

**FREE**

# Kuwait Times **Friday Times**



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**Most popular  
English books of  
2016 in Kuwait**

**3**



**Manhunt for Berlin  
suspect intensifies  
as anger grows**

**10**



**Bayern hammer  
10-man Leipzig  
to open up lead**

**46**



In this Dec 20, 2016, photo, Julie Dombo celebrates her first full day with her new electronic hands with her husband, John in Derby, Kansas. Julie whose hands and feet had to be amputated after she was shot during a robbery got an early Christmas gift, new electronic hands worth \$260,000, courtesy of a businessman and his wife. —AP

## **Kansas amputee gets surprise holiday hands**

See Page 21



PHOTO OF THE DAY

KUWAIT: Arabic coffee, tea and a cosy fire are essential ingredients for a pleasant desert camping trip in Kuwait. — Photo by Ali Ali Roumi / KUNA

Local Spotlight

CHRISTMAS IS NOT HARAM!



By Muna Al-Fuzai

muna@kuwaittimes.net

Christmas is round the corner, and as usual, I have received messages and warnings on social media not to exchange any joyful gestures or greetings that reflect happiness on this important event for our Christian friends. Everything has been labeled as haram (unlawful in Islam). Muslims are not supposed to say Merry Christmas or Happy Holidays or smile at anyone who happens to be a Christian.

There are two reasons given for this - first, that this is not our celebration and is a Western ritual that has nothing to do with Islam. The second is that we should be mourning the death of people in the Arab world instead of expressing joy. I am stunned by these calls and messages on social media that associate every act with the term haram. During our Islamic holidays, such as Eid, many of my Christian friends and readers shower me with emails and messages wishing me and my family. Should I counter them with the term 'haram'?

Christmas is a festival of joy that revolves around decorating Christmas trees, Santa Claus, candles and snowmen, although every country has its own rituals. For example in Japan, Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC) is considered the traditional meal on Christmas, since the launch of the "Kentucky Festival of Christmas" campaign in 1974. Japan is not a Christian nation, but adopted this tradition from the Western world.

*I am stunned by these calls and messages on social media that associate every act with the term haram.*

Christmas is considered one of the most important festivals for Christians after Easter. So it's natural to associate it with religious ceremonies and private prayers. Large numbers of non-Christians also celebrate this festival. I see no harm in it and I enjoy it too. It is a great feeling to let yourself be a kid again and enjoy the holiday spirit - whether it's by leaving cookies and clogs by the fireplace for Santa in this cold weather. It makes you experience the spirit of magic and joy.

While all European countries are preparing to celebrate Christmas and the New Year, it's a different issue in Arab countries. Many countries forbid Christmas and New Year celebrations, and warn the public against doing so. I love Christmas in the UAE. Major hotels and shopping malls in Dubai and Abu Dhabi celebrate Christmas by setting up Christmas trees and Santa figures.

Of course, children always enjoy the biggest share of the celebrations by receiving gifts from everyone. But it is not always rosy. Many Islamic states prohibit the celebration and have penalties that may reach up to imprisonment. Kuwait is a little conservative over celebrating these festivals, but it doesn't interfere with the celebrations. Of course, it is nothing compared to the celebrations in Dubai.

Some Muslim scholars rush to issue fatwas for people to avoid expressing or sharing the joy of such festivals. Some have even said that the celebration of Christmas is against Islamic identity. I have joined my Christian friends in these celebrations for years, and I'm still a Muslim. I cannot see any negativity in it. There are other religious men who do not see any harm in these celebrations.

So to all my Christian friends and readers - Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



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# Most popular English books of 2016 in Kuwait

By Athoob Al-Shuaibi

With the swift pace of life and the need to achieve some sort of balance between work and family responsibilities, while keeping up with friends and other social relations, all of us need some me-time. We strive to savor some relaxing moments to enjoy a book with a favorite hot drink in a quiet place to escape from daily pressures.

As we can see from the list above, English novels are widely popular among the youth and younger readers. There is an absence of romantic novels, compared to books of mythology, action and thriller genres. The list also shows there's some interest in self-development books. In addition, novels turned into movies become popular in the same year, because readers like to compare between the two, and usually exclaim: "The novel is way better than the movie!"

Nevertheless, Kuwait is far behind global book trends, and we can't assign the blame only on the bureaucratic procedures of the censorship department of the information ministry. Bookstores often bring in what sells the most. Therefore, the lack of variety is disappointing for avid readers, turning them to buy their favorite books online.



— Photos by Athoob Al-Shuaibi



English novels are widely popular among the youth and younger readers. Interest in self-development, action and thriller books also tops interest in romantic novels.

This year, English readers in Kuwait found what they searched for in these 25 popular books, according to sales figures from That Al-Salasil, Afaaq and Jarir Bookstore, in no particular order:

- Harry Potter and the Cursed Child by J K Rowling, John Tiffany and Jack Thorne
- Solitaire: This is not a Love Story by Alice Oseman
- The Next Together by Lauren James
- The Fault in Our Stars by John Green
- Paper Towns by John Green
- What Light by Jay Asher
- Looking for Alaska by John Green
- The 5th Wave by Rick Yancey
- Inferno by Dan Brown
- The Girl on the Train by Paula Hawkins
- Return to the Little Coffee Shop of Kabul by Deborah Rodriguez
- Girl Online by Zoe Sugg
- Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them by J K Rowling
- Age of Myth: The Legends of the First Empire by Michael J Sullivan
- All the Birds in the Sky by Charlie Jane Anders
- The Last Mortal Bond: Chronicle of the Unhewn Throne by Brian Staveley
- The Axe and the Throne by MD Ireman
- Wreck this Journal by Keri Smith
- Eleanor & Park by Rainbow Rowell
- Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children by Ransom Riggs
- Hollow City: The Second Novel of Miss Peregrine's Peculiar Children by Ransom Riggs
- Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children by Ransom Riggs
- Thinking Fast and Slow by Daniel Kahneman
- Emotional Intelligence: Why it can Matter more than IQ by Daniel Goleman
- Return to the Isle of the Lost: A Descendants Novel by Melissa de la Cruz
- The Forty Rules of Love by Elif Shafak

## RECRUITMENT OPEN DAY

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- Nutrition Specialist (Female)
- Physiotherapist (Female)
- Receptionist / Front Desk Admin (Female) with 3 years min experience
- Cleaner (Female)
- General Helper (Male)

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- Civil ID Copy
- Valid Visa # 18 transferable
- English speaking (Arabic is a plus)

### LOCATION:

Salmiya, Zahra Complex, 6th Floor, M2R Office  
You may also email CV to : [hr@m2rkw.com](mailto:hr@m2rkw.com)



# The realities of **ROAD RAGE** in Kuwait

By Faten Omar

Spending hours stuck in traffic may take a toll on your health and happiness, and can lead to road rage. Road rage is a term used to describe angry, hostile reactions when driving that are directed towards other drivers. That, in turn, may raise the risk of having a heart attack or physically assaulting another motorist. Road rage is on the rise all over the world, so Kuwait Times spoke to a psychologist to give readers the best tips on how to reduce the stress, anger and anxiety when their cars are stuck in a traffic jam.

"Overcrowding of roads and highways is

*Road rage is a term used describe angry, hostile reactions when driving that are directed towards other drivers.*

one reason people resort to road rage. Human nature reacts defensively when we feel that our personal space has been invaded. The feeling of anonymity and security behind the wheel makes an otherwise timid driver lose his temper over traffic-related situations, and induces behaviors like obscene or provocative gestures, yelling, cursing and tailgating," Consultant Psychologist Abdullah Al-Hamadi told Kuwait Times.

First of all, the driver should check his mood before driving, he said. If you leave your home or workplace in an angry, irritated or otherwise upset mood, there's a good chance that a minor traffic incident can set

you off. Hamadi said that to control an angry, adrenaline-driven response, the driver should focus on breathing.

"Pay attention to each breath as it goes in and out. Maintain a normal breathing rhythm, as it relaxes the body. Inhale and exhale calmly - this is a proven technique for eliciting relaxation. It's also simple enough to do behind the wheel," he noted.

"The driver should not personalize an incident - you must refuse to allow another driver - someone whom you do not know and will probably never see again - to dictate your mood and determine the quality of your day," Hamadi advised.



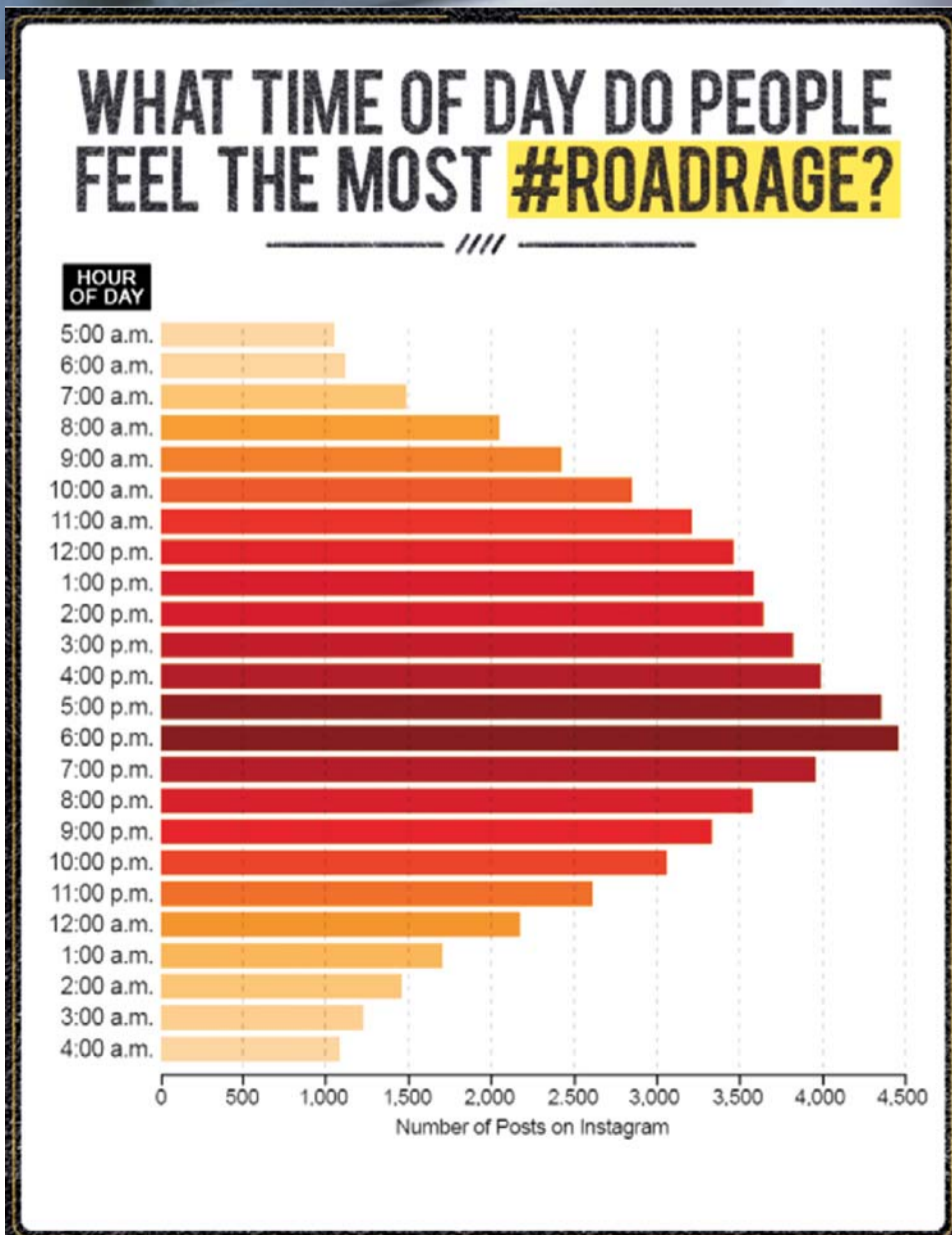


He said that the best solution to avoid the worst rush-hour traffic is by leaving home an hour earlier. "If people are wary about arriving early for work, they can have a cup of coffee or go to the gym before work. Avoid peak traffic times - this will vary from one city to another, but traffic is generally at its worst between 7:00 and 10:00 am and from 1:00 to 7:00 pm."

**Listen to the radio**

Hamadi remarked that social media has done a good job to help pass a driver's time while waiting. "The driver can tell himself it's a welcome respite from work. It is also a golden opportunity to listen to your favorite radio show or the soundtrack of your favorite movie," he said.

*For some people, hand yoga is an excellent way to relieve stress. Hand yoga is the act of stretching and relaxing the muscles of the hands.*



A 2007 report by the National Centre for Biotechnology Information on the psychology behind road rage stated that previous literature had demonstrated "an association between road rage and psychiatric morbidity". Also, a 2012 study by Washington University in St Louis noted that being exposed to the daily hassles of traffic could lead to higher chronic stress.

