

FREE

Kuwait Times Friday Times



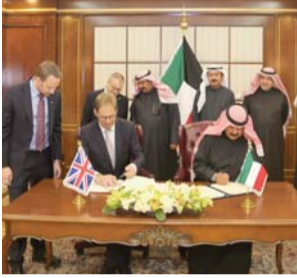
Min 04°
Max 16°

www.kuwaittimes.net

NO: 17082 - FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2016

**Speaker hails
Kuwait-Britain
extradition pact**

9



**Hundreds leave
Aleppo under rebel
withdrawal deal**

12



**Real Madrid
advances to Club
World Cup final**

46



Forty days of winter

See Pages 4 & 5

Children play in the desert
under the cool winter sun.
— Photo by Athoob Al-Shuaibi



Local Spotlight

SALUTE TO INDIANS



By Muna Al-Fuzai

muna@kuwaittimes.net

I am not an Indian, but I wish I was one. This article salutes all Indians around the globe, and especially those in Kuwait. Despite being the most hardworking and intelligent community that knows the best way to live and even survive under all kinds of pressures, I'm sorry to say that they don't receive the appreciation they deserve.

I don't mean to sound racist, but the truth is that some Arabs and Kuwaitis mock Indians' way of thinking or their behavior. I would say that old Indian movies are to blame, over the way they used to write the script, combining all drama elements in one film. With an Indian movie, you know in advance that you will see all types of action: drama, comedy, tragedy and sometimes even horror!

These old movies exaggerated the unbelievable action scenes, where two or three cars fly in the sky and one man can beat a group of men with one touch, etc. It is funny, but made some of us wonder what mind could think like that. These scenes have harmed the general image of Indians, and those who have never been to India believe such things. This is ancient history now and Indian film productions have transformed and developed tremendously in the last 10 years. So please people - stop mocking Indians!

Before making fun of any Indians, please remember that India has the 10th most powerful army in the world.

These scenes have harmed the general image of Indians, and those who have never been to India believe such things.

An Indian created Hotmail, while the heads of Google, Microsoft and MasterCard are of Indian origin. India has more wealthy people than the entire Arab world. Since ancient times, India was and still is a huge source of many contributions, including manpower and of course technology. They are the best technicians and field operators.

I have seen many Arabs making fun of Indians, but I haven't seen the same by other people, like Europeans. The reason goes back to their background and what they learned at home, school and their societies about respecting human rights and rejecting discrimination against others based on origin or race. Here, including our local children, don't receive any kind of lessons about these issues, and because of the existence of a large number of maids in their houses, they assume that Indians are born to serve, which is a compete lie and undermines the status of a great nation like India.

Indians have adopted a great value called tolerance. In India, there are approximately 180 different ethnicities and religions, and they have accepted each other as they are. This is something we need to learn more here. However, some here are still making fun of Indians. We argue about Sunnis and Shiites and start bloody wars just to make a point!

One wants to be Indian to know what they know and get the ability to bear stress. When Kuwait was poor, old Kuwaitis traveled to India and learned a lot from the Indians about spices, perfumes and fabrics. This is what history says, and it never lies. We have Indians who have been in Kuwait before I was born, and never asked for citizenship or privileges.

For all these reasons, I wish I were Indian...

PHOTO OF THE DAY



KUWAIT: French macarons, like these shown here for sale at a shop in the Avenues, are widely popular in Kuwait and often served at parties, gatherings and other social events. They are sweet meringue type of cookies traditionally made with almond powder or ground almonds, egg whites, icing sugar and filled with ganache, butter cream or jam. — Photo by Jamie Etheridge

IN MY VIEW

ALEPPO AGAIN AND AGAIN (AND AGAIN)



By Nejouad Al-Yagout

local@kuwaittimes.net

There always seems to be a new genocide, another invasion, a war, a terrorist attack. Those of us without power watch, with broken hearts, and donate money to sites without a guarantee that the money will reach the intended parties.

We pray, we hold vigils, we send messages on social media, because our helplessness has become a burden, a crucible too painful to carry around in our minds. And today, we watch with horror as Syria is the new target of our collective insanity. The killing will not stop until we stop believing that we are different to anyone else. What is happening in Aleppo can happen to any of us at any moment at any given place. Life is cyclical and our anger cannot remain confined to one space. And on the glorious day that Aleppo is finally freed, yet another genocide in yet another part of the world will shatter us to our core.

Only when we realize we have been duped - or have duped ourselves - into believing we are different, can we awaken and realize that we are the ones perpetuating divisiveness. Patriotism is the enemy, any belief system that says you are above your fellow brothers and sisters is the enemy, any matrix that places the powerful above the rest is the enemy. Though our systems are appalling, we are all to blame, because we have accepted these systems blindly. At school, we learn about polarities before we can count: males and females, bullies and victims, rich and poor, popular and ostracized, jocks and nerds, ugly and beautiful. Immediately, we are catapulted into a world where we feel superior or inferior, depending on where we live, how we look and, in many cases, our heritage. We are taught - unconsciously - that we are different. Then, at work, in our families, our social lives, we swim in oceans of hierarchies, desperately trying to reach the shore of non-duality, when the oneness silently speaks to us from our hearts. Still, we ignore our inner voice and waltz away from the stillness of our soul, embracing a paradigm that prepares us to either reign or be defeated. And being on auto-pilot, we blame others for all the aggression around us, when the key to freedom is a mere lack-of-thought away.

And so, the killing will not stop until our system dissolves and we rise again like phoenixes from the ashes. In the mean-

time, I will never stop praying, but my prayers have changed. They are now intimate, personal, sporadic and my prayer is: Help me ascend from fear into love. Help us all ascend.

I can no longer pray just for Muslims as I have been taught, nor can I pledge allegiance just to my country, as I have been taught. My love is too expansive. My soul knows that I was born a Kuwaiti and into Islam, but love is beyond all labels. I am beyond all these labels. I am here on this planet, navigating unknown terrain, and until we all find a way to dissolve this madness, I will try my best to love with a force that surpasses you and me.

And so, I ask us: If any part of us is involved in a clique-like ideology that claims the Divine loves us more, or a system where wealth defines our status, I ask, nay I beg us all, myself included, to free ourselves from these chains of polarization for the sake of all sentient beings.

One by one, we must let go and awaken from this nightmare we have all created. It may be the scariest thing we ever do, but it begins in our thoughts. I beg you. I beg myself. I beg us to no longer walk around on auto-pilot. The belief that we are separate from each other is what has kept divisiveness alive and what makes us feel entitled to rape, to kill, to subjugate the wayward. The belief we are separate has made us gender-biased and has given birth to words such as minorities, homosexuals, immigrants, refugees. How dare we call others minorities! How dare we define another person by who they are attracted to or who they love! And the only reason we have immigrants and refugees is because we have created borders, while Earth has so generously given us land to roam freely, sharing her fruits and resources will all, regardless. Can we learn from Earth? There were no borders. There were no price tags on fruits and vegetables. There were no signs of trespassing. There were no bodies of water that were named after countries, and no countries named after individuals. Can a line really divide us? Are we so insane, so naïve, that we have forgotten that borders and labels have nothing to do with who we are, in essence?

I invite us all to remember that beneath it all, there is a life-force that has no religion, no race, no gender and it does not discriminate between humans and animals, the tangible and the immaterial, nature and the vast expanse. Until then, we can keep donating, keep holding vigils and sending care packages, in the hope that these noble inclinations will propel us toward transcendence. But we must prepare ourselves to face more anxiety, feel more pain and suffer on the sidelines helplessly as we watch our world experience one trauma after another. Viva l'awakening!

Nejouad Al Yagout - Photo by Djinane Alsuwayeh

HCA

International Hospitals

THE HARLEY STREET CLINIC

THE LISTER HOSPITAL
Chelsea


London Bridge Hospital


The Portland Hospital
for Women and Children


THE PRINCESS GRACE
HOSPITAL


The Wellington Hospital

HCA NHS ventures


Leaders in Oncology Care


SCRI
Sarah Cannon Research Institute
United Kingdom

HCA is an
American
company
providing
world-class
private
hospital care
in London

Tel: +44 (0)20 7034 8564

Internationalreferrals@hcahealthcare.co.uk

www.hcainternational.com

HCA Hospitals

World-Class Healthcare



Forty Days of WINTER

Seasonal food sweep dining and coffee tables. Chestnuts are among the most popular winter fruits. Truffles aren't called the White Gold for nothing.

Photos and Story by Athoob Al-Shuaibi

The coldest time of the year in Kuwait is between the second week of December to mid-January. Forty days of winter, which is locally called "Al-Marba'aniya". The weather after that, gradually changes to moderate. There aren't many natural features for winter in Kuwait. Some areas may witness early morning frost that soon wears away. No snow. No frozen lakes or springs. But there are many events and activities people do only in the winter and usually outdoors.



Women wait impatiently for the few precious days of the year when they can don their favorite pair of knee high boots. They may also don wellies, heavy jackets or coats and heavy shawls. Most parents would overprotect their children hiding their little bodies under layers of clothes to protect them from flu and cold that become widely spread during the season. Men of course pull out the darker colored dishdashas. As much as



Kuwaitis express their longing for the freezing nights, they quickly hide at home or by wearing heavy clothes so they don't experience it.

At the same time, there are those who are keen to enjoy the few days of winter with their family and friends. They buy grills, portable stoves and external heaters for BBQs and outdoor home cinema nights. Thousands of people start camping and picnicking in the desert until spring. However, some of them still prefer to picnic at Mishref area, off the Sixth Ring Road, despite the fact that it's located just a few kilometers from their homes. This area has a great stature to Kuwaitis who lived the period of camping at "Bar Mishref" before it became inhabited in the eighties.



Seasonal food sweep dining and coffee tables. Chestnuts are among the most popular fruits. Beside so, people impatiently wait for winter to have the luxury of eating the desert fungus, Truffles. They aren't called the White Gold for nothing. They're also relatively expensive and hard to find. Truffles are sold at "Souq Al-Faqa'a", at a seasonal market behind the famous Friday Market at Al-Rai area. The vendors bring it from various Arab lands.

Changes in the daily routine during winter aren't many, however, small things make the winter scene more comprehensive. People would take longer walks to their cars, there are an increasing number of morning joggers, school children can now enjoy field trips near the seashore of Kuwait, and a lot of men workers have their siestas on street benches at Mubarakiya market that thrives in winter when thousands of Gulfie tourists pilgrimage to Kuwait.

As a matter of fact, winter is the season of all sorts of activities, such as, cultural, musical, and sports, that suits all ages. Children of Kuwait have the lion's share of those activities. Every week, a musical or an artistic event is held together with a pop up market. Thus, there's no alibi for those who complain throughout the summer months of tedium. Even inviting friends over a BBQ is enough to expel the ghost of boredom from your life.





FAKE CHARITIES & PHONE CALLS

By Nawara Fattahova

Donate one dinar for printing a copy of the Holy Quran. We will send the mandoub to your place to collect the donation. These copies will be distributed to Muslims living in poor countries," says an Arab woman who randomly calls people, which can be very annoying, especially when these calls become frequent. Some people believe in the calls and donate, while others find it a scam.

Mazen, 55, sincerely believes in charity. When he was called, he immediately agreed and gave the charity his address. "The mandoub sent by the charity arrived on time and I gave him a larger donation than what was asked for, since it wasn't reasonable for him to come for only KD 1. The mandoub gave me a receipt for my payment. Two days later, I got another call - I wasn't sure if she was the same woman or someone else. She also asked me if I wanted to donate for printing copies of the Holy Quran. I told her about my recent donation, so she thanked me and claimed she was from a different charity," Mazen told Kuwait Times.

Mazen complained about the repeated calls he gets asking for donations. "I even

apologized for not donating this month, but they keep calling me. I don't know if they are real or fake. I just do it as a good deed."

Thousands invited to donate

Mazen isn't the only one getting these calls. Thousands of people in Kuwait are contacted by similar callers asking for nominal donations. Saleh, 33, likes to donate, but is more mindful.

"One of the most recent calls was from an Arab woman calling from a charity, asking me to donate for printing copies of the Holy Quran. I told her I have 100 copies of the Quran that I would like to donate to the poor, but she hesitated, saying she didn't have drivers available to take them from me. I was surprised, as their charity is supposed to print thousands of copies and deliver it inside and outside Kuwait," he pointed out.

"I then offered to send the copies with my driver, and asked her for the charity's address. She hesitated again, and said she will ask her boss and call me back. It's been almost a year now, but she never returned the call," said Saleh.

He also recalled another call he received from abroad.

"A man called me from a North African Arab country claiming he was an imam of a mosque and knew the entire Holy Quran by heart. He was seeking donations to teach the Quran to poor students. So I asked him to recite verses from a short and popular Surah of the Quran, but he started talking about something else while he searched on Google for a few minutes, then offered to recite them. So I changed the verses, so he again tried delaying tactics while searching online, which proved he was a liar," stressed Saleh.

So how can people know if a charity is genuine or registered at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MSAL)? Fatma Al-Fadhli, PR Officer at MSAL, said a person who is asked for donations from any charity should take the name of the charity and verify it by calling MSAL to confirm whether it is registered.

"People can also demand the declaration certificate from the mandoub who comes to collect the donation. The donor also has the right to ask for documents proving where the previous donations were spent or where the future donations will be spent," she told Kuwait Times.

What if the charity is fake and is illegally fleeing people? "In this case, MSAL will trans-

What if the charity is fake and is illegally fleeing people? "In this case, MSAL will transfer the case to the interior ministry to take legal action against the fake or illegal charity."

fer the case to the interior ministry to take legal action against the fake or illegal charity, as it is violating the law, according to the Kuwaiti penal code. Since MSAL is in charge, it is our responsibility to supervise and monitor charities, issue licenses or give approval for collecting donations, as well as penalize those collecting donations without approval," added Fadhli.

People can complain or ask for information on the MSAL hotline 51218688 or landline 22484733.



KUWAIT: Photos show raids by security forces and the Municipality in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh yesterday.

SECURITY, MUNICIPAL RAIDS IN JLEEB

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

KUWAIT: A security campaign was held in Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh and details of 3,500 persons were checked. Police arrested 185 people without IDs, 12 absconders, 20 wanted on civil cases, 49 as their residencies were expired, two wanted for felonies, nine for indecent acts, nine for drunkenness and one person who was banned from entering the country. The campaign also resulted in issuing 200 traffic citations, 35 vehicles were impounded and 45 license plates were withdrawn. Separately, the Municipality's public relations department said its roaming vendors' team carried out an inspection campaign in Jleeb to clear several street markets. The raid was accompanied by police security backup and resulted in confiscating six truckloads of food and used clothes.



ADASANI URGES PM TO RETURN CITIZENSHIPS, END AUSTERITY

16 JAILED FOR REPEATING BARRAK'S SPEECH

By B Izzak

KUWAIT: Opposition MP Riyadh Al-Adasani said yesterday that if the prime minister and the government want a fresh, clean start with the National Assembly, all revoked citizenships must be returned and economic austerity measures halted. Adasani said that the government had revoked the citizenships of most people in the past few years for political reasons and not as a result of forgery or any other errors.

Citing examples, Adasani said the citizenships of Ahmad Jabr Al-Shimmari, the owner of the closed Al-Youm television, and Islamic preacher Nabil Al-Awadhi were revoked for threatening national security, although the government failed to provide the court with any evidence. He added that the citizenships of former opposition MP Abdullah Al-Barghash and 58 members of his family and that of opposition activist Saad Al-Ajmi were revoked for forgery, but again it failed to prove that in court.

He said if they had faked their citi-

zenship documents, they should have been sent for investigation before their citizenships were revoked. Adasani welcomed the move by some MPs to amend the nationality law to prevent arbitrary revoking of citizenships, but he said the law - if approved - would only apply to cases in the future and will not return the revoked citizenships. The lawmaker said that if the prime minister wants to open a new page, he should return those citizenships and review the economic austerity measures to stay away from taxing citizens.

Meanwhile, Islamist opposition MP Osama Al-Shaheen said yesterday that he and a number of lawmakers submitted two packages of draft laws - the first to abolish austerity decisions and measures and the second for abolishing laws that curb public freedoms. These laws were passed by the previous Assembly, which was entirely pro-government. Shaheen said lawmakers have a daunting task ahead, but they are determined to achieve it.

MP Saadoun Hammad yesterday warned Minister of Social Affairs and

Labour Hind Al-Subaih to scrap a decision that halted social government aid for Kuwaiti women married to non-Kuwaitis. He said the minister's decision was not properly studied and is totally rejected, adding that the decision has created social problems for many Kuwaiti women who are paying back hefty bank loans. He said that if the minister does not scrap the decision, lawmakers will pass legislation to force the ministry to pay the aid as before.

Separately, the criminal court yesterday sentenced 16 opposition activists to two years in prison for repeating in public a speech by former opposition lawmaker Musallam Al-Barrak, who is serving a two-year jail term for making the speech. The court however asked every convict to pay a bail of KD 3,000 to suspend the implementation of the jail term. It now depends on the appeals and the cassation courts to decide whether the jail term will be served. Barrak was jailed for two years for making the speech in Oct 2012 and which the courts considered as undermining the authority of HH the Amir.

Crime

Report

FARMWORKER DIES AFTER BURNING COAL INDOORS

KUWAIT: Despite warnings by Kuwait Fire Services Directorate to avoid using coal heaters in enclosed areas, some people are still not heeding the warnings, as the case was at a Mutlaa farm, where an expat died of carbon monoxide poisoning and another was found in critical condition. A citizen told police that his farmworkers were not responding to his calls, so he went to the farm, broke open the door open and found them on the ground. Paramedics found one person dead, while the other was taken unconscious to Sabah Hospital by medevac.

Maid raped

Jahra prosecutor ordered the arrest of a citizen who was accused by his Filipina domestic helper of raping her. A security source said the Filipina told Qairawan police that she worked for the accused for a year, during which he gave her strange looks, which she ignored. She also claimed he later started to grope her, then two weeks ago, he attacked and raped her, so she went to her embassy for help.

Doctor arrested

An Egyptian doctor was arrested to serve a five-year jail sentence after being convicted of killing a fetus through an abortion. The doctor disappeared after the conviction, but resumed his activity of holding abortions in a clinic in Hawally. Detectives learnt about his whereabouts and arrested him red-handed.

Arson attack

A policeman at the central prison accused an inmate jailed on charges of drug use of torching his luxury car along with his brother's in front of their house in Abdullah Al-Mubarak after he refused to help him smuggle illicit substances. The policeman woke up at dawn to find his car worth KD 30,000 in flames, so he called police and firemen. His accusations were based on earlier threats by the inmate, and detectives are investigating.

Blackmailer beaten

A policeman told interrogators that he beat a tourist guide was because the guide blackmailed him when he was undergoing treatment in Germany. A source said that a tourist guide arrived at Mubarak Hospital with wounds and fractures, claiming a citizen beat him. When he was arrested, the suspect said that the tourist guide, who was his translator in Germany, had blackmailed him, so after they returned to Kuwait, he beat him. — Al-Rai and Al-Anbaa

ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS LEGIT, SAYS KU PROF

By A Saleh

KUWAIT: Kuwait University Law Professor Dr Mohammad Al-Faily said there is no substance behind what is being said about the unconstitutionality of the parliamentary elections. "I do not find what can be considered a reason for canceling the elections. As far as I understand it, the decree that dissolved the National Assembly was correct," he said.

Faily was speaking during a "Legislation between Success and Failure" gathering held at the diwan of the Tawasul cultural and social forum. He said the number of MPs should be increased because after women's participation, and number of voters increased. He said the constituent council had an idea of having 100 members of parliament, and there were several other proposals of having 60 and 40 MPs.

Cold snap

Meteorologist Yasser Al-Beloushi said today's weather will witness a drop in temperatures. The winds will be northwesterly with speeds of 8-38 km/h with maximum temperatures of 14-16 degrees Celsius. He said it will be very cold at night with winds of 10-32 km/hr and temperatures of 4-7 degrees Celsius.



BEIRUT: Lebanese President Michel Aoun meets KFAED General Director Abdulwahab Al-Badr at the Baabda Presidential Palace. — KUNA

KUWAIT AID FUND FINANCES LEBANON WATER NETWORK

BEIRUT: Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED) yesterday signed a loan agreement worth KD 18 million (\$60 million) to finance a water sewage network in Al-Sarafand in southern Lebanon. KFAED also inked a grant accord valued at \$25 million to aid Syrian refugees - part of financial pledges made by Kuwait at the fourth international donation conference for Syria that had been held in London.

They were signed by KFAED General Director Abdulwahab Al-Badr and Nabil Al-Jisr, the head of the Lebanese Council of Construction and Development. The inking ceremony was attended by officials from the two sides. In a statement to KUNA, Badr said the network to be built in Al-Sarafand will serve some 30 towns and villages with a population of 300,000. On the grant, he said it is the third to be offered by the fund following

two previous ones, one valued at \$27 million and the other at \$30 million. The grant is intended to improve utilities in regions hosting refugees.

Earlier yesterday, Badr met Lebanese President Michel Aoun at the latter's palace in Baabda, just southeast of Beirut, briefing the president about the Kuwaiti fund's contributions and relief projects in the country, including the aid given to Syrians. — KUNA

KUWAIT FOLLOWS US INTEREST RATE HIKE

KUWAIT: The Central Bank of Kuwait said yesterday it has decided to raise its benchmark discount rate by 25 basis points to 2.50 percent after the US Fed hiked its rate. Governor Mohammad Al-Hashel said in a statement the increase was taken "to ensure the continued competitiveness and attractiveness of the national currency," after taking into consideration interest rates movements on major currencies. The hike was to be effective from yesterday, the statement said.

The US Federal Reserve on Wednesday raised the benchmark interest rate by a quarter percentage point citing an improving economy. The Kuwaiti decision was taken despite the sharp decline in the price of oil which contributes to over 80 percent of public revenues.

Kuwait is the only member of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) state not to peg its dinar to the US dollar. Instead the dinar is linked to a basket of major currencies, the composition of which is kept confidential. But it is believed that the greenback accounts for more than 70 percent of its weight. Under Central Bank regulations, interest rates on consumer loans cannot exceed three percentage points above the discount rate. —AFP



KUWAIT: Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah is seen during a reception hosted by the Embassy of Japan on the occasion of the country's national day. — KUNA

FM LAUDS STRONG, HISTORIC KUWAIT-BAHRAIN RELATIONS

KUWAIT: First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah commended yesterday deeply-seated relations between Kuwait and Bahrain. Speaking on the sidelines of a celebration held by the Bahraini Embassy in Kuwait to mark Bahrain's National Day, Sheikh Sabah Khaled emphasized the eagerness of leaderships and peoples of the two nations to further develop mutual relations and cooperation in all domains. He congratulated Bahrain on the happy occasion, wishing the sisterly monarchy more progress and welfare.

Furthermore, Minister of Information and Minister of State for Youth Affairs Sheikh Salman Sabah Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah and Minister of State for Housing Affairs and Minister of State for Services Yasser Abul also congratulated Bahrain on the national day. On the sidelines of their participation in the embassy celebrations, they spoke highly about the fraternal bonds between the two nations and the prospects of their future cooperation in various domains. They also expressed admiration of the prosperity and development of Bahrain. — KUNA

News

in brief

Concert's revenues to go to Aleppo victims

KUWAIT: The concert revenues of Kuwaiti singer Nawal will go to the victims of the Aleppo massacre, the Jaber Al-Ahmad Cultural Center (JACC) announced in a statement yesterday. The statement added that the initiative came in solidarity with the Syrian people who are suffering from awful crimes committed against them. According to the statement, Kuwait was among the first countries to strongly condemn the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Syria. The concert was held late yesterday.

Info ministry launches campaign to aid Aleppo

KUWAIT: The information ministry announced yesterday the launch of a campaign to support and aid Aleppo and Syrians in need. The ministry launched a one-week plan on Wednesday to broadcast programs on aiding Aleppo on Kuwait TV, Assistant Undersecretary for Television Affairs Majeed Al-Jazzaf told KUNA. There will be a two to four hours of programing daily, in cooperation with the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) to collect donations for the matter, he also added. Assistant Undersecretary for Radio Affairs Yousef Mustafa noted that the ministry will also use social media and cyberspace to promote the campaign and encourage people to donate.

Kuwait's Al-Awwash reelected ASBU chief

TUNIS: Undersecretary for Media Planning and Knowledge Development of Kuwait's Ministry of Information Mohammad Abdulmohsen Al-Awwash was chosen as chief of Arab States Broadcasting Union (ASBU) for a second term. This came during a coordinative meeting of TV and radio bodies on Wednesday. "I was chosen unanimously as chief of ASBU, a major Arab institution, thanks to Allah and the status of Kuwait," he said. He expressed his pride for commending Kuwait's media for major efforts exerted over the past two years in supporting and developing Arab media.

Kuwait pledges \$1m to CERF activities in 2017

NEW YORK: Kuwait announced Wednesday an additional contribution of \$1 million to the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) to support urgent aid whenever and wherever crises hit in 2017. The announcement was made by Hayam Al-Fasam, member of Kuwait mission to the UN, during CERF's annual High-Level Conference. She said the voluntary donation materializes Kuwait's commitment to cooperation with CERF in responding to numerous humanitarian emergencies worldwide. Kuwait believes in the essential roles played by the UN aid agencies to save lives and alleviate the suffering resulting from natural or man-made disasters, Fasam added, noting that Kuwait had previously contributed \$1 million to CERF.

GOVT FILES FRAUD CHARGES AGAINST SEVERAL BUSINESSES

KUWAIT: The ministry of commerce and industry referred to the commercial prosecution department a number of irregularities and fraud cases recently detected at coffee shops, restaurants and shopping malls. Under instructions of Minister Khaled Al-Roudhan, the ministry's sector of commercial supervision and consumer protection was able to spot these irregularities and file for legal action against those involved, the Ministry's Assistant Undersecretary Eid Al-Rashidi said in a press release on Wednesday.

Rashidi noted that the minister issued directives for intensifying the inspection campaigns against unjustifiable price hikes nationwide with a view to protecting the interests of consumers. "The commercial prosecution dept. received the fraud charges, including counterfeit in the country of origin of meat, exaggerated price hikes and expired foodstuffs. "The prosecution will take legal action against law violators soon," he added. —KUNA



KUWAIT: Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Khaled Al-Jarallah during a reception hosted by the Embassy of Japan on the occasion of the country's national day. — KUNA

KUWAIT ASPIRES FOR EARLY SETTLEMENT TO SYRIA CONFLICT

KUWAIT: Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Khaled Al-Jarallah said Wednesday Kuwait is looking forward to seeing signs of political solution to the bloody conflict in Syria. "It's unacceptable that the international community remains silent on the tragic and regrettable situation in Syria, particularly Aleppo city. The brotherly people of Syria pay the price of the failure of the international community in reaching a political solution to the crisis," he said. Jarallah made the press remarks on the sidelines of a reception, hosted by the Embassy of Japan on the occasion of the country's national day.

Asked on the protest staged by Kuwaiti MPs and citizens near the Russian Embassy - the staunchest ally of the Syrian regime - he reaffirmed the commitment of the government to protecting the diplomatic missions in Kuwait as per the provisions of the Vienna Convention on diplomatic relations. "The protests represent popular reaction to the tragedy in Aleppo and the people have the legitimate right to self-expression," Jarallah pointed out. He noted that the Kuwaiti diplomacy has always been active on the regional and international levels, recalling the call for convening emergency meetings by the Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on the crisis in Aleppo.

Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah contacted the OIC Secretary-General, the GCC Secretary-General and the foreign ministers of the GCC member states as part of lobbying for the two meetings, he added. Jarallah said Kuwait supported the joint request by Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the UAE and Turkey for convening an emergency meeting by the UN General Assembly.

Jarallah reaffirmed Kuwait's support to the efforts aiming to reach a political solution to the bloody conflict in Yemen. "Kuwait hosted the UN-mediated intra-Yemeni peace talks for more than three months between April 21 and August 6, but regrettably the negotiators failed to hammer a mutually-acceptable deal," he said. He voiced hope for the success of the efforts being made by the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Yemen Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed and other countries in the region in this regard. Jarallah refuted the reports that Kuwait is mediating between Saudi Arabia and Yemen's ex-president Ali Abdullah Saleh.

Regarding Kuwait-Japanese ties, he said the two friendly countries maintain exemplary and lively relations that kept growing over the last decades thanks to the top-level visit exchanges. He recalled the visits to Japan by HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah. —KUNA

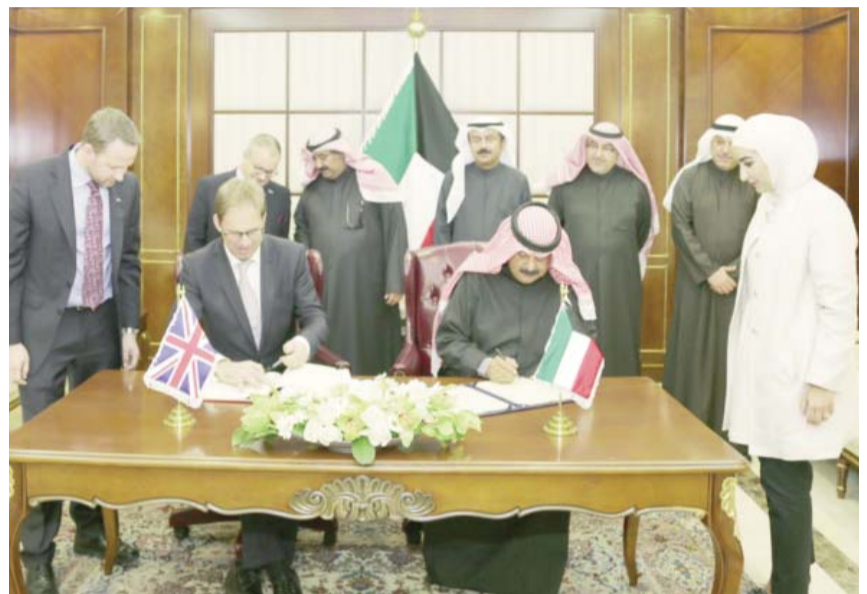
KUWAIT, BRITAIN INK EXTRADITION ACCORD

SPEAKER HAILS PACT, WARNS EMBEZZLERS

KUWAIT: Kuwait and the United Kingdom yesterday signed an accord stipulating wanted criminals' extradition between the two states. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement that First Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah and the visiting UK Minister for the Middle Eastern and North African Affairs Tobias Ellwood signed the agreement for criminals' extradition at the ministry's headquarters.

National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanem praised "the enormous efforts" that have been exerted by the relevant authorities to draw up the criminals' extradition treaty between Kuwait and the United Kingdom. "I publicize the good news to the people of Kuwait; the signing of the treaty which will be endorsed by the parliament instantly after its submission by the government," he said. After its endorsement by the Kuwaiti and British legislative authorities, the accord will be effective immediately, "and Kuwaitis will no longer see embezzlers of public funds roaming the streets of London and Britain," he added.

Ellwood earlier met Ghanem, First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Sabah and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Sheikh Mohammad Al-Abdullah Al-Sabah. The officials tackled bilateral



KUWAIT: First Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah and UK Minister for Middle Eastern and North African Affairs Tobias Ellwood are seen during the signing ceremony. — KUNA

relations and means to enhance them in various fields. Prior to heading to Kuwait late Wednesday, Ellwood said the UK and Kuwait are eager to boost their strong historic bilateral ties. In a statement, Ellwood said that he was pleased to visit Kuwait for the second time this year. He

noted that he will discuss with Kuwaiti officials cooperation within the economic, energy, health, and security sectors. He added that they will also discuss boosting educational cooperation, as the UK is willing to provide further facilitations for Kuwaiti students. — KUNA

KUWAIT AIRWAYS B777-300ER MAKES MAIDEN COMMERCIAL FLIGHT TO DUBAI

KUWAIT: Following its arrival in Kuwait, on Dec 9, and undergoing its flight and technical testing, the official national carrier of Kuwait commenced commercial operations of its new flagship aircraft, the Boeing 777-300ER, with two flights to Dubai, on Dec 15. Return flights KU671/KU672 and KU675/KU676 departed from Kuwait International Airport at 10:05 and 17:00, respectively.

Passengers on the flight were the first to experience travelling on Kuwait Airways' new flagship, with world-class interiors and on-board features set to rival the best-in-class offerings in global aviation today. Flight KU671 enters the aviation history books as the first commercial flight to be operated by Kuwait Airways with its dynamic new livery.

One of the most noted features of Kuwait Airways' Boeing 777-300ER is that, in economy class, the official national airline of Kuwait has adopted a nine-abreast (3-3-3) seating configuration. This means that the airline has placed passenger comfort at the heart of its product offering by removing a complete column of seats in the middle section of the seating plan. Most airlines operating the Boeing 777-300ER go with four seats in the centre section. As a consequence, this offers Kuwait Airways passengers some of the widest spacing for seats in economy class. After welcoming the first passengers on board Flight KU617 to

Dubai, Al-Roumi said: "We are delighted to be launching our flagship aircraft's first commercial flight as scheduled for December 2016; the first services on our network to operate with our new aircraft and bearing the dynamic new livery. While the Boeing 777-300ER is primarily

geared to long-haul destinations, Dubai is our highest frequency destinations [21 times per week]; so, we felt that for the first commercial flights we would showcase the new product to passengers who are some of our most loyal and frequent flyers."



