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Kuwait Times Friday Times



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**Kuwait opposition
'needs unity' after
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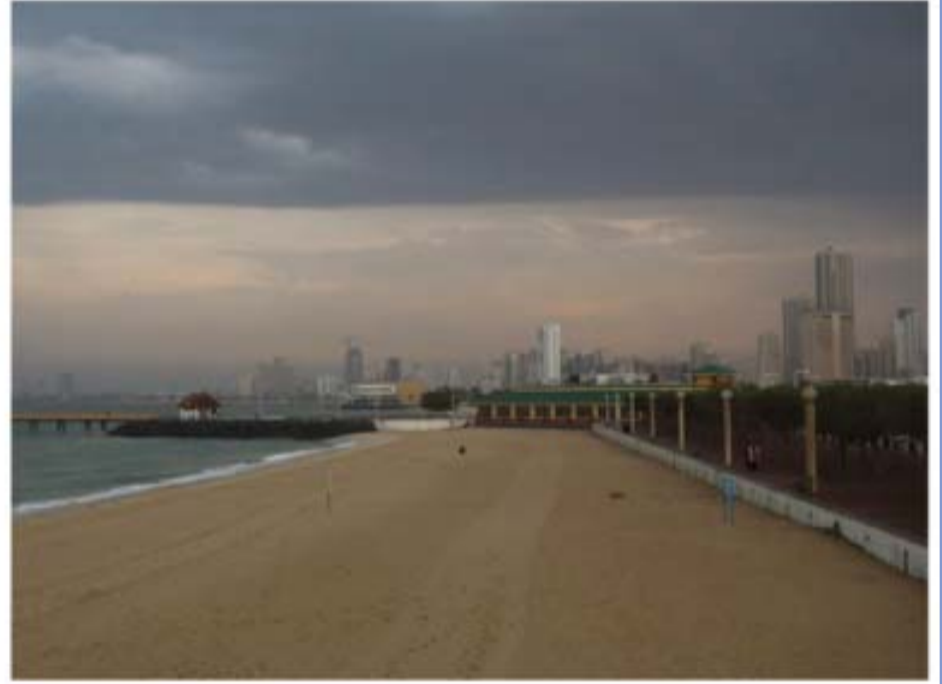
**Ibra and Martial
lift Man United;
Arsenal crash out**

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Rain soaks Kuwait

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KUWAIT: Rain drenched various areas across Kuwait yesterday with heavy downpours throughout the day. — Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat

Local Spotlight

ABUSE OF EXPAT WOMEN



By Muna Al-Fuzai

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When Kuwaiti citizens fall victim to abuse, they can find many ears to hear their plight at the police station, and if not, at least they can find friends and family to help. But when an expat woman is the victim of abuse, she can be totally alone with not a single friend to help or a shoulder to cry on.

Unfortunately, I have seen many expat women suffering from abuse by their husbands. But because they are far away from family and sometimes are mothers of small children, they hesitate to speak out. These victims of spousal abuse are also victims of fear who often choose to keep their abuse private until they die. This is a sad truth for some expat wives here.

Our story today is yet another heartbreaking tale of a woman abused by her husband. The woman called the police asking for help after she was abused both physically and mentally by her husband. She said her husband had been abusive for a while, then one day he tied her up, and with his brother's help, stole her gold bracelets along with KD 800. They also abducted her son and fled to Egypt, their homeland. This wife and mother is alone now after being mistreated by her husband, who according to their marriage vows, promised to love and cherish her until death do them part!

The police will do their routine job and will file a case against the husband. But I don't think this will be the end of this family tragedy. The issue of abuse among expats must be opened for discussion, because the police can intervene and detain a person for a while or file a court case against him/her, but this may not bring the matter to an end.

We need to study every abuse case to find what led to such behavior? Is it money? Is it jealousy among couples, especially if one of them earns more than the other? Abuse is most commonly by men against women, and sadly is often ignored, as it happens behind closed doors here in the Arab world. Many women feel ashamed to speak up about their abuse and the suffering they have to put up with for years. They also fear the reactions of their friends and families and the way they will be treated if the truth comes out.

Back to our story. This woman will be in great pain over the loss of her son. The hard part here is that she will likely have to go back to Egypt, to the place her husband is hiding. In some cases, the family tries to fix the problem, but an abuser is always an abuser, even if he tries to pretend otherwise. I recall a neighbor who always had bruises on her arms, legs and face. For many years, she would blame an accident or working in the kitchen as excuses and refused to admit the abuse. The couple finally left Kuwait, but I still pray for her.

It would be great to see support groups to encourage abused people to seek help and speak out. The police show up only when the damage is done, and it could be too late. We also need awareness for people not to put up with any kind of abuse, which may not necessarily be physical. Verbal abuse can be just as damaging, though harder to see. I know violence is a phenomenon in modern societies, but we do not have to accept it against any human or animal.

PHOTO OF THE DAY



Children seen riding a camel at last year's camel races in this file photo. Camel races are a seasonal sport in Kuwait that typically kicks off in late November and runs through March. They are held every Saturday afternoon at the Camel Racing Club in Kabd area. — Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

IN MY VIEW

DEAR INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER, KINDLY CORRECT YOUR INFORMATION

By Athoob Al-Shuaibi

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The Independent, on the 25th of November 2016, published an article entitled "Israel is burning: inflammatory social media posts celebrate wildfires raging in Jewish state - The imam of Kuwait's Grand Mosque tweeted: 'All the best to the fire'."

The headline was in reference to a tweet made on November 23 by Imam Mishary Rashid Al-Afasy, a well known Quranic recite and imam at the grand mosque in Kuwait City. However the British newspaper deliberately misconstrued Al-Afasy's role, referring to him in its response tweet as the imam 'for the Grand Mosque of the State of Kuwait'.

Al-Afasy's original tweet garnered widespread criticism in the Arab world, receiving more than 20,000 retweets, thousands of comments and more than 17,500 likes. Many Palestinians and other Arabs rejected his tweet, saying that the land was being destroyed by fire that claiming the lives of thousands of organisms and destroyed their natural habitat. Therefore, pushing politics into this tragedy doesn't make any sense.

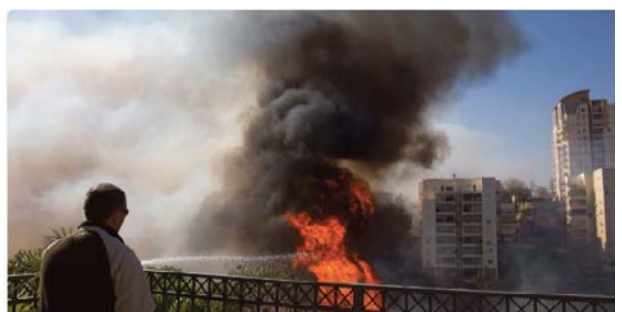
It seems to me that the newspaper was deliberately trying to provoke its readers and tarnish the reputation of Kuwait by pointing to Al-Afasy's tweet as if he represents the whole of the country.

Let me just say that Al-Afasy is an imam for the Grand Mosque not the imam. Despite the Independent's lack of fact checking, there are many imams at the grand mosque and their personal views do not necessarily reflect the views of the State of Kuwait or the Kuwaiti public. The Grand Mosque has several imams who lead prayers during the final 10 days of Ramadan, such as Fahd Al-Kandari, Salah Al-Hashem together with Mishary Al-Afasy. The latter is firstly a Quran reciter, a chanter and a businessman.

Any respectable news organization such as the Independent would do well to refrain from casting xenophobic aspersions at a time when the whole world is facing a rise in nationalist, anti-Islam propaganda.

I tried to clarify the situation. I do not represent all the Kuwaiti people no more than Al-Afasy. Just like many developed nations, we hold a diversity of opinion and points of view. My replies to the Independent were ignored.

Kuwait holds a clear stance toward the Palestinian issue, and its wise foreign policy elevates it from adopting such an ill-considered reaction.



The Independent tweeted about the Al-Afasy story more than once, highlighting his role as Kuwait's Grand Mosque imam.



Al-Afasy's tweet reads: "All the best to the fires. #Israelisburning."



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Dark or light? The question that baffles men of Kuwait

Popular fabric colors for this season, dimi is the second from the top.



Readymade dishdashas shopfront. — Photo by Dr.Moayad H. Hussain



Yaqoub Al-Towaitan

By Athoob Al-Shuaibi

The weather in Kuwait these days is puzzling. Winter is not officially here, but the climate is definitely getting cooler and becoming a topic of daily conversations. Is it time to open those suitcases we packed with winter clothes last year, or should we wait till temperatures fall further?

In Kuwait, men prefer to wear dishdashas of lighter colors during summertime, while they wear dark-colored dishdashas in winter. Dishdasha, thobe, jalabiya and kandora are different terms for the long-sleeved Arabian garment men wear.

In the short autumn period when it's still warm but cooling down, some men get teased by their peers and families for wearing their winter garments too soon. Some men will even prefer feeling cold to avoid the mocking. Elderly people are more understanding of the need to protect themselves from the cold, because of their health.

The reason behind this joking is that some Kuwaitis do not want to scare away winter, as they superstitiously believe that winter will flee once people are seen wearing heavy clothes. Yaqoub Al-Towaitan said people long for winter and rejoice in its arrival. "We want our bodies to feel the cold, therefore we shouldn't hide ourselves from it," he said. His compatriot Nasser Sulaiman had another explanation. "Kuwaitis love to make sarcastic comments and jokes - we leave no one untouched," he said jokingly.

Designs

There are various designs of dishdashas in the Arabian Peninsula. In Kuwait, for instance, the garment went through several stages. "Before oil was discovered, our dishdasha resembled the shape of the Emirati garment to a large extent. There was no collar. Then, a classic collar was added after the oil boom that made it look like a shirt," explained Sulaiman. This design was fashionable for almost 30 years. "I still wear a dishdasha with



Mohammad Al-Turfi

a classic collar. I really like it. I believe it reflects the genuine soul of Kuwait," said Rajab Al-Shatti.

Another design appeared in the 1970s, but it didn't survive for long. It was called the mokhassara (slim fit). The quick disappearance of this garment wasn't surprising, because dishdashas are meant to be loose, comfortable and hide body imperfections.

Colors

The most popular color among the elderly is called dimi (identical to the color of tea with milk). Popular dishdasha colors are navy, gray, ocean blue and brown. But two old colors are now making a solid comeback.

"There's a high demand now for dark maroon and dimi

among younger buyers," noted Mohammed Al-Turfi, who has been working at the Nasser Kakoli fabric shop in Souq Al-Mubarakiya for nearly seven years. "Men buy Chinese and Indian cashmere for everyday dishdashas, but they prefer British and European fabrics for the workplace and special occasions, as they're of a nicer quality. The great variety and quality we have in Kuwait attracts buyers from around the Gulf," Turfi added.

The Kuwaiti dishdasha design has gained fame in the Gulf states, and many tailoring shops offer it to their customers. In general, the dishdasha maintains its position as the main sartorial choice for local men in the Gulf region despite the openness of the youth to Western styles. They are proud of their inherited traditional attire, which is not anticipated to become extinct anytime soon, at least in this century.



Men's fabric shop (Al-Ebda'a by Nasser Kakoli). Photos by Athoob Al-Shuaibi.

Kuwaitis do not want to scare away winter, as they superstitiously believe that winter will flee once people are seen wearing heavy clothes.



Nasser Sulaiman



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HEAVY RAIN HITS KUWAIT

KUWAIT: Rain drenched various areas across Kuwait yesterday with heavy downpours throughout the day. Patches of flooding appeared in Shuwaikh, Farwaniya, Jleeb and other areas in the south. Scattered showers and cloudy skies are expected to continue through the weekend, according to the Kuwait Meteorological Center. The rain affected the flow of traffic yesterday. Meanwhile, Kuwait Fire Service Directorate (KFSD) warned residents to take caution during the rainy weather.

—Photos by Yasser Al-Zayyat



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KILIS: Khansa Al-Saeed teaching Computer lessons to Syrian refugees at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah village project in the south-central city of Kilis, Turkey. — KUNA photos



Manual weaving class at Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah village project in the south-central city of Kilis, Turkey.

‘Kuwait village’ gives refugees a new lease of life in Turkey

KILIS: Kuwait’s relief aid given out to Syrian refugees has paid dividends in mitigating their misery, at a time where the number of refugees has increasingly been on the rise. The lion’s share of that aid has been earmarked for young Syrian refugee girls, where a social center, part of the “His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah” village project in the south-central city of Kilis, caters to their needs and ambitions.

Moreover, the village is home to a social center designed to provide young refugee girls with the opportunity to hone their skills, allowing them the chance to assimilate into society, a prospect that brings palpable joy to these girls.

The biggest humanitarian conflict since World War II, the Syrian conflict has induced a refugee crisis of unspeakable proportions, where citizens of this war-torn nation have deserted their homeland in a des-

perate attempt to save their lives, most of whom now reside in refugee camps provided by the Turkish government. Furthermore, the village comprises 1,248 domiciles that accommodate some 15,000 refugees, along with a co-ed school and a library. The village also encompasses a nursery and a social center that provides computer lessons for girls, in addition to courses on manual labor.

Khansa Al-Saeed, a computer



A sewing workshop for Syrian refugees in Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah village.

teacher at this center, said that she is grateful to His Highness the Amir’s humanitarian efforts which instilled in young refugees feelings of sheer bliss.

Al-Saeed pointed out that the social center is currently accommodating 35 female pupils. Similarly, art teacher Mazna Mustafa noted that the center allows individuals with innate talent to further excel by showcasing their artistic prowess, as she thanked Kuwaiti charities for their incessant support.

Laura Darbala, a rug maker, expressed her appreciation of

Kuwait’s humanitarian efforts, hailing the village project as a humanitarian and philanthropic landmark. She also added that the village contains all sorts of facilities and centers that allow young girls to spend their time wisely and productively. On the border with Syria, the population of Kilis is 90,000 citizens, along with a total of around 100,000 Syrian refugees. Through innumerable projects and endeavors, Kuwait, long a bastion of humanity, continues to set the precedent for humanitarian and philanthropic work. — KUNA



Photo shows the Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah village project in the south-central city of Kilis, Turkey.

FORGERY AND EMBEZZLEMENT

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: Relations and Security Information Department said in a statement that during a review by the new board of directors of social Guarantee Fund, cases of forgery and embezzlement were discovered. There were also manipulations of payment receipts by an accountant in cooperation with outsiders. Criminal detectives have been informed and arrest has been made. The accountant confessed to committing the crime.

Lecture on drugs

Special Forces department (Riot Control Force), held a lecture on the 'Early Discovery Of Drugs Use And Its Effect On The Society', in cooperation with Drugs Control General Department.

Surprise campaigns

Traffic Department recently carried out several surprise campaigns in



Kuwait's six governorates. 34,611 citations were issued. 10,22 cars and 42 motorcycles were impounded, while 21 persons were detained for committing grave violations. Four expats were also deported.

Dormitory fire

Fire ravaged a student dormitory in Qurtuba - prompting Suhada and Shuwaikh fire centers to respond. No injuries were reported.



Announcement from Ministry of Commerce & Industry Consumer Protection Department

Ministry of Commerce & Industry - Consumer Protection Department, in accordance with Law No. 39/2014, and in cooperation with Mohamed Naser Al Sayer & Sons Est. Co. (Authorized Distributor and Provider for TOYOTA Kuwait).

As an After sales service and commitment to customer satisfaction, TOYOTA announces recall of 2012 TOYOTA HIACE because the oil passage switch control connected to shift lever of the Automatic Transmission an unexpected rapid shift can cause friction and the pivot connection may rattle.

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ICARDA IMPROVING IRRIGATION TECHNIQUES

KUWAIT: The International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) is keen on improving supplemental irrigation and water-saving irrigation techniques in farm lands and natural pastures, Deputy Director of Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) Faisal Al-Sadiqi said yesterday. Al-Sadiqi made this remark during a meeting held between ICARDA Director General Aly Abousabaa, advisor and supervisor of fisheries at GCC general secretariat Bander Al-Izani and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) representative Mohammad Abdul-Qader.

Al-Sadiqi pointed out that ICARDA is keen on enhancing food security and improving sustainability of natural resources in the Gulf region. He added that the international organization has helped Kuwait in combating desertification and rehabilitation of natural pastures. He noted that a laboratory for desert plants seeds technology is being built; it's a laboratory where research on seed physiology, pathology and biology is conducted in order to study seed development, maturation, germination, dormancy and deterioration. This laboratory will be the largest in the world in this field.— KUNA

Crime

Report

SORCERER ARRESTED

KUWAIT: A 35-year-old Egyptian has been accused of sorcery. The suspect charges KD 350 to bring couples closer or to separate them. Later, he raised the price to KD 1000. Criminal detectives learned about the activities and sent a female undercover agent to him. When she gave him the KD 500 down payment police moved in and caught him red handed with money. Separately, Farwaniya detectives arrested a bedoon who posed as 'spiritual healer'. The suspect swindled a girl of KD400 to relief her of her sadness. The bedoon denied the charge.

Kuwaiti threatened

A citizen in her 30s told Fahad Al-Ahmad police that her neighbor insulted her verbally and threatened to hurt her because of previous disputes. Police are investigating.

Under the influence

A Kuwaiti was arrested for being under the influence of drugs in Ahmadi. He was found wanted to serve a seven-year jail term for kidnapping a minor. The citizen has been sent to concerned authorities. In another development, a wanted citizen has been arrested by police. He is wanted to serve a 5-year jail sentence and also for owing KD 700.

Fake detective

An Indian was robbed of KD 530 by a fake detective in Khaitan area. The Indian told police he was stopped by a driver in 4WD vehicle who claimed to be a detective. The fake detective searched him and took the money.

'Haris' disappeared

An Egyptian 'haris' disappeared after collecting KD 3,200 in rent money. The building owner lodged a complaint at Fintas police station, and gave them details of the suspects. Detectives are investigating.—Al Anbaa, Al Rai

KUWAIT CALLS FOR JOINT EFFORTS AGAINST ANTI-ARAB CAMPAIGNS

AMMAN: It is imperative to bolster Arab media cooperation to face anti-Arab media campaigns, and also at times of emergencies and crises, a Kuwaiti media official said yesterday. Director of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Department of the Foreign Media Sector at the Ministry of Information (MoI) Faris Al-Enezi made the remark in a statement to KUNA on the sidelines of the fourth joint GCC/Jordanian meeting, which tackled various media affairs. Al-Enezi noted that the fight against terrorism was the focal point of discussions during the meeting, besides other issues on promoting cooperation between Jordan and the GCC.

On such meetings, the Kuwaiti official said they are instrumental for developing the media sector in the Arab world, adding that extensive training programs and workshops for employees of government news agencies are in the works. He added that he is hopeful that such meetings would pay dividends in further solidifying cordial ties between the GCC and the Hashemite Kingdom. It was decided that the fifth GCC/Jordan meeting will be held during the first week of April, 2017, in one of the GCC states. In addition to Al-Enezi, Inspector of General Secretariat Affairs at the MoI Muath Al-Mulaifi made up the Kuwaiti delegation to the meeting.— KUNA

CYBERACTIVIST LOSES COURT APPEAL

KUWAIT: Kuwait's appeals court has upheld a 10-year jail sentence against an online activist on charges of insulting the Amir and harming national interests, a newspaper reported yesterday. Waleed Fares was convicted of spreading false news on Twitter about the Gulf state's domestic affairs which harmed national interests and of insulting the Amir and undermining his authority. He was also convicted of publishing com-

ments deemed offensive to judges and the public prosecutor.

On Wednesday, the appeals court upheld the 10-year jail sentence handed down by a lower court, Kuwait's Al-Qabas newspaper reported. In recent years, dozens of opposition politicians and activists have been jailed by the Kuwaiti courts, most of them on charges of insulting the Amir or undermining his authority. Dozens

more are awaiting trial on similar charges. The crackdown came after the Amir dissolved an opposition-dominated parliament in 2012 sparking two years of mass street protests. A key opposition member of the dissolved assembly, Mussallam Al-Barrak, has been in jail for more than 18 months, serving a two-year sentence on charges of insulting the Amir during one of the protests. —AFP



KUWAIT: Kuwaiti candidate and former parliament speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem (center), celebrates with his supporters following the announcement of his victory in the parliamentary election, in Kuwait City on November 27, 2016. Kuwait opposition groups and their allies had bagged nearly half of parliament's 50 seats, raising fears of fresh political wrangling in the oil-rich Gulf state. —Photo by Yasser Al-Zayyat

KUWAIT'S OPPOSITION 'NEEDS UNITY' AFTER POLL COMEBACK

RADICAL SALAFISTS AND THEIR SUPPORTERS WON 5 SEATS

KUWAIT: Kuwait's Islamist-dominated opposition made a strong showing in the Gulf state's parliamentary elections, but analysts say the loose coalition must forge strong unity to become an effective political force. Saturday's polls were the first in nearly four years contested by the opposition, whose diverse components agree on some issues such as rejecting government austerity measures but are split on many others.

Political parties are banned in Kuwait, which has been ruled by the Al-Sabah family for two and a half centuries and was the first Gulf Arab state to adopt a parliamentary system in 1962. But many groups operate freely as de facto parties. As a result, the opposition coalition is made up of individuals, rather than well-defined parties with a distinct ideology.

The opposition groups boycotted two general elections in 2012 and 2013 in protest at a change in the voting system brought unilaterally by the government. But they decided to contest the November 26 snap polls to stop what they called a "political deterioration" in the oil-rich emirate. "The opposition is not a single entity. It is a coalition of groups and individuals not linked by a distinct ideology or even a program," said political analyst Abdulwahed Khalfan. "They differ in their directions and goals but they meet under a common umbrella of opposing the government," Khalfan explained.

Islamists took nearly half of the 24 seats won by the opposition in the 50-member parliament. The rest went to nationalists and liberals. The main Islamist group is the Muslim Brotherhood-linked Islamic Constitutional Movement (ICM) which won six seats along with its allies. The radical Salafists and their supporters won five seats. "I think we will see more than one opposition bloc in parliament ... Not all opposition members can be classified under one category," political analyst Saleh Al-Saeedi said. "They will agree on a number of priority issues ... On populist issues, their number will increase as other MPs will join," Saeedi said.

United against austerity

For example, a large number of MPs will join the opposition in rejecting government austerity measures and raising prices, motivated by popular pressure. Some leading opposition lawmakers have already pointed to a number of urgent issues they want to tackle when parliament holds its inaugural session on December 11.

Opposition MPs held their first coordination meeting on Wednesday and discussed fielding a candidate for the post of parliamentary speaker as well as their political agenda. They agreed in principle that their priorities are to address revocations of citizenship, opposing austerity measures and the scrapping of freedom-curbing bills issued by the previous pro-government

parliament. They plan to hold more meetings next week. "There is no alternative for MPs but to reach an understanding on the basis of joint national commitments," veteran Islamist opposition MP Jamaan Al-Harbash wrote on his Twitter account earlier this week. "We must put aside any controversial issues to ensure the success of agreed national topics," Harbash said.

During its heyday in 2011-2014, the opposition held massive street protests demanding wide democratic reforms, an elected government and broad constitutional changes that would effectively restrict the powers enjoyed by the ruling family. Those demands are no longer a priority for the opposition which has been weakened and several of its leaders and activists jailed. While parliament has the power to vote the prime minister and cabinet members out of office, the Kuwaiti political set-up means change is not easy.

The country has the Gulf's oldest elected parliament, but under the constitution the emir has extensive powers and can dissolve the legislature at the recommendation of the government. Ruling family members occupy the key portfolios of defense, foreign and interior. In addition, unelected ministers become members of parliament with almost similar powers to those of elected MPs, giving the government an edge. "The opposition's strength and capability will hinge on its unity and cooperation," Saeedi said. —AFP

News

In brief



KISR's Director General Samira Al-Sayed receives the award

Kuwait's KISR wins 'Arab Best Award'

KUWAIT: The Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR) has won the prize of the best Arab research institution (Best Arab Award) for 2016, KISR said yesterday. KISR's Director General Samira Al-Sayed received the award from the UAE's Plenipotentiary in Morocco Saif Al-Ketbi during a ceremony held by the Award's Secretariat, KISR added in a statement. The awards ceremony in various categories was attended by numerous senior officials, ministers, ambassadors, diplomats and heads of leading firms in the Arab World. This is the first edition of the award, only launched this year by two Qatari and Moroccan business institutions. The aim of the award is to honor people and institutions who have excelled in certain fields, in a bid to encourage efficiencies to lead the region to further progress. The award is offered in three categories, leadership, business and society and sports stars.

Kuwait keen on aiding injured Mosul civilians

IRBIL: Kuwait is keen on treating injured Iraqi civilians escaping from the ongoing military operations in Mosul, Kuwait's General Consul to Irbil Omar Al-Kanderi said yesterday. Kuwait is coordinating with local authorities in Mosul and private hospitals in the province to finance the treatment of the injured, Al-Kanderi said. This generous initiative came under His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's instructions, said the diplomat. Meanwhile, Mazen Ahmad, one of the wounded civilian said that he got injured in a car explosion carried out by the so-called Islamic State (IS) militants, adding that he was taken to a private hospital in Irbil to receive treatment. Ahmad pointed out that his expenses were paid by the State of Kuwait and expressed gratitude for this humanitarian initiative. Moreover, the Nineveh governorate's authority lauded Kuwait's support to the injured Iraqis, saying that this gesture was expected from the fellow neighboring country. It affirmed that Kuwait was among the first countries that rushed to help Iraq, underscoring Kuwait's quick response to provide relief for affected civilians.

The OICC 14th congress kicks off in Morocco

RABAT: The Organization of Islamic Capitals and Cities (OICC) kicked off its 14th congress in Morocco on Wednesday, with the participation of 50 delegations from 50 countries. The congress aims to help enhance cooperation among OICC members, for achieving sustainable development for the Islamic capitals and cities, OICC Secretary General Omar Abdullah Qadi told the opening session, attended by Moroccan Prime Minister Abdelilah Benkirane. He added that Rabat, hosting the congress for the second time, is one of the OICC founder capitals, since the organization was established by a resolution from the Ninth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, Dakar, Senegal, 1978, as an affiliate of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Qadi pointed to the regional and international successes realized by the OICC over nearly four decades, gaining advisory capacity at the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). It has also been awarded the memberships of several regional and international organizations.

Friday Times

International

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2016

'Catastrophic' water shortages in Mosul

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Voters in London take to polls for 'Brexit by-election'

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Indonesia tightens security ahead of protest against Christian governor

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ALEPPO: Syrian residents fleeing the eastern part of Aleppo walk through a street in Masaken Hanano, a former rebel-held district which was retaken by the regime forces last week, on November 30, 2016.—AFP

UN WARNS OF 'GIANT GRAVEYARD' IN ALEPPO

ELITE SYRIAN TROOPS MOVE EAST

ALEPPO: Hundreds of elite Syrian troops moved into east Aleppo yesterday ahead of a push into the most densely populated areas, after the UN warned the city risked becoming a "giant graveyard". Despite fierce global criticism, forces loyal to President Bashar Al-Assad have pressed an assault to retake control of all of Aleppo, once Syria's commercial hub but now a divided city in ruins. The assault-backed by heavy artillery fire has spurred a mass exodus of tens of thousands of residents from rebel-held districts. The relentless barrage has left Aleppo's streets strewn with the bodies of men, women and children, many lying next to the suitcases they had packed to escape. The steady artillery fire could again be heard pounding rebel areas early Thursday, with heavy rainfall adding to the misery.

The assault has seen Assad's forces make significant gains in the last week. After overrunning the city's northeast, they were in control of 40 percent of the territory once held by opposi-

tion forces in Aleppo, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. "The regime is tightening the noose on the remaining section of east Aleppo under rebel control," Observatory head Rami Abdel Rahman said. He said hundreds of fighters from the elite Republican Guard and Fourth Division arrived in Aleppo on Thursday "in preparation for street battles" in the densely populated southeast.

"They are moving in on the ground, but they are afraid of ambushes because of the density of both residents and fighters," he said. The violence in Aleppo has sparked widespread outrage, but little concrete action from the international community. Speaking to a special Security Council session on Wednesday, UN humanitarian chief Stephen O'Brien made an urgent appeal. "For the sake of humanity we call on-we plead-with the parties and those with influence to do everything in their power to protect civilians and enable access to the besieged part of eastern Aleppo before it

becomes one giant graveyard," he said.

Children killed

Syrian warplanes have been pounding east Aleppo with air strikes for months often using crude munitions like barrel bombs-but as the ground advance has gathered pace the army has instead turned to more precise artillery. The effect has been no less devastating. Yesterday, four children from a single family were killed in artillery fire by regime forces on the rebel-held Maadi neighborhood of Aleppo, according to the Observatory.

And at least 26 civilians, including seven children, were killed in shelling of the rebel-held Jubb Al-Qubbeh district on Wednesday, the Observatory said. The latest attacks brought the civilian toll of the government's offensive to more than 300 civilians, including 42 children, since November 15. Retaliatory rocket fire by the rebels on government-held areas has killed 48 civilians, according to the

Britain-based Observatory, which has a wide network of sources on the ground.

Thousands of people have sought refuge in the remaining rebel-held neighborhoods in southeastern Aleppo, arriving with overpacked suitcases or sometimes just the clothes on their backs. Another 50,000 have poured out into territory controlled by government forces or local Kurdish authorities, according to the Observatory. More than 300,000 people have been killed since Syria's conflict erupted in March 2011 with anti-government protests, before spiraling into a civil war. The loss of east Aleppo—a rebel stronghold since 2012 — would be the biggest blow to Syria's opposition in more than five years.

'Deliberate starvation'

The city had become a powerful symbol of Syria's uprising, producing some of the war's most iconic images—including of Omran, the shell-shocked toddler in an ambulance.—AFP

IRAQIS DISPLACED - AN ADDED PAIN OF DIVIDED FAMILIES

KHAZIR: Ihsan Ismail has spoken to his family just twice in a month. In the desperate flight from their village outside Mosul they were separated and are now confined to different camps for the displaced. More than 70,000 people have fled their homes since Iraqi forces launched their offensive on October 17 to retake Mosul, Iraq's second-largest city, from the Islamic State group. As if living under IS rule for more than two years and being forced from their homes were not enough, now some of the displaced are having to deal with the added burden of being separated from their families.

Security forces say measures are needed to ensure the jihadists do not infiltrate the camps that have sprung up around Mosul to house the displaced. But rights groups are concerned that the restrictions go too far. Ismail, 18, fled his village of Abu Jarbua east of Mosul shortly after the offensive was launched, and an hour before his parents and little sister Nurhan were able to leave. Kurdish peshmerga fighters, who are allied with Iraqi federal forces in the Mosul battle, took him to a camp at Khazir but his family was taken to another camp.

He has since only been able to speak to them twice. "It's been a month like this... I miss them very much," Ismail said. "All I'm asking for is to rejoin them. What's the difference? ... A camp is a camp." In nearly all of the camps set up to house the displaced, residents are forbidden from leaving and in some cases have had their mobile phones and identity cards confiscated. "We are at war with terrorists who use all possible means to carry out attacks, and members of Daesh can hide themselves among the displaced and form clandestine cells," Jabar Yaur of the Kurdish interior ministry told AFP, using an Arabic acronym for IS. — AFP



AL-KHAZIR CAMP, Iraq: A displaced Iraqi child, who fled the ongoing fighting between Islamic State (IS) group jihadists and government forces around Mosul, walks in the mud following heavy rain at the al-Khazir camp for displaced people, located between Arbil and Mosul, on December 1, 2016. —AFP

'CATASTROPHIC' WATER SHORTAGES IN MOSUL

500,000 CIVILIANS AFFECTED

MOSUL: Up to 500,000 civilians in Mosul are facing a "catastrophic" drinking water shortage, the UN warned, as Iraqi forces advance against the Islamic State group in the city. Already suffering from a severe lack of food and electricity, civilians in Iraq's second city are now also running out of drinkable water, said Lise Grande, UN humanitarian coordinator in Iraq. "Nearly half a million civilians, already struggling to feed themselves day to day, are now without access to clean drinking water. The impact on children, women and families will be catastrophic," Grande said Wednesday.

