



LOCAL **2**

Special committee tackles prison overcrowding

THE TIMES

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LOCAL **8**

Father Amanuel the first Kuwaiti to head a church

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Belt-tightening deficit budget for 2018-19

Staff Report

State budget for fiscal year 2018-2019 estimates total expenditure at KD20 billion and revenue at KD15 billion. The deficit of KD5 billion, which climbs to KD6.5 billion after 10 percent transfer to the 'Future Generations Fund', is the fourth consecutive budget shortfall in recent years.

Speaking at a news conference held on 29 January to announce the annual budget, Minister of Finance Dr. Naif Falah Al-Hajraf said he was presenting a belt-tightening budget aimed at consolidating financial reforms and enhancing economic sustainability. Describing the budget, which covers the period to 31 March 2019, as challenging, the minister said the government was determined to overcome

the budget's revenue constraints by rationalizing its spending policies capping expenditures and borrowing from debt markets.

However, he made clear that the government decision to limit public spending at KD20 billion would not affect public sector salaries and that the state would continue to provide support for those who deserve it.

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Celestial spectacle over Kuwait

See Page 8



Kuwait outlines priorities during UNSC presidency

Kuwait would continue pursuing its foreign policy that it has reiterated over the past many decades, on top of which is the Palestinian issue, as well its policies of preventive diplomacy and mediation, said Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Mansour Al-Otaibi.

Ambassador Al-Otaibi was speaking on the

occasion of Kuwait assuming presidency of the 15-member United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for the month of February. Kuwait was elected as non-permanent member to the UNSC for a two-year term in 2018 after a hiatus of 40 years and last held presidency of the UN's top security policy body in February 1979.

Continued on Page 9

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Special committee tackles prison overcrowding

In a move to address prison congestion, living conditions of inmates and other security issues, the Ministry of Interior (Mol) has formed a special committee in coordination with the Public Prosecutor's Office, said Mol Undersecretary Mahmoud Al Dossari.

Local media recently reported that an inspection committee set up by the Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah had found that around 4,000 inmates from several nationalities were being held in the Central Prison, which had been built to

accommodate only 1,200 prisoners. "We will try to cut down the number of prisoners, review some rulings, cancel others, and release some of the inmates," said Al Dossari, following his meeting with members of the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights last week.

Clarifying on the overcrowding in the central prison, Al Dossari said he had discussed with the lawmakers about "the necessity of introducing new legislation that allowed the exchange of prisoners with other countries so that foreign inmates



could spend the remaining of their jail sentence in their countries".

He pointed out that the special

committee set up by the Mol, comprising of senior officials from security agencies and the head of

the Central Prison, had already started removing some security restrictions on citizens and people living illegally in Kuwait.

In a bid to ease the precarious prison overcrowding, the committee had recommended sending 200 Indian and Egyptian inmates, whose verdicts were final and could not be further challenged in court, to finish serving their remaining prison terms in their home countries.

The committee also decided to release 700 Kuwaitis convicted on drugs charges, under stringent conditions.

LuLu Hypermarket launches 'Incredible India 2018'



LuLu Hypermarket, the leading hypermarket chain in the region, launched its annual 'Incredible India 2018'. The event was inaugurated by the newly appointed Indian Ambassador to Kuwait H.E. K. Jeeva Sagar on 25 January, 2018 at the

hypermarket's Al Rai outlet. Top management of LuLu Hypermarket in Kuwait along with a large crowd of shoppers, well-wishers and media personnel attended the inauguration. A two-hour long cultural program of dances and

music showcasing India's rich and colorful culture was a highlight of the inaugural event.

During the 11-day promotional period, from 24 January to 3 February, all LuLu Hypermarket outlets in the country will offer special promotional

prices on all Indian products. As part of the promotion, the glorious heritage of India will be spotlighted through large cut-outs of several well-known heritage monuments in India, further emphasizing the variety and uniqueness of the

country. Lulu Hypermarket, which is the region's leading lifestyle shopping destination, has anchored its position in Kuwait by providing customers with a distinctive shopping experience unlike any other retail outlet.



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BAIA performs Swan Lake at Winter Wonderland event



The British Academy of International Arts (BAIA) delighted a captivated audience at the Winter Wonderland event held at the Al Hamra tower and Mall with twenty dancers between ages' six to eleven performing ballet steps from the world famous ballet, Swan Lake.

The students gave a high class dance performance reminiscent of London or Moscow, with BAIA's Primary Ballet students ages six and seven years opening the act. With a spectacular performance of the Swan Lake Waltz, their spritely dance and bright smiles captured the audience.

BAIA's Junior Company Class, an auditioned class for young dancers, took to the stage to end the show with a moving performance of the Dying Swan from Swan Lake. As well as dance classes, BAIA offer courses in theatre, speech, arts and crafts, with individual music tuition for a variety of instruments. BAIA courses lead to prestigious examinations with a number of UK examination boards; BBO, NATD and LAMDA.

For further information regarding courses at BAIA, and the 'Musicality' dance show, contact: 50962809.



Grand Hyper launches its 12th branch at Al Rai



Grand Hyper launched its newest branch in Al Rai as a New Year gift to Kuwait, and amazing inaugural offers coinciding with Hala February celebrations. The managing director of the Regency Group, Dr. Anwar Ameen, and Sheikh Dawood Salman Al Sabah, jointly inaugurated the new branch on Wednesday, 31 January.

Abu Baker Mohammed, N.V. Mohammad (Director Regency Group), Abdussubhan Shamsudheen, AP Nabeel Salam, Jassim Mohammad Khamis Al Sharrah, Ayyoob Kachery (Regional Director), Dr. Abdul Fathah (Director Grand Hyper, Kuwait), Mohammad Suneer (CEO) and Thahseer Ali (General Manager), were the other dignitaries present at the ceremony.

This is Grand Hyper's 12th branch in Kuwait and the 49th in the region. The inauguration of the showroom coincides with the start of the festive month of February in Kuwait, and to add to the celebratory mood, there are several inaugural offers that reward customers handsomely.

Speaking to the media, Dr. Anwar Ameen stated that the new opening is a tribute to the loyal customers in Kuwait, "who have always supported all our initiatives, fully appreciating the value that we offer them both in terms of quality and quantity. We stay focused on providing satisfaction to our customers in order to build their trust, which is our biggest investment." Further, he noted that

the journey of Grand Hyper in Kuwait is a testimony to our dedication and sincerity to our customers, who have patronized us loyally in the face of stiff competition. "The inaugural offers we are extending to our customers is our way of expressing our gratitude for their support. We promise that we will keep raising the bar higher in providing greater value to them, fulfilling their growing needs," he added.

The new showroom is located in the heart of Kuwait's busiest commercial district of Al Rai, at the intersection of the 4th Ring Road and the Airport Road 55. The showroom boasts an expansive parking area and spans an enormous 45,000 sq feet on a single floor, providing all the

needs of consumers under one roof, including a special food section that serves Indian, continental, Chinese and Arabic cuisines. The food section is set to satisfy the cravings of the large number of workers and the floating population in the area.

Competitive pricing, which has been one of the strengths of Grand Hyper, will continue to benefit customers in its newest showroom, providing value without compromising quality or quantity. The new branch will provide all the needs of the customers under one roof across a vast range of product categories including foodstuffs, electronic equipment and appliances, garments from the collections of European designers, footwear, health

and beauty items among others. Vegetable and fruit produce are sold fresh and are purchased from select farms from around the world to ensure the highest quality.

Meat and fish products are imported from India and other countries on flights on a daily basis to ensure customers a steady supply of fresh products. Grand Hyper is able to provide such competitive prices by sourcing products directly from international suppliers, bypassing middlemen, who otherwise charge a commission adding to the overall cost. All these factors combine to give shoppers a unique shopping experience that is exciting and truly satisfying.

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Vital steps pondered to end visa trafficking

As part of its efforts to combat visa traffickers, the Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) is planning to automatically link private and public institutions and agencies to build a fence around the visa traders.

A source at the PAM said a certificate issued by the Public Authority for Civil Information (PACI) will flash on the screens of labor departments after completion of the automated connection, complete with the date of operation of the building or office, and this will have a great



impact on the so-called temporary renting of apartments.

The source added PAM has asked PACI to approve the registration of the name of the government contract, its number and name and duration of the project on the civil IDs of the laborer.

The source revealed PAM has obtained the approval of the Kuwait Petroleum Corporation to link automatically the eight affiliate oil companies, to issue work permits and the

estimated required labor in accordance with the controls set by PAM. PAM has also requested the General Traffic Department to approve the registration of vehicles used in government contracts on the contract and not on the main company's file, and the number of drivers is according to the number of cars registered on the government project. The source explained PAM is currently working to establish an automated link with the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources.

BEC marks 25 years of business

Bahrain Exchange Company (BEC), one of the oldest leading worldwide money transfer and foreign currency specialist in the region, celebrated on 24 January its 25th year in operation.

BEC, which was established in 1992, is a part of BFC Group Holdings, and began its legacy as Bahrain's most trusted Money Transfer and Currency Exchange Company. In the 1990's, with the influx of expatriate workers into the country, it recognised a requirement in the market for reliable remittance services for expatriates to send money back to loved ones in their home countries and became the first company to offer draft and door to door money transfer products to both local and expatriate residents.

Commenting on the occasion, Mathews

Varughese, BEC General Manager said, "BEC has completed yet another milestone in its successful journey. I would like to take this opportunity and thank all the people who have worked hard for the growth of BEC in the past. Also, I would like to emphasize that in the last 25 years we have delivered the services and products that are best in the market with outstanding results. Opportunities don't happen. You create them. There are no secrets to success; it is the result of strategic thinking, hard work and learning from failure. Going by our values we have won the hearts of the mass expatriate community with care, trust and efficiency".

Since the days of paper drafts and through the evolution of technology, and its focus on



innovation, BEC have developed its product offering to accommodate the ever-evolving needs of its customers and today offers a vast array of fast and secure money transfer services, including its own product - EzRemit Money Transfer which allows customers to send money in minutes to over 46,000 agent locations in 50+ countries. Moreover, its global reach is extended to over 200 countries through its partnership with MoneyGram, Xpress Money and Transfast, an international remittance companies. In addition, BEC is the leading provider of foreign currency exchange in the country, offering over 40 currencies at great rates and at 0% commission.