International

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2016

The fall of Aleppo puts Iran on cusp of 'Shiite crescent' of influence



One billion Yahoo users hit in newly discovered hack



Japan, Russia likely to revive security talks



ANKARA: Turkish riot police stand guard in front of the Iranian Embassy during a protest against Iran's role in Aleppo, in Ankara yesterday. — AFP

QATAR SCRAPS NATIONAL DAY FESTIVITIES OVER ALEPPO IRAN'S ROUHANI CONGRATULATES ASSAD ON ALEPPO 'VICTORY'

DOHA: Qatar's ruler announced Wednesday that the Gulf state will call off its National Day celebrations next week out of solidarity with the people of Syria's war-ravaged Aleppo. The decision to scrap the celebrations came directly from the emir, Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani, said a statement carried on state media. It was taken "in solidarity with our people in the city of Aleppo, who are subjected to the worst kind of repression and torture, displacement and genocide", said the Qatar News Agency. Qatar's national day falls on December 18, to mark the founding of the state in 1878.

The celebrations usually involve a parade in the centre of the capital Doha, dancing and a huge fireworks display. The final of the 2022 football World Cup to be hosted by Qatar will be played on December 18. Qatar has provided arms to rebel Sunni groups dur-

ing Syria's five-year conflict and houses a Syrian opposition "embassy" in Doha. Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani said Tuesday that the war in Syria would not end if the regime recaptured the country's second city Aleppo. Nizar Al-Haraki, ambassador of the Syrian opposition coalition in Doha said that the decision to cancel the celebrations was "a dignified humanitarian gesture and a strong and positive message of solidarity". He added that he had recently spent two days in Aleppo.

Rouhani congratulates Assad

Meanwhile, Iran's President Hassan Rouhani phoned his Syrian counterpart Bashar Al-Assad yesterday to congratulate him on the impending defeat of rebel forces in the battleground city of Aleppo, his website said. "The victory in Aleppo... constitutes

a great victory for the Syrian people against terrorists and those who support them," Rouhani told Assad. The Syrian leader reportedly responded that Iran had stood "on the side of the Syrian people and government in its most difficult moments, and we will never forget it".

Iran has not committed its regular army to the Syrian conflict, but its paramilitary Revolutionary Guards have played a crucial coordinating role. Thousands of Iranian volunteers-many of them motivated by a desire to protect Shiite shrines in Syria-are thought to have fought on the frontline. With just a small pocket of rebel resistance left in Aleppo, Tehran officials say the offensive has underlined Iran's growing regional clout. "The coalition between Iran, Russia, Syria and (Tehran-backed Lebanese militant group) Hezbollah led to the liberation of Aleppo and

will next liberate Mosul (in Iraq)," said Yahya Safavi, top foreign policy adviser to Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Safavi, a former head of the Revolutionary Guards, said a clear message was being sent to the incoming US president, Donald Trump, who has vowed to take a tougher line with Iran. "The new American president must accept the reality that Iran is the leading power in the region," the Guards' Sepahnews website quoted him as saying. Iran accuses the United States and its allies of supporting "terrorists" in Syria. Fresh panels have sprung up around Tehran, with one reading: "The fight against the United States has once again paid off. Aleppo is liberated." Western governments counter that Assad is responsible for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of his own people in more than five years of conflict in Syria. — Agencies



ALEPPO: A general view shows smoke and flames rising from buildings in Aleppo's southeastern Al-Zabdiya neighborhood following government strikes. — AFP

FALL OF ALEPPO PUTS IRAN ON CUSP OF 'SHIITE CRESCENT' OF INFLUENCE

INFLUENCE WOULD EXTEND THROUGH IRAQ AND SYRIA INTO LEBANON

BEIRUT: Iran has played a pivotal role in Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad's campaign to crush rebel resistance in Aleppo and is now close to establishing a "Shiite crescent" of regional influence stretching from the Afghan border to the Mediterranean Sea. Revolutionary Guards commanders and senior clerics in Tehran have this week praised Iran's defeat of "Wahhabi terrorists" in Syria and the country they characterize as the rebels' patron, Sunni Muslim regional rival Saudi Arabia.

There is little doubt the capture of Aleppo after years of fighting, and at the cost of thousands of lives, will make Assad unassailable to the rebels who have sought to end his rule. It is unlikely such a victory would have been possible without Iran's steadfast supply of Shiite fighters, money and weapons. The central role the Shiite majority nation has played - and the power it wields - was starkly illustrated on Wednesday when the evacuation of rebel-held districts was delayed after Tehran was said by opposition officials to have imposed new conditions.

Iran demanded a simultaneous evacuation of wounded from two towns besieged by insurgents, according to rebel and UN sources. The civil war has pitted Assad, supported by Russia and Iran, against rebel groups backed by the United States, Gulf Arab powers and Turkey. Iran's involvement over more than five years - first by providing military advisers and then by training and arming Shiite militia - has not only helped shape the Syrian conflict, it has strengthened its own hand across the region.

For the first time, Tehran could exert authority over a vast sweep of the Middle East extending through Iraq and Syria into Lebanon - an arc of influence that Sunni Arab

powers, particularly Saudi Arabia, have been warning about for years. "We know the Iranians are very patient," said Hilal Khashan, a professor of political studies at the American University of Beirut. "They do not expect immediate rewards. So they persevered and they are reaping the fruits of their patience." "There is no doubt in my mind that this Shiite arc or crescent will be created," he added. "The Iranians will establish their sphere of influence from Iraq through Lebanon."

Mediterranean

That is not only because of the imminent fall of Aleppo but also because of the gains the Shiite-led government in Baghdad - a close ally of Tehran - has made in the battle to retake Mosul with Islamic State, an ultra-hardline Sunni group. Thousands of Shiite militia fighters trained by Iran are fighting on the side of the government in Iraq. Some have already fought in Syria to support Assad and pledged to go back if necessary. In Iraq they are battling for control of Tal Afar, a city between Mosul and Iraq's western border with Syria which - if retaken - would allow Iran nearly unfettered military access all the way to the Mediterranean sea. Iran already has a great deal of influence in Lebanon, where it has deep historical ties with the Shiite community and funds Hezbollah, the country's most powerful political and military movement, which is also fighting in Syria on behalf of Assad.

Establishing such a "Shiite crescent" would give Tehran immense political clout in the region as it vies with arch-rival Riyadh and allow it to protect Shiite communities in these countries. It would also present a military threat to Israel, through Syria and Lebanon, which Iranian officials regard as a deterrent to

any Israeli aggression towards Iran. For Saudi Arabia and other regional Sunni powers, increased Iranian power would come at cost to their own political, military and trading interests. But whether Iran can maintain such a large sphere of influence is uncertain, Khashan said.

Iranian commanders

From as early as 2012 Iran began arming, training and paying thousands of Afghan and Pakistani fighters, as well as Hezbollah militants from Lebanon, to fight on behalf of Assad, according to diplomats and analysts. Overseen by seasoned Iranian Revolutionary Guards commanders, some of whom have combat experience dating back to the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s, these fighters were able to hinder many Syrian opposition advances. Among those commanders is Qassem Soleimani, the head of the Revolutionary Guards' Quds Force - the arm responsible for operations outside Iran - who has been repeatedly photographed at frontline positions in Iraq and Syria in recent years.

The presence of Soleimani, as well as other senior Guard commanders, on the ground was completely different to the approach of countries like Saudi Arabia who only sent money and military equipment to the opposition, diplomats and analysts said. "The Saudis have kit. They don't really have expertise. They provided kit. They provided money. That's what they thought would be enough and it wasn't," said a Western diplomat in the Middle East who asked not to be identified because he is not authorized to speak publicly. "That's one thing the Iranians did that the other side didn't - invest capital on the ground."

Rebel fighters have said that when Iranian

commanders were present on the ground the Syrian army performed much better, according to the Western diplomat. That decision to keep senior Iranian commanders at the front-line came at a cost, with at least half a dozen Iranian generals killed in Syria. But by using Shiite militia fighters from other countries, Tehran was able to keep the total number of Iranians killed in Syria relatively low. Analyst tallies of combat deaths in Syria indicate that hundreds of Iranian nationals likely fought there but it is not clear how many are in the country now.

Existential threat

In turn, the Revolutionary Guards and Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei were able to sell the war to the Iranian public. Hardline news outlets close to the Guards have been printing stories about the existential threat posed by Islamic State and the need to fight the group in Syria since Iran went public about its role in the conflict in 2012. Earlier this year, Khamenei said that if Iran was not taking part in the war in Syria then they would be fighting the same enemy inside Iran.

Iranian religious singers, known as mad-dah, have regularly praised Shiite fighters heading to Syria and Iraq, known as "defenders of the shrine", in popular videos posted online. At the Tehran book fair in May people could photograph themselves dressed up with a helmet and ammo belt against a backdrop of a bombed-out cityscape that resembled Aleppo. "It's easier for the government to sell a war that isn't that popular or essential if it's not Iranian blood being spilled for the most part," said the Western diplomat. "By outsourcing it they've kept the pain away from most Iranians." — Reuters

A look at key events in Syria's Aleppo since March 2011

March 2011: Protests in Daraa follow the detention of boys accused of anti-government graffiti. Troops open fire on protesters. Demonstrations spread, as does the crackdown igniting a full-scale civil war as soldiers defect.

Oct. 2013: Poor coordination and infighting weaken the rebels' ranks.



Oct. 2015: Russia launches airstrikes to aid Syrian troops new offensive on Aleppo along with foreign militias.

Feb. 2016: Russia-U.S. broker a cease-fire that excludes extremists. The government resumes its siege in July.

Sept. 2016: A new cease-fire negotiated by Russia and the United States holds for a few days.



Dec. 2012: Rebels expand their presence in Aleppo province and secure supply lines to the border. Building burned by protesters in Daraa

Dec. 2013: The bombing campaign intensifies. The Islamic State (IS) enters the fray.

Jan. 2014: Rebels unite against IS, driving them out. Government forces exploit the fighting to push the rebels back.



March 2015: A newly formed group brings together rebel factions, seizes Idlib city. Rebel sniper, Aleppo

Oct. 2016: Russia suspends airstrikes on eastern Aleppo and designates humanitarian corridors urging residents to leave.

Nov. 2016: The government renews its aerial campaign. Rebel defenses crumble and thousands of residents flee.

ALEPPO REBEL EVACUATION UNDERWAY

FALL OF CITY WOULD GIVE ASSAD BIGGEST VICTORY OF WAR

ALEPPO: Hundreds of civilians and rebels left Aleppo yesterday under an evacuation deal that will allow Syria's regime to take full control of the city after years of fighting. The rebel withdrawal began a month to the day after President Bashar Al-Assad's forces launched a new offensive to recapture Aleppo and will hand the regime its biggest victory in more than five years of civil war. A revived agreement on a ceasefire and the evacuations was announced yesterday, after an initial plan for civilians and fighters to leave rebel-held parts of east Aleppo collapsed the previous day amid renewed clashes.

The evacuation began with a convoy of ambulances and buses crossing into a government-held district in southern Aleppo around 2:30 pm (1230 GMT). A Syrian military source told AFP that 951 evacuees, including 108 wounded, were in the convoy. Most were civilians but about 200 rebel fighters were among them, the source said. The convoy arrived just over an hour later in opposition territory west of the city, a doctor at the scene said.

"Vehicles carrying the wounded have arrived, and the wounded will be transferred to... nearby hospitals for treatment," said Ahmad Al-Dbis, who heads a unit of doctors and other volunteers coordinating the evacuation of wounded people. He spoke to AFP from the transit point near opposition-controlled Khan Al-Aassal, about five kilometres west of Aleppo city.

'We will return'

The evacuees had spent hours earlier gathering earlier at a staging area in Aleppo's southern Al-Amiriyah district. An AFP correspondent there saw people piling onto the green buses, filling seats and even sitting on the floor, with some worried that there would not be another chance to evacuate. Many were in tears and some hesitated to board, afraid they would end up in the hands of regime forces. On the dusty window of one of the buses someone had written "One day we will return".

Each bus carried a member of the Syrian Red Crescent dressed in the organization's red uniform, riding at the front next to the driver. Ingy Sedky, the International Committee of the Red Cross's spokeswoman in Syria, said the first convoy included 13 ambulances and 20 buses carrying civilians. Once the first convoy arrives safely "it will return and collect more people for a second journey and continue like that. We will go today for as long as conditions allow," she told AFP.

Syrian state television reported that at least 4,000 rebels and their families would be evacuated

under the plan. It said preparations were underway for a second convoy to leave rebel-held territory. A first evacuation expected to take place on Wednesday morning fell apart, with artillery exchanges and resumed air strikes rocking the city until the early hours of yesterday.

But the agreement, brokered by Syrian regime ally Moscow and opposition supporter Ankara, was revived following fresh talks. The defense ministry in Moscow said that Syrian authorities had guaranteed the safety of the rebels leaving the city. The head of the UN-backed humanitarian taskforce for Syria, Jan Egeland, told reporters in Geneva that "most" of those evacuated from Aleppo would head to opposition stronghold Idlib, in Syria's northwest. "Russians and others assure us that there will be a pause in the fighting... when we assist the evacuation," Egeland said.

Ambulance 'fired on'

The evacuation was going ahead despite reports earlier Thursday of pro-regime forces firing on an ambulance transporting the injured to Al-Amiriyah, wounding three people including a member of the White Helmets civil defense organization. On Wednesday, cold and hungry civilians had gathered for the initial planned evacuation but were instead sent running through the streets searching for cover as fighting resumed.

Russia accused the rebels of having violated the ceasefire while Turkey accused Assad's regime and its supporters of blocking the evacuation. Iran, another key Assad backer, was reported to have imposed new conditions on the agreement, including the evacuation of some civilians from two Shiite-majority villages in northwestern Syria under rebel siege.

Yesterday, nearly 30 vehicles were headed to Fuua and Kafraya to evacuate sick and wounded residents, the governor of neighboring Hama province, Mohamed al-Hazouri, told state news agency SANA. A Syrian source on the ground told AFP that "1,200 injured and sick people and their families will be evacuated."

Backed by foreign militia forces including fighters from Lebanon's Shiite Hezbollah movement, the advance launched last month made rapid gains, leaving the rebels cornered in a tiny pocket of the territory they had controlled since 2012. More than 465 civilians, including 62 children, have died in east Aleppo during the assault, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. Another 149 civilians, among them 45 children, have been killed by rebel rocket fire on government-held zones in the same period, the Britain-based monitoring group said. The United Nations and Western

countries this week condemned alleged atrocities being carried out by pro-government fighters, including reported summary executions of men, women and children. A UN panel said on Wednesday that it had also received reports that rebel fighters were blocking civilians from leaving and using them as human shields.

Shrinking rebel territory

More than 310,000 people have been killed since the Syrian conflict began, and over half the population has been displaced, with millions becoming refugees. The United States and other Western nations, Turkey, and Gulf Arab states all backed opposition forces during the

war but their support was limited. The conflict, which began with anti-government protests that were brutally put down, saw a turning point last year when Russia launched an air war in support of Assad.

With Aleppo out of rebel hands, the largest remaining rebel bastion is Idlib province, which is controlled by an alliance dominated by former Al-Qaeda affiliate Fateh al-Sham Front. Rebels also hold territory in southern Daraa province and the Ghouta region around Damascus, although the army has been advancing there. Diplomatic efforts - including several rounds of peace talks in Geneva - failed to make headway in resolving the conflict. — AFP

STATUS OF MAIN BATTLE FRONTS IN SYRIA, IRAQ

BEIRUT: Here are the latest developments on the main battle fronts in Syria and Iraq, as of yesterday:

Battle for Aleppo

Shelling and air strikes sent terrified residents running through the streets of Aleppo amid international efforts to save a deal to evacuate rebel-held districts of the city. A month into an assault to regain control of all of the northern city, Syria's army has taken back more than 90 percent of the former rebel stronghold in east Aleppo. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported "very intense clashes on every front line" and said at least two people had been killed in rebel areas.

State television said rebel rocket fire on government-controlled areas had also resumed, killing at least seven people. It was unclear how many civilians remained in rebel territory, after an estimated 130,000 fled to other parts of Aleppo during the government advance. More than 465 civilians, including 62 children, have died in east Aleppo during the assault, the Observatory said Wednesday in a new toll. Another 142 civilians, among them 42 children, have been killed by rebel rocket fire on government-held zones in the same period, the monitor said.

Palmyra

With regime forces focused on taking Aleppo, the Islamic State group has seized the ancient city of Palmyra in cen-

tral Syria, just eight months after the army backed by Russia drove the jihadists out. Retaking the UNESCO World Heritage site on Sunday gave the jihadist group an important propaganda boost as it faces assaults on two key bastions-

Syria's Raqa

A US-backed Kurdish-Arab alliance is fighting to seize IS's de facto Syrian capital of Raqa, east of Aleppo. Backed by US troops and air strikes from a US-led coalition, members of the Syrian Democratic Forces have advanced to within 25 kilometers (15 miles) of the city.

Battle for Mosul Iraq

Hashed Al-Shaabi (Popular Mobilisation) paramilitary forces said on Tuesday they retook three more villages southwest of Mosul, completing another phase in operations aimed at cutting the jihadists' link to Syria. Pro-government forces launched an assault on October 17 to eject IS from its last Iraqi stronghold. They have taken almost half of eastern Mosul. The elite Counter-Terrorism Service now controls several eastern neighborhoods and is closing in on the river Tigris that divides the city. Federal police and interior ministry forces have mostly been fighting on a southern front, stalled within striking distance of Mosul airport. The United Nations says a total of 90,000 people have been displaced as a result of the Mosul operation. — AFP

ALEPPO SIEGE CONJURES MEMORIES FOR SARAJEVO, GROZNY

PARIS: The siege of Aleppo is brutal but far from unprecedented, with the Bosnian capital Sarajevo and Chechnya's regional capital Grozny previously subjected to devastating bombardments.

Sarajevo: the longest siege

Sarajevo endured the longest siege in modern times when it was pounded by Serb forces for 43 months during a war triggered by the break-up of the former Yugoslavia. The Muslim-dominated city of 350,000 people was besieged from April 1992 until November 1995. Food and electricity supplies were cut, and its civilian population was shelled relentlessly. More than 10,000 people, including 1,600 children, died during the siege, one of the most dramatic chapters of the Bosnia war that opposed Serbs, Muslims and Croats who had comprised the former republic's multicultural population. The images and witness accounts of a besieged European capital, under the helpless eyes of UN peacekeepers, shocked the world. Here are extracts from AFP reports at the time:

May 20, 1992

"It is too dangerous to carry the injured to hospital, because as soon as you leave the building, you become a target of the many snipers and militias... Only a few telephones work in the neighborhood and they are our only window on the world", according to a university professor contacted by telephone.

July 15, 1992: Near a bridge over the river Miljacka, an AFP reporter saw a boy aged between eight and 10 lying by the riverbank, a pool of blood growing under his head. He had just become the victim of a sniper hidden in an apartment block or in one of the many little red-roofed houses that lie on the side of nearby hills. The sniper continued to fire at two people who tried to reach the body, crawling in a bid to drag it behind a low wall, until the arrival of Bosnian soldiers who responded with volleys of automatic rifle fire.

February 5, 1994

An attack on Sarajevo's main Markale market kills 68 people. Edi Vagler, 65, says at a friend's funeral: "Of course it is dangerous to be here but... we have been beyond fear for a long time. We are all condemned to die in any event. We just do not know when and how we will be struck down."



SARAJEVO: Young Bosnian women hold baby dolls wrapped in white fabric with stains symbolizing blood, as several thousands of Bosnian protesters gather to raise their voice against the killing in eastern Aleppo, Syria, during a rally in Sarajevo. The siege of Aleppo is brutal but far from unprecedented, with the Bosnian capital Sarajevo and Chechnya's regional capital Grozny previously subjected to devastating bombardments. — AFP

August 28, 1995

More grisly scenes of blood and mangled flesh at the Markale market. An artillery shell slams into the street, killing 35 people and injuring 89 others. This attack triggered the NATO bombing operation against Bosnian Serb military targets, Operation Deliberate Force, which was crucial in bringing an end to the war.

Grozny razed

The capital of Chechnya, a small republic in the Russian Caucasus, was razed to the ground during the winter of 1999-2000 by Russian artillery and air strikes during the battle to reclaim it from Chechen separatists. The battle for Grozny was spearheaded by then prime minister Vladimir Putin, helping to turn him from an anonymous former KGB officer into the clear successor to take over from Boris Yeltsin

after his shock resignation as president on New Year's Eve 1999. Human Rights Watch charged in December 2000 that the international community had failed to respond to the "carnage" in Chechnya.

On January 9, 2000, Grozny inhabitants who had taken refuge in the Russian republic of Ingushetia told an AFP journalist of hellish conditions in the city's ruins. "We lived for three months in a cellar, in the cold and the dark, without light, without heating and without water, we almost never risked going outside, said Rosa Movlayeva, 40. "Bodies remain in the streets for several days, for up to a week. We could not go out to bury them because of sniper fire. The wounded also died in the street because they could not be rescued." Ali Munayev, 28, said: "There are corpses everywhere. People have already started to eat dogs and cats. If you do not want to die of hunger you have no choice." — AFP



Kuwait Times

Premier Brands

To see your ad here, call:
+965 248 35 616 / 617
 E MAIL: info@kuwaittimes.net
ads@kuwaittimes.net
 Website: www.kuwaittimes.net

GRAND YEAR END SALE

ES-MM95Z-H

7.5kg WASHER

- 8 Programs
- Soak Timer
- Air Dry
- Child Lock

الآن 59,000
 قبل 79,000 **25%**

ES-T127SA-R

9kg WASHER

Made in Indonesia

- Spin Capacity 7 Kg
- Dolphin Pulsator

الآن 59,000
 قبل 89,000 **34%**

SHARP

ES-FE608AZ-W

6kg WASHER

صنع في تركيا
 Made in Turkey

- 800 RPM
- 15 Programs
- LED Display
- Child Lock

الآن 59,000
 قبل 99,000 **40%**

best بست
 AL-YOUSIFI اليوسفي

Credit: Start from 5KD • Up to 48 month • Instant approval

• Kuwait 1 (The New str.) • Kuwait 2 (Panasonic Tower) • Hawalli 1 (Tunis str.) • Hawalli 2 (Bin Khalid str.) • Shuwaikh (4th Ring road) • Al-Rai (4th Ring road) • Salimiya (Salem Al-Mubarak str.) • Farwariya (Behind police Station) • Fahahel (Opp. General Parking) • Jahra (Opp. Main Co-op.) • Airport (Departure Hall)

Shop Online www.best.com.kw Free Delivery

1809 809

TRUMP'S WASHINGTON HOTEL 'A CONFLICT OF INTEREST'

WASHINGTON: US President-elect Donald Trump must divest his luxury Washington hotel in a building leased from the federal government because the arrangement violates conflict-of-interest rules, congressional Democrats said on Wednesday. The General Services Administration, which manages property owned by the federal government, including the Old Post Office housing the Trump International Hotel, has said the lease would violate federal conflict-of-interest rules once the Republican businessman is sworn in on Jan 20, according to a letter to the agency from lawmakers.

The letter referred to a Dec 8 briefing to congressional staffers by a GSA official whom the letter did not name. "The Deputy Commissioner made clear that Mr. Trump must divest himself not only of managerial control, but of all ownership interest as well," Representative Elijah Cummings of Maryland and three other Democrats said in the letter, which was made public on Wednesday.

The hotel is a few blocks from the White House and has become a rallying point for anti-Trump protesters since it opened in September. It is among businesses that could create unprecedented



President-elect Donald Trump holds summit with Technology Industry Leaders (left to right) Amazon's chief Jeff Bezos, Larry Page of Alphabet, Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg, Vice President-elect Mike Pence and President-elect Donald Trump at Trump Tower December 14, 2016. Trump is meeting with top tech executives-including several of his sharpest critics-to mend fences after a divisive election in which the majority of Silicon Valley backed Hillary Clinton.— AFP

conflicts of interest for Trump, a New York real estate developer and former reality TV star. Trump's company has not responded to the GSA's concerns about the potential conflict, the Democratic lawmakers said. They asked the agency for documents about the lease, profit and expense projections and legal memos about the conflict of interest. The hotel

lease includes a standard GSA provision barring members of Congress or other elected federal officials - such as the president - from having any part of it.

Trump has said he will draw up documents that will remove him from day-to-day business operations. He had planned a news conference to disclose details, but put that announcement off until next

month. Trump will address the hotel issue in January, spokesman Jason Miller told reporters. In response to the Democrats' letter, the GSA said in a statement it could not speak definitively about divestment until Trump's financial arrangements were completed and he had become president. The agency added, "To do so now would be premature." Later on Wednesday, Cummings said Democrats still stood "100 percent behind" the letter, saying GSA informed their staff of the lease issue. Federal law does not prohibit the president's involvement in private business while in office, even though lawmakers and executive branch officials are subject to conflict-of-interest rules. But most presidents in recent decades have placed their personal assets in blind trusts so they do not know how their decisions influence their personal fortunes. Trump has said he plans to avoid the conflict issue by transferring control of his businesses to his oldest three children. But the US Office of Government Ethics said in a letter to Democratic Senator Tom Carper of Delaware on Monday that such a transfer would not qualify legally as a blind trust nor eliminate conflicts of interest. — Reuters

BRITAIN'S MAY SETS GRACIOUS TONE BEFORE BREXIT BRIEFING

BRUSSELS: Prime Minister Theresa May said yesterday it was right for EU leaders to discuss Brexit without her over dinner, setting a conciliatory tone before she updates them on Britain's preparations for leaving the bloc. At the start of a summit when EU leaders will for the first time have dinner without the British prime minister, May sought to reinforce her message that, while still a member, Britain will play a full part in discussions on European Union issues. Summit chair Donald Tusk said in a tweet May will update the leaders "on Brexit preparations".

But the summit is focused on other matters, including curbing migration from Africa and on building up defences against Russia as Donald Trump prepares to enter the White House with an agenda many Europeans fear may dilute the US military commitment to protect them from Moscow. "I welcome the fact that the other leaders will be meeting to discuss Brexit tonight as we are going to invoke Article 50, trigger the negotiations by the end of March next year," May told reporters. "It's right that the other leaders prepare for those negotiations as we have been preparing. We will be leaving the EU. We want that to be as smooth and as orderly a process as possible. It's not just in our interests, it's in the interests of the rest of Europe as well."

An aide to May said she saw the dinner as a sign that EU leaders are "facing up to the reality that the UK is leaving" and getting ready for Britain to trigger the EU treaty article that will start divorce talks. British ministers have said that after responding with anger to the referendum deci-

sion, EU officials are starting to approach some of the most complicated talks in the region since World War Two with a feeling of "mostly friendly regret". Both sides have given little away as to their negotiating stance, but Britain was warned again yesterday that finalizing a new trade deal with the EU could take 10 years.

Impatient

EU governments have been impatient for May to start a process they see as being held up by divisions in London on what to ask for in a Brexit that even few of its supporters had thought likely before a shock referendum vote in June. The leaders will end the dinner with a statement saying they are ready to start talks with London and negotiate swiftly, to stick together to preserve the Union and to ensure Britain does not retain EU benefits, for instance on trade access, if it shirks obligations, such as accepting EU migrants. "They stand ready to start negotiations with the UK as soon as the UK has notified," a draft of the statement said.

It added that the Council of EU leaders would give a negotiating mandate to the EU's executive arm, the European Commission, while ensuring national governments were kept in the loop by officials named by Tusk to sit in on talks run by the commission's negotiator, Michel Barnier. The European Parliament, which must sign off on any deal, would be kept informed, the draft says-angering lawmakers who want to be involved directly. The Parliament's outgoing president, Martin Schulz, who will brief the summit, said he was "really surprised" by the plan.— Reuters



ONE BILLION YAHOO USERS HIT IN A NEWLY DISCOVERED HACK

A HUGE BLOW TO THE STRUGGLING INTERNET PIONEER

WASHINGTON: Yahoo said Wednesday more than a billion users may have had data stolen in a hack dating back to 2013 - separate from its previously disclosed breach affecting 500 million. In a huge blow to the struggling internet pioneer, Yahoo said it made the discovery as it was investigating what was already the largest data breach of a single company. "Yahoo believes an unauthorized third party, in August 2013, stole data associated with more than one billion user accounts," it said in a statement.

Yahoo said this case "is likely distinct from the incident the company disclosed on September 22, 2016." The news comes with Yahoo in the process of selling its core operating assets to Verizon for \$4.8 billion. The breach disclosed in September had already threatened to derail the deal with Verizon or result in a reduction in the price. In November, Yahoo disclosed that as part of its investigation into the prior breach, it had received data files from law enforcement "that a third party claimed was Yahoo user data."

Using outside forensic experts, Yahoo confirmed that this was indeed user data but added that it "has not been able to identify the intrusion associated with this theft." Yahoo said in September it believed the breach of information on 500 million user was "state sponsored" but some analysts have questioned this theory. The stolen user account information in the newly disclosed breach may have included names, email addresses, telephone

numbers, dates of birth, "hashed" passwords and, in some cases, encrypted or unencrypted security questions and answers, Yahoo said. The hackers did not obtain passwords in clear text, payment card data, or bank account information, it said.

The latest breach discovery is a further embarrassment to a company that was one of the biggest names of the internet but which has failed to keep up with rising stars such as Google and Facebook. Yahoo's valuation hit \$125 billion during the dot-com boom, but it has been losing ground since then despite several efforts to reboot. In the mid-1990s, Yahoo was among the most popular destinations on the internet, helping many people navigate the emerging web. It became the top online "portal," connecting users to news, music and other content. But its fortunes started to fade when Google began to dominate with its powerful search engine. But as its core business declined, its stake in outside investments-notably Chinese internet giant Alibaba-surfed. After a series of management changes and revival efforts, Yahoo decided to sell its main operating business as a way to separate that from its more valuable stake in Chinese online giant Alibaba. Yahoo's plan would place its main operating business within Verizon, which has already acquired another faded internet star, AOL. The remaining portion would be a holding company with stakes in Alibaba and Yahoo Japan. — AFP

BERLUSCONI'S MEDIA EMPIRE FENDS OFF FRENCH TAKEOVER

ROME: Shares in Silvio Berlusconi's Mediaset empire were volatile yesterday after the Italian government suggested it wouldn't accept a hostile takeover by France's Vivendi media group. Trading in Mediaset was halted twice on the Milan stock exchange Thursday morning for losses that reached nearly 8 percent before shares recovered around midday. Vivendi, which owns France's Canal+ pay-TV operator and Universal Music Group, confirmed late Wednesday it had acquired a 20 percent stake in Berlusconi's television and publishing group.

At the start of the week, its stake was little over 3 percent. Mediaset holding company Fininvest responded by increasing its stake in Mediaset to nearly 39 percent and lodging a complaint with Milan prosecutors alleging market manipulation. Mediaset has accused Vivendi of taking advantage of the 30 percent drop in Mediaset's share value after Vivendi backed out of a plan to buy its Premium unit over the summer. Mediaset has already taken Vivendi to court in Milan to try to recover 570 million euros in losses.

Italy's economic development minister, Carlo Calenda, said that while Italy respects the rules of the market, Vivendi's move on Mediaset "doesn't appear to be the most appropriate way to proceed" to boost Vivendi's presence in Italy. He said foreign investment is always welcome, but that in such a strategic field as mass media "the way in which one proceeds isn't irrelevant." By early afternoon in Milan, shares in Mediaset were down 1.8 percent at 3.55 euros. Mediaset isn't the only Berlusconi asset that has caught the eye of foreign investors. Fininvest is in final negotiations to sell Berlusconi's beloved AC Milan soccer club to a group of Chinese investors. The deal with Sino-Europe Sports, now expected to close in March, values Milan at 740 million euros (about \$800 million).— AP



LA ROCHELLE: Former French Prime minister Manuel Valls (4th left), candidate for the Socialist Party (PS) primaries ahead of France's 2017 presidential election, visits the University of La Rochelle yesterday in La Rochelle, western France. — AFP

TURKEY 'SILENCING' MEDIA IN POST-COUP CRACKDOWN

ISTANBUL: Turkey has "all but silenced independent media" in an accelerating crackdown on journalists who are being detained on "bogus charges" including terrorism, an international rights group said yesterday. In a new report, Human Rights Watch said the government's assault on critical journalism sharpened noticeably in 2014, but gained new momentum in the wake of a failed July 15 coup, which Ankara has blamed on a movement linked to a US-based Islamist cleric.

The report said that along with the arrests, there has been an increase in threats and physical attacks on journalists, government interference with editorial independence, the closure or takeover of private broadcasters and fines brought against critical news outlets. "In the past, journalists were killed in Turkey," Human Rights Watch quoted one journalist saying. "This government is killing journalism in its entirety." The report is based on a review of court documents and on 61 interviews with journalists, editors, lawyers and press freedom advocates.

There was no immediate response from Turkish officials. Ankara says it is fighting a multi-prong war on terror and that its security sweeps have targeted Kurdish militants, the Islamic State group and backers of the Islamist cleric, who once was an ally of the president and has denied masterminding the attempted coup. The Human Rights Watch report accuses Turkish authorities of misusing the penal code to go after journalists with charges ranging from insulting public officials to membership in a terrorist organization.