Hamadi advised drivers to not expect to eliminate every negative feeling. "If you feel a twinge of worry over being late, notice and accept the feeling nonjudgmentally, and then let it go. Turn your awareness to what's happening in the present moment. Listen to soothing music - it is a good way to relax when you start to experience road rage. Music can help you calm down and focus on getting to your destination safely."

For some people, hand yoga is an excellent way to relieve stress. Hand yoga is the act of stretching and relaxing the muscles of the hands. "Spread your fingers and stretch out both hands as much as possible. Hold this position for a few seconds, then release it."

Curl each finger individually into your palm, pushing gently with your thumb. Hold, then release. Flex your wrists and bend each knuckle individually to "shake out" the muscles and joints," he explained.

Also, making eye contact is a sign of aggression. "Whether someone is honking their horn, flashing you with high beams or just driving aggressively, make sure you avoid eye contact with that person. Experts warn that making eye contact with an enraged driver can be seen by that person as a sign of aggression, and could result in an attack," Hamadi cautioned.

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News

in Brief

**FM leaves for Jeddah to attend OIC meeting**

**KUWAIT:** First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah left Kuwait yesterday heading to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, to partake in the urgent meeting for the Islamic Cooperation Organization (OIC) on the situation in Syria and specifically the tragic humanitarian crisis in Aleppo.



**KRCS continues to aid Syrian refugees in Lebanon**

**BEIRUT:** Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) continued yesterday to provide relief aid and assistance to the Syrian refugees in border areas of northern Lebanon, in cooperation with the Lebanese Red Cross. Head of the KRCS field team Fahad Al-Yagout told KUNA the society provided food rations for about 200 Syrian refugee families in the city of Akkar, adding the rations could feed five people for about a month. This campaign is within the KRCS initiative to help Syrian refugees fend off the harsh winter season, said the official. There are around one million Syrian refugees in Lebanon escaping from the ongoing war in their country raging since 2011. Recently, the city of Aleppo, besieged by Syrian regime forces and allies, had been subjected to a ruthless onslaught that resulted in the death and injury of many Syrians. The crisis in Aleppo is expected to worsen the humanitarian situation in Syria and nearby countries.

**Mongolian parliament speakers leaves Kuwait**

**KUWAIT:** Speakers of Mongolia's parliament Khural Miyegombyn Enkhbold and his accompanying delegation left the country yesterday, after two-day official visit. He was seen off at the airport by National Assembly's Secretary and head of the mission of honor accompanying the Mongolian official MP Dr Ouda Al-Rowai and Charge d'affaires at Mongolian Embassy in Kuwait. During his visit, the Mongolian official met with His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, and National Assembly Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanim in addition to top state officials.

**FIRE IN KHAIRAN CHALET**

By Meshal Al-Salama

**KUWAIT:** Zour Fire Center responded to a call about an accident in Al-Khairan area chalet. On arrival, the officials found an Asian expat dead inside the chalet. Initial inference suggests that he may have died of inhalation of poisonous fumes emanated from a charcoal heater.

**RISE IN RISK ALLOWANCE SOUGHT**

By A Saleh

**KUWAIT:** Public Authority for Agriculture Affairs and Fish Resources (PAAAFR) asked the Civil Service Commission to increase the risk allowance for employees working in the sea supervision from KD 35 to KD 70. Around 250 employees work in the supervision department of the PAAAFR.



**MOH CARRIES OUT MOCK RESCUE EXERCISE**

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** The Health Ministry's Medical Emergencies Department in cooperation with departments carried out a 'comprehensive exercise 3' in southern Kuwait's Jlaiah area. The mock exercise imitated an airline crash in the desert after it collides with a chopper and crashes into the sea. Subsequently, a fire breaks out in a truck carrying chemicals when debris from the plane hit it.



Munther Al-Jalahma

The plane had 95 passengers and the chopper had six. One person was injured in the truck fire while others involved in the crash were rescued. Acting Director of Medical Emergencies Department Munther Al-Jalahma set up established medical clinics on the scene and 12 ambulances participated in the operation.



ics on the scene and 12 ambulances participated in the operation.

Department at the Interior Ministry said the Civil Defense Department launched its website within MoI web in cooperation and coordination with Information Technology Systems Department.

**Website**  
Relations and Security Information



**KUWAIT:** Personnel from Medical Emergencies Department of the Health Ministry carry out a 'comprehensive exercise 3' in southern Kuwait's Jlaiah area.

**RAPE ATTEMPT THWARTED; LIQUOR TRADERS ARRESTED**

**KUWAIT:** A young woman who disappeared from her family's house a month ago was arrested at a check point in Hawally. The girl was with a man who seemed to be under the influence of drugs. The young woman confessed to being with her boyfriend in a flat. Drugs were found on both when searched.

**Woman arrested**

A wanted Ethiopian woman accused of theft was arrested in Salmiya. The owner of a beauty shop had earlier accused the Ethiopian of stealing KD 850. The woman was sent to concerned authorities.

**Liquor traders caught**

Three Indians were arrested with 48 bottles of liquor in Khaitan area. The trio said they were on their way to sell the bottles. They were also found in violation of residency laws. They were sent to concerned authorities.

**False tweets**

Orders were given by senior officials to state security and criminal detectives to identify a person who made tweets that could affect relations with a neighboring country. The tweets claimed that there were troops massing at the Kuwait borders, though those claims are totally false.

**Robbery**

Two persons attacked a Bangladeshi expat and robbed him of KD 35 after beating him black and blue. The Bangladeshi was walking in Khaitan when he was stopped by the two who escaped after the attack. The victim filed a report at Khaitan police station.

**Screams and alleged rape attempt**

The screams of a female Arab expat saved her from a rape attempt, as she claimed, meanwhile the accused citizen said he did not intend to rape her, rather he wanted to talk to her about disputes between the two but she started screaming. — Translated from the Arabic press



KUWAIT: The new graduates attend the ceremony.

## SIXTH BATCH OF 179 INVESTIGATORS GRADUATE

By Hanan Al-Saadoun

**KUWAIT:** Deputy Premier, Interior Minister Lt Gen (right) Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah witnessed the graduation of the sixth batch of 179 investigators both male and female who

completed their training under the supervision of the specialized training center at the Investigations General Department.

Sheikh Khalid Al-Jarrah called upon the graduates to continue their education to enhance their performance and wished them

success. He also conveyed the congratulations of the political leadership to them.

Meanwhile, Interior Ministry Undersecretary Lt General Suleiman Al-Fahad said Kuwait is proud of its children who joined the legal profession and said the government would exert

all efforts to protect the law and its principles.

Director General of Investigations General Department Maj Gen Dr Fahad Al-Dousary said the training course lasted six months in which 31 uniformed and 148 civilians (69 girls and 79 men) participated.

## JAHRA MUNICIPAL SQUAD CLEARS MOBILE VENDORS

NEW LAW WILL HELP CURB VIOLATIONS: OFFICIAL

By Hanan Al-Saadoun and KUNA

**KUWAIT:** Jahra Municipality Branch carried out a campaign that resulted in removing five mobile vendors from Abdaly road. They also cleared the seventh Ring Road of illegal vendors and removed 12 abandoned vehicles.

The Municipality's new law is a significant achievement which will help curb violations of construction rules and encroachment of the state's properties, Kuwait Municipality Director General Ahmad Al-Manfouhi said yesterday.

Addressing a seminar organized by Kuwait Institute for Judicial and Legal Studies late on Wednesday on Law No 33/2016, Al-Manfouhi added

that the previous Law No 5/2005 included several loopholes related to building violations. But, the new law will work on tackling all these negative aspects and violations, he said, pointing out that it set regulations and punishments against violators like removing unlicensed buildings, cutting off electricity and others services.

The clauses in new bill have not been introduced so far, but they are appreciated, he said, indicating that the municipality will ask the legislative authority to add some technical points to the law. The official added that the act has been prepared well and would contribute to addressing several problems pertaining to violations.



KUWAIT: Jahra Municipality Branch carrying out a campaign in areas close to Abdaly road.



## KUWAIT EX-MP GETS NEW JAIL TERM FOR SAUDI INSULT

**KUWAIT:** A Kuwaiti appeals court yesterday sentenced former lawmaker Abdulhameed Dashti to 10 years in jail in absentia for insults against neighboring Saudi Arabia.

The new term raises to 42 years and six months the total jail terms handed to Dashti for making comments deemed offensive to Saudi Arabia and Bahrain and endangering Kuwait's ties with them.

In previous cases, he was also convicted of insulting HH the Amir. The three countries are part of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) regional alliance.

"Could anyone believe that I received jail sentences of 42 years and six months for just expressing my opinion," exclaimed Dashti, who is living outside Kuwait, in a tweet. Dashti was elected to parliament in 2013 but left the country in March this year for medical treatment in Britain and has been abroad since then.

He tried to register to contest last month's snap polls but electoral authorities and the court barred him. Dashti still faces several other cases for which he could receive further jail terms if convicted. In previous comments on Twitter, Dashti said he expected sentences that could amount to 100 years in jail.

The verdicts are not final but Dashti can only challenge once he returns to the country. He has not said when he would come back.

Dashti is a staunch supporter of Iran and Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad and a critic of the royal families of both Saudi Arabia and Bahrain. He denounced as an "invasion" the 2011 Saudi military intervention in Bahrain to support the government against protests. —AFP

## KUWAITI MARRIAGE RITUALS - CONNECTING PAST AND PRESENT

**KUWAIT:** People from various cultures take marriage rituals very seriously to the point that centuries-old traditions survive till this day. Though Kuwaiti society upgraded its approach to marriage with flashy wedding celebrations and lavish banquets, there are essential marriage rituals and protocols that appears to surpass time and space bringing the past and the present together. In contrast with many societies around the globe, the concept of dating between men and women seems to be almost nonexistent in old Kuwaiti society with courtship and matchmaking being more dominant till modern times.

After finding a suitable woman to marry, the marriage process begins with "Al-Dazah", basically a celebration involving the family of the bridegroom delivering the dowry and other presents to the family of the bride.

The most important part of marriage is something called "Al-Melcha", an event in which the husband and the bride's guardian sign the Islamic marriage contract or more commonly known in Arabic as "Aked Al-Nekah".

The event is usually celebrated at the Diwan of the bridegroom or at the mosque after "Isha" evening prayers during mostly a Thursday.

A wedding proceeding is usually optional; however, most choose to put on a celebration for this glorious occasion usually attended by members of both families, friends, and the public.

After the celebrations are done, the husband spends about a week at the house of the bride. After the seventh day, the family of the bride celebrates the occasion with "Al-Tehwaal", which is the process in which the woman would finally head to her husband's house.

What follows after the marriage is mostly visits by the family members of the bride, usually the mother, to the house of the husband's family to make sure everything is fine.

Despite some aspects of Kuwaiti marriage rituals disappearing, the process mostly remains intact during our modern era, giving the proverb "old habits die hard" a whole new meaning. —KUNA

## KUWAIT URGES DIALOGUE TO END SYRIA CARNAGE

SHEIKH KHALED ADDRESSES OIC MEETING ON ALEPPO

**JEDDAH:** The solution to the "catastrophic" conflict in Syria can never be a military one, Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah said yesterday.

Speaking at an urgent meeting called by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to discuss the humanitarian crisis in the war-torn Syrian city of Aleppo, the Kuwaiti Foreign Minister urged all sides to return to the negotiating table in efforts to restore security and stability in Syria.

On the conflict that remains unabated for more than five years, Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled pressed the international community for urgent and prompt action to put an end to the violence in Syria, calling for the immediate evacuation of civilians from besieged areas through safe passages.

Moreover, addressing the need to deliver much needed humanitarian aid to Aleppo, he said that it is incumbent upon the international community to act quick in order to mitigate the misery the Syrian people are living in.

Meanwhile, the foreign minister also spoke of viable suggestions comprising political efforts to put an end to the conflict in Syria, including plans by Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) nations and Turkey to hold an urgent meeting of the UN General Assembly with the aim of exposing crimes being committed in Aleppo.

On the planned UN General Assembly meeting, he said that it will underscore that the war in Syria has reached perilous levels and has induced an unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe that poses a grave threat to global peace and security.



**JEDDAH:** Kuwait's First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah speaks at an urgent meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) convened to discuss the humanitarian crisis in Aleppo at Jeddah yesterday. —KUNA

The Kuwaiti Foreign Minister also noted that since the war in Syria erupted more than five years ago, Kuwait has spared no effort to provide humanitarian aid to the Syrian people, worth \$1.6 billion, as pledged during a trio of conferences on Syria hosted by Kuwait.

"What is happening in Syria, particularly, in Aleppo, is a shame and an insult to our dignity, as the blood of innocent people continues to be spilled," he said.

He also thanked all those who participated in this urgent meeting, held to discuss the humanitarian crisis unfolding in Aleppo, for their "prompt response" and for their impeccable efforts to organize this meeting.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled departed Jeddah after taking part in the urgent

OIC meeting, called at the behest of Kuwait. Kuwait's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Sheikh Thamer Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah and the country's Consul General in Jeddah and permanent envoy to the OIC Wael Al-Enezi bid farewell to the Kuwaiti Foreign Minister upon his departure.