From its humble beginnings with its first branch in Murgab, the company has grown its network in Kuwait to over 45 branches across

the country and through its parent company 'BFC Group Holdings', it has brand presence globally through the establishment of its affiliate money transfer and currency exchange company's in Bahrain, the United Kingdom, India and Malaysia with a combined retail network of over 125 outlets.

At the heart of BEC is its customers and in 2016, it launched a new brand ambassador 'Bob, the BEC Buddy' whose role is to guarantee that all BEC customers will receive great rates and customer service with every transaction. The launch of Bob also represents the company's vision 'To be the prominent money service company that fully engages with our customers' and with its strong heritage and values of Care, Trust and Efficiency, BEC remains strong as a bull and the customers number one choice.

Carmel School celebrates Golden Jubilee



Carmel School, Kuwait organized an athletic display on 20 January, on its Golden Jubilee celebration at the Khaitan Sports Club. This gilded milestone was graced by Shri. Yashwant Chatpalliwar-2nd Secretary- Indian Embassy and witnessed by sponsors, benefactors, students and their parents and well-wishers. Around 2000 students participated in a spectacular athletic display that highlighted the commitment and discipline instilled in students.

The events of the day included a Butterfly Drill (3rd and 4th graders), colorful Garden Drill (Kindergarten), an Arabic Drill (5th and 6th graders), a Pom Pom Drill and the Hula Hoops (7th, 8th and 9th graders).

The icing on the cake was the Pyramid formation that exhibited teamwork followed by the Finale -a wonderful formation of 'Carmel 2018', a field display involving 697 students.



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Crime rate drops by 18.5 percent in Kuwait

Indians celebrate Republic Day through blood donation



Blood Donors Kerala (BDK), Kuwait Chapter, celebrated the 69th Republic Day of India by organizing various activities in Kuwait. On Thursday, 25 January, a Blood Donation Drive was conducted at the Jabriya Central Blood Bank.

A large number of donors from the NRI community participated in the event and celebrated the Republic Day by donating their

blood to the needy in society. The event was inaugurated by renowned playback singer from Kerala, Panthalam Balan.

On the Republic Day, BDK volunteers gathered at the Embassy of India, Kuwait to participate in the flag hoisting ceremony and other cultural programs, and distributed pamphlets showing the importance of voluntary blood donation.



Crimes in Kuwait dropped by 18.5 percent in 2017 compared to the previous year, a ranking officer of the Ministry of Interior said on Thursday. The ministry annual statistics showed that criminal acts deemed harmful to public interest decreased by 78.57 percent in 2017 in contrast to 2016, whereas crimes against individuals rose by 48.14 percent, said Major General Sehab Al-Shemmari, the general director

of the General Department of Criminal Evidence.

Maj. Gen. Al-Shemmari said in a statement that financial crimes fell by 11.5 percent and misdemeanor crimes detrimental to public interest dropped by 48 percent. Deaths resulting from traffic accidents amounted to 424 in 2016 while there were 428 deaths last year. Recorded drug dealing cases reached 33 in 2016, but rose to 68 last year.

LuLu launches 'Win to Drive' promotion

LuLu Hypermarket, the largest retail destination in the country, has launched its exciting 'Win to Drive' promotion from 31 January to 10 March, as part of the upcoming Hala February celebrations.

During the promotional period shoppers at all LuLu Hypermarket outlets in the country will receive one raffle coupon for every KD5 worth of purchase. The coupon entitles shoppers to enter a raffle draw to win one of three brand new 2018 model Chevrolet Equinox SUVs. In addition to the bumper prize of SUVs, 25 winners will receive KD100 worth of gift vouchers, while 100 winners could walk away with KD50 worth of gift vouchers. The 'Win to Drive' promotion is part of



the Hypermarket's customer-oriented approach of constantly interacting with customers and adding value to their shopping experience.

CBSE appoints ICSK Principal, DR. V Binumon as pre-exam counselor and T. Premkumar as tele-counselor

Dr. V. Binumon, the Principal of The Indian Community School Kuwait (ICSK), has been appointed as a counselor for Kuwait region as part of the CBSE annual pre-examination counseling. This is the 19th consecutive year that CBSE will provide psychological counseling services to students at the time of preparation as well as during the examinations to overcome exam related stress. The Pre-Examination counselling for students and parents will begin from 9 February to continue till 22 April, 2017.



The counselling session will be carried via telephone and Dr. V. Binumon can be reached at the mobile number: 00965 98821027 between 8:00 pm and 10 pm on all days from 9 February, 2017 to 20 April, 2017. Dr. V. Binumon is trained personnel who has a brilliant record as an



Education Counsellor and is empathetic to the needs of students.

In similar news, T. Premkumar, the principal, Bhavans Kuwait has been appointed as the CBSE tele-counselor for the CBSE schools in Kuwait. Premkumar assisted many students and their parents in several ways in the past as well. This veteran educator has over three and a half decade of teaching experience in CBSE schools and is fully aware of the examination related rules and regulations in addition to his in-depth knowledge of physical sciences especially Chemistry.

T. Premkumar - the proud recipient of CBSE best teacher award this year has been appointed as the secretary of the CBSE affiliated schools in the Gulf this year to cater to the needs the heterogeneous student community in the GCC.

SIMS wins first place in Inter-School Quiz competition



Fahaheel Al-Watanieh Indian Private School (F.A.I.P.S, DPS) held the final round of its inter-school quiz competition on 17 January at its premises. The preliminary round was on 16 November. Many Indian schools participated in the quiz competition, but only six teams were selected for the final round.

Rayyan Sheikh of V-D and C.D. Keyur Kumar of IV-F of SIMS, Kuwait bagged the first prize and brought laurels to the school. Salmiya Indian Model School (SIMS) Director Dr. Anis Ahmed, Principal Elizabeth Joseph and Vice-Principal Anita Sadanand congratulated the young talents of SIMS.

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Easy-bake PUMPKIN PIE

Here is your guide to perfecting pumpkin pie from the sugar to spice ratio, to making homemade crust and serving in style.

A slice of pumpkin pie is the sweetest way to end a hearty meal. If you have never prepared a pie from scratch, our guide below is a great one to start with. All you need is a few simple kitchen utensils and ingredients. While the recipe at the end calls for canned pumpkin puree, you can always opt for your own filling with fresh pumpkin.

Crust: The beauty of preparing pumpkin pie is that it only calls for a one-crust pastry, which means you can prepare it in any number of ways from the pat-in-the-pan method to a traditionally rolled-out crust or even a store-bought pie crust.

Filling: Making the filling for pumpkin pie can be as simple as buying a can at the store. But you can exercise more control over the flavor of your pie by taking steps like making your own pumpkin pie spice or even roasting your own pumpkin to make puree. Below are the steps to preparing your own canned pumpkin puree.

Canned Pumpkin Puree: When making a filling using canned pumpkin, you will want to make sure to use canned pumpkin puree, not pumpkin pie mix. The mix has sugar and spices already in it, so if you have purchased the pumpkin pie mix, follow the directions on the label.

The benefit of using canned pumpkin puree is its simplicity. You do not need to break down a pumpkin, roast it or puree it, instead you can grab your can opener and get to work.

Here is how:

Gather your equipment: a whisk or beaters, a medium bowl and a can opener.

Mix up a batch of pumpkin pie spice, using: 3 tbsp. ground cinnamon, 2 tsp. ground ginger, 2 tsp. ground nutmeg, 1 1/2 tsp. ground allspice and 1 1/2 tsp. ground cloves. Then, simply beat the ingredients in a bowl. In addition to canned pumpkin, most recipes call for eggs, pumpkin pie spice, evaporated milk, sugar and salt.

Homemade Pumpkin Puree: Passionate scratch bakers may want to try preparing homemade pumpkin puree using a fresh pumpkin. Sugar pumpkins are sweet, as the name implies, and great for baking.

Here is how to prepare homemade pumpkin puree.

Preheat the oven to 190 degrees Celsius, and gather your equipment, including a sharp knife, cutting board, sheet pan and food processor. Make cleanup easier by lining your sheet pan with aluminum foil.

Begin by cutting the pumpkin in half, scooping out the seeds and discarding the stem. Then lay the squash flesh-side down on the sheet pan, rub the pumpkin with neutral oil (such as canola) and bake until tender. Bake time will depend on the size of the pumpkin, but it should take about 20 minutes per 1/4 kilogram.

After baking the pumpkin and allowing it to cool completely, cut away the skin and discard. Then, puree the pumpkin flesh in a food processor until smooth. You will need 1 1/2 cups of pumpkin to make a 22cm pie.

Once you have the pureed pumpkin, you can follow any pumpkin pie recipe that uses canned pumpkin puree. It will just be a matter of mixing in the other filling ingredients.

Toppings: Once you have your pie prepared and ready to serve, it is time to do the toppings. You can do so with a dollop of homemade or store brought whipped cream. For homemade recipe, simply beat 3/4 cup whipping cream and 2 tbsp. of sugar in a chilled medium bowl with an electric mixer on high speed until stiff peaks form.

You can also serve your pie with a scoop of vanilla ice cream for an extra-sweet touch.



Storage: One of the best things about pumpkin pie is that it can be prepared ahead of time. After you have baked it and let it cool, you can refrigerate it for up to three days. It is recommended to store the pie in an airtight container or with plastic wrap to best maintain its freshness.

Recipe

Ingredients:

Pat-in-the-pan pastry:	1/2 tsp. salt
1 1/3 cups all purpose flour	1/2 tsp. ground ginger
1/2 tsp. salt	1/8 tsp. ground cloves
1/3 cup vegetable oil	1 can pumpkin (not pumpkin pie mix)
2 tbsp. cold water	1 can evaporated milk
Filling:	Sweetened whipped cream:
2 eggs	3/4 cup whipping cream
1/2 cup sugar	2 tbsp. sugar
1 tsp. ground cinnamon	



Preparation: Heat oven to 218 degrees Celsius. In medium bowl, mix flour, 1/2 tsp. salt and oil with a fork until all of the flour is moistened. Sprinkle with cold water, 1 tbsp. at a time, tossing with the fork until all of the water is absorbed. Shape pastry into a ball. Press in the bottom and up side of a 22cm glass pie plate.