HRW's Europe and Central Asia director, Hugh Williamson, said 148 journalist and media workers have been detained under the state of emergency the government declared after the failed coup, while 169 media and publishing outlets have been shut. "The Turkish government and president's systematic effort to silence media in the country is all about preventing public scrutiny," Williamson said.— AP

POLLSTERS TUNE-UP FOR FRENCH ELECTION AFTER LATEST SHOCKS

OPINION POLLS UNDER SCRUTINY AFTER TRUMP, BREXIT WINS

PARIS: Pollsters hoping to avoid further election shocks are trying to improve the quality of their data ahead of the 2017 French presidential election by asking questions differently and fine-tuning collection methods. Opinion polls have come under scrutiny after the unexpected election of Donald Trump as US president and the surprise British referendum vote to leave the European Union. Financial market participants and EU partners are watching France closely for signs of another shock, especially one in which far-right National Front leader Marine Le Pen wins on her anti-EU platform. "Measuring participation is the real challenge," said Jean-Daniel Levy, head of political polling at the Harris Interactive institute.

The problem with turnout is that some groups express a preference then fail to show up to vote, while others, missed by the polling machine, vote in large numbers. Pollsters say a better sample is key to ironing out sources of inaccuracy. Many modern polls are conducted by mobile phone, whose numbers have no regional prefix, so reaching a representative sample has become labor intensive. "Basically, if you're looking for the mobile number of someone who lives in Marseille, you have to make a huge number of calls," said

Bruno Jeanbart of Opinion Way, whose operation is talking with phone operators to get hold of databases that tell them where their voters are located.

Wrong questions?

Pollsters are also looking at the questions they ask. For example, Jeanbart said, Opinion Way got better turnout results in the last conservative primary by asking voters how important voting was to them on a sliding numerical scale, rather than asking simply whether they were certain to or likely to vote. But other questioning techniques could be difficult to improve upon, especially when it comes to measuring the degree to which the surge of populism seen in the Trump and Brexit votes could translate into support for Le Pen. Jean Chiche, a voting science researcher at Sciences-Po university in Paris, reckons the gulf in life experience between highly educated, urban-based pollster statisticians and less educated working-class voters in rural or suburban areas is a hard one to bridge. "The people who write the questions are not capable of imagining the ones you need to ask to identify those ... who voted Trump in the US," he said.

Chiche suggests the industry needs to study social media for ways

to reach the people it might not have been reaching so far. Polling institutes should also make clear that their polls have margins of error, Erwan Lestrohan of pollster BVA said. In 2002, insisting on the 3 percent margin of error or giving a polling range could have helped people realize there was a possibility that Marine Le Pen's father Jean-Marie could beat Socialist leader Lionel Jospin, he said. Jean-Marie Le Pen edged out Jospin by gathering 16.86 percent of first-round votes, 0.8 percentage points more than Jospin. Polls before the election had Le Pen around 14 percent.

With the first round of voting due in April, polls show the gap Marine Le Pen needs to bridge is much larger than the one faced by Trump or Britain's Brexiteers at the same stage. A poll this week by Ipsos Sopra Steria for Cevipof and Le Monde newspaper has Le Pen on a first-round vote of 24-25 percent, depending on who she faces, which would put her into a second-round run-off against conservative Francois Fillon, seen getting 26-29 percent in the first round. The poll did not make second-round predictions, but other polls since November, when Fillon became candidate for Les Republicains, have shown Fillon winning the second round with a two-thirds majority.— Reuters

SAUDI REJECTS INTERFERENCE IN YEMEN

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia is determined to prevent external "interference" in neighboring war-torn Yemen, King Salman said in an annual address yesterday. He did not explicitly refer to the kingdom's regional rival Iran but Saudi officials have accused Tehran and the Lebanese Shiite militant group Hezbollah of aiding rebels in Yemen. Since March 2015, Saudi Arabia has itself led an Arab coalition conducting air strikes against the Shiite Houthi rebels and providing other assistance to local forces in support of President Abedrabbo Mansour Hadi.

"We will not accept any interference in the internal affairs of Yemen," King Salman said in an address opening a new session of the Shura Council, an appointed body which advises cabinet. Salman said his country will neither accept that Yemen "becomes a base or a point of passage for whatever state or party to menace the

security or the stability of the kingdom and of the region". The Saudi-led coalition intervened after Huthi rebels allied with elite members of security forces loyal to Yemen's former president Ali Abdullah Saleh seized the capital Sanaa and overran other parts of the country.

The rebels have killed at least 110 civilians and soldiers in rocket fire and skirmishes along the Saudi frontier. They have also fired longer-range ballistic missiles over the border at Saudi Arabia. International investigators last month said they had found a suspected "weapons pipeline" from Iran through Somalia to Yemen. British-based Conflict Armament Research, which is primarily funded by the European Union, analyzed photographs of weapons including assault rifles and rocket launchers to draw its conclusions. Tehran has repeatedly denied sending arms to Yemeni rebels. The

Arab coalition, for its part, has faced repeated allegations of killing civilians, and on Tuesday the United States blocked the transfer of precision-guided bombs to Saudi Arabia.

'Sometimes painful' measures

A senior US administration official said the move reflected "strong concerns with the flaws in the coalition's targeting practices" and its overall conduct of the Yemen air war. Salman's son, Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, 31, has had overall responsibility for the Yemen campaign as he holds the post of defense minister. King Salman underlined that Riyadh was open to a "political solution" in Yemen, whose security "is intrinsically linked to that of the kingdom". The Yemen war has killed more than 7,000 people, about half of them civilians. Its intervention has cost

Saudi Arabia billions of dollars despite austerity at home to cope with fallen oil revenues.

On top of hikes in the prices of petrol, electricity and water over the past year, the cabinet in September imposed a wage freeze on civil servants, who make up the bulk of the workforce. The government was left owing billions of dollars to private firms, chiefly in the construction sector, where tens of thousands of foreign workers were left unpaid. King Salman said the government "took measures that were sometimes painful" because of the effect of lower oil prices, but that it has coordinated with other producers to stabilize the petroleum market. "The kingdom experienced similar circumstances in the past three decades, obliging it to reduce its expenses, but it always succeeded in surmounting them," he said. — AFP

FREED FROM MOSUL, IRAQI BROTHERS CARRY SCARS OF ISLAMIC STATE RULE

AL-DHIBANIYAH: His right arm strapped with a tourniquet and numbed by anaesthetic, Azad Hassan sat before the crowd waiting for Islamic State militants to chop off his hand as a punishment. First, he had watch them do the same to his brother. Freed from Islamic State rule in Mosul by Iraqi forces who are fighting to recapture the city, the Hassan family bear more scars than most from two years under the jihadists' self-declared caliphate.

The family tragedy parallels Mosul's own recent history, from its storming by Islamic State in 2014, and the imposition of the group's ultra-hardline rule in its de facto capital, to the Iraqi military campaign to retake it which has led to ferocious fighting in eastern districts. A dispute over flour deliveries brought the two brothers before an Islamic State court more than a year ago. Militants had already taken another brother a few months before - a document given to the family says he was shot suspected of working with the Iraqi army, but they never saw his body.

A younger brother has joined the Sunni militia brigades, one of the forces fighting in support of the army around Mosul. On a small USB stick, Azad, 21, carries a copy of the Islamic State video made of his and his brother Mohamed's public amputations, hoping someday for some form of justice. "As long as I live I won't forget that moment they cut off my brother's hand," Azad said. "Then they tied down my hand. They had to hit it twice to cut it off. I wanted the ground to open up."

Their father Hussein lies in a small bed in the family's farm in the village of Al-Dhibaniyah outside Mosul, his legs seeping blood through bandages over wounds from an explosion after he returned to their former home in a recaptured but still fragile area in Mosul. "They cut the hands of two of my sons, and my third son they took him - Daesh hurt my family badly," said Hussein, whose wife is Kurdish, using an Arabic acronym for Islamic State. "We are all Iraqi, all the same people. I don't know why they did this to us."

Corpses crucified

Iraqi forces, engaged in a nine-week-old US-backed campaign to crush Islamic State in its last urban bastion in the country, have retaken about a quarter of Mosul, but their advance has been slow and punishing. As they slowly gain ground, refugees fleeing the city and those living inside recall a brutal life under Islamic State, whose religious police would patrol and enforce their laws.

Men were forced to wear beards to lengths deemed Islamic. Women had to cover up from head to foot. Some people were beaten for infractions, others were shot - their corpses sometimes crucified - with punishments decided by Islamic State courts. One refugee in Khazer camp outside the city showed Reuters scars from where he says his teeth were pulled out and his tongue slashed for smoking in public. — Reuters

SYRIAN GIRLS FLEE WAR ONLY TO BECOME MOTHERS IN JORDAN

ZAATARI REFUGEE CAMP: In a crowded maternity clinic at a refugee camp in Jordan near the Syrian border, Elhem cradled her crying 11-month-old son, bounced him on her knee and then handed him to her mother to help calm him down. "When I had the baby I felt a sense of motherhood and was happy," the Syrian refugee said through a translator, adjusting her floral niqab. "I'm a housewife now." She's 17, and her experience is common. Elhem, who asked to be identified by her first name, says many Syrian girls in the camp are also mothers, including a friend who gave birth at the age of 15.

Despite efforts to reduce early marriage in Zaatari camp since its opening in 2012, maternal health workers from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) say the number of babies born to adolescent girls remains stubbornly high. More than 15 million girls worldwide are married before they turn 18, according to campaign group Girls Not Brides. Child marriage deprives girls of education and opportunities, and puts them at risk of serious injury or death if they have children before their bodies are ready. In Jordan, Zaatari sprouted in an area that had been an empty desert, transforming in just a few short years into a sprawling slum city currently housing nearly 80,000 Syrians.

Since UNFPA began its operations in Zaatari in mid-2013, doctors have delivered more than 6,500 babies in the camp - 5 percent of them born to mothers younger than 18. Girls Not Brides estimates about 13 percent of girls in Syria are married before their 18th birthday, and 3 percent become brides before they turn 15. But the child marriage rate among Syrian refugees in neighboring Jordan is far higher - more than doubling to 25 percent in 2013, from 12 percent in 2011 when the war began, said the UN children's agency UNICEF. The charity Save the Children says many Syrian refugee families marry off their daughters to provide them financial security or protect them from sexual violence perpetrated by other men in refugee camps.



ALEPPO: Civilians gather for evacuation from eastern Aleppo, Syria. — AP

'Very hard to convince them'

When Elhem fled her hometown of Daraa in Syria, she did not imagine that two years later in 2014, she would get married at age 13 to her older cousin in Zaatari camp. She said it was not a decision borne out of love or romance, but did not elaborate further. Elhem said she has never been to school, which UNFPA says is a key risk factor for child marriage. With no schooling or sexual education, generations of girls and women are not aware of the physical, mental and sexual health risks associated with early marriage.

"It's very challenging, it's very hard to convince them not to marry young," said Samah Al-Quaran, a UNFPA health worker in Zaatari camp. Girls who marry young are more vulnerable to domestic and sexual violence, said Al-Quaran. "The risk of gender-based violence is higher in early marriage because the girl doesn't understand what her husband is allowed or not allowed to do," the Jordanian health worker said, adding that the maternity clinic also provides round-the-clock assistance for victims of domestic and sexual violence.

Al-Quaran said she has seen many cases of husbands determining the use of birth control. She said many men opt for short-term solutions, such as condoms or contraceptive pills, so he can control exactly when his young wife becomes pregnant. "The decision for family planning within this culture is with the man. The man decides if he wants children or not. It's not up to the mother," she said. "This control is a sort of violence."

In June, the UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution calling for an end to child, early and forced marriage, and recognising child marriage as a violation of human rights. Ending child marriage by 2030 is one of the targets within the new Sustainable Development Goals adopted by world leaders at a UN summit last year. At Zaatari, Elhem says her only hopes and dreams are for the sleeping baby she is holding. "The most important thing for me now is to raise my child and to give him a decent life with a good education. All I care about is the future of my son." Travel for this story was provided by the European Commission and European Journalism Centre. — Reuters

GERMANY DEPORT 50 AFGHAN ASYLUM SEEKERS

BERLIN: About 50 Afghans who had their asylum bids in Germany rejected were being deported yesterday, a pro-refugee group said, as the government works to reduce the number of migrants remaining in the country. A plane with the deportees on board left Frankfurt airport Wednesday at 6:55 pm local time, refugee group Pro Asyl said. Hundreds of protesters chanted slogans at the airport's departure terminal asking to have deportations to Afghanistan halted. The German government said earlier that it would only confirm deportations after they happened, but officials had not verified after the plane's departure time if any had taken place.

After allowing in 890,000 migrants last year, Germany has sought to manage the influx by speeding up the asylum process for the applicants most likely to receive it, such as Syrians fleeing civil war. Authorities in turn have accelerated the expulsion of unlikely candi-

dates for asylum, such as people seeking to escape poverty in the Balkans. Afghans have fallen somewhere in the middle, with some areas of the country considered safe and some not. But few have been deported because Germany lacked a proper agreement with Afghanistan. Instead, many have been convinced to go home voluntarily with financial incentives.

But the German and Afghan governments signed a memorandum of understanding on deportations a few weeks ago, paving the way for the several dozen who were to be sent home on Wednesday night. Petra Haubner, a lawyer from the Bavarian city of Passau said that a 20-year-old Afghan client was on his way to Frankfurt to be deported after being detained by police at a Bavaria shelter. The client, who Haubner did not name, arrived in Germany as a minor in 2011. His asylum request first was rejected in 2012 because authorities



KABUL: Afghans who were deported from Germany exit the Kabul International Airport yesterday. —AP

did not see enough proof of his individual persecution by the Taliban. After several failed court appeals, he had been living in Germany on short-term "tolerated

status." On Wednesday night, Germany's federal constitutional court temporarily suspended the deportation of another Afghan in a last-minute decision. — AP



JALALABAD: Afghan girls carry bags of coal to use as fuel in their homes as the winter sets in on the outskirts of Jalalabad. — AFP

KABUL SECURITY GATES IN STORAGE AS AFGHAN OFFICIALS TRADE ACCUSATIONS INFIGHTING DELAYS INSTALLATION

KABUL: A set of giant security gates financed by China and intended to protect Kabul from large bombs and drug smuggling lie stored in a warehouse more than five months after they arrived, while Afghan authorities bicker over who should install them. Intended for the four main entry points into Kabul, they have been delayed by infighting between departments and by a land dispute, underlining the difficulty of getting things done in a country where conflict and corruption have slowed progress.

The hangar-style gates, each weighing around 30 tons, are to reinforce the so-called "Ring of Steel" that surrounds Kabul, a city of five million people already protected by blast walls, armed checkpoints and eye-in-the-sky surveillance cameras. Although there are many entrances to the city, security officials

believe channeling large vehicles through the gates could help reduce the risk of big truck and car bombs that have previously wrought devastation in Kabul. The gates are to be equipped with control rooms and surveillance scanners to enhance inspections of vehicles.

Civilian deaths are rising across the country as Afghan Taliban insurgents fight to topple the Western-backed government and drive out foreign troops, while an offshoot of Islamic State has claimed responsibility for several attacks in the last year. Not all are carried out by car or truck bombs, but in September a car bomb went off outside a central Kabul security office during rush hour, killing dozens of people. "It shows that the ministry's different departments are sadly incapable of setting them (the new gates) up, and Kabul police is delaying them for no reason," said a senior

Interior Ministry official, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk to the media.

"These gates are made with the latest technology, and delaying their installation is a big injustice to the residents of Kabul," the official added. He said the Interior Ministry's Support and Procurement Office, which had agreed to pay for and organize the installation of the gates, had tried to subcontract the work, but the bids were too high. Now responsibility has been transferred to a similar body run by Kabul police, who, in turn, rejects accusations that they have been dragging their feet. "We understand it is our department that is responsible for the gates, but the government has to purchase the land first and then we need a budget for it from donors," said Salem Almas, deputy chief of Kabul police. — Reuters

CHINA BOOSTS DEFENSES ON THE SOUTH CHINA SEA ISLETS

WASHINGTON: New satellite imagery shows China has apparently installed "significant" defensive weapons on a series of artificial islands it built in the South China Sea, a US-based think tank said. Beijing has created seven islets in the Spratly Islands in recent years, built up from much smaller land protuberances and reefs. Although Beijing has said it does not intend to militarize the contested waters of the South China Sea, ongoing satellite imagery has shown the installation of military equipment and longer runways. The latest images, released by the Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative (AMTI), show a series of hexagonal structures now in place on each of the seven islets. They appear to be large anti-aircraft guns and close-in weapons systems (CIWS), the AMTI said.

Such systems are designed to take out incoming missiles and enemy aircraft. "These gun and probable CIWS emplacements show that Beijing is serious about defense of its artificial islands in case of an armed contingency in the South China Sea," said AMTI, part of the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies. "Among other things, they would be the last line of defense against cruise missiles launched by the United States or others against these soon-to-be-operational air bases." AMTI director and Southeast Asia expert Greg Poling said watching the Chinese military buildup was like seeing pieces of a jigsaw puzzle come together. China now has air bases, radar and communications systems, naval facilities and defensive weaponry in place.

"I also would expect we will see antiship cruise missiles," Poling said. "You are beginning to have these interlocking rings of defense around these islands, (extending) China's ability to project power to the south." The South China Sea issue has been brewing for years, with China, the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia and Vietnam making competing claims in waters with vital global shipping routes and what is believed to be significant oil and natural gas deposits. Beijing's territorial claims, based on controversial historical records, have also pitted it against the United States.

China paused land-reclamation efforts last year and began focusing on "infrastructure development" of the islets, according to a US Defense Department report in May. The United States insists China's claims have no basis under international law, and the US military has conducted several "freedom of navigation" operations in which ships and planes have passed close to the sites Beijing claims. Such missions have drawn howls of fury from China, which accuses Washington of provocation and increasing the risk of a military mishap. The Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague ruled in July that there was no legal basis to China's claims to nearly all of the South China Sea, a verdict Beijing dismissed. — AFP

FOREIGN NGOS ON BACK FOOT AS NEW CHINESE LAW LOOMS

BEIJING: Foreign organizations including social and environmental advocacy groups fear they could inadvertently break broadly defined new rules that take effect in China next month, with some even shutting up shop to avoid such pitfalls. Chinese President Xi Jinping's administration has made sweeping changes to Chinese law in the name of boosting national security, including a controversial cybersecurity law passed last month and another targeting foreign non-governmental organizations (NGO), slated for Jan 1.

China says the NGO law, which grants broad powers to police to question NGO workers, monitor their finances and regulate their work, is necessary to regulate an unruly sector and that only those operating illegally have anything to fear. Western governments say the law, which was passed in April, treats groups as criminals and would severely limit their ability to operate in China. Foreign NGO employees in China have told Reuters that many groups still do not know whether they will be able to register with the authorities in time as key information about the process has not been published.

"There are many NGOs that wish to comply but feel unable to comply due to a lack of information," says Lester Ross, a partner at WilmerHale Lawfirm in Beijing who advises such groups. Faced with the prospect of inadvertently operating illegally, a number of groups are temporarily or permanently suspending their China operations, according to people in direct contact with the NGOs. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said on Thursday that the law was being introduced to "protect the legal rights of foreign NGOs working in China" and directed groups to consult the most recently released government guidelines.

The Ministry of Public Security did not respond to requests for comment on Thursday. The key concern is the failure to yet publish a list of 'supervisory units' - government bodies that will act as a go-between with the Ministry of Public Security, which has ultimate responsibility for registration and management. The list's publication, which NGOs have been told will happen soon, is not the only hurdle, according to Ross. "There are also constraints in the system over how many Supervisory units will be available and whether they will be able to manage all those companies who wish to register," he said.

Behind procedural concerns about the law hangs an unanswered question about the government's intentions, according to Anthony Spires, a professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, who studies NGOs in China. "Are they trying to chase people out or not?" he said. "This is clearly the aim for rights groups and activists that the government does not like, but there may well be some unintended casualties as well." In November the government twice made clarification statements, saying there would be no grace period for NGOs to meet the new law, later adding that groups must give details of how they are funded.

There remains a spectrum of concern among NGOs, from those who act in areas considered relatively benign by the authorities, such as education and health, to those who work in sensitive areas, including legal reform and rights issues. The founder of an education NGO, who asked not to be named, said the government told them they need not worry about the process. — Reuters



NAGATO: Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (right) listens to Russian President Vladimir Putin during their meeting at a hot springs resort in Nagato, western Japan yesterday. Putin is on a two-day official visit to Japan. — AFP

JAPAN AND RUSSIA LIKELY TO REVIVE SECURITY TALKS

ABE SEEKS DIPLOMATIC LEGACY, COUNTER-BALANCE TO CHINA

NAGATO: Japan and Russia will likely revive security talks and keep discussing a territorial row that has kept them from signing a peace treaty formally ending World War Two, Russia's foreign minister said yesterday, as the countries' leaders met. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Russian President Vladimir Putin held talks at a hot spring resort, seeking progress on the row over windswept isles in the western Pacific controlled by Russia but also claimed by Japan.

Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told reporters that Putin had offered to resume security talks among their foreign and defense ministers, suspended after Russia annexed the Crimea region in 2014, triggering Western sanctions. "The prime minister has reacted positively, so we hope such a decision will be taken," Lavrov said as the two leaders continued their one-on-one talks. The two sides are likely to clinch agreements on economic cooperation in areas from medical technology to energy.

But both have sought to dampen expectations of a breakthrough in the feud over the islands seized by Soviet forces at the end of the war. The two met at a mountainside inn at the hot spring resort of Nagato in Abe's home constituency in southwest Japan. They will meet again in Tokyo today. "After such a meeting between leaders, I promise you can relax in onsen," Abe said in welcoming Putin, referring to the hot spring, after the Russian leader arrived nearly three hours late. Abe has pledged to resolve the territorial dispute, in hopes of leaving a diplomatic legacy that eluded his foreign minister father, and of building better ties with Russia to counter a rising China.

'Russian worries'

But a deal to end the dispute over the islands, known in Japan as the Northern Territories and in Russia as the Southern Kuriles, carries risks for Putin, who does not want to tarnish his image at home of a staunch defender of Russian sovereignty. The isles have strategic value for Russia, ensuring naval access to the western Pacific.

Putin also told Abe of Russia's concerns about the US presence in Asia, which Russia thinks is disproportionate to the North Korea nuclear and missile threat, Lavrov said. "We thought that our Japan colleagues started to understand Russian worries in this regard better," he said. Japan has long insisted that its sovereignty over all four of the disputed islands off Japan's northern island of Hokkaido be confirmed before a peace treaty is signed.

But there have been signs it has been rethinking its stance, perhaps by reviving a formula called "two-plus-alpha", based partly on a 1956 joint declaration in which the Soviet Union agreed it would hand over the two smaller islands after a peace treaty was signed. Over the decades, the two sides have at times floated the idea of joint economic activity on the islands, but how to do that without undercutting either side's claim to sovereignty has never been resolved. Lavrov said Abe and Putin also discussed Syria. The talks come as Russia faces Western criticism over the destruction of eastern Aleppo in Syria, where Russia is backing Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's forces. — Reuters

BEIJING ON RED ALERT OVER POLLUTION

BEIJING: Beijing's city government has issued a red alert for severely high levels of air pollution in the Chinese capital, running for five days from Friday evening, the environmental protection bureau said on its official Twitter-like Weibo account. The city issued its first ever red alert on smog in December last year, after adopting a color-graded warning system in a crackdown on environmental degradation left by decades of breakneck economic growth.

Smog expected this week will stem from air pollution accumulated in Beijing and its environs, such as the nearby city of Tianjin and the northern provinces of Hebei, Shandong and Henan, the bureau said, citing environment monitoring forecasts. New environmental protection



BEIJING: Photo shows the city skyline in Beijing on a clear day. Beijing issued its first air pollution red alert for 2016 yesterday, as choking smog is expected to cover the city and surrounding areas in north China during the next five days. — AFP

measures took effect on Thursday, among them unifying Beijing's system of alerts with those of Tianjin and Hebei, and a ban aimed at keeping older, polluting cars off Beijing's roads. In addition, drivers of newer cars face an 'odd-even' usage limit determined by the final digit of their license-plates.

Schools freed from an earlier requirement to close en masse are being given the authority to 'flexibly' cancel classes, on the basis of their needs and those of students' parents. Companies may also consider early departures for employees, or provisions to work from home. After temporary school closures and construction halts brought by last year's smog alert, the city government has tweaked its system. —

Friday Times

Lifestyle

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2016

www.kuwaittimes.net



A man stands in front of a fashion advertisement along a downtown street in Hong Kong. — AP

18th-century Chinese imperial seal sells for a record 21 million euros

Page 23



CHRIS MARTIN GIVES 10% OF EARNINGS TO CHARITY

The Coldplay frontman's mother Alison kept back 1p of his 10p pocket money while he was growing up to teach him the importance of sharing and it seems the life lesson has stuck with him as he now makes sure he gives away some of his income to help others. Appearing on Australian television show 'Today' this week with his band mate Jonny Buckland, the guitarist said: "Ten per cent of Chris' pocket money goes to charity." Chris - who is worth an estimated £70 million - added: "I used to get 10 pence pocket money. The first time she gave me nine, I was

like, 'What is this?' [And my mum was like], 'Get used to it, son.' Mum still gives me three pounds a week." And the 39-year-old hunk's generosity has rubbed off on his band mates as they now also give away ten per cent of their cash to 28 different charities every month. Chris explained: "It's very important for us [to give money to charity regularly]. It drives us on. We don't talk about it that much but you asked. It is true!"

Kourtney Kardashian shares a 'heart-warming post'

The 37-year-old 'Keeping Up With the Kardashians' star has described herself as the "luckiest mommy in the world" as she posted a picture of Mason and Reign, who celebrated their seventh and second birthday respectively, on Wednesday, on Instagram. Alongside a photograph of her eldest and youngest children - who she has with her on/off partner Scott Disick, 33, the brunette beauty wrote: "My twin boys born five years apart. Luckiest mommy in the world. Happy birthday to them. (sic)." And the television personality gave Reign an extra birthday tribute, as she uploaded a picture of him standing on a bench sporting a tracksuit. She captioned the post: "Birthday boy (sic)." Kourtney also took to Snapchat to showcase the surprises left around her house for the birthday boys, which saw her pan around her bathroom where 'Happy Birthday Mason' was scribbled on the bathroom mirror in red lipstick, with an elf hanging next to it.

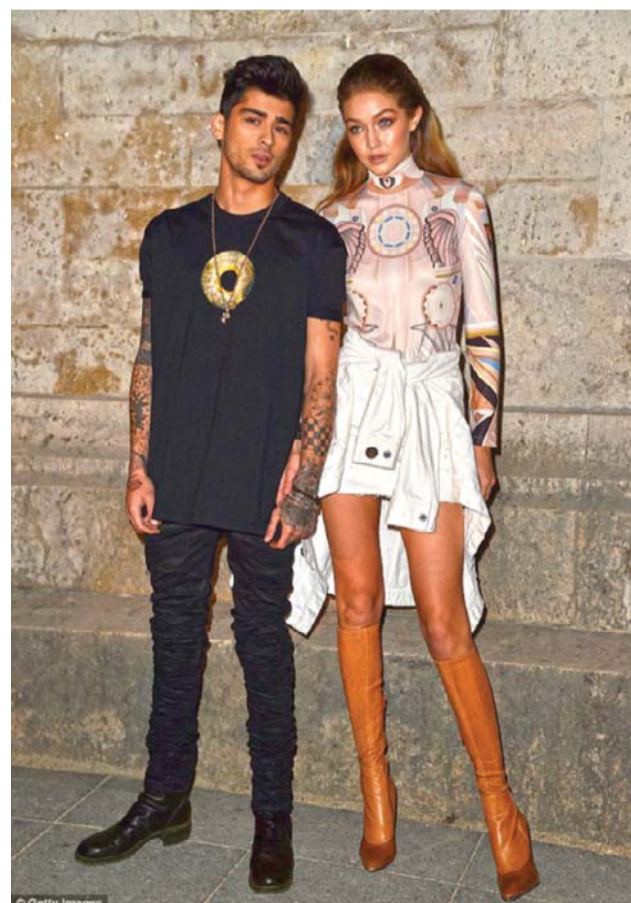


John Legend missed Santa's first meeting with daughter

The 'Love Me Now' hitmaker's wife Chrissy Teigen came up with a creative way to include her husband, who was in the French capital, by printing his face onto a stick and getting someone to hold it over their face for the family's portrait with Father Christmas and baby Luna. Alongside the festive photo, the 31-year-old beauty wrote on Twitter: "When your husband is in Paris but you gotta get your Santa on (sic)." The 37-year-old singer also recently missed out on hearing his eight-month-old daughter's first words as he's been busy promoting his new album 'Darkness & Light'. The hunky star was disappointed he didn't get to hear Luna say 'mama' or 'dada' for the first time. He said: "She said 'mama' the other day. I missed it. She said 'dada' as well!" Despite missing out on some big events in the early days of Luna's life, John is looking forward to experiencing the adorable little tot's first Christmas, but he insists he's not going to shower her with gifts.

Zayn Malik talks about sex life with Gigi Hadid

The former One Direction singer teamed up with Taylor Swift to create the track 'I Don't Wanna Live Forever' as part of the soundtrack for the upcoming 'Fifty Shades Darker' - the second installment in the racy movie franchise - and has hinted that his time in the bedroom with his 21-year-old model girlfriend is similar to the steamy scenes in the movies. During an appearance on US radio station Sirius XM, the DJ asked if he had seen the first installment, 'Fifty Shades of Grey', or read any of the original books by E L James. When the 'Pillowtalk' hitmaker said no, the DJ quipped: "He's lived the movie." Zayn then erupted into laughter, swiftly moving the conversation on when he simply stated: "I like that." Elsewhere in the interview, the 'It's You' singer talked about when he first met the blonde beauty in New York, saying that he was "straight up" about asking her on a date. Asked how he "landed" Gigi, Zayn said: "I don't know, I think you'll have to ask her."



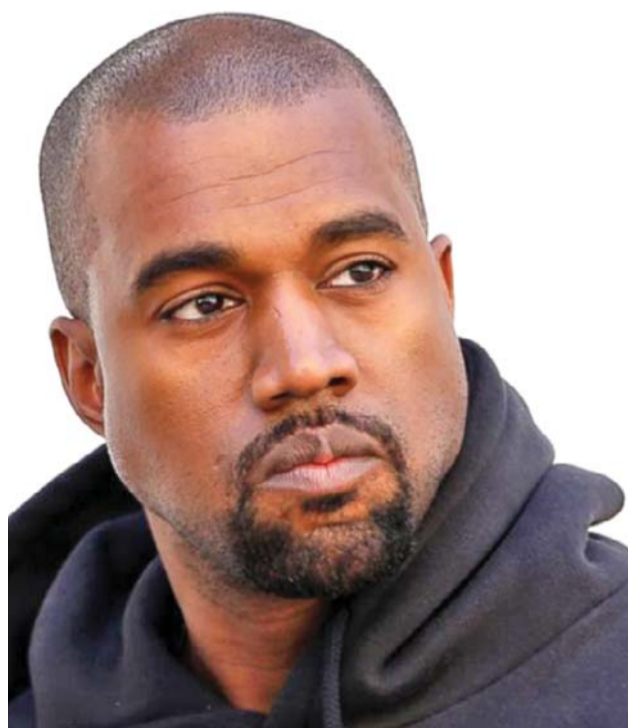


RITA ORA THINKS WOMEN SHOULD BE PROUD OF THEIR CLEAVAGE

The 26-year-old singer appeared at the relaunch of lingerie store Tezenis on Oxford Street in London on Wednesday night and while she flaunted ample assets in a racy black number she said that women should "embrace their body". Responding to claims by Vogue magazine, that baring boobs is not trendy, the 'Body on Me' hitmaker told the crowd at the event: "Cleavage is beautiful. I never really was a trend follower, I'm more of a trend setter so I don't listen to things like that. "I think girls should embrace their body and their cleavages - I think you should be very proud of who you are, where you're from, what color your skin is, what you represent." And the new 'America's Next Top Model' host said she wouldn't be afraid of going completely nude after she did so for Lui magazine in January, but said it would depend on the "timing". She said: "It's all about timing and how I'm feeling and what I want to represent. "At that moment when I did the last one - I really wanted to represent freedom and being able to do that at 25 years old and saying why not.

Mark Wahlberg bought a new car for his mum

The 45-year-old actor has splashed out on some lavish gifts for his family this year, not least of all the brand new Hyundai Azera that the star handed to his mother Alma before they headed out to the Boston premiere of his new movie 'Patriots Day' - which is based on the terrible events of the Boston bombings - on Wednesday. Speaking to 'Entertainment Tonight', Alma said: "I looked out my front door today, and there was this brand new car sitting out there with the big red bow on it! "Don't laugh! He bought me a brand new Hyundai Azera, my favorite car in the world!" But the 'Deepwater Horizon' actor has admitted the car probably wasn't as big of a surprise as he would have liked, as his mother "kept asking" him if he could buy it for her. He said: "She was in love with this Hyundai. She kept asking me, and I kept saying no, and she told my sis that I was getting one anyway, so then I was like, 'Alright, let's just get it for her.' "I wanted it to be a surprise. If you're going to do it, you gotta do it right."



Kanye West didn't handle the 'pressure' of fame very well

The 'Only One' hitmaker was hospitalized in November after suffering from sleep deprivation and exhaustion but things had started going downhill for the rapper in late October. A source said: "The pressure had gotten to him and he didn't handle it well. He made himself exhausted. But [the exhaustion] was a symptom of the problem, not the problem itself ... He wasn't making a lot of sense when he talked, and he was texting a lot of strange stuff to people. Not dangerous, but he just didn't make a lot of sense. "Part of loving Kanye is that he sometimes is talking on a different level from you, and you just listen. But this was a lot more alarming. When Kanye gets like this, he doesn't sleep. So you'd wake up to like 20 texts. The more tired he got from not sleeping, the less sense he was making. He wasn't in a good head space." And whilst Kanye and his wife Kim Kardashian West are reportedly going through a tough patch at the moment, an insider believes it will make the couple's relationship stronger. They told People magazine: "Kanye loves Kim very much, and he adores the kids. He would take a bullet for them. They're his whole world.