Kuwait's delegation to the meeting included Assistant Foreign Minister for the First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister's Office Affairs Ambassador Sheikh Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah, Sheikh Thamer Al-Ahmad, Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister for the Affairs of International Organizations Nasser Al-Heyn, Al-Enezi and other senior Foreign Ministry officials. —KUNA

## PARLIAMENT TO FORM PANEL FOR TACKLING SPORTS ISSUE

**KUWAIT:** Kuwait's National Assembly is scheduled to establish a special panel at a session on December 27 to be charged with drafting amendments to the national sports laws and regulations, in a fresh quest by the state to lift the ban on its participation in international tournaments.

The legislators, during a crucial session on Wednesday, voted in favor of setting up the special committee in debates on prospects of modifying the national sports laws. Following Wednesday's session, Parliament Speaker Marzouq Ali Al-Ghanem stated that international authorities should take into consideration vows by the State of Kuwait government for sports reforms that could help lift the international suspension imposed on the country.

Elaborating after the special session dedicated to the sports crisis, Al-Ghanem noted that the ban on Kuwait should be temporarily lifted after the country's embassies have provided international authorities with a book detailing a government decisions to initiate reforms in the sports sector, which comply with the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) policies.

Moreover, he said that the session yielded an overwhelming consensus to form the parliamentary committee tasked with investigating this sports crisis during a two-month period in which a solution to remedy this issue must be found. He

also added that he was hopeful that collective efforts on the part of the government will be instrumental in ultimately solving this dilemma.

Meanwhile, in response to a question of whether the sports ban will remain in place well after the two-month period, Al-Ghanem affirmed that the government will spare no effort to ensure that the ban is lifted.

The IOC has suspended the Kuwait Olympic Committee (IOC) and prevented the country from taking part in international tournaments; claiming that the national sports laws do not comply with the international regulations. It has also accused the Kuwaiti government of "undue interference" in the sector. The ban states that the Kuwaiti committee "is not entitled to participate in any activity connected with the Olympic Movement or exercise any right conferred upon it by the Olympic Charter or the IOC."

### Efforts

Speaking during Wednesday's session, the Information Minister stated that Kuwait is exerting great efforts to lift the international ban. Sheikh Salman Sabah Al-Salem Al-Humoud Al-Sabah, also the Minister of State for Youth Affairs, said Kuwait is set to develop the Olympic and non-Olympic sport sectors and achieve all terms required to lift the ban. —KUNA

Friday Times

# International

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2016

**Prince Charles warns of return to 'dark days of 1930s'**



**California Supreme Court denies Manson follower's petition**



**Kashmir struggles to cope with tide of trauma**



**BERLIN: (L to R) German Justice Minister Heiko Maas, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and German Interior Minister Thomas de Maiziere leave after delivering a statement at the Federal Criminal Police Office yesterday. —AFP**

## MANHUNT FOR BERLIN SUSPECT INTENSIFIES AS ANGER GROWS POLICE SEARCH A REFUGEE CENTER

**BERLIN:** German authorities came under fire yesterday after it emerged that the prime suspect in Berlin's deadly truck attack, a rejected Tunisian asylum seeker, was known as a potentially dangerous jihadist.

Prosecutors have issued a Europe-wide wanted notice for 24-year-old Anis Amri, offering a 100,000-euro (\$104,000) reward for information leading to his arrest and warning he "could be violent and armed".

A temporary residence permit believed to belong to Amri, alleged to have links to the radical Islamist scene, was found in the cab of the 40-ton lorry that rammed through a packed Christmas market in Berlin Monday, killing 11. The twelfth victim, the hijacked truck's Polish driver, was found shot in the cab. Police have searched a refugee center in Emmerich, western Germany, where Amri stayed a few months ago, as well as two apartments in Berlin. In a sign of defiance, Berlin was set to reopen the Christmas market at the central Breitscheid square where the articulated truck cut a swathe of death and destruction through the festive crowd. Organizers said they would dim the lights and tone down the Christmas music but begin

selling mulled wine and open the traditional market huts, as Berliners left a sea of flowers and candles at the site in honor of the victims.

But as the manhunt intensified, questions surfaced about how the suspect had been able to slip through the net, avoiding arrest and deportation despite being on the radar of several security agencies. "The authorities had him in their crosshairs and he still managed to vanish," said Der Spiegel weekly on its website. The top-selling daily Bild's frontpage headline screamed "Deportation Failure!" while local tabloid B.Z. said starkly "They knew him. They did nothing" next to a photo of the heavyset, dark-haired Amri.

Conservative lawmaker Stephan Mayer, a critic of Chancellor Angela Merkel's liberal stance on asylum, told public radio that the case "held up a magnifying glass" to the failings of her migration policy. But Armin Laschet, a deputy leader of Merkel's Christian Democrats, placed the blame with regional security authorities, calling their failure to keep tabs on Amri "shocking".

The attack, Germany's deadliest in recent years, has been claimed by the Islamic State group. Among the confirmed dead were six

Germans and an Israeli woman. A total of 48 people were injured.

### 'Planning an attack'

In a revelation likely to stoke public anger, German officials said they had already been investigating Amri, suspecting he was planning an attack. The interior minister of North Rhine-Westphalia state, Ralf Jaeger, said counter-terrorism officials had exchanged information about Amri, most recently in November, and a probe had been launched suspecting he was preparing "a serious act of violence against the state".

Berlin prosecutors said separately that Amri had been suspected of planning a burglary to raise cash to buy automatic weapons, "possibly to carry out an attack". But after keeping watch on him from March until September this year they failed to find evidence of the plot, learning only that Amri was a small-time drug dealer, and the surveillance was stopped.

The New York Times reported, citing US officials, that Amri had done online research on how to make explosive devices and had communicated with IS at least once, via

Telegram Messenger. He was also on a US no-fly list. In Tunisia, Amri's family expressed disbelief on hearing he was wanted. "I'm in shock, and can't believe it's him who committed this crime," his brother Abdelkader Amri told AFP. But "if he's guilty, he deserves every condemnation. We reject terrorism and terrorists—we have no dealings with terrorists."

Amri left Tunisia after the 2011 revolution and lived in Italy for three years, a Tunisian security source told AFP. Italian media said he served time in prison there for setting fire to a school. He arrived in Germany in July 2015 but his application for asylum was rejected this June. His deportation, however, got caught up in red tape with Tunisia, which long denied he was a citizen.

### Merkel under pressure

The apparent security failings in the case triggered fresh criticism of Merkel's refugee policy, which has seen over a million people arrive since last year. The record influx has fuelled support for the nationalist anti-migrant AfD party, which has accused Merkel of endangering the country. But even within her own CDU party, dissent grew louder. —AFP

## RUSSIA JAILS STUDENT WHO FOLLOWED IS LOVER TO SYRIA

**MOSCOW:** A Russian military court yesterday sentenced a 21-year-old student who tried to enter Syria after falling in love with an Islamic State jihadist to four and a half years in prison. Varvara Karaulova was detained last year after she tried to cross into war-torn Syria from Turkey while still a philosophy undergraduate at the renowned Moscow State University. Judge Alexander Ababkov said in court that the “criminal activity of the defendant continued for quite a long time” and that Karaulova had a criminal intention. He said she was a “supporter of radical Islamist views” and decided to join IS, aware of the jihadist group’s aim to “create an Islamic caliphate.”

Karaulova was charged last year with preparing to participate in a “terrorist organization”, but pleaded not guilty, saying she was motivated by love for a Russian jihadist fighting in Syria. Karaulova, her dark hair in a pony-tail, looked calm as the judge read the verdict, watched by family members including her parents and stepmother. Defense lawyer Sergei Badamshin told reporters it was a “very harsh, unjustified sentence” and “we have already appealed.”

Prosecutor Mikhail Reznichenko said his side, which had requested a five-year sentence, was satisfied with the decision. Karaulova’s lawyers argued that the authorities are trying to make an example of her to warn off other young Russians from trying to head to Syria, where Moscow is conducting a bombing campaign in support of Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad. Her father Pavel Karaulov condemned the sentence as “absurd.” He told reporters outside the court that he now regrets having gone to the authorities when his daughter disappeared, saying: “I made a mistake... by turning to those who should protect our security.” Lawyer Ilya Novikov said that sentence sent a message to parents in a similar situation that “you mustn’t go to the FSB (security service), you mustn’t believe the state.”

### ‘Stupid escapade’

In her last words in court on Wednesday, a weeping Karaulova said her attempt to cross into Syria was “all a mistake, a very stupid reckless act.” “I have realized all my mistakes and my stupidity,” she said. “I dream of making amends for my guilt for all this stupid escapade.” In 2012, while still a teenager, Karaulova met a man named Airat Samatov online and they wrote to each for three years without ever meeting. Samatov went to Syria in 2014 and told her he was fighting for IS. Karaulova converted to Islam and began wearing a hijab. She disappeared without warning in May 2015, prompting a frantic search by her parents. They found that she had flown to Turkey and travelled to the border with other women hoping to join men fighting for IS. Turkish border guards detained the group and she was forced to fly back to Russia with her father. Investigators initially said she was being treated as a witness before arresting her in October 2015. Her case is particularly unusual in Russia since her family is not Muslim. — AFP



**MOSCOW :** Moscow State University student Varvara Karaulova sits inside a defendants’ cage during a hearing at Moscow’s District Military Court yesterday. — AFP



**ALEPPO, Syria :** A United Nations (UN) vehicle drives by during an evacuation operation of rebels from Aleppo towards rebel-held territory in the west of Aleppo’s province yesterday. — AFP

# FALL OF ALEPPO SHINES HARSH LIGHT ON UN

‘THE FALL OF ALEPPO IS THE SINGLE GREATEST CRISIS FOR UN SINCE IRAQ WAR’

**UNITED NATIONS, United States:** The warning from the UN envoy could not have been starker: Pounded by a near-daily barrage of air strikes, Aleppo would be totally destroyed by Christmas unless the United Nations stopped the carnage. During the weeks that followed Staffan de Mistura’s distress call in early October, there was a global outcry as Syrian forces, backed by Russia, tightened their grip on the city, but little action at the United Nations. Two Russian vetoes at the Security Council blocked attempts to halt the bombing and spare civilians as UN statements professing that there can be no military solution to the devastating five-year war rang hollow.

With the fall of Aleppo, the world body founded on the post-World War II promise of “Never Again” is once again facing questions about its ability to confront conflicts. “The fall of Aleppo is the single greatest crisis for the UN since the Iraq war,” says Richard Gowan, a UN expert at the European Council on Foreign Affairs. “It has created an enormous crisis of trust in the Security Council.” Diplomats point the finger of blame at Russia, accused of providing diplomatic cover while its Syrian ally waged an all-out assault on Aleppo. But there are also recriminations against Western powers, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and the broader UN system that has been unable to bring humanitarian aid to one million Syrians under siege.

### Too late

Alarmed by UN reports that Syrian

militias had executed dozens of civilians in east Aleppo, France, Britain and the United States called for observers to be dispatched to monitor the situation on the ground. It took four days for the council to finally adopt a resolution on deploying UN observers and two days later, the teams had yet to set foot in the eastern districts of Aleppo. Amnesty International lamented that “this important measure has come far too late”, and warned: “The world is watching how the UN responds to the plight of Aleppo.”

Ban, who steps down next week after 10 years as UN chief, has defended the world body’s handling of the Syria crisis even though the war escalated under this watch. In a recent interview with AFP, Ban said divisions among world powers, regional players and among Syrians themselves had created a “perfect storm” that allowed the war to rage on, killing more than 310,000 people. “If there is any criticism, I am ready to accept this,” he said.

“But sometimes, a situation just develops beyond my control, beyond the control of the United Nations.” Ban has appointed three envoys to lead UN efforts to end the war, with De Mistura taking up the mission in July 2014 after former secretary-general Kofi Annan quit as did his predecessor, veteran diplomat Lakhdar Brahimi.

### No sanctions, no justice

After nearly six years of conflict, there is no international investigation under way of war crimes in Syria after Russia, backed by China, used its veto in 2014 to block a request to the International

Criminal Court. Contrary to other conflicts such as South Sudan and Yemen, no UN sanctions have been imposed on those deemed responsible for the bloodshed. Next week, France and Britain are to present a draft resolution demanding sanctions for chemical weapons use in Syria, but Russia will undoubtedly again veto the measure. That would be the seventh Russian veto since the conflict began in 2011. “The Syrian crisis has profoundly damaged the UN’s reputation across the Arab world,” said Gowan. “Many Sunni Arab governments view the Security Council as a Russian tool.”

Russia fiercely defends its support of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. Ambassador Vitaly Churkin has remarked that were it not for Moscow’s military intervention, “the black flags” of the Islamic State group “would be flying over Damascus.” Antonio Guterres, who will succeed Ban on January 1, will inherit the UN failure in Syria. The former UN refugee chief and Portuguese prime minister has said it was high time to “stop the nonsense” in Syria, though he will have to contend with the new US administration of President-elect Donald Trump.

