for two weeks, underlines LuLu Hypermarket's



commitment to cater to all sections of society and to provide opportunities to ensure that no one is left behind.

The event aims to promote the rights and well-being of persons with different abilities

in all spheres of society and development, and to increase awareness of the situation of persons with different abilities in every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life of the country.

## Gulf Bank holds forum on 'Making WISE Investments for the Long-term'



**G**ulf Bank was pleased to hold a private dinner forum for its Priority and Wealth clients entitled 'Making WISE Investments for the Long-term' with leading investment expert and Harvard Business School professor, Dr. Josh Lerner. The event took place at the Sheraton Hotel, on Monday, 27 November, and shed light on Gulf Bank's WISE Investments product - Kuwait's first digital and advisory portfolio management service.

The evening began with opening remarks from Omar Kutayba Alghanim, Chairman of Gulf Bank. Mr. Alghanim said: "When we came up with this product, we wanted to introduce our customers to a world-class investment experience. Products like WISE often outperform in the long-term when compared to the traditional, more expensive, managed funds. Gulf Bank values its customers and is always looking for products and services that really resonate with our consumers. We

asked our customers what they wanted from an investment product and WISE is the result. We're proud to be the first bank in Kuwait to offer this type of product and we're really excited to have it."

Dr. Josh Lerner, keynote speaker, highlighted the importance of a sound investment strategy and explored how 'patient investing' ultimately benefits the investor. Dr. Lerner explained the difference between passive and active investing strategies, noting the recent trend towards passive investing, as investors seek funds with lower fees and more predictable outcomes.

Following his remarks, Dr. Lerner joined Tareq Al-Saleh, Assistant General Manager for Investments at Gulf Bank; Saud Al Zaid, Assistant General Manager of Treasury at Gulf Bank; and Mr. M.R. Raghu, Head of Research at Kuwait Financial Center - Markaz, for a panel discussion and question/answer session.

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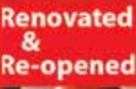


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# Kuwait and UNDP highlight Human Rights Day

Human Rights Day this year marks the beginning of a year-long celebration of the seven decades since adoption of one of the deepest and most influential international agreements, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Declaration, which established the principles of equality and dignity for everyone, stipulates that every Government has a fundamental duty to enable people to enjoy all their inalienable rights and freedoms.

"Over the past 12 months, we have witnessed a number of historic achievements in international development, in which the international community has affirmed its determination to live through solidarity and support in line with the Universal Declaration," said Zeinab Rouimi Benjelloun, the resident coordinator for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Kuwait. She added, "It is necessary to reflect on these



achievements and our long-term commitment to the protection and promotion of these universal rights."

In line with Kuwait's principles of foreign policy that promote the work of humanitarian values and provide assistance to those who need them, the country offers many good examples of respect for human rights in the regions, said the resident coordinator. The hosting of three Syrian donor conferences in Kuwait, and support for the fourth donor conference in London, resulted in pledges of more than US\$10 billion in support of the humanitarian situation in Syria and neighboring countries. In

addition, in recent years, Kuwait has also taken a number of measures to promote human rights through legislation and laws that contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights within the country.

Among these measures is Law No. 109 of 2013 that established the General Authority for Manpower, which is tasked with the issuance of regulations and rules guaranteeing the rights of expatriate workers, including through the establishment of temporary shelter for employees with the aim of providing full protection and care for them.

Among other measures, the

National Assembly enacted legislation to regulate family affairs in Kuwaiti courts, through Law No. 12 of 2015, which contains 17 articles that would eliminate obstacles and impediments to Kuwaiti women in exercising their legitimate and financial rights.

Kuwait's commitment to the promotion of human rights, including women's rights, also remains clear through a number of development projects and initiatives taken by the government in this area. One such program is the National Cooperation Program which aims to support Kuwait in implementing the Fifth UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG5), Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality. The program brings together the Supreme Council for Planning and Development and UNDP, along with the Research Center and Women Studies of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Kuwait University. The project launched a number of



activities inside and outside Kuwait University, including a two-week long campaign this year from 25 November to 10 December against gender-based violence. The 25 November (World Day to Combat Violence against Women) and 10 December (World Human Rights Day) emphasize the links between ending violence against women and human rights values.

## Indian Heritage opens new outlet at Kuwait Magic Mall



Guided by the philosophy of preserving and promoting the rich craftsmanship and heritage of India, a new outlet of Indian Heritage was unveiled at Kuwait Magic Mall in Abu Halifa on 9 December.

The new outlet was inaugurated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony by Charge d'Affaires of the Indian Embassy Raj Gopal Singh, along with the Ambassador of Myanmar to Kuwait, H.E. Aye Khaing and the Ambassador of Thailand to Kuwait, H.E. Dusit Manapan, in the presence of the sponsor Abdul Aziz al Rayes, and the CEO of Indian Heritage, Anupam Jain. Indian Heritage began in 2000 as an initiative to promote and market quality lifestyle and fashion products, including exclusive jewelry and artifacts from Indian artisans, within the Middle Eastern market. Its objective is to be



a premier organization in developing, promoting and marketing quality products from India.

Speaking at the event Al Rayes thanked his partners in the venture and expressed his gratitude to everyone who patronized the store and helped make it a success over the years. "We are very pleased and happy to open our third branch to cater to the shopping needs of the citizens and expats in this area," added Al Rayes.

At the inaugural event, Indian artisans demonstrated their craftsmanship in artifacts and textiles, while cultural performances provided entertainment for visitors and made the grand opening a vibrant success.

Along with outlets in Souq Al Safat and Slayil Al Jahra, the new store in Abu Halifa is the third branch of Indian Heritage in Kuwait.

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# Ministry rubbishes rumors on granting of 'amnesty' to illegals

Director General of the General Department for Residence Affairs, Major-General Talal Ma'arafi, has rubbished rumors which say the Interior Ministry will open the door for violators of residence law to amend their legal status without paying fine and allowing them to return to the country.

Ma'arafi stressed the ministry, at least in the near future, does not plan to give grace period because earlier grace periods have not acquired the desired results. However, Ma'arafi in a statement said, the door is open for those expatriates who want to check with the concerned department, pay the fines and adjust his/her legal status provided there are no legal obstacles or security restrictions. He added, the ministry doors are open to any violator who wants to change the status to stay legally in the country.

As for the proposals made by the ministry on the new visits and residence and the fees, Ma'arafi said they will be applied only after the approval of the Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khalid Al-Jarrah and

the National Assembly. Ma'arafi reiterated the ministry proposes to charge about KD30 for visitors the duration of which will be one month with the possibility of extension. However, those who overstay their visit visa will have to pay KD one per day of overstay.

Ma'arafi added Al-Jarrah has approved the executive regulations of the Foreigners' Residence Law and referred it to the Fatwa and Legislation Department to prepare the legal text before issuing a ministerial decree.

He explained it is proposed to impose KD 300 fee for family visa other than the wife and siblings. He added fees will be announced once approved by the Fatwa and Legislation Department. Ma'arafi said the regulations include several amendments in order to increase the number of visitors to the country. The amendments include granting multiple entry visit visas to businessmen to encourage the capital inflow and economic movement in the country so that visitors can frequently visit the country at regular intervals according to the validity of the visa.

Ma'arafi pointed out the maximum validity



of a visa granted to businessmen will be one year to enable businessmen to enter and exit the country multiple times. Ma'arafi added the amendments include granting entry visas to students from other countries who wish to complete their studies in private universities in Kuwait according to an applied mechanism to encourage and attract students to give a boost to the national economy.

He added graduates of Kuwaiti universities have the right to work in the private sector because they have become familiar with the

Kuwaiti society, its customs and traditions during their education period. He pointed out that entry visas shall be granted for patients wishing to receive treatment in private hospitals upon an agreed mechanism to allow them to enter according to an agreement with the Ministry of Health.

He revealed the Interior Ministry is preparing a plan to track down and arrest violators of the residence law and deport them. He pointed out there are about 100,000 residence law violators and warned those who shelter or hide them.