In large bowl, beat eggs slightly with wire whisk or hand beater. Beat in 1/2 cup sugar, the cinnamon, 1/2 tsp. salt, ginger, cloves, pumpkin and milk.

To prevent spilling, place the pastry-lined pie plate on the oven rack before adding filling. Carefully pour the pumpkin filling into the pie plate. Bake for 15 minutes.

Reduce the oven temperature to 176 degrees Celsius. Bake for about another 45 minutes or until the knife inserted in center comes out clean. Place the pie on cooling rack. Cool completely, about 2 hours.

In a chilled medium bowl, beat whipping cream and 2 tbsp. sugar with electric mixer on high speed until stiff peaks form. Serve pie with whipped cream. Store in the refrigerator.

Guidelines for illegal Indians to leave the country

As per the latest Directives of Ministry of Interior Kuwait, regarding travel of expatriates back to their countries without payment of penalty/fine for violation of 'Residency Rules', the Indian embassy has released the following guidelines for the Indian community in Kuwait.

1. All Indian expatriates without valid Residency/Visa (Residency not obtained at all /Residency not renewed timely /or has a valid Residency, but intend to return to India) must utilize this opportunity to leave Kuwait before 22 February, 2018.
2. Expatriates (under Visa Article Numbers 18 & 20) with absconding cases (registered by sponsor/company) can leave Kuwait during this period using valid Passport OR a travel document, i.e. Emergency Certificate (EC), to be issued by the Embassy.
3. Expatriates with 'travel ban' (due to civil/



criminal cases etc.) shall not be allowed to leave the country during this period. First, they have to obtain proper clearance from the concerned Authorities/Court/Ministry of Justice, Kuwait.

4. Those who are in possession of valid Passports (with air ticket) and not under travel ban can directly approach Airport Immigration Authorities for clearance and exit.

5. Those who do not have valid Passports, will have to;
 - a. Obtain an EC from the Embassy.
 - b. Along with EC, please approach

Residency department (Passport) offices at various Governorates in Kuwait from where Residency/visa of individual was initially processed. EC will be verified and stamped at special counters (from 7 am to 2.30 pm) which will enable individual to travel. c. EC forms (free of cost) are available at the Embassy and individual has to pay a fee of KD 5 only while submitting duly filled in EC applications. The individual has to personally collect EC from the Embassy on the due date of delivery.

Huge crowds at Indian embassy on first day of General Amnesty

A large crowd of Indians gathered in front of the Indian embassy on Monday morning, to have their passports endorsed or to receive necessary travel documents, so as to avail of the general amnesty announced by Kuwait's Ministry of Interior.



The general amnesty for residency violations came into force on 29 January and extends to 22 February. The amnesty allows any expatriate stranded in the country on account of expired visas, or other residency-related problems, to either rectify their residency status and pay any accumulated fine, or exit the country without paying due fines. The amnesty is not applicable to anyone who has a travel ban imposed on them from concerned legal authorities in Kuwait.

5 & ABOUT

Ongoing



Snow Festival: Kuwait's biggest snow festival is being held at Al-Shaheed Park till 10 March, from 10am to 10pm. The festival includes shows and attractions such as ice skating, ice sculpture, mirror family, colorful musicians and more. The ticket is priced at KD2 and is available at the location. For more information: Visit: www.alshaheedpark.com.

The Golden Age Circus: The Touristic Enterprises Company

(TEC) and Cirque Madona Bouglione are organizing the Golden Age Circus at the Entertainment City, Doha, till 31 March. The circus intends to take its visitors through a magical journey which will help them see the beauty and wonder of the world through



the circus' eyes. This spellbinding spectacle will feature more than a dozen of the world's finest circus performance acts, who will set out to captivate their viewer's senses with a breathtaking medley of circus art, music, technology and sheer fantasy. For more information: Visit, www.eventat.com.

6 February



Drone Race: National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) will be organizing a drone race from 6 to 10 February, in Kuwait City, from 9am. The event is open to all and further information will be available on registration. To register: Visit their Facebook page, NBK race in Kuwait.

8 February

Live with the Improvengers: Staged in Kuwait (SIK) will be organizing an adults only night of unscripted comedy from Kuwait's premiere Improv Comedy team at the American United School, Sabah Al Salem, at 7:45pm. The ticket is priced at

KD8.750. For more information and to book your tickets: Visit, www.stagedinkuwait.com.

9 February

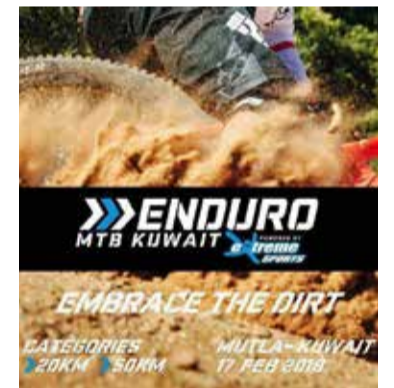


Russ concert: American Hip Hop recording artist, singer, song writer and record producer RUSS will be performing live at a concert at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, at 8pm. A special MEET & GREET option is also available as an add-on to ones ticket on purchase which can be selected after choosing a seat. For more information and to book a ticket: Visit, www.funologykw.com or Whatsapp, 98989822, 97227919.

Jashn E Ishqa: On the occasion of Valentine's Day, Style Inn Boutique will be organizing Jashn E Ishqa at the Indian Public School, Salmiya, from 10:30am to 8pm. The event will include shopping, delicious food, dancing and lots of fun. The event is free and open to all.

Blood donation camp: Pakistan Sports Association Kuwait will be organizing their annual blood donation camp at the Central Blood Bank, Jabriya from 1pm to 6pm. The event is free and open to all. For more information: Call, 50009204, 50415558, 99442640, 97519004.

17 February



Enduro MTB Race: A mountain bike race will be held on the Arabian trails of Mutla, from 8:30am. Participants will have the opportunity to pick from two distances, 20KM and 50KM. Participants are also required to bring in their own helmets and bikes for the competition. For more information and to register: Visit,



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Father Amanuel - the first Kuwaiti to head a church

The National Evangelical Church in Kuwait is nestled on a quiet cul-de-sac in the city, right off a long stretch of coastal highway that separates the chapel from the Arabian Gulf. The structure is one of the last remnants of Kuwait's pre-oil urban landscape, built by American missionaries in 1931 using mostly mud and rocks taken from the sea. It is here we find the office of Rev. Amanuel B. Ghareeb, the head of Kuwait's Evangelical Church.

Father Amanuel, as he is sometimes called by his congregants, assumed the position of Reverend in 1999, having just turned forty-nine-years-old. Unlike his predecessor, however, the announcement of his post made headlines across Kuwait: for the first time in the country's history, a Kuwaiti had been selected as head of a church.

Ghareeb spent twenty-five years as a civil servant in the oil sector, and was a self-described nominal Christian, before receiving his call to ministry in 1986: what he called his 'born-again' experience. His ordination fell on a chilly Friday evening on 8 January, 1999.

The ordination was a turning point in his life and a momentous occasion for this tiny community of indigenous Christians. Attendees including ambassadors, academics, and members of the clergy watched as he knelt before the Head of

the Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon, who officiated his transition into a fully-fledged Reverend.

Cheers and applause filled the hall that night as Ghareeb stood, for the first time, as head of Kuwait's Evangelical Church. Ghareeb, now 68, has tried to mitigate the concerns of his community for almost two decades. As the first-ever Kuwaiti priest, he explains that a heavier burden has been placed on his shoulders than that of his predecessors. And space is at the forefront of his agenda.



Today, Christians residing in Kuwait account for more than twenty percent of the total population: around 900,000 in total, of which less than 200 are actual citizens.

Since assuming his role, Ghareeb has consistently lobbied the government for more sites to build churches. He explains that the current seven licensed churches can't keep up with the staggering number of visitors that regularly pour through their doors to worship.

But in 2016, several MPs rejected the Municipality's plans to allocate land for additional churches, claiming

it would contradict Shariah law, which is stated as the main (but not the sole) source of legislation in Article Two of the constitution.

Ghareeb lets out a deep sigh. "It's a matter of time," he says, almost quixotically.

The Kuwait Nationality Law was promulgated in 1959 as the country was experiencing its first oil boom.

Over the years, a series of amendments were made to the law, including one in 1982, which stipulated that only Muslims (or Muslim converts) could obtain citizenship by naturalization.

While Ghareeb sees this as a key contributor to the population decline of the indigenous Christian community, not everyone shares his concern. "Personally, I can't say that I worry much, if at all, about a population decrease," said Samer Shamma, a banker and second cousin to the Reverend.

Shamma belongs to Kuwait's first Christian family. His grandfather immigrated from Turkey in 1919, and worked with the American Missionaries who eventually founded the Evangelical Church.

In 2012, during an especially politically-charged time, Shamma was growing increasingly frustrated with a minority group in Kuwait that criticised public celebrations of Christian holidays.

They called for the removal of Christmas trees from public spaces and claimed that it was haram (forbidden) to wish Christians a Merry Christmas.

As a response, he published an article in Al Qabas newspaper: A



Message from a Kuwaiti Christian. In the article, Samer announced his intention to run for parliament, which would have made him the first non-Muslim to do so since the establishment of the National Assembly.

"I knew I'd never win, but I wanted to prove a point," explained Samer.

"I wanted to send a message that Kuwait is an open society and our constitution does not discriminate between different religions."

Although Samer decided not to run in the end, his article received a positive response, with many Kuwaitis welcoming the idea of a Christian MP including Waleed Al Rujab, a Kuwaiti novelist, and popular liberal columnist, Iqbal Al Ahmad.

Ghareeb has appeared on a variety of local and regional news programs, to promote a positive image of Kuwait's Christian community as well

as educate the masses about the tiny minority of Gulf Christians.

Many people are surprised to find out that Kuwaiti Christians exist.