Ryan Lochte expecting a child with his fiancée

The Olympic swimmer took to Instagram to reveal Kayla Rae Reid is pregnant with the couple's first child. Sharing a picture of the pair in a swimming pool where Ryan is kissing his fiancée's tummy, he wrote: "My Christmas gift came early this year, can't wait for next year! Best news I've ever received #CLOUD9 #excited #family #love #2017 (sic)" The happy news comes after Ryan revealed he wanted to become a father sooner rather than later. He said: "Before I even got engaged, I wanted a family of my own. I wanted to find the right one first and then have kids with her. Now that I've found the right one, that's something we definitely talk about ... we want kids and I mean, I'm ready to be a dad." And the 32-year-old sportsman also revealed he wants to take a front seat in the planning of the couple's wedding. He added: "That's one of the things that I wanted to do because this is not just her wedding, even though everyone always says it's the woman's wedding, but it's mine too and we're a couple now. "I wanted to be involved as much as possible. I want to help her pick out the flowers, help pick out the cake ... like everything. I want to be right there with her."



Bollywood breaks borders as Indian studios expand distribution footprint

Indian studios have long released their films day-and-date in dozens of countries. The studios' core list of 50 international territories includes North America, Britain, United Arab Emirates, Hong Kong, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Australia, and—barring political tensions—Pakistan. But Bollywood and other indigenous-language productions are increasingly expanding to newer shores. For example, the South Indian historical saga "Baahubali: The Beginning" is set for the biggest rollout in nontraditional territories of any Indian film to date, after grossing \$95 million in the usual international markets.

China, Myanmar, Laos, Indonesia, Thailand, and Taiwan are among the Asian markets that have released the film, with Japan and Korea scheduled for early 2017. Produced by Arka Mediaworks in Tamil, Telugu, and Hindi versions, the epic adventure will also be distributed in 25 Latin American territories. One of the studios leading the global charge is Mumbai-based Eros Intl. This year, its gender-role-reversal hit "Ki & Ka" became the first Bollywood movie to be shown in theaters in Ivory Coast, Zimbabwe, and Gibraltar. The company also released one of the biggest Bollywood blockbusters of 2015, "Bajrangi Bhaijaan," in Morocco, Tunisia, and Poland.

And it pushed further into Central Asia with "Mary Kom," a boxing biopic starring Priyanka Chopra ("Quantic"), which reached Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, and Kyrgyzstan last year. In 2013, the crowd-pleaser "Cocktail" was released across 19 screens in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan and became the first Indian film in the two developing nations to earn more than \$100,000. Like Hollywood, Eros is eyeing the huge China market. Chinese film authorities have granted historical drama "Bajirao Mastani," starring Chopra and Deepika Padukone ("XXX: Return of Xander Cage") a slot for 2017; Eros is planning a 4,000-screen release early in the year. The studio first entered East Asia three years ago, releasing the comedic drama "English Vinglish" in South Korea and then in Japan, where it grossed \$1.5 million.

Eros also has just announced an alliance with major Russian distribution and production company Central Partnership, an affiliate of Gazprom Media Holding, to promote and distribute Indian and Russian content across multiple platforms in both countries. Yash Raj Films, another leading Mumbai studio, has expanded its distribution footprint to include Peru, Brazil, Romania, Kazakhstan, Turkey, Egypt, Portugal, and Mozambique. It was the first Indian studio to release a film in South Korea, 2005's drama "Black," which collected 900,000 admissions. In 2014, the company reaped \$3 million from heist caper "Dhoom: 3" in China.

Related Election Casts Doubt on Hollywood's Relations With China but that figure pales next to the \$19.5 million haul of rival distributor Disney UTV in the Middle Kingdom last year with "PK," a satire on organized religion that went out on 4,600 screens. Though promising, China and Korea haven't yet met Yash Raj's expectations. "We have released a number of films there, and we still find that there's a long way to go," says Avtar Panesar, Yash Raj's vice president of international operations. "There are basic areas that need to be fine-tuned that really come from the different style of working. It will happen slowly but surely. More communication and reporting will be key."

The company's latest film, the romantic crime drama "Befikre," will be released in established international territories Dec 9, with nontraditional markets to follow.

And then there's cyberspace—Indian studios have a keen eye toward distribution via digital platforms. Yash Raj has worldwide deals with iTunes, Netflix, and Google Play. Eros' digital platform, Eros Now, boasts 55 million registered users across 135 countries who have access to 5,000 library titles. The site is part of Eros' strategy of being "platform agnostic," says president of business development Kumar Ahuja. It's a major part of his company's goal, he notes, to bring viewers "the best of Indian entertainment across screens and networks." — Reuters



Models present creations by Indian fashion designer Ravi Bajaj during a show to launch the new BMW Mini Clubman car in Mumbai yesterday. — AFP photos

Indian multiplex leader **PVR** expands 4DX rollout

PVR Cinemas, India's largest cinema exhibition company, is to install Korea's 4DX motion and olfactory technology to ten of its multiplexes. The deal is an extension of an existing agreement between PVR and CJ 4Dplex, part of CJ-CGV. The deal was announced last week on the sidelines of the CineAsia convention in Hong Kong.

"4DX offers an experience that is not only impossible to replicate at home, but also enhances the overall viewing experience. With more global exposure, the expectations of audiences are increasing as they look for added experiences that supplement

the on-screen viewing. PVR, being an innovator in the cinema exhibition space in India, aims to fulfill this expectation by aligning itself with the world leaders in motion picture technology," said Ajay Bijli, Ajay Bijli, PVR's chairman MD.

PVR cinemas currently have a total count of 557 screens at 121 properties in 48 cities. The company first installed 4DX in one of its complexes in New Delhi. The new roll-out includes PVR's highest grossing theaters in prime in Bangalore and Mumbai. — Reuters

Dubai Film Festival



UAE's Abdulla al-Kaabi receives the 'Best Muhr Emirati feature' award from Sheikh Mansoor bin Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum during the closing ceremony of the 13th Dubai Film festival on December 14, 2016 at Madinat Jumeirah resort in Dubai. — AFP Photos



Kurdistan's director and actor, Hussein Hassan receives the 'Best Muhr fiction feature' award from Sheikh Mansoor bin Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum.



Saudi filmmaker Bader Al-Homoud receives the 'Best Muhr Gulf Short' award from Sheikh Mansoor bin Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum.



Lebanese writer and director Mounia Akl receives the special prize of the jury in the 'Muhr short' category from Sheikh Mansoor bin Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum.



Saudi director Mohammed al-Holayyil receives the 'Muhr Gulf Short' award from Sheikh Mansoor bin Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum.



Actress Julia Kassar receives the 'Best actress' award in the Muhr feature category from Sheikh Mansoor bin Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum.



Lebanese director, Eliane Raheb, receives the 'Special jury prize Best Muhr feature' award from Sheikh Mansoor bin Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum.



Actor Ali Sobhi receives the 'Best actor' award in the Muhr feature category from Sheikh Mansoor bin Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum.



Egyptian director Mohammed Hammad receives the 'Best director' award from Sheikh Mansoor bin Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum.

18TH-CENTURY CHINESE IMPERIAL SEAL SELLS FOR RECORD 21 MILLION EUROS

An 18th-century Chinese imperial seal sold for a record 21 million Euros in Paris on Wednesday—more than 20 times its estimate, the Drouot auction house said. Decorated with stylized dragons, the symbol of imperial authority, the extremely rare stamp in red and beige nephrite jade comes from the Qianlong period (1736-1795). It was snapped up by an unnamed Chinese collector after a furious bidding battle between would-be telephone buyers and those in the salesroom.

The previous record for a seal had been set in 2011 when one was bought for 161 million Yuan, around 14 million Euros (\$15 million). The Chinese imperial seal, remarkable for being "very red, almost blood" red according to Asian art expert Alice Jossaume, had been expected to sell for between 800,000 and one million Euros. It belonged to the Emperor Qianlong, who is regarded as the longest serving emperor in Chinese history, holding ultimate power long after he officially retired.

"The Qianlong period is highly prized, it's

flourishing, it's the absolute pinnacle," added Jossaume. "All pieces from this period are highly sought after." Under this hugely capable and cultured emperor, the Qing dynasty reached its apogee of wealth and power, almost doubling in size during his six decade reign. The nine dragons that decorate the seal's sides symbolize both his masculine power and imperial authority, the auction house said. On the reverse the seal included an inscription written in an ancient script saying: "Treasure of the imperial brush of Qianlong." The emperor was known to be a talented calligrapher and poet and this seal was one he used to sign his works.

Protector of the arts

Qianlong's reputation was one of a protector of the arts and literature, as well as a compulsive collector. He is said to have acquired one of the biggest world art collections and founded the library of four treasures, the largest collection of books in Chinese history. The empire's population rose to some 400 million people as he

expanded its borders, but by the end of Qianlong's long reign China was slipping into slow decline. Still, the Qing dynasty, which came from the Manchu minority from Manchuria in northern China, staggered on until 1912.

The seal was acquired by a young French naval doctor in China in the late 19th century and has remained in the same family since. According to Drouot, the young officer visited China many times and built an impressive collection through his "taste, culture and the friendships he was able to build up over the years". Two paintings by the Japanese master Katsushika Hokusai—"36 Views of Mount Fuji" and "Great Wave at Kanagawa"—from the same collection were also going under the hammer with estimates of £30,000 Euros (\$32,000). — AFP

A handout picture shows a Chinese imperial seal of the Qianlong era before its auction at the Hotel Drouot. — AFP



COOKING ON DEADLINE:

SHORTCUT MOUSSAKA

By Katie Workman

A friend recently became a first-time grandmother, and when we went out to lunch she was exhausted. She had been cooking meals for the new parents, and collapsed into her chair saying she hadn't finished making a moussaka before she had to leave. "You," she said, "could do the world a big service by coming up with a quick and easy moussaka." Moussaka is, in short, an eggplant and meat casserole, one of Greece's national dishes. I did ask why she picked such a labor-intensive dish to make the young couple, who probably would have been grateful with a baked ziti. But the notion of a simple moussaka stuck in my mind.

I started looking at moussaka recipes, and remembered why I never make it. The bechamel sauce; the slow-simmered tomato sauce; the thinly sliced, salted and fried eggplant (in some cases lining the casserole pan!); the sliced, sautéed or mashed potatoes; the finely chopped lamb shoulder. I started to feel tired just thinking about it. But I owed my friend a recipe.

Traditional Greek cooks will probably flinch and shake their heads when they see some of the shortcuts I've taken. The potatoes are diced and baked, and then get a casual mush in the casserole pan. I used Japanese eggplants, which have few seeds and less bitterness, thus eliminating the need to salt them, and they are diced and baked alongside the potatoes (less oil, less hands on time). The tomato sauce is created right into the sautéed lamb, which is bought pre-ground. And the bechamel is replaced with a quickly stirred-together sauce made from eggs, creme fraiche and yogurt. A sprinkle of kashkaval cheese (a Greek sheep's milk cheese) finishes it off, but if you can't find that, grated Parmesan will do just fine.

You can make all the components a day ahead and then assemble and bake. This is a nice dish for holiday entertaining - comforting and indulgent at the same time - and you can assemble the casserole early in the day and bake it just before dinner. Serve with a big, leafy, green salad. I can't yet picture the day I am cooking as a grandmother. But for the first time, I can envision making moussaka without needing a vacation afterward.

**Ingredients**

1-1/2 pounds Japanese eggplant, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch cubes (about 4 or 5 eggplants)
2 pounds Yukon golden potatoes, peeled and cut into 1/2-inch cubes
4 tablespoons olive oil, divided
1 onion, chopped
2 garlic cloves, minced
2 pounds ground lamb
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
Salt and freshly ground pepper
1 15-ounce can crushed tomatoes
1 bay leaf
1/2 cup chopped fresh parsley
2 large eggs, lightly beaten
1 8-ounce tub creme fraiche

1/2 cup half and half
1/3 cup grated kashkaval cheese or Parmesan

Preparation

Preheat the oven to 375 F. Grease a 2- or 3-quart shallow baking dish. Spray two rimmed baking sheets with nonstick cooking spray and place the cubed eggplant on one of the baking sheets, the potatoes on the other. Drizzle 1 tablespoon of the olive oil over each of the sheets and toss well. Spread out the vegetables in a single layer, and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Roast for about 40 minutes, until golden and tender.

Meanwhile, heat a large skillet over medium heat, add 1 more tablespoon olive oil, and sauté the onion and garlic until tender, about 4 minutes. Add the ground lamb and sauté until the lamb is completely browned, about 6 minutes. Add the cinnamon, nutmeg (if using) and season with salt and pepper. Add the crushed

tomatoes and bay leaf, bring to a simmer (there won't be much liquid, but enough to bubble slightly), and cook, stirring occasionally, for 15 minutes. Stir in the balsamic vinegar and chopped parsley.

While the lamb sauce is simmering, in a small bowl combine the eggs, creme fraiche or yogurt and half and half. Season with salt and pepper and stir to blend well.

Place the cooked potatoes in the prepared baking dish, spreading them out over the bottom, and use a fork or potato masher to lightly crush them. Remove the bay leaf and discard, then distribute the lamb in the tomato sauce over the potatoes. Finish with an even layer of the baked eggplant. Evenly pour the cream mixture over the casserole, then sprinkle the grated cheese over it. Bake for about 45 minutes, until bubbly and browned on top. Serve hot. — AP

Ready for breaded cutlets of a different kind? Cauliflower!

By Sara Moulton

Let's say that one of your New Year's resolutions is to eat healthier and lose some weight. Join the crowd, right? In practice, what we probably mean - among other things - is that we plan to eat more vegetables and less meat. It's a challenge. But if you try this dish - a wonderful vegetarian version of breaded or chicken cutlets swimming in a marinara sauce - you will see how easy and satisfying it can be to turn a resolution into reality.

You start by slicing a whole head of cauliflower into cutlets. The idea is to end up with thick slabs of the vegetable. One easy method for doing this is to cut the head in half down the center, then turn each half on its cut side and cut the halves into 1/2-inch-thick slabs. There will always be a few loose bits from the ends, but those also can be breaded and cooked as described below.

You'll want to take care with the breading, too. It's a three-step process: dust the steaks lightly with cornstarch, coat them well with an egg mixture, then finish them with a layer of breadcrumbs. This is standard operating procedure among culinary pros. The three layers provide a more substantial crust than any other single coating or combo of coatings.

Now it's time to brown your vegetable cutlets. You could do it in a skillet - just as you would a breaded meat cutlet - but that would require a ton of oil (those breadcrumbs just soak it up). And remember, it's the New Year and you're on a new path. So we bake them instead, which requires a lot less oil. The key is to place the cutlets fairly close to the heat source. In my electric oven that's the top of the stove. If they're not properly browned at the end of the prescribed cooking time, just leave them in the oven a little longer. Then dig in. The biggest flavor is going to come from the marinara sauce. Your brain likely won't care at all whether the cutlet is veal or vegetable. But your body will thank you.

BREADED CAULIFLOWER CUTLETS WITH MARINARA

Start to finish: 1 hour 15 minutes (45 minutes active)

Servings: 4

1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
2 teaspoons minced garlic
1 large head cauliflower
3 large eggs, lightly beaten
1/2 cup fat-free plain Greek yogurt
1 teaspoon salt, divided
1/2 cup cornstarch
1 3/4 cups panko breadcrumbs
1 ounce grated Parmesan cheese
1 1/2 cups speedy marinara (recipe below) or store-bought marinara, heated

Preparation

Heat the oven to 400 F. In a small bowl, combine the oil and the garlic. Set aside. Pull off any leaves from the stem end of the cauliflower and trim off just enough of the stem so the cauliflower stands flat on the counter. Slice the cauliflower head in half down the center top to bottom. One at a time, set each half onto its cut side. Starting from one end of each half, slice crosswise to create 1/2-inch-thick slices. This will yield 3 to 4 cutlets from the center of each half, with the small ends being chunks. The chunks can be prepared as the cutlets, or reserved for another use.

In a shallow bowl or pie plate, whisk together the eggs, yogurt, 3 tablespoons of water and 1/2 teaspoon of the salt. On a sheet of kitchen parchment, combine the cornstarch with the remaining 1/2 teaspoon of salt, stirring the mixture with a fork to combine. On a second sheet of parchment, combine the panko with the cheese, stirring with a fork.

One at a time, coat the cauliflower cutlets (and trimmings, if using) on both sides with the cornstarch, knocking off the excess. Next, dip each in the egg mixture, coating them on both sides and letting the excess drip off. Finally, coat them with the panko mixture, patting the crumbs on well. Set aside. Strain the garlic oil through a mesh strainer, pressing hard on the garlic to get out all the oil. Discard the garlic (or reserve for another use).

On a rimmed baking sheet, spread half of the oil in an even coating. Set the baking sheet on the oven's top shelf and heat for 5 minutes. Carefully remove the pan from the oven and quickly arrange the prepared cauliflower on it in a single layer. Return the pan to the oven and bake for 15 minutes. Remove the pan from the oven, drizzle the tops of the cauliflower evenly with the remaining oil, turn them over, then bake for another 15 minutes. Divide the cauliflower among 4 serving plates, then serve topped with marinara. — AP





26

Friday Times

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2016



Sudoku 9x9 Puzzle - Sheet 2

Every row, column and mini-grid must contain the numbers 1 through 9. Don't guess - use logic!

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

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

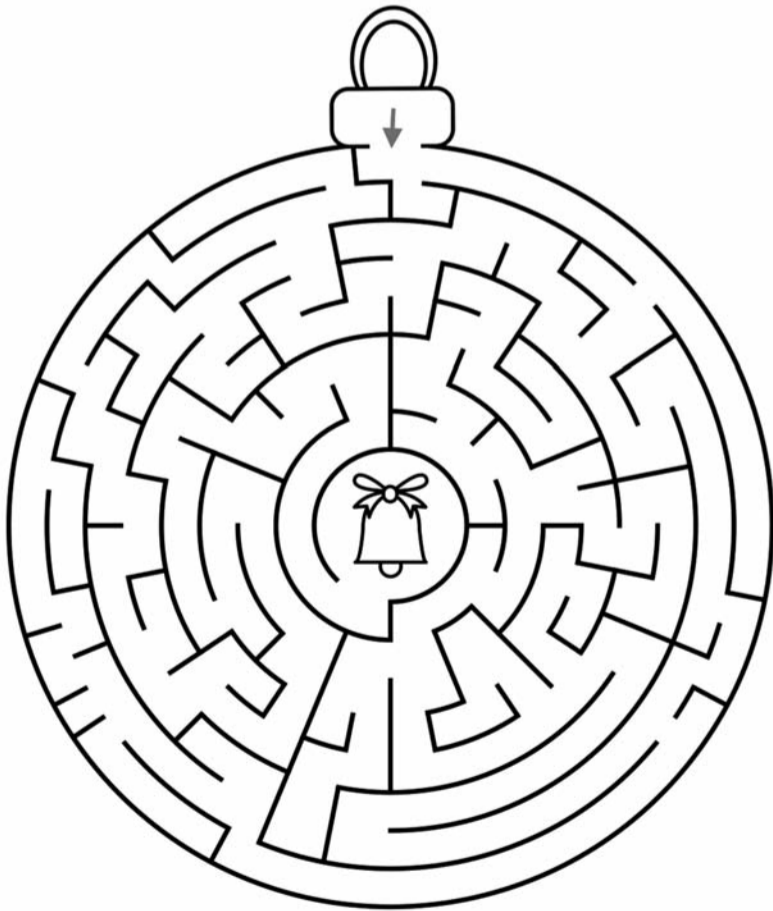
1			4		7			8
		8	6	3	2	7		
		6				4		
6	4			8			9	3
	5			9			8	
3	8			4			7	5
		2					5	
		5	9	2	8	3		
9			1		5			7



Christmas Decoration Maze

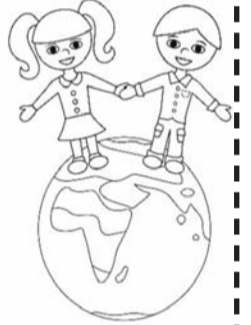


Can you find a way to the bell in the middle of this Christmas decoration? Start at the red arrow.



Countries Alphabet Challenge

Can you come up with country whose name begins with A, then one for B, and so on, right through to the letter Z?

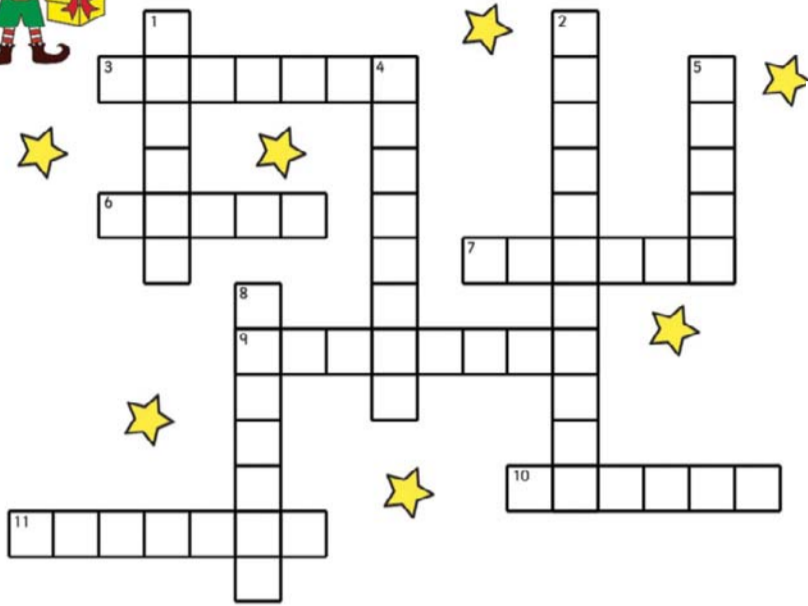


- | | | | |
|---|-------|---|-------|
| A | _____ | N | _____ |
| B | _____ | O | _____ |
| C | _____ | P | _____ |
| D | _____ | Q | _____ |
| E | _____ | R | _____ |
| F | _____ | S | _____ |
| G | _____ | T | _____ |
| H | _____ | U | _____ |
| I | _____ | V | _____ |
| J | _____ | W | _____ |
| K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





Christmas Crossword



Across

3. Hang these on the Christmas tree.
6. Santa's helpers.
7. If you eat too much you will be stuffed like the bird.
9. They pull Santa's sleigh.
10. Open this calendar one day at a time!
11. When Santa comes down this watch out for the soot!

Down

1. Silent Night and Hark the Herald Angels Sing.
2. Christmas cookie made in to houses or men.
4. Hang it up on Christmas Eve.
5. It's green and spiky with red berries.
8. Pull with a bang to get the hat and toy inside.

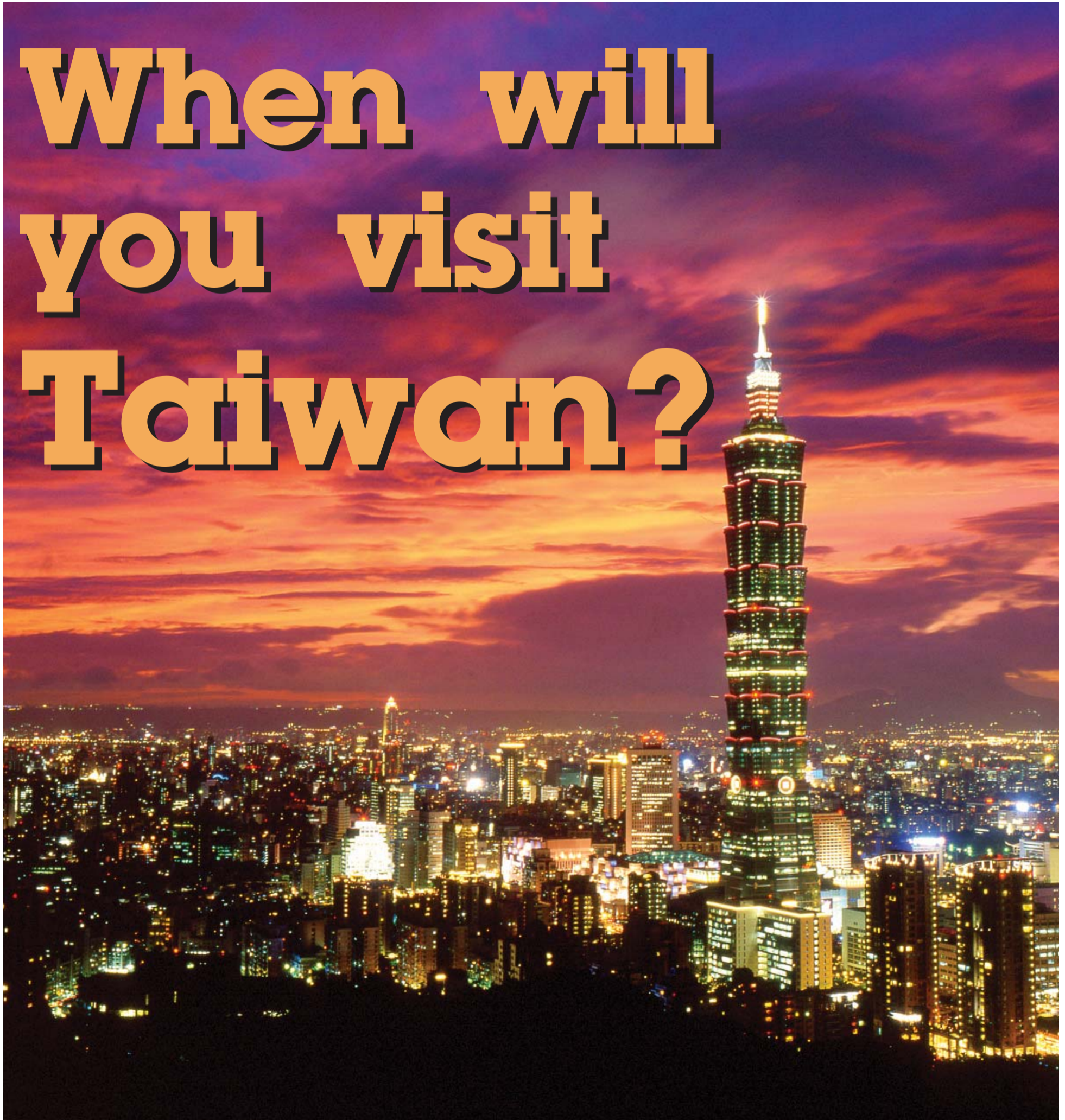
Count the Christmas Present

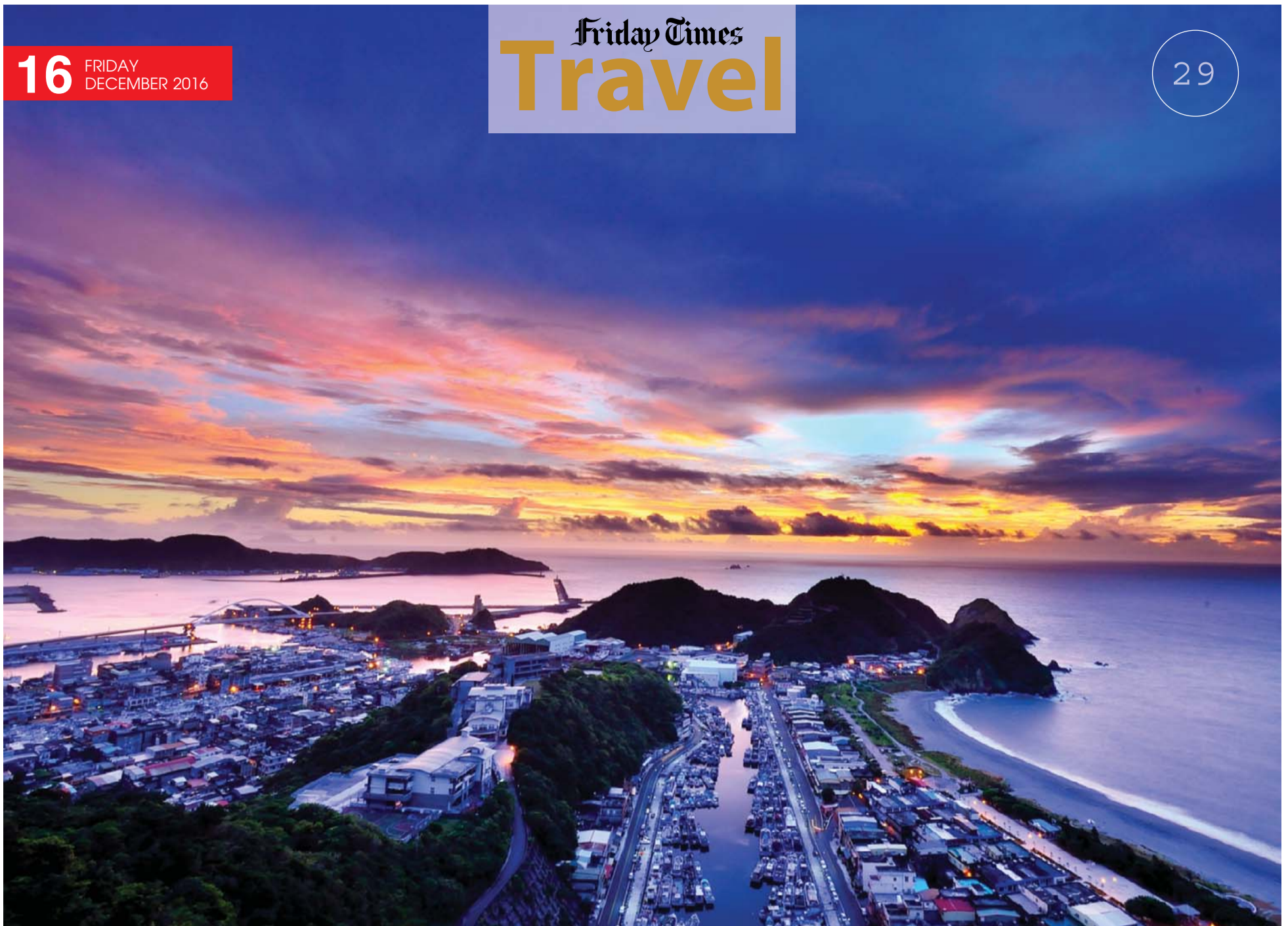




Friday Times
Travel

**When will
you visit
Taiwan?**





By Abigail Mathias

When it comes to cultural holiday destinations, there is one that doesn't fail. If you are looking for friendly people, exotic food and lush natural greenery, Taiwan is your place.

According to a survey conducted by Inter Nations, an online expat community, Taiwan was voted the best place in the world for immigrants. The island-country also made it to the top 10 world's safest countries for the past few years. In an increasingly edgy global environment, this goes a long way. In two visits to the country, I've always encountered Taiwanese people who smile, make the effort to speak in broken English and thank you profusely for visiting their country. These aren't just people from the tourist circuit. It is the complete stranger on the street and the friendly fruit seller who may not speak a word of English.