Tens of thousands of Iraqi troops and allied forces launched an offensive last month to retake Mosul, which was seized by IS more than two years ago. Weeks of fighting have seen the Iraqi forces surround the city and break into its eastern neighborhoods, where there have been heavy street-to-street battles with the jihadists. Inside the city on Wednesday, AFP journalists heard loud explosions and heavy fighting as Iraq's Counter-Terrorism Service special forces tried to mop up IS pockets and set their sights on the area of Al-Ikhae. But CTS commanders said heavy clouds covering the city could hamper aerial surveillance and slow down operations in the coming two days.

A yellow suicide truck bomb, of the type frequently used by IS as a defensive tactic, stood smoldering near homes where CTS forces were deployed. The battle for Mosul has destroyed a major water pipeline, the UN children's agency UNICEF said, adding that the break was located in an inaccessible part of the city controlled by IS. "Unless running water is restored in the next days, civilians will be

forced to resort to unsafe water sources, exposing children to the risk of water-borne diseases such as severe diarrhoea and the threat of malnutrition," it said.

Residents in east Mosul say they have resorted to pumping water from wells. "We don't have water or electricity. We are drinking well water but that's not enough," said Mosul resident Mohamed Khalil, 25. "Water is the most important thing. We aren't washing. We are going to catch lice and our homes are filthy," said Iman Baker, a 34-year-old mother of three who lives in an eastern neighborhood recently retaken from IS. Since the launch of the assault on October 17, more than 70,000 people have fled the fighting, but more than a million people are estimated to remain in the city, including around 600,000 in the eastern neighborhoods.

Disease warnings

Abdelkarim al-Obeidi, the secretary general of the local civil society organization Mosul People Gathering, warned of a "humanitarian disaster" in the making. "The government as well as aid organizations must step up and offer assistance to the people, especially those families forced to drink water from the wells that is not fit for drinking," he said. At a hospital in the village of Gogjali on the eastern outskirts of Mosul, a medical source said civilians were starting to arrive with "cases of diarrhoea and intestinal cramps, especially among children".

Abu Ali, a resident of eastern Mosul, said he hoped running water would return before an outbreak of disease. Some residents "will take water from the Tigris", he said, referring to the river that

divides the city. While it was unclear what had caused the massive water shortage, some residents blamed the US-led coalition backing Iraqi forces in the assault, saying its warplanes had damaged the main pipeline bringing water from the western side of the city.

But Basma Basseem, an official with the Mosul municipality, suggested IS may have intentionally stopped the flow. "There are efforts to bring water tankers to neighborhoods that have been retaken," Basseem said. Residents said that many were also running out of food supplies and relying on aid distributed by Iraqi forces. "Some people had stocks of dried goods but food is starting to run out, and we have neither water, nor electricity, nor fuel for heating," said 54-year-old Natiq, who was receiving food aid at a distribution centre in the eastern neighborhood of Khadraa. Iraqi commanders say around 40 percent of the eastern half of Mosul has been retaken in the offensive.

And coalition air strikes have hampered IS's ability to launch suicide attacks across the city, British Army Major General Rupert Jones, a deputy commander for the US-led coalition, said Wednesday. Suicide missions, particularly those conducted in explosive-laden vehicles, have been a vital weapon for the jihadists. Iraqi forces have told civilians to stay at home in order to avoid massive displacement from the city. The progress of the forces who vastly outnumber the estimated 3,000 to 5,000 jihadists defending their last major bastion in Iraq has been slowed by the presence of a large civilian population often used by IS as human shields. — AFP

BLOCKED QATARI NEWS SITE BLAMES GOVT CENSORSHIP

DOHA: An independent English-language news site in Qatar accused the Gulf state of censorship yesterday, saying two Internet service providers had simultaneously blocked access to it. "We can only conclude that our website has been deliberately targeted and blocked by Qatar authorities," the Doha News said in a statement. "We are incredibly disappointed with this decision, which appears to be an act of censorship." A spokesman for the Qatari government did not respond to phone messages seeking comment. The two Internet service providers, Vodafone Qatar and state-controlled Ooredoo, declined to comment.

Freedom of expression is tightly controlled in Qatar with self-censorship prevalent among national newspapers and other media outlets. The gas-rich state has faced increased international scrutiny over alleged corruption and labour abuse as it prepares to host the 2022 soccer World Cup. Internet users outside Qatar were still able to access the Doha News, which stirred a debate about the limits of tolerance with an opinion column in August about gay rights in the conservative country. Rights group Amnesty International said the government appeared to have targeted a "key source of journalism" which fostered "dialogue and discussion about social and political issues that affect people in Qatar".

Some Qataris on social media said they were upset at the news site being blocked, calling it a setback for the country. "It's extremely worrying that @dohanews has been blocked. We always prided our self in being open to voices," Anood Al-Thani, a student, said on Twitter. Others said Doha News, which has an audience of around one million unique users per month, was "run by foreigners" and had put itself at risk by being unfairly critical in its reporting. "The site has an unprofessional bias against Qatar and recently became the source of all those foreign media attacks on Qatar, feeding them with everything that offends us," tweeted Ahmed Al-Kuwari, a Qatari engineer.

Qatar finances and hosts the pan-Arab satellite TV network Al Jazeera, which has won millions of viewers across the Arab world and beyond, as well as the government-funded Doha Centre for Media Freedom. A 2016 survey by Northwestern University, one of six prominent US schools with branches in the country, showed most Qataris support the principle of free speech online. But the same survey also showed that a majority want the Internet to be more tightly regulated. — Reuters

SHAMOON VIRUS RETURNS IN NEW SAUDI ATTACKS AFTER 4-YEAR HIATUS

RIYADH: A version of Shamoan, the destructive computer virus that four years ago crippled tens of thousands of computers at Middle Eastern energy companies, was used two weeks ago to attack computers in Saudi Arabia, according to US security firms. CrowdStrike, Palo Alto Networks Inc and Symantec Corp. warned of the new attacks on Wednesday. They did not name any victims of the new version of Shamoan, which cripples computers by wiping their master boot records that they use to start up. They also did not say how much damage had been caused or identify the hackers.

Saudi Arabia confirmed on Thursday that hackers had launched a virus attack on computers in government bodies and installations including the kingdom's transport sector in mid-November, heightening concern about security in the world's largest oil

exporter. The attack originated outside the country and was one of "several ongoing cyberattacks targeting government authorities", the National Cyber Security Center, an arm of the Ministry of Interior, told state news agency SPA.

The statement did not give further details of the identity of the attacker or the damage that had been done, beyond saying the virus aimed to disrupt servers and plant malicious software in computer systems.

The reappearance of Shamoan is significant as there have only been a handful of other high-profile attacks involving disk-wiping malware, including ones in 2014 on Sheldon Adelson's Las Vegas Sands Corp and Sony Corp's Hollywood studio. Governments and businesses pay close attention to such cases because it can be time-consuming and extremely expensive to restore infected systems.

Motive unknown

The original Shamoan hackers left images of a burning U.S. flag on machines at Saudi Aramco and RasGas Co Ltd in 2012. Researchers said the Shamoan 2 hackers also left a calling card: a disturbing image of the body of three year-old Syrian refugee Alan Kurdi, who drowned in the Mediterranean last year. The 2012 Shamoan attacks against Saudi Aramco - the world's biggest oil company - were likely conducted by hackers working on behalf of the Iranian government, said CrowdStrike Chief Technology Office Dmitri Alperovitch. It is too early to say whether the same group was behind Shamoan 2, he said.

Tehran has been investing heavily in its cyber capabilities since 2010, when its nuclear program was hit by the Stuxnet computer virus, widely believed to have been launched by the United

States and Israel. The motive of the recent attacks was also not immediately clear. "Why Shamoan has suddenly returned again after four years is unknown," the Symantec Security Response team said on its blog. "However, with its highly destructive payload, it is clear that the attackers want their targets to sit up and take notice." The malware triggered the disk-wiping to begin at 8:45 p.m. on Nov. 17, according to the security firms.

The Saudi business week ends yesterday, so it appears to have been timed to begin after staff left for the weekend to reduce the chance of discovery and allow maximum damage.

"The malware had potentially the entire weekend to spread," Palo Alto researcher Robert Falcone said in a blog post. Saudi Arabia's economy is heavily dependent on oil, which provides most of the government's income. — Reuters

TURKEY DETAINS BUSINESS EXECUTIVE, ALLEGING GULEN LINK

ANKARA: Turkey has detained an executive from a major business conglomerate under a probe into supporters of the Muslim cleric blamed for July's failed coup, state media reported yesterday.

Barbaros Muratoglu, of Dogan Holding, was held in connection with the investigation into followers of preacher Fethullah Gulen. State news agency Anadolu said Muratoglu is accused of conducting media activities for a "terrorist organisation" (FETO) and being a "FETO member in this way". FETO is how Turkey refers to "Fethullah Terror Organisation".

The company responded by issuing a statement that said the claims amounted to "slander" and "distortion". Muratoglu was held at 6am (0300 GMT) in Ankara and taken to Istanbul, Hurriyet daily, which itself is owned by Dogan Holding, reported.

Turkey accuses Gulen-currently in self-imposed exile in the United States-of masterminding the July 15 attempt to overthrow President Recep Erdogan's government. Gulen denies the charges. Dogan Holding is one of Turkey's biggest conglomerates with interests in retail, energy, tourism and media including Hurriyet and the Posta daily, Dogan news agency and broadcaster CNN Turk.

The Dogan news agency carried a statement from its parent group denying that the company or Muratoglu, its Ankara representative, had links to Gulen or his movement. "We see that some media organs are finding this an opportunity to falsely claim that there is investigation into the Dogan group," the statement read. "It is clear there is no connection between our group and this illegal structure."

The Dogan group's shares fell after the reports emerged and were down 5.7 percent to 0.66 Turkish lira, at 1430 GMT. "In its 58 years of business and 40 years in the media sector, the Dogan Group has been against all kinds of terror and terrorist organizations, and together with its state and its people," the statement added.

More than 100,000 people from the civil service, judiciary, military, media and education sector have been detained, dismissed or suspended over alleged links to the coup-plotters. While there has been international concern over the widescale purges, Ankara insists it is dealing with a real threat and must remove Gulen supporters from the state. — AFP

NEARLY 2,000 MEMBERS OF IRAQI FORCES KILLED IN NOVEMBER: UN SPIKE IN CASUALTIES

BAGHDAD: Close to 2,000 members of the Iraqi security forces were killed in November across the country, along with hundreds of civilians, the United Nations said yesterday.

According to the UN mission in Iraq's monthly tally, 1,959 Iraqi forces were killed last month and at least 450 others wounded. The toll includes members of the army, police who are engaged in combat, the Kurdish peshmerga, interior ministry forces

and pro-government paramilitaries.

The UN statement also said at least 926 civilians were killed, bringing to 2,885 the number of Iraqis killed in acts of terrorism, violence and armed conflict last month. "The casualty figures are staggering, with civilians accounting for a significant number of the victims," the top UN envoy in Iraq, Jan Kubis, said.

The spike in casualties comes as a major offensive to retake the Islamic State group

stronghold of Mosul, Iraq's largest military operation in years, entered its seventh week. Kubis said the growing death toll was largely a result of the jihadists' ferocious defense of Mosul, the city where they proclaimed their now crumbling "caliphate" in 2014. "Daesh (IS) has been employing the most vicious tactics, using civilian homes as firing positions as well as abducting and forcibly moving civilians, effectively using them as human shields," he said. — AFP

EU: LIBYA'S CITIES MAKING \$346M A YEAR FROM PEOPLE SMUGGLING

BERLIN: Libya's coastal cities are making millions of Euros each year from people smuggling, the commander of a European Union military task force in the Mediterranean Sea says in a confidential report.

In a report to the EU's 28 nations, Rear Adm. Enrico Credendino warned that "migrant smuggling, originating far beyond Libyan borders, remains a major source of income among locals in Libyan coastal cities generating estimated annual revenue of up to 275 to 325 million Euros (\$292 million to \$346 million)." The report, issued to EU member states Wednesday and obtained by The Associated Press, illustrates how much the flow of migrants toward Europe is a central part of the economy in war-torn Libya. The report provides no details on how the figure was calculated and EU officials didn't immediately respond to questions by email or phone Thursday. Tens of thousands of migrants leaving Libya in unseaworthy boats have been picked up in the Mediterranean this year, however, often telling aid workers of the hundreds or thousands of Euros they had to pay smugglers in Libya.

The report assesses the work of Operation Sophia, a naval mission intended to stop the flow of migrants to Europe, between Jan. 1 and Oct. 31. Credendino noted in the report that Islamic extremist groups are among



SABRATHA, Libya: In this Aug. 29, 2016 file photo, migrants, most from Eritrea, jump into the water from a crowded wooden boat as they are helped by members of a non-governmental organization during a rescue operation in the Mediterranean Sea, about 13 miles (20 kilometers). — AP

those involved in the smuggling business, which sometimes begins far south in Africa's Sahel zone. "Al-Qaida and Al-Qaida AQIM (Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb), aligned with the Tuareg tribe in southwestern Libya, are assessed to be financially exploiting these smuggling routes," he said. He added that

there was no evidence extremists were trying to enter Europe via the dangerous Central Mediterranean route that passes from Libya to Italy. The International Organization for Migration estimates that 4,690 people have lost their lives this year trying to cross the Mediterranean into Europe. — AP

ETHIOPIA ARRESTS OPPOSITION LEADER

ADDIS ABABA: An Ethiopian opposition leader has been arrested following his return from Europe where he had spoken about a state of emergency imposed last month to quell anti-government protests, his coalition said yesterday. Merera Gudina, the 60-year-old chairman of the Oromo Federalist Congress (OFC) was arrested at his home in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa on Wednesday and is being held in an unknown location with three others, said Beyenne Petros, president of the Medrek opposition alliance of which the OFC is a member. "This is the first time they are targeting the highest level of leadership. I don't fully understand. Merera has always done things peacefully and played by the rules," Petros said of the veteran political leader.

Earlier this month Gudina had addressed the European Parliament in Brussels, alongside Olympic silver medalist runner and fellow member of the Oromo tribe, Feyisa Lilesa. Lilesa drew attention to an Oromo anti-government movement by crossing his wrists above his head—a gesture that has become a symbol of the protests—at the Rio games and has been in self-imposed exile since then. Berhanu Nega, an opposition activist sentenced to death in absentia, had attended the same meeting in Brussels.

At home in Ethiopia, Gudina has strongly criticized repression of the unprecedented protests that have posed the biggest challenge to the quarter-century rule of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF). Hundreds have been killed in a government crackdown since the unrest began about a year ago, according to human rights groups. A state of emergency was announced in October, a week after more than 50 people died in a stampede in the Oromia region when security forces tear gassed a religious festival where protesters were chanting anti-government slogans.

Since then official figures show over 11,000 people have been arrested in the Oromia, Amhara and Addis Ababa regions where protests had been centered. Among those arrested are leaders of small opposition parties, journalists and at least two bloggers. — AFP

VOTERS IN LONDON TAKE TO POLLS FOR 'BREXIT BY-ELECTION'

RESULTS MIGHT SHOCK

LONDON: Residents of the posh London suburb of Richmond took to the polls yesterday in a local by-election that has turned into a mini-referendum on Brexit in a pro-EU heartland. Liberal Democrat challenger Sarah Olney, whose party wants a second referendum on Brexit, is hoping the result will shock Downing Street, as the government forges on towards the EU exit door.

Olney is running against Zac Goldsmith, who held the seat for Prime Minister Theresa May's Conservative Party but quit in protest after the government backed expanding the nearby Heathrow Airport. He is now standing as an independent candidate. "While some people feel very strongly about Heathrow expansion, lots more people feel much more strongly about Brexit," Olney told AFP during the campaign. "That's really alarmed and upset people and they want to use this opportunity to send a message."

In the June referendum on Britain's membership in the European Union, 52 percent nationwide voted to leave. But in the well-heeled borough of Richmond in southwest London, 69 percent voted to remain in the bloc. Its 82-percent turnout, one of the highest in the UK, showed it was an issue locals felt passionate about.

The centrist and unambiguously pro-EU Lib Dems, reduced to a rump in the 2015 general election, are eyeing a come-



LONDON: Sarah Olney (R), Liberal Democrat candidate in the upcoming by-election for Richmond Park, speaks with a member of the public whilst canvassing for votes in a residential neighbourhood in Richmond, south-west London on November 29, 2016. — AFP

back by filling the void for disgruntled 'Remain' voters.

However, the 39-year-old Olney faces a tough task in overturning Goldsmith's majority. Both the Conservative and Brexit-cheerleading UKIP parties are giving him a clear run. Goldsmith won Richmond from the Lib Dems in 2010 and retained it in the May 2015 general election with 58 percent of the vote.

Wealthy, suave, affable and soft-spo-

ken, 41-year-old Goldsmith is Brexit royalty. He is the son of the late tycoon financier Jimmy Goldsmith, whose high-spending Referendum Party, calling for a vote on UK-EU relations, got the anti-EU bandwagon rolling. Zac Goldsmith's understated, local approach seems to have won him support around Richmond. "There's a lot of loyalty to Zac round here," said Jane McCready, 52, who sat enjoying a hot drink overlooking the River Thames last week. — AFP

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THE FARMERS, THEIR LITTLE ANIMALS: AN ITALY EARTHQUAKE SURVIVAL TALE

NORCIA: Italy's earthquakes would not leave the Fausti family alone. The first of this year's devastating tremors, on August 24, left their farmhouse on the outskirts of Norcia looking like a bombed-out shell. Asleep inside at the time, pig breeders and award-winning ham producers Ada and Giuseppe Fausti were lucky to get out alive. Three months later, Ada allows herself a wry smile as she inspects a first floor bedroom that is now open to the elements on two sides. "We did have a pretty miraculous escape," she says. "What we didn't know was that just the start of it." Two more powerful quakes struck the country's mountainous centre in the last week of October.

This time the epicentres were much closer to Norcia, a town with medieval roots that has long been synonymous with production of the cured hams, salamis and pure pork sausages that are cornerstones of Italy's culinary heritage. In the space of six days, the Faustis lost the use of their pig barn, their curing store and the shop where they treated customers to tastings of prosciutto crudo (raw hams) and other acclaimed products from their

stock of indigenous, free range Suino Cinto and Rosa Perugino pigs. To add insult to injury, the quakes also disrupted a supply of spring water that had kept 400 pigs watered while they foraged freely across 100 hectares (about 250 acres) of wooded mountain side in the Monti Sibillini national park.

No insurance

With no barn to shelter sows before and after giving birth, new-born piglets suddenly became vulnerable to the threat of wolves that roam the rugged Apennine highlands. The trauma of the quakes also took its toll: most of the sows carrying litters at the time miscarried. The Faustis meanwhile were left desperately wondering what to do with more than 200 valuable prosciutto legs they had no place to store. With the total damages running into seven figures and virtually none of it covered by insurance because of the region's record of seismic activity, it seemed for a while as if the business would be reduced to rubble just like St Benedict's basilica in the heart of Norcia. A month later, however, the family business

is up and running again, their savoury delicacies once more being dispatched to discerning customers around the world.

A media appeal launched by daughter Valentina ensured all the hams without a home were sold, friends pitched in by offering temporary shelters, the curing centre has been patched up sufficiently to resume operations at around half capacity and a new wooden barn is on its way to the farm. "Solidarity worked well," says Valentina, but she admits it has not been easy. "It has been non-stop, I think the worst thing is never having any time when you can just relax." Worries about wolves and the water supply meant the family spent the first ten days after the August quake sleeping in their cars on the farm.

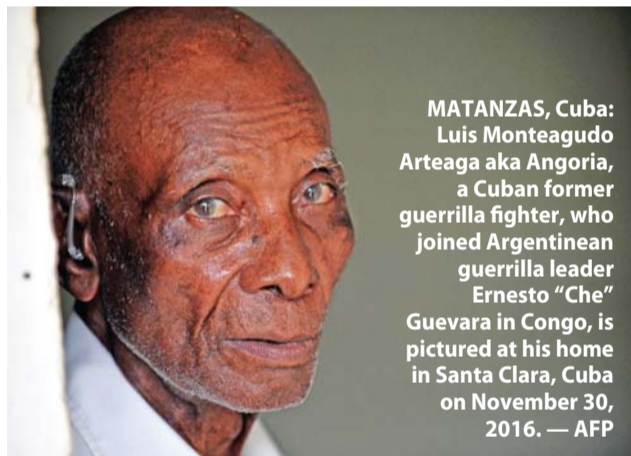
Buried hams

They then briefly decamped to a tent and now home for five adults is a cramped camper van parked at the back of the curing store. "We are a stubborn bunch, in this part of the world," says Ada, batting away a suggestion that they might have been tempted to move their business somewhere less prone to seismic disruption.

"This is where we are from, this is what we do and there have been a lot of sacrifices to get us to where we are. We can't give that up. "And besides, our hams tastes the way they do because they are produced here. It would not be the same anywhere else."

Her husband Giuseppe strikes a similar tone as he explains why his most expensive hams - which sell for 150 euros/kg and have appeared on the menu at the White House - come from pigs slaughtered in the dead of winter.

"All summer and autumn they have been eating acorns, fruits of the forest, different grasses and grains, even truffles," he says. "That's why the hams are so intensely flavoured and also why studies show they are rich in Omega 3 and 6. "You have to learn how to taste them, almost like a wine." Some of those precious hams are currently trapped in the cellar of the Fausti's home and will not be accessible until the upper storeys are safely demolished. "I am not too worried about them - the temperature and the humidity down there are perfect, the hams will only get better," Giuseppe says. — AFP



MATANZAS, Cuba: Luis Monteagudo Arteaga aka Angoria, a Cuban former guerrilla fighter, who joined Argentinean guerrilla leader Ernesto "Che" Guevara in Congo, is pictured at his home in Santa Clara, Cuba on November 30, 2016. — AFP

A CUBAN VETERAN REMEMBERS 'CHE' AND FIDEL CASTRO

SANTA CLARA: Luis Monteagudo, a hardened Cuban military veteran, remembers with pride fighting alongside revolution icon Ernesto "Che" Guevara and watching maximum leader Fidel Castro fire a gun. Monteagudo, 78, grieved when Guevara was killed in the mountains of Bolivia in 1967 and now he is mourning Castro, who died on Friday at age 90. "The blow has been so overwhelming that you can't think," said Monteagudo with teary eyes as he adjusted his hearing aid in his home in the central city of Santa Clara.

A military jeep took the ashes to Santa Clara early Thursday, the first stop in a cross-country trip that will end with a burial in the eastern city of Santiago de Cuba on Sunday. Santa Clara is also home to the remains of Guevara, the Argentine doctor and Castro's comrade-in-arms whose victory against the army of dictator Fulgencio Batista in Santa Clara in 1958 became a major turning point in the revolution. "We still miss Fidel, just as we miss Che," said Monteagudo, who joined Guevara's rebel force when he freed his home town of Cabaiguan in 1958.

Failure in Congo

The veteran is black, like most of the more than 100 Cubans who accompanied Guevara to help rebels in what is today the Democratic Republic of Congo in 1965. The attempt to export Cuba's revolution to Africa was a failure, which the Argentine fighter himself admitted. It cost Monteagudo his hearing, damaged by the sound of canons. Sitting in his small home, the bony former fighter recalled meeting Castro while he was training in a camp in Pinar del Rio in western Cuba. "He visited us weekly and trained with us," he said. — AFP

350 US UNIVERSITIES PRESS TRUMP TO BACKTRACK ON DEPORTING THOUSANDS 1.2 MILLION YOUNG PEOPLE COULD BE AFFECTED

NEW YORK: More than 350 US universities are urging President-elect Donald Trump to change his mind and keep a program that lets hundreds of thousands of undocumented young people study and avoid deportation. Nicknamed "Dreamers," they are the estimated 1.2 million young people who were brought to the United States illegally as children, grew up without US residency papers, finished high school and often speak better English than the language of their parents.

Some 740,000 of them have joined the DACA ("Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals"), a program approved in 2012 by President Barack Obama that protects them from deportation. It has brought some normalcy to their lives, but it is a program that Trump promised during the presidential campaign to eliminate "immediately" if he won.

While DACA does not grant the dreamers federal funds or the coveted "Green Card"-permanent residence and a work permit-it lets them study at university, get a job and have a driver's license if they were in the country before the age of 16 and if they were under 31 in 2012. It is renewable every two years.

Waste of talent

At the initiative of Pomona College president David Oxtoby, more than 350 universities, including Columbia, Harvard, Yale, UCLA, UC Berkeley and Stanford, signed a statement last week pledging to do what they can to protect their undocumented students, most of whom are DACA beneficiaries. "To our country's leaders we say that DACA should be upheld, continued, and expanded. We are prepared to

meet with you to present our case," the letter reads.

"This is both a moral imperative and a national necessity. America needs talent-and these students, who have been raised and educated in the United States, are already part of our national community." The statement was released after thousands of university students protested nationwide after Trump's win, calling for their campuses to become "sanctuaries" where undocumented students are safe. During the campaign, Trump cast DACA as an "illegal executive amnesty" by President Barack Obama. But he never made clear whether ending it meant accepting no new applicants, or simply abolishing the whole program.

"It's really a huge waste of talent not to continue and not to expand the DACA program," Oxtoby said. "These students are Americans in almost every dimension of the word, except in the geographical birthplace," he said. For Wendy Feliz, of the American Immigration Council, "it makes zero sense" to dismantle DACA when the state has already invested so much in these young people. "Imagine being stripped of your driver's license, being denied the right to go to college, getting your work permit taken away. It's devastating for a young adult," he said. The definitive solution for these young people, a approval of a "Dream Act" bill granting them permanent residence, languished in Congress 15 years ago.

Ready for the worst

After his election, Trump said that he would first expel undocumented people with criminal records, which he estimated at two to three million people. Those who commit serious crimes

are not eligible for DACA. But some experts say Trump's estimate of the number of undocumented immigrants is overinflated, but worry he may include the DACA dreamers in the three million number. Obama himself urged Trump to "think long and hard" before eliminating the program and harming young people "who for all practical purposes are Americans."

Some universities are already preparing for the worst. "We will not allow immigration agents to enter our campus without a court order, nor will we share information about the immigration status of undocumented students with them unless required by a subpoena or court order," Columbia University's provost John Coatsworth, wrote in a message to all students. Harvard University President Drew Faust announced Monday that she will expand a refugee and immigrant program at law school and have immigration experts provide legal assistance to the university's 40 undocumented students, the Harvard Crimson reported.

Many big US cities with Democratic mayors, such as New York, Chicago and Los Angeles, have also rejected Trump's deportation plans and vow to protect their undocumented residents, even if it means losing millions in federal funds.

Michael Crow, the president of Arizona State University, said in an email to all students that if any of them lose the status that makes them eligible for in-state tuition, ASU will "seek financial support for the continued study of students ... at ASU who graduated from Arizona high schools and who are qualified to attend the state universities-regardless of their immigration status." — AFP

RWANDANS PRAY WHERE VIRGIN MARY 'APPEARED' TO SCHOOLGIRLS

KIBEHO: Christian pilgrims gather each year in their thousands in the southern Rwandan hill town of Kibeho, some hopeful of miracles where three schoolgirls said the Virgin Mary came to them. A service held Monday in the small, isolated town marked the 35th anniversary of the first reported appearance of the mother of Christ, which was authenticated by the Vatican in 2001. People crowded together in front of the brick church, some seated on the grass, facing a platform surrounded by blue and white flags, to hear the mass said in Kinyarwanda, French and English. "It's the fourth time I've come here. It was a long trip, but that doesn't matter because I come to pray on holy ground," said Alphonse Munyemana, a bicycle-taxi driver of 19 who arrived on Sunday afternoon after pedalling for 10 hours from Nyamagabe to the north.

Many pilgrims came to Kibeho by bus, others also rode their bikes or came on foot and some travelled from neighboring countries. Rwanda is a former Belgian colony in central Africa bordered to the east by English-speaking nations. People slept on the grass in front of the church, lacking the money to pay for a room in one of the hotels in town, which were all full anyway. The annual pilgrimage began once the Roman Catholic Church formally acknowledged that the Virgin Mary had appeared to teenagers Alphonsine Mumureke, Nathalie Mukamazimpaka and Marie-Claire Mukangango, on November 28, 1981 and in subsequent years.

At the foot of the hill on which the church stands, the faithful queue up to fill containers with water from the "spring of the Virgin Mary", which trickles into a brownish pond. "In the past, I had problems with swollen feet and breathing difficulties, but thanks to the blessed water I am cured," said Caritas Niyibigira, 47, from Rubavu in western Rwanda. Grace Morris, a woman of 31 from Uganda, says that earlier this year, she saw a paralyzed young boy recover the use of his limbs after being taken into the Chapel of Apparitions, the former high school dormitory where the Holy Mother is said to have appeared to the girls. "We saw the child come running out of the chapel shouting with joy," Morris said.

'Rivers full of blood'

The Polish priest who has been rector of the sanctuary for 11 years, Zbigniew Pawlowski, says that the spring water is like "that of Lourdes, a bit special." However, he notes that none of the miracles held to have taken place at Kibeho have been investigated by a scientific commission and thus they have not been recognized by the Holy See. Along the main road leading to the church, pilgrims can stop at boutiques to buy rosaries, statues of the Virgin Mary and T-shirts marked "I am the Mother of the Word," which she is held to have told the schoolgirls when she first appeared.

Apart from a message calling for conversion, the Holy Mother is said in some interpretations to have warned of the genocide that would claim some 800,000 lives 13 years later, when Hutu militias and soldiers mostly massacred minority Tutsis. "The Virgin Mary spoke and showed the girls a mystical journey, the girls saw hills full of corpses, rivers full of blood," Pawlowski said. — AFP

TRUMP'S CABINET: 'DRAINING THE SWAMP' OR DIVING RIGHT IN?

TRUMP TAPPING PEOPLE WITH DEEP TIES TO WALL STREET

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump promised to "drain the swamp" in the nation's capital. Instead, he's diving right in. So far, the president-elect is tapping people with deep ties to Washington and Wall Street as he fills out his Cabinet, turning to two power centers he vilified as greedy, corrupt and out of touch with Americans during his White House campaign. His choices have won praise from Republicans relieved by his more conventional choices, but could risk angering voters who rallied behind his calls for upending the political system.

Two of Trump's early picks are wealthy financial industry insiders with ties to the kinds of institutions he railed against as a candidate. Elaine Chao, his choice for transportation secretary and an accomplished political figure in her own right, is married to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell - blending family and political power in a way Trump fiercely criticized campaign rival Hillary Clinton for. Jeff Sessions, Trump's selection for attorney general, has spent two decades in the Senate, and Tom Price, his health and human services nominee, is a six-term congressman.

The gap between Trump's campaign rhetoric and his governing decisions is most striking regarding his emerging economic team. On Wednesday, he announced that he planned to nominate former Goldman Sachs executive Steven Mnuchin as his Treasury secretary and billionaire investor Wilbur Ross to lead the Commerce Department. As a candidate, Trump said Wall Street had created "tremendous problems" for the country. He included the CEO of Goldman Sachs in a television advertisement that accused global financial powers of having "robbed our working class."

Mnuchin and Ross also have financial links to Trump's White House bid, with Mnuchin having led the campaign's fundraising efforts. Trump repeatedly bragged that his personal wealth - he mostly self-funded his campaign during the primaries - meant he would not be beholden to donors who might expect their financial contributions to be repaid with powerful jobs or insider access. "I can't be bought," Trump said during the campaign. "I won't owe anybody anything."

Trump's transition team brushed aside questions about whether there are inconsistencies between the president-elect's campaign rhetoric and his Cabinet picks. "These are experts who know how to win,"



NEW YORK: Steven Mnuchin, President-elect Donald Trump's nominee for Treasury Secretary, gets on an elevator after speaking with reporters in the lobby of Trump Tower on Wednesday. — AP

spokesman Jason Miller said Wednesday. By picking billionaires, as well as a smattering of millionaires, for his Cabinet, Trump is asking voters to trust that privileged insiders can help a stressed and dispirited middle class - even though he, like past presidential candidates, promised he would change that dynamic. Few of his choices have outwardly displayed much of a common touch. Many live surrounded by a level of wealth that most Americans struggle to fathom - and prospered in recent decades as many Americans coped with stagnant incomes.