For many diplomats, Aleppo joins Rwanda and Srebrenica on the list of UN failures, marking another low in the world body’s 71-year history. The “comparisons between Aleppo, Rwanda and Srebrenica tell you everything about the magnitude of the current catastrophe,” says Martin Edwards, professor of diplomacy at Seton Hall University. “There is nowhere to go but up.” — AFP

## BERLIN ATTACK SUSPECT'S FAMILY IN SHOCK

**OUESLATIA, Tunisia:** In shock after he was named the prime suspect in the Berlin market attack, Anis Amri's family says he fled Tunisia seeking a better life, only to find more trouble and misery.

"If my brother is behind the attack, I say to him 'You dishonor us'," Abdelkader Amri told AFP yesterday at a poor village in central Tunisia. He spoke as his brother was on the run after Monday's attack on a Christmas market, when a large truck ploughed through a crowd, killing 11 people. A 12th victim, the hijacked truck's Polish driver, was found shot in the cab.

Prosecutors in Germany have issued a Europe-wide wanted notice for 24-year-old Anis Amri, offering a 100,000 euro reward for information leading to his arrest and warning he "could be violent and armed".

Yesterday, his brothers Walid and Abdelkader were still reeling at the news. Speaking outside their home in the town of Oueslatia, some 50 kilometres (30 miles) from Kairouan in eastern Tunisia, Abdelkader told AFP of his brother's departure from the North African country more than five years ago. The youngest of nine siblings, with divorced parents and in difficult social circumstances, Amri left the country illegally in March 2011 by sea for the Italian island of Lampedusa.

He was fleeing a court conviction and a sentence of four years handed down in absentia for robbery and burglary, Abdelkader said. A security official in the area confirmed this information.

### 'He had no future'

"Anis left to get away from misery—he had no future in Tunisia and wanted at all costs to improve the family's

financial situation. We live below the poverty line, like most families in Oueslatia," Abdelkader said, his eyes red. His brother Walid added: "He lived like all young people—he drank, he didn't go to prayers or anything."

Once in Italy, Anis Amri found himself in a detention centre along with other illegal migrants.

But he soon found himself in trouble: he was sentenced to four years in jail for setting fire to a building, Abdelkader said. "In 2015 he had made it to Germany and was trying to sort himself out. He worked as an agricultural labourer and things like that," he said.

"He'd contact us on Facebook, saying he wanted to come back to Tunisia but that he had to earn some money to buy his own car and start his own business." According to Walid, "10 days before the attack he told us he was counting on God to get him home in January." Abdelkader said their brother "was laughing and joking with us. There was no sign he had been radicalised. I'm sure he can't have done this, that's not why he emigrated. May God reveal the truth," he said before bursting into tears, remembering that Thursday was Anis's birthday.

"I want to wish him happy birthday," he added. Outside the house, their red-faced mother urged curious onlookers to go away.

"Please understand," she pleaded with them. "Leave us alone with our misfortune."

### Risking 'the same fate'

Yesterday, the suspect's father Mustapha, as on any other day, was taking his cart around town looking for clients to transport their goods. "Look



**TUNIS:** Mustapha Amri (second left), the father of 24-year-old Anis Amri, the prime suspect in Berlin's deadly truck attack, poses next to his children Walid (left), Hanan (center), and Abdelkader and his brother (right) in front the family house in the town of Oueslatia, in Tunisia's region of Kairouan yesterday. —AFP

at my father with his cart, working at that age," Abdelkader told AFP. "Here in Oueslatia, if you don't work you die of hunger." His friend Faouzi could not contain his anger. "Tell (President) Beji Caid Essebsi to look after the country's young people!" he cried.

"We've had enough of being ignored. We've rotted in prison! All the young people in Oueslatia risk the same fate as Anis," he warned.

Monday's attack in the German capital was claimed by the Islamic State group, and according to a security official in Oueslatia, IS recruited the suspect in Italy. "These cursed sons who damage the country," headlined the French-language daily paper La Presse yesterday.

"There's no point in trying to hide the fact: Every time a terrorist attack takes place in the world, the people of Tunisia hold their breath," it said. "Because many times a cursed son has been responsible for carrying out a major attack." Walid Anis believes in his brother's innocence, despite the belief in Germany that he carried out the attack.

A temporary residence permit believed to belong to Amri was found in the cab of the 40-tonne lorry, and Germany's interior minister said investigators had also found his fingerprints inside. "We denounce the accusations against my brother," Walid told AFP. "We know him well. He has done nothing!" — AFP

## ATTACKS NEAR IS-HELD MOSUL IN IRAQ KILL 34

**BAGHDAD:** Mortar fire and car bombs killed more than 30 people including aid workers near Mosul yesterday as Iraqi forces battled to seize the city from the Islamic State group. A triple car bombing on a market killed at least 23 people in Gogjali, a few kilometres (miles) east of Mosul, the army said.

Gogjali was retaken by pro-government forces on November 1, two weeks into a massive operation to oust IS jihadists from their last stronghold in Iraq. Since launching the operation against IS on October 17, Iraq's elite counter-terrorism service has advanced into Mosul from the east, but progress has since slowed.

"A terrorist attack in the form of three car bombs at a market in Gogjali killed 15 civilians and eight police," a coordination centre for the forces battling IS said in a statement.

IS said three of its suicide bombers carried out the attack. Mortar fire also killed 11 people including four aid workers as civilians gathered to receive assistance in Mosul city, the United Nations said.

"According to initial reports, four aid workers and at least seven civilians queueing for emergency assistance in eastern Mosul city have been killed by indiscriminate mortar fire," UN humanitarian coordinator in Iraq Lise Grand said in a statement. "Within the last 48 hours, there have been two separate incidents" that also wounded up to 40 people, she said. "People waiting for aid are already vulnerable and need help. They should be protected, not attacked," Grande said.

"The killing of civilians and aid workers violates every humanitarian principle." Iraqi forces pushing towards Mosul on the southern front have yet to enter the city, and another advance from the north has stalled. To the west, forces from



**ERBIL:** A wounded boy from a district of Mosul, where a suicide attack killed at least 23 civilians, receives treatment at a hospital in Erbil yesterday. —AFP

pro-government paramilitary groups are close to the town of Tal Afar, between Mosul and the border with Syria.

However, areas taken from the jihadists are still exposed to deadly artillery attacks, bombs and gunfire.

Monday's attacks in Gogjali and Mosul came a day after Human Rights Watch said IS was "indiscriminately" attacking civilians who refused to retreat along with the jihadists in Mosul. "Residents said (IS) members told them in person, by radio, and over mosque loudspeakers that those who stayed behind were 'unbelievers' and therefore valid targets along with the Iraqi and coalition forces," the rights group said. — AP

## UN PUTS OFF VOTE ON ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS

**UNITED NATIONS:** The UN Security Council yesterday postponed a vote on a draft resolution demanding that Israel halt its settlement activities in the Palestinian territories and east Jerusalem, diplomats said. Egypt requested the delay to allow time for consultations on the measure, but no new time or date was scheduled, according to diplomats.

Egypt circulated the draft late Wednesday and a vote was initially scheduled for 3 pm (2000 GMT) yesterday. The move prompted immediate calls from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for the United States to use its veto power at the Security Council to block the resolution. A similar resolution was vetoed by the United States in 2011, and it remained uncertain if the measure would be adopted this time. President-elect Donald Trump weighed in early yesterday, saying in a statement that the resolution should be vetoed.

"The resolution being considered at the United Nations Security Council regarding Israel should be vetoed," the Republican said in a statement. "As the United States has long maintained, peace between the Israelis and the Palestinians will only come through direct negotiations between the parties, and not through the imposition of terms by the United Nations," he said.

"This puts Israel in a very poor negotiating position and is extremely unfair to all Israelis," Trump added. Israeli settlements are seen as major stumbling block to peace efforts as they are built on land the Palestinians see as part of their future state. The United Nations maintains that settlements are illegal, but UN officials have reported a surge in construction over the past months.

Some in the Israeli government view Trump's victory as an opportunity to expand settlements in the West Bank, Palestinian land occupied by Israel for nearly 50 years. —AFP

## UK TRUCKER RAISES FUNDS FOR DRIVER SLAIN IN BERLIN ATTACK

**LONDON:** A British truck driver has raised nearly £50,000 (59,000 euros, \$62,000) via crowdfunding for the family of the Polish driver found dead in the truck used in the attack on a Berlin Christmas market.

Dave Duncan said on the website GoFundMe, where he created the campaign on Tuesday, that the story of 37-year-old Lukasz Urban had shocked him. "Although I did not know Lukasz, the story of his untimely departure shocked and disgusted me. "So, as a fellow trucker, I decided to reach out to the trucking community and beyond to help in some small way," he said, signing off with the words "RIP Lukasz... from the truckers of the UK and beyond".

According to the website, 3,400 people had made donations. Twelve people were killed when the Polish-registered articulated truck, laden with steel beams, slammed into a crowded holiday market late Monday, smashing wooden stalls and crushing victims.

Urban, who worked for his cousin Ariel Zurawski's transport company in northern Poland, was found killed with a gunshot in the passenger seat. Zurawski described him as a "good guy" and said his body showed signs of a struggle with the assailant or assailants including stab marks. "One person would not have been able to overpower him," Zurawski said of the heavysset relative he had grown up with.

"We could see injuries. His face was bloodied and swollen," he told private news channel TVN 24, referring to a photo he received from Polish police. An autopsy indicated that the driver was still alive at the time of the attack, Bild newspaper reported. German police are hunting for a rejected Tunisian asylum seeker identified as the prime suspect. —AFP

## PRINCE CHARLES WARNS OF RETURN TO 'DARK DAYS OF 1930s' 'MONSTROUS EXTREMISM'

**LONDON:** Britain's Prince Charles warned against intolerance towards refugees fleeing religious persecution on yesterday, saying the rising tide of populism was reminiscent of the "dark days" of the 1930s. "The suffering doesn't end when they arrive seeking refuge in a foreign land," the heir to the throne told BBC radio. "We are now seeing the rise of many populist groups across the world that are increasingly aggressive towards those who adhere to a minority faith."

The 68-year-old, in his third broadcast for the "Thought for the Day" section of popular news program Today, added: "All of this has deeply disturbing echoes of the dark days of the 1930s."

Charles said his comments applied not just to Christians fleeing parts of the Middle East but also to other persecuted faiths in the world including Yazidis, Jews, Ahmadi Muslims and Baha'i people.

Referring to the "monstrous extremism" seen in World War II, the Prince of Wales said the fact that "nearly 70 years later we should still be seeing such evil persecution is to me beyond all belief". "We owe it to those who suffered and died so horribly not to repeat the horrors of the past," he said.

In the run-up to Christmas he



**LONDON:** Prince Charles photographed in Buckingham palace on October 20, 2016. —AFP

pointed to the idea that Jesus' family had sought refuge from persecution, and said the Prophet Mohammed had also "migrated" from Mecca to Medina in search of religious freedom.

Prince Charles, who will become the supreme governor of the Church of England when he succeeds his

mother Queen Elizabeth II, often speaks out about the plight of Christian minorities in the Middle East.

But he has long said he wants to be seen as a "Defender of Faiths" rather than the monarch's official title of "Defender of the Faith", to reflect Britain's multicultural society. —AFP

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## US RETURNS ALIBABA WEBSITE TO COUNTERFEITS BLACKLIST

**WASHINGTON:** The United States on Wednesday put a division of the Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba back on a blacklist of "notorious markets" known for selling counterfeit goods and violating intellectual property rights.

The office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR), which removed Alibaba from its annual list four years ago, included the company's online platform Taobao in its latest release, saying it is not doing enough to curb sales of fake and pirat-

ed goods. "The Taobao.com e-commerce platform is an important concern due to the large volume of allegedly counterfeit and pirated goods available and the challenges right holders experience in removing and preventing illicit sales and offers of such goods," the agency said.

Although inclusion on the blacklist carries no penalties, it deals a blow to Alibaba's reputation after the company has struggled to improve its image and boost international sales.

China's largest online retailer said it is "disappointed" by the decision, saying it has improved policing of the goods for sale on its platforms. "In 2016 alone, we proactively removed more than double the number of infringing product listings than in 2015," Alibaba Group president Michael Evans said in a statement. "The decision ignores the real work Alibaba has done to protect IP rights holders and assist law enforcement to bring counterfeiters to justice."

He suggested the "current political cli-

mate" in the United States may have more to do with USTR's decision. President-elect Donald Trump has repeatedly accused China of stealing intellectual property, part of what he calls the country's economic war against the United States.

However, Alibaba and its Taobao site has long been accused of providing a platform for the sale of counterfeit goods. Alibaba was suspended from the International Anti-Counterfeiting Coalition watchdog in May. —AFP

## ANCIENT SKELETON TO RETURN TO NATIVE AMERICANS FOR REBURIAL

### OBAMA SIGNED BILL

**SPOKANE, Washington:** The Ancient One is going home. One of the oldest and most complete skeletons found in North America will be given back to American Indian tribes in Washington state for reburial.