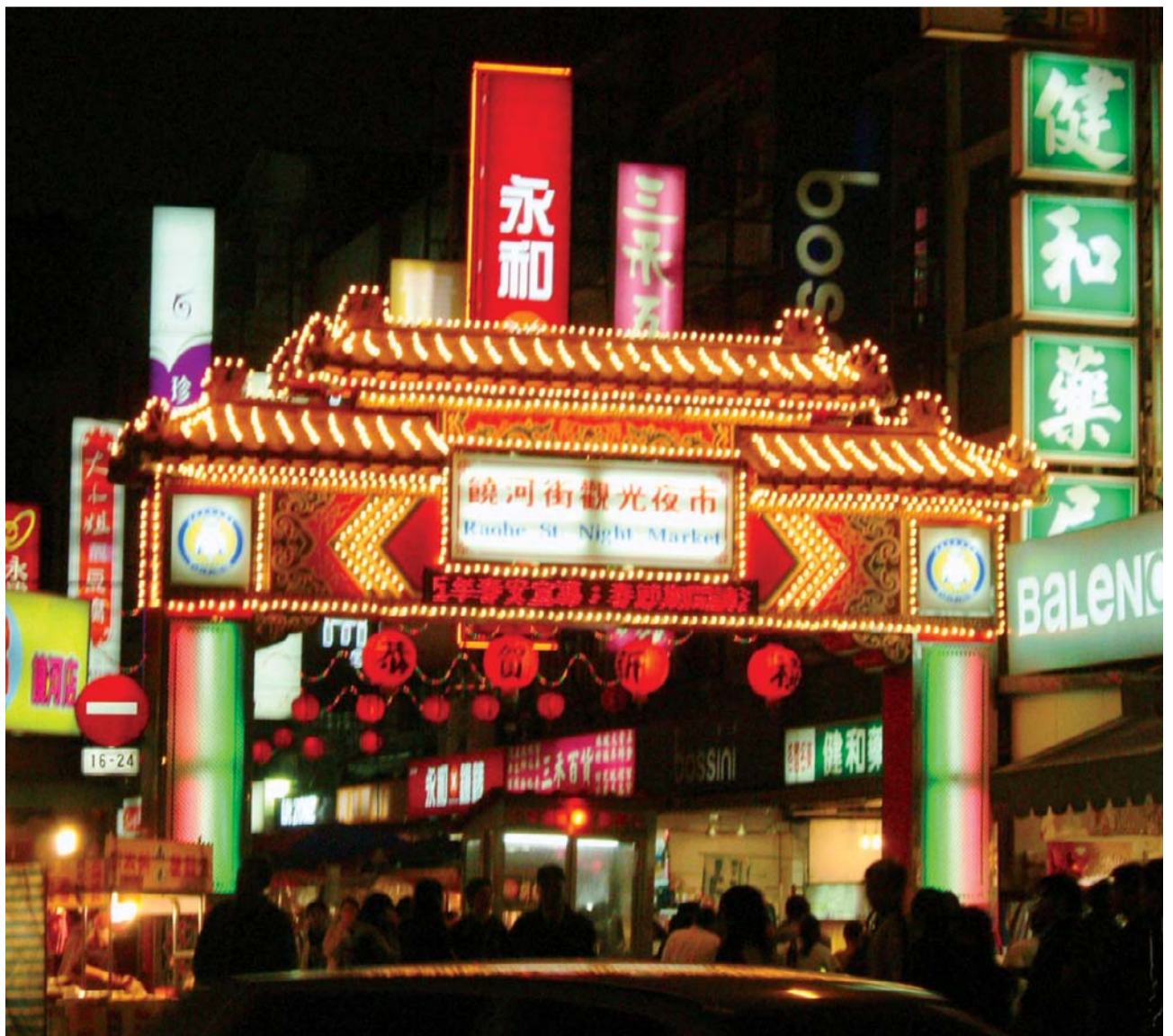
Sight and sounds

The capital Taipei, is often the first stop for visitors. Much like any busy city, it is brimming with sights and sounds that guests to the region will be familiar with. Take in the view of the 91st floor of Taipei 101 tower. It is the tallest building in the country and the world, till the UAE's Burj Khalifa was built in 2009. Taiwan's tower was built to withstand typhoons which are frequent in the country. It has one of the fastest elevators in the world as well which is a marvel of engineering. The outer viewing deck of the tower is its most scenic. A busy mall downstairs carries the biggest international labels.

Once the tower visit is done, stroll along the night markets where the city truly comes alive. From whacky cell phone covers to swanky leather shoes, you can find it all here. There is also a helping of strong aromas from freshly prepared food here. In Taiwan most people don't prefer to cook. They order food boxes or eat out, which explains why the street carts are so busy.

Bargaining for items is a must. Chances are that if the vendor doesn't agree to your terms, you will find it a few steps down the road. You are most likely to leave with something you never really knew you wanted in the first place.

The Shilin night market is the largest and most famous in Taipei. It is often open even at 2 am. The Ximending (pronounced as Shinding) Pedestrian area is also a popular hang-





out for tourists and the local youth. Taxis and Ubers are easily available till the wee hours. The markets are located within walking distance of the shopping malls making it hard to resist the urge to shop.

The blue and white Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall is built with a massive courtyard. Built in honor of the first president of the Republic of China, the Kai-shek memorial, holds a change of guard ceremony on most days. The entrance to the venue has a massive white arched gateway with ornate designs. Once inside, visitors can view relics from the president's life. The surrounding park was named Liberty Square back in 2007.

Visitors can drive through Yangmingshan National Park and discover thermal springs at the Beitou Hot Spring Museum. The springs are believed to relieve stress and are common way for locals to unwind. Don't be puzzled when you pass a sign reading 'Formosa.' It is the former name of Taiwan. Translated from the Portuguese term for 'beautiful,'

the title of beautiful isle was given to the country by passing Portuguese mariners in 1544.

Extraordinary experience

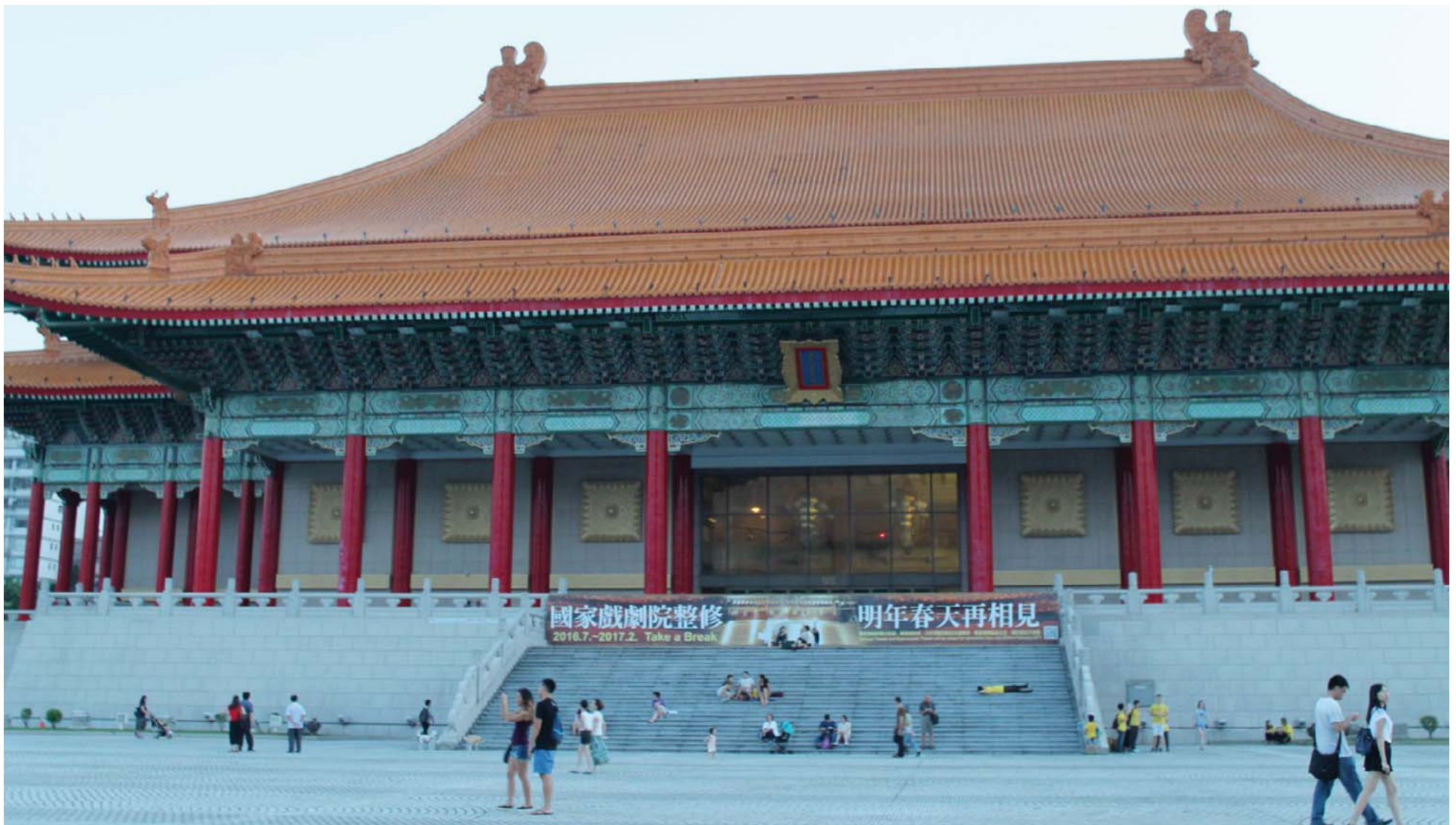
When people refer to heaven on earth, the Sun Moon Lake could easily qualify. Located in the Yuchi Township, Nantou County, the area around the lake is home to Taiwan's aboriginal Thao tribe. The landscape is made up of winding roads where cyclists take in the evening breeze while the sun offers its fading light over the largest vessel of water in the country.

The dramatic views attract honeymooners and those amazed by spectacular sunrises. Staying at the Fleur De Chine offers a taste of luxury and tranquility. Opt for the lake facing room which comes with its very own hot spring bath. It is an extraordinary experience to wake up to the scenery of lush green mountains. A silent temple could be spotted from

my balcony. The hotel also has an indoor pool and a separate community hot springs.

Many visitors choose to catch the unique sunrise of the Sun Moon Lake. Our group woke up and was out of the hotel before 5 am. We weren't able to trek up a small hill fast enough, though we did meet a jolly bunch of local people who had driven all the way from another town. Though most of us didn't understand each other, there were a lot of laughs and selfies taken that morning. It isn't hard to fall in love with Taiwan or its people. Their warmth remains with you long after you've left their shores. This was my second visit and I could find myself making a mental note to return once more.

Abigail Mathias is a Senior Writer and lifestyle Blogger born in Kuwait and based in the UAE. Her blog [ab:original](http://abigail-mathias.blogspot.ae/) carries an array of feature pieces and can be accessed at <http://abigail-mathias.blogspot.ae/>





Aries (March 21-April 19)

Financial gains are possible through a job-related event. A shared belonging or stock could bring in monetary gains. Be sure to discuss any desire to sell or profit by this gain with a partner-if ownership is shared. Failure to do so could create some really bad vibrations. This would be the perfect time to schedule a meeting for planning your next adventure; now you can afford one. This could also mean that you are earning enough to move into a nice home for growing a family. Do something that will help you improve yourself in the future. Learn a musical instrument, sew your own clothes or volunteer to help a needy person or charity. Music is more than likely to play an important role for you now as part of a listening audience this evening-relax.



Taurus (April 20-May 20)

Working on a project today, you will find progress satisfactory. Later this afternoon, employees may be preparing for a special visitor; this could be the owner or it could be an investor. Whatever the case, all will work to everyone's advantage. You will show honest and sincere appreciation and arouse an enthusiastic attitude with all who come across your path. Someone older than yourself could be engaged in a conversation with you this afternoon. Others may find you a patient listener. Figuring out some new ways to communicate or taking on an easy manner before entering into a dialogue make the interactions go well. A difficult child this evening or a difficult neighbor brings you the opportunity to demonstrate your abilities; cool.



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Because you have been able to stay ahead of the delays or cancellations in the workplace, you may be looking at a little bonus this year. If there is not a financial bonus for you, it will be something you like. Today you give a lot of thought to your goals and whether you need to change anything that might not be working in your life. A neighborhood planning committee may want your suggestions on some city proposal. Someone will realize just how much your creative and intuitive mind benefits you and others-your ideas are supported. Good things come as a result of your efforts. This could be in the form of college help for the teenagers in your neighborhood or just taking turns to be available for tutoring. Dare to learn something new.



Cancer (June 21-July 22)

A better understanding of your financial affairs and an urge to invest may find you around banks and account offices today. You may feel rushed into making decisions. However, it would be a wise choice to take all the information you have obtained under advisement for a few days. You will eventually be able to make an excellent choice for your investment. While gathered near a warm fireplace this evening, you find yourself in a position to entertain a small audience. You can really jump in and enjoy telling bizarre stories, especially if you want to make a point. Lots of people enjoy your version of a particular holiday story. Perhaps it is a bible story or a story from Dickens; whatever the case, you enjoy captivating an audience-small or large.



Leo (July 23-August 22)

You have good practical problem-solving techniques on the job today. You are able to communicate to your superiors just what you see that needs improvement or eliminating. You have a talent for taking action and getting things taken care of, with very little fuss or muss. You obviously make it a point to show a great deal of understanding and sensitivity to other people's needs. You may take a young person under your wing today and help him or her begin to learn a new skill. You can turn the difficult child into one that is more interested in learning what other things he or she can accomplish. Let yourself have the pleasure of dreaming this afternoon. There is an opportunity to let your imagination loose. Think about the sun, moon and stars.



Virgo (August 23-September 22)

Self-expression works quite well now and should lend itself to your special ideas and thoughts. You should find others responding to your way of thinking because you are very eloquent in speech and communication. Expect to hold a pleasant conversation with someone you find captivating, perhaps a mentor or a teacher or a customer who has a few wise ideas. You somehow seem to understand what others want at this time. You could find yourself making some decisions that affect others today. People value your ability to make such commonsense determinations on their behalf. Stability and dependability take care of a deep emotional need. You may feel the need to be entertained later this evening. You will not be disappointed.



Libra (September 23-October 22)

The folks around you may give you some extra recognition or support today. You accomplish quite a lot and much of your accomplishment just now is in working with a customer or customers that do not speak your language. Measurements in another language are confusing as much as words and you are good at using pictures to teach as well as understand what is needed. Later today someone that trusts your judgment asks you for help in resolving some very personal issues. You will have no problem in understanding and will be able to offer some important insight. This evening you will find you are very much in touch with your emotions although a few people could be rowdy. You may begin to plan on new places for new social activities.



Scorpio (October 23-November 21)

Expect yourself to be challenged in some way today. The situation you find yourself in will have a positive end with your decisive action. Respect is an important issue and boundaries may need defining. This could be with people, property, job identity, etc. Financial security is extremely important to you now. It is time to reassess your progress along this line and to perhaps make some new goals. Your intuitive powers are predominant at this time and you may be getting some insight into some new computer software that will help you work more efficiently. It might be wise to check with your employer regarding the guidelines and rules pertaining to personal and creative ventures you might want to enjoy apart from the workplace.



Sagittarius (November 22-December 21)

Fortunately, your childhood was sprinkled with people from whom you could learn and develop an honorable character. You have become an idea person with a talent for reaching a broad scope of people. It is possible that you will reach many people through your art, but it is also possible that you will lead people with your organizational skills. People accept your ideas easily. In midlife, you will find your self-expressive personality attracts many rewards. Money, business and domestic problems are solved with your ability to change a concept. Enjoy a bit of reflection this evening, perhaps looking through the photo albums or creating a bit of poetry as you think about the people that made a difference in your life.



Capricorn (December 22-January 19)

You could come up with an easier way in which to achieve a quick turnaround time regarding a time-consuming project today. The wheels in your head just keep turning and you will find this analytical thinking beneficial for the whole day. Having and appreciating things of beauty and value play a big role in your life this afternoon. Provided you do not spend it all on the fancy things that catch your eye for gift-giving, this can be a financially favorable period. It's probably not a time that you feel very outgoing and you would not want to present yourself publicly. A feeling of peace and stability on the emotional level could play a somewhat prominent role in your life at this time. Music may stir your soul and be more important to you now.



Aquarius (January 20- February 18)

You are able to listen, discern what is needed to gain a grip on the progress of this day. By the end of this workday you encourage a group meeting to run through some of the things each person did to help make the day run successfully. It may be that inventory was taken and several extra workers have been hired. Radical new approaches to health, diet and exercise can change your life now, as a whole new health-consciousness comes into play. The way you work is transformed as well; there's a high-tech element to this, plus a reorganization of the way you work with other people. At home this afternoon you may find it necessary to consider a reorganization of some kind and become more conservative in the long run. Your creative thinking is at work.



Pisces (February 19-March 20)

You may be feeling a kind of spiritual wanderlust tugging at you now, as you long to expand your horizons and reach for the utmost. There could be an assortment of areas that come into play, such as travel-perhaps internationally as well as domestically-politics, religion, education and something in law enforcement. It takes rain as well as sunshine to make a rainbow, and with your determination to learn and grow, you can be a beam of light to shower others with your same enthusiasm toward life and learning. You may find new solutions or inventions because of allowing your creative and intuitive sides to come forth. You may believe there is no security on earth-there is opportunity. There is new opportunity to be with loved ones this evening-enjoy.

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 Faso	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	00238	Netherlands (Holland)	0031
Chad	00235	Netherlands Antilles	00599
Chile	0056	New Caledonia	00687
China	0086	New Zealand	0064
Colombia	0057	Nicaragua	00505
Comoros	00269	Niger	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

OSN MOVIES HD ACTION

- 00:15 The Dead Lands
- 02:15 The Frozen
- 04:00 Swelter
- 06:00 Unstoppable
- 08:00 Pompeii
- 10:00 47 Ronin
- 12:15 Legendary: Tomb Of The Dragon
- 14:00 Unstoppable
- 15:45 Pompeii
- 17:45 47 Ronin
- 20:00 X-Men: The Last Stand
- 22:00 Montana

ANIMAL PLANET HD

- 00:50 River Monsters: Lair Of Giants
- 01:45 Bondi Vet
- 02:40 Wildest Europe
- 03:35 Tanked
- 04:25 Wildest Africa
- 05:15 Gator Boys
- 06:02 River Monsters: Lair Of Giants
- 06:49 Wildest Europe
- 07:36 Call Of The Wildman
- 08:00 Call Of The Wildman
- 08:25 Too Cute! Pint-Sized
- 09:15 Wildest Europe
- 10:10 Mutant Planet
- 11:05 Tanked
- 12:00 Too Cute! Pint-Sized
- 12:55 Bondi Vet
- 13:50 Wildest Europe
- 14:45 Gator Boys
- 15:40 Mutant Planet
- 16:35 Tanked
- 17:30 Wildest Africa
- 18:25 River Monsters: Lair Of Giants
- 19:20 Big Fish Man
- 20:15 Tanked
- 21:10 The Real Lion Queen
- 22:05 Mutant Planet
- 23:00 Big Fish Man
- 23:55 Gator Boys

BBC FIRST

- 00:00 The Detectorists
- 00:30 Doctors
- 01:00 Eastenders
- 01:30 Holby City
- 02:30 Benidorm
- 03:30 The Detectorists
- 04:05 Doctors
- 04:35 Eastenders
- 05:05 Call The Midwife
- 06:00 Holby City
- 07:00 Doctors
- 07:30 Doctors
- 08:00 Eastenders
- 08:30 Eastenders
- 09:05 Casualty
- 10:00 Stella
- 10:50 Lapland: Christmas 2011
- 12:10 New Tricks
- 13:05 Casualty
- 14:00 Holby City
- 15:00 Doctors
- 15:30 Eastenders
- 16:00 Stella
- 16:45 Lapland: Christmas 2011
- 18:00 Doctors
- 18:30 Doctors
- 19:05 The Coroner
- 20:00 Undercover
- 21:00 The Collection
- 21:55 War And Peace
- 22:45 Hunderby
- 23:15 Him & Her
- 23:45 Doctors

COMEDY CENTRAL

- 00:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
- 01:00 Killer Kids
- 02:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos
- 03:00 Tbc
- 04:00 Crimes That Shook Australia
- 05:00 Killer Kids
- 06:00 Britain's Darkest Taboos
- 07:00 The First 48
- 08:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
- 09:00 Crime Stories
- 10:00 The First 48
- 11:00 It Takes A Killer
- 11:30 Frenemies
- 12:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 13:00 Killers
- 14:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
- 15:00 Crime Stories

- 16:00 It Takes A Killer
- 16:30 Frenemies
- 17:00 The First 48
- 18:00 Killers
- 19:00 Crimes That Shook Britain
- 20:00 Fred Dinenage: Murder Casebook
- 21:00 It Takes A Killer
- 21:30 Frenemies
- 22:00 Crime Stories
- 23:00 50 Ways To Kill Your Lover

crime & investigation network

- 00:00 South Park
- 00:25 Tosh.0
- 00:50 Tosh.0
- 01:15 Tosh.0
- 01:40 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
- 02:05 Chris D'Elia: White Male, Black Comic
- 03:00 Ridiculousness
- 03:25 Ridiculousness
- 03:50 Workaholics
- 04:15 Workaholics
- 04:40 Ridiculousness
- 05:05 Key And Peele
- 05:30 Workaholics
- 05:55 Workaholics
- 06:20 Tosh.0
- 06:50 Tosh.0
- 07:15 Workaholics
- 07:40 Workaholics
- 08:05 Workaholics
- 08:30 Key And Peele
- 08:55 Tosh.0
- 09:20 Tosh.0
- 09:45 Nathan For You
- 10:10 Nathan For You
- 10:35 Ridiculousness
- 11:00 Tosh.0
- 11:25 Hungry Investors
- 12:15 Workaholics
- 12:40 Key And Peele
- 13:05 Key And Peele
- 13:30 Tosh.0
- 13:55 Tosh.0
- 14:20 Tosh.0
- 14:45 Workaholics
- 15:10 Workaholics
- 15:35 Tosh.0
- 16:00 Tosh.0
- 16:30 Workaholics
- 16:55 Nathan For You
- 17:25 Tosh.0
- 17:50 Coaching Bad

- 18:39 Ridiculousness
- 19:03 Ridiculousness
- 19:27 Key And Peele
- 19:50 Key And Peele
- 20:13 I Live With Models
- 20:37 Brotherhood
- 21:00 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah
- 21:30 Another Period
- 21:54 Broad City
- 22:18 South Park
- 22:42 Ugly Americans
- 23:05 Chappelle's Show
- 23:30 The Daily Show With Trevor Noah

Discovery Family

- 00:30 Prototype This
- 01:20 Secret Space Escapes
- 02:10 How The Universe Works
- 03:00 Untamed & Uncut
- 03:50 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
- 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 Animal Planet's Most Outrageous
- 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 Animal Planet's Most Outrageous
- 12:50 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
- 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
- 23:40 Bear Grylls: Born Survivor
- IDX HD

Disney Channel HD

- 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
- 02:15 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
- 07:25 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
- 10:25 A.N.T. Farm
- 10:50 That's So Raven
- 11:15 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 Pocahontas
- 20:05 Dog With A Blog
- 20:30 Jessie
- 20:55 Liv And Maddie
- 21:20 Austin & Ally
- 22:10 Girl Meets World
- 22:35 H2O: Just Add Water
- 23:00 Binny And The Ghost
- 23:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch
- 23:50 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch

Disney Junior

- 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
- 04:20 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 Doc McStuffins
- 12:00 Goldie & Bear

- 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 Welcome To Moustuffinsville
- 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

Discovery Channel HD

- 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 What's In The Barn?
- 05:00 How It's Made: Dream Cars
- 05:30 How Do They Do It?
- 06:00 You Have Been Warned
- 06:50 Incredible Engineering Blunders: Fixed
- 07:40 Magic Of Science
- 08:05 Magic Of Science
- 08:30 Railroad Australia
- 09:20 Survive That!
- 10:10 Dive Wars Australia
- 11:00 Running Wild With Bear Grylls
- 11:50 Car vs Wild
- 12:40 Telescope
- 13:30 Fast N' Loud: Demolition Theatre
- 14:20 Sacred Steel Bikes
- 15:10 How It's Made: Dream Cars
- 15:35 How It's Made: Dream Cars
- 16:00 Street Outlaws
- 16:50 Street Outlaws
- 17:40 Street Outlaws
- 18:30 Street Outlaws
- 19:20 Street Outlaws
- 20:10 Street Outlaws
- 21:00 Fast N' Loud: Demolition Theatre
- 21:50 Sacred Steel Bikes
- 22:40 Street Outlaws
- 23:30 Telescope

Disney XD

- 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
- 10:45 Annedroids
- 11:10 Counterfeit Cat
- 11:35 K.C. Undercover
- 12:00 K.C. Undercover
- 12:30 Gravity Falls
- 12:55 Lab Rats Elite Force
- 13:20 Lab Rats Elite Force
- 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



47 RONIN ON OSN MOVIES HD ACTION

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2016

22:35 Booster
23:00 Programmes Start At 6:00am KSA



00:05 Catching Kelce
01:50 E! News
02:50 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
03:40 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
04:35 Hollywood Medium With Tyler Henry
05:30 Botched
06:00 Kourtney And Khloe Take The Hamptons
06:55 E! News
07:10 Kourtney And Khloe Take The Hamptons
08:10 E! News
09:10 Fashion Police: The 2015 American Music...
10:10 Kourtney And Khloe Take The Hamptons
11:05 Kourtney And Khloe Take The Hamptons
12:00 E! News
12:15 Kourtney And Khloe Take The Hamptons
13:10 Kourtney And Khloe Take The Hamptons
14:05 Kourtney And Khloe Take The Hamptons
15:00 E! News
15:15 Catching Kelce
16:10 Catching Kelce
17:05 Catching Kelce
18:00 Catching Kelce
20:00 WAGs Miami
21:00 Fashion Police: The 2015 American Music...
22:00 Keeping Up With The Kardashians
23:00 E! News
23:15 WAGs Miami



00:00 Private Chef
00:30 Private Chef
01:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
01:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
02:00 Man Fire Food
02:30 Man Fire Food
03:00 Chopped
04:00 Guy's Grocery Games
05:00 Roadtrip With G. Garvin
05:30 Roadtrip With G. Garvin
06:00 Chopped
07:00 Barefoot Contessa
07:30 Barefoot Contessa
08:00 The Kitchen
09:00 Barefoot Contessa
09:30 The Pioneer Woman
10:00 Chopped
11:00 Guy's Big Bite
11:30 Guy's Big Bite
12:00 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
12:30 Diners, Drive-Ins And Dives
13:00 Man Fire Food
13:30 Man Fire Food
14:00 Chopped
15:00 The Kitchen
16:00 Cooking For Real
16:30 Cooking For Real
17:00 Chopped
18:00 Iron Chef America
19:00 Cutthroat Kitchen
20:00 BBQ Crawl
20:30 BBQ Crawl
21:00 Bite This With Nadia G
21:30 Bite This With Nadia G
22:00 Iron Chef America
23:00 Cutthroat Kitchen



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 Italian Escape / 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 Italian Escape / Gino's Hidden Italy
09:30 Together
10:00 The Doctor Blake Mysteries
10:55 Sunday Night At The Palladium
11:50 The Chase
12:45 Emmerdale



MISS YOU ALREADY ON OSN MOVIES HD

13:15 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
19:15 Emmerdale
19:45 Coronation Street
20:10 The Chase: Celebrity Specials
21:00 Broadchurch
21:55 Broadchurch
22:50 Emmerdale
23:15 Emmerdale
23:40 Coronation Street
00:00 America's Book Of Secrets
01:00 Ancient Aliens



02:00 The Universe: Ancient Mysteries Solved
03:00 Ancient Discoveries
03:50 Heroes Of War
04:40 Your Bleeped Up Brain
05:30 America's Book Of Secrets
06:20 Cities Of The Underworld
07:10 Ancient Discoveries
08:00 America's Book Of Secrets
09:00 The Universe: Ancient Mysteries Solved
10:00 Ancient Discoveries
11:00 Heroes Of War
12:00 Your Bleeped Up Brain
13:00 Ancient Aliens
14:00 The Universe: Ancient Mysteries Solved
15:00 Ancient Discoveries
16:00 Heroes Of War
17:00 Your Bleeped Up Brain
18:00 Ancient Aliens
19:00 Ancient Aliens
20:00 The Universe: Ancient Mysteries Solved
21:00 Ancient Discoveries
22:00 Heroes Of War
23:00 Serial Killer Earth



00:20 Billion Dollar Wreck
01:10 Lost In Transmission
02:00 Storage Wars
02:25 Storage Wars: Best Of
02:50 Counting Cars: Best Of
03:15 Counting Cars: Best Of
03:40 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
12:15 Counting Cars
12:40 Counting Cars
13:05 Aussie Pickers
13:55 Time Team
14:45 Battle 360
15:35 Hoard Hunters

16:25 Counting Cars
16:50 Time Team
17:40 Pawn Stars Australia
18:05 Pawn Stars Australia
18:30 Alone
19:20 Ice Road Truckers
20:10 Mountain Men
21:00 Pawn Stars
21:25 Pawn Stars South Africa
21:50 Ozzy & Jack's World Detour
22:40 Sean Bean On Waterloo
23:30 Time Team



00:10 Mega Food
01:00 Bangkok Airport
01:50 The Food Files
02:15 Eat Street
02:40 Hotel India
03:30 Hook It, Cook It
03:55 Hook It, Cook It
04:20 Eat Street
04:45 Eat Street
05:10 Eat Street
05:35 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
06:00 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
06:25 Route Awakening
06:50 Bangkok Airport
07:40 The Food Files
08:05 Eat Street
08:30 Hotel India
09:20 Hook It, Cook It
09:45 Hook It, Cook It
10:10 Eat Street
10:35 Eat Street
11:00 Eat Street
11:25 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
11:50 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
12:15 Route Awakening
12:40 Bangkok Airport
13:35 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia
14:00 The Food Files
14:30 Hotel India
15:25 Hook It, Cook It
15:50 Fish Of The Day
16:20 Fish Of The Day
16:45 What's For Sale?
17:15 Raw Travel
17:40 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
18:10 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
18:35 Route Awakening
19:05 The Food Files
19:30 Hook It, Cook It
20:00 Fish Of The Day
20:25 Fish Of The Day
20:50 What's For Sale?
21:15 Raw Travel
21:40 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
22:05 Lyndey Milan - Taste Of Australia
22:30 Route Awakening
22:55 Bangkok Airport
23:45 Tripping Out With Alie & Georgia



00:10 Explorer
01:00 Classified: Secret Service Files
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 Dawn Of Humanity
07:30 Savage Kingdom
08:25 WWII's Greatest Raids
09:20 Science Of Stupid
09:45 Science Of Stupid
10:15 The Human Family Tree
11:10 The Border
12:05 Kung Fu Motion
13:00 WWII's Greatest Raids
14:00 Nazi Megastructures
15:00 Classified: Secret Service Files
16:00 Locked Up Abroad
17:00 The Border
18:00 Taboo
19:00 Classified: Secret Service Files
20:00 Locked Up Abroad
20:50 The Border
21:40 Taboo
22:30 Classified: Secret Service Files
23:20 Car SOS



00:20 Animal Fight Club
01:10 Bear Nomad
02:00 Animal Armory
02:50 Deadly Game
03:45 Swamp Men
04:40 My Life Is A Zoo
05:35 Animal Armory
06:30 Deadly Game
07:25 Swamp Men
08:20 My Life Is A Zoo
09:15 Animal ER
10:10 Killer Hornets
11:05 America's National Parks
12:00 Dinofish
12:55 Deadly Super Cat
13:50 Deadly Game
14:45 Swamp Men
15:40 Shane Untamed
16:35 Animal ER
17:30 Dragon Island
18:25 Last Devils
19:20 Swamp Men
20:10 Shane Untamed
21:00 Animal ER
21:50 Dragon Island
22:40 Last Devils



00:30 Scrubs
01:00 Scrubs
01:30 Baskets
02:00 Baskets
02:30 Difficult People
03:00 2 Broke Girls
03:30 The Last Man On Earth
04:00 Fresh Off The Boat
04:30 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
05:30 George Lopez
06:00 Hank
06:30 Community
07:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers

08:00 Fresh Off The Boat
08:30 George Lopez
09:00 2 Broke Girls
09:30 The Last Man On Earth
10:00 Young & Hungry
10:30 Community
11:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
12:00 Hank
12:30 Fresh Off The Boat
13:00 George Lopez
13:30 Community
14:00 The Last Man On Earth
14:30 The Last Man On Earth
15:00 Young & Hungry
15:30 Scrubs
16:00 Scrubs
16:30 Hank
17:00 Late Night With Seth Meyers
18:00 Black-ish
18:30 The Goldbergs
19:00 The Goldbergs
19:30 New Girl
20:00 The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon
21:00 Scrubs
21:30 Scrubs
22:00 Man Seeking Woman
22:30 Man Seeking Woman
23:00 Difficult People
23:30 Late Night With Seth Meyers



01:00 Peter Pan
03:00 Mostly Ghostly: Have You Met My Ghoulfriend
05:00 Little Man Tate
07:00 The Good Dinosaur
09:00 Gulliver's Travels
11:00 Despicable Me 2
13:00 Home
15:00 The Unbeatables
17:00 Big Fat Liar
19:00 Diary Of A Wimpy Kid
21:00 Night At The Museum: Battle Of The Smithsonian
23:00 The Unbeatables



01:00 Kidnapping Mr. Heineken
03:00 Steve Jobs
05:15 50 To 1
07:15 The Beat Beneath My Feet
09:00 Steve Jobs
11:00 Star Wars: The Force Awakens
13:15 Barely Lethal
15:00 Ride Along 2
17:00 Miss You Already
19:00 The 5th Wave
21:00 In The Heart Of The Sea
23:15 Pride And Prejudice And Zombies



00:00 A Fantastic Fear Of Everything
02:00 The Invention Of Lying
04:00 Sunshine On Leith
06:00 Confessions Of A Shopaholic
08:00 Passed Away
10:00 Sunshine On Leith
12:00 The Invention Of Lying
14:00 Jack
16:00 Passed Away
18:00 The Proposal
20:00 The Brass Teapot
22:00 Horrible Bosses 2



01:30 Jamie Marks Is Dead
03:30 Unbroken
06:00 Les Miserables
09:00 One Fine Day
11:00 Fearless
13:00 The Railway Man
15:00 Foreverland
17:00 One Fine Day
19:00 The Village
21:00 Mystic River
23:30 Black Swan



01:00 Ploddy Police Car On The Case
02:30 Dixie And The Zombie Rebellion
04:15 Memory Loss
06:00 Baby Geniuses And The Treasures Of Egypt
07:45 True Story Of Puss'n Boots
09:30 Jetsons: The Movie

WORD SEARCH

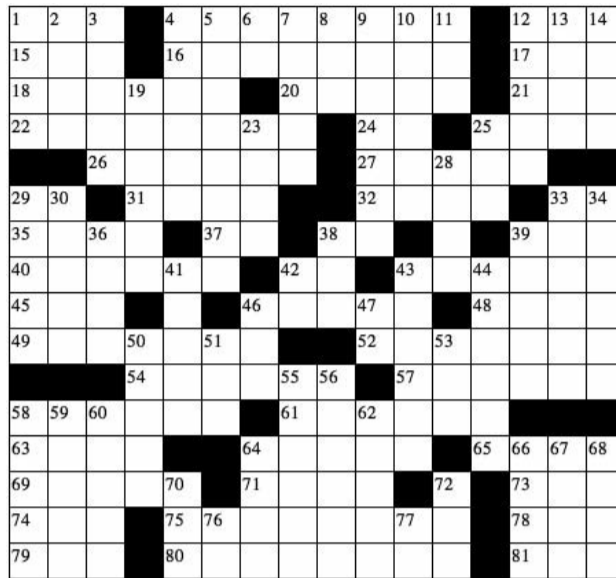
Animals 1

Find and circle all of the animals that are hidden in the grid. The remaining letters spell the name of an additional animal.