Ghareeb's main message of course, is that the National Evangelical Church stands as a testament to the level of religious freedom enjoyed in Kuwait.

It's also a microcosm of a democracy, he insists proudly. Church elections typically occur every two years for the reverend position, and a two-third majority vote is required to win. And while the next elections cycle should take place in 2019, Ghareeb isn't worried about losing his title. "After my election in 1999, the Church decided that I should maintain the position indefinitely."

He tugs at the clerical collar sewn into his dishdasha before adding, with a smile: "It was for the best, they said since I'm a Kuwaiti."

Celestial spectacle over Kuwait



Kuwait's night sky was lit up by a rare cosmic occurrence, the appearance of a 'Super Blue Blood Moon', on 31 January. This event, a combination of an extra big super moon, a blue moon, and a total lunar eclipse, or a 'lunar trifecta', was last seen was in December 1982. The reddish-orange hued, larger than normal sized moon, was visible to sky-watchers across Kuwait.

The title 'Super Blue Blood Moon' comes because the full moon appears 'super', larger and brighter than usual due to it being at its closest point in its elliptical orbit around Earth; while the 'blue' refers to it being the second full moon in a calendar month. The 'blood' denotes the reddish-orange glow that arises when a lunar eclipse, which places the Earth between the Sun and Moon, results in sunlight getting refracted or bent, as it skims through the Earth's atmosphere. The Earth's atmosphere and refraction filters out the shorter wavelengths of light such as blue, and leaves the larger wavelengths such as red and orange to reflect off the moon's surface. The lunar eclipse which began at 10:51GMT and ended at 16:08GMT was visible to stargazers across North America, Australia, and large swathes of Asia and Middle-East.

Photos Credit: **Abdulmajeed AlShatti** and **Pradeep Kumar**

Belt-tightening deficit budget for 2018-19

Continued from Page 1

The public wage bill at around KD11 billion accounts for over half of the budget expenses, while budget provisions for subsidies are projected to rise to KD3.4 billion, despite the recent slashing of subsidies on fuel, water and electricity.

Elaborating on the state's income, the minister said the budget was based on an oil price of \$50, which was arrived at in consultation with the Ministry of Oil and Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC). While oil continues to constitute 89 percent of the budget's total revenues, accounting for KD13.3 billion, non-oil revenue is projected to reach KD1.7 billion in the new budget, marking an increase of 6.2 percent from the previous budget, the minister said.

Minister Al-Hajraf noted that the government was committed to the New Kuwait 2035 vision and that capital spending plans on development projects would proceed as planned and would account for around 12 percent of the budget at KD2.5 billion. Funding for development projects include those covering vital maintenance and infrastructure developments, including road networks, the new airport and power generation.

The Finance Minister said the government aimed to address the budget deficit mainly by curbing expenses while enhancing revenue raising measures, including increasing non-oil revenues, making measured draw-downs from the state's general reserves, and securing additional financing by issuing domestic and international bonds. Last March, in a first ever international debt issuance, the government raised additional funding of KD8 billion from international debt market, in addition to raising KD3.5 billion from the domestic market.

While the recent up-tick in oil prices is believed to have made another international issuance generally superfluous, the overwhelming response to the first issuance

has encouraged Kuwait to continue the policy of plugging deficits by borrowing. Moreover, in early January of 2018, the Parliament's Finance and Economic Committee approved a draft bill that allowed the government to raise the debt ceiling to KD25 billion from the current KD10 billion, and extend the maximum debt issue maturities to 30 years, from the 10-year period limitation now in place.

Analysts expect the budget for the current fiscal year, which ends on 31 March 2018, to reach around KD6.5 billion, before deductions to the Future Generations Fund are made. Total expenditures in 2017/2018 are projected to be KD19.8 billion, with non-oil revenue totaling KD1.6 billion and oil income coming in at KD11.7 billion, based on a price of \$45 per barrel.

With Brent crude averaging around \$54 in 2017, some of the economic and financial pressures on the government precipitated by the fall in oil prices since mid-2014 have generally eased.

The decision by OPEC and non-OPEC members in November 2017 to maintain their oil production cuts that began in January of the year, to the end of 2018 will probably see oil remain in the \$65 range throughout 2018.

Kuwait's recurring budget deficits despite higher oil revenues raises questions about the government's continued commitment to the slew of economic and financial reforms that it had announced earlier. It is obvious that more than any government reform initiative it was the increase in oil prices that accounted for narrowing of the state's budget deficit. This makes it increasingly doubtful whether the government's multi-faceted reform packages aimed at managing budget deficits, including rationalizing spending, diversifying the economy and increasing non-oil revenues, are really going as planned.

With oil prices likely to maintain its current trajectory throughout 2018 the authorities have sufficient leeway to defer or dilute planned fiscal reform measures in deference to a voluble

and contentious opposition in parliament. The government has already backtracked on energy and utility price hikes by ensuring that fuel, water and electricity subsidy cuts do not impact citizens. Incidentally, citizens are one of the largest consumers of power and utilities in the country.

Kuwait has also delayed the implementation of a 5 percent Value-Added-Tax (VAT) to 2019. In fairness, Kuwait is not the only one; the initiative, which was supposed to be rolled out across the Gulf-Cooperation Council (GCC) states in 2018, has so far found compliance only by Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Bahrain has said it would roll out VAT by mid-2018, Oman has deferred it to early 2019 and Qatar has expressed reservations about its implementation.

The higher oil prices have also slowed down the urgency to implement a slew of other economic reforms planned by the government, including boosting the role of private sector in development plans, diversifying income sources, increasing non-oil revenues, trimming public spending, and, in general, improving government performance.

Despite the foot-dragging, there have been a few positive moves, especially in rolling-out the New Kuwait 2035 development plan. This strategic plan, which envisions transforming Kuwait into a financial, trade and cultural hub in the region, has been gaining ground in recent months.

A key ingredient in the successful implementation of this ambitious plan is creating a talented national human resource pool capable of becoming competitive and competent members of the workforce. However, developing this segment of the population calls for not only reforming the educational system in order to cope with the demands of the 'fourth industrial revolution', but also encouraging young minds to imbue a culture of responsibility, ethics and respect for work — all kinds of work.

EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Dollar depreciation offsets oil price gains



Carmen M. Reinhart and Vincent Reinhart

Carmen M. Reinhart is Professor of the International Financial System at Harvard Kennedy School. Vincent Reinhart is Chief Economist and Investment Strategist at Standish Mellon Asset Management.



The price at the pump for premium gasoline topped \$3 per gallon in much of the United States over the past few weeks, which is surprising to consumers but not to analysts of the world's oil markets. From its local low two years ago, the price of oil has more than doubled. As with any market, where you stand on this price increase depends on where you sit.

Higher oil prices buttress the fortunes of producers abroad and at home. The International Monetary Fund upgraded the GDP growth outlook of all six of the top ten oil producers that were shown separately in its 2018 forecast update, and the projected growth of world trade volumes was raised half a percentage point this year and next. Increased oil revenues improve the fiscal positions of most producing economies, and some have

Even more problematic, this is a regressive tax, disproportionately draining lower-income households' discretionary spending power. Last year, energy represented 8.7 percent of spending by the bottom 20 percent of households, compared to 4.9 percent for the top quintile. Moreover, the bottom group lacks net assets to tide them over bad outcomes.

This tax effect partly underlies the robust association between spikes in world oil prices and US economic downturns documented by James Hamilton of the University of California San Diego. Hamilton's sobering results show that, over the long sweep of history, every recession but one was preceded by an increase in oil prices, and every oil market disruption but one was followed by a recession.

But that does not mean that we should hunker down and await a downturn. As already noted, the oil price rise has been associated with an uptick in growth, and, whereas the events Hamilton examined related more to supply disruptions, the story of the past two years represents a combination of supply and demand forces. Most important, over the course of this energy-price run-up, the dollar's exchange rate depreciated by about 10 percent on a trade-weighted basis. With oil priced in dollars on a world market, this has had a material effect on the incentives of market participants on both blades of the supply-demand scissors.

A weaker dollar increases the purchasing power of US trading partners (the so-called Dornbusch effect, named for the late MIT economist Rudi Dornbusch), some of which spills over to increased demand for energy. Non-US oil producers sell their goods denominated in dollars but consume a basket of dollar and

non-dollar items. For them, a weaker US dollar lowers the price of exports relative to imports, and so they restrict supply. The scissors close with more demand and less supply, implying a higher dollar price of oil.

The decline in the dollar's exchange rate seems to have gathered momentum, in part

oil prices is apparently due to supply restraint by the members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and their friends of convenience (particularly Russia). Not accidentally, oil prices started their ascent with the production curtailment by 'OPEC+' at the end of 2016, and now seem high compared to other industrial commodities.

Further dollar depreciation eroding supply and enhancing demand might just change that. Saudi Arabia dearly wants a stable, balanced market for petroleum in advance of the sale of a 5 percent stake in Saudi Aramco, the national oil company. For a healthy market consistent with longer-run capital investment, an oil price that is too high can be as challenging as one that is too low. In such circumstances, officials in OPEC+ may well jump on the chance to expand supply while maintaining prices in their current channel.

Third, when it comes to supply, do not look exclusively abroad. The increase in US production, thanks to technological advances in shale oil production, has been breathtaking.

The US is on track to pump more oil this year than at any time in its history. Nonetheless, domestic producers have been moderate thus far in ramping up supply, reportedly owing to their equity owners' desire for more profit and less capital spending. But production technology advances, and higher prices beckon.