Not only did Mnuchin once work at Goldman Sachs, but so did his father. After leaving the investment bank in 2002, the Yale graduate pivoted into hedge fund management and producing blockbuster movies such as "Batman vs Superman: Dawn of Justice." Mnuchin invested in the wreckage of the housing crisis, scooping up the troubled bank IndyMac and turning a \$1.6 billion profit in under a year as millions of Americans endured foreclosure. Ross orbits a similar world as Trump, as both of them have luxurious homes in Manhattan and Palm Beach, Florida. The billionaire investor bought up many struggling steel, auto and coal firms in the industrial Midwest at a steep discount and sold them for steep profits, even as factory and mining jobs at the core of American identity disappeared.

Chao is the offspring of a Chinese shipping magnate, in addition to serving on the

boards of Wells Fargo bank, Dole Food and News Corp., the parent of Fox News. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos, the wealthiest of Trump's Cabinet nominees thus far, married into the family that started the sales company Amway. Trump and other Republicans spent months warning voters that a possible Clinton administration would be lined with Wall Street insiders, campaign donors and other special interest hires. But GOP officials have raised no such concerns about Trump's picks.

If anything, some Republicans appear relieved. Many of Trump's picks are cut from a more traditional Republican mold and share the party's ideological preferences, in some cases more so than Trump himself. "The picks so far have been fantastic and well-received by Republicans and conservatives of all stripes," said Cesar Conda, the former chief of staff for Florida Sen Marco Rubio. "Trump is unifying the party, which is essential to getting his agenda enacted."

House Speaker Paul Ryan, a lukewarm Trump supporter for much of the campaign, praised the economic picks Wednesday, saying he was "excited to get to work with this strong team." Trump is still weighing his choices for several Cabinet posts, including secretary of state. Among the leading contenders: millionaire businessman Mitt Romney, the 2012 GOP presidential nominee, and millionaire lawyer Rudy Giuliani, the former New York City mayor. — AP

UGANDA TOWN COMES TO TERMS WITH A MASSACRE'S AFTERMATH

KASESE: Outside the mortuary in Kasese, grief-stricken families wait to find out if their missing relatives were among scores killed by Ugandan security forces at the weekend. Huddling in groups, some pull clothes over their mouths and noses to mask the sickening stench of the decomposing corpses inside. Kikanda Bwambale, 40, was back at the mortuary to look for his older brother, Siriro, after being turned away the previous day.

Bwambale last heard from Siriro on Saturday when he visited the local king's palace to discuss a land issue. That day, clashes broke out between royal guards and Ugandan police that left nearly 90 dead. "My brother had never been to the palace before.

He was a peasant, he didn't know anything about politics or the kingdom," said Bwambale. "I think he's been shot." Mumbere Isaac, 27, was also looking for his brother, Nyanza. "The bodies in there are burnt and decomposed," he said, distraught that he may be unable to identify the corpse.

Sobs rang out as coffins were loaded into trucks or carried to grave sites as families who had recovered their dead began holding funerals. The official police toll from weekend fighting first given on Sunday stands at 62. However Kasese's district police commander has told AFP another 25 bodies were found in two sub-counties on Monday. The government accused King Charles Wesley Mumbere

of stoking a secessionist rebellion and stormed his palace on Sunday to arrest him. He was taken to the capital Kampala where he was charged with murder.

Fear and anguish

But in Kasese there are different stories, with some suspecting the real toll tops 100. Tembo Jockim of the Ugandan Red Cross said many people remain missing. "Civilians, wives to the royal guards were at the palace and we know that in the palace there were children and they're seen neither in police custody nor in the death list," Jockim said. The Ugandan government alleges that kingdom hardliners want to secede and establish an independent

state they call the Yiira Republic that would include a part of neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo, whose people share the same culture and language as the local Bakonzo.

Before being recognized as a traditional kingdom in 2009, Rwenzururu had a long history as a separatist movement, and the government said a trained, armed militia had set up camp in the palace and surrounding Rwenzori mountains. Uganda's Internal Affairs Minister General Jeje Odongo said machine guns, machetes, spears and petrol bombs had been found in the palace. But Bwambale said none of this meant anything to his missing brother. — AFP

INDIA SIGNS \$750 MILLION DEAL FOR BAE HOWITZERS

NEW DELHI: India has signed a \$750 million agreement with the United States to buy 145 howitzer artillery guns from BAE Systems, an official said yesterday, its first such deal in three decades. India, the world's number one defense importer, is updating its military capabilities with hardware worth tens of billions of dollars in the face of long-standing tensions with regional rivals China and Pakistan. It has been in discussions since 2012 to buy BAE Systems' M777 ultra-light-

weight guns through the US Foreign Military Sales program. "India has signed the letter of acceptance which formalizes the contract between India and the US for the howitzer guns," a defense official said in New Delhi.

The deal, worth nearly 50 billion rupees, will see 25 guns being delivered in ready-to-use condition with the rest being assembled in India, the official said on condition of anonymity. The howitzers, with a maximum range of 30 kilometers (17 miles), will be used

by the army's mountain artillery divisions along India's high-altitude frontiers. India has fought three wars with arch-rival Pakistan since independence in 1947, but China is increasingly seen as the main focus of its ambitious military modernization and procurement policy.

India last purchased howitzers for the army in 1986, when it bought 410 field guns from the Swedish arms giant AB Bofors. The Bofors deal became mired in corruption allegations

and cost then Congress Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi the 1989 national elections. BAE Systems said in February it had chosen India's Mahindra group to build a plant for assembling the artillery guns. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said he wants foreign manufacturers that win lucrative hardware deals to invest in India by partnering with local firms. "The first two howitzers should be delivered within the next six months," the official said.—AFP

UN ADDS YOGA'S INDIAN PHILOSOPHY TO HERITAGE LIST

ADDIS ABABA: The ancient Indian philosophy behind yoga, the mind-body discipline now practiced the world over, yesterday joined UNESCO's list of "intangible" world heritage. The discipline was added to the prestigious list in recognition of its influence on Indian society, "from health and medicine to education and the arts", the World Heritage Committee said in a statement. "Designed to help individuals build self-realization, ease any suffering they may be experiencing and allow for a state of liberation, (yoga) is practiced by the young and old without discriminating against gender, class or religion," UNESCO added in a tweet.

The list of "intangible" cultural treasures was created 10 years ago, mainly to increase awareness about them, while UNESCO also sometimes offers financial or technical support to countries struggling to protect them. On Wednesday, the Paris-based UN body meeting in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa added Cuba's rumba dance and Belgium's beer culture to the list, which also includes the Mediterranean diet, Peking opera and the Peruvian scissors dance. On Tuesday, the UN body designated Ugandan traditional music, which is dying out partly because it requires materials from endangered species, as intangible heritage "in urgent need of safeguarding".

UNESCO began compiling a list for cultural and natural world heritage-physical properties such as Cambodia's Angkor Wat or the Grand Canyon in the United States-in 1972. The list now comprises 814 cultural sites, 203 natural ones and 35 with both natural and cultural qualities such as Australia's Uluru National Park, formerly known as Ayer's Rock. The committee winds up its review of nominations to the list of Representative Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity today.—AFP



BANDA ACEH, Indonesia: Indonesians gather during an 'Archipelago Unity' gathering, being held across the country to call for peace and reduce tensions ahead of a December 2 protest, in Banda Aceh on Wednesday.—AFP

INDONESIA TIGHTENS SECURITY AHEAD OF PROTEST AGAINST CHRISTIAN GOVERNOR

FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS WARN CITIZENS

JAKARTA: More than 100,000 Indonesians are expected to rally today to call for the arrest of the Christian governor of the capital, Jakarta, for alleged blasphemy, as police staged drills and prepared water cannon after violence at a protest last month. Authorities are hoping to avoid a repeat of Nov 4 when one person killed and more than 100 wounded in clashes with police during a similar rally led by hardline Islamists. Muslim groups accuse Governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama of insulting the Quran, though they have pledged that today's demonstration will be peaceful.

Police brought in water cannon and barbed wire to the site of the rally, a central Jakarta park yesterday. "We are expecting over 100,000 participants," said Jakarta police spokesman Argo Yuwono. "There is enough security so the public need not worry. We hope everything will proceed according to the agreement with the protesters." Indonesia has the world's biggest Muslim population

but recognizes six religions and is home to dozens of ethnic groups, some of which follow traditional beliefs. Purnama, an ethnic Chinese Christian, is being investigated over comments he made about his opponents' use of the Koran in political campaigning. He has denied wrongdoing but apologized for the remarks.

Police yesterday handed over their investigation dossier to prosecutors, who are expected to take the case to court in coming weeks. Simmering religious and ethnic tension have prompted President Joko Widodo to rally top military, political, and religious figures in a sign of unity amid fears of attempts to undermine the stability of his government. Police helicopters last week dropped leaflets over the capital warning residents of harsh penalties if the upcoming rally turned violent. Tens of thousands participated in military-led rallies in several cities this week calling for unity and celebrating Indonesia's diversity.

The Jakarta government has also put up billboards on major roads call-

ing for national unity and displaying pictures of independence heroes who fought against colonial rule. The Australian foreign ministry and the US embassy in Jakarta issued security notices urging nationals to avoid the demonstration. Purnama, popularly known as Ahok, is running for re-election in February against two Muslim candidates. The governor who is popular with many for pushing through tough reforms to clean up the teeming city, has slipped into second place in the race, opinion polls showed this week.

Meanwhile, foreign governments have warned their citizens to keep away from a major rally in the Indonesian capital Jakarta by Muslim groups against the city's Christian governor amid fears it could turn violent. At least 150,000 people are expected to flood downtown Jakarta to protest against Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, who has caused widespread anger in the world's most populous Muslim-majority country by allegedly insulting Islam.—Agencies

15 FEARED DEAD IN EXPLOSIVES FACTORY FIRE IN INDIA

NEW DELHI: Police say a fire has engulfed a factory manufacturing explosives in southern India and 15 workers are feared dead and another three injured. Police have recovered two bodies and the rescue work is continuing in the factory in Tiruchirappalli, a city in Tamil Nadu state. The fire has been extinguished. The cause of yesterday's fire is being investigated.

According to the Press Trust of India, the 25-year-old factory manufactured explosives for deepening and widening water wells in the rocky region. PTI says a series of blasts in the factory created panic among people living in the area. Tiruchirappalli is 325 kilometers (200 kilometers) south of Chennai, the Tamil Nadu state capital.—AP

SHAM BROKERS SHATTER NEPALI STUDENTS' EDUCATION DREAMS

KATHMANDU: When aspiring chef Bijay Shrestha left Nepal last year for the Caribbean island of Saint Lucia his goal was an international degree, work experience, and a chance at a well-paid career. But instead, after 14 months living in penury in Saint Lucia, Shrestha was back in Kathmandu penniless and without his qualification. Shrestha is one of hundreds of Nepali students duped into paying thousands of dollars to brokers on the promise of help with international college applications and visas, who then disappear with the cash or ship them to sham colleges.

Education consultancies have mushroomed in Nepal, helping students who have begun to look overseas for better education opportunities than those available at home. Once the preserve of the country's rich, an increasing number of students are now burdening themselves with large debts in the hope that a foreign degree will pay huge dividends. Last year alone, over 38,000 students left Nepal for higher education opportunities—chances never materialized for some. Shrestha's tropical education dream quickly evaporated when he arrived in Saint Lucia.

Promised an internationally-recognized diploma, a paid internship and eventual transfer to a US-based college, Shrestha

arrived at Lambirds Academy to find a sparsely furnished two-story building with three classrooms. "I was stunned. But what could I do? My parents had spent so much so I could come here to study," Shrestha said. Hundred of thousands of Nepalis work abroad—mostly as maids and on construction sites in Southeast Asia and the Gulf—and their remittances are a mainstay of the country's economy, providing about 30 percent of gross domestic product. For years dishonest labour brokers have taken advantage of the huge stream of willing workers, but now the illicit trade is cashing in on the big ambitions of a younger generation dreaming of foreign degrees. Along a main street in the capital Kathmandu, dozens of education consultancies vie for business—flashing promises of places at international colleges and easy visas on huge billboards.

But only a fraction are registered with the government and many are simply fronts. These cowboy outfits pocket the huge deposits the applicants stump up, though some take the charade a step further, sending students to far flung colleges that don't match up the promise—or don't exist—and leaving them there. "It is almost a form of trafficking when the students are stranded abroad," said Sarvendra Khanal,

head of Kathmandu's police crime branch. Nepali students have been abandoned in countries around the world, including Chile, Malaysia and Holland, he said.

'Like prisoners'

A month after Shrestha arrived in Saint Lucia with four other Nepali students, the authorities closed down Lambirds Academy and arrested three Indians and one Bangladeshi on human trafficking and money laundering charges. They took 60 Nepali students into custody as witnesses. "We were victims but felt like prisoners. Our passports were confiscated, we couldn't study, we couldn't work. We were stranded," Shrestha said. Shrestha spent 14 months in a government shelter before he was allowed home, but over a dozen Nepali students remain, he said. "Other students had warned the agent about the conditions at Saint Lucia, but he still sent me and four others," Shrestha said. Prakash Pandey, head of the Educational Consultancy Association of Nepal, said that the government has left a regulation vacuum which has opened the door to this kind of fraud. "Unfortunately, the absence of strong monitoring made it easy for those looking for fast money to join the industry and trap gullible students," Pandey said. Last year,

Kathmandu police's crime branch raided over three dozen unregistered outfits claiming to be education consultancies and found that many were fake. The raid was the necessary scare to encourage some to register with the government. But the education ministry is playing catch up to an industry that has mushroomed out of control: at present 506 educational consultancies are registered with the ministry, with about 900 applications under process.

"We understand there are irregularities," said Gauri Shankar Pandey, a senior official at the education ministry. "It is important for the parents and the students to be alert as well, only choosing consultancies registered with the government." A 28-year-old nurse, who asked not to be named, had her dreams of a master's degree in Australia shattered when a broker disappeared leaving her \$10,000 in debt.

"He not only ran away with my money, but also made wrong papers in my name, which means I have been blacklisted by Australian authorities and cannot apply again," she said.

The broker is now in police custody, accused of cheating more than 10 others out of nearly \$100,000. "I had big dreams, I trusted him with my career. But now I don't know what to do." — AFP

PAKISTAN WELCOMES TRUMP'S OVERTURES TO 'AMAZING' COUNTRY

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Foreign Ministry yesterday said Islamabad welcomes US President-elect Donald Trump's overtures, saying Trump told Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif that Pakistan is "amazing" and its citizens are "one of the most intelligent people."

Trump's transition team offered few details about the Wednesday conversation with Sharif. A three-sentence statement called the conversation "productive" and said Trump is "looking forward to a lasting and strong personal relationship with Prime Minister Sharif." But a statement from the Pakistani government quoted Trump at length as saying that he would "love to come to a fantastic country, fantastic place of fantastic people."

It said Trump asked Sharif to convey his message to the Pakistani people that "they are amazing and all Pakistanis I have known are exceptional people." Trump, according to the Pakistani government statement, also told Sharif that he was looking forward to seeing him soon.

"As I am talking to you Prime Minister, I feel I am talking to a person I have known for long. Your country is amazing with tremendous opportunities. Pakistanis are one of the most intelligent people," it quoted Trump as saying.

Although Trump did not specifically mention Pakistan's long-running dispute with India over the Kashmir territory, Foreign Ministry spokesman Nafees Zakaria said yesterday that Islamabad welcomes Trump's input on how to resolve the issue.

Tensions between the two nuclear-armed neighbors have spiked recently over Kashmir, which is divided between them and is claimed by both in its entirety. The two nations have fought two of their three wars over Kashmir.

There was no immediate comment from New Delhi, but Lalit Mansingh, a former Indian ambassador to the United States, said Trump and Sharif exchanged niceties but, "I don't think it should cause India any anxiety because what will matter is what he will do after becoming the president and after he consults his officers and learns about what Pakistan is up to." — AP



KABUL: Members of Afghan women's volleyball teams play in the final round of a volleyball tournament at the Kabul University in Kabul yesterday. — AFP photos

AFGHAN FEMALE VOLLEYBALL PLAYERS CALL FOR A CHANGE

KABUL: Afghan female volleyball players called for a change in mindset yesterday at a Kabul tournament marking a rare chance for women athletes to compete in the national spotlight in the deeply conservative, war-torn Muslim country.

The United Nations hosted the tournament as part of a campaign against gender violence in Afghanistan, still seen by foreign observers as one of the worst places in the world to be a woman. "Initially, my father was against my playing volleyball, he threw out my jerseys," Muzghan Sadat, a member of the Afghan Red Crescent team said.

The young business graduate, her head covered in a scarf, said she begged her father to reconsider—and, when he finally saw her play, "he changed his mentality." "I urge every single person, please change your mind and don't look down on women," the 23-year-old said. "Please don't impose your restrictions and oppressions on them. A woman has the same abilities as a man does... Chase your dreams, never give up, fight against restrictions and show your parents that women can be as good as men."

Shugla Hellali, a specialist on gender issues at the United Nations Development

Program (UNDP) in Afghanistan said she is "optimistic" about women in Afghanistan. "Ten years ago, we had no girls' volleyball team in the country, but now they have come such a long way forward," she said. Gender equality in Afghanistan has improved somewhat since a US-led coalition toppled the hardline Taliban regime in 2001, but women still suffer tight restrictions and regular violence. In March 2015, a 27-year-old woman known as Farkhunda was beaten to death in Kabul after being falsely accused of blasphemy, a case that became a symbol of the endemic violence that women still face. — AFP

'ONE APP, TWO SYSTEMS' FOR CHINA APP CENSORSHIP

BEIJING: China's hugely popular social media app WeChat operates different censorship systems for Chinese- and overseas-based users, a research group found, applying the Communist country's rules to mainland-registered accounts even when their owners are abroad.

WeChat, known as Weixin in China, is the world's fourth most popular social media platform, according to the University of Toronto's Citizen Lab, with

806 million monthly active users. More than just a chat application, it offers payment, ride-hailing and other services, and owner Tencent has ambitions to spread it far beyond its home country.

In China, Communist authorities censor online content they deem politically sensitive, while blocking some Western websites and the services of Internet giants including Facebook, Twitter and Google with a vast control network dubbed the

Great Firewall of China. WeChat censors content for all users registered with Chinese phone numbers, Citizen Lab found, even if they travel overseas or switch to an international number. Censorship for accounts tied to overseas numbers was limited to the intermittent blocking of gambling or porn-related content within the app's internal browser.

"WeChat has seemingly created a 'One App, Two Systems' model for censorship,"

said the report, posted on the group's website Wednesday.

Foreign companies such as LinkedIn have agreed to censor their content in exchange for access to the world's second-largest economy and most populous country, a potentially lucrative market. Facebook, banned on the mainland since 2009, has reportedly built a software tool for geographically censoring posts as it seeks access. — AFP

CHINESE BISHOP EXCOMMUNICATED BY VATICAN TAKES PART IN ORDINATION

CHENGDU, China: A Chinese Catholic bishop excommunicated by the Vatican took part in the ordination of a new bishop in China on Wednesday, a move that some experts said could complicate Pope Francis' drive to heal a decades-old rift with the Communist government in Beijing. The ordination of the new Chinese bishop, which was witnessed by a Reuters reporter, took place under heavy security at the cathedral in the southwestern city of Chengdu. It was cordoned off from the general public by dozens of police officers. About 200 people attended the ceremony. Lei Shiyin, the government-backed bishop of Leshan in Sichuan province where Chengdu is also located, was ordained in China in June 2011 without Rome's blessing, at a time of heightened tensions between the Vatican and Beijing.

He was excommunicated by the Vatican for accepting an appointment to become a bishop without papal approval, the harshest punishment that can be imposed on a Catholic and which involves exclusion from sacraments. Under Catholic church law, excommunicated clergy cannot actively participate in liturgical acts such as an ordination. The Vatican did not have any immediate comment on the ceremony. Lei could not be reached for comment. The Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, a Communist Party-controlled body that governs the Catholic community in China and is not recognised by the Vatican, declined to comment yesterday.

After several rounds of secret talks, Vatican delegates and Chinese government officials have hammered out a draft agreement on how to select and appoint new bishops in China, Reuters reported earlier this year. Vatican officials had been hoping to sign a deal as early as this year in an effort to unite Chinese Catholics, split between a church that functions openly and is controlled by the party and an underground church that swears allegiance solely to the pope.

The direct involvement of Lei in the ordination in Chengdu could be seen by the Vatican as an act of defiance and risks derailing the talks, experts said. Lei took an active part in the ordination ceremony, circling the new bishop, Tang Yuange, and holding his hand out over Tang's head. This is called the "laying of hands" and is one of the most sacred parts of the ordination ceremony.

"This will make a deal between China and the Vatican on appointment and ordination of future bishops more difficult," said Meixiu Wang, a Beijing-based Chinese scholar who focuses on Sino-Catholic relations.

Still, Francis Yan, a Rome-based Chinese Catholic researcher, said Rome's priority right now was to avoid further ordinations it considers illegitimate and that the "shadow of Chengdu can be overcome". He noted both sides were making an effort to increase the dialogue. The selection and ordination of bishops is the focus of current talks between the two sides, which have been at odds since the expulsion of foreign missionaries from China after the Communists took power in 1949.

A resolution of the dispute over the ordination of bishops would lessen the possibility of a formal split within the Catholic Church in China, Vatican and Catholic sources say. The Chinese Communist government says bishops have to be appointed by the local Chinese Catholic community and refuses to accept the authority of the pope, whom it sees as the head of a foreign state that has no right to meddle in Beijing's affairs. "If Lei was there, this means the government still has the upper hand" on Catholic matters in China, said Rachel Zhu, a professor of religious studies at the Fudan University who focuses on Chinese Catholicism. — Reuters



KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak (second left) inspects a ceremonial guard of honor during the annual congress of his ruling party, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) yesterday. — AFP

MALAYSIA PM TARGETS SNAP POLL, VOWS FIGHT TO DEATH

NAJIB WARNS OF 'NIGHTMARES' IF RULING PARTY LOSES POWER

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia will hold polls soon, embattled Prime Minister Najib Razak said yesterday, vowing "to fight until the death" and showing no sign of succumbing to calls to quit over a massive financial scandal. It was the first time the Malaysian leader has signaled he may bring forward polls not due until mid-2018, as he addressed the annual assembly of his ruling United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) and called for party unity. "I know, many can feel the heat ... and are waiting for directions to battle in the polls that will be held soon," he said. Speaking to some 2,600 delegates of UMNO, which represents the Malay heartland whose support is crucial for any Malaysian leader, Najib promised to uphold Islam and protect the community's interests.

The party has been in power ever since independence in 1957 and its annual gathering is the country's most closely watched political event. "God willing, we will fight until the death and until the last drop of blood," Najib told delegates, who had earlier greeted him with enthusiastic applause, signaling their support for his leadership. "Please realise my (Malay) race, do not falter for a moment as we are facing unprecedented challenges," he added. Ruslee Bedol, a delegate from southern Johor

state, told AFP that UMNO had already started preparing for a vote and said "we expect elections in the next six months." UMNO has dominated multi-cultural Malaysia for decades, enshrining policies that favour the Malay majority. But the large ethnic Chinese minority and a new generation of other voters have flocked to the opposition in disgust over racial politics and persistent accusations of corruption and democratic abuses. But since former opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim was jailed in 2015 on sodomy charges, the political opposition has fractured.

Malay 'nightmare'

Najib warned his Malay-Muslim voter base that if the opposition won the election it would be a "nightmare" for rural Malays, who are largely dependent on government handouts. Najib is holding on to power despite damaging allegations he took part in the alleged looting of billions in state fund 1MDB. Najib, 63, and 1MDB deny wrongdoing. The UMNO gathering comes just two weeks after some 20,000 people took to the streets in the capital, demanding Najib's resignation. His position in the party and grip on power is said to be strong as he is backed by most of the 191 powerful UMNO division chiefs.

Few expect him to quit or be toppled. "He may see that relinquishing power would enable his opponents to go after him. So it makes more sense to stay on," Chong Ja lan, a political analyst from the National University of Singapore, told AFP. Najib has also purged the party of critics over the 1MDB scandal, which he mentioned only once in his speech. He fired his deputy Muhyiddin Yassin last year after being criticized over the 1MDB scandal, shook up his cabinet and surrounded himself with party loyalists. Malaysia has been seized since last year by the financial fiasco, which has sparked investigations in several countries.

The US Justice Department—which has filed lawsuits to seize assets it says were purchased with stolen 1MDB money—says the fund was pillaged in an audacious campaign of fraud and theft that involved an unnamed top Malaysian official. A Malaysian Cabinet official has since admitted that individual was Najib. Najib singled-out his fiercest critic, former premier Mahathir Mohamad, who has been campaigning for his ouster, calling him "a traitor". But analyst Chong said even Mahathir, who has a strong local following, was not able "to present a serious obstacle to Najib." — AFP

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2016

Friday Times

Lifestyle

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US singer Lady Gaga performs during the 2016 Victoria's Secret Fashion Show at the Grand Palais in Paris.—AFP

Goose bumps and bruises as Victoria's Secret models take to Paris catwalk

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US model Rachel Hilbert presents a creation during the 2016 Victoria's Secret Fashion Show at the Grand Palais in Paris.



Russian model Irina Shayk



US model Lily Aldridge — AP/AFP photos



Models Bella Hadid, left, and Gigi Hadid, right, pose with their mother Yolanda.



US singer Lady Gaga (left) performs as Chinese model Sui He presents a creation.



Model Alessandra Ambrosio

Goose bumps and bruises as Victoria's Secret models take to Paris catwalk

It took a fair bit of cheek-and not a little phlegm on a freezing Paris night-for the brash US lingerie brand Victoria's Secret to hold its first-ever fashion show in the city that invented sexy underwear. And true to the brand's brazen style, the spectacle featured a (slightly wounded) megastar, history-struck A-listers and a jewel-encrusted multi-million-dollar "fantasy" bra. Lady Gaga-the star draw for the annual extravaganza famous for bringing kitschy Las Vegas glamour to the catwalk-picked up a "couple of bruises from (the) dance rehearsal", she told her 64 million Twitter followers.

The show's mostly American models said they felt "goose bumps"-and not just because of the sub-freezing temperatures. They were also stepping out under the hallowed dome of the Grand Palais, the Art Deco temple where the luxury French label Chanel holds its couture shows.

Karl Lagerfeld, the forthright Chanel designer, was unfortunately not on hand to give his view of the proceedings. Three of his favorite models — Gigi and Bella Hadid, and Kendall Jenner from the Kardashian dynasty — were among the brand's "angels", so called because the models wear wings on the runway. The 35-year-old Brazilian beauty Adriana Lima struck a blow for older models, walking her 15th show on the pink-themed set. The mother-of-two had earlier said she keeps in shape with porridge for breakfast and a buckwheat drink before bed. "Eating buckwheat before bedtime actually helps you burn calories while you sleep," she said.

\$3-million bra

Another landmark was Jasmine Tookes becoming the "first black woman to sport the Victoria's Secrets Fantasy Bra in nine years", after Selita Ebanks and Tyra Banks. She closed the show modeling the emerald- and diamond-encrusted "Bright Night Fantasy Bra", which costs \$3 million (2.83 million euros). The 25-year-old Californian had earlier batted away allegations that she had bleached her skin for the show. "Are you kidding me! Who in the world does that?" she wrote on Instagram.

"Lighting is everything... not to mention I'm way darker in the summer and much lighter towards the winter. My skin tone changes all the time just like everyone else," she added. Former Swedish professional basketball player Elsa Hosk also made her debut to promote the brand's new sportswear range. Although Victoria's Secret has nearly 1,000 shops in the US with \$7.6 billion sales last year, it is almost unknown in France, where there is a long tradition of high quality lingerie.

Among French fashion figures who attended was Balmain designer Olivier Rousteing, a favorite of singers Rihanna and Beyonce. And in marked contrast to the usual Paris fashion shows, even if the models were not wearing much they all had smiles on their faces. "It was very much an America-style fireworks show that shouldn't be taken too seriously," one not overly

impressed guest called Ronan told AFP. The star-studded show, which will be broadcast in 190 countries from December 5, is being seen as an attempt by the label to break into the lucrative European market. The hype surrounding the event began months ago, with the brand launching the hashtag #trainlikeanangel on social media, showing the models working out to get in shape for the catwalk. Victoria's Secret has regularly faced criticism for presenting women with an unrealistic body imagine, with models admitting that they are on special diets for weeks before the show. — AFP



US singer Lady Gaga performs during the 2016 Victoria's Secret Fashion Show.



US model Lameka Fox

BIEBER PAL LIL TWIST JAILED FOR ASSAULT



Lil Twist, the rapper best known as the sidekick of Justin Bieber, was sentenced to a year in prison Wednesday after he pleaded guilty to assault. The 23-year-old rapper acknowledged that he beat up fellow artist and former child star Chris Massey two years ago at the Los Angeles apartment of the victim's brother, Kyle Massey. Chris Massey had asked Lil Twist to leave a party and he returned half an hour later with four others as Lil Twist subdued him, kicked him and pummeled him with brass knuckles, prosecutors said.

Lil Twist, whose real name is Christopher Moore, pleaded guilty in court to five counts including assault and robbery. He was given one year in prison, avoiding a longer term if he went to trial, the Los Angeles district attorney's office said. Lil Twist had until recently been a constant presence around Bieber, frequently appearing at parties with the onetime teenage star who became notorious for his legal run-ins.

In 2013, Lil Twist was pulled over and arrested for driving under the influence while driving the Canadian singer's Ferrari. While best known on the celebrity circuit, Lil Twist is signed to rapper Lil Wayne's label Young Money. Lil Twist's songs include "Twerk," which features both Bieber and Miley Cyrus. — AFP

This file photo shows Rapper Lil Twist attending Cash Money Records' Lil Wayne album release party for 'Tha Carter IV' at Boulevard3 in Los Angeles, California. — AFP



Drake tops Spotify's 2016 list with 4.7 billion streams

Drake owned the year on Spotify: He's the most streamed act on the platform with 4.7 billion streams. The rapper has the most streamed album and song - "Views" (2.45 billion) and "One Dance" (970 million) - on Spotify this year, it was announced late Wednesday. Justin Bieber, Rihanna, twenty one pilots and Kanye West round out the top five artists of the year.

The top albums following "Views" are Bieber's "Purpose," Rihanna's "Anti," twenty one pilots' "Blurryface" and The Weeknd's "Beauty Behind the Madness." Mike Posner's "I Took a Pill in Ibiza - Seeb Remix" came in second after Drake's "One Dance" for top songs, followed by The Chainsmokers' "Don't Let Me Down," Rihanna and Drake's "Work" and Sia's "Cheap Thrills." Zayn, the former One Direction member who released a solo album this year, is Spotify's top breakout artist. Drake is the most streamed act of all-time on Spotify with 8.7 billion streams. — AP

Action star Donnie Yen wants to be 'good example'

Action star Donnie Yen placed his deadly hands and feet in cement at Hollywood's TCL Chinese Theatre Wednesday, voicing hope that his career would inspire fellow Asians to take up acting. The martial artist-a multiple world champion in the wushu fighting style was being honored for a body of work mainly in Chinese cinema, although he also stars in the much-anticipated "Rogue One: A Star Wars Story." "Sometimes being an Asian actor is not easy. Unfortunately, for many years, Asian actors didn't have the same, equal opportunities," the 53-year-old Hong Kong resident told AFP at the ceremony.