Ma'arafi added the authorities will help any violator of the residence law if the person voluntarily wishes to adjust his/ her status, but if arrested it will mean inevitable deportation and blacklisted. It is noteworthy to mention the government of Kuwait had issued an amnesty way back in 2011 for violators of residence law to leave the country without paying fees. Those who want to pay the fines and legalize their status are welcome, he added. He also said those who pay fines and legalize their status will not be referred to the investigation authorities.



## Kerala Express launches new menu



Kerala Express, the authentic restaurant in Kuwait oriented towards Travancore cuisine, launched its new menu which boasts a fusion of well-known dishes originating from Kerala.

Hamza Payyanoor, Chairman Metro Medical Center, and Mr. Basheer, MD, Holy Bakers along with Tahkkara Management Group launched the menu at the inaugural ceremony.

The new menu consists of dishes that imbue the rich and varied flavors of Kerala, as well as draws inspiration from the traditional

techniques used by the natives to prepare their scrumptious food. The aim of the new menu is to highlight the union of authentic, traditional and natural ingredients that are rooted in Travancore cuisine.

Savor the main highlights of the menu - the delectable Grilled Mix Seafood Platter and the Tandoori Mix Chicken Platter, in addition to the Grilled Fish cooked to perfection. Another item, the Chicken Biryani bursts with the tantalizing flavors reminiscent of Kerala.

## Fifty years of distinguished and developed friendship

Continued from Page 1

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries a new chapter is expected to open with renewed cooperation in several fields, including in trade and investment, tourism, education and cultural exchanges.

Elaborating on this, Ambassador Al-Sager stated that although Indonesia had the largest Islamic population in the world and was blessed with an amazing natural beauty, he regretted that Kuwaitis did not take full advantage of the tourism potential of Indonesia, even though the country had all the right ingredients to be a preferred destination for Kuwaiti citizens and residents because of the excellent and high quality tourism infrastructure in place, including family shopping and abundant entertainment venues. The discontinuation of the direct flight by Kuwait Airways last year may have also had an impact on tourists from Kuwait, added the envoy.

On the economic front, trade between the two countries is worth around a billion dollars, with Kuwait exporting petroleum products and derivatives while Indonesia exports included palm oil, furniture, household appliances, car spare parts, tires, office equipment and electronic devices.

There are also Kuwaiti companies operating in Indonesia such as Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Exploration Company (KUFPEC) and the Bank Muamalat, an Indonesian Bank, has a share in Boubyan Bank; also, Indonesia Finance Ijarah, is a Kuwait-Indonesia company owned by Kuwait International Investment and Finance Company.

Ambassador Al-Sager pointed at the huge

scope of boosting trade and investment between the two countries, and said he was hopeful that the signing of MoU's to protect investors and capital would further encourage investments, from the present estimate of direct and indirect investments to the tune of \$2.5 billion.

He said Indonesia had a huge development plan that included six major oil refineries and Gulf countries were eager to support with finance provided the right investment atmosphere was created. "It is also in the interest of Gulf oil producing countries to work closely with their Indonesian counterparts owing to the excellent relations and common cultural and religious affiliations," he added.

Kuwait has also provided nine soft loans to Indonesia totalling around \$200 million since 1977 to 2006, through the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development. While in the humanitarian and charitable field, several Kuwaiti charities such as International Islamic Charitable Organisation, the Islamic Heritage Society, the Rahma Society of Indonesia, the Kuwait Indonesian Charity Society and the Social Reform Association, were doing commendable service in the rebuilding of entire villages destroyed by Tsunami in 2004 and have provided aid to over 50,000 people. One village in Garut, in West Java, is being funded by His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al Sabah, and another village in Aceh Besar is being built through funds provided by the late Amir Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah.

Kuwait's humanitarian aid and assistance during the past 13 years has totalled around \$175 million, said the ambassador.

## Growth picks up as economic slowdown recedes

Continued from Page 1

A relatively prudent fiscal policy over the years has allowed Kuwait to amass and sustain one of the largest SWF in the region. Kuwait's SWF is estimated to be worth around \$560 billion or 450 percent of GDP as at the end of 2017, with bulk of the assets held overseas and split between the Future Generations Fund (FGF), the assets of which are considered 'untouchable' except in national emergencies, and the General Reserve Fund (GRF), whose holdings are mostly in liquid assets and available to finance the government's budget deficit.

But relying on unstable oil prices to fuel growth, or a voluminous SWF to tamp down on the pace of fiscal adjustment, is not judicious move and is replete with inherent dangers.

Though the probability of oil prices moving

much lower from current levels of around \$55 - \$60 per barrel has receded for now, it remains a distinct risk going into the future. While Kuwait would be able to sustain a much lower oil price for some time, any drastic drop in price could alter the government's fiscal policy and hurt market sentiment, with the consequent impact on non-oil activity.

Similarly, depending on what might appear by all measures to be a substantial SWF is also a risk as the chances of it dwindling rapidly, especially under sustained economic pressure, are very real. Saudi Arabia realized this following the oil-price slump of 2014. According to a report in the Wall Street Journal in December 2016, the Saudi Arabian Monetary Authority (SAMA), the nation's central bank which controls SAMA Foreign Holdings, the Saudi SWF, said its reserves fell by more than 25 percent to \$543

billion in just two years to the end of October 2016.

So far Kuwait, despite the ready availability of funding from its GRF, has opted to rely more on debt to finance its deficit. Since April 2016, the government has issued KD3.6 billion in debt domestically and another KD2.4 billion internationally to take the total debt issued as of October 2017 to KD 7.1 billion, or 20 percent of GDP. Since 2016, debt issuance has financed around two-thirds of the budget deficit.

But new debt issuances have been kept in abeyance since September 2017 following the expiration of the law that allows the Ministry of Finance to issue new debt. The government has introduced new legislation for consideration by the National Assembly to renew the issuance mandate and double the sovereign borrowing ceiling to KD20 billion, as well as allow the

issuance of debts with a 30-year period. At present debts are limited by law to 10-year periods.

With the government committed to maintaining its capital spending plans and compelled to continue absorbing national manpower into the labor market, the government has to urgently push through much-needed structural reforms to encourage the private sector to play a larger role in the economy, both through their investments and by generating new jobs in the medium-to-long-term.

Though it is salutary that the government plans on raising around a third of capital spending from public-private partnership (PPP) projects, so far the progress on such projects have been slow. It is hoped the pace will pick up in the coming years.

# Lock system initiated for traffic violations

After bowing to pressures from the National Assembly and the populace to rescind the decision on impounding vehicles whose owners are caught using telephone by hand while driving and without fastening seatbelt as against the rule of law, Ministry of Interior has again decided

to seize such vehicles and driver's license of violators for one month.

The ministry has started to embark on the 'lock' procedures against minor and major violations, and the decision will frustrate the transactions of violators in the ministries and other government

departments; thereby causing them serious damages.

According to sources, traffic officers have received stern instructions to record speed and traffic-light violations either during their official field duties or through CCTV. They added the department



put lock sign on the file of a violator and will be asked to see the acting director of traffic investigation for Capital City Colonel Mohammad Al-Saeedi or head of indirect violations department lieutenant Colonel Ali Al-Qallaf who have exclusive right to unlock it.

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## 14 December – 23 February



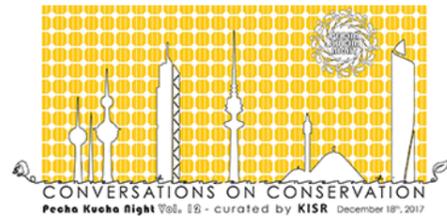
### Ultimate Winter Wonderland at KidZania:

The program features a sculptured Ice Cave, a designated skating rink, roller slides as well as new twists to take children on a fun-filled adventure in an enchanting winter-inspired atmosphere. Kids are also promised winter-inspired street performances and daily shows featuring KidZania's beloved characters and artistic team. With a minimal additional fee, children can get their own 'Arctic Pass' to unlock the full Winter Festival features.