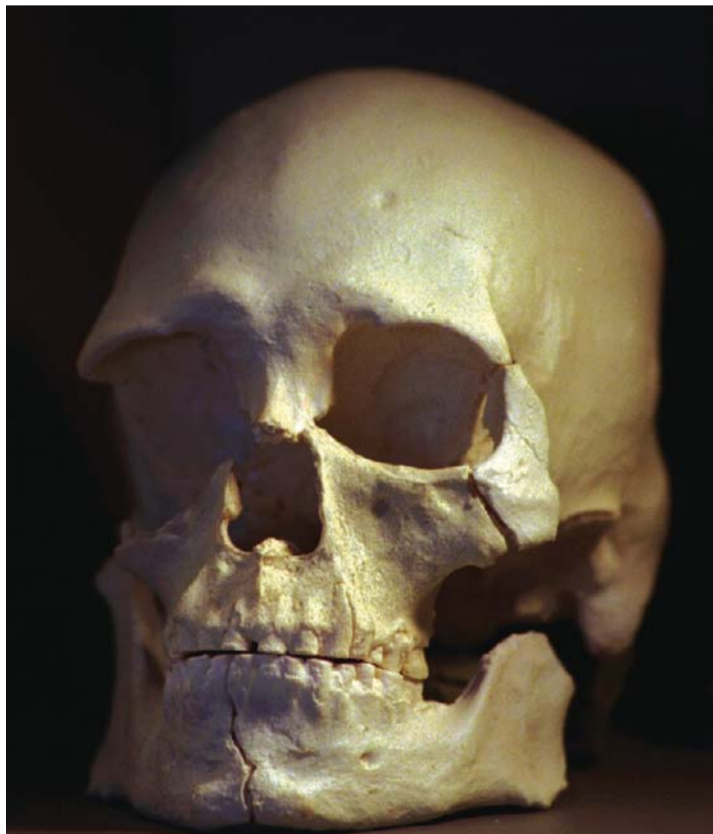
President Barack Obama signed a bill Monday with a provision requiring the ancient bones known as Kennewick Man be returned to tribes within 90 days. Experts estimate the remains found in 1996 on federal land near the Columbia River are at least 8,400 years old. The discovery triggered a lengthy legal fight between tribes and scientists over whether the bones should be buried immediately or studied.

In 2015, new genetic evidence determined the remains were related to modern Native Americans. The bill transfers the skeleton, which the tribes call the Ancient One, from the US Army Corps of Engineers to the state archaeology department, which will get it to the tribes. "We will work closely with that state organization to transfer the remains in an expedited fashion," said Amy J. Gaskill, chief of public affairs for the Army Corps in Portland, Oregon.

It was too soon to say exactly where the bones will go, as several Northwest Indian tribes have been involved in the fight. "We don't know where the bones are going yet," Gaskill said. The Yakama Nation is among the tribes that have pushed to rebury the bones in the manner their people have followed "since time immemorial," the tribe has said.

JoDe Goudy, chairman of the Yakama Tribal Council, noted that it took 20 years for the tribes to successfully fight for return of the bones. "He will be returned so that he may finally rest," Goudy said after the bill passed Congress on Dec. 10.

US Sen. Patty Murray first introduced the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act, and she was joined by senators from Oregon and Idaho. A provision in the bill called for returning Kennewick Man to the tribes of the Columbia River Plateau.—AP



**RICHLAND, Washington:** This July 24, 1997 file photo shows a plastic casting of the skull from the bones known as Kennewick Man. —AP

## 'JEOPARDY!' STREAK ENDS FOR CANCER-STRICKEN CONTESTANT

**WASHINGTON:** Cindy Stowell captivated national attention for her six-game winning streak as a contestant on the popular US television quiz show "Jeopardy!" which ended on Wednesday. But she never got to see them broadcast on television.

That's because the contestant was suffering from Stage 4 colon cancer when she recorded the episodes in August and September, pumped up with painkillers and at one point developing a fever that reduced her voice almost to a whisper. She died on December 5 at age 41, just over a week before the taped episodes began airing, after she pledged to donate her more than \$123,000 in winnings to the Cancer Research Institute. The show's host Alex Trebek ended Wednesday's show with a tribute. "For the past six Jeopardy! programs, you folks have been getting to know the talented champion, Cindy Stowell.

Appearing on the show was the fulfillment of a lifelong ambition for that lady," he said. "What you did not know is that when we taped these programs with her a few weeks ago, she was suffering from Stage 4 cancer and sadly, on December 5, Cindy Stowell passed away. So from all of us here at Jeopardy!, our sincere condolences to her family and her friends."

Stowell's run on the beloved 33-year-old show put her among the year's top performers. After she passed an online contestant test earlier this year, Stowell-a science content developer from Austin, Texas-wrote to a producer asking how long the audition process takes. "I just found out that I don't have too much longer to live," she said, according to the show's website. "The doctor's best guess is about 6 months." She showed up for the taping of her first episodes in August in Los Angeles under serious physical and mental

impairment, The New York Times reported her boyfriend Jason Hess as saying. She felt nauseated with a fever and the painkillers she was taking delayed her reaction time, a key handicap on a show in which contestants must be first to push a button in order to give their answers.

However, her opponents did not know about her condition, the show's website said. "Cindy's biggest fear going in was that she would get caught on minor pronunciation errors," Hess tweeted. Several days after filming the first four episodes, Stowell was hospitalized for a blood infection, the Times reported. During her last episode on Wednesday—which was taped later in September she provided the correct answer to the final, potentially decisive question, about the closest country to the US mainland where cars drive on the left (answer: the Bahamas). — AFP

## US FORMALLY ENDS CONTROVERSIAL REGISTRY PROGRAM FOR VISITORS

**WASHINGTON:** The US Department of Homeland Security said on yesterday it is canceling an inactive registry program for visitors from countries where extremist groups are operating, a plan similar to a Muslim registry considered by President-elect Donald Trump. The National Security Entry-Exit Registration Systems program, known as NSEERS, was suspended in 2011, DHS spokesman Neema Hakim said in a statement. He said the program was determined to be redundant and inefficient and did not provide increased security. "The intervening years have shown that NSEERS is not only obsolete but that its use would divert limited personnel and resources from more effective measures," Hakim said.

The department is formally ending the program by removing outdated regulations in a rule change, he said. The rule was scheduled to be published in the Federal Register on Friday and will be effective immediately, a DHS official said.

Trump was asked on Wednesday whether he would support a Muslim registry, similar to the dormant DHS program, and he would not confirm or deny his plans to do so. Several Trump transition aides have told Reuters the incoming Trump administration will not resurrect the program, although a key Trump immigration adviser, Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach, has advocated the idea.

The announcement comes as a growing number of prominent tech companies including Facebook, Twitter, Apple have told various news organizations that they would not help the Trump administration build a Muslim registry. Earlier this month, employees at various technology companies also signed an online pledge vowing not to help Trump build a data registry to track people based on their religion or assist in mass deportations. The petition has been signed by more than 2,500 employees.

The Obama administration's decision to formally end the program drew praise from critics who said it was discriminatory. "I applaud President Obama for his decision to dismantle NSEERS, the idle and ineffective federal registry that targeted Muslims and undermined our core values," New York Attorney General Eric T. Schneiderman said in a statement. The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee welcomed the decision to end NSEERS, which it called a "failed program rooted in discriminatory profiling." At one point in his campaign, Trump called for a temporary ban on Muslims entering the country as a means of fighting terrorism. That drew widespread criticism at home and abroad and Trump revised his proposal to suspending immigration from regions deemed as exporting terrorism and where safe vetting could not be assured. —Reuters

## KENYAN LAWMAKERS SCUFFLE AMID FEARS OF ELECTION-RIGGING

**NAIROBI, Kenya:** Kenyan legislators came to blows yesterday as opposition members tried to block an emergency session that passed a bill to allow manual counting of election results, calling it a back door to manipulating next year's presidential vote.

Opposition leader Raila Odinga called for mass protests from Jan. 4, saying, "No transparency, no elections." Parliament's deputy minority leader, Jakoyo Midiwo, said they are challenging the bill's legality. "They are trying to force a law to rig the

elections," Midiwo said.

The bill needs Senate passage and approval by President Uhuru Kenyatta, who is running for re-election. Kenya tried to digitize its election process in the 2013 elections in an effort to prevent the vote-rigging in 2007 that sparked violence killing more than 1,000 people. But biometric kits to scan people's fingers didn't work properly and a server handling voting results crashed, and the process was completed manually.

Odinga unsuccessfully petitioned

the Supreme Court challenging Kenyatta's 2013 win, claiming the system was set up to fail to allow the more easily manipulated manual system. Kenyatta received a majority of votes to avoid a runoff with Odinga, by 4,099 votes out of more than 12.3 million cast. Odinga is Kenyatta's closest challenger in the upcoming election.

Kenyatta led Odinga 50 percent to 22 percent in a recent opinion poll. The Catholic church, with 11 million followers in a country of 40 million,

condemned the passing of the bill. The chairman of the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops Justice and Peace Commission, Rev. Cornelius Korir, said it goes against the spirit of jointly negotiated amendments to reform electoral laws passed in August by parliament. Those changes came after violent street protests accusing the electoral commission of corruption and bias.

Many of the August amendments stipulated that the election process should be digitized. —AP

## MISSISSIPPI CHURCH MEMBER CHARGED IN 'VOTE TRUMP' FIRE

**WASHINGTON:** A member of an African-American Baptist congregation in Mississippi was charged on Wednesday with setting fire to the church building, which was also spray-painted with the words "Vote Trump," the authorities said.

Police in the western city of Greenville arrested Andrew McClinton, charged with one count of first-degree arson of a place of worship, police chief Delando Wilson said in a statement. "McClinton is awaiting his initial appearance in Greenville Municipal Court," he said. McClinton, 45, who is African-American, attended the Hopewell Baptist Church, which was burned on November 1, when the words "Vote Trump" were also painted on the building.

Fire officials at the time said the century-old church was fully engulfed in flames and sustained heavy heat, smoke and water damage. The fire was "a direct assault on the Hopewell congregation's right to freely worship," Greenville Mayor Errick Simmons said in a statement on Wednesday. "There is no place for this heinous and divisive behavior in our city."

The authorities have not released a motive for the alleged arson and are trying to determine whether McClinton painted "Vote Trump" on the church, local television station WJTV reported. However, officials do not believe the fire, set a week before Election Day, was politically motivated, The New York Times reported a state official as saying.

The Republican Donald Trump, who carried Mississippi by a large margin, lost to his Democratic rival Hillary Clinton in overwhelmingly African-American Greenville.

The divisive President-elect is a fierce critic of the Black Lives Matter movement, which arose in response to a series of police killings of black men that have roiled race relations in the United States. —AFP

## SENEGALESE MAN FOUND GUILTY IN MURDER OF US WOMAN IN ITALY

**FLORENCE, Italy:** A Florence court has convicted a Senegalese man of murdering an American woman in her flat after they met at a nightclub. The court has sentenced him to 30 years in jail.

Ashley Olsen, 35, was found dead in her apartment Jan 9, 2016. An autopsy found that she had been strangled and had suffered skull fractures.

Police arrested Cheik Tidiane Diaw a few days later after street surveillance cameras showed him walking with Olsen toward her home that night, and DNA traces were found on a cigarette butt and condom in her apartment.

Diaw told police he and Olsen, of Summer Haven, Florida, had fought but denied strangling her. Prosecutors had sought the maximum sentence of life in prison. —AP

CALIFORNIA SUPREME COURT DENIES MANSON FOLLOWER'S PETITION  
THE MOST NOTORIOUS MASS MURDERS

**LOS ANGELES:** The California Supreme Court denied a request on Wednesday to hold a hearing in the parole case of Leslie Van Houten who, as a follower of cult leader Charles Manson, took part in one of the most notorious mass murders of the 20th century.

California Governor Jerry Brown overturned a California Board of Parole recommendation to release Van Houten in July, saying she was an "unreasonable danger to society," four decades after she was convicted and sentenced to life for the murders of Leno and Rosemary LaBianca.

In a petition to the state's Supreme Court, her attorney Rich Pfeiffer said Van Houten believed the governor did not have evidence that she remained a risk to the public, the City News Service in Los Angeles reported.

The Supreme Court denied the petition for review, according to an entry on the court's online case database. Pfeiffer was not immediately available for comment. Manson, who is also serving a life sentence, directed Van Houten and his other mostly young, female followers - known as the Manson Family - to murder seven people in August 1969 in what prosecutors said was part of a plan to incite a race war between whites and blacks.

Van Houten was found guilty of the LaBianca murders in 1971 and sentenced to death, but that conviction and sentence were overturned on



**LOS ANGELES:** Leslie Van Houten is seen during a hearing before the California Board of Parole on Wednesday. —AFP

appeal. She was retried, convicted and sentenced to life in prison in 1978.

The La Biancas were stabbed to death in their Los Angeles home on Aug. 10, 1969, after which the killers used their blood to write "Rise", "Death to Pigs" and "Healter-Skelter", a misspelled reference to a Beatles song, on the walls and a refrigerator door.

