

Overheard in the Souk the grapevine

● The weather is getting better each day as the mercury starts to drop. Summer will soon be over and here comes the fall. Though, there is no colourful foliage in Kuwait but a prelude to winter is a refreshing time. As the season changes, the season of allergies is also on!

A pediatrician friend has been busy as a bee this week after parents have been rushing their kids to her clinic with asthma, cold, cough, flu and other allergies brought about by the changing season. Even adults are not exempted from seasonal allergies. Allergies happen but

may be prevented. Stay away from the allergens or the stuff that trigger your allergies. A few tips may include staying indoors when levels of pollens are high or very high for those that you're sensitive to; wear a mask; wash your hair at night; ditch the carpet; take antihistamines. Stay healthy and manage your allergy properly!

● The season of less traffic on the commute to work is over. Now we tarry along the motorways with phantom jams and

accidents to slow us down. A collective shift in our driving habits would go a long way in easing the lags. Too often we give in to the psychology of braking needlessly, step on ours in cases where a release of acceleration would suffice. While many expound on the many ways we can avoid ripples of delay, the optimal way to drive would be with the flow of traffic. Going faster or slower than everybody else creates situations that need to be reacted to by those around you, and the more reactions, the more traffic or accidents.

● The threat to grill ministers is continuing as Kuwait's Parliament will soon come back to sessions, but most will target the ministers of social affairs and labour and education and higher education.

For minister of social affairs, her fault, according to her critics, is her appointing or employing expatriates instead of citizens in her ministry and education minister's error is that his inability to make some of the schools ready to enroll students due to lack of teachers even though new academic year has started.

Lawmakers know that expatriates number is more than twice the number of citizens and they also know that expatriates occupy many jobs in the country and thus their demand to not only reduce expat numbers but also stop employing them in government institutions especially fields that can be occupied by citizens.

Some concluded that the expulsion and deportation should not affect the expatriates who are productive for the country rather than the unskilled ones and those who violate residency law.

Tongues Way

'Cyber Security Zone' aims to curb excessive cellphone use by young people

Rogue Korean child-monitoring app is back: experts

SEOUL, South Korea, Sept 13, (AP): A South Korean child-monitoring smartphone app that was removed from the market in 2015 after it was found to be riddled with security flaws has been reissued under a new name and still puts children at risk, researchers said Monday. The app "Cyber Security Zone" is part of government efforts to curb what authorities consider excessive cellphone use by young people. Parents are required by law to install monitoring software on smartphones for all children 18 and under.

The app is almost identical to a previous system, "Smart Sheriff", which left children's private information vulnerable to hackers, according to internet watchdog Citizen Lab at the University of Toronto. Both were developed under the auspices of MOIBA, the industry association for South Korean cellphone service providers.

"The flaws in the apps open the door to possible breaches of sensitive information including passwords, phone



In this May 15, 2015 file photo, a promotional banner of mobile apps that block harmful contents, is posted on the door at a mobile store in Seoul, South Korea. (AP)

numbers, and other user data", Citizen Lab said in a statement. "Smart Sheriff" was one of a family of apps intended to monitor children's online behavior. Some, like Smart Sheriff, act as filtering or blocking tools, while others send alerts to parents if children swear or talk about sex or bullying.

The apps have raised privacy activists' hackles, but experts have also been scathing about their lack of security. Cure53, a German auditing firm, said in 2015 that Smart Sheriff was "fundamentally broken".

Citizen Lab and Cure53 now say the app appears to have been rebranded as "Cyber Security Zone" — the equivalent of putting a fresh coat of paint on a dangerous old clunker.

"Users are being misled", said the Citizen Lab report. MOIBA denied the two systems were the same and an official of the group said a review by the government's Korean Internet & Security Agency found security for "Cyber Security

Zone" satisfactory. "We cannot agree to the opinion that the application was not developed with security in mind", said the official, Noh Yong-lae.

Noh said MOIBA cut ties with the developer of "Smart Sheriff" and hired another company to update and develop apps.

KISA officials who looked at the Citizen Lab report said their agency's audit failed to catch at least one security lapse: the app's developer had not encrypted a key to the password. That stemmed from the app's design.

"They should not have built the app this way", said Kim Chan-il, a KISA manager. He said the government and MOIBA should make sure to hire developers who pay attention to security and have enough time to build an app.

An audit by KISA "does not guarantee security against all weaknesses", Kim said. Rates of smartphone and internet use in South Korea are among the world's highest. The government operates filters to block access to pro-

North Korean websites and material deemed pornographic.

South Korean authorities believe monitoring and censoring children's smartphone use is part of the state's duty to protect teenagers against harmful content such as pornography.

There is broad public support for the government to stop online behavior that is deemed to be an addiction. The government spends public money to help users break habits of excessive computer gaming and internet use.

The backlash to "Smart Sheriff" prompted the government to ease enforcement by proposing a bill in parliament that would allow parents to opt out of installing a monitoring device.

The proposal "shows the government acknowledges its original position was wrong, but it's not enough", said Kelly Kim, general counsel at OpenNet Korea, a civic group, who co-authored the Citizen Lab report. "The mandate is unconstitutional and should be abolished".

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10 things you might not know about

Georgia



1. Tongue twister

Spoken Georgian is like no other language you are likely to hear. It belongs to its own ancient linguistic group unlike any other language spoken outside the region. It includes rare sounds that many visitors may never have heard before. Some consonants, for example, are pronounced from the back of the throat with a sudden guttural puff of air. Georgian has its own 33-letter alphabet thought to be based on the sort of Aramaic spoken in the time of Jesus. To the untutored eye, the letters look very much alike. A squiggle too far and your "k" can easily turn into a "v" or a "p". But even without understanding it, Georgian writing is beautiful, a myriad of theatrical swirls and flourishes. Very fitting to a country of dramatic personalities.

2. Georgia isn't called Georgia

At least, not by Georgians. They call their

country Sakartvelo. The origins of the country's name in English are obscure. One theory points to the Middle Ages when Christian crusaders swept through the region on their way to the Holy Land. At that time, it was part of the Persian Empire and the people here were known as "Gurj". They were also devotees of St George. Theory has it that the crusaders made the connection and named the country Georgia. These days, there's no mistaking the link to St George. A golden statue of the saint slaying a dragon dominates Tbilisi's central square. He is also Georgia's patron saint and the national flag featuring his red cross on a white background is everywhere.

3. Where's Uncle Joe?

Go to any flea market in Georgia and you're likely to stumble across a moustachioed face looking out at you amid the bric-a-brac. Sixty years after his death

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there's still a market for portraits of Joseph Stalin, the Georgian-born ruler of the former Soviet Union. As Georgia's most famous son, attitudes here towards "Uncle Joe" are complicated. After independence, many Stalin statues were torn down but now some are returning to town squares. Some older Georgians revere him as a strong leader, who defeated Hitler, and are proud that tiny Georgia produced someone who had such an impact on world history. But more often he's viewed as a tyrant responsible for brutal purges of his own people.

4. High mountains

What's the highest mountain range in

Europe? The Alps? Wrong. It is the Caucasus Mountains marking the border between Georgia and Russia. While the highest peak is in Russia, Georgia lays claim to the second highest, Shkara, which at 5,193m (17,040 ft) beats Mont Blanc by nearly 400m (1,312 ft). These dramatic mountains, with their terrifying hairpin roads and hidden villages cut off at winter, are the stuff of legend. In Greek mythology they were one of the pillars holding up the world. And it was here that Zeus tied up Prometheus, to have his liver eaten by eagles. Today they are increasingly becoming a destination for climbers, walkers or skiers looking for adventure...