## 17 December

**National Football League:** The National Football League Kuwait in partnership with Cinemagic is organizing an outdoor gathering for NFL fans to watch the Sunday games live in a fantastic and cozy outdoor area. The event commences at 8:30pm at Cinemagic on Salem Al Mubarak Street, and tickets are priced at KD10, including dinner which will be provided at the venue. To purchase tickets, visit: <http://www.eventat.com>

## 18 December



**PechaKucha Night:** Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) is curating the 12th edition of PechaKucha Night at Al-Shaheed Park in Kuwait City. Being held under the theme of 'Conversations on Conversation', the event aims to stimulate thought and provoke interest on energy efficiency. PechaKucha is a presentation style in which 20 slides are shown for 20 seconds each, which helps keep presentations concise and fast-paced, powering multiple-speakers at events called PechaKucha Nights (PKN). This will be first one to be curated by KISR, and held with a theme. Interested speakers or any queries for the event can be directed toward: [pkn.12.kisr@gmail.com](mailto:pkn.12.kisr@gmail.com).

## 22 December

**3 on 3 Basketball Tournament:** Styloplay Events in collaboration with Qadsiya Sports Club are having a major 3 on 3 basketball tournament at the Qadsiya Sports Club in Hawally (Behind Sultan Center) from 12 pm to 10 pm. The program features top players from several

Kuwait sports clubs, local Filipino leagues, teams from private universities and other locals. The all-day event is free and open to the public, with live music and entertainment. Food vendors and local markets will host booths to cater to the appetites and interests of those present.

## 24 December



### Harmony: Japanese Sword and Bamboo Flute:

The Embassy of Japan is hosting the music program at 7:00 pm, in the Yarmouk Cultural Center, Dar Al Athar Al Islamiyyah. The event has no entry fee and is open to the public.

### Christmas celebrations at Hilton Kuwait:

Celebrate the season of joy, warmth and cheer on Christmas Eve and on Christmas Day with your friends, family and colleagues by indulging in our lavish dinner buffets on Christmas Eve and bountiful Christmas brunch the next day, complete with live music and fun activities. An advanced booking is required, for more information and reservations, contact +965 222 56 222 Ext: 7311



## 25 December

**JW Marriot:** Celebrate Christmas in style at the Crossroads Restaurant with a traditional buffet, a selection of festive carving stations and mouthwatering desserts. Group of 10 people and above gets attractive discounts, for more information call: 22455550.



**Courtyard Marriot:** Bring friends and family together for an amazing Christmas celebration at Atrium restaurant and savor delicious buffet complemented with a wide array of Christmas dishes, decoration and more. Book for group of 10 people or more and get attractive discounts. For more information call: 22997000



## Cultural Days of Uzbekistan in Kuwait

Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan will be hosting an event highlighting the rich culture and heritage of Uzbekistan from 17 - 19 December at the Ahmed Al-Adwani Art Gallery in Abdulla Al Salem Area.

The three-day event will be inaugurated on Sunday at 10 am in the presence of the Ambassador of Uzbekistan H.E. Dr. Bakhromjon Alov, and will also include a concert of Uzbek artists to be held on Monday and Tuesday evening at 7 pm, at the Abdulhussain Abdulredha Theatre in Salmiya.

Deeply infused with the fascinating history of the Silk Road and the profound influence of different cultural and ethnic groups, Uzbekistan is the proud home to a spellbinding arsenal of culture, architecture and ancient cities. In terms of sights alone, Uzbekistan is Central Asia's biggest draw and most impressive showstopper. The three-day event is an insight into the country's remarkable heritage, including its famous handlooms, silks, ceramics, wood work, calligraphy and miniature paintings and more. The arts and crafts, which have been passed down through generations, reveal a strong historical and ethnic influence that is unique to this region.

Also on display at the event will be other traditional art forms like miniature painting and calligraphy, including an Arabic

The National Council for Culture, Arts & Letters  
Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the State of Kuwait

الأسبوع الثقافي الأوزبستاني  
Cultural days of Uzbekistan in Kuwait  
December 17 - 19, 2017 2017 ديسمبر 17 - 19

- افتتاح معرض الصور الفوتوغرافية لجمهورية أوزبكستان
- معرض الحرف اليدوية والأطباق التقليدية الأوزبكية
- افتتاح ورشة الخط
- معرض الترويج السياحي لأوزبكستان
- العروض لممثلي الفن الموسيقي الأوزبكي
- Photo Exhibition ■ Traditional Handicraft Exhibition
- Arabic Calligraphy workshop ■ Tourism Promotion Exhibition
- Musical Concert by Uzbek artists
- Symposium of Pluralism & Tolerance: Uzbekistan as a role model

calligraphy workshop, as well as common forms of applied arts in Uzbekistan. Other attractions at the exhibitions include highlights on the remarkable history and culture of the region through photographs, handicrafts and regional cuisine. In addition a symposium on 'Pluralism and Tolerance: Uzbekistan as a Model' will be held at the Kuwait

University as a part of the event, in the presence of Vice president of Tashkent Islamic University Dr. Ibrahim Osmanov, Advisor to the Department of Muslims of Uzbekistan Abdulhamid Tursunov, and Assistant Dean of the Faculty of Arts- Kuwait University Dr. Abdulhadi Al Ajmi, and Head of Department Dr. Sheikh Al Jassim.

## Indian embassy announces KU scholarship opportunity for Indian student

Ministry of Higher Education, Government of Kuwait has offered one scholarship to an Indian student at Kuwait University (KU) for the Second academic session of the scholastic year 2017-18. Students who have passed their 12th Grade Board Examinations and are interested in availing of this offer of a scholarship program may obtain an application form from Kuwait University and submit the completed application to the Education Wing of the Embassy of India at the latest date of 28 December.

In the case of more than one application, the student with the highest marks obtained in 12th Grade will be recommended by the Embassy to the concerned Kuwaiti authorities. The academic eligibility test of the scholarship student will be held by the Kuwait University on Monday, 29 January 2018.

For further enquiries, interested students may please contact Shri Sanjeev Saklani, Attaché (Education/Consular) at Office Telephone No. 22522215 and Mobile No. 97295728.

## Message of love from Ambassador Christian Nakhle...

Continued from Page 2

In the last few weeks, I have visited many offices and entities that I have visited during my stay to say goodbye to my friends. I met some of you personally to pay tribute. I also sent messages on WhatsApp and made some phone calls ... to farewell you all and confirm that I shall see you again real soon. As our dear poet Sheikh Saad Al-Sabah says with great skill, "We Remain". I shall always enjoy

seeing you again and I shall definitely accept all future invitation to "Megabus" dish on Tuesday or to share a dish of "Naqrar Fish", because, as per the old saying, "He who eats the eye of Naqrar shall never leave". I shall come back!

@christian.nakhle

**Christian Nakhle**  
Ambassador of France to the State of Kuwait

EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

# Gender Equity for Africa's Scientists



**Aminata Garba, Dorothy Nyambi, Hendrina Doroba, and Ivy Mwai**



A girl in Ethiopia could grow up to engineer a new method for improving agricultural yields, if only she could meet the right mentor. A young woman in Malawi has ideas for new cancer treatments, but will never apply them if she is pushed out of school. And a girl in Rwanda has all the skills to create a mathematical model to mitigate droughts; all she needs is a research grant to help her pay for college.

There is a global gender imbalance in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics — the so-called STEM disciplines. But in Africa, this imbalance is doing more than threatening individual futures. It is also depriving the continent of talents and contributions needed to drive development and progress. A 2011 African Development Bank report finds that getting women into science and technology ultimately promises to benefit society as a whole.

Gender equity in STEM is achievable, and many African scholars are showing the world how to do it. But they need help, and programs that offer scholarships and support are among the best ways to achieve parity in the sciences.

The causes of Africa's STEM gender imbalance are often compared to a leaky pipe: girls start out with interest and aptitude, but drop out of the disciplines at various points in their education. Early data from a Mastercard Foundation initiative aimed at reversing these trends show that a comprehensive approach to plugging the leaks can make a difference.

Success begins with acknowledging that gender equity in STEM matters. "Science needs us" is how Armanda Kouassi, an industrial engineer and former Mastercard Foundation scholar, puts it. "With different ideas and perspectives come better solutions and thinking that can move scientific innovations forward and benefit the whole of Africa."

Kouassi is right. Africa cannot afford to squander its young, female talent. Sub-Saharan Africa faces a shortfall of some 2.5 million

engineers, technologists, mathematicians, and scientists. This dearth of expertise threatens a number of Sustainable Development Goals, such as food security, health care, clean water and sanitation, energy, and infrastructure.