"But I think that things have been changing," he added. "And I certainly would like to be one actor that set a good example." Overshadowed over the years by Jackie Chan and other sought-after kung fu stars, Yen has been gradually breaking into Hollywood since appearing in Guillermo del Toro's "Blade II" in 2002. In "Rogue One," due to be released on December 16, he plays a warrior monk who is part of a heroic band of rebels that steals plans for the Death Star. He also stars opposite Vin Diesel in "XX: Return of Xander Cage," which hits theaters on January 20. Born in the southern Chinese province of Guangdong, Yen came to Hong Kong where he lives now-at the age of two and later moved to the United States, growing up in Boston's Chinatown.

'Ridiculous stereotype'

Much of the star's inspiration comes from his mother, Bow Sim-Mark, a world famous wushu and tai chi master, at whose internationally-known Chinese Wushu Research Institute the young Yen learned kung fu. When he became involved in gang violence in Boston at age 16, his worried parents sent him to Beijing, where he spent two years training with the famed Beijing wushu team, studying with the same masters as Jet Li. Yen's turning point came when the veteran film director Yuen Wo-ping, the action choreographer for the "Matrix" trilogy, discovered him and helped him break into movies as the new kung fu hero.

Yen has spent years since then using his celebrity to wage a campaign to kick the Asian stereotype out of Hollywood. In the mid-1990s, he turned down an offer from Francis Ford Coppola because of a script he said contained "a ridiculous stereotype about the Chinese." He also rejected an offer to be in the "Tomb Raider" sequel, which China banned for making the country appear lawless and run by secret societies. "I hope this ceremony,

this achievement, will inspire many Chinese actors not just Chinese actors, but many young actors-that they, too, can achieve the same dream if they put enough hard work into it," he said before sinking his hands into the cement. "The force is with me and the force is with everybody." — AFP



Martial arts actor Donnie Yen displays his hands after imprinting them into the block of cement at his Hand and Foot ceremony in front of the TCL Chinese Theater. — AFP



New York's Lincoln Center to remember Leonard Cohen

New York's Lincoln Center on Wednesday announced a low-key memorial for legendary poet and singer Leonard Cohen next week, with the art complex simply to play his songs. Lincoln Center — the campus of premier US art institutions including the Metropolitan Opera and New York Philharmonic — said the remembrance event will take place on Monday. Recordings of Cohen's music, as selected by his fans and friends, will play for four hours starting at noon (1700 GMT) at Lincoln Center's outdoor plaza regardless of weather.

"There are no speakers and no live performances," Lincoln Center said in a statement. The event is being put together by Hal Willner, a veteran music producer behind a 2005 tribute show for Cohen in Sydney that gave birth to the documentary film "Leonard Cohen: I'm Your Man." The remembrance event follows the model of a 2013 memorial for another rock great and friend of Cohen, Lou Reed, whose music was played on speakers outside of Lincoln Center without commentary.



Nikolaus Wostry, head of Film Collections of Filmmarchiv Austria, shows the movie 'The City Without Jews' (Die Stadt Ohne Juden) at Filmmarchiv Austria in Laxenburg.



Nikolaus Wostry, head of Film Collections of Filmmarchiv Austria, shows an old damaged film at Filmmarchiv Austria in Laxenburg.

Spielberg right-hand Frank Marshall on his best year yet

Veteran producer Frank Marshall says 2016 is shaping up to be his biggest year—quite a claim for the man who, alongside Steven Spielberg, gave the world "Indiana Jones" and "Back to the Future." The five-time Oscar nominee defined the blockbuster for a generation of cinemagoers alongside the legendary director and their artistic partner Kathleen Kennedy—whom Marshall went on to marry. As the founders of Amblin Entertainment, the trio reigned supreme from 1982's "E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial" through a string of milestones including "Gremlins," "The Goonies" and "Who Framed Roger Rabbit."

He'd be forgiven for resting on his laurels at age 70, but Marshall revealed he is busier than ever as AFP caught up with him to discuss the release of "Jason Bourne" on DVD and Blu-ray. "We're just finishing 'Assassin's Creed' and we're talking about how we're going to sell the movie and the publicity campaign," he responded when asked about his schedule for the day. "And we're working on 'Sully' for the awards season so I'm pretty busy. The other thing: 'Jurassic World II' is in pre-production so I work on that early in the morning because they are in London."

Add Spielberg's "The BFG" to all that work and it's been a packed year for the father of two. Film finance website Box Office Mojo attributes worldwide ticket receipts of just under \$10 billion for Marshall's body of work, which includes directing stints, most notably on "Arachnophobia" and "Congo."

Sportsman

"When I direct, it's a 24/7 focus and I have a couple of projects that I'm considering directing, but I love producing," he tells AFP. "This is really my biggest year with four movies out so that's been exciting and very satisfying." Born in Los Angeles, Marshall excelled in both music and sport, running track and cross-country for UCLA before entering his film career as an assistant to director Peter Bogdanovich. His 1980s output alongside Spielberg and Kennedy include critical hits such as "The Color Purple," "Empire of the Sun" and "Always," which featured a cameo by Audrey Hepburn in her last role.

In 1991, Kennedy and Marshall branched out to form the pro-socially-titled Kennedy/Marshall Company, producing 35 movies including "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button," M. Night Shyamalan's "The Sixth Sense" and the "Bourne" franchise. Among the extras for "Jason Bourne," released on DVD and Blu-ray next week, is a behind-the-scenes featurette about filming a car chase on the Las Vegas Strip that Marshall describes as among his most challenging. "For 12 nights in a row we had two crews working 24 hours a day," he told AFP. "It actually took four hours just to close down the Strip before we could even shoot. It was quite a large undertaking." Marshall became sole head of the couple's company when Kennedy was made chairwoman of Lucasfilm in 2012, taking on responsibility for the "Star Wars" sequels and spin-offs.

'Comfortable'

The couple—who have 13 Oscar nominations between them and yet no statuettes—live in a \$10 million beachfront pad in Malibu, in what Marshall describes as a "very comfortable home life." His next big project—perhaps his biggest ever—will be "Jurassic World II," which begins shooting in London in February. Co-written by Colin Trevorrow—who helmed "Jurassic World" and is slated to direct 2019's "Star Wars IX"—the film carries a weight of expectation after its predecessor made an astonishing \$1.7 billion. The internet has been abuzz with rumors of a darker episode than previous movies in the "Jurassic" stable, featuring weaponized dinosaurs. —AFP



Steven Spielberg

CAPITAL 'OF ANTI-SEMITISM'

One of Austria's most important anti-Nazi films was thought lost for decades, until it was uncovered by chance last year. Now experts must race to keep from losing "The City Without Jews" again—this time from decay. Shot and screened in Vienna in 1924, the silent film proved disturbingly prophetic in its dark depiction of anti-Semitism clutching the Austrian capital in the wake of World War I. Based on the eponymous bestseller by Austrian writer Hugo Bettauer, it tells the story of an anti-Semitic mayor who, reacting to rising social discontent, opts to expel all Jews.

The decision leads the city to the brink of ruin as its economy declines and unemployment explodes. In the end, the law is repealed and the banished Jews are welcomed back. The black-and-white movie broke ground as the world's first cinematographic work to foreshadow the horrors of the Third Reich, according to the Film Archive Austria (FAA). It would also cost Bettauer his life: the liberal author and journalist was killed by a Nazi a few months after the movie's premiere.

"'The City Without Jews' is much more than a film: it is an anti-Nazi manifesto," said Nikolaus Wostry of the FAA. The Vienna-based archive only possessed a fragmented version of the original until a French art collector stumbled across a near-complete reel at a flea market in Paris in 2015. Hitherto unknown scenes provided a much sharper articulation of the rising anti-Semitism in Vienna, which had been a prominent centre of Jewish culture at the start of the 20th century.

"This version is the missing link. We have many wonderful new takes giving an insight into the Jewish community in Vienna, but



A large 'film strip' sign shows directions towards the building of Filmmarchiv Austria in Laxenburg. — AFP photos

there are also scenes showing the pogroms," Wostry said. The copy also contained the final scene, revealing a slightly altered ending—albeit still a happy one—to that in the book.

Capital 'of anti-Semitism'

However, the FAA fears that the new reel could soon once again be lost as it shows serious signs of deterioration. The institute has launched a crowd-funding appeal until December 10 to raise money for the restoration of the highly flammable nitrate film. "We have to save it and make it available to the public, not just for its historic value but also for its current message against the walls we are building and the exclusion of people," said Wostry. The archive has already raised three-quarters of the required 75,000 euros (\$79,500).

"It would be fitting to show this film in Vienna, which was the capital of political anti-Semitism," Wostry said. At the time of the movie's release, a dangerous wind of change was already blowing across the Austrian city. Home to great minds like Sigmund Freud, Stefan Zweig and Gustav Mahler, Vienna in 1897 voted in the openly anti-Semitic mayor Karl Lueger who would stay in power for 13 years. In 1907, Adolf Hitler, aged 18, moved to the capital. His six years spent here would prove a highly formative time and steer his political views. Hitler greatly admired Lueger and later referred to him in "Mein Kampf".

'Light version'

Observers say the anti-Semitic backlash was fuelled by a steady influx of eastern European Jews drawn to "sparkling Vienna". "At the turn of the century, anti-Semitism is a cultural code directed against the elites, the financial circles, the press," historian Jacques Le Rider told AFP. The situation turned critical after World War I as Jewish refugees fleeing violence on the Russian front stream into the capital. "Hyper-inflation and unemployment explode in Austria, already humiliated by the loss of the Austro-Hungarian empire. Xenophobia reaches a new dimension," Le Rider said.

Bettauer, a Jew converted to Protestantism, astutely captured these changes in his novel published in 1922. "He perfectly describes the climate of anti-Semitic terror which gripped Austria at the time," Werner Hanak-Lettner of the Jewish Museum in Vienna told AFP. The release of the film two years later sparked huge protests and would eventually force several of its Jewish actors to emigrate. Less successful than the book, the movie vanished after a screening in Amsterdam in the 1930s. Six decades later, a copy was found in the Netherlands Filmmuseum. Austrian experts say the emergence of the new version shows that the Dutch copy from 1991 had been edited for foreign audiences. "This seems to have been a 'light version' of the original, destined for export and cleared of the shock factor," Wostry said. — AFP



A man walks inside a hall at the Al-Qarawiyyin Library in the Moroccan city of Fez. — AFP photos



A man reads an encyclopedia about Maliki Muslim doctrine at the Al-Qarawiyyin Library.

In Morocco's Fez, world's oldest library holds gems

Nestled in a labyrinth of streets in the heart of Morocco's ancient city of Fez, stands the world's oldest working library. Its sculpted dark wooden door stands almost hidden on the edge of a square where artisans hammer away at copper in a deafening din, delighting passing tourists. But for the few lucky enough to be allowed behind the door, a staircase tiled with green and blue hints at the written wonders beyond. As early writings from the Arabic-speaking world have come under increasing threat from extremists, the Qarawiyyin library is home to priceless treatises in Islamic studies, astronomy and medicine.

Last year the Islamic State group burned thousands of rare manuscripts at the Mosul library in Iraq, and in 2013 Islamists torched countless early writings from the Islamic world and Greece in Mali's Timbuktu. The Qarawiyyin library has just emerged from years of restoration, although no date has yet been fixed for a public opening. "All that's left to be done are a few finishing touches and the electricity," says Boubker Jouane, the library's deputy director. "A house of science and wisdom", according to its founder Fatima Al-Fihri, the Qarawiyyin library was one of the Arab world's largest centres of learning. Fihri, the daughter of a wealthy merchant from Al-Qayrawan in Tunisia, established the library, the university that originally housed it and a mosque in 859.

Manuscript room

Today the university has moved to a new location, but the

mosque—which shares an emerald-green tile roof with the library—still stands. The library as it appears today was built in the 14th century under sultan Abu Inan, and completely restructured under king Mohammed V, the grandfather of Morocco's current monarch. Over the centuries, sultans, noblemen, princesses and wise men have contributed works to its shelves. Under an imposing ceiling of wooden arabesques and a huge copper chandelier, the main reading room sits next an area that contains some 20,000 books.

A short walk-through a corridor of mosaics, past panels of sculpted cedar wood under finely chiseled ceilings—leads to the library's centerpiece. The manuscript room is hidden behind two heavy metal doors and protected by an alarm system and surveillance cameras. Its wooden window shutters are closed to prevent sunlight from entering. The precious manuscripts are each bundled in a grey-coloured cardboard file and displayed on standard metal shelves. Works can be consulted sitting at one of two chairs next to a simple table on which sits a green felt cushion embroidered with gold thread. Around 3,800 titles are kept here, some of them priceless. One example is a treatise on medicine by philosopher and physician Ibn Tufayl from the 12th century.

'Ailments in verse'

"From baldness to corn on the foot, all ailments of the body are listed-in verse to make them easier to learn," Jouane says. The word "diabetes", which is of Greek origin, already features written

in Arabic script. Another gem is a handwritten copy of historian and philosopher Ibn Khaldun's "Book of Lessons". The treatise in history has been signed by the 14th-century thinker himself. "Praise be to God, what is written belongs to me," a line he wrote reads in breathtakingly elegant handwriting.

Another 12th-century manuscript—a treatise in astronomy by philosopher Al-Farabi—shows the course of the planet Jupiter, complete with drawings of astonishing precision. And then there is a treatise on the Maliki doctrine in Islam written by the grandfather of the Arab philosopher Averroes. Its 200 pages of gazelle leather are inscribed with tiny immaculate calligraphy dotted with embellishments in gold ink. Perhaps surprisingly, one of the "works most in demand" according to Jouane is Christian: a 12th century copy of the Gospel of Mark in Arabic.

It was translated "in all likelihood by a Christian man of letters from Andalusia who had come to Qarawiyyin to learn Arabic", says Jouane, expressing pride at the "incredible degree of tolerance at the time". The library counted 30,000 manuscripts when it was founded under Abu Inan. But many were destroyed, stolen or plundered over the years, says Jouane. "There's only very little left of what once was, but today we carefully watch over these priceless treasures." — AFP



A man reads an encyclopedia about Maliki Muslim doctrine at the Al-Qarawiyyin Library.



A man reads a manuscript on astronomy by renowned tenth century Muslim philosopher Al-Farabi.

Cheese fondue:

The ultimate winter comfort food

By Melissa D'Arabian

Living in France in my early 30s, I fell in love with the classic recipe made with nutty gruyere cheese. One of my favorite spots in Paris was a restaurant whose name translated literally into "Bread, Wine, and Cheese" that was hidden away in a cozy underground cave with low ceilings. Stepping inside from invariably chilly rainy Paris nights, we'd be hit with an appealingly musty aroma, like a freshly-popped wine cork combined with heady, fatty, aged cheeses.

French fondue is life-changing. And I've found a way to capture all that flavor for a fraction of the calories. Just kidding. Truth is, I can't completely mimic my beloved wine-cave version of melted bliss. But, I can get close enough to scratch the cheese-fondue itch in a dip while staying reasonably healthy, thanks to a sneaky ingredient: white beans.

Cooked white beans add lush body to the dip, so I can swap out a bunch of the cheese and heavy cream, bringing the calories and fat way down. Low-fat cream

cheese, or Neufchatel, boosts the cheesy factor, so a mere half cup of high-quality grated gruyere goes a long way to keeping the dip squarely in the cheese-fondue flavor profile, helped by dry mustard and a dash of ground nutmeg.

The beans are also a wise way to boost the nutrient profile - one cup of white beans adds 19 grams of protein and 13 grams of fiber. If you are entertaining on a budget, including frugal-friendly beans in your menu to stretch more expensive ingredients (like gruyere) is a smart move - guests will be satisfied with the extra fiber and protein. Since this is a dip, it pairs beautifully with veggies to create a stellar winter crudite - steam up cubes of butternut squash if you really want to winterize.

The beans offer a final benefit, and I've saved the best for last. Blended beans stabilize the cheesy dip, so you can serve it warm, room temperature, or chilled - a relief if you are entertaining this holiday and don't want to worry about cheese congealing. This dip will stay perfectly creamy all party-long.



CHEESE FONDUE DIP

Ingredients

Start to finish: 15 minutes
 Servings: Approximately 8
 1/2 cup sliced shallot (about 2 large shallots)
 1/4 teaspoon dried rubbed sage
 2 teaspoons unsalted butter
 2 teaspoons flour
 1/2 cup chicken or vegetable broth, divided
 4 ounces Neufchatel cheese ("light cream cheese")
 1/2 cup shredded gruyere cheese

1 tablespoon lemon juice
 1/2 teaspoon dried mustard
 Pinch of ground nutmeg
 Pinch of ground black pepper
 1 cup cooked white beans, drained and rinsed if canned

Preparation

Cook the shallot and sage in the butter in a medium skillet over medium heat, until shallots are soft (but not brown), about 5 minutes. Sprinkle the flour and over the shallots and cook for 1 minute,

stirring. Add 1/4 cup of the broth and stir. Add the Neufchatel cheese and stir as it melts and creates a thick, creamy mixture, about 1-2 minutes. Stir in the gruyere cheese and turn off the heat - it will melt with the residual heat. Let mixture cool a few minutes.

Meanwhile, place the remaining 1/4 cup broth, lemon juice, dried mustard, nutmeg, pepper and beans in a blender. Blend on high until smooth, about 30 seconds. (If bean mixture is too thick to blend, add a tablespoon of water.) Scrape the cream cheese mixture into the blender and blend all together until very creamy, about 30 seconds. Serve warm, room temperature or cold. — AP



Avocado toast trend adds sweet potato slices

By Melissa D'Arabian

Sweet potato slices are the latest rage in the avocado toast trend. If you are at all involved with Pinterest, you know this already. Pop slices of unpeeled sweet potato in a regular old toaster and then top it with healthy goodies - like the very popular avocado - for a breakfast or snack filled with slower carbs and healthy fats.

I'll admit, I was skeptical. But I decided to take one for the team, and get to the bottom of this sweet potato toast craze for the benefit of us all. I love the idea of getting some extra vitamins (mostly A and B6) and minerals (mostly potassium and magnesium) with my morning meal, so why not?

Here is what I found: I discovered that the sweet potato really will cook in the toaster, if you let it go through enough cycles. However, a few of my slices got dried out with all that toasting, and sides turned an unpleasant shade of dull brown in some cases.

I tried thinner slices, but they just turned hard or fell apart. My solution? Slice potato into 1/4-inch toasts and give them a

quick turn (30-60 seconds) in the microwave wrapped in a damp towel. This process barely started cooking the slices while also infusing them with the smidgen of moisture that made all the difference. The toasts still took 3-4 toasting cycles to cook, but retained their color and pleasant texture. On a purely subjective front, our household preferred using these little toasts to hold sweet items like pear or banana slices with yogurt or almond butter - like little handheld fruit pies.

Savory versions worked best when they were combined with spice and acid to offset the sweetness of the potato - eggs with hot sauce, avocado with chili oil and lime, shredded pork curry, for instance were extra tasty. But once we left the hot zone, we found ourselves noticing the sweet potato flavor too much to not regret the absence of bread. Dip your toe into this sweet potato toast craze using our family's favorite - a super-simple pear and yogurt combination that reminded us all of a heavenly sour cream apple pie. Feel free to swap out toppings, or even toast up a bunch of toasts and serve with a (spicy?) dip at your next party.

SWEET POTATO TOAST WITH PEAR SLICES AND YOGURT

Ingredients

Start to finish: 10 minutes
Servings: 8 toasts
1 long orange-fleshed sweet potato, clean and unpeeled, sliced into eight 1/4-inch slices
1/2 cup reduced fat plain Greek yogurt
1/2 pear, thinly sliced
Ground cinnamon, for sprinkling
1 tablespoon real maple syrup
Pinch of salt

Preparation

Lay a damp paper towel on a microwave-safe plate and lay out the sweet potato slices. Cover with a second damp paper towel. Microwave until slices barely begin to soften and turn brighter orange, about one minute. Blot with paper towel to remove any extra moisture. Run the slices through the toaster cycle until the potato is softened, but not flimsy, about 3-4 cycles. Let the slices cool a few minutes. Top with yogurt, pear slices, a sprinkling of cinnamon, a drizzle of maple syrup and a tiny pinch of salt. Pick up a mini-pie or two with your hands and enjoy for breakfast, snack or even dessert. Other topping options: almond butter, banana slices and chia seed; peanut butter and honey; avocado, lime juice, hot sauce and cilantro; hardboiled egg, tomato slices and chopped cooked turkey bacon. - AP

Cook's note: Orange-fleshed sweet potatoes are often called "garnet" sweet potatoes or "yams" in American grocery stores



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Friday Times

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2016

Kids

Sudoku 6x6 Puzzles - Sheet 8

Every row, column and mini-grid must contain the numbers 1 through 6. Don't guess - use logic!

2		6	4		3
1					6
5					2
3		2	5		4

		2	6		
	4			3	
1					4
2					1
	6			2	
		3	4		

2					4
6					3
		1	3		
		6	4		
4					5
1					2



2D Shape Word Scramble

Unscramble the 2D shape words and join them to the pictures on the right. We've done the first one for you!

shubmor

rhombus

iccler

peghanot

cantleger

iket

quares

zapimute

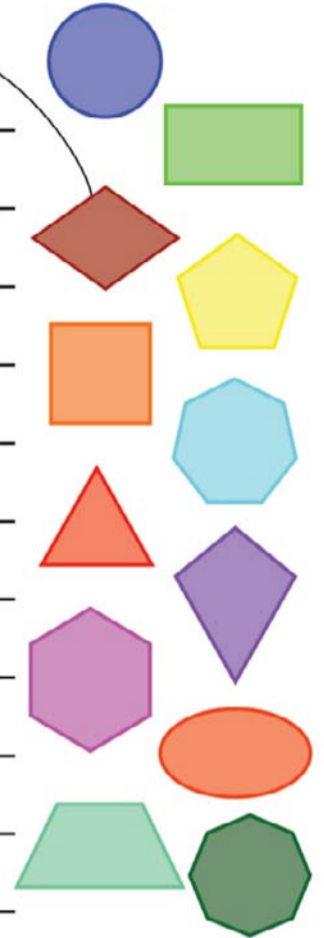
pantgone

lova

catgoon

irlegtan

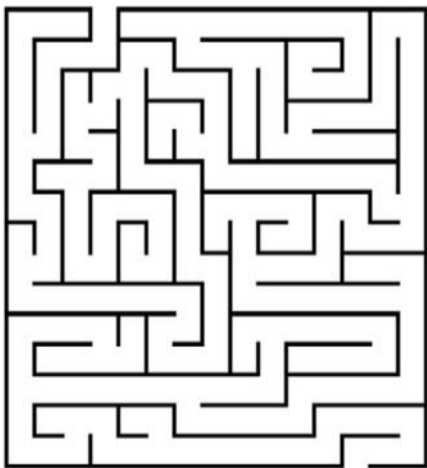
exnoagh



Winter Maze



The girl has lost her hat and mittens. Can you help her find her way through the maze to find them?



COUNT THE BEARS.....

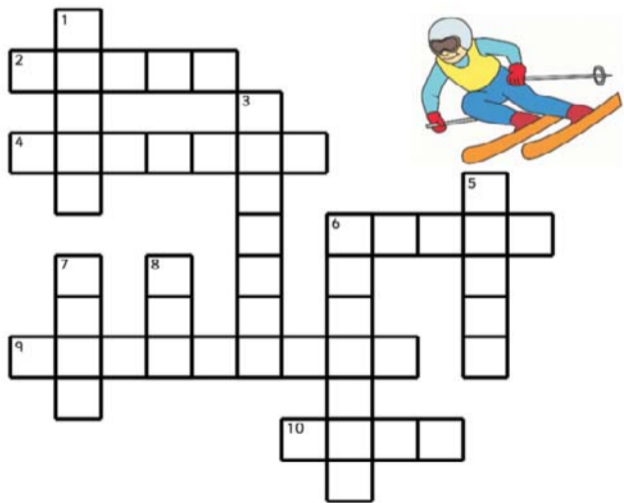




Can you spot 10 differences between these pictures?



Winter Crossword



Across

- 2. You might serve this drink with cream and marshmallows?
- 4. You wear these on your hands to keep warm?
- 6. A length of cloth to wrap around your neck to keep warm?
- 9. Going to sleep for the winter?
- 10. White flakes that fall from the sky?

Down

- 1. Bird with a red breast?
- 3. You might make one and use a carrot for a nose?
- 5. Jack _____
- 6. Sport you do on ice with thin blades on your feet?
- 7. Planks of wood you wear on your feet so you can glide on snow?
- 8. Frozen water?

Winter Word Search



k	e	t	r	h	j	o	g	y	z	r	l	c	j	j	b	k
l	t	l	b	d	f	v	p	j	b	w	l	t	t	s	o	y
p	t	a	g	c	r	e	a	n	a	i	k	k	n	t	o	l
r	a	a	m	m	o	u	o	a	i	f	o	n	s	t	e	
d	k	q	x	r	s	a	n	b	t	m	w	s	k	c	s	j
n	e	h	r	u	t	y	t	i	v	f	w	h	o	a	c	o
t	s	l	e	d	g	e	t	i	l	p	e	o	b	r	n	b
w	p	q	a	m	x	e	p	a	m	s	z	h	n	f	u	z
h	i	g	n	f	f	q	k	i	h	u	m	w	a	s	t	d
e	c	n	v	h	x	e	e	c	a	s	g	j	s	n	o	w
m	c	g	t	y	u	f	v	i	w	h	e	z	v	a	n	e
w	r	o	r	e	l	x	b	c	l	e	z	v	i	f	y	p
a	q	n	f	u	r	e	h	l	s	h	l	w	o	y	p	r
c	t	q	s	e	j	r	o	e	x	x	f	u	u	l	b	p
h	d	g	b	p	n	d	l	o	c	h	i	l	l	y	g	b
a	m	i	t	t	e	n	s	c	z	y	s	w	v	n	g	k
t	g	q	l	d	n	h	w	l	r	b	y	y	g	l	f	z

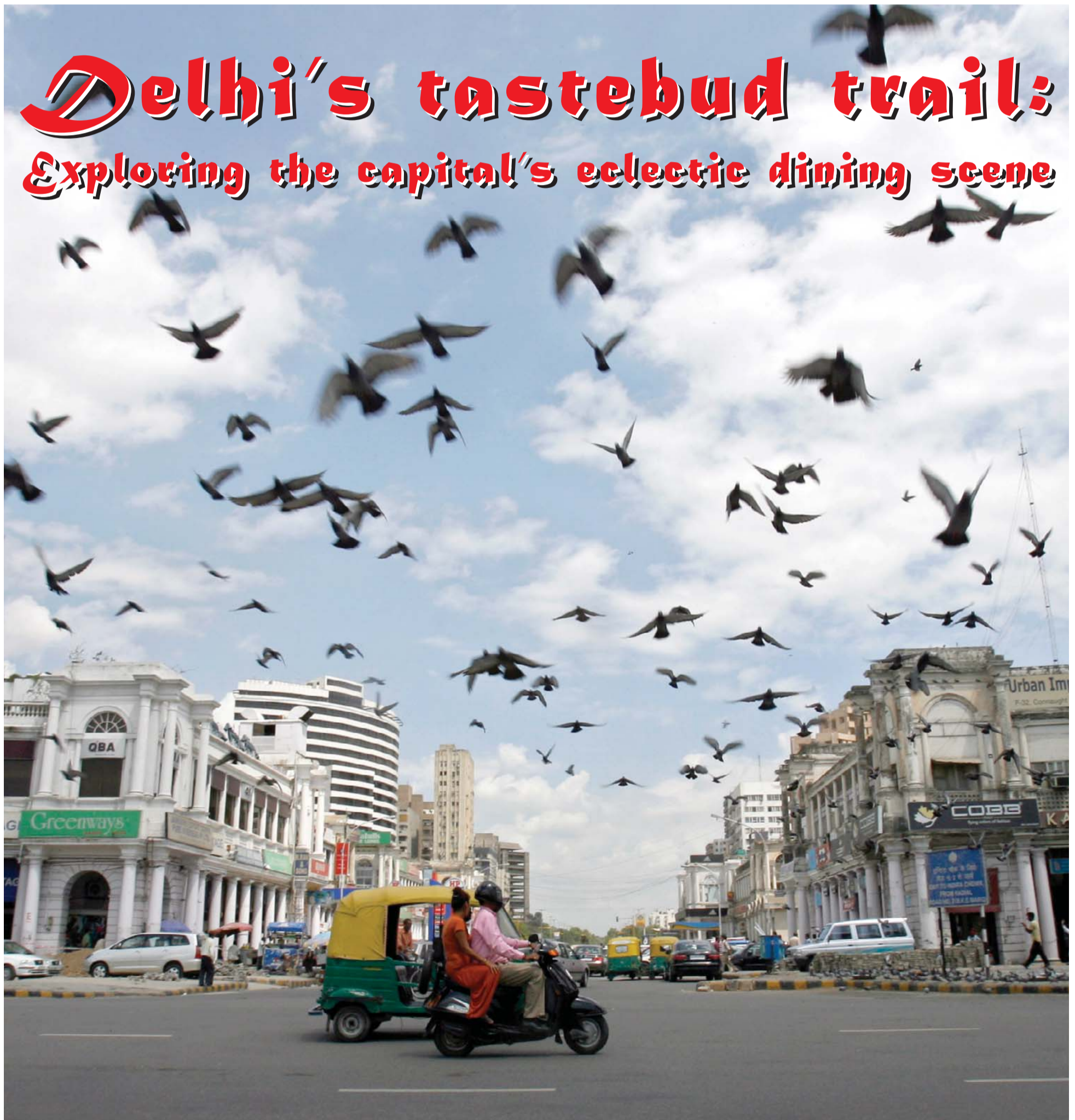
- | | | | |
|-----------|---------|--------|--------|
| boots | chilly | coat | cold |
| frost | gloves | hat | icicle |
| mittens | scarf | sledge | snow |
| snowflake | snowman | winter | |





Friday Times Travel

Delhi's tastebud trail: **Exploring the capital's eclectic dining scene**





Cafe Lota

Delhi's onion-layered history is mirrored deliciously in its diverse and dynamic cuisine. Cosmopolitan Delhi-ites crave fine food like plants crave sunshine, and the city's food scene trots the globe. From tiny hole-in-the-wall restaurants to fine dining and quirky cafes, this really is a city with something to please everyone. Here are some eateries in the Indian capital that reflect its eclectic personality.

Cafe culture with a twist at Cafe Lota

The leafy cul-de-sac beside the Crafts Museum at Pragati Maidan has been reinvented as an indoor-outdoor eatery, and a calm retreat from the city crush. A huge hit with Delhi's arty set, Cafe Lota (Crafts Museum, Gate No 2, Bhairon Marg) charms with an innovative menu of regional Indian flavors and surprise twists on traditional favorites. Reserving ahead will allow faster access to some of the capital's tastiest food. Otherwise, you may have a long wait for your crunchy palak patta chaat (spicy spinach salad), apple cinnamon jalebi, or filtered coffee.

Continental creations at Le Bistro Du Parc

When Delhi-ites crave European flavors, they head to Le Bistro Du Parc (lebistroduparc.com) in Defence Colony. Capturing just the right Parisian mood, this little piece of La Belle France serves fine French fare, with a live jazz soundtrack on Wednesdays and Fridays. Tucked into a tree-lined corner of Moolchand Flyover Market, it's a great, pocket-friendly alternative to the pricey European restaurants in Delhi's five-star hotels. Oh, and did we mention the food is outstanding?

Old city wonders at Lakhori

In earshot of the muezzin's call from the iconic Jama Masjid, Lakhori (havelidharampura.com/lakhori), is cosily housed inside Haveli Dharampura, a handsomely restored 200-year-old traditional mansion that doubles as an upscale hotel. Hidden away in an atmospheric alley, you'll find all the street-food that you wistfully passed by as you walked the streets of Old Delhi, served up as high-tea most afternoons. Weekends are reserved for a spot of Mughal-mania, with a heady mix of kebabs, curries, and classical Kathak dances.



Moody interiors at Lakhori



Tribal color at Dzukou Tribal Kitchen

Fruit flavors at Jain Coffee House

A blink-and-you'll-miss-it neighborhood haunt for over half a century, the Jain Coffee House is an Old Delhi institution. Inside, an archaic coffee machine coughs, hisses, and streams coffee into Styrofoam cups for a quick pick-me-up, but most are here for the seasonal fruit sandwiches. Imagine soft white bread slathered with fresh butter, jam or marmalade, and topped with cottage cheese and fresh fruit - mango, pineapple, sapodilla, apple, grapes, pomegranate - serving up a burst of flavors and textures.

