

US EMBASSY: NO CHANGES IN TRAVEL PROCEDURES FOR KUWAITIS

KUWAIT: Changes in travel procedures brought about by the US's visa waiver program does not apply to current valid visas, or nationals of countries that are not participating in the program, the US embassy said on Thursday.

"Travel to Iraq, Iran, Syria, Yemen and Somalia does not nullify visas obtained by Kuwaiti nationals," said a statement by the embassy, denying the veracity of contradictory information disseminated on social media.

"The visa waiver program and the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) application do not apply to citizens of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) nations and has no bearing on Kuwaitis wishing to travel to the US," the statement added. It also urged all those looking for more details on US travel procedures to visit the US Department of Homeland Security's website. —KUNA

ARAB MINISTERS COUNCIL CALLS FOR SPECIAL FORCES TO GUARD BORDERS

TUNIS: The Arab Interior Ministers Council has called for special security forces to guard border crossings, to counter potential terrorist attacks and protect personnel at these sites. A statement issued by the council's Secretariat, participants in the 13th joint meeting of the chiefs of the Arab border security, airports and ports security bodies and customs departments, urged the member states to consolidate efficiency of the staff by providing them with the necessary equipment.

The conference stressed on the dire need to exchange data and maintain direct communications among the relevant security bodies in the Arab countries, especially those sharing borders. Recommendations also emphasized the momentousness of cooperation among the border security, airports and ports security bodies and customs departments to combat terrorism and organized crime. Exchanging field visits is of prior importance to benefit from others' experience, participants agreed. The experiment of the GCC Secretariat is a leading one to benefit from, they said. — KUNA

SOCIAL MEDIA IN KUWAIT: A DOUBLE-EDGED SWORD

72% KUWAITIS USE SOCIAL MEDIA 5+ HOURS A DAY

KUWAIT: Social media plays an integral role in today's world, shaping public and social opinions as well as increasing interaction amongst people. With this fact in mind, the public and private sectors acknowledged the power of social media and began using these tools to promote their services and campaigns.

However, the impact of social media within the public and private domains varied due to the important of crowd involvement and interaction with such tool. Social media could be a great method to spread news, images, and videos regarding current events, but it also could be used to create panic and scatter rumor.

Direct nature

Speaking on the impact of social media, head of the security media department at the Ministry of Interior Brigadier Adel Al-Hashash said that this method of communication was important due to its direct nature.

Delivering a message from the Interior Ministry nowadays does not require going through the same bureaucratic channels as before, affirmed the security official who indicated that with a quick swipe on any smartphone, a piece of information was readily available for mass consumption.

"Our department uses social media and the internet to reach the public directly," said Hasash, adding that the department made its mission to deliver quick and accurate news and information to the general populace.

On the same note, head of the Health Ministry's website operations department



Dr Abdulaziz Al-Rshaid noted that the Ministry continuously battles against those spreading rumors through its official accounts on the internet and social media. It is vital in this day and age to deliver the correct message to the masses or else chaos and disarray would prevail, added Dr Rshaid.

The health official revealed that there were teams of dedicated individuals at the ministry who spread Public Service Announcements (PSAs), refute rumors on the spread of disease, and advise against using counterfeit drugs.

Five hours

According to a survey conducted by Kuwait News Agency's (KUNA) IT department, around 72 percent of Kuwaitis are spending over five hours daily using

social media applications and websites. The survey revealed that social media helped in spreading news and rumors alike by 65 percent, revealing that the top Social Media application was 'WhatsApp' with 90 percent of usage followed by 'Snapchat', 'Instagram', and 'Twitter' with 40, and 38, and 25 percent of usage respectively.

The survey revealed that some 25 percent of users log on to social media applications around 50 times a day with the average age being between 31 and 40. Social issues reigned champion amongst topics discussed by social media users with 81 percent, said the survey, adding that cultural, political, and religious matters were less prominent in daily discussions of users. —KUNA

KUWAIT OIL PRICE DROPS TO \$38.40 PB

KUWAIT/VIENNA: Price of Kuwait crude oil dropped 74 cents reaching \$38.40 per barrel in Thursday's trades against \$39.14 pb on Wednesday, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) said yesterday. Meanwhile in the international markets, the crude rates on Thursday dropped for the sixth session in a row, affected by jitters regarding forecast supply rise, with data showing hike of the American crude reserves by 1.7 million barrels in a

week. Nymex forwards for September's delivery closed with a 1.9 percent rise, 78 cents, settling at \$41.14 pb.

The price of OPEC basket of 14 crudes fell by 79 cents on Thursday to \$39.79 pb, compared with \$40.49 the previous day, OPEC said yesterday. The annual average of the OPEC basket price hit \$49.64 pb, it said.

The OPEC Reference Basket of Crudes (ORB) is made up of the following: Saharan Blend (Algeria), Girassol (Angola), Oriente (Ecuador), Rabi Light (Gabon), Minas (Indonesia), Iran Heavy (Islamic Republic of Iran), Basra Light (Iraq), Kuwait Export (Kuwait), Es Sider (Libya), Bonny Light (Nigeria), Qatar Marine (Qatar), Arab Light (Saudi Arabia), Murban (UAE) and Mery (Venezuela).

During a meeting in Vienna on June 2, OPEC oil ministers emphasized that Member Countries should continue to closely monitor developments over the coming months, and if necessary meet again and suggest further measures according to prevailing market conditions. They also decided that their next ordinary meeting will convene in Vienna on November 30, 2016. — KUNA



KFH PATRONIZES KUWAITI RIDER IN MOTOCROSS MESHARI BU SHAYBA

KUWAIT: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) patronized the Kuwaiti Rider in Motocross Meshari Bu Shayba in the framework of its commitment towards assuming the social responsibility and keenness to support the youth and sports. Bu Shayba achieved many local, regional and international titles in the Motocross sport that is a form of off-road motorcycle racing held on enclosed off-road circuits. KFH's support to Bu Shayba emanates

from its social responsibility and keenness to support the youth and sport, while recognizing the national talent in efforts to motivate them to win international titles and elevate Kuwait's name in the international championships and forums. Meanwhile, Bu Shayba praised KFH's support and keenness on appreciating him, which comprises an impetus for further success and achievements in his upcoming championships.



Yusef Al-Ruwaieh honors Bu Shayba.