Removing gender barriers to STEM requires African governments to make equity in the sciences a priority. Nowhere is this happening more successfully than in Rwanda, where our collective experience has helped more than 1,250 girls and young women excel in STEM disciplines.

The African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS), in Rwanda's capital, Kigali, is one of these agents of change. The school believes that the next Einstein could be an African woman, an educational approach that informs its comprehensive strategy to plug leaks in the STEM development pipeline.

AIMS's innovative approach includes helping governments train teachers, ensure that female students are not vastly outnumbered in their classrooms, support students who are mothers, and engage with industry leaders to help graduates succeed in their careers. To attract more female students, 30 percent of the school's scholarships are reserved for female applicants, and the school aspires to reach 50 percent in the near future.

Similarly, Carnegie Mellon University Africa (CMU-Africa), also in Kigali, is championing change by allocating 30 percent of its scholarships

to young women. These commitments will have a positive effect on the entire institution, as CMU-Africa seeks to increase dramatically enrollment of female scientists.

Finally, the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) in Rwanda has funded the education of 1,200 girls enrolled at the country's top-performing secondary schools specializing in STEM subjects. Of these students, an estimated 70 percent are expected to study science at the university level.

Despite these positive developments, quotas alone will not achieve parity. To make lasting gains, opportunities outside the classroom are also needed. At FAWE Rwanda, a program called Tuseme (a Swahili word meaning 'let's speak out') offers girls leadership training through drama, song, and creative arts to teach presentation, negotiation, and decision-making skills. FAWE Rwanda also works with teachers to develop gender-responsive pedagogical methods.

Likewise, at CMU-Africa, scholars are invited to participate in the university's Meeting of the Minds Symposium, an annual global gathering for undergraduates to showcase their work to a wider audience of faculty, students, government officials, and industry representatives. And, the Next Einstein Forum, a select program at AIMS that recognizes Africa's best young scientists and technologists — of whom 40 percent are women — provides emerging innovators with an opportunity to lead their own research

while inspiring the next generation of scientific thinkers.

Inequalities faced by girls and young women in African education cannot be erased overnight. As Rebecca, a Mastercard Foundation scholar from Uganda, remembers, "When I was at my school, the boys used to call us 'half-men,' because if you're a lady and you go for sciences, you're a half-man." But, Rebecca adds, "It was cool being a science student."

Africa needs more women who share Rebecca's enthusiasm for STEM. To ensure that science remains appealing to girls, schools, governments, and industries must cooperate to educate teachers and mentors, and allocate funding to close the gender gap.

As Miranda, another Mastercard Foundation scholar, recently observed, "As we try to find new innovations and inventions to drive the economy, I believe that math and science is at the forefront of that progress." As professionals working to improve African education, we could not agree more.

*Aminata Garba is an assistant teaching professor in electrical and computer engineering at Carnegie Mellon University Africa. Dorothy Nyambi is Executive Vice President of the African Institute of Mathematical Sciences (AIMS). Hendrina Doroba is Executive Director of the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE). Ivy Mwai is a senior program manager at the Mastercard Foundation.*

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EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

# AIDS, NCDs, and the ABCs of Organizing



Kent Buse and Laurel Sprague

Kent Buse is Chief of Strategic Policy Directions at UNAIDS. Laurel Sprague is Executive Director of the Global Network of People Living with HIV.

**N**on-communicable diseases (NCDs), like heart disease, stroke, cancer, diabetes, and chronic lung disease, are responsible for 70% of all deaths. There is incontrovertible evidence that tobacco use, inactivity, unhealthy diets, and excessive alcohol consumption increase the odds of dying prematurely from an NCD.

And yet, despite widespread knowledge of the risks, global obesity goes largely unchecked, while tobacco and alcohol use continue to rise. It is against this backdrop that networks of NCD alliances met December 9-11 at the second Global NCD Alliance Forum, in the United Arab Emirates.

As they search for solutions to bring NCDs under control, they should look for inspiration to the movement to fight AIDS. People living with and affected by HIV continue to drive response efforts, and their unique form of mobilization has been instrumental to progress. While the battle is not over, AIDS activists know that it can be won.

Similarly, a mobilized NCD movement can turn the tide against that epidemic. Yet, in 2015, Richard Horton, the editor of The Lancet, described the NCD community as needing an "electric shock to its semi-comatose soul." He added: "But who has the courage to deliver it?" We believe there are lessons to be learned from AIDS activists. As global attention focuses on NCD prevention, those seeking to control preventable illnesses should look to the 'ABCs' of AIDS organizing for guidance.

The first letter that the NCD community should consider is 'A', for activism. Anyone over 40 will recall images of AIDS activists performing 'die-ins' at scientific meetings around the world.

In the United States, AIDS activists took to the streets, even shutting down the Food and Drug Administration's headquarters for a day in October 1988. Globally, activists lobbied governments and pharmaceutical companies to make medicines more affordable. This activism continues, and should serve as a model for action on NCDs. Next, the NCD community must adopt a bolder approach to budgets - the 'B' of the AIDS movement's strategy. Civic organizing and grassroots activism may fuel early energies, but organizing and sustaining a broad-based coalition takes money. The AIDS movement was clear about this from the beginning, and lobbied for resources to support its advocacy and accountability effectively.

'C' is for coalitions: the AIDS movement was quick to understand that progress would come only with diverse support. Activists established links between people living with HIV and those with other concerns, such as women's rights, intellectual property, nutrition, and housing. Issue-specific coalitions and campaigns work best when they bring together government insiders and outsiders, to combine perspectives and expertise.



“As global attention focuses on NCD prevention, those seeking to control preventable illnesses should look to the 'ABCs' of AIDS organizing for guidance.”



The AIDS movement also understood that a holistic response to the epidemic was essential if support was to spread. Thus, 'D', the determinant of success, was to draw attention to the interconnectivity of the challenge. For example, lobbying education leaders to keep girls in school longer has contributed to providing young people with the knowledge and agency to make smart decisions about when and with whom to negotiate safe sex. Similarly, links were forged between groups working on poverty, gender, and nutrition - factors that played a role in driving the AIDS crisis. NCDs are no less isolated in their causality, and similarly require a multi-sector approach to prevention.

Engagement - 'E' - was what helped the AIDS movement become so influential. By borrowing from the playbook of the disability rights movement, which championed the mantra "Nothing About Us Without Us", AIDS advocates demanded representation on the bodies established to address the disease. For example, UNAIDS remains the only United Nations agency with seats on its board for representatives from civil society. This norm is so powerfully embedded in the AIDS movement that it would be almost unthinkable for an AIDS meeting to take place without representation from the community.

Disease prevention movements must also develop persuasive narratives, and 'F' - framing the issue - was essential to the AIDS community's effort to gain support from political leaders. In particular, access to AIDS treatment was framed as a matter of economic justice. Framing the narrative this way led to a dramatic reduction in the price of medicines, so much so, that more than half of people living with HIV in low- and middle-income countries are in treatment.

An equally important framing issue for AIDS, which is highly relevant to the NCDs movement, is that of responsibility. The AIDS community worked hard to shift the focus from blaming individuals' lifestyle choices to putting the onus on the state for providing health care and removing legal discrimination.

In the AIDS debate, gender - our movement's 'G' - was a significant focal point. HIV was initially seen as a 'gay disease', and gender identity was embedded in the DNA of the AIDS movement early on. Gender dimensions of NCDs are no less important; one only has to consider how alcohol and tobacco are marketed to understand that. Gender, therefore, must

become a focus of NCDs prevention efforts.

Finally, 'H' - human rights - was the bedrock of the AIDS response. Campaigns were launched against discrimination in workplaces, schools, and health centers. Strategic litigation helped ensure equality under the law. The AIDS movement refused to hold major conferences in countries with punitive laws against people living with HIV. The NCD movement could take a similar tack by, for example, refusing to meet in countries that fail to restrict advertising of junk food to children.

The list of AIDS lessons could continue throughout the alphabet, but ending with 'H' is

apt, given that human rights drove the response, and should drive the response to NCDs. Poverty, exclusion, and social and economic marginalization put people at higher risk for HIV. It is no different for NCDs.