Live the Naga life at Dzukou Tribal Kitchen

For a slice of India's rugged northeast, walk up three floors in Hauz Khas Market. At Dzukou Tribal Kitchen (dzukoutribalkitchen.com) copious amounts of traditional rice beer wash down tangy curries, sticky rice and spicy relish from India's least explored quarter. For adventurous palates, they serve raja mirchi chutney, rated high on the Scoville chili scale, but the Nagaland style ribs are arguably the showstopper. The interior is kitted out in unpretentious wood, bamboo and brick, and upbeat live bands add evening ambience.

Comfort food at Rustom's Parsi Bhonu Cafe

Antique furniture, grandfather clocks, sepia photos and foot-tapping music from the 70s: Rustom's (rustoms.com) feels like stepping into a dignified Parsi home, and the menu draws on generations of Parsi family recipes. Delhi's tiny Zoroastrian community has a gargantuan appetite for rich mutton stews - come for dhansak (hot and sour curry with lentils) and salli boti (lamb stew with apricots), spiced scrambled eggs and vegetable pulao rice. After sipping on a raspberry soda and tapping your foot to Miles Davis, you can pop down the road to the nearby Qutb Minar, Delhi's most impressive archaeological heirloom.

Lebanese bites at Zizo

It's all about nostalgia at this cheery restaurant in bustling Connaught Place, named for a tiny green beetle that the owner kept as a childhood pet. The kitchen at Zizo (zizo.in) is helmed by a Lebanese chef, ensuring that the batata harra (spice potatoes), man'oushe (spiced flatbread), lamb kibbeh



(meatballs) and kanufa (sweet pastries) are as authentic as they come. The owner's playful attitude extends to the décor: Arabic but modern, with half a mule emerging from the wall in the bar upstairs.

Canine cuisine at Puppychino

Delhi's first dog cafe lures in the punters with cute resident pooches. Families gather at Puppychino ([\[puppychino.com\]\(http://puppychino.com\)\) for a lively menu of pizzas, pastas, burgers, sandwiches and shakes, but it's the play area full of frolicking pups that is the main attraction. A tasty bite and a bit of puppy love can feel surprisingly restorative after a day on Delhi's crowded streets. Dog-owners can even order from a special food menu for dogs, including pooch-friendly pancakes. - \(\[www.lonelyplanet.com\]\(http://www.lonelyplanet.com\)\)](http://facebook.com/pup-</p>
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Aries (March 21-April 19)

You could feel that you are left out of the loop when it comes to something important in the workplace today-consider yourself blessed! Higher-ups may think there is not enough work. Changes are imminent and the less you lend to the situation the better. Patience is required and patience you have; smile. A love song comes into your mind and the rest of your day is spent in trying to keep the sound of your humming low. An after-work meeting with friends or family may create an opportunity to enjoy the evening meal away from home. You will be wishing for anything that is new, different and unique to come into your life this evening. This may just come through simple pleasures. Do you see the stars this evening?



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

It's a super day to get things accomplished. Good hand-eye coordination makes almost any task run well-especially with your determination to see things through to the end. There could be a window in time that opens now, making insights possible this afternoon; take a look. Something that you thought was above your understanding seems to be quite simple. Also, this is a very lucky day. You may feel like exercising or getting mobile this afternoon. A loved one is encouraged by your words and by your attention. A bicycle ride or walk together is a wonderful way to devote some focused time together. This evening is for building family memories-you will not want to wander too far from home, no matter what the temptation.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

You may wake up to the fact of just how much beauty you have in your life and in those around you. Similarly, everything could take on value and importance. There could be a lot of temptation to overspend or indulge too much. Just remember that you must pay to play and the bills still come due. Enjoy this time, but be realistic. Things are definitely happening in your vocation or path and will depend upon your own ambition and effort, which are strong now. Being in a position to use your good wisdom helps you to feel the trends and to make the right moves. It's a time to get ahead by taking action. Let your intuition be your guide. This evening is about money and resources, what you personally bring to the table and what you share.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

It's not hard to see what you value and care about. Your sense of appreciation is sharpened and in high focus. Being able to talk with superiors and describe what you see is a big plus in your favor. This is a good day for practical job-related thoughts and ideas. You are able to make good decisions and may decide this is the time to appraise your holdings. Understanding those around you almost assures you of a special time with special people. Great feelings and a sense of support and harmony make this a happy time. You may find a kind of romantic sentimentality characterizing your approach to life now. Possibly you are longing for a soul mate or yearning to save the world; it could mean carrying a torch, as well. You are classy for your date tonight.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You may find it easy to bring together a group of people with your words or ideas that move others. Your mental focus is strengthened and you feel more disciplined. By increasing your efforts and becoming more responsible for your actions, you can accomplish a great deal, as well as gain respect and admiration of others. After this workday has ended, you may take on a more introverted approach to your life. You may feel more like sharing some time with your lover or with close friends. This may not be a time when you feel like being very outgoing or wanting to present yourself to the world. Your whole world may seem trancelike or dreamy. Movies, books and all forms of escape could prove very enjoyable this afternoon.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

A group meeting first thing this morning finds you expressive. Your self-expression is at a high-you naturally find expressions for your particular ideas and thoughts. You could be most convincing with others and powerful in your communications. There is an abundance of energy behind what you say and think. You can make quick and sharp decisions. You communicate with feeling and strength. It's a great time to think about your own situation, exactly how you feel about where you want your life to go. Your emotions in particular-or the feelings of those around you-may be very clear. You attach more importance to friendships now and enjoy taking part in group activities that center on visionary goals.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

There is a nagging feeling that you have forgotten something today. At this time you need to tend to any unfinished business-there is a tendency to forget your place in a past project. Establishing a sound program of organization might be your first consideration. A list will help you gain a focus. Your ambition is high at this time. Those around you truly appreciate your ability to make commonsense decisions and may interrupt you from time to time today in order to gain your advice. You will find plenty of opportunities to exert your problem-solving abilities-for others and for yourself. A romantic involvement seems less tense at this time. Perhaps you have grown more comfortable with each other. Enjoy the giving and receiving of hugs.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

One thing comes to an end and another begins. A burdensome business partnership or situation lets up now. Listen carefully to advice from a third person. There is insight for moving forward in a new adventure. Finances are about to increase! You have many needs but also sense the needs of those around you. You encourage a friend to seek help in caring for an ill or elderly person in his or her life. Mentally, you are very perceptive, your analytical abilities are at a peak and that could find you engaged in some very in-depth discussions and exploratory conversations. Being able to communicate and get your message across to others is at a crest. Your timing should be just about as good as it can get. You can indulge in a personal whim this evening.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Your focus may be on your career this day. You earn the respect of your peers through your ability to accomplish much-regardless of what happens around you each day. You attract loyal, brainy and practical people in your life-even in the workplace. You promote yourself, your ideas and your willingness to attend to the management and details of an entrepreneur type of project. You have all the ingredients to live up to your own expectations for success. Professional situations have a green light today and you are successful in what you do. You enjoy a fun evening this evening with friends and family; there is talk about old times and plans are in the making for new experiences. There is a garden of ideas; enjoy!



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

To get the things accomplished that you feel are necessary, you will probably have to take the first step today. You could find that circumstances dictate your taking action. To be more specific, a teacher could be absent at the last minute. Because you are an assistant teacher, you can step in to help. Perhaps a lecturer did not show up and someone has to entertain the crowd, etc. These situations may not be your specialty, but you will be pleased at the positive results by the end of this day. You should feel healthy and ready for any project. Someone may pay you a very nice compliment on your courage. There is a need to be entertained this evening and two or three loved ones have plenty of suggestions-of course, they would like to tag along!



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You may find that it is difficult to concentrate on work issues this day. A young person in your family may have a performance or some other member of your family may be in front of an audience or jury-your thoughts are in the positive mode for them. It is possible that both your personal growth and your career depend on how you handle some very sensitive psychological material. You will benefit from perceptive insights and getting to the heart of a matter. An estate sale this afternoon gains your attention. Attractive antiques could be worth more than their advertised prices. Appreciating things of value and even the idea of value itself could be the order of the day. Material things will be important to you at this time.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You feel close to others-even those you do not know. The lines of communication are wide open. You have the right words when you need them and possibly a few too many words when you do not need them. Be wise in your criticisms. It is a time when you can expect some kind of extra support or recognition from those around you. You appreciate what is aboveboard and sincere and have a special abhorrence of what is secret, intense and private. Mental concentration should come easily to you just now; so put your mind to work and take care of any details that you may have. Problems and obstacles should find some easy explanations under your keen examination. This evening has many relaxing possibilities; look around and enjoy the fun stuff!

COUNTRY CODES

Afghanistan	0093	Kuwait	00965
Albania	00355	Kyrgyzstan	00996
Algeria	00213	Laos	00856
Andorra	00376	Latvia	00371
Angola	00244	Lebanon	00961
Anguilla	001264	Liberia	00231
Antigua	001268	Libya	00218
Argentina	0054	Lithuania	00370
Armenia	00374	Luxembourg	00352
Australia	0061	Macau	00853
Austria	0043	Macedonia	00389
Bahamas	001242	Madagascar	00261
Bahrain	00973	Majorca	0034
Bangladesh	00880	Malawi	00265
Barbados	001246	Malaysia	0060
Belarus	00375	Maldives	00960
Belgium	0032	Mali	00223
Belize	00501	Malta	00356
Benin	00229	Marshall Islands	00692
Bermuda	001441	Martinique	00596
Bhutan	00975	Mauritania	00222
Bolivia	00591	Mauritius	00230
Bosnia	00387	Mayotte	00269
Botswana	00267	Mexico	0052
Brazil	0055	Micronesia	00691
Brunei	00673	Moldova	00373
Bulgaria	00359	Monaco	00377
Burkina	00226	Mongolia	00976
Burundi	00257	Montserrat	001664
Cambodia	00855	Morocco	00212
Cameroon	00237	Mozambique	00258
Canada	001	Myanmar (Burma)	0095
Cape Verde	00238	Namibia	00264
Cayman Islands	001345	Nepal	00977
Central African Republic	00236	Netherlands (Holland)	0031
Chad	00235	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Chile	0056	New Caledonia	00687
China	0086	New Zealand	0064
Colombia	0057	Nicaragua	00505
Comoros	00269	Nigar	00227
Congo	00242	Nigeria	00234
Cook Islands	00682	Niue	00683
Costa Rica	00506	Norfolk Island	00672
Croatia	00385	Northern Ireland (UK)	0044
Cuba	0053	North Korea	00850
Cyprus	00357	Norway	0047
Cyprus (Northern)	0090392	Oman	00968
Czech Republic	00420	Pakistan	0092
Denmark	0045	Palau	00680
Diego Garcia	00246	Panama	00507
Djibouti	00253	Papua New Guinea	00675
Dominica	001767	Paraguay	00595
Dominican Republic	001809	Peru	0051
Ecuador	00593	Philippines	0063
Egypt	0020	Poland	0048
El Salvador	00503	Portugal	00351
England (UK)	0044	Puerto Rico	001787
Equatorial Guinea	00240	Qatar	00974
Eritrea	00291	Romania	0040
Estonia	00372	Russian Federation	007
Ethiopia	00251	Rwanda	00250
Falkland Islands	00500	Saint Helena	00290
Faroe Islands	00298	Saint Kitts	001869
Fiji	00679	Saint Lucia	001758
Finland	00358	Saint Pierre	00508
France	0033	Saint Vincent	001784
French Guiana	00594	Samoa US	00684
French Polynesia	00689	Samoa West	00685
Gabon	00241	San Marino	00378
Gambia	00220	Sao Tome	00239
Georgia	00995	Saudi Arabia	00966
Germany	0049	Scotland (UK)	0044
Ghana	00233	Senegal	00221
Gibraltar	00350	Seychelles	00284
Greece	0030	Sierra Leone	00232
Greenland	00299	Singapore	0065
Grenada	001473	Slovakia	00421
Guadeloupe	00590	Slovenia	00386
Guam	001671	Solomon Islands	00677
Guatemala	00502	Somalia	00252
Guinea	00224	South Africa	0027
Guyana	00592	South Korea	0082
Haiti	00509	Spain	0034
Holland (Netherlands)	0031	Sri Lanka	0094
Honduras	00504	Sudan	00249
Hong Kong	00852	Suriname	00597
Hungary	0036	Swaziland	00268
Ibiza (Spain)	0034	Sweden	0046
Iceland	00354	Switzerland	0041
India	0091	Syria	00963
Indian Ocean	00873	Taiwan	00886
Indonesia	0062	Tanzania	00255
Iran	0098	Thailand	0066
Iraq	00964	Toga	00228
Ireland	00353	Tonga	00676
Italy	0039	Tokelau	00690
Ivory Coast	00225	Trinidad	001868
Jamaica	001876	Tunisia	00216
Japan	0081	Turkey	0090
Jordan	00962	Tuvalu	00688
Kazakhstan	007	Uganda	00256
Kenya	00254	Ukraine	00380
Kiribati	00686	United Arab Emirates	00976



00:20 Wheeler Dealers
 01:10 Salvage Hunters
 02:00 What On Earth?
 02:50 British Treasure, American Gold
 03:40 Fast N' Loud: Demolition Theatre
 04:30 The Liquidator
 05:00 How It's Made: Dream Cars
 05:30 How Do They Do It?
 06:00 Blue Collar Backers
 06:50 Incredible Engineering
 Blunders: Fixed
 07:40 Magic Of Science
 08:30 Catching Monsters
 09:20 Survive That!
 10:10 Dive Wars Australia
 11:00 Running Wild With Bear Grylls
 11:50 Sherpa
 13:30 Fast N' Loud: Demolition Theatre
 14:20 Sacred Steel Bikes
 15:10 Street Outlaws
 16:00 British Treasure, American Gold
 16:50 British Treasure, American Gold
 17:40 British Treasure, American Gold
 20:10 British Treasure, American Gold
 21:00 Fast N' Loud: Demolition Theatre
 21:50 Sacred Steel Bikes
 22:40 Street Outlaws
 23:30 Sherpa



00:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
 01:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos
 02:00 Killer Kids
 03:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos
 04:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
 05:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos
 06:00 Killer Kids
 07:00 The First 48
 08:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
 09:00 Homicide Hunter
 10:00 It Takes A Killer
 10:30 It Takes A Killer
 11:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
 12:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
 13:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
 14:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
 15:00 The First 48
 16:00 Gangs Of Britain...
 17:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
 18:00 I Killed My BFF
 19:00 Nightmare In Suburbia
 20:00 Homicide Hunter
 21:00 It Takes A Killer
 21:30 It Takes A Killer
 22:00 The First 48
 23:00 50 Ways To Kill Your Lover



00:30 Prototype This
 01:20 Secret Space Escapes
 02:10 How The Universe Works
 03:00 Untamed & Uncut
 03:50 Ultimate Survival
 04:40 How It's Made
 05:05 How It's Made
 05:30 Dirty Jobs
 06:20 Mythbusters
 07:00 Kids vs Film
 07:25 Doki
 07:50 America's Cutest Pets
 08:40 How It's Made
 09:05 How It's Made
 09:30 Prototype This
 10:20 Mythbusters
 11:10 Dirty Jobs
 12:00 America's Cutest Pets
 12:50 Ultimate Survival
 13:40 How It's Made
 14:05 How It's Made
 14:30 Dirty Jobs
 15:20 Mythbusters
 16:10 Kids vs Film
 16:35 Doki
 17:00 Battle Bots
 17:50 Now That's Funny
 18:40 Prototype This
 19:30 How It's Made
 19:55 How It's Made
 20:20 Mythbusters
 21:10 Battle Bots
 22:00 Now That's Funny
 22:50 Untamed & Uncut



00:10 Hank Zipzer
 00:35 Binny And The Ghost
 01:00 Violetta
 01:45 The Hive
 01:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
 02:40 Hank Zipzer
 03:05 Binny And The Ghost
 03:30 Violetta
 04:15 The Hive
 04:20 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
 04:45 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
 05:10 Hank Zipzer
 05:35 Binny And The Ghost
 06:00 Violetta
 06:45 The Hive
 06:50 Mouk
 07:00 Jessie
 07:50 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
 08:15 Tsum Tsum Shorts
 08:20 Disney Cookabout
 08:45 Bunk'd
 09:10 Austin & Ally
 09:35 Shake It Up
 10:00 A.N.T. Farm
 10:50 That's So Raven
 11:40 Good Luck Charlie
 12:05 Good Luck Charlie
 12:30 Jessie
 12:55 Disney Mickey Mouse
 13:00 The 7D
 13:15 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
 13:40 Hank Zipzer
 14:05 Star Darlings
 14:10 Austin & Ally

14:35 Austin & Ally
 15:00 Dog With A Blog
 15:25 Jessie
 15:50 Rolling To The Ronks
 16:15 Hank Zipzer
 16:40 Bunk'd
 17:05 Star Darlings
 17:10 Elena Of Avalor
 17:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir
 18:25 The Little Mermaid
 19:55 The 7D
 20:50 Dog With A Blog
 20:30 Jessie
 20:55 Liv And Maddie
 21:20 Austin & Ally
 22:10 Girl Meets World



00:00 Doc McStuffins
 00:30 Minnie's Bow-Toons
 00:35 Zou
 00:50 Loopdidoo
 01:05 Art Attack
 01:30 Henry Hugglemonster
 01:45 Calimero
 02:00 Zou
 02:15 Loopdidoo
 02:30 Art Attack
 03:00 Calimero
 03:15 Zou
 03:30 Loopdidoo
 03:45 Art Attack
 04:10 Henry Hugglemonster
 04:25 Calimero
 04:45 Loopdidoo
 05:00 Art Attack
 05:25 Henry Hugglemonster
 05:35 Calimero
 05:50 Zou
 06:00 Loopdidoo
 06:15 Art Attack

06:35 Henry Hugglemonster
 06:50 Calimero
 07:00 Zou
 07:20 Loopdidoo
 07:35 Art Attack
 08:00 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
 08:30 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
 09:00 The Lion Guard
 09:30 Miles From Tomorrow
 09:40 Goldie & Bear
 10:00 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
 10:10 Doc McStuffins
 10:30 PJ Masks
 10:40 Jake And The Neverland Pirates
 11:00 Sofia The First
 11:30 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
 12:30 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
 13:00 Loopdidoo
 13:15 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
 13:45 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
 14:15 Henry Hugglemonster
 14:30 Doc McStuffins
 15:00 Sofia The First
 15:30 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
 16:00 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
 16:30 Doc McStuffins
 17:00 The Lion Guard
 17:30 PJ Masks
 18:00 Sofia The First
 18:30 Goldie & Bear
 19:00 Miles From Tomorrow
 19:30 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
 20:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse
 21:00 PJ Masks
 21:30 The Lion Guard
 22:00 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
 22:30 Jake And The Never Land Pirates
 23:00 Sheriff Callie's Wild West
 23:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse



06:00 Star vs The Forces Of Evil
 06:25 K.C. Undercover
 06:50 The 7D
 07:00 Phineas & Ferb
 07:15 Atomic Puppet
 07:40 Danger Mouse
 07:50 Counterfeit Cat
 08:05 Future Worm
 08:10 Gravity Falls
 08:35 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
 09:00 Supa Strikas
 09:25 Supa Strikas
 09:50 Danger Mouse
 10:20 Annedroids
 11:10 Counterfeit Cat
 11:35 K.C. Undercover
 12:30 Gravity Falls
 12:55 Lab Rats
 13:20 Lab Rats
 13:45 Phineas And Ferb
 14:10 Disney Mickey Mouse
 14:15 Supa Strikas
 14:40 Supa Strikas
 15:05 Lab Rats: Bionic Island
 15:30 Danger Mouse
 15:55 Kirby Buckets
 16:25 K.C. Undercover
 16:50 Annedroids
 17:15 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
 17:40 K.C. Undercover
 18:05 Future Worm
 18:10 Gravity Falls
 18:35 Counterfeit Cat
 19:00 Star Wars Freemaker Adventures
 19:25 Supa Strikas
 19:55 K.C. Undercover
 20:20 Gamer's Guide To Pretty Much Everything
 20:45 Mighty Med
 21:10 Pickle And Peanut
 21:40 Disney Mickey Mouse
 21:45 Guardians Of The Galaxy
 22:10 Marvel Ultimate Spider-Man vs The Sinister
 22:35 Boyster

10:55 Sunday Night At The Palladium
 11:50 The Chase
 12:45 Emmerdale
 13:45 Coronation Street
 14:15 Sunday Night At The Palladium
 15:10 The Chase: Celebrity Specials
 16:00 Broadchurch
 16:55 Broadchurch
 17:50 The Doctor Blake Mysteries
 18:45 Emmerdale
 19:45 Coronation Street



00:00 America's Book Of Secrets
 01:00 Ancient Aliens
 02:00 Missing In Alaska
 03:00 Ancient Discoveries
 03:50 WWII: Europe's Secret Army
 04:40 Your Bleeped Up Brain
 05:30 America's Book Of Secrets
 06:20 Cities Of The Underworld
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 18:00 Your Bleeped Up Brain
 19:00 Ancient Aliens
 20:00 Missing In Alaska
 21:00 Ancient Discoveries
 22:00 WWII: Europe's Secret Army
 23:00 Serial Killer Earth History HD
 00:20 Billion Dollar Wreck
 01:10 Britain's Bloodiest Dynasty
 02:00 Storage Wars
 02:25 Storage Wars: Best Of
 02:50 Banger Boys
 03:40 American Restoration
 04:05 American Restoration
 04:30 Pawn Stars
 05:00 Time Team
 06:00 Time Team
 06:50 Time Team
 07:40 Hoard Hunters
 08:30 American Restoration
 08:55 Alone
 09:45 Swamp People
 10:35 Ice Road Truckers
 11:25 American Restoration



00:20 Man V. Lion
 01:10 Planet Carnivore
 02:00 Swamp Lions
 02:50 Deadly Instincts
 03:45 Snakes In The City
 04:40 My Life Is A Zoo
 05:35 Swamp Lions
 06:30 Deadly Instincts
 07:25 Snakes In The City
 08:20 My Life Is A Zoo
 09:15 Animal ER
 10:10 Wild Congo
 11:05 America's National Parks
 12:00 Shark Men
 12:55 Natural Born Monsters
 13:50 Deadly Game
 14:45 Swamp Men
 15:40 My Life Is A Zoo
 16:35 Animal ER
 17:30 Viper Queens
 18:25 America's National Parks
 19:20 Swamp Men
 20:10 My Life Is A Zoo
 21:00 Animal ER
 21:50 Viper Queens
 22:40 America's National Parks
 23:30 Shark Men



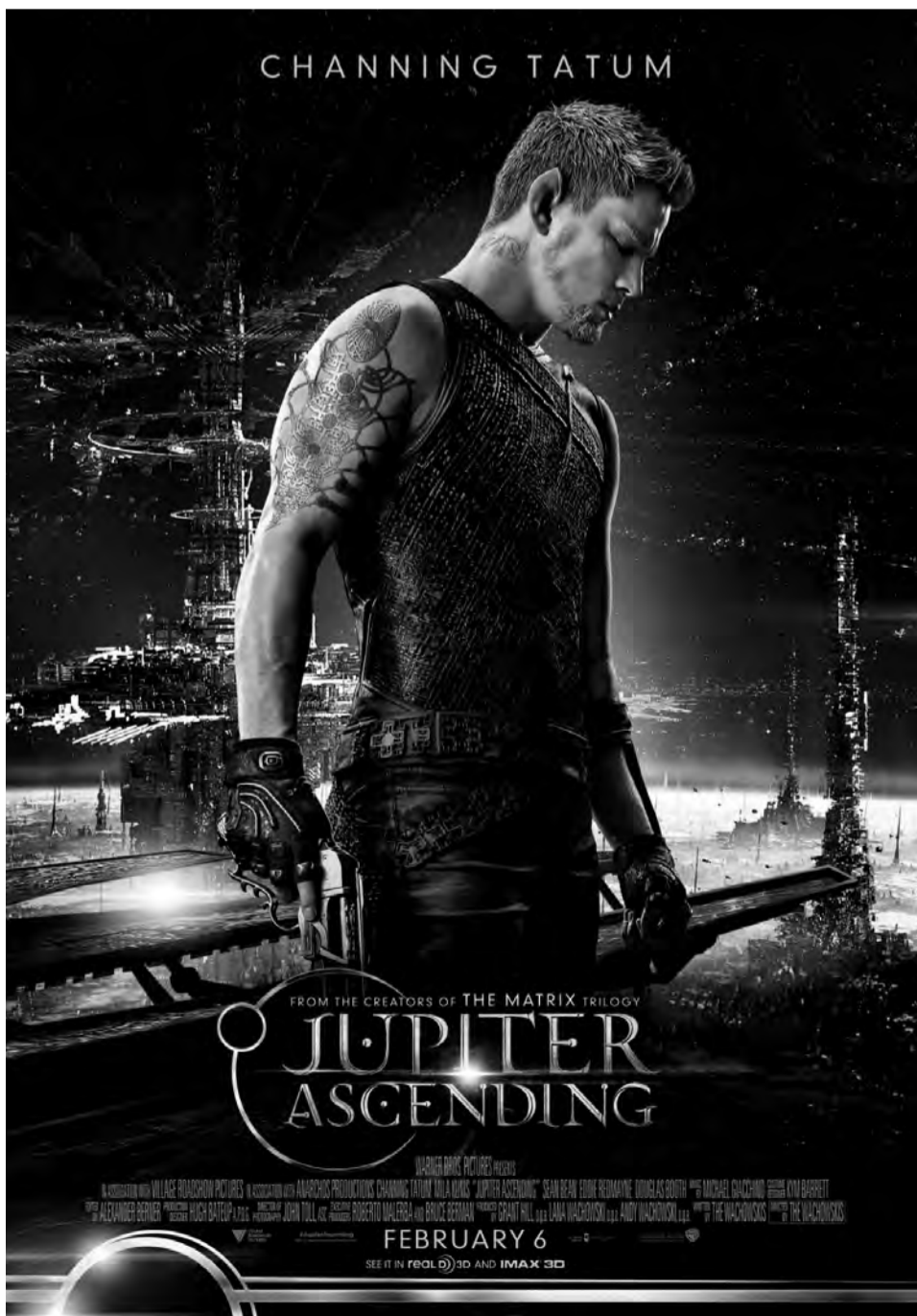
00:05 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
 00:55 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
 01:50 E! News
 02:50 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
 05:30 Fashion Bloggers
 06:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
 06:55 E! News
 07:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
 08:10 E! News
 09:10 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
 12:00 E! News
 12:15 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
 15:00 E! News
 15:15 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
 19:00 E! News
 20:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
 21:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians



00:10 Sunday Night At The Palladium
 01:00 Emmerdale
 01:30 Coronation Street
 02:00 Coronation Street
 02:30 The Chase
 03:25 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs
 03:55 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs
 04:20 Gino's Hidden Italy
 04:45 Together
 05:15 The Doctor Blake Mysteries
 06:10 Sunday Night At The Palladium
 07:05 The Chase
 08:00 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs
 08:30 Paul O'Grady: For The Love Of Dogs
 09:00 Gino's Hidden Italy
 09:30 Together
 10:00 The Doctor Blake Mysteries



00:10 Explorer
 01:00 Disappeared: The Search For Cody Dial
 02:00 Locked Up Abroad
 02:55 Air Crash Investigation
 03:50 Explorer
 04:45 Science Of Stupid
 05:10 Science Of Stupid
 05:40 Car SOS
 06:35 Disappeared: The Search For Cody Dial
 07:30 Nazi Megastructures
 08:25 WWII's Greatest Raids



JUPITER ASCENDING ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD

- 09:20 Science Of Stupid
- 09:45 Science Of Stupid
- 10:15 Locked Up Abroad
- 11:10 To Catch A Smuggler
- 12:05 Kung Fu Motion
- 13:00 WWII's Greatest Raids
- 14:00 Nazi Megastructures
- 15:00 Disappeared: The Search For Cody Dial
- 16:00 Locked Up Abroad
- 17:00 To Catch A Smuggler
- 18:00 Taboo Compilations
- 19:00 Air Crash Investigation
- 20:00 Locked Up Abroad
- 20:50 To Catch A Smuggler
- 21:40 Taboo Compilations



- 00:14 Louie
- 00:21 Louie
- 00:29 Fresh Beat Band Of Spies
- 00:51 Olive The Ostrich
- 00:56 Olive The Ostrich
- 01:02 Max & Ruby
- 01:24 Wanda And The Alien
- 01:34 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
- 01:45 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
- 01:57 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 02:19 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 02:42 Zack & Quack
- 02:52 Zack & Quack
- 03:02 Team Umizoomi
- 03:25 Louie
- 03:31 Louie
- 03:38 Olive The Ostrich
- 03:43 Olive The Ostrich
- 03:48 Paw Patrol
- 04:01 Paw Patrol
- 04:24 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
- 04:35 Dora The Explorer
- 04:58 Max & Ruby
- 05:06 Bubble Guppies
- 05:28 Little Charmers
- 05:41 Shimmer And Shine
- 06:04 Dora And Friends
- 06:26 Zack & Quack
- 06:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 07:00 Paw Patrol
- 07:13 Paw Patrol
- 07:37 Dora The Explorer
- 08:00 Wanda And The Alien
- 08:11 Zack & Quack
- 08:22 Dora And Friends
- 08:46 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 09:10 Paw Patrol
- 09:35 Shimmer And Shine
- 09:58 Dora The Explorer
- 10:21 Paw Patrol
- 10:45 Little Charmers
- 10:57 Bubble Guppies
- 11:20 Fresh Beat Band Of Spies
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- 15:35 Louie
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- 15:44 Olive The Ostrich
- 15:49 Paw Patrol
- 16:01 Paw Patrol
- 16:24 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
- 16:35 Dora The Explorer
- 16:59 Max & Ruby
- 17:07 Bubble Guppies
- 17:29 Little Charmers
- 17:41 Shimmer And Shine
- 18:05 Dora And Friends
- 18:27 Zack & Quack
- 18:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 19:00 Paw Patrol
- 19:13 Paw Patrol
- 19:36 Dora The Explorer
- 20:00 Wanda And The Alien
- 20:11 Zack & Quack
- 20:22 Dora And Friends: Into The City!
- 20:46 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 21:10 Paw Patrol
- 21:35 Shimmer And Shine
- 21:58 Dora The Explorer



SPOOKS: THE GREATER GOOD ON OSN MOVIES HD



- 00:00 V/H/S 2
- 02:00 Mercy
- 04:00 Blunt Force Trauma
- 06:00 The Taking Of Pelham 123
- 08:00 The Machine
- 09:45 Panic Room
- 11:45 Jurassic Hunters
- 13:30 The Taking Of Pelham 123
- 15:30 The Machine
- 17:15 Panic Room
- 19:15 Jupiter Ascending
- 21:30 Public Enemies



- 01:00 Peter Pan Live!
- 03:15 The Education Of Little Tree
- 05:15 Eragon
- 07:15 Rugrats Go Wild
- 09:00 Beyond The Mask
- 11:00 Louie
- 12:22 Louie
- 12:30 Fresh Beat Band Of Spies
- 12:53 Olive The Ostrich
- 12:58 Olive The Ostrich
- 13:03 Max & Ruby
- 13:26 Wanda And The Alien
- 13:37 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
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- 14:00 Blaze And The Monster Machines
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- 20:46 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 21:10 Paw Patrol
- 21:35 Shimmer And Shine
- 21:58 Dora The Explorer