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

- AARDVARK
- ALLIGATOR
- BABOON
- BARRACUDA
- BEAR
- BISON
- CAMEL
- CHIMPANZEE
- CHINCHILLA
- COBRA
- COUGAR
- CROW
- DONKEY
- DOVE
- EAGLE
- ELK
- FERRET
- FOX
- GECKO
- GOAT
- GOPHER
- HAMSTER
- HAWK
- HERON
- HIPPOTAMUS
- JACKAL
- JELLYFISH
- KIWI
- LEOPARD
- LION
- LLAMA
- MACAW
- MEADOWLARK
- MINK
- MOOSE
- NIGHTINGALE
- OTTER
- PANTHER
- PARROT
- PEACOCK
- PELICAN
- PIG
- PORCUPINE
- QUAIL
- RACCOON
- RAVEN
- REINDEER
- ROADRUNNER
- SALMON
- SLOTH
- SWAN
- SWORDFISH
- TIGER
- TORTOISE
- TROUT
- TURKEY
- VULTURE
- WOLVERINE
- WOODPECKER
- WREN

CROSSWORD 1462



ACROSS

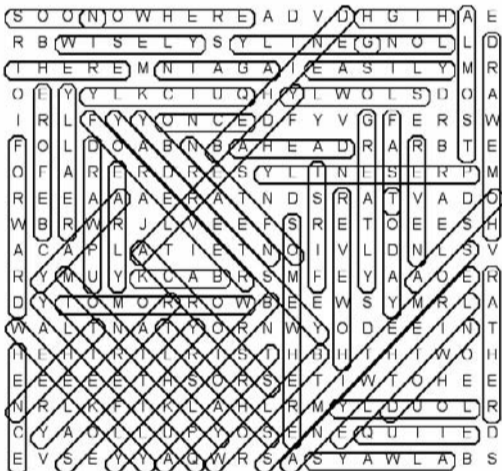
1. (computer science) The rate at which data is transferred (as by a modem).
4. An examination and dissection of a dead body to determine cause of death or the changes produced by disease.
12. A sharp hand gesture (resembling a blow).
15. Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects.
16. The condition of having no arms.
17. Fiddler crabs.
18. Reach a destination.
20. The act of carrying something v 1.
21. The shorter of the two telegraphic signals used in Morse code.
22. The shattering or crushing effect of a sudden release of energy as in an explosion.
24. A colorless and odorless inert gas.
26. Fabric made with yarn made from the silky hair of the Angora goat.
27. A region of Malaysia in northeastern Borneo.
29. A state in north central United States.
31. A discharge of lightning accompanied by thunder.
32. According to the Old Testament he was a pagan king of Israel and husband of Jezebel (9th century BC).
35. A particular geographical region of indefinite boundary (usually serving some special purpose or distinguished by its people or culture or geography).
37. The branch of engineering science that studies the uses of electricity and the equipment for power generation and distribution and the control of machines and communication.
40. A state in southeastern India on the Bay of Bengal (south of Andhra Pradesh).
45. A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
48. A visual representation of an object or scene or person produced on a surface.
49. A republic in southwestern Africa on the south Atlantic coast (formerly called South West Africa).
52. The Magadhan language spoken by the Assamese people.
54. Covered with beads of liquid.
57. Produced by inbreeding.
58. Small genus of erect balsam-scented herbs.
61. A penicillinase-resistant form of penicillin (trade name Nafcil) used (usually in the form of its sodium salt) to treat infections caused by penicillin-resistant strains of staphylococci.
63. American novelist (1909-1955).
65. Tropical starchy tuberous root.
69. Metal shackles.
71. A connecting point at which several lines come together.
73. A river in north central Switzerland that runs northeast into the Rhine.
74. A loud harsh or strident noise.
75. Acting according to certain accepted standards.
78. A self-funded retirement plan that allows you to contribute a limited yearly sum toward your retirement.
79. (informal) Of the highest quality.
80. A machine that smoothes or glazes paper or cloth by pressing it between plates or passing it through rollers.
81. A person's brother or sister.

DOWN

1. Divulge information or secrets.
2. Queen of England as the 6th wife of Henry VIII (1512-1548).
3. A firm open-weave fabric used for a curtain in the theater.
4. A member of an Athapaskan people that migrated to Arizona and New Mexico and Utah.
5. Trees or shrubs of the families Ebenaceae or Sapotaceae or Styracaceae or Symplocaceae.
6. A hard brittle blue-white multivalent metallic element.
7. Someone who drives racing cars at high speeds.
8. South American wood sorrel cultivated for its edible tubers.
9. Of or relating to or functioning as a phrase.
10. Formerly a contemptuous term of address to an inferior man or boy.
11. A branch of the Tai languages.
12. (Old Testament) The fourth son of Jacob who was forebear of one of the tribes of Israel.
13. Harsh or corrosive in tone.
14. A Chadic language spoken south of Lake Chad.
19. An isogram connecting points having equal barometric pressure at a given time.
23. Make reference to.
25. A light touch or stroke.
28. A small cake leavened with yeast.
30. Any of numerous low-growing cushion-forming plants of the genus *Draba* having rosette-forming leaves and terminal racemes of small flowers with scapose or leafy stems.
33. Japanese statesman who set Japan's expansionist policies and formed an alliance with Germany and Italy (1891-1945).
34. The upper house of the parliament of the Republic of Ireland.
36. Mild yellow Dutch cheese made in balls.
38. A white linen liturgical vestment with sleeves.
39. A Muslim or Hindu mendicant monk who is regarded as a holy man.
41. American dramatist (1928-).
42. A white metallic element that burns with a brilliant light.
43. A statement of fundamental facts or principles.
44. Moving quickly and lightly.
46. Having undesirable or negative qualities.
47. Unknown god.
50. Realistic Norwegian author who wrote plays on social and political themes (1828-1906).
51. A plant hormone promoting elongation of stems and roots.
53. Black tropical American cuckoo.
55. Convert ordinary language into code.
56. A native of ancient Troy.
59. One of the two branches of the Finno-Ugric family of languages.
60. The basic unit of money in Sierra Leone.
62. A cruel wicked and inhuman person.
64. A blue dye obtained from plants or made synthetically.
66. A platform raised above the surrounding level to give prominence to the person on it.
67. An Iranian language spoken in Afghanistan.
68. An Arabic speaking person who lives in Arabia or North Africa.
70. An enclosed space.
72. An emotional response that has been acquired by conditioning.
76. A soft silvery metallic element of the alkali earth group.
77. A ductile gray metallic element of the lanthanide series.

Yesterday's Solution

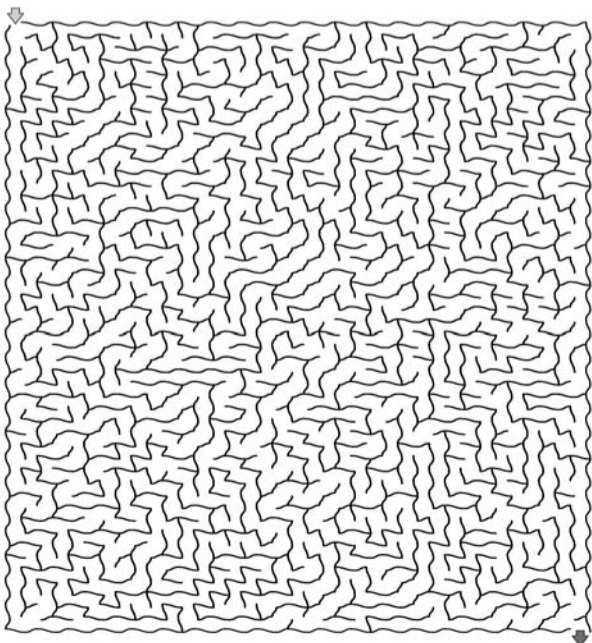
Adverbs



- ACROSS
- BEHIND
- HENCE
- ONCE
- SOMETIMES
- AGAIN
- BELOW
- HIGH
- PRESENTLY
- SOMEWHERE
- AHEAD
- BRISKLY
- HOMEWARD
- QUICKLY
- SOON
- ALMOST
- DOWN
- HOWEVER
- QUIETLY
- THEN
- ALREADY
- EARLY
- LITTLE
- QUITE
- THERE
- ALSO
- EASILY
- LONG
- RARELY
- TODAY
- ALWAYS
- FAST
- LOUDLY
- RATHER
- TOMORROW
- ANYWHERE
- FIRST
- MONTHLY
- REALLY
- UPWARD
- APART
- FOREVER
- NEARBY
- SHORT
- WEEKLY
- AWAY
- FORWARD
- NEVER
- SLOWLY
- WISELY
- BACK
- GENTLY
- NOWHERE
- SOFTLY
- YESTERDAY
- BEFORE
- GREATLY
- OFTEN

The hidden message is: ADVERBS MODIFY VERBS AND ADJECTIVES AND OTHER ADVERBS

CHALLENGING MAZE



Daily SuDoku

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

Yesterday's Solution

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

SMOKERS HARASSED, CHASED IN BEIJING

CHINA CONSIDERS NATIONAL LAW TO HELP PEOPLE QUIT

BEIJING: A group of anti-smoking volunteers in blue vests marched through an office building on a recent morning in China's capital, trailed by two police officers and the building's management. As people peered out of the doorways, the volunteers turned several corners and stopped in front of a stairwell door. One of them pushed it open.

There stood an office worker, pressing a cell phone to one ear and holding a lit cigarette in his other hand. Someone had turned him in. A stern lecture followed from the group's leader, a stocky, 32-year-old fine arts teacher named Liu Li. "Today, we won't punish you, but we will criticize and educate you," Liu said in a carrying voice, as the worker bowed and apologized repeatedly. "Don't throw cigarette butts around. You must not act like this next time."

As China considers a nationwide ban on smoking in public places, the fight is well underway in Beijing, which banned smoking in restaurants and other indoor areas 18 months ago. Zealous volunteers and anti-smoking advocates have made some headway against millions of occasionally intransigent smokers and the state-run cigarette monopoly, a large and powerful force in China's government and economy.

Cigarettes are a cultural symbol in China, where national leaders dating back to Mao Zedong were well-known smokers, and where cigarettes are still handed out commonly at weddings, banquets and holiday celebrations. The tobacco industry employs more than 300,000 people and remains a key source of revenue in the national budget. The State Tobacco Monopoly Administration gen-

erated more than \$150 billion in tax revenues just last year alone.

But tobacco extracts a huge cost as well. About 1 million deaths a year in China can be attributed to cigarettes, a figure that could triple by 2050 without greater action to curb the habit. China has more than 300 million smokers and nearly half of China's adult males smoke regularly, according to the World Bank.

Misplaced blame?

For all of the attention given to China's notorious air pollution, it's smoking that's often far more damaging and far easier to correct, said Dr Bernhard Schwartlander, who has worked for several years in China as the World Health Organization's local representative. "When the air is bad outside, everybody gets upset and talks about it," Schwartlander said. However, "just a few smokers in a room in an average restaurant can cause air pollution inside that is worse than the very worst days we see in Beijing," he said.

At the behest of WHO and other advocates, China has launched a national anti-smoking campaign backed by the force of Chinese President Xi Jinping, considered the country's strongest ruler in decades. Shortly after becoming head of the ruling Communist Party in 2012, Xi admonished Communist Party officials not to smoke in public, and his sweeping anti-corruption probe has targeted the acceptance of expensive gifts like fancy cigarettes. Xi, who was once photographed in the 1980s holding a cigarette at his desk as a party cadre, has reportedly quit smoking himself. His wife, the singer and actress Peng



BEIJING: In this Thursday, Dec 1, 2016 photo, volunteers walk past cardboards featuring officers showing thumbs-up signs and the words "Thank you for not smoking" on display at the government-funded Beijing Tobacco Control Association. —AP

Liyuan, has appeared in anti-smoking advertisements in addition to her role as an advocate for HIV-positive people under the WHO.

At a health conference last month in Shanghai, an official with China's national health commission said it was considering a nationwide ban targeting smoking in public places, possibly as soon as the end of this year. Shanghai issued an indoor smoking ban just before the conference, and other cities have also followed suit.

But anti-tobacco advocates remain concerned that the national law currently under

consideration might do more harm than good. China's government considers and passes laws behind closed doors and has not made its draft legislation available to the public. Advocates have heard that the law might allow airports and restaurants to establish indoor smoking rooms, or only require offices to keep public areas smoke-free, but not private rooms or an office belonging to one person. "Top officials must take the lead," said Wu Yiqun, vice director of the ThinkTank Research Center for Health Development.—AP

CLINIC
PAGE



Kuwait Times
THE LEADING INDEPENDENT DAILY IN THE ARABIAN GULF

Dr. Fahad Al-Mukhaizeem
د. فهد علي المخيزيم
Consultant Pediatrician استشاري أطفال
M.B. Bch. FRCPC. FAAP. PEM

Al-Jabriya - Block 1A - St. 1 - Mazaya Building - 15th Floor - Clinic B - Tel.: 22269369 - Fax: 22269368



KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY (15/12/2016 TO 21/12/2016)

SHARQIA-1 MOANA 1:00 PM MOANA 3:15 PM MOANA 5:30 PM MOANA 7:45 PM TAHT AL TARABEZA 10:15 PM COLLATERAL BEAUTY 12:30 AM	ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 2:30 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 5:30 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 8:30 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 11:30 PM	INTO THE FOREST 7:30 PM INTO THE FOREST 9:45 PM INTO THE FOREST 12:05 AM
SHARQIA-2 ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 12:30 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY-3D 3:30 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 6:30 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 9:30 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 12:30 AM	MARINA-3 MOANA 12:30 PM MOANA 2:45 PM MOANA 5:00 PM MOANA 7:15 PM COLLATERAL BEAUTY 9:30 PM COLLATERAL BEAUTY 11:45 PM	AL-KOUT.1 ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 1:15 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 4:00 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 6:45 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 9:30 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 12:15 AM
SHARQIA-3 MOANA 12:00 PM COLLATERAL BEAUTY 2:30 PM MANTAQH MAHZOURAH 4:45 PM COLLATERAL BEAUTY 7:00 PM MANTAQH MAHZOURAH 9:15 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 11:30 PM	AVENUES-1 MOANA 12:30 PM LAF WA DAWARAN 2:45 PM MOANA 5:00 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 7:30 PM TAHT AL TARABEZA 10:30 PM TAHT AL TARABEZA 12:45 AM	AL-KOUT.2 MOANA 12:45 PM MOANA 3:00 PM MOANA 5:15 PM MOANA 7:30 PM MISS SLOANE 9:45 PM MISS SLOANE 12:30 AM
MUHALAB-1 COLLATERAL BEAUTY 12:45 PM COLLATERAL BEAUTY 3:00 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 5:15 PM MANTAQH MAHZOURAH 8:15 PM MANTAQH MAHZOURAH 10:15 PM TAHT AL TARABEZA 12:15 AM	AVENUES-2 MOANA -3D- 4DX 11:30 AM MOANA -3D- 4DX 1:45 PM MOANA -3D- 4DX 4:15 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY -3D- 4DX 6:45 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY -3D- 4DX 9:45 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY -3D- 4DX 12:30 AM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY -3D- 4DX 11:30 AM MOANA -3D- 4DX 2:15 PM MOANA -3D- 4DX 4:45 PM MOANA-3D- 4DX 7:15 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY -3D- 4DX 9:45 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY -3D- 4DX 12:30 AM	AL-KOUT.3 MISS SLOANE 1:15 PM TAHT AL TARABEZA 3:45 PM MISS SLOANE 6:00 PM MANTAQH MAHZOURAH 8:45 PM MANTAQH MAHZOURAH 10:45 PM TAHT AL TARABEZA 12:45 AM
MUHALAB-2 MOANA 11:45 AM MOANA 2:00 PM MOANA 4:15 PM MOANA 6:30 PM COLLATERAL BEAUTY 8:45 PM COLLATERAL BEAUTY 11:00 PM COLLATERAL BEAUTY 1:15 AM	AVENUES-3 MANTAQH MAHZOURAH 12:00 PM MANTAQH MAHZOURAH 2:00 PM MANTAQH MAHZOURAH 4:00 PM MANTAQH MAHZOURAH 6:00 PM MANTAQH MAHZOURAH 8:00 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 10:00 PM THE LAST KING 1:00 AM	AL-KOUT.4 COLLATERAL BEAUTY 12:15 PM INTO THE FOREST 2:30 PM INTO THE FOREST 4:45 PM COLLATERAL BEAUTY 7:00 PM INTO THE FOREST 9:15 PM COLLATERAL BEAUTY 11:30 PM
MUHALAB-3 ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 12:00 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 3:00 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY-3D 6:00 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 9:00 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 12:05 AM	AVENUES-4 COLLATERAL BEAUTY 11:30 AM COLLATERAL BEAUTY 1:30 PM MOANA 3:45 PM Special Show "MOANA" 3:45 PM MOANA 6:15 PM COLLATERAL BEAUTY 8:45 PM COLLATERAL BEAUTY 11:00 PM COLLATERAL BEAUTY 1:15 AM	BAIRAQ-1 MOANA 11:45 AM MOANA 2:00 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 1:15 PM NO THU+FRI+SAT MOANA 4:15 PM MOANA 6:30 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY-3D 9:00 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 11:45 PM
FANAR-1 COLLATERAL BEAUTY 1:30 PM COLLATERAL BEAUTY 3:45 PM COLLATERAL BEAUTY 6:00 PM COLLATERAL BEAUTY 8:15 PM COLLATERAL BEAUTY 10:30 PM COLLATERAL BEAUTY 12:45 AM	AVENUES-5 ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 12:00 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY -3D 3:00 PM Special Show "ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY" 2:00 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 6:00 PM Special Show "ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY" 6:00 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY -3D 9:00 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 12:05 AM	BAIRAQ-2 ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 12:45 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 3:30 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 6:15 PM MANTAQH MAHZOURAH 9:15 PM TAHT AL TARABEZA 11:30 PM
FANAR-2 MOANA 11:30 AM MOANA 1:45 PM MOANA 4:00 PM MOANA 6:15 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY-3D 8:30 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 11:15 PM	AVENUES-6 COLLATERAL BEAUTY 12:30 PM COLLATERAL BEAUTY 2:45 PM COLLATERAL BEAUTY 5:00 PM COLLATERAL BEAUTY 7:15 PM COLLATERAL BEAUTY 9:30 PM COLLATERAL BEAUTY 11:45 PM	BAIRAQ-3 COLLATERAL BEAUTY 12:30 PM COLLATERAL BEAUTY 2:45 PM COLLATERAL BEAUTY 5:00 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 7:15 PM MANTAQH MAHZOURAH 10:15 PM COLLATERAL BEAUTY 12:30 AM
FANAR-3 TAHT AL TARABEZA 12:00 PM TAHT AL TARABEZA 2:15 PM INTO THE FOREST 4:30 PM MISS SLOANE 6:30 PM INTO THE FOREST 9:30 PM INTO THE FOREST 11:45 PM	AVENUES-7 MOANA 1:00 PM MOANA 3:30 PM INTO THE FOREST 6:15 PM INTO THE FOREST 8:30 PM INTO THE FOREST 10:45 PM INTO THE FOREST 1:00 AM	PLAZA ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 4:00 PM NO FRI DHRUVA - Telugu 3:45 PM FRI ORE MUKHAM -Malayalam 6:45 PM DEAR ZINDAGI -Hindi 9:15 PM NO THU DHRUVA - Telugu 9:00 PM THU
FANAR-4 ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 1:00 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 3:45 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 6:30 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 9:15 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 12:05 AM	360°- 1 ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY -3D 11:30 AM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 2:30 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY -3D 5:30 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 8:30 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 11:30 PM	LAILA MOANA 3:30 PM MOANA 5:45 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 8:00 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 10:45 PM
FANAR-5 THE LAST KING 11:30 AM MISS SLOANE 1:45 PM MISS SLOANE 4:15 PM MANTAQH MAHZOURAH 7:00 PM MANTAQH MAHZOURAH 9:00 PM MANTAQH MAHZOURAH 11:00 PM THE LAST KING 1:00 AM	360°- 2 ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 12:45 PM TAHT AL TARABEZA 3:45 PM LAF WA DAWARAN 6:00 PM TAHT AL TARABEZA 8:15 PM TAHT AL TARABEZA 10:30 PM TAHT AL TARABEZA 12:45 AM	AJIAL.1 AE DIL HAI MUSHKIL -Hindi 4:00 PM NO FRI DHRUVA - Telugu 4:00 PM FRI DHRUVA - Telugu 7:00 PM DEAR ZINDAGI -Hindi 10:00 PM NO THU DHRUVA - Telugu 10:00 PM THU
MARINA-1 COLLATERAL BEAUTY 11:45 AM MANTAQH MAHZOURAH 2:00 PM TAHT AL TARABEZA 3:45 PM COLLATERAL BEAUTY 6:00 PM MANTAQH MAHZOURAH 8:15 PM MANTAQH MAHZOURAH 12:30 AM	360°- 3 INTO THE FOREST 12:30 PM INTO THE FOREST 3:00 PM INTO THE FOREST 5:15 PM	AJIAL.2 WAJAH TUM HO -Hindi 3:45 PM WAJAH TUM HO -Hindi 6:30 PM WAJAH TUM HO -Hindi 9:30 PM
MARINA-2 ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 11:30 AM		AJIAL.3 ORE MUKHAM -Malayalam 4:15 PM ORE MUKHAM -Malayalam 6:45 PM ORE MUKHAM -Malayalam 9:15 PM

Friday Times BUSINESS

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2016

DRUGMAKERS PUSH PROFITABLE, BUT UNPROVEN, OPIOID SOLUTION

Page 41



Eurozone economy appears robust as inflation pressures mount

Page 41



LAREDO, Texas: In this Monday, Nov 21, 2016 photo, Alma Boubel, executive director of the South Texas Food Bank, stands over sacks of groceries intended for families. —AP

BORDER CITIES WORRY THAT ENDING NAFTA WOULD HURT ECONOMIES 'WORST TRADE DEAL EVER', SAYS TRUMP

LAREDO, Texas: Donald Trump's only visit to the US-Mexico border while running for president was a stop in Laredo that lasted less than three hours. On some days, that's not long enough for 18-wheelers hauling foreign-made dishwashers and car batteries to lurch through the gridlocked crossing.

Trump's campaign promise to tear apart the North American Free Trade Agreement helped win over Rust Belt voters who felt left behind by globalization. But the idea is unnerving to many people in border cities such as Laredo and El Paso or Nogales in Arizona, which have boomed under the 1994 treaty.

About 14,000 tractor-trailers cross the border daily in Laredo, the nation's busiest inland port. Local officials say roughly 1 in every 3 jobs benefits from international trade. "We are NAFTA on wheels," Mayor Pete Saenz said.

Free trade across the border, he explained, is the "backbone" of this city of 255,000 people. The Democrat endured a backlash from his party for welcoming Trump in July 2015 after the then-candidate called immigrants from Mexico criminals and rapists.

Trump described NAFTA as "the worst sin-

gle trade deal ever approved in this country." That kind of talk resonated in hard-hit industrial towns such as Greenville, Michigan, where Electrolux shut down a factory a decade ago and moved jobs to the Mexican border city of Ciudad Juarez.

'Worst trade deal ever'

During his transition to the White House, the president-elect has not discussed NAFTA at all. The agreement went unmentioned in a video Trump released last month laying out the priorities for his first 100 days in office.

Saenz, the telegenic son of a dairy farmer, talks about the possible repeal of NAFTA like a small-town Midwest mayor trying to keep a factory from moving away. He foresees unemployment spiking to double digits, abandoned warehouses and crippled city finances. Laredo keeps the toll revenue from international bridge traffic, which last year amounted to about \$60 million, enough, according to Saenz, to cover police and fire department payrolls.

His grim predictions are not widely shared. Even customs brokers in Laredo who have cashed in on NAFTA believe they will survive

and trade will continue if the agreement is abandoned.

But for now, there's still no better place in the US to get a glimpse of the trade treaty than the Rio Grande city.

Interstate 35, clogged with wheezing 18-wheelers, starts here on its 1,600-mile straight shot to the Canadian border. Busy industrial parks are a revolving door of imported and exported goods. Four years after NAFTA was signed by President Bill Clinton and approved by a Republican-controlled Congress, the Census Bureau named Laredo the country's second-fastest growing area.

At one time, denim makers thrived in Texas, and El Paso was considered the blue jean capital of the US. But those clothing manufacturers closed and the jobs went south.

Bill Hrcir, owner of LMS International, turned a small factory that once made Levi's into a 200,000-square-foot distribution center. His warehouses are now stocked with coils of steel awaiting transport to Mexico.

Doubting Trump's seriousness

Emilio Richer III, whose company has cus-

toms brokers and logistic-services offices up and down the US-Mexico border, said ending NAFTA would be felt in his hometown of Laredo, but he does not think Trump is serious. "I have it in the back of my head that he was being fed wrongful information," and Trump was talking to people in other parts of the country, telling them "what they wanted to hear," said Richer, whose vote for Trump was in the minority in heavily Democratic Webb County, which went 3-to-1 for Hillary Clinton.

Repealing or renegotiating the agreement could wallop Mexico, the United States' largest trading partner. Most American economists do not believe NAFTA has a major effect on the nation's overall job market.

Nor was NAFTA some high tide that lifted all boats, even in Texas. After NAFTA was adopted, \$400,000 homes sprung up in Laredo. But beyond that wealth is widespread poverty in one of the nation's poorest cities. The poverty rate in Laredo is 32 percent, among the highest in the nation, according to census figures. And 92 percent of students in the city's public schools qualify as economically disadvantaged. —AP



CHICAGO: Traders in the Standard & Poor's 500 stock index options pit at the Chicago Board Options Exchange (CBOE) react to the Federal Reserve's statement that it would increase its benchmark interest rate on December 14, 2016.— AFP

DOLLAR CHARGES HIGHER AFTER FED HIKE RATES

LONDON: The dollar charged to a 14-year high and government bond yields rose sharply on yesterday after the Federal Reserve hiked US interest rates and signaled more would follow at a faster pace next year.

European shares made solid progress as bank stocks jumped over 2.5 percent on the prospect of a boost to their lending profits, but the main action was elsewhere. Bond markets saw yields on short-term US debt surge to the highest since 2009, sending the dollar to peaks last seen in early 2003, which in turn prompted China's central bank to set the Yuan at its weakest against the greenback in eight years.

The Fed's anticipated policy path, and expectations that Donald Trump as US president will get growth motoring, are keeping emerging markets on edge as capital gets sucked from more fragile, export-dependent economies toward dollar-based assets.

The Fed's rate rise of 25 basis points to 0.5-0.75 percent was well flagged but investors were spooked when the "dot plots" of members' projections showed a median of three hikes next year, up from two previously. "You had the Fed come in and be a bit more hawkish than many people, including us, were expecting," said TD Securities head of global strategy Richard Kelly. "It wasn't just the move in the dots, it was the language that was used. There was an acknowledgement that if Trump gets his plans moving through Congress you could see the economy pushing higher."

The Fed's economic projections have hardly been upgraded, suggesting it could accelerate the monetary tightening even further if policymakers see firmer evidence of higher growth or inflation. Fed fund futures slid to imply an almost 50 percent chance that the

Fed would raise rates three times, with two hikes fully priced in already. The dollar continued to rise in European trading. It hit a 10-month high of 117.87 and then jumped through \$1.0450 per euro, while the difference in yields on benchmark 10-year US and German government bonds ballooned to the widest since at least 1990.

Those US yields rose as far as 2.63 percent, having already risen more than 0.8 of a percentage point since Trump was elected last month. The jump in 2-year Treasury paper was the biggest daily rise since early 2015 as it topped 1.29 percent. "One of the reasons why a bond market sell-off this time around looks more sustainable is because it can be accompanied by higher equity markets," Peter Schaffrik, chief European macro strategist at RBC Capital Markets said.

Emerging pressure

The allure of higher US yields raises risks for emerging markets, as funds look to take advantage of rising US rates rather than put their money in traditionally riskier economies.

China's central bank reacted to the Fed's move by setting the yuan midpoint at 6.9289 to the dollar, its weakest since June 2008, though market players noted that the yuan has been firmer against many other currencies and rose on trade-weighted basis.

Currencies such as the Singapore dollar and Korean won came under pressure, and analysts anticipate the low-yielders will be on the back foot in an environment of a rising dollar, higher yields and weaker yuan.

Mexico, whose markets and currency have been battered hardest by Trump's threats to tear up trade deals, holds a central bank meeting later where it is expected to hike its own interest rates in

response to the Fed. The Bank of Korea gave a taste of the challenges many EM economies face. It held its key rate at a record low of 1.25 percent despite flagging the growing risks on its export-reliant economy.

Majors are at the dollar's mercy too. The euro dropped to as low as \$1.0433 despite upbeat economic data. The break below its March 2015 low of \$1.0457 was a significant milestone, opening the way for a test of \$1, or parity against the dollar, which last happened in late 2002.

That drew reaction from Switzerland, which is highly sensitive to the euro's moves. Its central bank head said another cut in Swiss interest rates couldn't be ruled out, though the Swiss franc took little notice. Wall Street was expected to open higher, having suffered on Wednesday its biggest percentage decline since before the Nov 8 US presidential election. That decline was modest, however, compared with the strong gains of the last month that have put the Dow Industrial index within touching distance of 20,000 points. Among commodities, Oil prices stabilized as a tighter market looms in 2017 due to planned output cuts led by OPEC and Russia. Earlier they had seen sharp declines following the Fed's action.

Brent crude futures traded up a shade at \$54.33 per barrel, having lost some of the ground overnight made earlier in the week that had taken it a 1 1/2-year high. Gold dropped to its lowest in more than 10 months around \$1,135.1 an ounce and last stood at \$1,138. "The outlook for gold is not particularly great," said ANZ analyst Daniel Hynes. "The more hawkish comments from the Fed are clearly a headwind in the short-term ... The selling seen this morning is just the start of things to come." —Reuters

GOLD SLIDES TO LOWEST SINCE FEBRUARY AS FED STRIKES HAWKISH NOTE

LONDON: Gold hit its lowest since early February yesterday after the Federal Reserve sounded an unexpectedly hawkish note on US interest rates, sparking a surge in Treasury yields and sending the dollar to a 14-year high.

Lifting the federal funds rate to a 0.50-0.75 percent range on Wednesday, the US central bank flagged a faster pace of hikes next year as it geared up for the incoming Trump administration's pledges to cut taxes and boost spending.

That sparked a rally in the dollar, pressuring assets priced in the currency, while US Treasury yields soared, lifting the opportunity cost of holding non-yielding gold. Spot gold hit a 10-1/2 month low of \$1,126.48 an ounce, and was down 1.2 percent at \$1,130.55 an ounce by 1230 GMT. US gold futures for February delivery were \$30.80, or 2.7 percent, lower at \$1,132.90. "The rate hike was pretty much priced in, so what gold is really reacting to is the anticipation of three rate hikes next year instead of two," UBS analyst Joni Teves said. "The pressure on gold is understandable if you look at yields, if you look at the dollar. As long as yields are high, gold is going to struggle." The metal had already fallen sharply in the run-up to the Fed meeting after Republican candidate Donald Trump's election to the US presidency sparked a rally in the dollar and a rise in assets seen as higher risk, like stocks, at gold's expense.

It saw its biggest monthly drop since mid-2013 in November, and has fallen 10 percent since the US election. Holdings of the world's largest gold-backed exchange-traded fund, SPDR Gold Shares, are down about 10 percent from mid-November. Holdings fell again on Wednesday, by 6.8 tons. "The sell-off in ETFs is the result of lack of investor appetite in the gold markets," ANZ analyst Daniel Hynes said. "The weak physical markets in China and India are not really helping gold." Indian demand has suffered from a cash crunch in recent weeks after officials suspended the use of some bank notes, while Chinese traders say the People's Bank of China has limited imports into the world's biggest gold market.

Meanwhile, silver was down 3.9 percent at \$16.17 an ounce, having earlier hit its lowest since June at \$16.05, and platinum was 0.9 percent lower at \$915.40. Palladium, bucking the trend among the major precious metals, was up 0.2 percent at \$721. The white metal is mainly used in autocatalysts, and tends to be more broadly correlated to other cyclical assets than gold, silver and platinum. — Reuters

DEARER OIL, FOREIGN BORROWING CURB POST-FED MONEY RATE RISES IN GULF

DUBAI: Money market rates in the Gulf barely rose yesterday after the US Federal Reserve tightened policy - a sign that the region's worries over a bank funding squeeze have partly eased because of higher oil prices and international borrowing.

Gulf central banks scrambled to raise their policy rates by a quarter of a percentage point in the hours after the US central bank hiked its federal funds target by that margin on Wednesday and signaled three hikes in 2017, more than expected.