The early mainstream reaction to the AIDS epidemic was to ask, "Why don't those people make better choices?" The AIDS movement made clear that that was the wrong question. Today, with 70 percent of the planet at risk of premature death from preventable illnesses, 'those people' are many of us. The NCD and AIDS communities can learn from one another. We are a stronger movement when we join forces.

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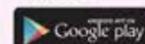
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# France unveils new Africa-Europe relations

Over the past year Europe has aggressively pursued a policy of deterrence of migrants by either hampering NGOs carrying out search-and-rescue operations at sea or by providing incentives to Turkey to take back Syrian refugees and to sub-Saharan states to repatriate migrants stuck in North Africa.

Europe's migrant policies came under increased pressure last month following the release of video footage revealing the existence of slave markets of young African migrants in Libya. The video footage turned what were earlier private concerns over the policy shift into public criticism and challenged Europe's resolve on migration while highlighting that Africa's problems are now increasingly Europe's problems.

No doubt, Europe is facing its own problems, too. For the first time, the very existence of the European Union is being threatened from within. Brexit and the increasing popularity of anti-migration, inward-looking, nationalist parties are shaking the

foundations of the continent's liberal post-war consensus.

It is against this background that French President Emmanuel Macron began a three-day visit to Africa last week. With the United Kingdom enmeshed in Brexit and political stalemate hobbling Germany, the new resident at the Élysée Palace sees an opportunity to claim the mantle of leader promoting Europe's progressive, pro-business ideals.

Visiting Burkina Faso at the start of his first African tour on 5 December, the French President outlined his plans for Africa. Speaking in Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso, President Macron announced that France was embarking on a new approach with the continent that looks beyond Paris's traditional spheres of influence in French-speaking West Africa.

Announcing the setting up of a billion-euro fund for small- and medium-sized African businesses, President Macron said he wanted France, and by extension Europe, to promote more investment, education



and cultural exchanges in the continent. He said that the money could help firms maximize value from agriculture, but also the digital sector.

The French President clarified that the money would be provided France's Public Investment Bank, which offers firms tailored funding, and the French Development Agency. Macron said the ultimate objective is "to multiply this fund tenfold, which is absolutely do-able if we appeal to our European allies or other private financiers,

European or non-European."

Such investments as the billion-euro fund were "a necessity in order to face up the demographic challenges," said President Macron. With Africa facing a population explosion over coming decades, the continent is hoping to create 450 million jobs by 2050.

The French President's new European vision for Africa was also highlighted during his visit to the other two countries in his itinerary,

Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana. In Abidjan, the capital of Côte d'Ivoire, the President attended a Europe-Africa summit where linked relations with Africa to his plans for European Union reform. Meanwhile, his final destination, Ghana, a former British colony, underlined France's new 'continental approach to Africa'.

The potential for a change in dynamics between Africa and Europe clearly exists, with France's new approach being welcomed by leaders on the continent. Africa, too, it appears is finally keen to escape a relationship which has long been defined by aid donations and investment that sees the proliferation of corruption and ends up with most of the continent's wealth being shipped overseas.

President Macron summed up this mutual need by reiterating, "Our collective responsibility is to enable Africa to succeed as our fates are linked. If Africa fails we all lose together, as Europe will be overwhelmed by a wave of migration... and deep imbalances of prosperity."

## Africa 2017 forum promotes young entrepreneurs



Long-term sustainability of economic growth in Africa depends on encouraging entrepreneurship among youth and creating an enabling environment for businesses to flourish. This was the message from recently concluded Africa 2017 Forum, which was held from 7 - 9 December in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt.

Held under the patronage of Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El Sisi, the forum provided a platform for promoting trade and investment within Africa. With the theme of 'Driving Investment for Inclusive Growth', the event witnessed a galaxy of attendees and speakers, including the Presidents of Comoros, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, Rwanda and Somalia. Africa 2017 was also attended by the Vice-President of Nigeria and Prime Ministers of Egypt and Mozambique and the Deputy Prime Minister of Ethiopia, as well as business leaders and entrepreneurs from across the continent.

In his opening statement at the Forum, President Sisi detailed that the forum aims to provide a platform for heads of state and government as well as private sector and business leaders in Africa and the world to discuss a wide range of business and development issues on the continent and to engage with some of Africa's most important economic partners and stakeholders. He added that discussions during the forum "will help us further promote intra-African trade; design solutions to spur investment and to accelerate job creation and more inclusive growth." The president pointed

out that the Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA) signed between three African trade blocs COMESA, EAC and SADC at Sharm El-Sheikh in June 2015, was an important step in the direction of creating a continental free trade area that would encompass all African nations.

"These endeavors primarily aim at facilitating trade across the continent, supporting African nations in their quest for development and prosperity as well as pushing forward regional integration efforts," said President Sisi.

Enhancing the role of women in our societies will enable us to better deliver on our development agenda. For that reason, empowering women will be an important aspect of the Africa 2017 Forum's program. Meanwhile, the 'Young Entrepreneurs Day' will ensure youth's engagement and their central position in the Forum's programs, added the Egyptian President.

It is noteworthy that despite adverse global economic headwinds, African economies have proved to be resilient and remain among the most attractive destinations for global investment. Business has been growing fast in Africa since the beginning of the new millennium, but it could be a lot more, especially within Africa itself, said Heba Salama, the regional investment director for Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) in the run-up to the Forum.

She pointed out that intra-African trade has consistently represented around 15 percent of its total trade for the past

few years. As regional trade agreements multiply, we are in a position to better capitalize on our diversifying African economies. FDI into Africa is certainly moving in the right direction: 21 percent of all announced greenfield FDI projects were in manufacturing and 75 percent in services in the last year. And of these, 51 percent of Africa to Africa investment projects announced was in manufacturing,

For his part, Nigerian economist, entrepreneur and philanthropist Tony Elumelu, speaking at the Youth Entrepreneurs Day held on 7 December, said: "We need to hold our governments accountable for failing to create the right conditions that would create the right environment for businesses to do well, and for economic opportunities to advance, because we are a continent that is hugely endowed naturally and there's no reason why our young ones should suffer."

Other speakers at the forum urged African governments to support entrepreneurs in order to create an ecosystem that will inspire more young people to remain and advance the continent in order to curb rising unemployment and stem the migration crisis.

For their part young entrepreneurs said that though they face various challenges as they get their ventures off the ground, they did not think of them as deterrents. They say that the youth is the future of Africa, but the youth want to be the present of Africa help create the Africa they would like to live in, said one young entrepreneur.



## World Bank revises Kenyan economic growth

Kenyan economy is expected to rebound in 2018 as headwinds such as drought, slowing credit access and politics, which hurt growth this year, begins to ease, said the World Bank in its latest assessment of the country's economy.

The bank said last week it had cut back forecast of the country's growth this year to 4.9 percent from an earlier estimate of 5.5 percent. It expects East Africa's largest economy to rebound to a growth of 5.5 percent next year before accelerating to 5.9 percent in 2019.

"We believe Kenya's economy can rebound and strengthen through specific measures that safeguard macroeconomic stability, enable the recovery of private sector credit growth, and mitigate the impact of future adverse weather conditions on the agriculture sector," said Diarietou Gaye, World Bank Country Director for Kenya. The economy has witnessed several shocks this year that forced the government and international monetary fund to scale down their growth projection. A severe drought in the last quarter of 2016 hurt agricultural production in Kenya that led to the World Bank scaling down its growth forecast in April this year by half percent.

A rate-capping law that was introduced in the fourth quarter of last year contract contributed to the slowing of credit to businesses, which also hurt economic growth.

The slowdown in credit growth coupled by a prolonged politicking season that saw the country go to its first ever presidential election rerun at the end of October also hurt the country's key sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing and trade.

Meanwhile, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has cautioned that Kenya's rising debt levels need to be contained to cushion the economy from unplanned shocks. The fund said that while the economy has proven to be resilient to drought and prolonged electioneering period this year, the rising public debt was a concern that needed to be addressed urgently to check any shocks to the economy in the future.