- 01:15 Insidious: Chapter 3
- 03:15 Barely Lethal
- 05:00 Spooks: The Greater Good
- 07:00 Spare Parts
- 09:00 Barely Lethal
- 11:00 Step Up Revolution
- 13:00 Dolphin Tale 2
- 15:00 Taken 3
- 17:00 Cinderella
- 19:00 Pitch Perfect 2
- 21:00 The Intern
- 23:15 Vacation
- 00:00 The Right Kind Of Wrong
- 02:00 Baby Mama
- 04:00 Hot Rod
- 06:00 The Out Of Towners
- 08:00 Under The Tuscan Sun
- 10:00 Baby Mama
- 12:00 Overboard
- 14:00 Norbit
- 16:00 Under The Tuscan Sun
- 18:00 Hanging Up
- 20:00 The Mexican



- 01:30 Foxcatcher
- 03:45 Big Fish
- 06:00 WarGames
- 08:00 Love & Mercy
- 10:00 Monkey Kingdom
- 11:30 Foxcatcher
- 14:00 Jack Strong
- 16:30 Eight Men Out
- 19:00 Arlington Road
- 21:00 Changeling
- 23:30 Primal Fear



- 01:15 The Heart Of The Oak
- 02:45 Pixies
- 04:30 Elf: Buddy's Musical Christmas
- 06:00 Jock The Hero Dog
- 07:45 Moomins And The Comet Chase
- 09:15 When Marnie Was There
- 11:00 The Olsen Gang In Deep Trouble
- 12:45 Pixies
- 14:30 Ploddy Police Car On The Case
- 16:00 Savva
- 18:00 When Marnie Was There
- 20:00 Scooby-Doo! And Kiss: Rock And Roll Mystery
- 22:00 Ploddy Police Car On The Case
- 23:30 Savva



- 00:40 Da Vinci's Machines
- 01:30 How Do They Do It?
- 01:55 Food Factory
- 02:20 How To Build... Everything
- 02:45 How To Build... Everything
- 03:10 Mythbusters
- 04:00 Sci-Fi Saved My Life
- 04:48 Da Vinci's Machines
- 05:36 How To Build... Everything
- 06:00 How To Build... Everything
- 06:24 Mythbusters
- 07:12 How Do They Do It?
- 07:36 Food Factory
- 08:00 How Do They Do It?
- 08:26 Da Vinci's Machines
- 09:14 Mythbusters
- 10:02 Powering The Future
- 10:50 How Do They Do It?
- 11:14 Food Factory
- 11:38 How To Build... Everything
- 12:02 How To Build... Everything
- 12:26 Da Vinci's Machines

- 13:14 Mythbusters
- 14:02 How Do They Do It?
- 14:26 Food Factory
- 14:50 Powering The Future
- 15:38 How To Build... Everything
- 16:02 How To Build... Everything
- 16:26 Da Vinci's Machines
- 17:14 Mythbusters
- 18:02 Sci-Fi Saved My Life
- 18:50 Da Vinci's Machines
- 19:40 Powering The Future
- 20:30 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman
- 21:20 How Do They Do It?
- 21:45 Food Factory
- 22:10 Sci-Fi Saved My Life
- 23:00 Through The Wormhole With Morgan Freeman
- 23:50 Mythbusters



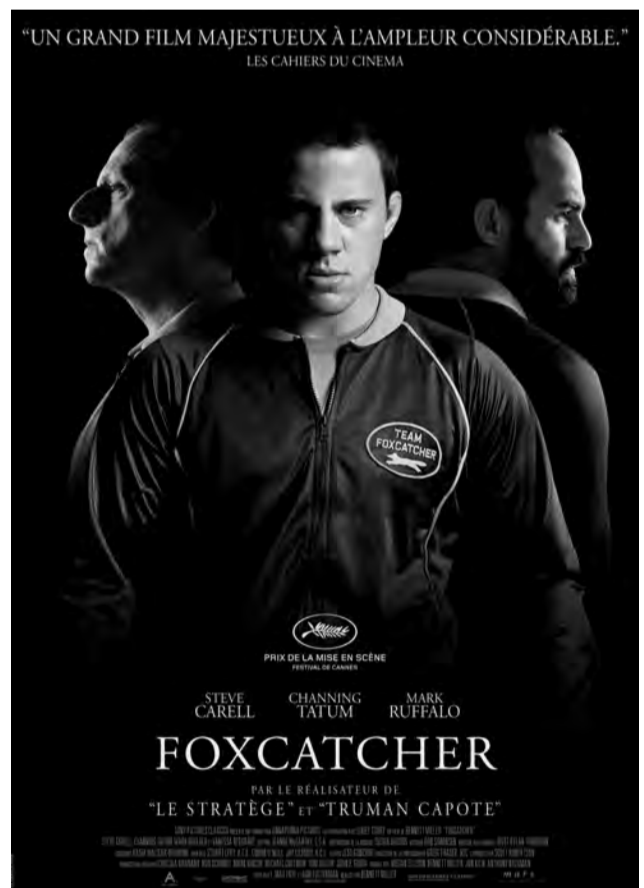
- 00:45 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
- 01:35 90 Days To Wed
- 02:50 Love At First Swipe
- 03:15 Cake Boss
- 03:35 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
- 04:20 Little People, Big World
- 04:45 Little People, Big World
- 05:10 Toddlers & Tiaras
- 06:00 Little People, Big World
- 06:25 Little People, Big World
- 06:50 Little People, Big World
- 07:15 Little People, Big World
- 07:40 Little People, Big World
- 08:05 Little People, Big World
- 08:30 My Big Fat Fabulous Life
- 09:20 7 Little Johnstons
- 10:10 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners
- 11:00 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners
- 11:50 Love At First Swipe
- 12:15 Love At First Swipe
- 12:40 Love At First Swipe
- 13:05 Love At First Swipe
- 13:30 Love At First Swipe
- 13:55 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
- 14:45 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
- 15:35 Cake Boss
- 16:00 Cake Boss
- 16:25 Cake Boss
- 16:50 Cake Boss
- 17:15 Cake Boss
- 17:40 Cake Boss
- 18:05 Cake Boss
- 18:30 Love, Lust Or Run
- 18:55 Love, Lust Or Run
- 19:20 My Big Fat Fabulous Life
- 20:10 7 Little Johnstons
- 21:00 Outdaughtered: Busby Quints
- 21:50 Sister Wives
- 22:40 Separated At Birth
- 23:30 Breaking Amish: Brave New World - The Shunning...



- 00:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 01:00 Ancient Aliens
- 02:00 Missing In Alaska
- 03:00 Ancient Discoveries
- 03:50 WWII: Europe's Secret Army
- 04:40 Your Bleeped Up Brain
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- 16:00 Ancient Discoveries
- 17:00 WWII: Europe's Secret Army
- 18:00 Your Bleeped Up Brain
- 19:00 Ancient Aliens



- 0:40 Suspicion
- 01:30 Deadly Women
- 02:20 Six Degrees Of Murder
- 03:10 Nowhere To Hide
- 04:00 Suspicion
- 04:48 I Almost Got Away With It
- 05:36 Deadline: Crime With Tamron Hall
- 06:24 Women In Prison
- 07:12 Southern Fried Homicide
- 08:00 Tabloid With Jerry Springer
- 08:50 I Almost Got Away With It
- 09:40 True Crime With Aphrodite Jones
- 10:30 Heartbreakers
- 11:20 Southern Fried Homicide
- 12:10 A Crime To Remember
- 13:00 Tabloid With Jerry Springer



FOXCATCHER ON OSN MOVIES FESTIVAL HD

Word Search Puzzles

Spring

Find and circle all of the words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell a message about Spring.

T L E M W O N S S S A R G L A
G C Y C L A M E N S A L I L P
G N G R O W T H R L L L L R S
O Y I I D L S A R A I E S N N
L A L N K A I E B E R R O H E
F M L O A N F E S G M I P W W
E N A E E E S F I U L R R A L
I O B Q R A L E O E C S A B E
R S T U B E S C D D F O S W A
I A F I G R N N G L I N R H V
S E O N N R A E O N I L C C E
E S S O I D E W W B I R S B S
S I N X R G E E O A A R M E G
A Y F L P R O R N M L W P E O
E T E W S S P I L U T R S S R
R E T S A E P L A N T I N G F

- | | | |
|------------|------------|-----------------|
| ALLERGIES | FROGS | RAIN |
| APRIL | GOLF | RENEWAL |
| BASEBALL | GRASS | ROBINS |
| BEEES | GREEN | SEASON |
| CROCUSES | GROWTH | SNOWMELT |
| CYCLAMENS | IRISES | SOFTBALL |
| DAFFODILS | LILIES | SPRING BREAK |
| DANDELIONS | MARCH | SPRING CLEANING |
| EASTER | MAY | TULIPS |
| EQUINOX | NEW LEAVES | WARMER |
| FLOWERS | PLANTING | WET |

Yesterday's Solution

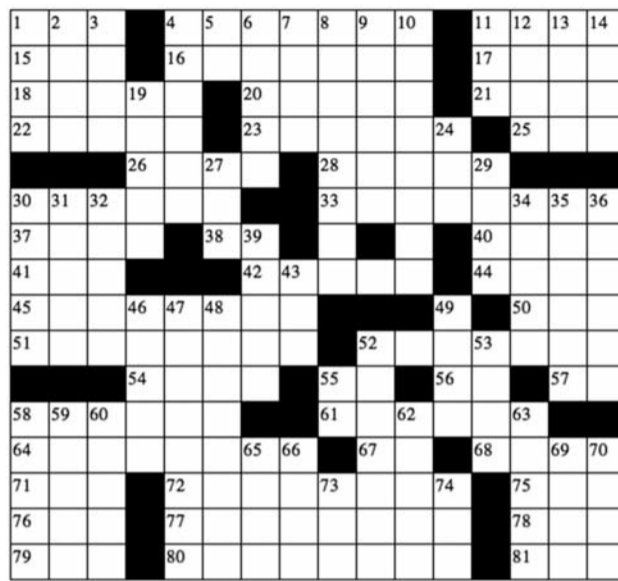
Hip-Hop Artists

H Y M R A L L I (K) U R T I S B L O W E
T S E W E Y N A K R R A T S G N A G V
I T E T H E A L C H E M I S T R Y T H
M E J L O O C L L C R A I G M A C K S
S T H S A L F R E T S A M D N A R G E
L S I N G A N A L C G N A T U W S
L A I S G O T U W A H L A T E T E
I S V N N U O T P O L E H M T E M B U
W O W Y A S E E A I D E A O D T Y S F
S N X Y A I P E H B P A I V H E H U
P I W L C N B N N H M L H E Y S R
O C E O T L Y U A L L A F S T D A I
O D P L R R E R N E A A B O J F T R C
N I A R U B C F Y D T T O A A D S O
I S L A E Y Y S J B N R I T K M U T R
E T L O D T S X O E E A J F U I B O M
G L R E O I S Y O H A O R G A Y R N E
E C T H M C S A T F E N G B I H N F G
E E R U T A N O M R E S K C I R E G A

- | | | | |
|----------------|-------------------|------------------|---------------|
| AFRIKA BAMBATA | FOXY BROWN | MISSY ELLIOTT | THE ALCHEMIST |
| BRAND NUBIAN | GANG STARR | MUGGS | THE FAT BOYS |
| BUSTA RHYMES | GRANDMASTER FLASH | NATURE | THE FUGEES |
| COOLIO | HEAVY D | NOTORIOUS B.I.G. | THE PHARCYDE |
| CORMEGA | KANYE WEST | ONYX | THE ROOTS |
| CRAIG MACK | KILLARMY | QUEEN LATIFAH | TLC |
| DE LA SOUL | KURTIS BLOW | REDMAN | WILL SMITH |
| DJ SHADOW | LAURYN HILL | SALT N PEPA | WU-TANG CLAN |
| ERICK SERMON | LL COOL J | SPOONIE GEE | WYCLEF JEAN |
| FAT JOE | MASTER P | STETSASONIC | |

The hidden sentence is: EVERYTHING IS EVERYTHING

CROSSWORD 1448



ACROSS

- An adult male person (as opposed to a woman).
- A degree or grade of excellence or worth.
- An amino acid that is found in the central nervous system.
- The 17th letter of the Greek alphabet.
- Pertaining to one of the small sacs (as in a compound gland).
- (Babylonian) God of storms and wind.
- Connected with or belonging to or used in a navy.
- Of or relating to or characteristic of Scotland or its people or culture or its English dialect or Gaelic language.
- A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
- A unit of current equal to 10 amperes.
- Rigged with a triangular (lateen) sail.
- The most common computer memory which can be used by programs to perform necessary tasks while the computer is on.
- A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
- Minute aquatic herbs floating on or below the water surface of still water consisting of a leaflike frond or plant body and single root.
- A junction where two things (as paper or film or magnetic tape) have been joined together.
- Herbs of Mediterranean to central Asia cultivated for their flowers.
- (in Gnosticism) A divine power or nature emanating from the Supreme Being and playing various roles in the operation of the universe.
- A metric unit of volume equal to one tenth of a liter.
- A person who acts and gets things done.
- (used of animals especially a horse) Of a moderate reddish-brown color n 1.
- A nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (trademarks Aleve and Anaprox and Aflaxen).
- Worthless people.
- (zoology) Lacking a tail or taillike appendage.
- A sudden loss of consciousness resulting when the rupture or occlusion of a blood vessel leads to oxygen lack in the brain.
- The capital and largest city of Finland.
- Socks and stockings and tights collectively (the British include underwear as hosiery).
- A colorless and odorless inert gas.
- (Akkadian) God of wisdom.
- The ohmic resistance of a conductor.
- In the Arabian Nights a hero who tells of the fantastic adventures he had in his voyages.

DOWN

- The template for protein synthesis.
- According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
- A star that ejects some of its material in the form of a cloud and become more luminous in the process.
- A high-crowned black cap (usually made of felt or sheepskin) worn by men in Turkey and Iran and the Caucasus.
- A radioactive element of the actinide series.
- A fabric woven with lisle thread.
- A ruler of the Inca Empire (or a member of his family).
- A long lace for fastening boots.
- The condition of being honored (esteemed or respected or well regarded).
- Appear like.
- An anxiety disorder characterized by chronic free-floating anxiety and such symptoms as tension or sweating or trembling of light-headedness or irritability etc that has lasted for more than six months.
- The sixth month of the civil year.
- A small cake leavened with yeast.
- (Old Testament) In Judeo-Christian mythology.
- At full speed.
- The compass point that is midway between north and northeast.
- Having any of numerous bright or strong colors reminiscent of the color of blood or cherries or tomatoes or rubies.
- Acute lung injury characterized by coughing and rales.
- The state prevailing during the absence of war.
- Steadfast in allegiance or duty.
- Italian lawn bowling (played on a long narrow dirt court).
- The total output of a writer or artist (or a substantial part of it).
- A large fleet.
- Made of grated potato and egg with a little flour.
- Flower arrangement consisting of a circular band of foliage or flowers for ornamental purposes.
- Goddess of dawn.
- Greek Cynic philosopher who rejected social conventions (circa 400-325 BC).
- (zoology) Of or resembling a goose.
- Divulge information or secrets.
- A city of east central Mexico (west of Veracruz).
- (informal) Exceptionally good.
- A bachelor's degree in science.
- A person who hates.
- Small shrubby African tree having compound leaves and racemes of small fragrant green flowers.
- A spirit believed to inhabit an object or preside over a place (especially in ancient Roman religion).
- (Irish) Chief god of the Tuatha De Danann.
- Electronic warfare undertaken to insure effective friendly use of the electromagnetic spectrum in spite of the enemy's use of electronic warfare.
- Gull-like jaeger of northern seas.
- Someone who works (or provides workers) during a strike.
- A metabolic acid found in yeast and liver cells.
- Resonance of protons to radiation in a magnetic field.
- A cgs unit of work or energy.

Daily SuDoku

		4	2	1	8			
8			5					
1				7				3
	9	7	4					2
6								4
	4				8	7	6	
9				1				2
					7			6
		1	3	2	9			

Yesterday's Solution

7	4	3	8	6	5	1	2	9
8	6	9	1	3	2	5	7	4
2	1	5	9	4	7	6	3	8
9	7	8	5	1	3	4	6	2
6	5	4	2	9	8	3	1	7
3	2	1	4	7	6	9	8	5
4	9	7	6	2	1	8	5	3
1	8	2	3	5	4	7	9	6
5	3	6	7	8	9	2	4	1

Yesterday's Solution

A	S	K		C	A	R	L	S	B	A	D		R	A	T
G	C	A		O	C	E	A	N	I	C	A		A	N	A
H	A	M		T	U	S	S	A	H		M	U	J	I	K
A	N	A	S		A	T	A	K	A	P	A		A	L	A
				A	U	T	O	G	Y	R	O		L	B	
W	O	O	D	F	E	R	N			A	L	I		L	A
A	L	U	L	A		E	A			E		I	B	I	S
R	O	T	E		B	D		A	N	G	U	I	L	L	A
E	G	E	R	I	A		B	B		A	Z		E	A	R
S	Y	R	I	N	G	A				D	E	B	A	U	C
				A	L	E	V	E		B	A	A	L		
L	I	P		A	L	O	U	D			K	A	L	K	A
E	L	E	M	I			P	A	C	K		S	A	E	K
M	I	K	A	D	O			N	G	U	N	I		M	B
M	A	A	R			P	L	E	A	S	E	D		N	A
A	C	N	E			S	W	A	N	S	E	A		A	B

HOW FOUR CITIES WRESTLE WITH CLIMATE CHALLENGE

PARIS: Fighting climate change means different things in different cities, as this snapshot illustrates:

Vancouver, Canada

Environmentalism and tourism are intertwined in Vancouver, a city of 600,000 nestling between beautiful mountain peaks and the Pacific Ocean. Since 2007, a swathe of green measures has cut CO2 emissions from buildings by 20 percent, landfill by 23 percent and road trips by 27 percent. The city has a vastly-expanded network of bike paths and two new rail transit lines. In 2015, Vancouver set a target of 100 percent renewable energy by 2050. The province's electricity supply is already 93 percent renewable, mostly hydro. Like other port cities around the world, Vancouver is faced with rising seas and more destructive storms as a result of climate change, for which it intends to revamp storm-water systems and management. Forestry and mining remain the province's major industries, but the city has made a big push to attract investment in less polluting sectors such as high-tech and film production.

Chongqing, China

A megapolis of 18 million people, Chongqing is a manufacturing hub for cars, motorcycles, steel, aluminum and many other heavy-industry goods. Its citizens have gagged for decades on some of the foulest air in the world, made worse by a landscape of hill-lined basins that trap pollution. Zhou Jie, a 28-year-old advertising industry worker, said she worries constantly about pollution and global warming.

"I would be very willing to switch to a low-emission and low-polluting lifestyle if

the government asks us and is willing to subsidize it," she said. The giant municipality-whose administrative area covers 30 million people-has an ambitious program to encourage lower-carbon practices. A buy-back program launched in 2013 has taken tens of thousands of high-polluting vehicles off the road. High-sulphur coal and diesel are banned within city limits. Chongqing wants non-fossil fuels to be 15 percent of its energy mix by 2020. Beijing has promised China's world-leading carbon emissions will peak by "around 2030."

Los Angeles, California

Despite improvements, sprawling Los Angeles still has some of the most polluted air in the United States. But that status may change as California ramps up to enact among the most ambitious environmental policies in the world. Last September, Governor Jerry Brown—who calls climate change "the existential threat of our time"—approved legislation requiring the state to cut greenhouse gas emissions 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030.

The state also aims to generate 50 percent of its electricity from renewable resources—notably wind and solar energy—by 2030. Buildings are to become twice as energy efficient by the same date. Three-quarters of all waste must be recycled by 2020. As for Los Angeles, stricter fuel emissions standards for vehicles are bound to help. But there will be new challenges: temperatures in the sun-soaked city are expected to rise by 2.8 degrees Celsius (5.0 degrees Fahrenheit) by mid-century.

Lagos, Nigeria

Battered trucks and cars on the high-



This combination of pictures created yesterday shows (From L - clockwise) a view of the Los Angeles city skyline as heavy smog shrouding the city in California on May 31, 2015; a general view of the Vancouver skyline on February 11, 2009; a photo of skyscrapers being built in China's southwest metropolis of Chongqing on August 8, 2013; and Nigeria's commercial capital of Lagos on May 22, 2015. — AFP

ways of Nigeria's main commercial city spew black clouds of exhaust, while chronic electricity outages mean that most businesses and homes rely on gas-guzzling generators for power. The air often tastes of petrol. Despite its exploding population of 20 million in a low-lying coastal area, Lagos has done little to adapt to future climate change. "There is often a big gap between plan and implementation," explained Ademola Omojola, an associate professor of geography at the University of Lagos. "The capacity to manage it at the local level isn't there."

With limited green energy options, peo-

ple are forced to rely on fossil fuels. With government corruption endemic, the private sector may be better placed to adapt to climate change. A privately managed city for half a million people, for example, is under development on 10 square kilometers of reclaimed jutting out into the Atlantic. Dubbed the "Dubai of Africa", Eko Atlantic boasts an eight-kilometer-long wall designed to prevent the ocean from eating away the Lagos coastline, and thousands of homes with it. But the project—far too expensive for most of Lagos' inhabitants—has been tarred as a "climate apartheid".— AFP

CLINIC
PAGE



Kuwait Times
THE LEADING INDEPENDENT DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

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Consultant Pediatrician استشاري أطفال
M.B. Bch. FRCPC. FAAP. PEM

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CHANGE OF NAME

I, Fakhruddin holder of Indian Passport No. K-3650949 & Civil ID No. 281112702289 has changed my name from Hakim Fakhruddin Ikhlas to Hakimuddin Gakher hereinafter in all my dealings and documents, I will be known by name of Hakimuddin Gakher. (C 5244)
2-12-2016

I, Mohan Lal Jangir old name S/o Omkar Mal Jangir holder of Indian Passport No. M8397095 and Civil ID No. 268020305095 has changed my from Mohan Lal Jangir to Mahaveer Prasad Jangir hereinafter in all my dealings and documents, I will be known by name of Mahaveer Prasad Jangir. (C 5242)

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KNCC PROGRAMME

SHARQIA-1

ARRIVAL	11:30 AM
ARRIVAL	1:45 PM
TROLLS	4:15 PM
DEAR ZINDAGI -Hindi	6:15 PM
ARRIVAL	9:15 PM
TAHT AL TARABEZA	11:45 PM

SHARQIA-2

TAHT AL TARABEZA	11:30 AM
TAHT AL TARABEZA	1:30 PM
TAHT AL TARABEZA	3:45 PM
TAHT AL TARABEZA	6:00 PM
TAHT AL TARABEZA	8:15 PM
TAHT AL TARABEZA	10:30 PM
TAHT AL TARABEZA	12:45 AM

SHARQIA-3

FANTASTIC BEASTS AND WHERE TO FIND THEM	11:30 AM
ALLIED	2:15 PM
ALLIED	4:45 PM
FANTASTIC BEASTS AND WHERE TO FIND THEM	7:15 PM
ALLIED	10:00 PM
ALLIED	12:30 AM

MUHALAB-1

TAHT AL TARABEZA	11:30 AM
TAHT AL TARABEZA	1:45 PM
ARRIVAL	4:00 PM
DEAR ZINDAGI -Hindi	6:30 PM
FANTASTIC BEASTS AND WHERE TO FIND THEM	9:30 PM
ARRIVAL	12:15 AM

MUHALAB-2

ALLIED	12:30 PM
TROLLS	3:00 PM
ALLIED	5:00 PM
ARRIVAL	7:45 PM
ALLIED	10:15 PM
ALLIED	12:45 AM

MUHALAB-3

TAHT AL TARABEZA	12:45 PM
TAHT AL TARABEZA	3:00 PM
TAHT AL TARABEZA	5:15 PM
TAHT AL TARABEZA	7:30 PM
TAHT AL TARABEZA	9:45 PM
TAHT AL TARABEZA	12:05 AM

FANAR-1

ARRIVAL	11:45 AM
FANTASTIC BEASTS AND WHERE TO FIND THEM	2:15 PM
ARRIVAL	5:00 PM
ARRIVAL	7:30 PM
GHOST COINS	10:00 PM
ARRIVAL	12:05 AM

FANAR-2

ALLIED	11:30 AM
ALLIED	2:00 PM
ALLIED	4:30 PM
FANTASTIC BEASTS AND WHERE TO FIND THEM	7:00 PM
ALLIED	9:45 PM
ALLIED	12:15 AM

FANAR-3

DEAR ZINDAGI -Hindi	11:45 AM
DEAR ZINDAGI -Hindi	2:45 PM
AE DIL HAI MUSHKIL -Hindi	5:45 PM
DEAR ZINDAGI -Hindi	8:45 PM
DEAR ZINDAGI -Hindi	11:45 PM

FANAR-4

TAHT AL TARABEZA	1:00 PM
TAHT AL TARABEZA	3:30 PM
TAHT AL TARABEZA	5:45 PM
TAHT AL TARABEZA	8:00 PM
TAHT AL TARABEZA	10:15 PM
TAHT AL TARABEZA	12:30 AM

FANAR-5

TAHT AL TARABEZA	11:30 AM
TAHT AL TARABEZA	2:00 PM
TROLLS	2:00 PM
FRI+SAT	
TROLLS	4:30 PM
TAHT AL TARABEZA	6:30 PM
TAHT AL TARABEZA	9:00 PM
TAHT AL TARABEZA	11:30 PM

MARINA-1

ALLIED	12:15 PM
ALLIED	2:45 PM
TROLLS	5:30 PM
ALLIED	7:30 PM
ALLIED	10:00 PM
ALLIED	12:30 AM

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FRIDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2016

CHINA HIKES TAX ON IMPORTED LUXURY CARS

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Blame wages and turtle doves: '12 Days' now costs \$34,363



VIENNA: General view of a meeting of oil ministers of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting countries, OPEC, at their headquarters in Vienna, Austria. — AP

IRAN CLAIMS VICTORY IN OPEC OIL DEAL 'NO LOSERS'

TEHRAN: Iran claimed victory after it was spared any of the cuts in oil production accepted by other OPEC members, including its bitter regional rival Saudi Arabia, to tackle a global glut. "Iran's oil victory at OPEC" and "Failure of Riyadh's oil diplomacy" were among the headlines in Iranian newspapers on yesterday morning, a day after the 14-member cartel agreed to reduce its output by 1.2 million barrels per day (bpd).

Iran, Libya and Nigeria were exempted from the cuts, with Tehran even managing to win the right to increase its production by 90,000 bpd over the next six months. The other members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries agreed that Iran should be allowed to return to its 2005 production levels of 3.975 million bpd before international sanctions crippled its industry.

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia, OPEC's most powerful member, agreed at the Vienna meeting to cut 500,000 bpd from its output. Iran's Oil Minister Bijan Zanganeh put a diplomatic spin on the fraught negotiation process. "The lesson to take is that it is possible to cooperate and reach an agreement

despite competition and the existence of very strong political differences," he told state television.

Shiite Iran and Sunni-dominated Saudi Arabia are locked in a series of brutal proxy conflicts across the Middle East that have taken on increasingly sectarian overtones, and have had no diplomatic ties since January.

Collapsing revenues

The Saudis may have had little choice but to accept the deal, despite Iran's refusal to cut production. Riyadh's finances have been ravaged by the collapse in oil prices, which fell from more than \$100 a barrel in 2014 to near 13-year lows below \$30 in February this year.

In August, it was forced to tap international bond markets, having seen \$170 billion wiped off its reserves and facing a budget shortfall of around \$87 billion (80 billion Euros) this year. The Saudis had kept oil production high despite the falling prices, partly in the hope that low margins would force fast-growing but less-competitive shale producers in the United States out of business.

That tactic was already putting a strain on Riyadh's relationship with Washington, its most vital military ally, and looked increasingly untenable in the face of an incoming president, Donald Trump, who has vowed to prioritize shale energy production and questioned the relationship with the Saudis. "Nobody wants to cooperate with Iran but the economic situation of Saudi Arabia is getting worse," said an oil industry source in Riyadh, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The cut is only small compared with the current high levels of production in Saudi Arabia, the source said, and is only likely to boost prices to around \$50-60 — and that depends on everything going to plan.

"The most important point is whether oil countries, both OPEC and non-OPEC countries, will obey" the Vienna agreement, he said.

'No losers'

But market expert Kamel al-Harami, based in Kuwait, said there were no losers from the deal. "Everyone has gained \$3-4 per barrel

during the past 24 hours," he said, referring to the 10-percent jump in the oil markets since the Vienna deal to around \$50 a barrel. "I think a leader should always compromise and Saudi Arabia is the leader of this organization," he said.

He pointed out that Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates had added around three million bpd to their production while Iran was under sanctions, "so whatever they cut now, it's not going to be a big loss."

Iran's President Hassan Rouhani said much of the blame for the current challenges lay with Riyadh, accusing it of launching a plot two years ago to damage Iran's finances by over-producing.

The Saudis' financial difficulties over the past year, compared with Iran's rapid return to the oil markets, showed the plot had failed, Rouhani said. Zanganeh said Iran's strong production capacity had given it powerful leverage in the OPEC discussions. "If you are strong, you can press your point of view. We resisted and proved that we are determined to return to the situation before the sanctions," he said. — AFP

AS TRUMP CLAIMS TO HAVE SAVED CARRIER JOBS, DETAILS ARE HAZY

PUBLIC RELATIONS SUCCESS?

WASHINGTON: In persuading Carrier to keep hundreds of jobs in Indiana, President-elect Donald Trump is claiming victory on behalf of factory workers whose positions were bound for Mexico. But the scant details that have emerged so far raise doubts about the extent of the victory.

By enabling Carrier's Indianapolis plant to stay open, the deal spares about 800 union workers whose jobs were going to be outsourced to Mexico, according to federal officials who were briefed by the heating and air conditioning company. This suggests that hundreds will still lose their jobs at the factory, where roughly 1,400 workers were slated to be laid off.

Also, neither Trump nor Carrier has yet to say what the workers might have to give up or precisely what threats or incentives were used to get the manufacturer to change its mind. "There's excitement with most people, but there's a lot of skepticism and worry because we don't know the details," said TJ Bray, 32, who has worked for Carrier for 14 years and installs insulation in furnaces. "There's a few that are worried. And there's still a few that don't even believe this is real. They think it's a play, a set-up or a scam."

Sen. Joe Donnelly, an Indiana Democrat, said he, too, has lingering questions about what the announcement could mean for the workers. "Who is going to be retained? What is the structure there will be for the retention? What is going to be put in place?" Donnelly said. "Are these the same jobs at the same wage? I would sure like to know as soon as I can."

Answers could merge

Fuller answers could emerge, when Trump and Vice President-elect Mike Pence, who is ending his tenure as Indiana governor, are to appear with Carrier officials in Indiana.

On the campaign trail, Trump threatened to impose sharp tariffs on any company that shifted its factories to Mexico. And his advisers have since promoted lower corporate tax rates as a means of keeping jobs in the US Trump may have had some leverage because United Technologies, Carrier's parent company, also owns Pratt & Whitney, a big supplier of fighter jet engines that relies in part on US military contracts. Carrier said in a statement that more than 1,000 jobs were saved, though that figure includes headquarters and engineering staff that were likely to stay in Indiana.

The company attributed its decision to the incoming Trump administration and financial incentives provided by Indiana, which is something of a reversal, since earlier offers from the state had failed to sway Carrier from decamping to Mexico.

"Today's announcement is possible because the incoming Trump-Pence administration has emphasized to us its commitment to support the business community and create an improved, more competitive US business climate," the company said. In February, United

Technologies said it would close its Carrier air conditioning and heating plant in Indianapolis and move its manufacturing to Mexico. The plant's workers would have been laid off over three years starting in 2017.

Whatever deal Trump struck with Carrier does not appear to have salvaged jobs at a separate branch of United Technologies in Huntington, Indiana, that makes microprocessor-based controls for the heating, air conditioning and refrigeration industries. That branch will move manufacturing operations to a new plant in Mexico, costing the city 700 jobs by 2018.

Huntington Mayor Brooks Fetters suggested that local officials lack the political clout to preserve those jobs. "At a local level, there was not much that anybody was going to do to make glob-

stem the job losses caused by automation and cheap foreign competition.