Among the victims of the Manson Family was actress Sharon Tate, the pregnant wife of filmmaker Roman Polanski. She was stabbed 16 times

by cult members.

Four other people were stabbed or shot to death at Tate's home on Aug. 9, 1969, by Manson's followers, who scrawled the word "Pig" in blood on the front door before leaving. Van Houten was not involved in the Tate murders.

Manson is serving out his sentence at Corcoran State Prison in California for the seven Tate-LaBianca killings and the murder of another man, Gary Hinman, in July 1969. —Reuters

## UN WARNS OF WATER CRISIS IN NIGERIA'S MEGACITY

**GENEVA:** Nigeria's commercial capital Lagos faces an acute water crisis that is creating unacceptable conditions for millions of people, according to an independent expert appointed by the United Nations. The 21 million residents of Lagos, which is built on a lagoon, struggle to find water suitable for drinking and sanitation. Estimates suggest only one in 10 people have access to water supplied by the state utility provider, according to the UN.

This has been compounded by years of mismanagement, said Léo Heller, the UN special reporter on the human rights to water and sanitation, after Lagos's state governor presented a proposed budget for 2017 to the Lagos House Assembly. "Government reports indicate alarmingly high deficits in the sector, representing clearly unacceptable conditions for millions of the megacity's residents," a UN statement quoted Heller as saying.

More funding could be used to improve the state utility

provider, adopt financing schemes and reduce water losses, he said. Lagos is the biggest city in Africa's most populous nation. A state government spokesman declined to comment. Despite having Africa's largest economy, Nigeria has one of the highest child death rates from water-borne diseases in Africa. It has sought international development help to finance new water treatment plants and expand its distribution networks.

As a result of the creaky public water system, many residents rely on private water suppliers, or bore into pipes themselves. Damaged pipes leak millions of gallons of treated water, about one-quarter of the supplies meant for homes, schools, hospitals and industry. Water rights activists, labor unions and environmentalists blame the failure on the endemic corruption that permeates so much of Nigeria, which ranks in the bottom fifth on Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index. —Reuters



**BANGKOK:** The Thai offices of the BBC locked and unoccupied with their signage removed on Wednesday, Dec. 7, 2016. —AP

## THAI COURT REVOKES BAIL OF ACTIVIST WHO SHARED BBC STORY

**BANGKOK:** A pro-democracy activist in Thailand was re-arrested yesterday after his bail was revoked in a case accusing him of sharing online a Thai-language BBC story about the country's new king. The court's action has drawn more than the usual attention because of the contrast with the release on bail earlier in the week of two people sentenced to death in a murder case.

The arrest of Jatupat 'Pai' Boonpattaraksa for sharing the BBC story on Facebook was the first under the country's tough lese majeste law since King Vajiralongkorn Bodindradebayavarangkun ascended the throne on Dec. 1 after his father's death in October.

Lese majeste, or insulting the monarchy, carries a penalty of three to 15 years in prison. Jatupat's case has not yet come to trial, and he faces charges in other separate cases for his political

activities opposing Thailand's military government, The BBC story included mentions of the king's personal life and other material considered too sensitive to be published in the Thai press.

### Bail revoked

The court in Khon Kaen province revoked Jatupat's 400,000 baht (\$11,100) bail after police reported that he was still using social media in ways that could complicate his case and had taunted officials by suggesting that the bail procedure was mainly a way for the government to get money during an economic slowdown.

The court acted the same week that a court sentenced to death a woman for the murder of her husband and the lawyer who helped to hire the gunmen. Their treatment is likely to revive debate over whether the wealthy and well-connected have a large measure of impuni-

ty in the Thai justice system. Nitiwadee Pucharoenyos was sentenced Monday and released on bail the next day after the Appeals Court concluded she was not a flight risk because she was a doctor with an established residence. The court also approved the release on bail of lawyer Santi Thongsem, who was sentenced for hiring the gunmen who killed Nitiwadee's husband in 2013.

Thai courts seldom grant release on bail in lese majeste cases, citing national security, even though most cases involve speech that does not go beyond a small circle of friends. Critics of the law say it is often abused as a tool to silence political dissent.

"The military are the ones that asked police to request to the court to revoke Pai's bail," said Anon Numpa, a lawyer and fellow activist. "This is just the military's way of silencing Pai's political activities." —AP

## CHRISTMAS TRAIN TO SPREAD TOLERANCE IN PAKISTAN

**ISLAMABAD:** A Christmas-themed train yesterday set out on a journey to criss-cross Pakistan in an effort to promote tolerance in the overwhelmingly Muslim country.

Adorned with Christmas lights and mock snowmen, and with carriages that have portraits and tributes to notable Christian Pakistanis, the government says it hopes to change mindsets in Pakistan, where attacks and persecution of religious minorities have become routine. Christians make up an estimated 1.6 percent of Pakistan's 200 million people and have long faced discrimination-sidelined into lowly paid jobs and often the target of trumped-up blasphemous

charges. "This is a sign of tolerance, everybody will celebrate Christmas together,"

Human Rights Minister Kamran Michael told AFP, adding that members of the public would be welcomed to visit the train and see its exhibits along its many stops. It set off yesterday afternoon from Islamabad to Peshawar, capital of the conservative northwestern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, and will travel to Lahore on Christmas day before leaving for southern Karachi on January 1.

Discrimination and violence against religious minorities is commonplace in Pakistan, where Muslims account for more than 90 percent of the population.

A bomb attack on a park in Lahore on Easter Sunday in March killed 73 people, with the Pakistani Taliban claiming the attack and saying they had targeted Christians.

Twin suicide attacks against churches in Lahore killed 17 people in March last year, sparking two days of rioting by thousands of Christians. Agnes, a Catholic Pakistani who attended the launch ceremony, said she was grateful for the gesture, while acknowledging it was symbolic. "It's nothing more than a function-but it makes me feel proud, it is a first step," she said. "Let's hope we can celebrate Christmas in peace and harmony in the many years to come". —AFP

## JAPAN, US MARK RETURN OF LAND TO OKINAWA

**TOKYO:** Japan and the US marked a partial return of the land used by American troops to Okinawa in a ceremony yesterday on the southern island, but there was no sign the move was helping to lessen protests against the island's heavy US military presence.

Nearly 10,000 acres, about half the plot of land, was returned to Okinawa in exchange for helipads for Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft being built nearby. Residents say the deal only transfers the burden.

US Ambassador Caroline Kennedy called the reversion "a milestone" in the US-Japan alliance in her speech at the ceremony in Nago. "This return will reduce our footprint by about 20 percent (of base facilities on Okinawa) and allow this pristine natural environment to be enjoyed by future generations of residents and visitors to Okinawa." The land is a rich forest with rare birds and other fauna and flora and had been used as jungle training by US troops.

Demanding an unconditional land return and opposing Osprey deployment on the island, Okinawa Gov. Takeshi Onaga boycotted the ceremony and joined a protest against the US military presence on the island, his choice highlighting differences between the central government and Okinawa.

At a rally held near the ceremony venue, Onaga told thousands of cheering people that the land return in exchange for a new US military facility is deceptive and is not reducing Okinawa's burden.

"The land return ceremony one-sidedly held by the central government is nothing but a proof they have no intention whatsoever to be considerate of our suffering," Onaga said. He renewed his demand that Ospreys be removed from Okinawa and that any US military base planned for a closure simply be returned and not relocated. An Osprey crash-landing off Okinawa last week has added to safety concerns and anti-US base sentiment. It landed in shallow waters off the eastern coast after its propeller was damaged during training for midair fueling. All five crewmembers ejected and survived.

The return of the northern land area was agreed on in 1996 but delayed due to protests over building helipads. A new site was chosen and the central government resumed construction of the helipads this year. The helicopter landing sites in tiny Takae village are now operational. Protests and a legal battle between the central and Okinawan governments have also stalled the planned relocation of Air Station Futenma for two decades. More than half of 50,000 US troops in Japan are stationed on Okinawa under the bilateral security pact. Many people on the island have long complained about noise, pollution and crime linked to US military base. —AP



**NAGO, Okinawa:** Protesters stage a rally near the venue for a ceremony to mark the return of US military training area, in Nago, Okinawa prefecture yesterday. —AP





**SRINAGAR, JAMMU AND KASHMIR, INDIA:** In this photo taken on November 19, 2015, Kashmiri depression patient Parvaiz Ahmed, 38, and who was detained and interrogated by Indian security personnel in 2009, talks with clinical psychologist Asiya Niyaz during an initial assessment session to discuss his symptoms at a trauma and depression out-patient clinic at the Shri Maharaja Hari Singh (SMHS) hospital. — AFP

## KASHMIR STRUGGLES TO COPE WITH TIDE OF TRAUMA

### VALLEY OF TEARS

**SRINAGAR, India:** In a consultation room in a Kashmiri hospital, Parvaiz Ahmed struggles to find the words to describe how his interrogation at the hands of India's security forces seven years ago has left him traumatized.

Speaking in a whisper and barely looking up from the table, Ahmed's face is wracked with pain as he speaks of his sleepless nights, still haunted by his months in detention in 2009. "I worry all the time that they will come back and arrest me again," the 38-year-old tells his trauma therapist. "We can see maybe 190 patients per day and I average around 100," says Arshad Hussain as he explains the workload at the Shri Maharaja Hari Singh Hospital.

"Sixty to 80 percent of them are trauma, depression or PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) patients," he adds.

The hospital is situated in the centre of Srinagar, the largest city in Kashmir—an often achingly beautiful Himalayan region which is divided between India and Pakistan and claimed in full by both.

Since an uprising erupted in the Indian-controlled part of the territory in the late 1980s, rights groups estimate some 70,000 people have been killed. While the violence is on a smaller scale these days, tensions are never far from the surface. More than 100 people have been killed since July when a prominent militant leader was shot dead by Indian forces.

#### Valley of tears

A Doctors Without Borders survey last year found more than 1.5 million liv-

ing in the Kashmir Valley have symptoms of depression. Some are relatives of those killed, such as Mohammad Shafi Bhat, who lost his voice for several years after troops shot dead his 23-year-old son Bashir Ahmad Bhat in 2014, and still finds speaking a struggle.

Shafi, 50, is barely audible as he tries to recount the events surrounding Bashir's shooting as he waters the flowers around his son's grave in Srinagar's 'Martyrs' Cemetery'. He soon gives up and instead pulls a miniature photo portrait of his son from his wallet, his face streaming in tears.

Some of the other sufferers don't even have a body to mourn over. For some, the last glimpse of their loved ones was as they were being hauled away for questioning. It's a situation which further complicates the grieving process.

Rahma Begum's son Mir Ali disappeared 13 years ago from their hamlet in the Kashmir Valley, home to around 7 million people. For three years afterwards, she got up at dawn to search for her son, scouring the nearby forest for any clues as to his whereabouts, unable to accept he was gone for good. "Everyone told me I had gone mad, that I was mad," she said. Amnesty International and other advocacy groups say around 8,000 people have permanently "disappeared" after being taken away for questioning by the security forces in Kashmir.

Their bodies are widely believed to have been buried in unmarked graves or thrown into rivers by security forces,

who can operate with virtual impunity under a special act. Then there are the likes of Ahmed who spent years bottling up the resentments bred from often brutal interrogations by security agents whom rights groups have accused of using torture.

#### Coping mechanism

Mudasir Hassan, who conducts therapy sessions at Srinagar's Psychiatric Diseases Hospital, said a lot of his patients suffered from erectile dysfunction. While Kashmir is a predominantly Muslim region, some victims have turned to alcohol as a coping mechanism, said Hassan. "Alcohol is an issue, as is drug dependency," he told AFP.

Big queues crowd around the tiny window of the dispensary at Hassan's hospital from where the pharmacists dispense cocktails of pills throughout the working day.

Medics say stress levels are exacerbated by India's large military presence, with troops and armored vehicles posted on just about every street corner in Srinagar and at checkpoints throughout the Kashmir Valley.

People living in villages regarded as militant hotbeds by the security forces are often woken in the middle of the night by the sound of army patrols or raids on houses. "People are talking about this more... They understand now that there is something behind these symptoms," said Hussain. "It is not a problem with them. It is because of something outside that has happened to them."—AFP

## HUNDREDS RESIST EVICTION FROM DELHI SLUM AS NEW HOUSING FALLS SHORT

**MUMBAI:** Hundreds of residents in a New Delhi slum are resisting eviction by city officials and police in the third such protest this month in India's capital city, as anger mounts over a shortfall in housing for the urban poor, campaigners said.

Evictions began this week in Kathputli Colony, home to 3,500 families of street performers and puppeteers, after authorities marked it for development as part of a plan to upgrade the city. City officials say residents were notified of the plan which involves moving them to a temporary location while a private builder constructs modest high-rise homes for a nominal sum. They say more than 500 families have already moved to temporary accommodation. "Residents were given sufficient notice. The police are on hand to maintain law and order," said JP Agrawal, a principal commissioner with the Delhi Development Authority (DDA).