Because of its currency pegs to the dollar, the Gulf region must stay in line with US monetary policy or risk debilitating capital outflows. But the region's interbank money rates up to one year rose by only around 2 to 4 basis points on Thursday, with Saudi Arabia's three-month interbank offered rate edging up to 2.049 percent from 2.025 percent.

Qatar saw a similar rise and in the United Arab Emirates, the three-month rate actually dropped, to 1.334 percent from 1.403 percent, suggesting some banks released funds when the market proved softer than they had expected. Bankers attributed the calm in Gulf money markets partly to signs that the region may be past the worst of a funding squeeze triggered by low oil prices.

In late 2015 and much of 2016, money rates soared to multi-year highs, alarming banks and threatening to raise corporate borrowing costs, as governments' oil revenues shrank and flows of petrodollars deposited in the banks diminished. — Reuters

21ST CENTURY FOX TO TAKE OVER EUROPEAN BROADCASTER SKY

LONDON: Rupert Murdoch's media giant Twenty-First Century Fox has agreed to take over European broadcaster Sky PLC in a 11.7 billion pound (\$14.6 billion) deal, the companies said yesterday.

The deal values the shares in London-based Sky at 10.75 pounds (\$13.41) each. It is not expected to be complete before the end of 2017. Twenty-First Century Fox already owns just over 39 percent of Sky. An earlier attempt to acquire the rest was scuttled by the 2011 phone-hacking scandal that rocked his British newspapers and the media establishment. The scandal abated, and a drop in the pound following Britain's vote to leave the European Union made the company cheaper to take over.

Another approach was long predicted. James Murdoch, Rupert's son and the CEO of Twenty-First Century Fox, became chairman of Sky in April. He had been CEO of Sky, then known as BSkyB, from 2003 to 2007 and chairman from 2007 to 2012.

Taking control of Sky will give Twenty-First Century Fox, which owns cable networks Fox News, FX and the Fox broadcast channel and a major Hollywood film studio, a distributor in Europe. Sky has 22 million customers in the UK, Ireland, Germany, Austria and Italy. "The strategic rationale for this combination is clear," Twenty-First Century Fox said in a statement. "It creates a global leader in content creation and distribution, enhances our sports and entertainment scale, and gives us unique and leading direct-to-consumer capabilities and technologies."

The move comes as part of a wider consolidation among media and broadcasting companies - bringing together the maker of films and television programs together with distributors of content. Entertainment companies are trying to adapt as consumers increasingly bypass traditional TV and spend more time watching video on their phones.

Wireless carrier AT&T has proposed buying HBO, CNN, TBS and film studio owner Time Warner in the US for \$85.4 billion. Cable giant Comcast finished its takeover of NBCUniversal in 2013. In Europe, France's Vivendi media group has accumulated a 20 percent stake in Italy's Mediaset, potentially setting up a hostile takeover bid. Shares in Silvio Berlusconi's Mediaset empire were volatile yesterday after the government suggested it wouldn't accept a hostile acquisition.—AP

MANUFACTURING GROWING AT SOLID PACE IN NEW YORK, HIRING LAGS

WASHINGTON: Manufacturers in New York state expanded more quickly this month than in November, driven by a big jump in new orders.

The Federal Reserve Bank of New York said yesterday that its Empire State index rose to a reading of 9 in December, up from 1.5 in the previous month. Anything above zero signals that factories are doing more business.

The healthy jump adds to other evidence that US manufacturing is rebounding after a rough 18 months. Businesses have been clearing out their stockpiles of unsold goods and spending less on machinery and equipment, which have lowered factory output. Yet nationwide surveys in the past several months suggest manufacturing is growing again, if slowly.

Still, a gauge of employment in the Empire State report fell to minus 12.2, from minus 10.9, which means factories cut jobs last month. Those figures are an example of how automated, high-tech factories are frequently able to boost output without having to add more workers.

Nationwide, manufacturers expanded for the third straight month in November, according to a survey by the Institute for Supply Management, a trade group. That report also showed rising new orders, as well as more production. Hiring grew, but not as quickly as the other measures.—AP



MOUNT PLEASANT, South Carolina: In this Wednesday, April 20, 2016, file photo, real estate agent Lauren Newman, right, prepares to show Steve Martin a home for sale.—AP

SOME ADVICE FOR BORROWERS AND INVESTORS TAKE A DEEP BREATH

FEDERAL RESERVE RAISES INTEREST RATE

WASHINGTON: If you're about to buy a home, shop for a car or borrow for college, the pros have some advice: Go ahead.

The Federal Reserve's decision Wednesday to slightly raise its key interest rate, advisers say, should have little immediate effect on mortgages or auto and student loans. The Fed doesn't directly affect those rates, at least not in the short run.

That said, rates on some other loans - notably credit cards, home equity loans and adjustable-rate mortgages - will likely rise soon, though only modestly. Those rates are based on benchmarks like banks' prime rate, which moves in tandem with the Fed. After the Fed announced its rate increase, several banks said they were raising their prime rates to 3.75 percent from 3.5 percent.

And if the Fed should accelerate its rate hikes, eventually rates on other categories of debt, like auto loans, would rise, too. On Wednesday, the Fed predicted it would raise rates three more times in 2017, up from two in its previous forecast. But those predicted increases are just that - predictions. A year ago, the Fed projected that it would raise rates four times in 2016 but has ended up doing so just once.

Surging before the Fed acted

Mortgage rates had been surging before the Fed acted, for reasons that had little to do with the central bank. Rather, Donald Trump's election as president - with his pledge to slash taxes, loosen regulations and increase infrastructure spending - has raised the prospect of faster economic growth and

inflation. In response, the rate on the 10-year US Treasury note has jumped about half a percentage point. Long-term mortgage rates tend to track the 10-year Treasury. The average rate on a 30-year fixed home loan is up nearly in lockstep with the 10-year Treasury - to about 4.1 percent from 3.5 percent. "The Fed isn't what's influencing mortgage rates right now," said Greg McBride, chief financial analyst at Bankrate.com.

Nela Richardson, chief economist at real estate brokerage Redfin, said: "Mortgage rates will increase but not too much. As long as the Fed remains a trillion-dollar investor in the US mortgage system, a moderate pickup in short-term rates won't dampen the strong home buying demand we've seen as a result of a strengthening economy." Even if mortgage rates and other borrowing costs rise, they won't likely do so in a straight line, which is why most people need not rush to lock in a rate. "If you're a first-time homebuyer, yes, rates are higher than they were in September, but they're still reasonably attractive," says David Geibel of Girard Partners, a wealth management firm in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania. "You can still get a very juicy mortgage."

Tom Libby, an auto analyst for IHS Markit, noted that if the Fed raised rates three more times next year, car loan rates would eventually rise and likely slow sales. As much as 70 to 80 percent of new-car transactions are financed or leased and dependent on interest rates.

The zero-percent financing deals that have facilitated many auto sales could go away if the Fed keep raising rates, Libby said.

Big changes

Some investment advisers said they wouldn't recommend that clients make big changes in their portfolios despite the Fed's forecast of three more rate hikes next year. "We're not going to be changing our investment outlook or our portfolios on a minor change in Fed outlook," said Charlie Smith of Fort Pitt Capital Group in Pittsburgh. "The world is changing where the Fed is not the primary variable anymore."

That said, rising rates can erode the value of longer-term bonds. So some investors may not want to own many bonds that mature more than 10 years out, whether they're individual bonds or mutual funds that hold long-term bonds. "Longer-term bonds are going to most likely be the biggest losers if the Fed embarks on a cycle of raising interest rates," said Ken Moraif of Money Matters, a wealth management firm in Dallas. "Shortening up the duration of the bonds in your portfolio is a very good idea."

Moraif has his clients now in bonds that mature in five to seven years. Don't go too short, though. Though you'll lower your risk, you'll also unduly limit your potential returns. Intermediate-term bonds may be best for some.

Over time, if the Fed steadily raises short-term rates, savings accounts and certificates of deposit would finally begin to sport more attractive yields. Just don't expect that to happen soon. "We're going to have to go through a series of rate hikes before savings accounts and short-term CDs are attractive again," Heider said.—AP



MILAN: In this photo taken on Monday, Sept 30, 2013, a view of the Mediaset TV headquarters in Cologno Monzese. — AP

BERLUSCONI MEDIA EMPIRE LOOKING TO FEND OFF FRENCH TAKEOVER

ROME: Shares in Silvio Berlusconi's Mediaset empire were volatile yesterday after the Italian government suggested it wouldn't accept a hostile takeover by France's Vivendi media group.

Trading in Mediaset was halted twice on the Milan stock exchange yesterday morning for losses that reached nearly 8 percent before shares recovered around midday. Vivendi, which owns France's Canal+ pay-TV operator and Universal Music Group, confirmed late Wednesday it had acquired a 20 percent stake in Berlusconi's television and publishing group. At the start of the week, its stake was little over 3 percent.

Mediaset holding company Fininvest responded by increasing its stake in Mediaset to nearly 39 percent and lodging a complaint with Milan prosecutors alleging market manipulation. Mediaset has accused Vivendi of taking advantage of the 30 percent drop in Mediaset's share value after Vivendi backed out of a plan to buy its Premium unit over the summer. Mediaset has already taken Vivendi to court in Milan to try to recover 570 million Euros in losses. Italy's economic development minister, Carlo Calenda, said that while Italy respects the rules of the market, Vivendi's move on Mediaset "doesn't appear to be the most

appropriate way to proceed" to boost Vivendi's presence in Italy. He said foreign investment is always welcome, but that in such a strategic field as mass media "the way in which one proceeds isn't irrelevant." By early afternoon in Milan, shares in Mediaset were down 1.8 percent at 3.55 Euros. Mediaset isn't the only Berlusconi asset that has caught the eye of foreign investors. Fininvest is in final negotiations to sell Berlusconi's beloved AC Milan soccer club to a group of Chinese investors. The deal with Sino-Europe Sports, now expected to close in March, values Milan at 740 million Euros (about \$800 million). — AP

EU COURT DISMISSES NESTLE'S KIT KAT TRADE MARK

BRUSSELS: A European Union court has dismissed Nestle's attempt to register the Kit Kat shape as a trade mark for its chocolate biscuit bar, questioning whether consumers in all EU states would recognize the snack's "distinctive character".

Rival Cadbury Schweppes - now owned by Mondelez International - asked the EU to declare the Kit Kat trade mark invalid in 2007. Yesterday the court annulled the initial trade mark registration, meaning that the Kit Kat shape can for now be used freely.

The European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) will have to re-examine whether the Kit Kat four fingers bar has acquired distinctive character through its use within all EU member states, not just across the EU generally, the General Court of the EU said in a statement.

The General Court, based in Luxembourg, is the second-highest in the EU. Yesterday it annulled EUIPO's decision in 2006 to register the Kit Kat as a trade mark in sweets, bakery products, biscuits, cakes and waffles. If a trade mark is registered for a category of goods which also has sub-categories, then it applies only to goods where it has been put to use,

the court said. "The Court holds that none of the evidence taken into consideration by EUIPO establishes use of the mark in respect of bakery products, pastries, cakes and waffles," it said.

In addition, Nestle would have to prove that when it applied in 2002, its Kit Kat had already gained distinctive character through use in all 15 of the states that had joined the bloc by then.

It was not enough for Nestle "to show that a significant proportion of the relevant public throughout the EU, merging all the member states and regions, perceives a mark as an indication of the commercial origin of the goods designated by the mark," the Court said.

The Court said EUIPO had found that Kit Kat had acquired distinctive character in 10 countries - Denmark, Germany, Spain, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Austria, Finland, Sweden and the UK - but not in countries including Belgium, Ireland, Greece and Portugal.

Nestle has the option of appealing against the decision before the EU's highest court within two months. — Reuters

BANK OF ENGLAND HOLDS RATES AS IT MONITORS BREXIT IMPACT

LONDON: The Bank of England decided to keep its main interest rate at a record low of 0.25 percent yesterday as it capped a volatile year in the wake of the country's decision to leave the European Union.

Though the decision was expected, the pound dropped because the Monetary Policy Committee predicted inflation would rise more slowly than last forecast. That suggests the bank will be under less pressure to raise rates any time soon.

Britain's economy has held up much better so far to a Brexit vote than many forecasters expected, though the outlook remains gloomy for the coming months. Fears over the impact prompted the Bank of England in August to cut rates for the first time in more than seven years and expand its economic stimulus program. But at this week's meeting, the policymakers decided to refrain from going further.

Unanimous vote

The vote was unanimous and the minutes reflect the monetary policy committee's wait-and-see attitude. "Earlier in the year, the committee noted that the path of monetary policy following the referendum on EU membership would depend on the evolution of the prospects for demand, supply, the exchange rate, and therefore inflation. This remains the case," the committee said in minutes released after the meeting. "Monetary policy can respond, in either direction."

The bank's governor, Mark Carney, has said in the past that volatility and uncertainty would govern the process of Brexit, even though negotiations have yet to begin. Traders in currency markets have fretted since the June 23 vote and the pound has lost almost a fifth of its value. The lower pound is expected to stoke some inflation by raising the cost of imports like food. However, since the committee's last meeting, the pound has bounced back up by over 6 percent against a basket of currencies. "All else equal, this would result in a slightly lower path for inflation than envisaged in the November Inflation Report, though it is still likely to overshoot the target later in 2017 and through 2018," the policymakers said.

The central bank is now predicting inflation will rise to 2.75 percent in 2018, above the bank's 2 percent target. It has already increased to an annual rate of 1.2 percent, from 0.9 percent in October.

The Monetary Policy Committee expects inflation to rise to the 2 percent target within six months. Analysts like Ian Shepherson of Pantheon Macroeconomic said the central bank seems to be in a neutral stance as it monitors the economy. "(The committee) repeated its November points that policymakers have 'limited tolerance' for above-target inflation, and that rates can move in either direction in response to the evolving outlook, which remains very uncertain," he wrote. — AP

US CONSUMER PRICES UP 0.2 PERCENT IN NOVEMBER

WASHINGTON: Consumer prices rose in November by the smallest amount in three months as the climb in energy prices moderated a bit and food prices remained flat.

The Labor Department said yesterday that its consumer price index increased 0.2 percent last month after a 0.4 percent October increase. Energy prices were up 1.2 percent, a slowdown from a 3.5 percent surge in November. The result reflects the fact that gasoline prices rose 2.5 percent last month, less than half the 6.7 percent October gain. Food prices showed no increase for a fifth straight month.

Over the past year, consumer prices are up 1.7 percent, still below the Federal Reserve's 2 percent annual inflation target. But the Fed raised its benchmark interest rate Wednesday, noting that inflation has begun to rise from ultra-low levels.

Core inflation, which excludes volatile energy and food costs, was also up 0.2 percent in November. Core prices have risen 2.1 percent over the past year.

The Federal Reserve boosted its key interest rate by a quarter-point to a new range of 0.5 percent to 0.75 percent, the first rate increase since an initial quarter-point move a year ago. For seven years, the Fed kept its benchmark rate at a record low near zero as it sought to jump-start an economy that had been hit by the worst recession since the 1930s.

The Fed said in an updated set of forecasts that it foresaw the possibility of another three rate hikes in 2017. But Fed Chair Janet Yellen told reporters that the central bank still saw rate increases coming at a gradual pace given that inflation was expected to rise only moderately over the coming year. — AP



BERLIN: From right, French Economy and Finance Minister Michel Sapin, French President Francois Hollande, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and German Minister for Economic Affairs and Energy Sigmar Gabriel pose for a photo during a German-French 'Digital Conference' on Tuesday — AP

EUROZONE ECONOMY APPEARS ROBUST AS INFLATION PRESSURES MOUNT

LONDON: The euro zone economy is ending 2016 robustly and inflation pressures are growing, a key survey showed yesterday, in a combination that suggests the European Central Bank's stimulus efforts are working.

Financial information company IHS Markit said its purchasing managers' index, a gauge of activity in the manufacturing and services sectors, held at 53.9 points in December, the same as in November. The index, which is subject to revision, is on a 100-point scale, with 50 marking the threshold between growth and contraction. A more detailed look at the survey shows that inflows of new business, employment and backlogs of work remained strong and that the manufacturing sector offset a slight slowdown in services. IHS Markit said the index is pointing to quarterly growth of 0.4 percent, which would be the eurozone's highest rate this year.

Though Chris Williamson, chief business economist at IHS Markit, said the survey puts the eurozone economy on a 'strong footing' for 2017, he cautioned that there is 'clearly the potential for political uncertainty to derail growth.' Next year, there are scheduled elections in the Netherlands, France and Germany. Discussions over Britain's exit from the European Union are also scheduled to commence.

Perhaps more important for officials at the ECB is the intensification in inflation pressures identified by the survey as a result of higher import costs related to the fall in the value of the euro and the recent spike in commodity prices, notably oil. The common European currency has fallen further following the Federal Reserve's rate hike on Wednesday to trade at a 13-year low of \$1.0410.

The firm also found that average input prices - those that firms can't control - rose at the sharpest rate for five and a half years. And average selling prices for goods and services rose by their steepest rate for nearly the same period as firms passed on those higher costs to customers.

As a result, the survey is pointing to higher inflation, something that the ECB's bond-buying stimulus program aims to achieve. It is intended to keep interest rates in the markets low, which should boost lending and economic activity, thereby helping prices to rise. The upturn is being accompanied by rising inflation - a scenario that will please ECB policymakers, Williamson said. The ECB, which targets an inflation rate of just below 2 percent, can point to some success, not least from the fact that annual inflation has risen from below zero earlier this year to the two-and-a-half year high of 0.6 percent in November. Last week, the ECB extended its stimulus program through to the end of 2017 but reduced its intensity from March.

Analyst said that if inflation moves toward target over the coming year there will be less need for the stimulus program and the ECB could be in a position to phase it out in 2018.

In a survey yesterday, credit ratings agency Fitch found that for the first time in five years European bond investors see inflation as a bigger risk than deflation. Fitch is predicting a pick-up in inflation in the wake of the recent rise in oil prices - benchmark New York crude is trading at over \$50 a barrel compared to below \$30 at the start of the year. However, it expects inflation to remain 'well below' the ECB's target through 2018. — AP

YELLEN SIGNALS CAUTION ABOUT TRUMP'S ECONOMIC STIMULUS PLAN 'MOMENT FOR STIMULUS HAS LIKELY PASSED'

WASHINGTON: President-elect Donald Trump has pledged deep tax cuts and increased infrastructure spending to restore lost jobs, accelerate the economy and bring prosperity to more Americans.

Janet Yellen has her doubts. After a presidential campaign full of blunt words and sweeping promises, the Federal Reserve chair sought Wednesday to make a nuanced point: The moment for a deficit-fueled stimulus to improve job creation has likely passed.

With unemployment at a low 4.6 percent and hiring consistently solid, Yellen said she thought employers no longer needed large tax cuts and heavy infrastructure spending to create jobs. In fact, she suggested that with unemployment at a nine-year low, a major stimulus of the kind Trump is pushing could pose risks. For one thing, Yellen indicated that the government's debt could become a heavier burden. "As our population ages, the debt-to-GDP ratio is projected to rise," she said. "And that needs to continue to be taken into account."

Unusual role

Yellen's remarks, at a news conference after the Fed announced it was raising its key interest rate, cast her in an unusual role: Once a strong advocate of federal spending to support the economy in the aftermath of the Great Recession, Yellen now has cautionary words about such efforts. Besides expanding the government's debt, a heavy dose of economic adrenaline at this stage could also cause the economy to overheat. If that were to happen, the Fed would likely feel compelled to repeatedly raise its benchmark rate. Higher borrowing rates, in turn, would slow growth. "I would say at this point that fiscal policy is not obviously needed to provide stimulus to help us get back to full employment," Yellen said.

For years after the recession officially ended in 2009, Yellen and her predecessor, Ben Bernanke, had encouraged additional federal stimulus, concerned that the Fed alone could not support a fragile recovery. Her retreat from that view reflects a belief that the economy is now on firm ground. With low unemployment and inflation edging toward their 2 percent target, Fed officials voted unanimously Wednesday to raise the federal funds rate for just the second time in more than a decade. That rate sets the range for what banks can charge each other for short-term loans, and it heralds higher rates for some consumer and business lending.

Carl Tannenbaum, chief economist at Northern Trust, saw Yellen as taking a cautious tack. "She was very careful," he said. "She was pretty good today about being balanced on the prospects of new policies. She was good at deflecting questions about the new administration."

Yellen declined to say whether she thought a Trump stimulus program would necessarily prompt faster Fed rate hikes over the next few years. Fed officials now forecast that they will raise rates three times in 2017, up from two increases in their previous forecast.

Details about Trump's policies remain too scarce for the Fed to adjust its policies accordingly. But the nonpartisan



WASHINGTON: Federal Reserve Board Chair Janet Yellen listens to a reporter's question during a news conference about the Federal Reserve's monetary policy on Wednesday. — AP

Committee for a Responsible Budget estimates that Trump proposals would add \$5.3 trillion to the national debt over 10 years. "I wouldn't want to speculate until I were more certain of the details and how they would affect the likely course of the economy," Yellen said.

Yellen herself has frequently noted that many Americans haven't benefited from the job market's steady improvement. And on Wednesday, she said she'd welcome having the White House and Congress take steps to support job seekers and increase economic growth over the long run. She spoke favorably, for example, about job training initiatives, tax reform, increased public and private investments and policies that aim to spur innovation and create businesses.

Greater worker productivity is "the ultimate determination of the evolution of living standards," Yellen said. And then, ever focused on the Fed's independence, Yellen stressed that she was "not trying to provide advice to the new administration or to Congress." But private economists noted that her remarks suggested that the Fed might choose to raise rates at an accelerated clip if Trump manages to enact a massive dose of stimulus. A sustained series of rate increases would likely limit the economy's ability to grow 3.5 percent annually - the pace Trump's advisers say can be achieved.

The Fed might "have to push against some of the stimulus in terms of higher interest rates," said Scott Anderson, chief economist at the Bank of the West. — AP

DRUGMAKERS PUSH PROFITABLE, BUT UNPROVEN, OPIOID SOLUTION

WASHINGTON: Pilloried for their role in the epidemic of prescription painkiller abuse, drugmakers are aggressively pushing their remedy to the problem: a new generation of harder-to-manipulate opioids that have racked up billions in sales, even though there's little proof they reduce rates of overdoses or deaths.

More than prescriptions are at stake. Critics worry the campaign is distracting from more productive solutions and delaying efforts to steer physicians away from prescription opioids - medications involved in the deaths of more than 165,000 Americans since 2000. "If we've learned one lesson from the last 20 years on opioids it's that these products have very, very high inherent risks," said Dr. Caleb Alexander, co-director of Johns Hopkins University's Center for Drug Safety and Effectiveness.

The latest drugs - known as abuse-deterrent formulations, or ADFs - are generally harder to crush or dissolve, making them difficult to snort or inject. But they still are vulnerable to manipulation and potentially addictive when swallowed. Pharmaceutical companies are making an under-the-radar push for bills benefiting the reformulated opioids in statehouses

and in Congress, where proposed legislation would require the Food and Drug Administration to replace older opioids with the new drugs.

The lobbying push features industry-funded advocacy groups and physicians, along with grieving family members, who rarely disclosed the drugmakers' ties during their testimony in support of the drugs. Making painkillers harder to abuse is a common-sense step, but it's also a multibillion-dollar sales opportunity, allowing drugmakers to corner the market with their newly patented, higher-priced versions.

Abuse-deterrent painkillers represented less than 5 percent of all opioids prescribed last year, but they generated more than \$2.4 billion in sales, or roughly a quarter of the nearly \$10 billion U.S. market, according to IMS Health. The field is dominated by Purdue Pharma's OxyContin, patent-protected until 2030. "Opioids with abuse-deterrent properties won't stop all prescription drug abuse, but they are an important part of the comprehensive approach needed to address this public health issue," Purdue spokesman Robert Josephson said in a statement. — AP



LONDON: In this file photo taken on November 20, 2016 shows Britain's Andy Murray posing with the ATP World Number One trophy after winning the men's singles final against Serbia's Novak Djokovic on the eighth and final day of the ATP World Tour Finals tennis tournament. — AFP

MURRAY, KERBER LEAVE RIVALS PLAYING CATCH-UP NEXT YEAR

PARIS: Andy Murray and Angelique Kerber emerged the standout players of 2016, deposing world number ones Novak Djokovic and Serena Williams, while Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal and Maria Sharapova were left with careers to rebuild. Having lost the Australian Open and French Open finals to Djokovic, Murray thundered back in the second half of the year. The 29-year-old Briton won a second Wimbledon, became the first man to clinch two Olympic singles gold medals and snatched Djokovic's world number one spot, ending the year on a five-title, 24-match winning run.

"It's taken a huge effort to get there but to repeat that again next year is going to be extremely difficult. I'm not going to be able to play at this level into my mid-30s. The young guys are going to keep improving," said Murray after dismantling lifetime rival Djokovic in the ATP World Tour Finals title match to confirm his end of year top ranking.

It's no coincidence that Murray's domination in the second half of 2016 came in tandem with his decision to rehire Ivan Lendl as part of his coaching team just before Wimbledon. In stark contrast, by the end of 2016, Djokovic had separated from Boris Becker. It was a messy finale for the 29-year-old Serb who had completed the career Grand Slam with his maiden French Open crown in June.

Season imploded

His 12th major title allowed him to hold all four Grand Slam titles at the same time while he also became the first

player to win \$100 million in prize money. The talk was of Djokovic becoming just the third man in history to compete the calendar Grand Slam and the first since 1969. But his season imploded as a third round loss at Wimbledon sparked an alarming slide—he suffered a first round exit to the rejuvenated Juan Martin del Potro at the Rio Olympics and a lackluster defeat to Stan Wawrinka in the US Open final.

Federer, the 17-time major winner, slumped to 16 — his lowest ranking since 2001 — and failed to win a title for the first time since 2000. The Swiss, who will be 36 in August, skipped the French Open before a five-set loss to Milos Raonic in the Wimbledon semi-finals pre-empted a withdrawal from the rest of the season to recover from a serious knee injury.

Nadal, the 14-time major winner, ended at nine in the world. He shut down his season in October to rest the wrist injury which had forced him out of Roland Garros after two rounds, kept him sidelined from Wimbledon and almost torpedoed his Olympics hopes. As it was, the 30-year-old Spaniard made it to Rio, carried his nation's flag at the opening ceremony and won doubles gold with his childhood friend Marc Lopez. Nadal, however, is aware that a change is coming.

His fears were illustrated by 19-year-old Alexander Zverev becoming the first teenager to finish in the top 25 since Djokovic and Murray in 2006 while the colorful Nick Kyrgios, another of the ATP's much-vaunted #NextGen of players, ended at a career-high 13.

Change coming

"It's an era of transition where two good generations combine together," said Nadal. In the women's game, 28-year-old German left-hander Kerber bookended the Grand Slam season, winning the Australian and US Opens and knocking 35-year-old Williams off her top spot after an 186-week reign. Williams won a seventh Wimbledon to equal Steffi Graf's Open Era record of 22 Slams but her season finished after a semi-final loss to Karolina Pliskova at the US Open. The great American, also beaten in the French Open final by Garbine Muguruza, called time on 2016 to nurse a shoulder injury.

Former world number one Victoria Azarenka came off the tour in June after announcing she was pregnant while Sharapova failed a drugs test at the Australian Open. Five-time major winner Sharapova subsequently had a two-year ban for testing positive for meldonium cut to 15 months and will be eligible to return in April. If Sharapova, as well as an early season betting uproar, rocked tennis there were still as many feel-good stories.

Monica Puig won Puerto Rico's first ever Olympic gold medal while the men's game was boosted by the return to form of 2009 US Open champion del Potro. The giant Argentine, who came close to retiring after a succession of wrist surgeries, bounced back from 1,045 in February to finish the year at 38 having won a silver medal at the Olympics and led Argentina to a first Davis Cup title. — AFP

FLYERS SOAR TO 10TH STRAIGHT VICTORY

DENVER: Roman Lyubimov and Brayden Schenn scored 1:46 apart in the third period to help the Philadelphia Flyers to their 10th straight victory, 4-3 over the Colorado Avalanche on Wednesday. The Flyers have their longest winning streak since a franchise-best 13-game run in 1985. Off a Colorado turnover in its own zone, Lyubimov slapped the go-ahead goal past Calvin Pickard 3:30 into the third. Schenn added to the lead with his fifth goal in his last three games. Wayne Simmonds and Michael Del Zotto also scored, and Steve Mason stopped 26 shots. Pickard, starting in place of injured Semyon Varlamov, made 21 saves. Matt Duchene had two goals and Rene Bourque also scored for the Avalanche. They have lost five straight at home and eight of their last 10 overall.

PENGUINS 4 BRUINS 3, OT

Bryan Rust flipped a backhander past Tuukka Rask 1:24 into overtime to lift Pittsburgh past Boston for its seventh straight victory. Racing down the slot, Rust took a swipe at Evgeni Malkin's centering pass and the puck fluttered by Rask. Conor Sheary, Nick Bonino and Justin Schultz also scored for Pittsburgh. Matt Murray stopped 41 shots to improve to 10-0-1 in his last 11 home starts. Stanley Cup champion Pittsburgh improved to 20-7-3 to take the overall NHL lead with 43 points. David Pastrnak picked up his 19th goal for the Bruins. Brad Marchand and David Krejci also scored for the Bruins. Rask played spectacularly at times and finished with 33 saves.

LIGHTNING 6, FLAMES 3

Brian Boyle scored two first-period goals and Tampa Bay beat Calgary to snap the Flames' six-game winning streak. Alex Killorn also scored twice, the second into an empty net, and Braydon Coburn and Andrej Sustr added goals for Tampa Bay. Victor Hedman and Valtteri Filppula each had three assists, and Ben Bishop made 19 saves. Troy Brouwer, TJ Brodie and Micheal Ferland scored for Calgary.

SHARKS 4, SENATORS 3, SO

Kevin Labanc scored the lone goal in four rounds of a shootout to lift San Jose past Ottawa. Joe Pavelski, Brent Burns and Chris Tierney scored in regulation for San Jose, and Martin Jones made 29 saves. On Tuesday night in Toronto, Logan Couture scored the only goal in a shootout in the Sharks' 3-2 victory over the Maple Leafs. Bobby Ryan, Kyle Turris and Dion Phaneuf scored for Ottawa. — AP

CHIEFS WITHOUT STAR LINEBACKER

KANSAS CITY: The Kansas City Chiefs have a multitude of ways to replace Derrick Johnson in the middle of their run defense, whether it's Frank Zombo, DJ. Alexander or even injured linebacker Justin March-Lillard. Replacing his leadership is a much bigger challenge. "That's a tough void to fill, just the years of experience," Chiefs safety Eric Berry said. "Just his presence and his IQ that he's accumulated over the years, just having him out there and understand what the offenses are trying to do - that's a big deal. We'll have to figure something out."

Johnson was lost for the season when he ruptured his Achilles tendon before halftime of last week's victory over Oakland. It's the second time the star linebacker has sustained the injury and it couldn't have come at a more inopportune time with Tennessee rolling into town. The Chiefs' run defense is predicated on their defensive front occupying offensive linemen long enough for the linebacker crew to dart in and plays. And that's a big reason why Johnson, their career tackles leader, had been putting up big numbers again this season.

Now that responsibility falls on the shoulders of others, just as the Titans' third-ranked rushing attack arrives at Arrowhead Stadium. DeMarco Murray, Derrick Henry and Co. are averaging nearly 150 yards rushing per game, and churned out a win over Denver last week despite quarterback Marcus Mariota having arguably his poorest game as a starting quarterback in the NFL. "They've got a lot of weapons," Berry said, "but I think all of it starts up front. Their offensive line is pretty good, and to pair that with some good backs and a quarterback with some good speed, I think that really opens up the running game." — AP

KOHLI URGES INDIA TO 'LEAVE ITS MARK'

CHENNAI: India's talismanic captain Virat Kohli yesterday urged his in-form teammates to "leave a mark on world cricket" by going on to become one of the greatest sides ever. Kohli's India are bidding to extend their 17-game unbeaten run in the dead rubber fifth and final Test against England, which starts in the southern city of Chennai on Friday.

The hosts, who have already clinched the series 3-0, will become the first Indian team to go 18 matches without a loss if they avoid defeat against Alastair Cook's struggling tourists. Kohli called on his players to build on recent successes and become a team that can be mentioned in the same breath as Don Bradman's Australian "Invincibles" and the legendary West Indies side of the 1980s.

"We still understand we got to play a lot of cricket everywhere in the world. It's not only about this one period we are going through," the 28-year-old told reporters. "As I said it's an ongoing process which needs to be sustained for the next five, seven or eight years for us to become a top quality side and leave a mark on world cricket-maybe known as one of the best teams to have assembled on the field," Kohli added.

The batsman, who is in the form of his life after striking his third double century of the year, has already become the first Indian captain to win five successive series, including a 3-0 whitewash of New Zealand in October. India sit comfortably at the top of the world rankings but Kohli insisted his side were taking nothing for granted going into the Chennai Test. "We don't feel invincible to be honest, we respect every opposition, we admit every time we are put under pressure, and we know teams are going to put us under pressure," he said.