More than three million cases of cholera are reported worldwide each year. The infectious disease is transmitted through food or water contaminated by the bacterium *Vibrio cholera* and hits developing countries particularly hard. The standard regimen for protecting against cholera with existing non-living oral cholera vaccines includes administering two doses over a two-week period. Now, researchers at the University of Maryland in the United States have found that giving a stronger single-dose of a live oral vaccine could be an effective tool in controlling outbreaks more quickly.

Researchers assessed the effectiveness (ability to stimulate vibriocidal antibody, an immune response that correlates with protection) of a single high-dose of live cholera vaccine CVD 103-HgR, which was developed by the university's

## Single-dose vaccine for cholera epidemic

Center for Vaccine Development (CVD), versus the standard two-dose killed vaccine approach.

The research team found that the single-dose live oral vaccine approach could be the more effective way to rapidly protect individuals in large outbreaks of cholera. Given the highly encouraging results, the team envisions that as a matter of priority high-dose CVD 103-HgR will now be evaluated more completely



in low income countries menaced by cholera.

Cholera transmission is endemic in many areas of Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. In severe cases, patients pass large amounts of diarrhea that causes rapid dehydration and ultimately death if left untreated. This year, the World Health Organization

(WHO) estimated that in Yemen alone there have been a million cases of cholera.

Researchers will now study whether the single high-dose live vaccine is suitable for initiating vaccination campaigns early during outbreaks to nip them in the bud, as well as for preemptive vaccination

to diminish the burden of expected seasonal increases of endemic cholera in countries where this disease persists as a public health problem. Also, since young children less than 5 years of age suffer the highest incidence of cholera but are less well protected than adults by the current two-dose oral killed vaccines, it will be important to assess the effectiveness of a single high-dose of CVD 103-HgR live vaccine in protecting young children.

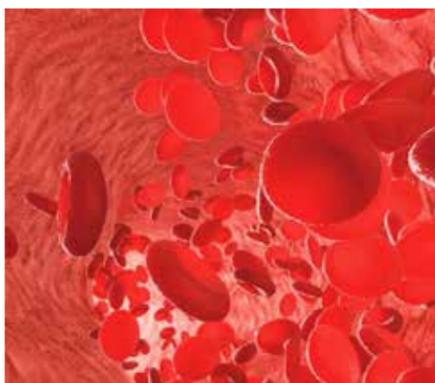
The vaccine was approved in 2016 for use in the US by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for adults 18-64 years old traveling to regions where cholera is common. PaxVax, a global biotechnology company based in California, received marketing approval from the FDA for the vaccine, and CVD scientists have been working closely with PaxVax since 2009 to develop the vaccine and secure FDA licensure approval.

## Simple blood test predicts recurrence of breast cancer

A simple blood test that detects tumor cells circulating in the blood shows promise as a new way to predict high or low risk of a breast cancer relapse, finds a new proof-of-concept study by the US-based ECOG-ACRIN Cancer Research Group.

The researchers measured the prevalence of circulating tumor cells (CTCs) in blood samples from patients cancer-free five years or more after diagnosis, and then associated CTC presence with a later recurrence.

Late recurrence five or more years after surgery accounts for at least one-half of recurrences of breast cancer, and currently there are no tests that identify who are at highest risk. The study found that in women who were cancer-free five years after diagnosis, about five percent had a positive CTC test. More importantly, they also found that a positive test was associated with a 35 percent recurrence risk after two years,



compared with only two percent for those with a negative CTC test.

The concept study aimed to explore the use of the CTC blood test in a new way. Currently, the test is FDA-approved for use by physicians to monitor response to treatment

in patients with advanced breast, colon or prostate cancer, but not early stage cancer.

A rise in the number of circulating tumor cells in the blood in patients with advanced disease may indicate trouble before it shows up on a scan. In this study, the research team evaluated this test in a different setting — individuals alive and cancer-free about five years after their diagnosis and potentially cured, but still at risk for having a recurrence of their disease.

The research group said their ultimate goal was to use similar blood tests to tailor treatment in a way that minimizes recurrence risk for those at high risk, and spare treatment for those at low risk who may be unlikely to benefit from it.

The findings of this analysis provide strong evidence to further evaluate this new risk assessment approach using CTC and other blood-based tests in this setting.

## UV microscope to help in diagnosis

A new microscope that uses ultraviolet light to illuminate samples enables pathologists to assess high-resolution images of biopsies and other fresh tissue samples for disease within minutes, without requiring the time-consuming preparation of conventional slides or destroying the tissue.

The technology, known as Microscopy with UV Surface Excitation (MUSE), uses ultraviolet light at wavelengths below the 300 nanometer range to penetrate the surface of tissue samples by only a few microns (about the same thickness of tissue slices on traditional microscope slides.)

Samples that have been stained with eosin or other standard dyes to highlight important features such as nuclei, cytoplasm and extracellular components produce signals from the UV excitation that are bright enough to be detected by conventional color cameras using sub-second exposure times. The process allows for rapid imaging of large areas and immediate interpretation.

The new MUSE technology, developed at the University of California, eliminates any need for conventional tissue processing with formalin fixation, paraffin embedding or thin-sectioning.

And, since it does not require lasers, confocal, multi-photon or optical coherence tomography instrumentation, the simple



technology makes it well suited for deployment wherever biopsies are obtained and evaluated.

MUSE's ability to quickly gather high-resolution images without consuming the

tissue is an especially important feature, since sometimes just preparing conventional microscope slides can consume most of or even all of small specimens.

The ability to obtain instant, high-resolution, full-color images for histology, pathology or toxicology studies is also useful for basic scientists who want to assess tissue samples from experimental animal models at the laboratory bench.



## Right- or left-handedness decided before birth

Are you born or do you become right-handed or left-handed? A study by researchers at the International School for Advanced Studies in Italy shows that hand preference is already well defined at the 18th week of gestation. Analyzing the characteristics of several fetal movements, the researchers have been able to accurately foresee the hand preference observed in the same boys and girls at age nine.

The predictive capacity of the method used could be a good starting point for the early recognition of pathologies characterized by cerebral asymmetries, such as depression, schizophrenia and autism spectrum disorders.

It takes a few months for a newborn to be able to grasp an object, a few years to draw and then to write, manifesting the possible preference for the use of one hand or other parts of the body. And yet, the new study shows that as early as in the maternal womb, hand preference is well defined and the motor system is highly sophisticated.

The researchers studied fetal kinematics (limb movements) to predict manual dominance of 29 fetuses. After nine years they compared their predictions with the preference shown by the same boys and girls obtaining an accuracy that ranged between 89 to 100 percent depending on the parameters used.

In particular, the researchers analyzed the movements of the hands of the fetuses at the 14th, 18th and 22nd week of gestation using a 4D ultrasound scan, viewing the three dimensional image in real time and in movement, in 20-minute sessions. They studied three types of movements: two of greater precision, directed to the eyes and mouth, and one directed to the uterine wall, as a control. The results have shown that starting from the 18th week the fetuses execute significantly more quickly the movements requiring precision with that which will become the preferred hand.

The study, which reveals the high level of maturation and specialization of the motor system in utero with high accuracy, opens new perspectives for its use in the clinical field. Hand preference, in fact, is due to the prevalence of one cerebral hemisphere over the other. This characteristic has sometimes been linked to pathologies which involve a cerebral asymmetry, such as depression, schizophrenia and autistic spectrum disorders.



## Genius makeup tips for hooded eyes

**L**ike the rest of the body, eyes come in all shapes and sizes, and one of these variations is the hooded eye. Hooded eyes feature excess skin folding down from the brow bone to the lash line, which obscures your crease, shrinks your eyelids and can make you look drowsy. Lots of people have this eye shape from birth, but it could also be the result of your lid drooping with age. Whether you want to bring the drama for a night-out look or simply appear more bright-eyed for your day at the office, here are some makeup techniques you need to make your eyes - hooded lids and all - shine.

**For wide-awake eyes:** Lack of lid space can close in hooded eyes, making you appear tired. Fake a good night's sleep with strategically placed highlighter.

Blend a pretty champagne shade in the inner corner of your eyes and across your lid, bringing the shade up toward your brow bone. Be generous with the shade at the inner corners to bring light (and the illusion of space) to that area.