But some residents said they were not given the option of relocation, and that they received no notice of the eviction. "No one told us it would be this week. Suddenly one morning we woke up and found hundreds of policemen in the colony," said Dilip Bhatt, head of an artists' cooperative in the settlement. "We are surrounded by the police like we are criminals, and they have cut off water and power," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Television images showed police in riot gear, holding assault rifles and shields as residents gathered around them. About a third of India's 1.25 billion population lives in cities, with numbers rising every year as tens of thousands of people leave villages to seek better prospects. Many end up in overcrowded urban slums. — Reuters

## VAN EXPLODES OUTSIDE AUSTRALIAN CHRISTIAN LOBBY OFFICE

**CANBERRA:** A van laden with gas cylinders has exploded outside the headquarters of an Australian Christian lobby group, but police yesterday said the blast was neither politically nor religiously motivated.

Australian Christian Lobby's managing director Lyle Shelton tweeted pictures of the burnt-out white vehicle and said he was "shocked that this could happen in Australia". He added that the group this year received death threats for taking a stand against same-sex marriage, suggesting the incident could be linked.

But Australian Capital Territory police commander Mark Walters said the motive for the incident, in which only the driver was injured, remained unclear. "The driver appears to have ignited gas cylinders within the vehicle, causing an explosion which damaged the vehicle and building," he said. "Police spoke briefly with the man before he continued with treatment. Police were able to establish the man's actions were not politically, religiously or ideologically motivated."

The driver, a 35-year-old Australian, walked to hospital after the blast and was in a critical condition with serious burns. Police plan to speak with him again as soon as they can. The blast comes days after a truck drove into a Christmas market in Berlin, killing 12 people in an attack claimed by the Islamic State jihadist group.

Justice Minister Michael Keenan said the Wednesday night collision in Canberra was not being treated as a terror attack. "At the moment (police) are not treating it as a terrorist incident and there's no ongoing safety issues for the community," he told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

The building, which was vacant at the time, suffered damage including broken windows, with oil and debris strewn over the car park.

#### Won't be deterred

The ACL lobbies for Christian principles and ethics reforms in parliament, campaigning against gay marriage as well as a school program that aims to reduce homophobic bullying. "My team, my staff have had to endure numerous death threats over the course of this year because of our advocacy on something as simple as marriage between a man and a woman," Shelton told reporters. — AFP

## 4 IN CHINA CLEARED AFTER 2 DEATH SENTENCE APPEALS

**BEIJING:** Four men in eastern China accused of murder and rape have been exonerated after a 16-year legal ordeal in the latest instance of Chinese courts overturning deeply flawed verdicts.

A Jiangxi province high court announced yesterday it cleared the men accused of killing a woman in 2000, apologized and offered them an opportunity to seek compensation. The men had been sentenced to death by a municipal court in

2003 based on dubious confessions and successfully appealed. The same lower court reheard the trial and sentenced the defendants to death again the following year, only to be overruled again by the provincial court in 2006.

The provincial court reviewed the case this year and determined that forensic evidence did not match confessions given by the defendants, who said they had been tortured. A string of stories about wrongful

convictions has surfaced in recent years in China, where the government has sought to strengthen a criminal justice system wracked by police and prosecutorial misconduct. Human rights monitors say suspects are often tortured by police to extract confessions and cases are swayed by political interference.

And in court, prosecutors almost always win: China has a 99.9 percent conviction rate, according to official statistics - one of

the highest in the world. In February a man named Chen Man walked out of prison 21 years after he was wrongfully convicted. In another high-profile case, an Inner Mongolia man was exonerated for a rape and murder in 2014, 18 years after he had already been executed and nine years after another man, a serial rapist, confessed to the crime. The parents of the man, Hujiltu, were given 30,000 Yuan (\$4,300) in compensation. — AP

## INDIAN POLICE BUST BABY TRAFFICKING RACKET

**MUMBAI:** Police in India's commercial capital Mumbai have arrested a gang of six people accused of stealing babies or convincing single women to sell their children in the latest bust in a series of baby trafficking rackets. A police spokesman said the group, which included five women, sold the infants to childless couples in various states across India.

The arrests followed the rescue of five children - four boys and one girl - aged between four months and one year in the states of Goa, Gujarat and Karnataka, and came less than a month after a similar trafficking racket was busted in West Bengal. Officers are now investigating if the couples that purchased the babies, for between 200,000 to 400,000 rupees (\$3,000-6,000), were aware that the children had been kidnapped or bought from their biological parents.

"The gang was operating for the last two to three years. We are still investigating the number of children they may have kidnapped and sold," senior police inspector Naresh Kasale told the Thomson Reuters Foundation. "We suspect more people are involved in the racket." The police spokesman said one child has been reunited with its biological parent but the others were at a rescue home. Local media reported that police were looking into whether the group was linked to cases of kidnapping in hospitals.

### 'Alarming trend'

Kasale said police first uncovered the racket in early December while investigating the case of a missing child in Sathe Nagar slum in Mankhurd, eastern Mumbai.

They found a woman from that slum was also missing and tracked her by her mobile phone to Goa where she was detained. She told police she had sold the child and gave them details of the racket. "She had told the couple that it was her own child and that her husband was dead and she wanted to remarry. We rescued the child and have reunited him with his parents," Kasale said.

Last month, 13 babies were rescued and the remains of two other infants discovered in a series of raids in the eastern state of West Bengal in what police suspect is an international child trafficking racket. Eighteen people, including doctors, midwives and the owners of charities and clinics, were arrested, suspected of taking babies from women immediately after they had given birth and telling them their children were stillborn.

Adoption experts said that two gangs busted in quick succession is indicative that baby trafficking is becoming a widespread and organised crime in India. "This is an alarming trend," said Sunil Arora, president of Federation of Adoptive Agencies.

Arora said there are laws in place for women to give up their children if they are unable to keep them but single mothers are often unaware of these processes and, fearing social stigma, may hand over children to trafficking gangs.

Reports of human trafficking in India increased by 25 percent in 2015 to about 6,877 compared to the previous year. More than 40 percent of cases involved children being bought, sold and exploited as slaves, according to government data. — Reuters

## PHILIPPINES' DUTERTE ENLISTS MOM ARMY IN WAR ON DRUGS

### 'COMMUNITY DRUGS WATCH'

**CLARK, Philippines:** With a son addicted to methamphetamine and dealers and users winding up dead in a spree of killings in the Philippines, Emerciana Ybote was keen to be on the right side of President Rodrigo Duterte's bloody drugs war.

The 51-year-old housewife is among 9,000 women in one Philippine province who have formed a "Community Drugs Watch" to keep an eye on families and steer addicted relatives away from the danger zone and towards rehabilitation.

More than 6,000 people have been killed since Duterte took office in July and unleashed his promised crackdown, with a third of the deaths at the hands of police and the rest still under investigation. Many of the unsolved cases are assumed to be vigilante killings, which Duterte has refused to condemn. "Of course we heard about the killings, so we are telling our own families to stay away and we will look after them," she said. "My son is now reformed. I don't want him to get back to the bad habit, so I am here."

Duterte's justification against a tide of international condemnation is that "shabu", as the methamphetamine is known, is tearing apart families and threatening the next generation. Critics see that as ironic and say his drugs war has devastated communities and created a climate of fear.

That sentiment was shown by an opinion poll published on Monday, in which eight out of 10 Filipinos said they feared they or people they knew could become victims of extrajudicial killings. Thousands of wives attended a ceremony Duterte oversaw yesterday at a former US military base north of Manila and took an oath to support his drugs war at community level.

Evangeline Alvarez, 46, ignored her husband's advice to not get involved in a crusade by Duterte that numerous critics have argued impacts innocent, disenfranchised addicts as much as the dealers it was supposed to target.

Her younger brother was among hundreds of thousands of so-called "surrenderers" who have reported their addiction to the authorities and sought treatment. "My husband told me to stay away from the anti-drug activities because it's too risky," she said. "But my fear is losing my brother, so I have to join this fight."

The governor of Pampanga province, Lilia Pineda, said the mothers' movement was a more humane solution to curb drugs and would prevent the need for bloodshed. "They will be our potent weapon," she added. — Reuters



**MANILA:** This file picture taken on August 17, 2016 shows Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte (L) talking to Chinese Ambassador to the Philippines Zhao Jianhua during the 115th Police Service Anniversary at the Philippine National Police (PNP) headquarters. — AFP

## CHINA SAYS IT WILL COOPERATE WITH TRUMP BUT WARNS ON TAIWAN

**BEIJING:** China warned yesterday that ties with the US will likely see new complications and the only way to maintain a stable relationship is by respecting each other's "core interests."

Foreign Minister Wang Yi's remarks appeared to underscore that China's position on Taiwan is non-negotiable, weeks after President-elect Donald Trump suggested he could re-evaluate US policy on Taiwan. It also mirrored Beijing's relatively measured posture toward the incoming US administration despite signs of growing wariness.

Wang told the Communist Party mouthpiece, the People's Daily, that China will strive to boost cooperation with the US but he foresaw "new, complicated and uncertain factors affecting bilateral relations" under the Trump administration.

China complained this month after Trump questioned a US policy that since 1979 has recognized Beijing as China's government and maintains only unofficial relations with Taiwan. Beijing regards the self-governing island as part of China and has long used the "core interest" formulation to signal that any move by Taiwan toward formal independence could be met with military

force. Trump's comments on Taiwan, combined with his accusations that China is manipulating its currency and threats of imposing hefty tariffs against Chinese imports, have rattled relations between the world's two largest economies. Trump's transition team announced Wednesday that Peter Navarro, who has accused China of effectively waging economic war against the United States, would head a trade policy council inside the White House.

Asked by reporters about Trump's appointment of an economist and author whose books include "Death by China," foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said Beijing has been observing the incoming US administration's transition and its policy direction. "As two major powers with broad mutual interests, cooperation is the only correct choice," Hua said without naming Trump or Navarro. Although Navarro - and Trump - have been heavily criticized in the Chinese press, including state media, Beijing has largely measured its official response to potential flashpoints. This week, China's military returned a US underwater drone in the South China Sea that Trump had described as "stolen" on Twitter. — AP

Friday Times

# LIFESTYLE

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2016

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An Indian shop owner waits for customers as Christmas decorations are displayed for sale at a shop in Chennai yesterday.— AFP

## Aleppo soap makes leap from souk to Paris suburb



Samir Constantini, chief executive officer and founder of Aleppo soap company Alepia, checks bars of soap in Santeny, 30kms from Paris. — AFP photos



A picture shows bars of soap at the Aleppo soap company Alepia in Santeny.



An employee of the Aleppo soap company Alepia applies stamps on bars of soap.



An employee of the Aleppo soap company Alepia sorts out bars of soap.



Samir Constantini (left), chief executive officer and founder of Aleppo soap company Alepia, poses with soap maker Hassan Harastani in Santeny.

## ALEPPO SOAP MAKES LEAP FROM SOUK TO PARIS SUBURB

**A** collateral victim of the Syrian war, Aleppo soap has found a sanctuary far from the ruined city whose elegant souks, many now reduced to rubble, have made the coveted green bars for centuries. In an industrial zone on the outskirts of Paris, a Syrian master soap maker is carrying on the tradition, mixing olive oil and laurel oil with water and lye to produce a deeply moisturizing natural cleanser that has won devotees worldwide.

The scent of laurel oil wafts through the corridors of the factory in Santeny, about 30 kilometers (18 miles) southeast of the French capital, where big blocks of soap are drying. Wearing white overalls, Hassan Harastani stirs a bubbling pea-green mixture in a giant cauldron while chatting with businessman Samir Constantini. Constantini, a trained doctor, began importing soap from Syria's historic second city in 2004 and later began producing the soap under the "Alepia" brand. His plan had been to open a soap factory on the outskirts of Aleppo with Harastani, a master of the art who learnt the trade from his father.

But Syria's brutal civil war, which has made a smoldering ruin of much of Aleppo, laid waste to his plans. Harastani and his family fled the fierce fighting that turned the city into a global symbol of suffering. "We could no longer go to the factory because of the shelling and kidnappings," he said. With all but one or two of around 50 soap factories destroyed in Aleppo, Constantini and Harastani decided to start producing the soap on French soil.

"We left our country, our houses, our businesses, our friends," Constantini says, counting off his losses with a sigh. "I used to have lots of customers, in Syria but also abroad, in France, Italy, Germany, the Gulf

countries, South Korea, Japan, China," he says. "I was an ordinary person who loved his work and his family... It's the only profession I've known for over 35 years."

### 'We will return'

On arriving in France, he resumed his trade, 4,000 kilometers from home. Constantini is adamant that the Made in France soap is still essentially Syrian. "If a top French chef opens a French restaurant in New York it remains French cuisine, not New York cuisine. It's the same for the soap. It is made by the master soapmaker Harastani and is, therefore, proper Aleppo soap," he argues. The entire soapmaking process—from the selection and mixing of the oils and lye through to the drying and cutting—is carried out according to family recipes dating back more than 3,000 years.