Kohli leads the series' batting chart with 640 runs, way ahead of England batsman Joe Root, who has 397 for the four matches. England skipper Cook said after the huge innings and 36-run loss in the third Test in Mumbai that Root was "ready" to succeed him as captain, without saying when he would eventually step down. Kohli agrees that Root has what it takes to move up from his role of vice-captain. — AFP

COOK SHRUGS OFF CAPTAINCY CRITICS

CHENNAI: England's Alastair Cook yesterday shrugged off criticism of his captaincy ahead of the fifth and final Test against India in Chennai, saying one has to live and die by the decisions made. The tourists, who lost the series 3-0 trail after the fourth Test loss in Mumbai, started off with a strong performance in the first drawn Test in Rajkot but could not keep pace with top-ranked India.

Cook's role as a leader has been brought into question after the three consecutive defeats but he insisted that it is all part of the job. "You get judged on your results as a captain don't you? And when you lose games of cricket you are under fire, it happens to everyone," Cook said. "When Virat (Kohli) loses games of cricket he'll get criticized, when I lose games of cricket I get criticized. That's part and parcel of the job. "Look at Dylan Hartley the England rugby captain. He wins games of rugby and it's all flying and obviously an incident last week (when he hit an opponent in the face) he gets criticized," added Cook.

Cook admitted reading the pitch wrong in the Mohali Test and also regretted using just two spinners in Mumbai. "When you're part of the leadership group you live and die by those decisions and when it's going well everybody thinks you're brilliant and when you're doing badly everybody thinks you're terrible," he said. Cook insisted England's effort could not be criticized as they search for a consolation win.

'No regrets'

"We've put everything into this tour. I'll have no regrets on the effort and clearly we'd rather not be 3-0 down. "One thing you can't fault us on is how hard we've fought as a side and I'm proud of how we've stuck together," Cook told reporters. Cook, who has said that Joe Root is "ready" for the captain's job, was again asked about his likely successor. "The moment he got off the plane in India in 2012 as a very young-looking Joe Root you knew he was ready for international cricket - you knew. "Everything you knew-his mind, his game-was ready. Every challenge that's been thrown at him he's handled. So I don't think anything over the next few years will faze him," said Cook. — AFP



BRISBANE: Australia's batsman Steven Smith plays a shot as Pakistan's wicketkeeper Sarfraz Ahmed (L) looks on during the first day-night cricket Test between Australia and Pakistan at Gabba stadium. — AFP

ANOTHER SMITH TON PUTS AUSTRALIA IN COMMAND

BRISBANE: Skipper Steve Smith scored a hundred and rookies Matt Renshaw and Peter Handscomb half-centuries as Australia took an early grip on the pink-ball first Test against Pakistan in Brisbane yesterday. Smith, dropped on 53, showed the way as the Australians built the foundations for a sturdy first innings after winning the toss.

At the close before a first day Gabba crowd of more than 26,000, the home side were 288 for three with Smith on 110 and Handscomb, playing in only his second Test match, not out on 64. Smith raised his 16th Test century with a driven four off Mohammad Amir with three overs left in the day. It came off 184 balls with 15 fours.

The pair put on an unbroken stand of 137 runs for the fourth wicket after 20-year-old opener Renshaw chipped in with an impressive 71 also playing in his second Test. Smith was put down on 53 nearing the dinner break when an edge off spinner Azhar Ali went in and out of wicketkeeper Sarfraz Ahmed's gloves.

Smith and Handscomb batted through the entire final session when most wickets statistically tumble in pink-ball Tests under the lights to put Australia in a strong position. Pakistan feared they might have lost their star pace bowler Mohammad Amir after he fell to the ground in the final session

clutching his right knee after a misfield.

Amir jarred his knee after his right leg dug into the turf as the ball ran on to the boundary rope. He was ferried off the ground by a medi-cab, but remarkably returned to the field 30 minutes later and went on to finish the session bowling with the second new ball. It was a huge relief for the tourists after it conjured up memories of England fast bowler Simon Jones rupturing an anterior cruciate ligament in a similar fielding mishap at the Gabba in 2002.

'Disappointing end'

"His knee went into the ground and we all feared that he might be worse, but thank God he recovered quickly and he came back," team-mate Azhar Ali said. "He's feeling much better and the good thing is that he came on and bowled with the second new ball, which is a good sign." Australia lost the wicket of Renshaw in the middle session after the dismissals of David Warner and Usman Khawaja in the opening session.

Renshaw did not put a foot wrong in an assured innings until the 44th over when he was caught behind off Wahab for 71 off 125 balls with nine fours. The youngster looked at ease in his home ground Test match and was on course for his maiden Test century before

Wahab struck. "I'm just enjoying it and trying to go out there and play with a smile on my face because it's doing something I love, playing for my country," Renshaw said. "Everyone is disappointed when they get out, but I got 71, it's my best innings in Test cricket and I was excited to get to 71."

It was reward for Wahab, who was Pakistan's best performing bowler, maintaining a tight line and conceding few runs. Pakistan struck with two quick wickets in the first session after openers Warner and Renshaw gave Australia a solid start. Amir had Warner leg before wicket for 32 after the Australian vice-captain was struck on the pad on leg stump in the 24th over.

Warner was given out by English umpire Ian Gould and did not seek a review, ending an opening stand of 70. Amir is in the first year of his return to international cricket following a five-year ban over spot-fixing, a scandal which almost ended his burgeoning career. Khawaja, coming off his man-of-the-match 145 in last month's day-night third Test in Adelaide against South Africa, lasted just six balls before he was out to a false stroke to leg-spinner Yasir Shah. Khawaja advanced down the wicket but hit straight into Misbah-ul-Haq's midriff at short midwicket and was on his way for four. — AFP

WIZARDS COME FROM BEHIND TO CLINCH HORNETS

WASHINGTON: John Wall and Bradley Beal combined for 19 of their 45 points in the third quarter, Washington's highest-scoring period this season, and the Wizards came back to beat the Charlotte Hornets 109-106 Wednesday night, handing the Southeast Division leaders their third consecutive loss.

Wall, wearing bright orange neon shoes, outplayed Hornets star Kemba Walker, finishing with more points (25-17) and assists (10-9), along with seven steals to become Washington's franchise leader in that category. Beal, 0 for 6 in the first half, took over for part of the third, scoring 11 points, mostly via a trio of 3s, and finished with 20 points and a career-high nine assists. Charlotte got within two on Cody Zeller's layup with 10.6 seconds remaining. Wall made one of two free throws a second later, and Nicolas Batum and Walker both missed 3s that would have tied it. In the third, Washington went from trailing by 10 points to leading 79-71 thanks to a 23-5 burst, part of a 38-23 edge in the quarter. Charlotte (14-12) is 0-3 to start a five-game road trip.

GRIZZLIES 93, CAVALIERS 85

Troy Daniels scored 20 points and Marc Gasol had 17 points and 11 rebounds to lead Memphis over the short-handed Cleveland Cavaliers, who left their top three players at home to rest. Tony Allen added 16 points, eight rebounds and three steals as the Grizzlies won for the seventh time in eight games. The only loss during that stretch was a 110-89 defeat Tuesday night in Cleveland. LeBron James, Kyrie Irving and Kevin Love did not make the trip for the Cavs, leaving an average of more than 70 points per game back in Cleveland. The result was the Cavaliers setting a season low for points and hitting only nine 3-pointers - matching their fewest in a game this season. James Jones led Cleveland with 15 points.

JAZZ 109, THUNDER 89

Rodney Hood scored 25 points and Utah defeated Oklahoma City to break a tie between the teams atop the Northwest Division. Utah led from start to finish behind 58.3 percent shooting and showed why it's one of the best defensive teams in the NBA, holding the Thunder to 36.6 percent from the field. Gordon Hayward scored 17 for the Jazz, who have won nine of 11. Rudy Gobert added 12 points, 12 rebounds and three blocks. Russell Westbrook paced the Thunder with 27 points, six rebounds and five assists. He shot 7 for 25 from the floor. Enes Kanter scored 19 for Oklahoma City against his former team.

SPURS 108, CELTICS 101

Kawhi Leonard scored 26 points and San Antonio played its second consecutive solid home game in holding off Boston. Spurs point guard Tony Parker had 16 points, including 10 in the final period. Pau Gasol had 17 points and 13 rebounds for San Antonio, which has won three straight at the AT&T Center after dropping three of its first four at home. The Spurs (20-5) are 7-4 at home after matching an NBA record with a 40-1 mark last season. The Spurs had 33 assists on 44 field goals while shooting 55 percent from the field and winning their 11th straight over Boston. Boston was without injured leading scorer Isaiah Thomas. San Antonio rested starting power forward LaMarcus Aldridge, and both teams showed off their depth. Avery Bradley had 25 points and 10 assists for the Celtics.



WASHINGTON DC: Bradley Beal #3 of the Washington Wizards drives against Michael Kidd-Gilchrist #14 of the Charlotte Hornets in the first half at Verizon Center. — AFP

HEAT 95, PACERS 89

Hassan Whiteside had 26 points and 22 rebounds, Tyler Johnson scored 15 off the bench and Miami beat Indiana. James Johnson added 14 points for the Heat, who outrebounded Indiana 58-38 and won consecutive games at home for the first time all season. Paul George scored 22 for the Pacers, who were hoping for a season-best third straight win and instead managed just 10 points in the fourth quarter.

RAPTORS 123, 76ERS 114

DeMar DeRozan scored 31 points and Kyle Lowry added 20 in his Philadelphia homecoming to help Toronto win its fourth straight. DeRozan had 31 points through three quarters in his second consecutive 30-point game. The Atlantic Division-leading Raptors (18-7) have won 10 of 11 and are 11 games over .500 for the first time this season. The 76ers were trying to win three straight games for the first time since taking four in a row from Dec. 29, 2013-Jan. 4, 2014. Robert Covington led the Sixers with 26 points.

CLIPPERS 113, MAGIC 108

Austin Rivers made seven 3-pointers and scored 25 points in his return from a concus-

sion to help Los Angeles beat Orlando for its third straight victory. Rivers hit the key shot when he buried a 3 from the corner with 2 minutes left to give the Clippers a nine-point lead. Blake Griffin added 23 points, and DeAndre Jordan had 22 points and 12 rebounds. Jordan, who often struggles from the foul line, made 12 of 18 free throws. Aaron Gordon had 33 points for the Magic, and Evan Fournier added 24.

ROCKETS 132, KINGS 98

James Harden had a triple-double - 15 points, 14 assists and 11 rebounds - in just three quarters to lead Houston past depleted Sacramento for its eighth straight win. The Rockets have the longest current winning streak in the NBA and the team's longest since 2014. It was Harden's fifth triple-double this season and the 14th of his career, which ties him with Hakeem Olajuwon for most in franchise history. The Kings played without three starters: Rudy Gay (hip flexor strain) and Ben McLemore (left quadriceps contusion) were out with injuries, and DeMarcus Cousins received a planned day of rest. Sacramento was led by Garrett Temple's 20 points. Ryan Anderson had 22 points and Sam Dekker scored a career-high 19 for Houston.

NETS 107, LAKERS 97

Bojan Bogdanovic scored 23 points, Sean Kilpatrick had 22 and Brooklyn sent Los Angeles to its eighth straight loss. Brook Lopez added 20 points for the Nets, who played without Jeremy Lin again but avoided a third consecutive defeat. Trevor Booker grabbed a season-high 18 rebounds. Lou Williams scored 16 points for the Lakers, who have fallen from a .500 team early in Luke Walton's first season as coach to one that is 10-18. They shot 38.5 percent from the field and were dismal as well from 3-point range (22 percent) and the free throw line (61.8).

PISTONS 95, MAVERICKS 85

Reggie Jackson scored 20 points and Andre Drummond led a dominant rebounding effort with 17 as Detroit topped Dallas. Jon Leuer had a season-high 19 points off the bench as the Pistons beat the team with the worst record in the Western Conference three nights after losing to Philadelphia, the last-place team in the East. Drummond had 10 rebounds in the first 7 1/2 minutes and the Pistons had a 29-9 edge on the boards at halftime and 50-30 for the game. Harrison Barnes led the Mavericks with 19 points. — AP

GOAL IN FRIENDLY MAY HELP NEYMAR'S FORM

MADRID: A meaningless goal is still a goal, especially for someone who really needs a boost. Neymar had been enduring his worst scoring drought since arriving in Barcelona, but he got one in his team's 5-3 friendly win over Al Ahli in Qatar on Tuesday. That could be just the spur he needs. In Sunday's Spanish league game against Espanyol, Neymar will be trying to score his first goal in an official match since he signed a three-year contract extension with Barcelona almost two months ago.

Neymar's last goal for the Catalan club came in the 4-0 win over Manchester City in the group stage of the Champions League on Oct. 19, two days before the new contract was signed to

keep the Brazil striker in Barcelona until June 2021. Neymar failed to find the net in the eight matches since then, the longest scoreless streak in his four seasons in Spain.

He also hasn't scored since finding out about a month ago that he and his father are each facing a two-year prison sentence and a fine of more than \$10 million on corruption charges related to alleged irregularities during his transfer from Brazilian club Santos to Barcelona. They deny wrongdoing. In his debut season in 2013-14, Neymar went six consecutive games without scoring a goal two separate occasions. He never went more than four games without a goal the following season, and in 2015-16 he didn't score

in five games in a row late in the season.

Playing poorly

Although Neymar hasn't been playing poorly, his missed chances have attracted attention. None more than the one in the 68th minute of the "clasico" against Real Madrid at Camp Nou a few weeks ago, when he had an open shot from close range to give Barcelona a 2-0 lead but sent his strike over the crossbar. Madrid scored an equalizer in the 90th.

Neymar's missed opportunity might have cost Barcelona the game, but it also kept him from showing his support for Brazilian club Chapecoense, whose players and delegation

members died in a plane crash in Colombia. "If I had scored I would have shown a Chapecoense jersey," Neymar said. "It's what I could have done at that moment to show my support to the relative of those who died."

It's been a sub-par season for Neymar compared to a year ago, when he scored 14 goals in his first 17 games. He ended with 31 goals and made the short list for the best player of the year award, finishing behind Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo in the voting. The 24-year-old Neymar has only six goals after 17 official games this season. He did not make FIFA's shortlist this time, and finished fifth in the Ballon d'Or award announced Monday.—AP

EURO 16 SEEN BY 2 BILLION ON TV

GENEVA: Boosted by Cristiano Ronaldo's title run and Iceland's feel-good story, the 2016 European Championship attracted 2 billion people to watch live on television. The total live audience for the expanded 24-team, 51-match tournament grew to almost 5 billion viewers, according to UEFA research published yesterday. The research says 600 million viewers watched some of Portugal's 1-0 extra-time win over host France in the final.

The final attracted 284.4 million as an "average in-home global audience" - the industry-standard audit tracking viewers minute-by-minute. The 20 extra matches created by having eight more teams added 1.1 billion viewers to the overall TV audience. The 2 billion individual viewers was an increase of 100 million on the Euro 2012 figures, UEFA said. Bigger audiences in Brazil and China helped raise the totals.

"The newly created (1300 GMT) match slot had the biggest impact on Asian audiences," UEFA said, which scheduled the earliest Euro 2012 kick-offs at 1600 GMT. Among matches kicking off in a prime 9 pm slot in China, the peak audience there was 17.6 million for France's 2-1 win over Ireland in the round of 16. Euro 2016 TV rights earned UEFA 1.05 billion euros (\$1.1 billion) from 130 broadcast partners.

Ronaldo's quest for a first national-team title helped draw viewers to the final, who mostly stayed despite his exit from injury midway through the first half. The 284 million figure made it the second most-watched game in European Championship history. The average audience of the most-viewed match was 299 million when Spain beat Italy 4-0 in the Euro 2012 final.

In comparison, the 2014 World Cup final drew a 570.1 million average for Germany's 1-0 extra-time win over Argentina in Rio de Janeiro. Average audiences in Brazil for the Euro 2016 final topped 25.7 million, watching on three channels: TV Globo, Bandierantes and Sport TV. Globo averaged more than 13 million viewers for each live match it broadcast, for a 13.2 percent increase on Euro 2012, UEFA's research said.

In China, the final's average audience was 8 million in China, and United States broadcaster ESPN averaged 5.3 million. Still, no nation could match Iceland's support for its team, which was a surprise quarterfinalist in its major tournament debut. On the island of 330,000 people, while thousands had traveled to France to watch the team, 99.8 percent of all TV viewers during Iceland's 2-1 win over Austria were tuned in to the team sealing its place in the knockout rounds. — AP



PARIS: Paris Saint-Germain's French defender Presnel Kimpembe is tackled by Lille's Cape Verdean forward Ryan Mendes during the French League Cup football match between Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) and Lille (LOSC) at the Parc des Princes stadium. — AFP

PSG, MONACO CRUISE TO LEAGUE CUP LAST-EIGHT

PARIS: Defending champions Paris Saint-Germain eased into the French League Cup quarter-finals on Wednesday with a 3-1 win over Lille while Monaco routed Rennes 7-0. However, Ligue 1 leaders Nice were knocked out, going down 3-2 to Bordeaux in their last-16 tie.

At the Parc des Princes, PSG ended a three-match winless run as Unai Emery's men defeated Lille in a repeat of last season's final. Lucas scored twice with a 43rd-minute penalty and a 57th-minute goal before young Spanish striker Jese made the most of just his second start to hit the third after 69 minutes.

"(Jese) progressed as the match went on and he scored," said Emery. "It wasn't easy for him but he found his rhythm as the minutes passed. He needs to play, that is clear." PSG will face Metz, who won a penalty shootout 11-10 against Toulouse, in the quarter-finals. Title-chasing Monaco saw 17-year-old Kylian

Mbappe hit his first professional hat-trick as the Principality side also made the quarter-finals.

Mbappe, who turns 18 on December 20, now has six goals for the season in all competitions. Rennes will be fed up of the sight of the Stade Louis II where they lost 3-0 in a league game in September. Jaroslav Plasil put Bordeaux ahead against Nice after 14 minutes while a 22nd-minute strike from Gaetan Laborde made it 2-0 before Alassane Plea pulled one back just before the interval.

Marseille crashes out

Laborde restored Bordeaux's two-goal lead 10 minutes into the second period with Mario Balotelli's 83rd-minute penalty proving just a consolation for Nice who have already been eliminated from the Europa League this season. Lyon also exited the tournament, losing 4-3 on penalties at home to Guingamp after a 2-2 draw in normal time where

they twice came back from a goal down.

On Tuesday, Marseille crashed out after losing 4-3 on penalties to second-tier Sochaux following a 1-1 draw. Bouna Sarr fired the three-time champions ahead at the Stade Bonal but Moussa Sao swiftly responded to level for hosts Sochaux. Goalkeeper Christopher Dilo then saved spot-kicks from Doria and Aaron Leya Iseka in the shootout as Sochaux, the only non top-flight team left in the competition, advanced to the quarter-finals.

Portugal international Sergio Conceicao made a winning start as Nantes manager with a 3-1 victory over Montpellier. Argentine striker Emiliano Sala struck either side of a Kevin Berigaud goal at the Stade de la Beaujoire. Poland international Mariusz Stepinski added a third for Nantes on the hour, although the hosts played out the final few minutes with 10 men after the dismissal of Abdoulaye Toure. —AFP

LALLANA BRACE GETS LFC ROLLING AGAIN

MIDDLESBROUGH: Adam Lallana scored twice and Divock Origi found the net for the fifth consecutive game as Liverpool climbed to second in the Premier League thanks to a comfortable 3-0 victory at Middlesbrough. Jurgen Klopp's controversial decision to drop goalkeeper Loris Karius proved to be fully justified with Simon Mignolet keeping a clean sheet on his return to the side as Liverpool won at the Riverside Stadium for the first time in 14 years to remain six points behind leaders Chelsea on Wednesday. Reds boss Klopp left himself open to accusations of bowing to pundit power as the German seemingly contradicting himself following his public fall-out with Gary and Phil Neville over their criticism of his summer signing.

Despite mounting a stringent defense of the 23-year-old, he nevertheless benched the former Mainz stopper in the wake of conceding six goals in the previous two games, which had seen Liverpool drop five points in their title challenge. Mignolet, who had most recently featured in the League Cup victory over Leeds at the end of November, looked assured in his first top flight appearance since the 2-1 victory at Chelsea in mid-September.

But in truth the 28-year-old had little to do in securing a comfortable shut-out against the division's lowest scorers, who remain in relegation danger. Lallana broke the deadlock in the 29th minute as the hosts were stretched to breaking point by Nathaniel Clyne. Brazilian defender Fabio gave the England full-back too much space, and when his cross made it all the way to the back post, there was Lallana arriving ahead of his marker Adam Forshaw to head beyond Victor Valdes.

Scrambling

Sadio Mane was lucky to escape a booking for an early dive as he looked to earn a penalty under challenge from Adam Clayton. The Liverpool midfielder showed the more positive side of his game two minutes before the break as he almost doubled his side's lead.

Again Boro were caught out by a pacy counter-attack, this time down the left. Mane burst through to let fly from inside the area and his low shot beat Valdes, only to hit the foot of the post. Origi was the first to react to the rebound, and his raking shot grazed the side-netting with Valdes scrambling across goal to cover. It proved to be a similar pattern after the break, as Valdes saved at his near post to deny the increasingly influential Mane.

Middlesbrough defender Ben Gibson looked to use his arm to block the Senegal midfielder's shot soon after, but referee Jon Moss was unmoved as the Reds closed in on the decisive second goal. It arrived on the hour as Georginio Wijnaldum released Lallana into the box for the midfielder's inviting low cross to be swept home from close range by Origi, whose prolific scoring run is the best by a Liverpool player since Daniel Sturridge scored in eight consecutive matches at the outset of 2014.

Origi returned the favor in the 69th minute for Lallana's ninth goal of the season for club and country, the former Southampton trainee securing the points by firing home the forward's cross at the far post with Middlesbrough again caught short by a swift counter. — AFP



YOKOHAMA: Real Madrid's forward Cristiano Ronaldo (2nd R) dribbles the ball beside Club America's midfielder Rubens Sambueza (2nd L) during the Club World Cup semi-final football match between Mexico's Club America and Spain's Real Madrid at Yokohama International stadium. — AFP

RONALDO STRIKES LATE AS REAL REACH WORLD FINAL

YOKOHAMA: Karim Benzema and Cristiano Ronaldo were on target as Real Madrid eased past Mexico's Club America 2-0 yesterday to reach the Club World Cup final in Japan. The Spanish giants will face shock finalists and local favourites Kashima Antlers in Yokohama on Sunday as they look to capture their second world title in three years. "Our sole aim was to reach the final-so it's job done," Real coach Zinedine Zidane told reporters after watching his side extend their club record unbeaten run to 36 matches in all competitions. "We didn't have a great rhythm in the first half but in the second half we created a lot of chances and Cristiano finally scored so I'm very satisfied," added the Frenchman. "It was a long flight to Japan, but for Real Madrid the Club World Cup is an important tournament and we are here to lift the trophy." Zidane's countryman

Benzema said: "It was a hard game against a tough team. The conditions were difficult too with the long journey we've had but we played well and won the game-now for the final." With Ronaldo firing blanks until scoring with virtually the last kick of the game, Benzema struck in first-half stoppage time, finishing clinically with the outside of his right boot after a deft pass from Toni Kroos.

Turned to thunder

Ronaldo, who scooped his fourth Ballon d'Or earlier this week, had already squandered a gilt-edged opportunity by heading against the post. The Portuguese superstar also saw two stinging efforts blocked by goalkeeper Moises Munoz but his persistence paid off when he swept home from a tight angle deep into injury time. Confusion followed, however, when

it appeared that Paraguayan referee Enrique Caceres would review the decision to allow Ronaldo's goal using the video technology being trialed by FIFA in Japan. Ronaldo's face turned to thunder as the Mexicans protested he had been offside-until the match official finally indicated that the goal stood.

"It's a new invention but to be honest I don't like it," said man of the match Luka Modric when asked about video replays. "It causes confusion. I hope they don't continue with this system because for me it is not football." Club America coach Ricardo La Volpe, meanwhile, insisted his side had been unfortunate to lose. "I think the luck was against us this evening," insisted the firebrand Argentine. "It was a very tight game which we dominated for periods. But perhaps we weren't aggressive enough and we couldn't find the final ball." —AFP

FABREGAS FIRES CHELSEA TO SIX POINTS TABLE LEAD

SUNDERLAND: Cesc Fabregas struck as Antonio Conte's Chelsea edged a battling Sunderland team 1-0 on Wednesday to establish a six-point advantage at the top of the Premier League. While they controlled much of the match, Chelsea struggled to create clear-cut chances and required two superb saves from goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois to prevent bottom club Sunderland from equalizing.

It meant Chelsea could never relax before extending their winning run to 10 league games, but this was also evidence Conte has created a team that know how to win when not at their best. The perception that the Chelsea manager can do no wrong only increased when

they went ahead five minutes before the interval through a goal created and scored by the two players he called up for this game.

Fabregas, chosen in midfield ahead of Nemanja Matic, was the scorer with a crisp 20-yard shot after he exchanged passed with Willian, who was involved after a long absence because of an injury to Eden Hazard. The goal gave Chelsea an interval lead that had appeared unlikely for much of a low-key half. Sunderland provided stubborn resistance while creating only one threat when Adnan Januzaj curled a shot wide in the 25th minute. Otherwise, Chelsea were the more dangerous side, although it appeared they might miss

Hazard's influence as they lacked their usual fluency in the final third. It took them 26 minutes to carve out their first chance when Diego Costa miskicked as he attempted to volley in a cross. It was an indication, however, that Chelsea were getting into their stride.

Willian's woodwork woe

Eight minutes later, Sunderland's defense was opened up before Pedro Rodriguez strayed inches offside when he unleashed a shot that was well saved by goalkeeper Jordan Pickford. Pickford also saved a free-kick from David Luiz before he was beaten by Fabregas, leaving Sunderland with a solitary clean sheet in their

last 17 Premier League games.

There could have been another Chelsea goal in the dying seconds of the half when Willian's free-kick shaved a post. Sunderland would have been justified in fearing the worst against a Chelsea team who had kept nine clean sheets in their previous 10 games. But they almost found a way past Courtois only 82 seconds into the second half.

Jermain Defoe created the opening with a pass to Januzaj, whose low shot was turned wide by Courtois's outstretched left leg. It was a warning that brought a swift response from Chelsea, starting with a shot from Victor Moses in the 47th minute.—AFP

ZABALETA, SILVA GET CITY BACK ON TRACK

MANCHESTER: Pablo Zabaleta's first goal in two years helped earn Manchester City an important but nervous 2-0 win over Watford on Wednesday as Pep Guardiola's team returned to winning ways. Victory marked City's first Premier League success on their own turf since beating Bournemouth on September 17, but was only assured in the 86th minute when David Silva claimed a second goal.

After Yaya Toure dispossessed Sebastian Prodl, Silva and Raheem Sterling broke upfield, exchanged passes, and the Spaniard convincingly killed off the game from 15 yards. Argentine full-back Zabaleta, widely expected to leave when his contract expires at the season's end, scored the opening goal just as a hint of anxiety was beginning to creep into the Etihad Stadium.

For the opening 33 minutes, City had dominated possession without forcing visiting goalkeeper Heurelho Gomes into meaningful action as Watford showed discipline and concentration at the back. But a Nolito pass found the dangerous De Bruyne in space on the right and, with Adlene Guedioura failing to track Zabaleta, the City defender met his team-mate's cross with a superb half-volley. Guardiola had sprung a surprise before kick-off by relegating the £50 million (\$62.8 million, 59.6 million euros) England defender John Stones to the bench following some recent morale-draining mistakes. That, and a return to a four-man defense following the use of a back three in the recent losses to Chelsea and Leicester City, gave City a more solid look and Watford rarely, if ever, threatened. Not that City were wholly convincing at the other end.

De Bruyne's early, probing run ending with a dangerous cross that Jose Holebas cleared well before Sterling's accurate cross found De Bruyne, whose curling shot was well saved. Aleksandar Kolarov created a chance for Nolito, chipping over from the left wing for the Spaniard to stretch and head over.

Watford weathered that early pressure, although Prodl earned a yellow card for a hack at Silva. When De Bruyne managed to pick a hole in the defense with a threaded 22nd-minute pass that the speedy Nolito raced after, Gomes was equal to the task, turning his near-post shot behind. —AFP

ERIKSEN DOUBLE PUTS HULL TO THE SWORD

LONDON: Christian Eriksen scored two and made one as Tottenham got back on track with a 3-0 Premier League victory over struggling Hull on Wednesday. Eriksen netted from close range either side of half-time before Victor Wanyama converted after the Danish midfielder's free kick had come back off the bar. That made it four straight wins at home for Mauricio Pochettino's fifth placed side as they made light of some bumpy periods to remain firmly in the hunt for a top four finish.

Pochettino had sprang a surprise by playing Eric Dier as part of a 3-3-3-1 formation and Tottenham threatened early on when Dele Alli saw an effort blocked, while Moussa Sissoko, in for the injured Mousa Dembele, missed the target with another shot. Hull had struggled to get going early on with the hosts eventually capitalizing with a 30-pass move leading to Eriksen powering home into the roof of the net following a fine run by Danny Rose down the left.

Within moments Alli went close to a second as his powerful shot from 20 yards was well saved by David Marshall, while Eriksen then powered over after his initial free kick had hit the wall. Hull went close with a rare attack by Jake Livermore before Alli could not reach a Harry Kane cross for Spurs.

Eventually though, the Tigers found a way into the match as Hugo Lloris did well to push away a Andrew Robertson cross. Tottenham had appeals for a penalty waved away despite claims Curtis Davies had handled in the area from Eriksen's shot but moments later Marshall saved well to foil Alli. Jan Vertonghen then came close to a stunning goal but after beating several players the centre back lost his footing in the area. But the hosts' lack of composure was threatening to hand Hull a way back in as Kane could not convert an Alli cross, before Wanyama's poor shot from the edge of the area was straight at Marshall. —AFP



LONDON: Manchester United's Swedish striker Zlatan Ibrahimovic (2L) celebrates scoring their second goal with Manchester United's English midfielder Michael Carrick (L) and Manchester United's English midfielder Jesse Lingard (R) during the English Premier League football match between Crystal Palace and Manchester United at Selhurst Park. —AFP

IBRAHIMOVIC LATE SHOW LIFTS UNITED

LONDON: Zlatan Ibrahimovic's late strike gave Manchester United a 2-1 win at Crystal Palace after Jose Mourinho's side once again appeared in danger of squandering three points on Wednesday. Mourinho had been left frustrated by United's recent run that had brought three draws in their previous four league games.

And when referee Craig Pawson turned down a strong United claim for a penalty and then ruled out a Juan Mata effort for offside after Crystal Palace's James McArthur had cancelled out Paul Pogba's opening goal, Mourinho appeared set for more disappointment.

But Pogba and Ibrahimovic combined for the decisive goal four minutes from time when the France midfielder set up his team-mate, who produced an excellent finish from a tight angle to silence Selhurst Park. That ensured United remain sixth, six points off the top four, and turned the focus on Pawson's decision to ignore a possible handball by Ibrahimovic when he set up Pogba's goal immediately before half-time.

For the third time in less than a year, United fell foul of the London traffic, arriving at Selhurst less than an hour before kick-off. Unlike on their recent visits to Tottenham and West Ham, the team's late arrival did not result in a delayed kick-off. It was hardly the ideal preparation for Mourinho's team, how-

ever as they set about the task of building on the weekend home win against Tottenham.

And the visitors suffered another unwanted scare just five minutes into the game when Eric Bailly went down holding his left knee on his first Premier League start since damaging ligaments in his right knee. The Ivorian was initially fit enough to continue and United's early dominance of the game allowed the defender, operating at right-back on this occasion, to ease his way back into the game before his departure early in the second half added to Mourinho's concerns. The United manager had omitted Antony Martial from the matchday squad, while Henrikh Mkhitaryan is out until the turn of the year with an ankle ligament injury, prompting questions about whether United would have enough pace in the side to unsettle Palace.

Guile

A front three of Mata, Wayne Rooney and Ibrahimovic was always going to have to rely more on guile than speed, but the early signs were promising, with Rooney and Mata in particular combining well to set up a headed chance for the England captain. That effort flew wide, and despite dominating possession, Mourinho's side struggled to build on that opportunity.

A strong run from Wilfried Zaha,

anxious to make an impression against United after spending an unsuccessful two-season spell at Old Trafford, offered a hint of Palace's threat, drawing a crude challenge from Marcos Rojo that could have seen the United defender sent off. Bobby Charlton was looking on from the stands to see if Rooney could score the goal that would equal Charlton's United record of 249 goals.

The United skipper came close in the 37th minute when he got in behind the Palace defense to collect Pogba's chip, but saw his shot on the turn saved by Wayne Hennessey. Pogba's controversial effort came immediately before half-time when Ibrahimovic appeared to use his arm to direct the ball into his team-mate's path allowing the France midfielder to score.

Then after appearing to have taken control of the game, United were undone by a fine Palace move in the 66th minute that began with Joel Ward playing the ball towards Damien Delaney whose neat backheel sent McArthur clear inside the box to level.

United battled to fight back and were convinced they should have had a penalty when Ledley handled from Rojo's header before disputing the offside call that meant Mata's close range effort was ruled out. But Ibrahimovic's late strike ensured it was Palace manager Alan Pardew who was left feeling most aggrieved. —AFP

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2016

Friday Times

Sports

www.kuwaittimes.net

YOKOHAMA: Real Madrid forward Cristiano Ronaldo (R) fights for the ball with Club America midfielder Rubens Sambueza (L) during the Club World Cup semi-final football match between Club America of Mexico and Real Madrid of Spain at Yokohama International stadium. — AFP



Ronaldo

strikes late as Real reach world final