Apply a little on your lower lash line as well. Add a few coats of lengthening mascara to your top and bottom lashes to help open up and define your eyes.

**For an instant eye-lift:** To combat the downturned look of hooded eyes, all you need is the flick of a felt-tip liner. Extend and lift the

liner on the upper lid a bit higher than you normally do, creating a sexy cat eye. Start by powdering your lids to create a dry, creaseless canvas for the eyeliner. Then, pull the skin of your lid up to give you a little space to work with.

Run the liner in a fine line along your lashes, stopping a few millimeters from the outer corner of your eye. Hold the lid up for a few seconds longer, allowing the formula to dry so it doesn't leave a mark on your lids. Release, and then flick the liner up toward the tail of your brow, starting where you stopped your line earlier. You will get greater precision with a firm, felt-tip applicator than you will with a gel or powder. Keep the wing short for a subtle lift, or lengthen it for a more feline effect. Finish with a coat of mascara.

**For smoldering smoky eyes:** Smoky eyes are tough to execute for most mortals, and they can be especially tricky for people with hooded eyes. Hooded lids eat up shadow, so you will need to apply it slightly above the lid to create a crease where there isn't one naturally. Top off the look with some falsies to open your eyes way up.

You can achieve this look by blending a medium-toned brown shade onto your lid, and look straight ahead into a mirror. With your eyes open, you'll be able to see when the shadow starts to become visible. Blend the brown shade up past your socket, towards your brow bone. Don't worry, you've got plenty of room up there. This shadow technique contours your socket into looking like a crease, lending a sultry, defined vibe to your look.

Next, blend the same shadow along your bottom lash line. Rim your water line and upper lash line with a deep grey liner, and use a light champagne shadow to highlight just the inner corners of your eyes to keep them from looking closed-in.

Finish the look with a volumizing mascara on your top and bottom lashes. Add a set of medium-length false lashes to make your eyes appear even bigger.



## Summer dresses with winter coats combos

**O**ne of the more depressing aspects of dressing for winter is bidding a temporary farewell to your collection of summer dresses and not seeing them again. However, it is not really necessary to put dresses that traditionally would be considered off-season into storage, it is very possible to wear summery dresses paired with a big old winter coat. Here, a few tricks for pulling this off.

**Mix textures:** The key to nailing this trend is to make sure that you're mixing textures, you can easily pair a chiffon summer dress with a bulky shearling or a silky floral slip dress with an oversized wool military coat. The end result that comes from wearing a warm-weather piece of clothing with

something that's meant specifically for chilly temperatures will make this outfit seem nice.

**Experiment with different styles:** Shearling is undoubtedly the cosiest winter coat on trend this year and you can wear as much or as little as you like; go subtle in some lining or full on SNUG-tastic in a shearling long length. Puffers can also be a good choice, from long-length puffers to duvet-worthy styles and hoods, make sure to update your puffer for the new season.

**Don't be afraid to go really seasonal:** Have a summer dress in the back of your closet that you normally reserve for places like the beach or for scorching hot days? Even that with the right accessories can work in the winter. If you would prefer not to show excess skin, layer a turtleneck underneath.

**Break out your boots:** Mixing a floaty dress with a solid pair of boots is one of the easiest ways to nail the styling aspect of the trend. Over-the-knee suede boots, ankle boots, chunky lug soles—anything goes.

**Go crazy with color:** Resist the urge to only wear black, instead pastels, primary brights,

stripes, florals all work despite dated fashion rules. You are sure to draw attention in a bold, belted coat that gives off major vibes which you can match with your equally fun-colored dress. Alternatively, introduce a dose of color blocking to your look with a multi-colored trench coat that clashes in the right way with the print from a bright summer dress.

**Top off your look with winter accessories:** To drive home the point that this winter/summer combo is indeed intentional and not a case of season-rushing, finish off your outfit with appropriate accessories like a slouchy beanie, an oversized scarf, or even a blanket scarf. When your waist is cinched in a glamorous coat, giving you an automatic hourglass shape, and so your neckline is left on the looser side. Opt for a lightweight scarf that can folded over (and over again) and pulled tight to protect your neck. If your coat is so glamorous, stick with luxe looking accessories in a clean palette: silky, gilded and almost-gray all work, and go for a slouchy beret. You can also finish your combo look with other functional yet fab accessories like convertible mittens and a knitted turban.

## Upgrade your lashes

**Y**ou already know the transformative power of a pair of false eyelashes; this is in no way groundbreaking. There is, however, always some kind of upgrade that can be made — even for lash pros. Of course, professionally applied extensions are the easiest and longest-lasting option to wear, but that method comes with a commitment and level of care that not everyone is up for. If your hands shake at the thought of properly applying a lash strip, you're not alone — but that's no reason for you to be banished to boring eyes for eternity. Instead, try one of the following ideas.

**Get mermaid lash extensions:** Rainbow and mermaid hair colors are still going strong and are no longer reserved for just your head. These multicolored extensions are subtle enough to wear to work but are also a significant step up from your basic black strip lash. These are extensions, so you'll need to



have them applied by a pro. Once on, these last about four weeks.

**Try false bottom lashes:** Applying lower-lash falsies opens up the eye area and makes you appear more awake. It also balances out the look so your eyes don't come off as top-heavy. Consider using a pin-tip amount of clear glue for lower individual lashes. Use tweezers to place these where your natural lashes are sparse. The more individuals you apply to the lower lash line, the more open and bright your eyes will look.

**Coat your lashes in glitter:** Don't try using a large amount of glitz on your own lashes, instead, coat a pair of falsies in a thin layer



of lash glue. Dip the tips in a loose glitter powder (preferably a glitter shadow or something made for the eye area), and let things dry completely. Shake off any excess sparkle before applying.

**Experiment with rainbow mascara:** The hair on your head shouldn't have all the fun. Spread the rainbow love with lashes painted using a spectrum of vibrant mascaras. First, get some disposable mascara wands or a thin eyeliner brush. Start at the inner corner of your lashes, and coat small sections with different colored mascara.

**Use a primer:** Yes, adding a primer is an extra step, but it's a worthwhile one in the long run. You'll immediately notice the difference between using mascara alone and starting with this. Collagen and tiny fibers in the formula add volume and essentially work like a mask for your lashes to keep hairs strong and growing under makeup.

# Google launches Android Oreo Go edition

At Google I/O in May of this year, Google promised a version of Android custom-designed for low-end devices. Last week, Google announced that 'Android Go (Oreo edition)' is being made available for device manufacturers and developers, so you can expect phones running this version of Android out soon.

The premise behind Android Go is pretty simple. It is a build of Android Oreo that is designed to run better on phones with either 512MB or 1GB of RAM. By comparison, the Pixel 2 (like most flagships) has 4GB of RAM, while the iPhone X has 3GB and the Galaxy Note 8 has a whopping 6GB. Making the same operating

system work on both flagships and the cheapest of cheap phones is a challenge, but it is one that Google says it has overcome. Phones based on the 'Oreo Go' will use the 'Go' versions of a handful of Google apps — including the main Google app, Google Assistant, Google Maps, Gmail, and so on. Some of those apps, like YouTube Go, have special features for downloading stuff over Wi-Fi. In other cases, the 'Go' versions are radically smaller than their regular variants. The smaller apps and slimmer OS can as much as halve the amount of storage that is taken up by default on a brand new phone.

There are also performance and



storage improvements in the Go edition of Oreo, but optimizing an app to take up less storage can also mean it takes a little longer to launch. On phones where storage is at a premium, you optimize for that. On most high-end phones, however, you

would rather get those milliseconds back. Google is also piling on a bunch of other data-saving features turned on out of the box. So in Chrome, everything will get run through a Google server that reduces file sizes before it gets delivered to your phone.

There is also the new Dataly app for tracking where you data went.

Going forward, the 'Go edition' of future Android releases will not be quite so delayed compared to the full ones. For now, though, the Go edition of Oreo is available for manufacturers to start using, which should mean we will see it on new devices soon.

Chances are the first phones to use it will be launched in India — Google notes that it has more users in India than it does in the US now. India has more than 400 million internet users, and Google is increasingly looking to Asia as more and more users from developing markets in that region come online.