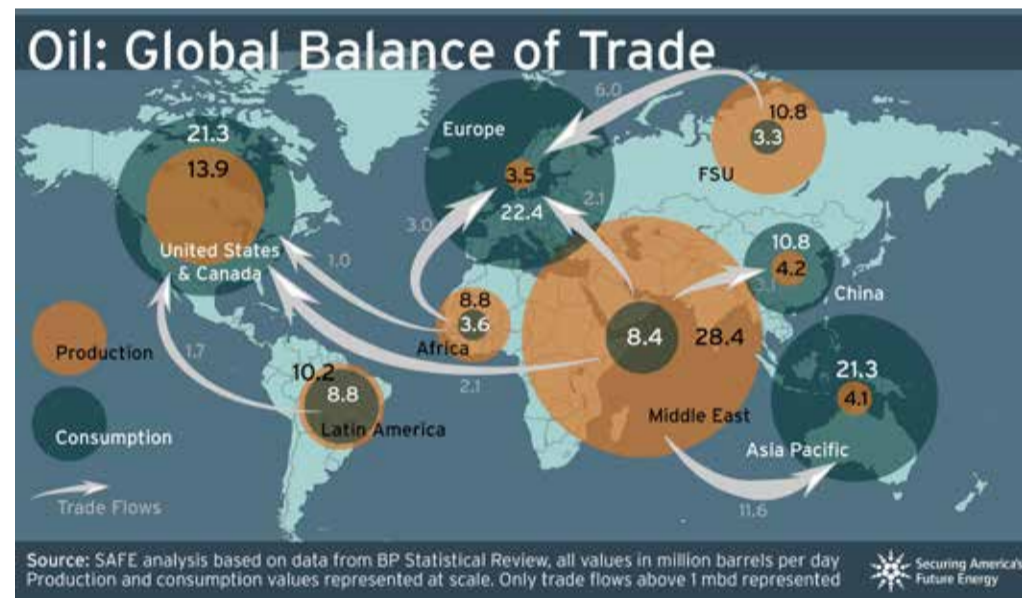
On balance, it is likely that the economy-

“
For a healthy market consistent with longer-run capital investment, an oil price that is too high can be as challenging as one that is too low.
”

taken advantage of global investors' hardier appetite to issue sovereign debt.

In the US, the five states with the largest gains in oil production this decade recorded employment growth of 2.75 percent in 2017, double the national average. Meanwhile, the number of oil rigs nationwide increased by roughly 50 percent.

At the same time, a doubling of energy costs takes a significant bite out of US households' budgets, with energy costs directly accounting for about 6.5 percent of consumer spending.



because the person who has his signature on US currency, Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin, seems unperturbed by its weakness. If it continues, could the result be a spike in energy costs? Our tentative answer is no, for three reasons. First, the dollar has depreciated against most currencies, but less so against those of important emerging-market partners, such as China. Second, some of the increase in

wide effects of the energy shock, though unpleasant, will not derail growth. We are tentative, however, because commodity markets are volatile. In recent work with Christopher Trebesch of the Kiel Institute, we counted more than twice as many boom-bust cycles in commodity prices than in capital flows since 1820. The global economy looks to be riding a roller coaster.

Kuwait outlines priorities during UNSC presidency

Continued from Page 1

Speaking at a press conference held at the UN headquarters in New York on Thursday 1 February, Kuwait's representative reviewed the agenda of the Council and elaborated on the top foreign policy priorities of Kuwait during its membership and presidency of UNSC. He pointed out that during the past decades, the State of Kuwait has made many moves in the Middle East and that during its presidency of the Security Council, the country would focus on developing the Council's working mechanism to increase efficiency and transparency, improve the working methods of the Council and humanitarian issues.

He said that the most important session of the Security Council will be an open discussion session on the working methods of the Security Council, a ministerial briefing on the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter, in addition to a session on the situation in Palestine and a focus on the humanitarian situation in Gaza after 50 years of occupation.

In response to a question on the position of the State of Kuwait on the Palestinian issue, Al-Otaibi said, "We support the Palestinian position and outcome of the meeting of Arab foreign ministers, where the participation of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in the meeting of the Security Council on the Palestinian issue was



recently confirmed." Ambassador Al-Otaibi stressed the importance of the Palestinian president's planned visit to the United Nations, which comes after

a meeting of Arab foreign ministers and the Arab action to push forward the peace process to deal with Israeli violations of Jerusalem.

Regarding Kuwait's position on the transitional phase in Syria, he said that this stage was adopted in the Geneva Declaration, which included a number of resolutions and the position of Kuwait is to support the implementation of the resolution and the Geneva Declaration.

On the forthcoming conference on Iraq reconstruction, the Kuwaiti Ambassador said "We expect the participation of more than 70 countries at a high level where preparations are being made in coordination with the governments of Kuwait, Iraq, the United Nations, the European Union and the World Bank to mobilize support for the reconstruction of the liberated areas."

Sri Lanka

Lying between the more trodden parts of India and Southeast Asia, Sri Lanka offers a distinctive history, vibrant culture and natural beauty that are undeniably alluring. With its myriad charms, Sri Lanka is becoming an increasingly popular tourist destination that boasts of ancient sites with beautifully detailed ancient temples, caves, peaks and fortresses that inspire exploration and evoke excitement.

Popular touristic ventures include dazzling white beaches, verdant tea plantations and safaris that introduce you to the vast fauna and flora of the region — from elephants to leopards, sloth bears to water buffaloes, as well as many endemic species of plants in its verdant rainforests.

Despite its small size, Sri Lanka, one of the 25 biodiversity hotspots in the world, also has many UNESCO World Heritage Sites that are easy to explore with minimal travel time between them.

Stunning white beaches that are often untrodden ring the island so that no matter where you go, you will be near a sandy gem. Should you beat the inevitable languor, you can surf and dive world-class sites without world-class crowds. And you are always just a short throw from something utterly new.



Colombo: Although unlikely to reclaim its 19th-century moniker 'the garden city of the East', Colombo has nevertheless emerged as a must-see stop in Sri Lanka. No longer just the sprawling city you have to endure on your way to the beaches, it has become a worthy destination in its own right and makes an excellent start, or finish, to your Sri Lankan adventures.

The legacies of colonial Colombo's garden roots are still very much intact along its often-shady boulevards. Fort is a compelling place thanks to ongoing restoration of its landmark colonial architecture, while Pettah brims with markets and rampant commerce. Colombo's cosmopolitan side supports ever-more stylish eateries, galleries and shops. Surprises abound: with a little exploration you will find great local food, shops filled with character and tiny, convivial cafes.

The National Museum, one of the premier cultural institutions

in the city, is popular for its galleries that date back as far as 1877. Here you will encounter all manner of art, carvings and statuary from Sri Lanka's ancient past, as well as swords, guns and other paraphernalia from the colonial period.

A unique spot in the city is The Dutch Period Museum which was originally the 17th-century residence of the Dutch governor and has since been used as a Catholic seminary, a military hospital, a police station and a post office. The mansion contains a lovely garden courtyard and has a nice faded feel since a 1977 restoration. Exhibits include Dutch colonial furniture and other artifacts.



Kandy: Some days Kandy's skies seem perpetually bruised, with stubborn mist clinging to the hills surrounding the city's beautiful centerpiece lake. Delicate hill-country breezes impel the mist to gently part, revealing colorful houses amid Kandy's improbable forested halo. In the centre of town, three-wheelers careen around slippery corners, raising a soft spray that threatens the silk saris worn by local women.

And when the drizzle subsides, cobalt-blue skies reveal a city of imposing colonial-era and Kandyan architecture, none more impressive than the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic, one of Buddhism's most sacred shrines.

Sri Lanka's most important Buddhist relic — a tooth of the Buddha — is housed in the golden-roofed Temple of the Sacred Tooth. It is kept in a gold casket shaped like a dagoba (stupa), which contains a series of six dagoba caskets of diminishing size.

A unique attraction in this city is The Ceylon Tea museum. It occupies the 1925-vintage Hantane Tea Factory which was abandoned for more than a decade. Recently refurbished, the museum holds exhibits on tea pioneers James Taylor and Thomas Lipton, and includes a number of vintage tea-processing paraphernalia for visitors to explore.

Galle: A UNESCO World Heritage Site, the historic city of Galle is



a delight to explore on foot, an endlessly exotic old trading port blessed with imposing Dutch-colonial buildings, ancient mosques and churches, grand mansions and museums. Wandering its rambling lanes you will pass stylish cafes, quirky boutiques and impeccably restored hotels owned by local and foreign artists, writers, photographers and designers.

Built by the Dutch, beginning in 1663, Galle's core is the Fort, a walled enclave surrounded on three sides by the ocean. Flag Rock, at the southernmost end of the Fort, was once a Portuguese bastion. During the Dutch period, approaching ships were signaled from the bastion atop Flag Rock, warning them of dangerous rocks, and hence its name. Musket shots were fired from Pigeon Island, close to the rock, to further alert ships to the danger. Today it is easily the most popular place to catch a sunset.

Other popular sites in the area include the Dutch Reformed Church, which was originally built in 1640, although the present building dates from 1752. Its floor is paved with gravestones from Dutch cemeteries, while other impressive features include the organ and an imposing pulpit made from calamander wood and topped by a grand hexagonal canopy.

Most travelers are utterly seduced by Galle's ambience, and it is undoubtedly southern Sri Lanka's one unmissable sight.

Nuwara Eliya: Often referred to as 'Little England', this genteel highland community does have a rose-tinted, vaguely British-country-village feel to it, with its colonial-era bungalows, Tudor-style hotels, well-tended hedgerows and pretty gardens. Indeed, Nuwara Eliya was once the favored cool-climate escape for the hard-working and hard-drinking English and Scottish pioneers of Sri Lanka's tea industry.

A recent construction boom has blighted the scene to a degree, and the dusty and bustling center is a thoroughly Sri



Lankan urban tangle, but Nuwara Eliya still makes a fine base for a few days' relaxation. The verdant surrounding countryside of tea plantations, carefully tended vegetable plots and craggy hills is highly scenic.

From here, it is easy to travel to Horton Plains, a beautiful, stark world with excellent hikes in the shadows of Sri Lanka's second and third highest mountains, Kirigalpotta (2395m) and Totapola (2357m).

The 'plains' form an undulating plateau over 2000m high, covered by wild grasslands and interspersed with patches of thick forest, rocky outcrops, filigree waterfalls and misty lakes. The surprising diversity of the landscape is matched by the wide variety of wildlife, although many of the larger animals are very elusive. The plateau comes to a sudden end at World's End, a stunning escarpment that plunges 880m.