The prospect that the White House might directly intervene is also a concern to some economists. The incentives needed to keep jobs from moving often come at the public's expense. They note that Trump's activism might encourage companies to threaten to move jobs overseas in hopes of receiving tax breaks or contracts with the government.

"It sets up a race to the bottom," said Diane Lim, chief economist at the non-profit Committee for Economic Development.

Carrier's parent company indicated that moving production to Mexico would save the company \$65 million annually. Because of pressures like that, states routinely give manufacturers incentives, and "economists who recoil



OMAHA, Nebraska: This April 21, 2009, file photo shows the Carrier logo on an air conditioning unit. — AP

al, publicly traded companies make a decision other than what they made for the benefit of their shareholders," Fetters said.

Donnelly said he worries about other factory job losses threatening his state. Bearing maker Rexnord, which has a factory near the Carrier plant in Indianapolis, plans to lay off about 350 workers. And electronics manufacturer CTS plans to eliminate more than 200 jobs at its Elkhart plant, he said.

Union leaders who represent the Carrier workers were not involved in the negotiations that the Trump team had with their employer.

Chuck Jones, president of United Steelworkers Local 1999, which represents Carrier workers, said of Tuesday's news: "I'm optimistic, but I don't know what the situation is. I guess it's a good sign. ... You would think they would keep us in the loop. But we know nothing."

Public relations success

Trump's deal with Carrier may be a public relations success for the incoming president. It also suggests that he has unveiled a new presidential economic approach: actively choosing individual corporate winners and losers - or at least winners. To critics who see other Indiana factories on the verge of closing, deals like the one at Carrier are unlikely to

at the thought of this are living in a dream world," said Scott Paul, president of the American Alliance for Manufacturing.

For Trump, a challenge will be trying to duplicate the Carrier feat many times over to retain and increase the nation's 12.3 million manufacturing jobs.

Since the start of 2015, the Labor Department has issued over 1,600 approvals for layoffs or plant closings as a result of shifts of production overseas or competition from imports, the American Alliance of Manufacturing noted. But other forces, such as consumer demand and the value of the dollar, also determine whether assembly lines keep humming.

Payroll services provider ADP said Wednesday that manufacturers shed 10,000 jobs in November. US manufacturers have struggled in the past year as a stronger dollar has cut into exports and domestic businesses have spent less on machinery and other equipment.

White House spokesman Josh Earnest said Wednesday that Trump would have to replicate the Carrier deal 804 times to meet President Barack Obama's record. He said that Obama created 805,000 jobs in manufacturing and that the figure is much higher if existing jobs that have been protected are included. — AP



ERFURT, Germany: In this picture taken with a long time exposure people walk along the Christmas Fair in front of the Mariendom (Cathedral of Mary) and St. Severi's Church on Monday, Nov 28, 2016. — AP

EUROZONE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE EDGES DOWN FURTHER

BRUSSELS: The unemployment rate in the 19-country euro zone edged down further in October, to 9.8 percent from 9.9 percent the previous month.

Statistics agency Eurostat said yesterday that the number of people out of work fell by 178,000 over the month. Most countries in the currency union saw a decline in unemployment, though the rates vary greatly. Germany's jobless rate was 4.1 percent while Portugal's was 10.8 percent. Greece had a rate of 23.4 percent in August, the latest month for which figures were available.

The overall improvement shows the region's economy is improving, albeit gradually. The European Central Bank has been pumping 80 billion Euros a month into the economy to boost business activity. Next week, it is expected to extend that program beyond its current end date of March. — AP

FREIGHT RAILROADS DON'T EXPECT BIG TRADE CHANGES UNDER TRUMP

OMAHA, Nebraska: Major US freight railroads expect their business to fare well as long as the economy continues growing despite President-elect Donald Trump's promises to overhaul US trade policy and renegotiate bad deals.

Railroad executives didn't seem worried about major trade changes Wednesday when they spoke at a Credit Suisse investor conference in Palm Beach, Florida. And railroads would benefit if major infrastructure projects are approved or the Trump administration relaxes environmental restrictions on coal. "At this point, we think logic will prevail," Union Pacific's Chief Financial Officer Rob Knight said. "If we want to grow our economy, it's going to require healthy trade."

All the railroads benefit from international trade because they haul containers of goods that ships bring into port hundreds or thousands of miles inland before trucks carry them to their destinations.

Those intermodal shipments accounted for nearly half of the 31.5 million carloads North American railroads have delivered this year. And Knight said that shipments to and from Mexico account for about 12 percent of Omaha, Nebraska-based Union Pacific's volume.

Trouble for railroads

So Trump's criticism of the North American Free Trade Agreement between the United States, Mexico and Canada would seem troubling for railroads. Trump says NAFTA and deals like it provide incentives for companies to move factory jobs abroad. But Edward Jones analyst Dan Sherman said that based on the people Trump has picked to join his cabinet, he doesn't expect major changes in trade. "I think we're still going to have trade," Sherman said. "It just might be on slightly different terms."

And even if international trade suffers, railroads can hope that coal shipments might finally stabilize after several years of decline or that major infrastructure projects requiring many carloads of raw materials will be approved. — AP

OPEC CUTS WILL HAVE A MUTED EFFECT ON CONSUMERS

DALLAS: OPEC's decision to cut production gave an immediate boost to oil prices, but the impact on consumers and the US economy is likely to be more modest and gradual. The cartel agreed Wednesday to cut output by 1.2 million barrels a day, reversing a strategy that produced lower oil prices and pain for US drillers but saved money for consumers.

Even if OPEC members carry through on their promises, global oil production would only fall by about 1 percent. There is still more supply than demand - the reason oil prices collapsed beginning in mid-2014.

The price of oil shot up 9 percent to near \$50 a barrel. If the price keeps rising, some of the slack from OPEC cuts will be picked up by producers in the United States - good news for drillers and oilfield workers in Texas and North Dakota. President-elect Donald Trump has vowed to increase drilling in the US, the world's third-largest producer after Saudi Arabia and Russia, which would help ensure there is plenty of oil.

In short, analysts say, consumers and businesses are not likely to see the return of \$100-a-barrel oil - and the high energy costs that came with it - anytime soon.

Still, there could be some short-term shocks even before OPEC's cuts take effect in January. "The average Joe filling up his tank may notice in the next week or two that gas prices move higher by 5 to 15 cents a gallon just on the psyche of the deal," said Patrick DeHaan, an analyst for GasBuddy, a site used to comparison-shop for gasoline.

The US Energy Department predicts that heating oil costs will rise about one-third this winter, but that prediction was issued more than a month ago and was based heavily on forecasts of much colder temperatures in the Northeast. If the weather forecast proves wrong, prices could sink because heating-oil inventories are running above their 5-year average and grew again last week.

Won't affect shoppers

A small increase in gasoline or even a bigger jump in heating oil, which is used in only 5 percent of American homes, won't affect shoppers if the economy does well, in the view of Michael Niemira, chief economist at The Retail Economist LLC, which does a weekly retail-sales report with Goldman Sachs. "The consumer isn't really focused on gasoline since prices remain low. A better economy, a better labor market - those matter much more," Niemira said. But if gasoline spikes to \$4, "that could be bad."

Crude has traded between \$40 and \$50 a barrel the last several months. The national average for gasoline on Wednesday stood at \$2.15 a gallon, according to the AAA auto club. Before the OPEC meeting, the US Energy Department predicted that crude would rise to \$50 or \$51 a barrel next year.

Sal Guatieri, senior economist at BMO Capital Markets, said modestly higher oil prices will actually help the US economy by spurring investment in the energy industry without draining consumers' purchasing power. He expects an average price of about \$53 a barrel next year as a result of the OPEC production cuts.

"The losers are Europe and Japan - oil-importing regions of the world," Guatieri said. US producers are likely to be winners. Drilling fell off after oil prices started to slide in mid-2014. The number of active US drilling rigs bottomed out at 404 in May and has been rising since, to just below 600 last week. That's still down 20 percent from a year ago, however. — AP



FORT LEE, New Jersey: In this Tuesday, Nov. 1, 2016, file photo, Leon Balagula changes the price for the gasoline at his Sunoco station in the early morning. — AP



LONDON: In this Nov. 22, 2016, file photo, a representative poses for a photograph beside the "Five Golden Rings" section of a "Fire Garden" display, on the eve of the public opening of the "Christmas at Kew" festival at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. — AP

BLAME WAGES AND TURTLE DOVES: '12 DAYS' NOW COSTS \$34,363 SPIRALING OUT OF CONTROL

PITTSBURGH: The slow recovery of the US economy is continuing to keep the cost of Christmas - or at least the gifts listed in "The Twelve Days of Christmas" - from spiraling out of control. The price of two turtle doves jumped from \$290 to \$375 this year, but nine of the other 12 gifts listed in the carol stayed the same price or became cheaper, including a partridge in a pear tree, according to the 33rd annual PNC Wealth Management Christmas Price Index released Thursday.

As a result, the overall cost of the gifts listed in the song increased 0.7 percent to \$34,363, up \$233 from last year's total of \$34,131. PNC Financial Services Group releases the price index each year as a whimsical way of tracking inflation. Besides the turtle doves, only the cost of 11 pipers piping and 12 drummers drumming - both up 2.8 percent - increased.

Thomas Melcher, chief Investment officers for PNC Asset Management Group, said the increasing wages of drummers and pipers could signal a march toward higher wages for a broader range of workers in 2017. He said he wouldn't be surprised to see increases coming for the eight maids-a-milking, nine ladies dancing and 10 lords-a-leaping. "There are some underlying inflationary pressures that seem to be building," Melcher said.

The price of five gold rings, as tracked by PNC, hasn't gone up in three years, even though the price of gold as a commodity has. "At a certain point, the end product should begin to reflect the price appreciation of the commodity," Melcher said.

PNC calculates the prices from sources including retailers, bird hatcheries and two Philadelphia dance groups, the Pennsylvania Ballet and

Philadanco. The cost of buying the same gifts online is \$44,603 this year, up 2.2 percent from \$43,627 last year. But Melcher cautioned that's largely because it costs more to transport animals and performers - 10 lords-a-leaping cost \$5,509 in-person, but \$13,373 online because of transportation costs - than the cost of the items themselves. "In most instances, it's cheaper to shop online," Melcher said. "I've never personally shipped a swan, but I imagine it's not the cheapest endeavor in the world."

A buyer who purchased all the gifts each time they are mentioned in the song would spend \$156,507, up \$1,100 from last year. The full set of prices for purchasing the gifts from a bricks-and-mortar business, not online, is:

- Partridge, \$20; last year: \$25
- Pear tree, \$190; last year: same
- Two turtle doves, \$375; last year: \$290
- Three French hens, \$182; last year: same
- Four calling birds (canaries), \$600; last year: same
- Five gold rings, \$750; last year: same
- Six geese-a-laying, \$360; last year: same
- Seven swans a-swimming, \$13,125; last year: same
- Eight maids a-milking, \$58; last year: same
- Nine ladies dancing (per performance), \$7,553; last year: same
- 10 lords a-leaping (per performance), \$5,509; last year: same
- 11 pipers piping (per performance), \$2,708; last year: \$2,635
- 12 drummers drumming (per performance), \$2,934; last year: \$2,855. — AP

ROLLS-ROYCE TO CUT 800 JOBS IN MARINE BUSINESS

LONDON: British engine maker Rolls-Royce said yesterday it was slashing 800 jobs worldwide in its marine business, where its order book is "very weak". The marine sector employs 4,800 people in 34 countries, with Norway the most significant with 1,900 workers. The division designs ships and systems, largely for the oil and gas market. Rolls said the job cuts would be made in 2017 in a bid to make savings of around £45 million to £50 million (\$57 million to \$63 million; 53 to 59 million Euros).

Rolls had already cut its marine division workforce back from 6,000 last year in response to a slump in the

offshore oil and gas market caused by low crude prices. "The ongoing market weakness that has followed the dramatic fall in the price of oil continues to have an adverse impact upon our order book and profitability," said Mikael Makinen, president of the Rolls marine division. "Reducing our workforce is never an easy decision, but we have no option but to take further action beyond the changes we have made to date."

Rolls said in a trading update in November that its order book in the marine division was "very weak" and it did not envisage a recovery in offshore oil and gas markets. — AFP



BEIJING: A sales person takes a smoke break outside the Rolls-Royce showroom near a McLaren sports car parked yesterday. — AP

CHINA HIKES TAX ON IMPORTED LUXURY CARS

BEIJING: Chinese buyers of eye-popping expensive luxury cars will have to pay extra under Beijing's latest effort to rein in ostentatious spending.

The communist government has added a 10 percent import tax, effective yesterday, on "super-luxury vehicles" priced above 1.3 million yuan (\$190,000). The Finance Ministry said it is aimed at encouraging "rational consumption" and curbing energy use and emissions.

Chinese leaders are trying to nurture domestic consumption to reduce reliance on trade and investment, but worry extravagant spending by the elite is politically dangerous at a time of slowing economic growth.

The government of President Xi Jinping has imposed a steadily widening series of austerity measures since 2013 to discourage corruption and what Beijing deems excessive spending. They have chilled revenues for high-end restaurants and sales of brandy, designer handbags and watches and other luxury imports.

It wasn't clear whether the latest tax, which explicitly targets imports, might run afoul of Beijing's World Trade Organization commitments to treat foreign and domestic goods equally.

China has been the fastest-growing market for Rolls Royce, Ferrari and other luxury automakers, with some reporting annual sales gains of 50 to 100 percent in recent years. The latest tax comes at a time when overall auto sales growth is slowing. Beijing helped to pull the market out of a slump last year by suspending a sales tax but that cut is due to end on Jan. 1. Buyers of luxury cars also pay taxes including one based on engine size that can add up to 40 percent to the purchase price. — AP

UK FACTORY GROWTH COOLS AS WEAK POUND FUELS COST PRESSURES - PMI SOARING COSTS CAUSED BY STERLING'S SLUMP

LONDON: British manufacturing growth cooled unexpectedly in November as factories grappled with soaring costs caused by sterling's slump after June's Brexit vote, even before this week's jump in oil prices. Thursday's Markit/CIPS UK Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) also suggested the weak pound failed to boost exports by as much as in previous months. Britain's economy has performed much better than expected since June's vote to quit the EU. But a bigger test will come next year when inflation is expected to rise sharply, eating into households' spending power.

The PMI's gauge of prices paid by factories for materials and energy shot up at a rate just shy of October's near six-year high, while prices of finished goods again rose sharply. Export growth, however, waned further from September's five-and-a-half year high. Wednesday's 10 percent surge in crude oil prices - after OPEC and Russia agreed

to restrict production - pushed the dollar cost of oil close to levels not seen in 18 months, and drove home the cost pressures facing British manufacturers.

"Once again, price growth is the key story from this reading," said HSBC economist Elizabeth Martins, who warned the spike in oil prices risked further aggravating factory costs.

"For the manufacturing sector, this is not good news, undermining the positive effects from weaker sterling on competitiveness."

The PMI's headline index fell to 53.4 from 54.2 in October, undershooting expectations for a rise to 54.5 in a Reuters poll of economists. Sterling, soaring 1 percent on the day against the dollar, showed little reaction.

Business investment is another doubt hanging over the economy. The Markit/CIPS survey showed signs of weakness. "The trend in new orders for investment goods such as plant and

machinery has eased sharply so far in the fourth quarter," Rob Dobson, senior economist at IHS Markit, said. Manufacturers, heavily reliant on migrant labor, hired greater numbers of staff last month, the PMI showed. Official data yesterday showed net migration from the EU to Britain hit a record high in the 12 months running up to June's Brexit vote. But some employer groups said firms were worried about a shortage of skilled workers, citing signs that the weak pound may already have made Britain less attractive for migrants.

"There is a strong likelihood that the recruitment and retention challenges of employers will be exacerbated further when EU migration restrictions are introduced, which will affect low-skilled employers especially," said Gerwyn Davies, labor market adviser at the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. — Reuters

RUSSIAN ECONOMY IS ON WAY TO RECOVERY, PUTIN SAYS

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin says that the country's economy is on the way to recovery. Speaking in his live state-of-the-nation address, Putin pointed at a growth in some sectors of industry and agriculture and pledged that positive trends will continue next year. He said agricultural exports this year will top \$16 billion, exceeding weapons exports.

The Russian economy contracted 3.7 percent in 2015 and the recession has continued this year under the combined blow of low oil prices and Western sanctions. Putin said the government should encourage growth by offering support to farmers and create incentives for small business. He noted that inflation, which stood at nearly 13 percent last year, is expected to slow down to 6 percent this year. — AP



MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin gestures as he gives his annual state of the nation address in the Kremlin yesterday. — AP

US FIRM PLANS NEW 2.2 BN-EURO MADRID LEISURE COMPLEX

MADRID: US leisure group Cordish Companies yesterday unveiled plans to invest 2.2 billion euros (\$2.3 billion) in a new leisure complex just outside the Spanish capital which it says will create over 56,000 jobs.

The project is a welcome boost for the Spanish economy which has returned to growth after a property bubble burst in 2008 but is still saddled with a jobless rate of 18.9 percent, one of the highest in Europe. The company has already bought 134 hectares (330 acres) of land in Torres de la Alameda near Madrid airport for the project, which will

include hotels, restaurants, convention centers and gambling areas, said Joseph Weinberg, a partner with the firm.

The Baltimore-based company filed a request for a license for the project with the regional government of Madrid on Wednesday and it expects a reply within five to six months, he added. "We believe this is a real win-win for everybody and do not anticipate any opposition," Weinberg told a Madrid news conference. "We believe there is a very strong possibility that we will increase the investment to the three-billion-euro range by

adding more hotel and congress space over time," he added.

Past casino projects have faced stiff opposition on fears that they would fuel crime and prostitution. US gaming giant Las Vegas Sands in 2013 dropped plans to build a megaresort, dubbed "EuroVegas" by the Spanish press, outside of Madrid after the government rejected some of the firm's demands, such as guaranteed compensation in the event of future legislative changes.

The project, which included six casinos and a golf course, was widely opposed across

Spain, including by the Roman Catholic Church. The Cordish Companies stressed that its project was different, with the bulk of the area dedicated to family-friendly activities such as a beach club and just 10 percent of the area dedicated to gaming. "Our approach is not to create a Vegas-style environment," said Abe Rosenthal, the company's executive vice-president for development. Privately-held Cordish Companies, set up in 1910, has developed leisure districts in several cities in the United States, including Baltimore, Philadelphia and Atlantic City. — AFP

OIL HITS 6-WEEK HIGH AFTER OPEC DEAL, STERLING JUMPS

LONDON: Oil swept to a six-week high yesterday after OPEC agreed to cut crude output to help clear a glut, while sterling hit a three-month peak after traders interpreted comments from a senior UK official as a crack in the government's "hard Brexit" line.

Global bond yields rose on prospects that resulting inflationary pressures from oil's surge will lead to higher interest rates, with the benchmark 10-year US Treasury yield matching November's 16-month high.

European stocks dived, shrugging off the bounce in Asian shares and following the S&P 500's fall the previous day instead. US futures pointed to another slight decline at the open on Wall Street. The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries on Wednesday agreed to its first output cut since 2008, finally taking action after global oil prices fell by more than half in the last two years.

Non-OPEC Russia will also join output reductions for the first time in 15 years. US crude oil added to overnight gains of 9 percent to reach \$50.00 a barrel for the first time since October. Brent crude, which soared \$4 overnight, touched a six-week peak of \$52.73 a barrel.

The jump in oil prices added to inflation expectations in the United States, which were already rising on prospects that President-elect Donald Trump would adopt reflationary policies using a large fiscal stimulus. "We've had a spike in oil prices plus better data, so we're seeing the reflation trade come back," said Martin van Vliet, senior rates strategist at ING.

As a result the rout in US Treasuries resumed, with yields pushing higher, especially on longer-dated bonds. The yield on 10-year and 30-year bonds <US10YT=RR>, which are most sensitive to inflation eroding their value, rose 5 basis points to 2.417 percent and 3.077 percent, respectively.

Sterling effort

The 30-year yield has climbed more than 40 basis points since the Nov. 8 presidential election, heading back towards a 14-month peak of 3.09 percent marked last week. The 10-year yield had its biggest monthly rise in November since 2009. Bonds across the world have lost about \$2 trillion in market value since the Nov 8 US election, according to Bank of America Merrill Lynch data.

Sterling grabbed the limelight in currencies, jumping to a three-month high against the euro and on a trade-weighted basis after Britain's Brexit minister David Davis said London would consider paying into the EU budget for market access.

The pound had slumped to historic lows following June's vote to leave the European Union on fears of a "hard Brexit", which would see Britain give up full access to the single market and the EU customs union in favor of retaining full control over its borders. "These headlines suggesting Britain may be able to access the single market are generating substantial sterling demand from traders and investors looking to reduce their short positions and unwind hedges," said Neil Jones, head of FX hedge fund sales at Mizuho.

The Bank of England's trade-weighted broader measure of sterling rose to 78.8 and the pound was at its strongest against the euro for three months at 83.96 pence per euro. It hit a three-week high of \$1.2650 against the dollar after Davis' comments.

The dollar advanced to a 9-1/2-month high of 114.83 yen before pulling back to 114.30 and the euro recovered from the previous day's slide to trade back above \$1.06 after shedding 0.6 percent the previous day.

Europe's index of leading 300 shares was down 0.8 percent at 1,340 points, Germany's DAX was down 1 percent and sterling's strength drove Britain's FTSE 100 down 1.3 percent. Energy and resources stocks in Europe shares outperformed the broader indices, which snapped a two-day winning run. The STOXX Europe 600 Oil and Gas index was up 1.5 percent, while the basic resources index was up 2.1 percent.

MSCI's index of Asian shares ex-Japan rose 0.4 percent, lifted by stronger-than-expected Chinese manufacturing data, and Japan's Nikkei 225 rose 1.1 percent after the yen fell to its lowest since February close to 115 per dollar. Spot gold touched a 10-month low of \$1,163.45. Bullion fell 8 percent in November, its worst month in three years. —Reuters

GLOBAL FACTORIES HAD BUMPER NOVEMBER BUT GROWTH MAY HAVE PEAKED

LONDON/HONG KONG: Manufacturers around the globe performed strongly in November, but concerns about the protectionist leanings of US President-elect Donald Trump and an OPEC-induced oil price rally could curtail future growth.

Factories across Asia and Europe ramped up activity and data due later on Thursday from the United States are expected to show manufacturers in the world's largest economy also pushed harder on the accelerator. But some analysts cautioned November might be as good as it gets as the effects of vast monetary stimulus from central banks wear off. "The strength in PMI numbers is unlikely to be sustained as much of it can be explained by previous stimulus measures," said Julian Evans-Pritchard at Capital Economics.

Policy makers at the European Central Bank are expected to announce an extension to their asset purchase program when they meet next week even after euro zone manufacturers enjoyed their best month in November since the start of 2014 and inflationary pressures, while still mild, picked up. IHS Markit's final manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index for the euro zone chalked up its highest reading since January 2014 in November, registering 53.7, in line with an earlier flash estimate and ahead of October's 53.5. Anything above 50 indicates growth.

But British manufacturing growth cooled unexpectedly as factories grappled with soaring costs caused by the slump in sterling after Britain voted to leave the European Union. The weaker pound also failed to boost export orders as much as in previous months. The Markit/CIPS UK PMI fell to 53.4 from 54.2, confounding expectations for a rise to 54.5 in a Reuters poll of economists. James Smith at ING noted the British PMI figure was still higher than the immediate post-Brexit dip, but forecast a tougher environment ahead. "We expect domestic demand to slow quite considerably next year as consumer spending gets hit by falling real wages and investment slows in response to post-Brexit uncertainty," he said. Britain's economy has performed much better than expected since the vote to quit the EU. But a bigger test will come next year when inflation is predicted to rise sharply, eating into house-



TOKYO: A monitor shows the current exchange rate between Japanese yen and US dollar, rear left, and between yen and euro, rear right, at a foreign exchange brokerage yesterday. — AP

holds' spending power that had just started to recover. Also consuming cash will be more expensive oil. Crude prices bubbled to a six-week high on Thursday after the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries agreed on Wednesday to cut output for the first time since 2008.

Asian tigers purring

There were stronger PMIs in China, Taiwan and Vietnam, and while activity in Japan's factories was still growing in November, the pace was slower. However, an uncertain outlook for global trade is worrying for Asia's export-driven economies. "We are still waiting very much to see what the Trump presidency will mean for things like trade policies and trade restrictions," Louis Kuijs, head of Asia economics at Oxford Economics, said.

Trump has declared his intention to withdraw from an Asia-Pacific free trade agreement once he is inaugurated on Jan. 20, and his protectionist comments while campaigning for the presidency could herald problems for Asia.

China's official PMI rose to 51.7 in November from 51.2. The index was stronger than economists polled by Reuters had expected and matched a level last seen in July 2014. But analysts noted a worrying lack of expansion in new export

orders for Chinese factories, suggesting the stronger headline number was a consequence of demand coming from its frothy property sector, which authorities are trying to cool.

The unofficial Caixin survey showed a more modest increase in activity, perhaps because it focuses on smaller firms which benefit less from government support for the economy. While growth in activity was slower in Japan, a sub-index for new orders, which measures both domestic and external demand, rose to a 10-month high. Elsewhere in Asia, the pace of growth in India's factory activity slowed, resulting in the biggest month-on-month decline in its PMI since March 2013. Analysts said the slowdown was probably due to a slump in demand after Prime Minister Narendra Modi ordered 500 and 1,000 rupee banknotes to be removed from circulation.

South Korean factories showed a fourth consecutive month of slowdown underlying a fragile recovery for Asia's fourth-biggest economy. In Malaysia, where the ringgit currency has fallen sharply due to capital outflows, the PMI fell to a five month low, hurt by falls in production and new orders. And in Australia, lower business investment has opened the possibility that the economy shrank last quarter for the first time in almost six years. — Reuters

GOLD HITS 10-MONTH LOW AFTER BIGGEST MONTHLY DROP IN 3 YEARS

LONDON: Gold fell to its lowest since February yesterday, extending losses after its biggest monthly decline in more than three years, as a surge in oil prices boosted bond yields, denting interest in non-yielding gold as an alternative investment. The precious metal fell more than 8 percent in November, hurt by a jump in the dollar and Treasury yields, and by expectations that the Federal Reserve is gearing up to lift interest rates for only the second time in a decade this month.

That led to hefty outflows from gold-backed exchange-traded funds, the largest of which, New York-listed SPDR Gold Shares, said its holdings fell nearly 60 tons in November, the most of any month since May 2013.

Spot gold was down 0.3 percent at

\$1,169.77 an ounce at 1230 GMT, off an earlier 10-month low of \$1,163.45. US gold futures for February delivery were down \$2.50 an ounce at \$1,171.40. "The key story for gold is still the combination of a stronger dollar and rising Treasury yields," Julius Baer analyst Carsten Menke said. "Either of the two is not really helping gold at the moment."

"We've seen outflows of around 5 million ounces (from ETFs) since the US election, and these are mainly from the US-listed products," he said. "There is a real rotation away from safe-haven investments, and towards pro-growth assets."

US bond yields have surged since Republican candidate Donald Trump's shock win in US presidential elections on Nov. 8, which led to speculation that his

commitment to infrastructure spending would spur growth and inflation.

That pushed the dollar sharply higher, with the US unit hitting its highest since 2003 last week. While it retreated on Thursday, it remains at highly elevated levels. Germany led euro zone government bond yields higher on Thursday as the first output cut by major oil producers since 2008 triggered an 8 percent surge in oil prices and boosted expectations of higher inflation.

Gold is highly sensitive to rising interest rates, as these increase the opportunity cost of holding non-yielding bullion. Silver was 0.9 percent lower at \$16.34 an ounce, while platinum was down 0.9 percent at \$903.25 after hitting its lowest since Feb. 8 at \$895 earlier in the session. — Reuters

3 UFC CHAMPIONS TRY TO FORM FIGHTERS ASSOCIATION

LOS ANGELES: Former champions Georges St Pierre, Cain Velasquez and TJ Dillashaw are taking on the UFC in an attempt to form a mixed martial arts fighters association. Current UFC fighters Donald "Cowboy" Cerrone and Tim Kennedy also announced their participation Wednesday in an organizing effort led by the five fighters and advised by Bjorn Rebney, the former CEO of Bellator.

The fighters hope to persuade the rest of the UFC's talent to join them in unified negotiation for a greater percentage of revenue from the UFC. The promotion was sold to the WME-IMG entertainment conglomerate earlier this year for roughly \$4 billion, an unprecedented price for a sports property.

"This is a different kind of fight," St Pierre said. "Even though you're afraid, it's time to step up and do the right thing. It's a fight (between) what is right and what is wrong, and we should never be afraid to stand for the virtues, to stand for what is right." The Mixed Martial Arts Athletes Association is the latest attempt to organize fighters in a famously individualistic sport into a collective bargaining unit. Kennedy, St Pierre and Rebney all spoke passionately about the need to level the playing field between the UFC and its fighters, who are independent contractors.

"These athletes are risking more for less than any professional athletes on earth," Rebney said. "They are paid pennies on the dollar." Rebney also described the UFC as "an egregious, predatory monopoly" and vowed to secure an unspecified set of benefits



QUEBEC CITY: In this Dec 13, 2013, file photo, UFC fighter Georges St Pierre gestures as he announces a pause in his fighting career during a news conference. — AP

for former UFC fighters as part of a settlement for the promotion's past revenue-sharing practices, in addition to improved conditions for current fighters.

Big stars

Other attempts at a fighters' organization in recent years have made little headway or are only in their initial stages, but St Pierre and Velasquez are the biggest stars to join an effort. St Pierre reigned as the UFC's welterweight champion and one of its top pay-per-view draws from 2007-13, while Velasquez has won the UFC heavy-

weight belt twice during an injury-plagued career.

St Pierre hasn't fought in three years, but has publicly claimed he is considering a comeback. He has become increasingly antagonistic toward the UFC during his retirement, even claiming to be a free agent earlier this year when he announced tentative plans to fight again. "I know agents will be threatened by UFC, and they'll try to convince their fighters that it's a bad idea to join us," St Pierre said. "I know, because I've been there before. I don't have to work another day in my life, but I want to change things for the right." —AP

RIVALS EXPECT TIGER WILL NEED PATIENCE

NASSAU, Bahamas: World top-10 rivals to Tiger Woods said Wednesday they expect the 14-time major winner needs time and patience before there's any chance he regains the form that made him a legend. Woods ends the longest layoff of his career after nearly 16 months in Thursday's opening round of the Hero World Challenge, an 18-player invitational featuring six top-10 players. Number eight Patrick Reed will tee off alongside US compatriot Woods at noon (1700 GMT).

"I'm really excited for golf to have Tiger back and to have that honor, it's going to be awesome. I'm looking forward to it. It should be fun," Reed said. "I still want to beat him. Tiger still wants to beat me. I want him to play well not only for the game of golf, I want him to play well for him. But at the same time you're out there trying to win a golf tournament."

The 72-hole showdown at 7,303-yard Albany Golf Club in the Bahamas is the first competitive event for Woods in 466 days, since finishing 10th at Greensboro in August 2015 and undergoing back surgery twice in the weeks that followed. "This is a perfect week for him to come back being fully healthy," two-time major winner Jordan Spieth said. "Less people are out there watching. He can play quickly. He's playing around a lot of people he knows on a place he's

familiar with." But fifth-ranked Spieth warned that Woods will not challenge for major titles instantly.

"I think he has accepted the fact he will be patient," Spieth said. "Like anybody that takes off a year and a half, you don't just come back and expect anything. It's going to take a little time. I just hope everyone gives him time. I hope he has the time to fall into a rhythm and just get enough tournaments where he can build up that."

Just the hope of seeing Woods on form again has created a buzz in the wealthy Caribbean enclave. "He's still just turning every head," Spieth said. "He's very excited, seems very confident. We all hope for many reasons that he comes back fully healthy and his game's fully back."

'See if you can YE Yang it'

One of those reasons is to do what South Korean Yang Yong-Eun did at the 2009 PGA Championship, outplaying Woods over the last 18 holes for a major crown. "It was a dream for all of us young guys to one day grow up and battle Tiger on a Sunday when he was playing his best," Spieth said. "And see if you can YE Yang it, see if you can pull off a shot where you can take him down."