## Facebook introduces AR effects for Messenger

Facebook today announced a new suite of augmented reality (AR) tools called 'World Effects' for Messenger.

The tools allow users to drop real-time 3D objects into photos or videos within the camera frame. The technology builds on Facebook's existing AR features, like the ability to add filters and masks to your face in a selfie, and it is designed to make Messenger more interactive by leveraging the increasingly sophisticated computer vision capabilities of smartphones. The first set of world effects include a floating heart, an arrow, and a 3D robot and unicorn, as well as word bubbles with predetermined messages like 'love', 'heart', and 'miss you'.

The idea is to make Messenger as playful and multifaceted as possible, so it can stay competitive with Snapchat and, Facebook hopes, lure away some of Snap's younger user base. Snapchat launched a version of this product back in April, calling it 'World Lenses'. Facebook is also looking at being able to identify every object by a smartphone camera in real time, similar to Google's existing Lens feature, but also augmented using object recognition and 3D animation.

A real coffee cup can be recorded showing a virtual wave of steam, for instance. So Facebook



is effectively racing against not just Snapchat in this field, but Apple and Google as well, both of which have launched their own AR platforms in addition to baking in new AR features within their respective mobile apps and services. Facebook is at a disadvantage in this respect. The company may have a billion plus user base but it does not have direct control over the camera on a smartphone, from which the social network is primarily accessed, because it does not own and operate a mobile OS.

## Internet economy soaring in Southeast Asia

Southeast Asia is now the world's third largest region for internet users — with more people online than the entire US population — and internet is having a bigger impact on the region than originally thought, according to a new report co-authored by Google.

China and India typically dominate the conversation when looking at emerging economies in Asia, but Southeast Asia is rapidly being acknowledged as a market where the internet is changing daily behaviors and creating new opportunities. The lack of data has traditionally

grown at a compound annual rate of 41 percent to cross \$10 billion for the first time in 2017. The e-Economy SEA project expects it will go on to hit \$88 billion by 2025 to become the most lucrative segment. Uber and Grab are battling it out in Southeast Asia's ride-sharing market, while local unicorn Go-Jek has plans to expand beyond Indonesia, and that competition is reflected in the report's newest findings. It concluded that total spend on the taxi apps has more than doubled over the two years to cross \$5 billion in 2017. Indonesia, Southeast Asia's largest economy, is likely to account for the majority of that, with the 2015 research pegging its share of revenue at more than 40 percent.

Other nuggets from the report include:

**Mobile internet:** Southeast Asians spend more time on the mobile internet than anyone else on the planet. Thailand is top of the list with 4.2 hours per day, with Indonesia a close second at 3.9 hours per day. To compare, the U.S. spends 2 hours per day, the UK 1.8 hours per day, and Japan 1 hour per day on mobile internet.

**Online shopping:** Southeast Asians spend 140 minutes shopping online each month; this is almost twice as much time as Americans spend in e-commerce marketplaces. The region will have an \$88.1 billion e-commerce market by 2025.

**Ride hailing:** The ride-hailing market in Southeast Asia's ride-hailing market has grown four-fold since 2015 to touch 6 million rides booked every day. The platform is projected to become \$20.1 billion business by 2025.

**Startups:** More than \$12 billion was raised by Southeast Asian startups since 2016. At 0.18 percent of GDP, the amount of investment into Southeast Asian startups is on par with India's and a vote of confidence in Southeast Asia's huge internet potential.



made it difficult to pinpoint that potential but Google and Singaporean sovereign fund Temasek recently released an update to their highly referenced 2015 'e-Economy SEA' report — the main takeaway is that growth has exceeded their initial expectations.

The original report forecast Southeast Asia's internet economy hitting \$200 billion per year by 2025, but now it is estimated that it will top that number, reaching \$50 billion in 2017 alone. Online travel remains the biggest segment for internet-based spending — jumping to \$26.6 billion in 2017 from \$19.1 billion in 2015 — but e-commerce and ride-hailing saw the highest growth. E-commerce, and this does not include second-hand/consumer-to-consumer sales,

## Hidden Keylogger found in HP laptops



Security research has found that some of the laptops sold by HP come with a preinstalled 'keylogger' program that captures keystrokes of users. Cyber-attackers with access to the program could capture passwords as they are typed and use it to access financial and personal accounts of users.

Once a machine is compromised, instead of using a malicious payload that possibly could be identified by security products, a smart attacker might turn on and use the built-in keyboard logger feature, explained analysts at security firm AppRiver. The keyloggers which have now been found across more than 460 different models of HP laptops were inadvertently not removed before shipping. The keylogger was part of the Synaptics touchpad found on HP

laptops and was used for debugging purposes by Synaptics. It's likely that the quality control checks for the third-party drivers were not extensive enough to uncover the disabled keylogger remaining from the software development stage, said the AppRiver analyst.

The keylogger is disabled by default, and requires administrative access to the device to be enabled, so the risk for consumers and business users is at present rather low. Still, it is advisable for consumers to ensure their systems are updated so as to reduce opportunities for exploitation at any future date.

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EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

# Dangerous Delusion of Price Stability



**William White**

A former deputy governor of the Bank of Canada, and a former head of the Monetary and Economic Department of the Bank for International Settlements, is Chairman of the Economic and Development Review Committee at the OECD.



result of easy-money monetary policies, it is not obvious that the solution to the problem is still more easy money.

Central banks' fixation on positive but low inflation under today's prevailing economic conditions is also increasingly dangerous. Global debt ratios have risen sharply since the financial crisis began, while traditional lenders' margins have been squeezed, raising questions about their overall health. And as lending has continued to migrate further into the 'shadows', price discovery in financial markets has become severely compromised, to the point that many assets now seem to be overvalued.

These developments constitute a threat not just to financial stability, but also to the workings of the real economy. Owing to easy financing and regulatory forbearance, aggregate supply has risen as 'zombie' companies have proliferated. Meanwhile, aggregate demand has been restrained by the debt headwinds — yet another result of easy monetary conditions. In view of these conditions, continuing to insist on monetary easing seems particularly ill advised. With so many potential dangers on the horizon, central bankers should at least consider rethinking the fundamental assumptions underlying their policies.

Looking further into the future, when some semblance of 'normality' has been restored, central banks should focus less on hitting near-term inflation targets, and more on avoiding 'boom-bust' credit cycles. Unlike slight deviations from inflation targets, or even slight deflation, the latter actually are costly.

The major central banks' vigilant pursuit of positive but low inflation has become a dangerous delusion. It is dangerous because the policies needed to achieve the objective could have unwanted side effects; and it is a delusion because there is currently no good reason to be pursuing the objective in the first place.

In the 1970s, when inflation in the advanced economies rose sharply, central banks rightly resisted it. The lesson central bankers took from that battle was that low inflation is a necessary condition for sustained growth. But, subtly and over time, this lesson has morphed into a belief that low inflation is also a sufficient condition for sustained growth.

But then the world changed. From the late 1980s onward, low inflation was largely due to positive supply-side shocks — such as the Baby Boomer-fueled expansion of the labor force and the integration of many emerging countries into the global trading system. These forces boosted

growth while lowering inflation. And monetary policy, far from restricting demand, was generally focused on preventing below-target inflation.

As we now know, that led to a period of easy monetary conditions, which, together with financial deregulation and technological developments, sowed the seeds of the 2007 financial crisis and the ensuing recession. The fundamental analytical error then — as it still is today — was a failure to distinguish between alternative sources of disinflation.

The end of the Great Moderation should have disabused policymakers of their belief that low inflation guarantees future economic stability. If anything, the opposite has been true. Having doubled down on their inflation targets, central banks have had to rely on an unprecedented array

of untested policy instruments to achieve their goals.

Central bankers sometimes rationalize their current policies not by extolling the benefits of low inflation, but by underscoring the heavy costs of even mild deflation. Yet while there is ample evidence showing that high inflation is more costly than low inflation, it is hard to find similar evidence that mild deflation is all that costly.

In fact, the widely held assumption that consumers and corporate investors will extrapolate from past price declines and hold off on making purchases as a result of deflation has essentially no empirical support behind it. True, as a matter of arithmetic, deflation increases the real (inflation-adjusted) burden of debt service. But if debt levels are at onerous heights as a

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