Sri Lanka - More than just Pearl of the Indian Ocean

A teardrop-shaped island cast adrift in the Indian Ocean, Sri Lanka is filled with cultural and natural treasures. Indians, Portuguese, Dutch and British have all left their marks here, making for a delightful mix of cultures and traditions, as well as ancient cities, monuments and grand colonial style architecture.

It is widely believed that the Sinhala people migrated to the island from north India, bringing their Indo-Aryan language and some version of Brahmanism with them, although Buddhism was introduced in their principal areas of settlement during the third-century BCE.

The Tamils emigrated to the north of the island from southern India, bringing Hinduism and their Dravidian language with them. The Sinhalese, the Tamils, and various south Indian invaders built powerful kingdoms, with advanced agricultural projects and elaborate religious institutions, and periodically brought the island under the authority of a single regime.

Because of its important ports along the East-West trade routes and valuable goods, traders were drawn to the island. Some of these Arab traders made Sri Lanka their permanent home, adding Islam to the island's religious mix. In the early sixteenth century Portuguese traders introduced Christianity as they began to make use of the island, eventually gaining control over productive portions of it.

In 1638 the king of Kandy drove out the Portuguese with the help of the Dutch. The Dutch then kept the land for themselves, controlling all but the kingdom of Kandy until they were driven out by the British in 1796. In 1815 the British ousted the last king of Kandy, gaining control over all of Sri Lanka, which remained a British colony until 1948.

On 4 February, 1948, Ceylon, as the nation was then known, became politically independent of Great Britain, though it remained part of the Commonwealth. The island's position along hundreds of ancient trade routes



and its proximity to India has resulted in a potpourri of visitors, immigrants, invaders, missionaries, traders and travelers, mostly from India, but also from East Asia and the Middle East. Many stayed on, and over the generations they assimilated and intermarried, converted and converted back again. The island's history, like that of its ethnicities, is one of constant flux and shifting dominance.

Sri Lankan culture includes a lot of customs and rituals, which date back to more than 2000 years and these are often reflected in the art, architecture, sculptures, and even food of the nation. On the cultural front in the modern era, it is worth noting that the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation, providing broadcasts in Sinhalese, Tamil, English and Hindi, is the oldest-running radio station in Asia. It was set up in 1923 by British engineer Edward Harper just three years after public broadcasting began in Europe.

With a tropical climate in most parts of the country, a temperate

climate in the central highlands and abundant rainfall throughout the year, the country is a major source for the production and export of tea, rubber, coffee, sugar and other agricultural commodities. It also has the largest biodiversity density in Asia and is one of 25 biodiversity hotspots in the world. In addition to being critical to the economy, tea is also an integral part

of the culture and hospitality of the country. Sri Lankan Tea is highly sought after across the world, in fact, it is the fourth largest producer of tea and the second largest exporter, with around 20 percent of the teas sold around the world coming from Sri Lanka. Visiting the wide number of tea estates, staying in converted tea planter's cottages, or merely sipping a cuppa in a local tea

shop is one of the great pleasures when traveling in Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka also stands tall in human development index figures. With literacy rate of 92.5 percent Sri Lanka has one of the most literate populations amongst developing nations. Its youth literacy rate stands at 98 percent and primary school enrollment rate stands at over 99 percent. Sri Lanka is one of the few countries in the world that provide universal free education from primary to tertiary stage.

The universal 'pro-poor' health care system in the country has led to a life expectancy of 77.9 years that is 10 percent higher than the world average, as well as an infant mortality rate of 8.5 per 1,000 births and a maternal mortality rate of 0.39 per 1,000 births, which is level with figures from the developed countries. The country is also ranked 8th in World Giving Index, reflecting the high levels of contentment and charitable behavior among Sri Lankan people.



AU headquarters, a gift from China, allegedly bugged

China has refuted allegations that for five years it had accessed confidential information from the African Union (AU) headquarters in Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa by spying on servers inside the building.

An investigative report published last week by leading French newspaper Le Monde claimed that China, which built and provided all the computer network within the AU headquarters, inserted a backdoor access to the servers that allowed it to transfer data to servers in Shanghai.

The bugging, which was discovered only in January 2017, came to light when technicians noticed that between midnight and 2 am every night, there was a peak in data usage even though the building

was empty. Following internal investigation, it was found that the organization's confidential data was being retransmitted regularly to servers in China. Since the hack was discovered, the AU has reportedly acquired its own servers and refused Chinese offers to reconfigure them. Algerian and Ethiopian officials also combed through the building, checking for any suspicious materials and microphones. Electronic communications at the headquarters are also now encrypted and reportedly no longer pass through the Ethiopian state-owned operator Ethio Telecom.

The AU headquarters that China built at a cost of \$200 million in 2012 and gifted to the pan-African organization, was the venue last week



for the annual AU Summit that drew leaders and heads of states from the 54-nation continent-wide bloc.

Chinese Ambassador to the AU, Kuang Weilin, dismissed the Le Monde

story as "absurd" and "preposterous". He told reporters in Ethiopia that it was "very difficult to understand" the paper's claims and that the story was certain to "create problems for

China-Africa relations." The landmark 20-story office tower in the heart of Addis Ababa was "a gift" from the Chinese government to help African nations integrate better and improve their institutional capacity. But the alleged data theft puts a spin on that rosy affair and might strain the relationship between the two sides.

China is heavily involved in Africa, with its companies and entrepreneurs conducting trade and investing heavily in African countries, mainly in the extractive industries for natural resources such as mineral mines, oil and forestry. Chinese aid has also been blamed for propping up authoritarian regimes and importing Chinese laborers to work in its infrastructure and mining activities.

AU Summit focuses on fighting corruption

The 30th session of African Union (AU) Summit, which drew the continent's leaders and heads of state to the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa last weekend, has decided to make 2018 the 'African Anti-Corruption Year', and to make addressing corruption a central plank of governance across the 54-nation bloc.

In his key-note address to the two-day gathering, the United Nations Secretary

of the partnership could be further bolstered in five key areas: addressing corruption; cooperation in peace and security; inclusive and sustainable development; climate change; and international migration.

Commending the AU for holding the Summit under the theme of 'Winning the Fight against Corruption: A Sustainable Path to Africa's Transformation', and deciding to focus on combatting corruption throughout 2018,

of illicit financial flows that deprive Africa of its essential resources.

In his opening remarks to the Summit on 28 January, the AU Commission chairperson, Moussa Faki Mahamat told delegates that this year's summit will deliberate on mechanisms for combating corruption, as a means of transforming Africa. "The year 2018 is the year of the battle against corruption and crucial decisions will be taken here whose highlight is institutional reform," the chairperson said.

The UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) estimates that every year more than US\$148 billion, representing around 25 percent of the continent's GDP growth, are drained out of Africa through various corrupt activities. In a forceful commentary ahead of the Summit, the ECA Executive-Secretary, Vera Songwe, said the only logical and winning formula for true independence and for a transformed Africa was that the continent collectively conquered corruption.

"Where is the Africa we want when our youth do not believe their leaders and their institutions to deliver what they need most, when that social contract is broken," Ms. Songwe asked. "How can we get the Africa we want when women in rural Africa cannot get access to land and collateral to feed their families and ensure good health for their kids, because of corruption? How can we get the Africa we want when we let billions leak out of the continent only to spend time begging for minimal sums because of corruption?"

"We are at a cross road — the youth are waiting, desperate and anxious for what path the leaders gathered here today will allow them to chart. That is why the topic of corruption or anti-corruption is so appropriate," said Ms. Songwe.



General, Antonio Guterres, hailed the strong AU-UN partnership and cooperation that were grounded on the sound principles of human rights and good governance. Reaffirming the UN's commitment to member states and the people of Africa, the UN Chief added, "I strongly believe Africa is one of the greatest forces for good in our world."

Highlighting several initiatives that the two organizations are carrying out across the continent, the Secretary-General said

Mr. Guterres promised the full support of the UN to the endeavor.

The UN Chief noted that an unimpeachable commitment to transparency and accountability was needed to combat the "far-reaching and devastating" impact of corruption, tax evasion and illicit financial flows in Africa.

He also added that the international community has a role to play in combating tax evasion, money laundering and the elimination

Mauritania urged to eliminate slavery

African Union (AU) has urged the West African nation of Mauritania to exert greater efforts to eliminate slavery, following a landmark conviction that saw a family of slave owners being handed out lenient sentence by the country's court last week.

The case involved a wealthy Mauritanian family who were found guilty of keeping two young boys, Said Ould Salem and his brother Yarg, as slaves from an early age. In Mauritania's first-ever prosecution against slavery in 2011, the owner was sentenced to only two years in prison, while the law required a minimum of five to ten years. He has also yet to be jailed, pending appeal, while other members of the family walked free.

Following the light verdict, the AU's Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child said in a statement published online, that all members of the family should be given sentences

commensurate to their crimes. The statement also urged Mauritania to "give due regard to the issue of slavery and make the elimination... one of its priorities". The AU



Committee also recommended that Said and Yarg, now teenagers, receive psychosocial support, schooling and compensation.

Mauritania has one of the highest rates of

slavery in the world, with 1 in 100 people living as slaves, according to the 2016 Global Slavery Index. Though it abolished slavery in 1981, it is a historical practice that continues to exist surreptitiously in many parts of Mauritania. Dark-skinned ethnic groups make up the main 'slave caste', and often work all day long for their owners as domestic servants and cattle herders.

Though the law criminalizing slavery has existed, it is not widely respected. A new anti-slavery law in 2015 doubled the prison term for perpetrators to 20 years, nevertheless, in its second prosecution a year later, the country's court gave two slave owners only five-year sentences.

The statement from the AU and its recommendations on eliminating slavery will add pressure on Mauritania to do more, as the country is slated to host two high-level AU conferences this year.

African agenda at Davos 2018



The annual World Economic Forum (WEF) gathering at the Swiss resort of Davos brings together movers and shakers from the worlds of business, finance, politics and the media.

This year was no different and offered African business and political leaders an opportunity to engage and push the African Agenda forward.

For the first time in its history, Somalia sent a delegation to the global forum headed by the country's Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khaire. The prime minister held several high-profile meetings with business and political heads to convince the world to do business with the Horn of Africa nation.