Reigning British Open champion Henrik Stenson, the world number four from Sweden, said Woods, who turns 41

in a month, might never match the glory days of his 2000-2001 Tiger Slam. "I think it would be hard, where golf is at right now, to be as dominant as Tiger was even if Tiger were now to play as good as he did in 2000," Stenson said. "The main thing is that his back is in good shape and he's healthy."

If anybody can it's Tiger

Stenson, however, isn't ready to write off more magic from 898th-ranked Woods, whose 79 career PGA titles are three shy of Sam Snead's all-time record. "He has been out of competitiveness for quite some time so it might be a little while before you find your bearings again," Stenson said. "But he has done some remarkable things throughout his career and if there's someone that can jump right back up and play some great golf again, that would be him."

Third-ranked Dustin Johnson, the reigning US Open champion, won't rule out anything where Woods is concerned. "When he was at his peak, he was very impressive. Wouldn't surprise me if he got back to, I don't know about quite that caliber, but who knows," Johnson said. "He has been working very hard at it, so I expect him to play pretty well. Whether he'll win or not, that's a whole different feat. I predict he'll do pretty well." — AFP

MLB PLAYERS AND OWNERS REACH LABOR AGREEMENT

IRVING: Baseball players and owners reached a tentative agreement Wednesday on a five-year labor contract that will extend the sport's industrial peace to 26 years. After days of near round-the-clock talks, negotiators reached a verbal agreement about 3-1/2 hours before the expiration of the current pact. Then they worked to draft a memorandum of understanding, which must be ratified by both sides. "Happy it's done, and baseball is back on," Los Angeles Dodgers pitcher Brandon McCarthy said.

One key issue was the level of 'luxury tax' which is a tax paid by teams that exceed a set level of salary payments; effectively operating as a soft salary cap. As part of the new deal, the level at which the luxury tax kicks in rises from \$189 million this year to \$195 million next year, \$197 million in 2018, \$206 million in 2019, \$209 million in 2020 and \$210 million in 2021, a person familiar with the agreement told The Associated Press. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the deal had not yet been signed.

Teams that exceed those amounts must pay a percentage of the amount by which they go over. The rate will increase from the current 17.5 percent to 20 percent of excess payments for first offenders, remain at 30 percent for second offenders and rise from 40 percent to 50 percent for third offenders. There is a new surtax of 12 percent for teams \$20 million to \$40 million above the threshold, 42.5 percent for first offenders more than \$40 million above the threshold and 45 percent for subsequent offenders more than \$40 million above.

A player can receive a free-agent qualifying offer only once in his career and will have 10 days to consider it, instead of seven. A club signing a player who failed to accept a qualifying offer would lose its third-highest amateur draft pick if it is a revenue-sharing receiver, its second- and fifth-highest picks (plus a loss of \$1 million in its international draft pool) if it pays luxury tax for the just-ended season, and its second-highest pick (plus \$500,000 in the international draft pool) if it is any other team.

A club losing a free agent who declined a qualifying offer would receive an extra selection after the first round of the next draft if the player signed a contract for \$50 million or more and after the competitive balance B round if under \$50 million. However, if that team pays luxury tax, the extra draft pick would drop to after the fourth round.

Among other details

For a team \$40 million or more in excess of the luxury tax threshold, its highest selection in the next amateur draft will drop 10 places. There will not be an international draft of amateurs residing outside the US, Puerto Rico and Canada, but there will be a hard cap on each team's annual bonus pool for those players, starting at \$4.75 million for the signing period that starts next July 2.

There is no change to limits on active rosters, which remain at 25 for most of the season and 40 from Sept 1 on. The regular season will lengthen from 183 days to 187 starting in 2018, creating four more scheduled off days. There are additional limitations on the start time of night games on getaway days.

The minimum salary rises from \$507,500 to \$535,000 next year, \$545,000 in 2018 and \$555,000 in 2019, with cost-of-living increases the following two years; the minor league minimum for a player appearing on the 40-man roster for at least the second time goes up from \$82,700 to \$86,500 next year, \$88,000 in 2018 and \$89,500 in 2019, followed by cost-of-living raises.

As part of the drug agreement, there will be increased testing, players will not be credited with major league service time during suspensions, and biomarker testing for HGH will begin next year. Baseball had eight work stoppages from 1972-95, the last a 7 1/2-month strike in 1994-95 that led to the first cancellation of the World Series in 90 years. The 2002 agreement was reached after players authorized a strike and about 3 1/2 hours before the first game that would have been impacted by a walkout. — AP



COLOMBO: Sri Lankan cricketer Kasun Rajitha (R) speaks with former Pakistan cricketer Wasim Akram during his first coaching session at the Sinhalese Sports Club (SSC) grounds. — AFP

AKRAM SAYS SRI LANKA HAS PACE, NEEDS MORE SWING

COLOMBO: Legendary Pakistani paceman Wasim Akram said that Sri Lanka had a promising crop of fast bowlers despite their traditional reliance on spin after holding a coaching session with the islanders yesterday. After spending several hours with the national team's main established strike bowlers and promising youngsters, Akram said there was no lack of raw pace but they needed to develop their ability to swing the ball.

"Most of the bowlers had a pace of 130 to 140 kmph (kilometers per hour)," said Akram who himself bowled at a similar pace in his prime in the 1990s when he was one of the world's leading players in all formats. Akram, who is now 50, said slower wickets were a fact of life in South Asia, particularly in Sri Lanka whose most successful bowlers have been spinners, including the record-breaking Muttiah Muralitharan. But he said there was no reason why fast bowlers could not thrive on slower tracks as long as they had the right tricks up the sleeve.

"The idea is to teach them how to believe in themselves

and how to fox out the batsmen," he said after a coaching session at the Sinhalese Sports Club (SSC) grounds in Colombo. Akram was joined at the SCC by Sri Lankan legends Aravinda de Silva and Chaminda Vaas, both of whom had played against the Pakistan swing king. Vaas, a former seamer, was recently tasked with identifying fast bowling talent across the cricket-mad island.

Regarded as one of the best left-arm pacemen ever to grace the game, Akram took 414 Test wickets and 502 in 356 one-day internationals—both still a Pakistan record. Sri Lanka Cricket Chief Thilanga Sumathipala said they invited Akram to mentor local players in the next two years and visit the island at least twice a year. "We have invited him to be with us in the next two years as our consultant in pace bowling," said Sumathipala. Sri Lanka, who have just completed a clean sweep of Zimbabwe, are to embark on a tour of South Africa later this month where they will play three Tests, three T20 matches and five ODIs. — AFP

DAY-NIGHT ASHES UNDER DISCUSSION

SYDNEY: Discussions over whether Australia will host England in a first day-night Ashes cricket test next year are taking place but nothing has been decided yet, Cricket Australia (CA) said yesterday. England head Down Under next November for the 2017-18 series and local media reported on Thursday that the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) had agreed in principle to play one of the matches under lights. A CA spokesman, however, said there had not been an agreement yet and the tour itinerary was still being finalized, though a day-night test was part of the discussions.

"Ongoing scheduling of day-night tests in the Australian summer is a natural progression," the spokesman said. "The Ashes is a great contest and attracts huge audiences both at the ground and on television, but nothing has yet been confirmed for next summer." CA have hosted two day-night tests under lights over the last two seasons, both of which have been a commercial success with large numbers attending the matches against New Zealand and South Africa.

While both games were at the Adelaide Oval, making it favorite to host a day-night Ashes test, Brisbane's The Gabba will host its first pink-ball test later this month when Australia play Pakistan. England are to host their first

day-night test next August at Edgbaston against West Indies. Alastair Cook, the England captain, said earlier this year he was against playing an Ashes test under lights in comments echoed by Australian counterpart Steve Smith. Both felt the traditional rivalry, the oldest in world cricket, generated enough interest.

However, CA chief executive James Sutherland, a major proponent of pink-ball cricket, said the success of the two Adelaide Oval games indicated the desire for at least one day-night test. "The scheduling of day-night tests has been driven by a desire to make test cricket more accessible, so it is wonderful to see the format resonate with so many of our fans," Sutherland said after the South Africa game ended on Sunday.

Smith also told local media on Thursday he felt pink-ball cricket was here to stay, particularly given the way lessons learned from last year's match against New Zealand had been applied. The inaugural day-night test lasted just three days with the twilight drastically affecting the movement of the pink-ball, while batsmen also said they found it hard to see under lights. The match against South Africa lasted four days and an improved ball did not move around as much in the evening session, nor get scuffed up by the pitch. — Reuters

NZ COACH DECLINES AUSTRALIA TURMOIL

SYDNEY: New Zealand coach Mike Hesson declined to lay the boot into Australia yesterday after a demoralizing Test series defeat to South Africa, insisting their one-day team was a different beast. Australia head into the three-game limited-overs Chappell-Hadlee Trophy, starting Sunday in Sydney, on the back of that 2-1 series loss to the Proteas while New Zealand arrive fresh from a 2-0 Test sweep against Pakistan.

"I think their one-day side is a heck of a lot more settled than their Test side," said Hesson. "The one-day side has been incredibly consistent, bar the recent South Africa (one-day 5-0 whitewash) series. They've been very good for a number of years and are ranked number one in the world, so I don't think the unsettled nature of the Test side will lead into the one-day side." The New Zealanders could take the world number one ranking from the Aussies with a 3-0 series whitewash, but Hesson insisted that simply retaining the Chappell-Hadlee Trophy would be enough.

"We won the Chappell-Hadlee the last couple of times, it's really important for us," he said. "Australia are our big brothers and winning a bilateral series against them is important. If the by-product of that is an increase in the ranking, then great." One of their secret weapons to unsettle the Australian top order is expected to be express bowler Lockie Ferguson, one of two new faces in their squad along with spinner Todd Astle.

The 25-year-old Ferguson bowls consistently above 140 kilometers per hour and occasionally tops 150 kph which sets him apart from New Zealand's trade mark stable of medium-fast bowlers. "With Adam Milne missing, Lockie gives us a point of difference in our attack," Hesson said. — AFP



SYDNEY: New Zealand cricket coach Mike Hesson looks out over the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG) after a press conference ahead of their first one-day international match against Australia. — AFP

AZAM LIKE YOUNG KOHLI: PAK COACH

SYDNEY: Pakistan coach Mickey Arthur compared "young gun" Babar Azam to Virat Kohli yesterday, saying the 22-year-old reminded him of the India skipper at the same age. Batsman Azam has played only three Tests, narrowly missing out on a century in Pakistan's loss to New Zealand in Hamilton this week when he was left unbeaten on 90 as the side was bowled out.

In his 18 one-dayers, he has scored three centuries, all of which came in consecutive matches against the West Indies earlier this year. "He (Azam) is a young gun who will be an exceptional player," Arthur told Perth's 6PR radio ahead of Pakistan's sole warm-up match for their three-Test series against Australia. "I'll go so far as to say, at the same age, I reckon he's as good as Virat Kohli, which I know that's high praise but he's right up there."

Pakistan have resisted the temptation to change and retained the same 16-man squad for Australia that lost the recent series against New Zealand 2-0. For South African Arthur, it will be his first time facing Australia since he coached them over a two-year tenure that ended in June 2013. He said Pakistan were ready to fire against an Australia Test team coming off a demoralizing 2-1 series loss to South Africa and had learned a lot in New Zealand. — AFP

WESTBROOK TRIPLE-DOUBLE OVERPOWERS WIZARDS

OKLAHOMA CITY: Russell Westbrook scored 14 of his 35 points in overtime and posted his fourth consecutive triple-double to help the Oklahoma City Thunder defeat the Washington Wizards 126-115 on Wednesday night. Westbrook added 14 rebounds and 11 assists for his ninth triple-double this season and the 46th of his career. The Thunder have won all four games during his triple-double streak, and he heads into December averaging a triple-double through 20 games this season.

Former Thunder coach Scott Brooks returned as Washington's coach, and the Oklahoma City crowd greeted him warmly. Brooks coached the Thunder for seven years and led them to the Western Conference Finals three times and the NBA Finals once. Bradley Beal scored 31 points, John Wall had 15 points and 15 assists, and Marcin Gortat added 12 points and 11 rebounds for the Wizards, who had won three of four.

KNICKS 106, TIMBERWOLVES 104

Kristaps Porzingis had 29 points and eight rebounds in a thrilling duel with Karl-Anthony Towns, helping New York beat Minnesota. Carmelo Anthony capped a quiet night with a game-winning 18-footer over Andrew Wiggins with 2.3 seconds to play, helping the Knicks avoid what would have been an epic collapse in the fourth quarter. Towns had a career-high 47 points and 18 rebounds for the Wolves, who tied the game in the final minute after trailing by 17 with 7:30 to play. But Porzingis threw Gorgui Dieng aside for a putback slam and Anthony tipped the inbound pass on Minnesota's final possession to thwart the comeback.

LAKERS 96, BULLS 90

Julius Randle made a strong move against Nikola Mirotic for a tiebreaking layup with 45.1 seconds left, and Los Angeles held off Chicago for a gritty victory. Randle had 13 points and matched a career high with 20 rebounds as Los Angeles bounced back from an ugly 105-88 loss at New Orleans on Tuesday night. Lou Williams and Jordan Clarkson scored 18 points apiece, and Larry Nance Jr. finished with 12 points and 11 boards. Randle's drive and layup gave Los Angeles a 92-90 lead. After Jimmy Butler missed on the other side for Chicago, Williams went 1 for 2 at the line with 20 seconds to go.

SPURS 94, MAVERICKS 87

Patty Mills scored 15 of his team-high 23 points in the fourth quarter and Kawhi Leonard added 21 points, helping San Antonio rally over Dallas. San Antonio became just the third team to start the season 11-0 on the road, following last year's Warriors (14-0) and the 1969-70 Knicks (12-0). Wesley Matthews had a season-high 26 points for the Mavericks, and Harrison Barnes added 17. Dallas had a 60-47 lead in the third quarter after a 13-0 run in which the Spurs went 13 consecutive possessions and nearly seven minutes without a point. The Mavericks still led by eight with seven minutes to play, but Mills hit his first of three huge 3s in the quarter to start an 11-2 run.

RAPTORS 120, GRIZZLIES 105

Kyle Lowry had 29 points and eight assists, DeMar DeRozan scored 24 points and Toronto ended Memphis' six-game road winning streak. Cory Joseph added 16 points off the bench for the Raptors, who defeated Memphis for the third straight time and for the sixth time in their last seven meetings. It was the fourth straight victory overall for the



OKLAHOMA: Oklahoma City Thunder guard Russell Westbrook (0) goes up for a shot in front of Washington Wizards forward Kelly Oubre Jr (12) during the second half of an NBA basketball game. —AP

Raptors, their longest winning streak of the season. Andrew Harrison had 21 points and Troy Daniels added 19 off the bench for the injury-riddled Grizzlies, who were missing six regulars. Among the absent is star Mike Conley, who was ruled out for at least six weeks Tuesday with fractured vertebrae in his lower back.

PISTONS 121, CELTICS 114

Kentavious Caldwell-Pope scored 25 points and Tobias Harris had 21 to lead balanced scoring that carried Detroit over Boston. Andre Drummond added 20 points and 17 rebounds, one night after he was ejected in the second quarter of a victory at Charlotte for a flagrant-2 foul. Isaiah Thomas paced the Celtics with 27 points, and Kelly Olynyk scored a season-high 19. Boston had won five of seven. Marcus Morris had 20 points and Ish Smith 19 for the Pistons, who had lost eight of their first nine road games before winning away from home on consecutive nights.

HEAT 106, NUGGETS 98

Hassan Whiteside had another big game with 25 points, 16 rebounds and four blocks to lift Miami over Denver. Wayne Ellington scored 22 points and Tyler Johnson had 18 points and seven assists for Miami in his

return after missing one game. Goran Dragic had 16 points and seven assists for the Heat, who have more wins on the road (four) than at home (two). Nikola Jokic had 17 points and 14 rebounds off the bench for Denver, outscored 31-18 in the fourth quarter. Miami went on an 11-0 run early in the fourth to take the lead for good. Ellington hit four 3-pointers in the period and his last one put the Heat up 10 with 2:25 left.

TRAIL BLAZERS 131, PACERS 109

Damian Lillard had 28 points and 10 assists to help Portland beat Indiana and former coach Nate McMillan. Maurice Harkless added 23 points for the Trail Blazers, who led by as many as 28 in their fifth consecutive victory over the Pacers. Portland had lost six of eight overall. Jeff Teague led Indiana with 25 points, while Myles Turner had 19 points and 10 rebounds. It was the first of a five-game road swing for the Pacers, who had won two straight. They were without All-Star Paul George for the third consecutive game and seventh overall due to a sore left ankle.

SUNS 109, HAWKS 107

Brandon Knight scored 23 points off the bench and Phoenix reserves combined for 54 as the Suns held off slumping Atlanta thanks

to a key fourth-quarter run. Eric Bledsoe's bank shot with 28.4 seconds left gave the Suns a 104-99 lead and all but sealed Atlanta's fourth consecutive defeat. Jared Dudley and P.J. Tucker added 17 points apiece for the Suns, who had lost four of five. Leandro Barbosa made baskets on three straight possessions midway through the fourth quarter to give Phoenix an 89-84 advantage, part of an 11-0 run. The Hawks cut it to 96-95 with 2:50 to play on Thabo Sefolosha's 17-footer, but the Suns held on. Dennis Schroder scored 14 of his 31 points in the fourth.

76ERS, KINGS, PPD

A scheduled game between Sacramento and Philadelphia was postponed by the NBA because of condensation on the court at the Wells Fargo Center. The game, which was slated to start at 7 p.m., was called off at 8:03 p.m. A makeup date was not immediately announced. The Philadelphia Flyers hosted an NHL game at the arena Tuesday night and the ice surface remained under the basketball court - standard procedure at the Wells Fargo Center. However, Wednesday was an unseasonably warm, humid day for late November in Philadelphia, and it likely affected the surface. — AP

FA'S CREDIBILITY AT STAKE OVER ABUSE

LONDON: Accusations that abuse by coaches was covered up have rocked English football, damaging the multi-billion pound sport's image and earning it comparisons with scandals in the Catholic Church and the BBC. Over 20 victims have come forward since the floodgates were opened when Andy Woodward spoke out to The Guardian and there is growing incredulity that English football's governing body the Football Association (FA) was unaware of the rumours and claims the abuse was going on.

British lawmaker Damian Collins, chairman of the influential Culture Media and Sports Parliamentary Committee, told AFP that there was a culture of avoiding the problem at the FA and the clubs. "A picture is building up of people in football not having addressed the abuse and also may have turned their gaze away from it," he told AFP. Giving credence to his view is the fact the FA dismissed with a terse "no comment" claims made by Ian Ackley about the abuse he had suffered at the hands of serial offender and youth coach Barry Bennell in a Channel Four documentary in 1997.

Such disdainful treatment of victims and also whistleblowers is of concern to Collins. "Abuse is an incredibly serious problem and my concern is how does a victim or a whistleblower report it?" said the 42-year-old. "Because often they are met with a response of 'do you have documentary evidence' and if you don't you're told you better keep your mouth shut."

Greg Clarke, the recently elected chairman of the FA, which has launched its own inquiry headed up by an eminent lawyer, does not believe there has been a cover-up but has conceded that a blind eye might have been turned to the stories of abuse. "I think the moral consequences of failing to deal with some of these issues in the past we must get to the bottom of," Clarke said on Tuesday.

Broader picture

However, with revelations emerging on a daily basis the FA's image is taking a pounding. The BBC revealed on Wednesday the FA scrapped a review into its Child Protection Program two years into its existence in 2003 and the journalist who made the 1997 Channel Four documentary insists there is a 2005 FA report lying gathering dust which has 250 names of abused under-age footballers on it.

Collins for his part said that if he and his committee are not satisfied by the reference points set by the FA for their inquiry then they will summon Clarke in the new year to appear before them. "I am concerned the inquiry by the FA will be too narrowly focused on the claims themselves and not on the broader picture," said Collins.

"I am worried the clubs will end up doing their own housework and it won't look at the broader cultural issues of how people got away with the abuse and will avoid posing difficult and pertinent questions." The FA are treading a well-trodden path taken in recent years by previously revered pillars or bedrocks of the establishment.

The Catholic Church has been rocked by thousands of reports of sexual abuse by priests and accusations of cover-ups by senior clergy, starting in the Boston archdiocese in the United States in 2002. Pope Francis last year offered a surprise public apology for pedophile scandals dating back decades and was praised for meeting with survivors in Rome and in Philadelphia during a visit to the US. But he has come under severe criticism for failing to punish guilty clerics and end a culture of complacency over internal abuse investigations.

In Britain, the BBC was the focus of an inquiry earlier this year that reported a culture of "fear" around whistle blowing that helped late presenter Jimmy Savile hide his crimes for decades. The report found Savile had abused 72 people—nearly half aged under 16 in studios, dressing rooms, lifts and canteens between 1959 and 2006. His youngest victim was aged just eight. Ackley said he hoped for one outcome above all else at the end of the inquiry. "Finally someone in authority might say 'yes, we were at fault. We are accountable,'" Ackley told The Times. — AFP



TORONTO: Benoit Cheyrou #8 of Toronto FC celebrates a goal with teammates during the second half of the MLS Eastern Conference Final, Leg 2 game against Montreal Impact at BMO Field. — AFP

TORONTO DOWN MONTREAL TO REACH MLS CUP FINAL

TORONTO: Toronto FC became the first Canadian club to reach Major League Soccer's championship game here Wednesday after overpowering Montreal Impact 5-2 in a seven-goal thriller after extra-time. Toronto, who had trailed 3-0 in last week's first leg in Montreal before recovering to score two crucial away goals, will now host the Seattle Sounders in the MLS Cup final on December 10.

A pulsating duel at a rainswept BMO Field was effectively settled in the first half of extra-time, when goals from Benoit Cheyrou and Tosaint Ricketts put Toronto 5-2 ahead on the night, 7-5 on aggregate. "It was a crazy match. The score line alone at 5-2 in a conference final was amazing," said Ricketts, a Canadian international who joined Toronto in July.

"I'm so proud of the guys. We battled back many times in the game and showed so much character. It was a very special moment for all of us."

The defeat marked the final chapter of Didier Drogba's MLS career. The former Chelsea and Ivory Coast star is leaving Montreal in the close season. The extra-time drama came after an action-packed 90 minutes which saw Montreal take a 1-0 lead — 4-2 on aggregate—with a swift counter-attacking goal midway through the first half. Patrice Bernier outmuscled Toronto's US international captain Michael Bradley near halfway and quickly released Matteo Mancosu, who in turn picked out Dominic Odoro.

The veteran Ghanaian striker darted into the box and tucked away a low finish past Clint Irwin. Toronto, however, were handed a lifeline on 37 minutes when a Sebastian Giovinco corner was met with a powerful header by Nick Hagglund. Hernan Bernadello cleared off the line but only as far as Armando

Cooper who lashed home the rebound. Cooper might have had a penalty moments later, when he rounded Montreal goalkeeper Evan Bush. But instead of going to ground Cooper stayed on his feet and penalty appeals were waved away by referee Jair Marrufo.

'All for the fans'

On the stroke of half-time, though, Toronto took the lead, and again it came from a setpiece, Giovinco curling an outswinging corner to the near post where an unmarked Jozy Altidore glanced in a firm header. "It's fantastic," Altidore said of Toronto's run to the title match—a first for a club that until this year had never notched a playoff win in

its 10-year existence. "It's all for the fans. They've suffered a long time. After the type of season we've had this year, hopefully we can give them one more celebration."

The momentum appeared to be firmly with Toronto but within eight minutes of the restart, Montreal were back in front on aggregate when Ignacio Piatti bundled in a scruffy low finish to make it 2-2 on the night. Once again Toronto responded with a setpiece goal. A quick freekick allowed Justin Morrow to escape to the byline and the fullback's cross picked out Hagglund whose thumping header beat the diving Bush to make it 3-2 and 5-5 on aggregate, ultimately sending the tie into extra-time. — AFP

KANE SIGNS NEW DEAL UNTIL 2022

LONDON: England striker Harry Kane has become the latest star to commit his future to Tottenham Hotspur, signing a new contract at the Premier League club until 2022. The deal replaces the five-year contract he signed in February 2015 and will reportedly earn the 23-year-old captain £80,000 (\$101,000) a week.

"It's amazing. Everyone knows how much I love this team and what I feel for this club," Kane, who finished top scorer in the Premier League last season with 25 goals and has hit the net five times already this term, told Tottenham's website yesterday. "To sign another contract is a special feel-

ing. We've got a great, young squad and the club is moving in the right direction." After coming through Tottenham's academy, Kane made his debut in 2011 but it was towards the end of the 2013-14 campaign that he first made an impact. The following season he scored 21 goals in the league and he now has 70 for Spurs in 137 appearances. Kane has only recently returned from a seven-week absence with an ankle injury but has scored four goals in his last four matches. Kyle Walker, Christian Eriksen, Eric Dier, Danny Rose and Dele Alli have all extended their deals at Spurs. — AFP

NICE IN POLE AS 100 GOALS CAVANI KEEPS PSG IN HUNT

PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain hotshot Edinson Cavani bagged his 100th goal for the club in a 2-0 win over Angers on Wednesday to keep the reigning Ligue 1 champions on the heels of leaders Nice. Cavani scored from the spot, adding to Thiago Silva's opener to round off a win for the Parisians, who trail Nice by a solitary point after the Cote d'Azur table-toppers handed Guingamp a first home defeat.

Uruguayan Cavani's big moment came after Hatem Ben Arfa strode forward on a mazy run only to be brought down by Romain Thomas. The goal machine, having made it 19 goals in 18 matches so far this season, promptly earned a booking for taking off his shirt to reveal a T-shirt slogan paying homage to Brazilian side Chapecoense, the club decimated by an air crash in Colombia.

Cavani joined PSG from Napoli in 2013 for a French record fee of 64 million euros (\$67.8m) and now is the club's fourth top goalscorer—now just one adrift of Dominique Rocheteau. Out in front with 156 is Zlatan Ibrahimovic, who left for Manchester United last summer.

"It was a very important match, for the three points, for the table because we were at home and it was important to be strong for the fans," said PSG coach Unai Emery. "Against a very defensively compact team, we put in a solid performance." Moroccan Younes Belhanda bagged the only goal for Nice, this season's surprise package, in the fifth minute with a sumptuous strike from the edge of the box. Nice won in the absence of the injured Mario Balotelli, who has a calf problem. The southerners badly missed Balotelli in their weekend draw with Bastia but on loan Dynamo Kiev star Belhanda's effort was enough to drag them over the line, to the relief of coach Lucien Favre.

'Very tough'

"We knew it would be tough to take the points here," said Favre. "Having got the first goal we didn't manage to get to 2-0. If you don't then you have to hold on to what you have and we did that. "Everyone must pull together. There is a fine margin between success and failure." Nice will meet PSG just before the Christmas break and Favre said that encounter would be crucial—albeit they are not looking that far ahead.

"If we take the three points in that one then all well and good. (But) beforehand we have Toulouse, who are a tough opponent. May I remind you they are the only side to have beaten both Paris SG and Monaco, so that will be a big match." Monaco, through at the expense of Tottenham to the last 16 of the Champions League, are third, three points off the pace, following their 1-1 draw Tuesday at Dijon.

Lyon stormed into fourth place albeit eight points behind Monaco, with a crushing 6-0 win at hapless Nantes, the eight-times champions, who suffered their worst top flight home reverse. Nantes are second bottom and staring the drop in the face after an eighth league defeat in 15 games left only Lorient below them. Nantes coach Rene Girard is hanging onto his job after the Canaries were outclassed with Lyon scoring at will through Corentin Tolisso, an Alex Lacazette penalty, Maxime Gonalons, Mathieu Valbuena, Mouctar Diakhaby and Nabil Fekir. Marseille stay in midtable after a goalless draw at Saint Etienne in a battle of fallen giants while Bordeaux drew 1-1 at Bastia, enough to stay in fifth spot ahead of Rennes on goal difference. — AFP



PARIS: PSG's Thiago Silva, left, Lucas, center, wears the Brazilian National flag in memory of the soccer team Chapecoense who died in a plane crash and Jese Rodriguez acknowledges applause after defeating Angers 2-0 during a French League One at Parc des Princes stadium. — AP



MANCHESTER: Manchester United's Anthony Martial, centre, celebrates after scoring his sides 3rd goal and his second of the game during the English League Cup quarterfinal soccer match between Manchester United and West Ham United at Old Trafford. — AP

IBRA, MARTIAL SEE MAN UNITED THROUGH, ARSENAL CRASH OUT

MANCHESTER: Zlatan Ibrahimovic and Anthony Martial scored twice as Manchester United crushed West Ham United 4-1 in the League Cup quarterfinals on Wednesday, while Arsenal were humbled by Southampton.

United manager Jose Mourinho served a one-game touchline ban after his dismissal for kicking a water bottle during Sunday's 1-1 Premier League draw against West Ham, but his absence had no ill-effects. Ibrahimovic put United ahead in the second minute and although Ashley Fletcher equalised, Martial's second-half brace restored the hosts' control before the Swede added a fourth goal in added time. "After the West Ham goal we had 10 minutes where we felt it deeply. West Ham's first shot, they equalise," said Mourinho, who has overseen United's worst start to a top-flight season since 1989.

"But in the second half we got the confidence to play and play beautiful, attacking football. "Goals plus performance means the real happiness." United will play Hull City in the two-legged semi-finals, while Southampton's reward for winning 2-0 at the Emirates Stadium was a last-four encounter with Jurgen Klopp's Liverpool.

The game at Old Trafford notably saw Bastian Schweinsteiger make his first appearance of the season for United as a late substitute. The former Germany captain has only recently returned to the first-team

squad after being frozen out by Mourinho and received a huge ovation as he came on.

West Ham had needed less than two minutes to take the lead in Sunday's game, but on this occasion United were the early birds. Wayne Rooney's clever reverse pass picked out the advancing Henrikh Mkhitaryan and the Armenian's alert back-heel freed Ibrahimovic to lift the ball past West Ham goalkeeper Adrian.

West Ham leveled in the 35th minute with a bolt from the blue as David de Gea spilled Dimitri Payet's shot and former United youngster Fletcher tucked in his first senior goal in front of the Stretford End. Fortunately for United, they started the second half as sharply as they had attacked the first, a move down the right culminating in Mkhitaryan squaring for Martial to sweep home.

Rooney ban

West Ham's cause was not helped by the fact they lost both wing-backs, Aaron Cresswell and Michail Antonio to injury, and in the 62nd minute they found themselves 3-1 down. Ibrahimovic was the architect with a fine pass down the inside-right channel for Antonio Valencia, whose cross was tapped in by Martial. Ibrahimovic doubled his tally in the 93rd minute, slotting in Ander Herrera's low cross from the left. The only source of regret for United was a booking for Rooney

that rules him out of Sunday's trip to Everton, nixing his hopes of scoring a club record-equaling 249th goal against his old side.

Arsenal manager Arsene Wenger had been hoping to win the competition for the first time, but instead his decision to make 10 changes backfired as Southampton ended his side's 19-game unbeaten run. Dutch midfielder Jordy Clasie's blistering drive put Southampton ahead in the 13th minute.

England left-back Ryan Bertrand added a second seven minutes before half-time, gathering Sofiane Boufal's pass and rifling a shot into the bottom corner. "I enjoy this win for all of the squad and for the fans, because it's a good answer to keep all of our possibilities in every competition," said Southampton manager Claude Puel.

"We played a very good game and to qualify for the next round is very important. We now get to play in a semi-final and that's great for the players." Mohamed Elneny was the only player to have kept his place from Arsenal's 3-1 win over Bournemouth on Sunday, but he succumbed to illness before half-time and was replaced by Granit Xhaka. It was Arsenal's first defeat since a 4-3 loss at home to Liverpool on the opening weekend of the Premier League season. "We didn't have enough urgency in the first half," said Wenger. "We were weak in some departments and we paid for that." — AFP



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