Following her meeting with Prime Minister Khaire, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Christine Lagarde said, "Somalia's debt relief is a priority for the IMF and every effort is being made to accelerate the process within established procedures." As part of her interaction with other African leaders, the IMF Chief also met with South Africa's Deputy President, Cyril Rampahosa, Guinea's president Alpha Conde and Angola's president Joao Lourenco. "We concurred that long-standing structural challenges continue to weigh on growth in South Africa. We consequently agreed that bold and timely reforms are needed to create an environment conducive to job creation and less inequality," Ms. Lagarde said in a statement.

Nigeria's vice president Professor Yemi Osinbajo who led the country's delegation was upbeat about Nigeria's fortunes. "Nigeria is seeing a generally improved economic space. Foreign investment has gone up almost 100 percent since a year ago. I think we are in a moment of great dynamism and movement," said Mr. Osinbajo. Addressing a gathering of select investors at Davos, the vice-president said, "The Federal Government and Private Sector will collaborate in creating Special Economic Zones, starting first with the Textile and Garment industry in the hope of spurring the nation's economic development." He stressed that the collaboration between private sector and the government ensures consistency in the implementation of the government's economic policies.

Gains in global life expectancy slow down

A new study by researchers at Johns Hopkins University in the United States has found a dramatic slowdown in human life expectancy increases across the world since 1950.

Although a general slowdown in life expectancy growth is expected in high-lifespan countries as average lifespan of the population approaches the biological ceiling of human age,

life expectancy, our predecessors in the 1950s were making faster progress with the basics of soap, sanitation and public health.

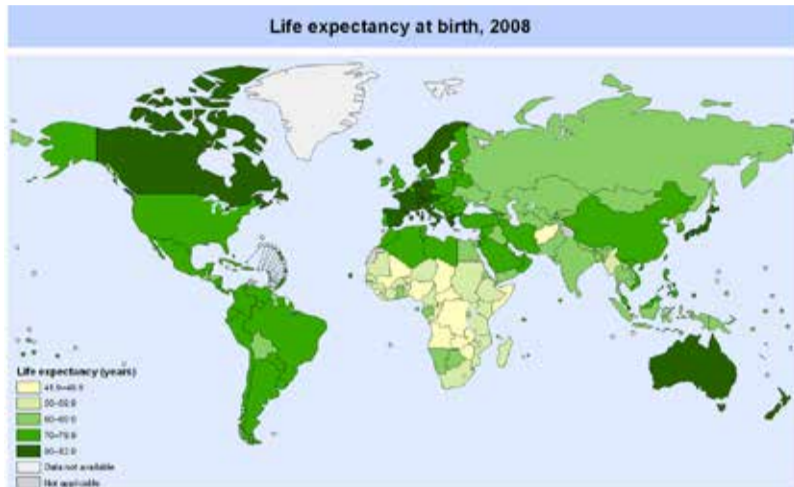
Researchers examined life expectancy data for 139 countries and for each one calculated the 'decadal' life expectancy gain — the gain from a given year to a decade later — during the period 1950-2009. The analysis

result was unsurprising, given that life expectancies in these countries are approaching the maximum average human lifespan of 71-83 years.

However, the researchers found an even steeper decline in countries in the lowest stratum of lifespan, with life expectancies under 51 years. For countries in this category the mean decadal change in life expectancy dropped continuously from a promising gain of 7.4 years in the 1950s to a worrisome loss of 6.8 years in the 2000s. In other words, the low-lifespan countries on average went from experiencing big gains to sharp declines in life expectancy.

While noting that the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which generally hit hardest in low-lifespan countries, was a factor in this trend, the researcher found that the slowdown in life expectancy gains started before AIDS hit in the 1980s and 90s and occurred even in regions that did not have big problems with this disease. Even giving latitude to modern methods used to calculate life expectancy in recent years did not explain the slowdown trend as it persisted through the 1970s and 2000s when demographers started using more modern methods

The researchers postulate that an important driver of the overall slowdown trend is a widespread failure of governance, especially in fragile states that are reeling under considerable instability. That in turn suggests that global public health efforts need to be about more than providing health technologies.





Attractive makeup under reading glasses

If you're afraid your eye makeup look will get lost behind reading glasses, you are not alone. Unfortunately, the accessory still carries a stigma that makes men and women think they should wear them only when absolutely necessary or behind closed doors. In actuality, wearing glasses presents an opportunity to better frame and highlight the eyes, as you can play more with product and applications that might feel heavy without them. The trick to looking great with glasses is giving your eyes as much dimension as possible by highlighting areas, like your inner eye, and pushing back and framing others, like your crease. Ahead are five ways to make your eyes radiant under a set of spectacles.

Contour your crease: Since wearing glasses can change how others perceive the depth and dimension of your eyes, a little eye contour along the crease goes a long way. The crease is where the top of your eyelid and your brow bone meet in an indentation. Use a nice neutral color on your lid and then use a dark brown, mauve, or even black in your crease to create a shadow pushing back the crease and adding in depth.

Use an illuminator in the inner eye, under-eye line, and under-brow bone. Drawing in attention and light to your eyes underneath lenses will help them appear brighter and wider and contrast beautifully with a darkened crease. Remember you are adding back in dimension so choose a color that contrasts with the crease color. The best way to do this is by adding a little shimmer.

Line your upper lid: Although fully lining the top and bottom lash lines can look super glamorous, it can also feel heavy and push back your eyes underneath your glasses, making you look sleepy. Instead, use one line on your top lid as tight as you can get to your lash line. A brown eyeliner works best, as it keeps your eyes defined without being harsh.

Wing it: Concerned that your glasses are making your eyes look closer together? Simply extend the line of your eyes by extending your eyeliner with a wing. Most glasses are wider than your eye, and it gives you the chance to do the wide-eyed look without it being too wild.

Groom your brows: Glasses already act as a frame, so make sure your real eye frames—your brows—are brushed and filled in. No need to go full squared-off brow, just make sure they are tidy. The best tip is to use a light matte brown and the angled brush to quickly get stray hairs in place and fill in any sparse areas.

Jazzy jogger pants



Joggers are here to stay, and they are the best lazy-girl staple for when it is cold. Moreover, with the right accessories and a stylish shoes or top, you can easily make joggers fashionable. Don't discount the versatility of these pants. Here are some tips to style joggers.



Play up the shoes: Give your joggers that tough-girl vibe by tucking it into a pair of lace-up combat boots, or switch out sneakers for a pair of heels. When it comes to styling your joggers, keep the outfit fresh and appropriate with fun shoe styles.

Focus on the top: While a button-down shirt is the obvious choice to give these sporty pants the old casual touch, a structured blouse is equally as effective. Add on a statement necklace and you have got one seriously stylish getup. To make your joggers brunch ready, go for a fabric that channels traditional trousers and pairs them up with not one, but two on-point toppers that draw the eye upward. This creates balance and keeps the focus away from the more laid-back bottoms.

Skip the plain joggers: Always pin point a flattering pair of joggers with unique details like a lace-up design to make it stand out from the rest. A plain pair might say, worn for couch or gym days, but a more interesting jogger pants says, 'I look fantastic and fabulous'.



Pay attention to the material: Joggers innately have a casual vibe. Ditch the cotton joggers completely and scoop up a velvet or expand your choices into ones made with fabrics like faux leather, silk, satin or other similar materials. Pair with a classic button-down or sweater and your go-to pumps for the ultimate in fashionable attire.

Opt for cropped joggers: Try cropped joggers with a graphic T-shirt for a look not meant for the gym. Plus, the crop version shows off your shoes way better.

Get trendy: Pair your joggers with a trendy top and your whole outfit suddenly looks brand new. People may still notice that you are basically wearing sweats, but they will still think you look chic.

Play with patterns as prints is totally fair game for joggers. Palm prints and florals are the best choice



and will give you that extra boost to get through your to-do list, while geometric or classic patterns look fab all year.

Go monochromatic: Match the rest of your outfit to your joggers. Monochromatic outfits couldn't be simpler to pull-together: Neutrals are always a safe bet — there is a reason all-black-everything and groutfits are go-to's — but bolder hues, like cobalt blue or burnt orange, also work like a charm. With this hack always in-mind, you will never have to worry if your look matches ever again, because it always will.

Throw on a blazer: Blazers make everything look instantly chic. Pairing one up with those far-from-fussy slacks is a surefire way to elevate what would be a weekend-only ensemble, making you look oh so stylish.

BEAUTIFUL BABY BANGS

First, there is the dilemma of whether or not to get bangs. Then, if you do go for it, comes the decision of how to style them. Lately, short bangs — talking about way above-the-brow baby bangs — have been trending in a major way. Whether you have them from a haircut gone wrong or are wondering if you should go in for the chop, rest assured that there are plenty of ways to slay a tiny fringe.

However, this style is a super big commitment and if you are not ready to commit, don't do it. Super short bangs are something you have to work on every morning. It's not a style that flows — you have to wake up and iron them down. It's not a wash and go type of style.

You'll want to tie the bangs down at night. When your hair is that short and you have even a little bit of texture, it's harder. For the girls with naturally stick-straight hair, it's a little easier, but if you have some texture, it's more work. They need to be straight and sleek at all times. So the way you sleep at night, the way you set it, the way you style it are all very important in order to keep the look looking like it's supposed to. Here are some options on wearing baby bangs.

Bold and blunt: A lob with a set of baby bangs is a look most women don't typically wear, it is not for the faint of heart. But if you want to stand out, this look is right. Make a statement by making sure the bangs are evenly cut straight across and super blunt to match your sleek lob.

Short everywhere: The perfect way to try out baby bangs: Get an equally short cut and that way, the grow-out period will happen at the same time.

Choppy fringe: Baby bangs can be both delicate and badass at the same time. The short fringe mixed with a few slightly longer pieces is key to adding more dimension. The beauty of this look is its versatility: you can cut your bangs short and style them whichever way you want; choppy, separated, or brushed down and sleek to perfection. Imperfect bangs are making a bigger comeback than padded headbands. Ask your stylist to cut as much texture into the edges as possible for an updated spin on the look.

Refreshed yet classic: Short hair can suit anyone, but if you have a flat crown area, this can be unflattering, so make sure to build some weight into the area of the haircut. Comb through hair with your fingers while blow-drying and add a spritz of a salt spray. This will give your hair some bite. Finish with a hair cream product to add some definition.

With an updo: Rock an entirely new look — a short, uneven fringe with the rest of your hair



pulled back. While bangs can be a security blanket, cutting above the eyebrow can have the opposite effect. It can open up your face and get you noticed. Hence, you have to take care, to prevent flyaways, add a bit of hair pomade.

Soft and wispy: Try a version of this bangs style called micro bangs with your hair in tousled waves. The best tip would be to establish the cut with shears and then once dry and styled, gently razor the bangs to soften the edges. The entire hairstyle looks so good when the ends of your bangs have a feathery feel.

Shaggy: Pair your shaggy hairdo with equally shaggy bangs that sit just an inch or so above your brow. This kind of cut loves movement, so try air-drying your hair to show off your natural texture in all its glory.

MIT designs new chip to cater to AI needs

Machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI) have been moving at a rapid rate in recent years, but the computer processors on which these programs run have failed to keep pace. While processor manufacturers have toyed with rejigging the processor architecture in a bid to boost speeds to meet the growing demand from AI, it has clearly not been enough.

Now researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) say they are working on a new chip that takes us closer to processors that work like the brain, and with



much lower energy needs. The new design called 'neuromorphic computing' could potentially lead to processors that run machine learning tasks with up to 1,000 times lower energy demands and enable more devices to have AI abilities such as voice and image recognition.

The key difference between neuromorphic chips and the ones currently being used in computers is that they process data in an analog, rather than a digital fashion. This means that instead of sending information in a series of on / off electrical bursts, they vary the intensity of

these signals — just like how connections called synapses work in the human brain network.

What this effectively means is that more information can be packed into each jolt, drastically reducing the amount of power needed. It could be likened to the difference between Morse code and human speech. The former encodes data using just two outputs, dots, and dashes — making meanings easy to understand but lengthy to communicate. Speech, by comparison, can be difficult to interpret (think fuzzy phone lines and noisy cafes) but each individual utterance holds much more data.

A big difficulty with building neuromorphic chips, though, is being able to precisely control these analog signals. Their intensity needs to vary in a controlled and consistent fashion. Attempts to find a suitable medium for these varying electrical signals to travel through have previously proven unsuccessful, because the current ends up spreading out all over the place. To fix this, researchers at MIT used crystalline forms of silicon and germanium that resemble lattices at the microscopic level. Together, these create clear pathways for the electrical signals, leading to much less variance in the strength of the signals.

Using the innovative medium the researchers were able to train a neural network that could recognize handwriting (a standard training task for new forms of AI) with 95 percent accuracy. That was less than the 97 percent baseline using existing algorithms and chips, but it is quite promising for a new technology.

Beauty industry looks at personalization tech



Cosmetic companies are increasingly experimenting with technology to give customers a more personalized and trial-based experience through use of augmented reality, actual custom-made products, and gadgets. Basically, they are offering a more user-oriented experience with the promise of delivering more suitable product recommendations.

Many brands, including Benefit, Estée Lauder, Nyx, bareMinerals, and Sephora have launched virtual try-on apps. At this year's annual CES tech exhibition in Las Vegas, there were a slew of gadgets and apps designed to help users gauge the condition of their faces and hair. HiMirror Plus could scan a face and tell if you had wrinkles; Neutrogena's SkinScanner could examine your face and say if you needed more moisturizer; while Henkel's Schwarzkopf Hair Analyzer could suggest if your hair needed a slather of conditioner. However, most of the time, these gadgets were telling things that you

already know about your face or hair. Where devices like these could come on their own is probably at a saloon where it could help profile and analyze a new customer's cosmetic needs. It could also help you decide what specific cosmetic product you needed to buy at the store without having to hunt around or research what issues a particular product addresses.

It is noteworthy that Henkel's Hair Analyzer and Customizer are targeted at hair styling saloons. If you are going to a new salon that does not know your hair coloring history or really anything about your hair, the analyzer and its companion app could make the consultation process more structured and data-driven. The scanner claims to help stylists determine your natural hair color and health through the use of near-infrared and visible light sensors. It relies on near-infrared spectroscopy to quantify cysteine acid, which can help determine how processed the hair is and your hair's moisture levels. The information gained from the app could also help companies create products customized to specific cosmetic needs of customers.

Personalized cosmetic gadgets and apps are unlikely to revolutionize how we use hair products or make-up any time soon, what they could do in the meantime is augment the current recommendation process. Many major cosmetic

Google in billion-dollar buyout of HTC design team



Google's \$1.1 billion deal to acquire most of Taiwan-based HTC's smartphone design division was officially confirmed last week by Senior Vice President for Hardware at Google, Rick Osterloh. Announcing the news in a blog post, he hailed the arrival of an "incredibly talented team to work on even better and more innovative products in the years to come."

The deal involves more than 2,000 HTC engineers moving over to Google. They will all remain in Taiwan; Osterloh notes that Taipei is becoming Google's biggest engineering hub in the Asia-Pacific region. While HTC's contract manufacturing operations and VR division are not affected, a substantial majority of the smartphone R&D team will now join Google. The move represents a serious expansion

of Google's hardware efforts, and the most obvious application of the new engineering talent is in its line of Pixel smartphones. Google worked with a subset of its new HTC hires on a contract basis for the Pixel and Pixel 2, according to a source familiar with the development, and now the company will have a larger R&D team in-house.

Google is still a small player in terms of smartphones shipped, but the Pixel phones are aimed squarely at high-end market leaders like Apple and Samsung. While the Pixel line is not quite mainstream yet, the HTC deal is a concentrated effort to give Google's hardware division an instant boost in bandwidth. "We don't want it to be a niche thing," Osterloh said in an interview last year. "We hope to be selling products in high volumes in five years."

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EXCLUSIVE to THE TIMES KUWAIT

Universities in the Age of AI



Andrew Wachtel

President of the American University of Central Asia

I was recently offered the presidency of a university in Kazakhstan that focuses primarily on business, economics, and law, and that teaches these subjects in a narrow, albeit intellectually rigorous, way. I am considering the job, but I have a few conditions.

the most compelling one, from my perspective, is the need to prepare future graduates for a world in which artificial intelligence and AI-assisted technology plays an increasingly dominant role. To succeed in the workplace of tomorrow, students will need new skills.

Over the next 50 years or so, as AI and machine learning become more powerful, human labor will be cannibalized by technologies that outperform people in nearly every job function. Higher education must prepare students for this eventuality. Assuming AI will transform the future of work in the lifetime of our students, educators must consider what skills graduates will need when humans can no longer compete with

is unsustainable. As AI moves deeper into the workplace, jobs will disappear, employment will decline and the pace of population decline will not compensate for job losses amid the robot revolution.

For this reason, the next generation of human labor — today's university students — requires specialized training to thrive. At the same time, and perhaps more than ever before, they need the kind of education that allows them to think broadly and to make unusual and unexpected connections across many fields.

Clearly, tomorrow's leaders will need an intimate familiarity with computers — from basic programming to neural networks — to understand how machines controlling productivity and analytic processes function. But graduates will also need experience in psychology, if only to grasp how a computer's 'brain' differs from their own. And workers of the future will require training in ethics, to help them navigate a world

differently. For one thing, in an AI-dominated world, people will need help managing their extra time. We will not stop playing tennis just because robots start winning Wimbledon; but new organizational and communication skills will be required to help navigate changes in how humans create and play. Managing these industries will take new skills tailored to a fully AI world.

The future of work may look nothing like the scenarios I envision, or it may be far more disruptive; no one really knows. But higher education

has a responsibility to prepare students for every possible scenario — even those that today appear to be barely plausible. The best strategy for educators in any field, and at any time, is to teach skills that make humans human, rather than training students to outcompete new technologies.

No matter where I work in education, preparing young people for their futures will always be my job. And today, that future looks to be dominated by machines. To succeed, educators and the universities we inhabit must evolve.



“Over the next 50 years or so, as AI and machine learning become more powerful, human labor will be cannibalized by technologies that outperform people in nearly every job function.”

What I have proposed is to transform the university into an institution where students continue to concentrate in these three disciplines, but must also complete a rigorous 'core curriculum' in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences — including computer science and statistics. Students would also need to choose a minor in one of the humanities or social sciences.

There are many reasons for insisting on this transformation, but

robots. It is not hard to predict that rote tasks will disappear first. This transition is already occurring in some rich countries, but will take longer in places like Kazakhstan. However, once this trend picks up pace, populations will adjust accordingly. For centuries, communities grew as economic opportunities expanded; for example, farmers had bigger families as demand for products increased, requiring more labor to deliver goods to consumers.

But the world's current population

in which the value of human beings can no longer be taken for granted.

Educators preparing students for this future must start now. Business majors should study economic and political history to avoid becoming blind determinists. Economists must learn from engineering students, as it will be engineers building the future workforce. And law students should focus on the intersection of big data and human rights, so that they gain the insight that will be needed to defend people from forces that may seek to turn individuals into disposable parts.

Even students studying creative and leisure disciplines must learn

American Tourister names footballing legend Cristiano Ronaldo as 2018 Brand Ambassador



American Tourister, world's leading fashionable, youthful, international luggage brand, is proud to announce the signing of international football superstar and fashion icon, Cristiano Ronaldo, as its new brand ambassador for 2018. Five-time winner — a world record, and the current holder of the FIFA Ballon d'Or Award (2008, 2013, 2014, 2016, 2017), the former Manchester United (2003-2009) and Real Madrid (2009-present) goal-scoring record-breaker has won 24 trophies over the course of his illustrious career, including four UEFA Champions League titles, and has captained Portugal to victory in the 2016 UEFA European Championship. Cristiano is a true legend of the game and one of today's most popular and recognizable sporting icons.

Dynamic, stylish and confident, with most followers across Facebook and Instagram globally, Cristiano embodies the soul of the American Tourister brand. His appointment also comes as football fever begins to grip global audiences ahead of the FIFA World Cup, which kicks off in Moscow, Russia on 14 June, 2018.

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