"I am very proud to carry on this tradition," says Constantini. "The know-how is not being lost. It will endure despite what is happening in Syria." The nearly six-year war came to a head in the eastern part of Aleppo last week, as thousands of hungry, terrified residents began being bussed out of the city after weeks of bombings. For Constantini the war has mushroomed into a "world war" pitting global powers against each other in a scorched-earth battle for control of the Middle East. With no immediate end to the fighting in sight, he says the best thing he can do is "continue making this soap and hope that peace will return." Harastani says he does not know what the future holds but is "not so pessimistic". One thing is certain, he says. "We will return to Syria someday." — AFP

## KANSAS AMPUTEE GETS SURPRISE HOLIDAY HANDS

A southern Kansas woman whose hands and feet had to be amputated after she was shot during a robbery got an early Christmas gift - new electronic hands worth \$260,000, courtesy of a businessman and his wife. Julie Dombo of Derby showed off her new hands on Tuesday with her husband, a day after receiving them as a present from Koch Industries' general counsel Mark Holden and his wife, The Wichita Eagle reported. Dombo was shot in the arm and chest during an August 2015 robbery at a Derby AT&T store. Because of medical issues that developed from the injuries while she was hospitalized doctors had to amputate portions of her arms and legs to save her life. James Michael Phillips, 27, was sentenced to about 31 years after being convicted in October of several charges in the case, including attempted first-degree murder.

Dombo met Holden in October at a Wichita Crime Commission awards banquet, where she told Holden insurance wouldn't pay for the electronic hands she said would give her a chance at a relatively ordinary life, The Wichita Eagle reported. The hands allow her to grip objects, to work an iPhone and to put on her prosthetic legs.

Without the hands, Dombo's husband, John, has to be with her most of the time to help her. Dombo has been working out with the hands once a week since May at People's Prosthetics so that if the money ever came through, she'd know how to use the hands, which retail for about \$260,000.

"I'll do what I can," Holden told her that night at the banquet. Holden traveled back to Washington, DC, told his wife and son about Dombo and contacted someone who knew US Rep. Mike Pompeo of Wichita. Holden wanted to see if Pompeo could talk with the insurance company. But when Holden attended Phillips' sentencing hearing he learned that Blue Cross hadn't changed its decision.

"I promise you I will get your sister the arms," Holden told Dombo's sister Linda. "We're going to get them." Holden later told Dombo his wife wanted to meet her. So the Dombos invited the Holdens over for lunch Monday when Mark Holden arrived carrying two big boxes with the prosthetic hands he and his wife bought for her. Dombo saw the boxes and started to cry. "Merry Christmas," Holden said. — AP



In this photo John and Julie Dombo walk out of the Wichita Ear Clinic in Wichita, Kan. — AP



Olga Kondrasheva, 71, poses for a photographer in Moscow. — AFP photos



Olga Kondrasheva poses for a photographer.

## Russian babushkas break stereotypes with fashion shoots

In Russia, elderly women are usually expected to forget about fashion and watch their grandchildren. Not 71-year-old Olga Kondrasheva, who is fighting stereotypes by modeling for a glossy magazine. "I'm over 70 now but my life is just beginning and it's so interesting," says Kondrasheva, slim and sporting wavy white hair, a few minutes before a studio photoshoot for the Russian edition of Cosmopolitan magazine in central Moscow. With a lifelong zest for adventure, she used to take part in zoological expeditions to study wildlife across Russia and has worked as an extra in films. She admits she "never trained as a model", but says she has "always been fascinated by this line of work".

"I'm discovering a totally new side to myself. When I've had my hair and make-up done and I've got a nice outfit on and there's some lovely music playing, it's wonderful," she enthuses. Kondrasheva found herself posing for the cameras thanks to a website called Oldushka ("Oldie") launched by photographer Igor Gavar. "I wanted to show that older people can work in the fashion industry and they can be beautiful-even with wrinkles and white hair," he says. The site serves as an informal modeling agency by showcasing studio shots of Gavar's elderly subjects, who like catwalk queens a quarter of their age have been spotted in all kinds of places-on the street, in a supermarket, and even a dance floor. Gavar has managed to organize numerous photoshoots for his dozen or so "muses", including 80-year-old former air stewardess Irina Denisova and 64-year-old Lyudmila Brazhkina, a retired engineer. Several striking silver-haired men are also on Oldushka's books, though of those who have scored shoots in Russian fashion catalogues, magazines and advertisements so far, all but one have been women.

### 'Like a little holiday'

The retirement age in Russia is 55 for women and 60 for men. Many continue working long afterwards out of economic necessity-and few look forward to retirement, knowing that years of money worries likely lie ahead. The average pension in Russia is only around \$200 (185 euros) per month, but Oldushka allows its models to "earn a little bit extra," Gavar says. He and the model split the fees for any shoots secured through the website, which have so far ranged from \$40 to \$300. They say the work gives women a new lease of life and a confidence boost at a time when their main role in Russian society as "babushkas" or grandmas is to provide large amounts of free childcare. "It brightens up my life. Doing this is always so joyful, so positive," says Brazhkina. "And I enjoy being viewed in a different way during the photoshoots-not the way I see myself in the mirror. It's like a little holiday!" she says, smiling.

### 'Enormous potential'

Old age has been enjoying something of a moment in global fashion as feminists challenge traditional beauty standards and as the West comes to grips with an ageing population. Last year French label Celine chose 82-year-old author Joan Didion as its new face, while Dolce & Gabbana, American Apparel and Saint Laurent have all featured elderly models in recent campaigns. Russia faces a similar demographic trend as developed Western countries, with nearly a quarter of the population currently over retirement age, a figure expected to rise to 27 percent by 2025 -- 39.9 million people, according to the health ministry.

Eduard Karyukhin, head of the Dobroye Delo ("Good Deed") organization that works with elderly people, says "the stereotype of a retired woman who stays at home and looks after the grandchildren

is changing". "Elderly people have enormous potential," Karyukhin said. "They just need help with organizing their leisure activities." The women involved in Oldushka said family members sometimes find it hard to understand their new pastime.

"My husband was very angry at first. He kept asking me: what are you doing this for?" said Kondrasheva. "But then he saw this was making my life interesting with lots of activity and it was keeping me fit. And now he is supportive." — AFP



Olga Kondrasheva poses for a photographer.



Olga Kondrasheva poses for a photographer.



Olga Kondrasheva gets her hair done before a photoshoot.



In this file photo one of the three outdoor pools of Szechenyi Thermal Bath and Swimming Pool is pictured in Budapest, Hungary. — AP photos

# Aaah: Sink neck-deep in hot mineral waters at Budapest baths

The buzz about Budapest has been steadily building since Hungary joined the European Union in 2004. Tourists and multinational companies alike have gravitated to the city's humming core. But the former imperial capital owes at least some of its prosperity to centuries of experience with slowing down, taking a breath and sinking neck-deep into blissful relaxation. For the harried business traveler - or anyone else who could use a respite - an escape to one of the city's seven public thermal baths provides a soothing glimpse into that history while being just a quick subway ride away from the city center.

The Romans were the first to harness the area's hot springs, setting up a regional capital here partly because of the steamy mineral water burbling below ground. The ruins of those grand temples are still visible in the northern part of the city. More than

1,000 years later, the Ottomans established the city as a trading post during their 150-year rule and built two baths that still operate. The oldest, the Rudas Baths, features an octagonal room dating to 1550 with one main pool encircled by four smaller ones of varying temperatures. A 30-foot dome covers the stone echo chamber, where steam wafts up through colored beams of light coming from the plate-sized pieces of stained glass in the ceiling. The sulfuric water, which has supposed curative properties, can be so pungent that it stings the nose, and the smell lingers. So lather, rinse and definitely repeat.

If you go to Rudas for the history, try the Szechenyi Baths for the grandeur. Built in stages in the early 1900s, the gilded neo-Baroque facility is one of the largest thermal spas in Europe. Ornate, blazing yellow buildings form a courtyard that encloses

three huge naturally heated pools. Classical statues of reclined bathing nudes surround the pools, which are open year-round and simmer between 78 and 100 degrees Fahrenheit (26 to 38 Celsius). It's like soaking in the world's fanciest hot tub.

Another 15 smaller pools indoors range from a chilly 64 F (18 C) up to a skin-tingling 104 F (40 C). Also inside are saunas, steam rooms, silent relaxing areas and massage services. Be prepared to get a little frustrated with the lockers, since the electronic key, already confusing, was broken on several of them during one recent visit. Sections of both spas are available until 10 p.m., but for early birds, some parts open as early as 6 a.m. Fortunately, the water at Szechenyi smells much less than at Rudas, so a dip there before a breakfast meeting is that much easier.



In this file photo visitors enjoy a bath in a pool of Szechenyi Thermal Bath and Swimming Pool in Budapest, Hungary.



In this file photo a visitor takes a shower in Szechenyi Thermal Bath and Swimming Pool in Budapest, Hungary.



In this file photo visitors enjoy a bath in a pool of Szechenyi Thermal Bath and Swimming Pool in Budapest, Hungary.



In this file photo visitors play chess in a pool of Szechenyi Thermal Bath and Swimming Pool in Budapest, Hungary.

## Bunnies, brains, breast implants: Welcome to LA's odder museums

**B**reast implants, a photo of the brain of John F. Kennedy, a cheerleader's outfit and the sketches of a serial killer: All are on display in some of Los Angeles's quirkiest museums. The cultural offerings in this city are immense, from highbrow museums featuring works by world renowned artists to others with a decidedly mass-market appeal-like the wax museum, with its likenesses of glaze-eyed celebrities. But there are edgier and more extravagant establishments throughout the city, with some exhibits that wow and others that terrify.

### Mementoes from the heartsick

There is, for example, The Museum of Broken Relationships, with displays about the heartsick and lovelorn. One dealt with a divorcee who packed her wedding dress into a pickle jar: She did not want to toss it, let someone else wear it or allow moths to feast on it. There is the cheerleader's uniform that another woman never got to wear because her boyfriend jilted her; or the partly used bottles of cologne of a man who died of cancer, kept as mementoes by his widow. And among the displays not to be overlooked is a pair of breast implants housed in a glass case. Their former owner had had them implanted to please her partner, a "boob guy." But for five years her body tried to reject them and in the end, she had to undergo repeated surgeries to remove them.

"I mutilated my body for a man I loved," she said poignantly. "At the time, I loved him more." The Museum of Broken

Relationships has had a nomadic history. It got its start after the artists Olinka Vistica and Drazen Grubisic broke off their romance and founded the museum as a repository for the objects they had acquired during their relationship. In 2010 they opened a venue in Zagreb, followed this year by one in Los Angeles. "The pieces themselves aren't necessarily art," museum director Alexis Hyde told AFP. But "the museum itself is this very sophisticated piece of conceptual art that is really cutting to the heart of the matter of what it is to be human," Hyde said.

### Death in every form

Then there is LA's Museum of Death, founded in 1995, with not-for-the-faint-of-heart exhibits on serial killers, group suicides, funerary displays, and other subjects related to death. One display deals with the suicides of famous people like rock star Kurt Cobain and historical characters like Adolf Hitler. There is another on fatal automobile accidents and still another about celebrated murder cases-like that involving accused wife murderer and former football and movie star OJ Simpson. "It's a way to quell the fear of death," said museum manager Ryan Lichten. "It's going to happen to everyone. The closer you are to what scares you, the less scary it is."

The extensive collection includes the head of Henri Desire Landru, decapitated on the guillotine in Versailles in 1922 for murdering 11 women, although he might have killed hundreds. Part of Lichten's work-he is also a curator-involves writing to con-

victed killers to ask them to send materials that can be used in exhibits. That is how he obtained drawings of the singer Rebecca Schaeffer sketched by her killer on death row.

On one wall are autopsy photos of John F. Kennedy performed just hours after his assassination in 1963 in Dallas, Texas: lifeless eyes, blood-matted hair, brains exposed. The photos are accompanied by graphs, newspaper front pages and a copy of the controversial Warren Report, which concluded that accused assassin Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone. Most visitors seem fascinated by the bizarre and grotesque displays, though every week one or two of them faint, Lichten said.

### A furry obsession

For Valentine's Day 1993, Steve Lubanski gave girlfriend Candace Frazee a stuffed bunny with a huge heart on its chest that read "I love you." That Easter, she gave him a porcelain rabbit. Thus was born a tradition, and eventually a museum. Today visitors can see their 33,000 rabbit-related pieces on display in Lubanski's house, later converted to a museum. Some 27,000 people have visited since 1998. Frazee says it is the largest US museum other than the White House that is also serves as someone's home. Next year they plan to move their vast collection to a former art gallery, including their four live rabbits and 22 stuffed ones. — AFP



This file photo shows people walking by a mural at the Museum of Death in Hollywood, California. — AFP photos



For Valentine's Day 1993 Steve Lubanski gave girlfriend Candace Frazee a stuffed bunny and that Easter she gave him a porcelain rabbit, starting a tradition and eventually a museum.



## AN ASIAN THEMED SALAD FOR ANY SEASON

By Katie Workman

This is the time of year when food writers start lamenting about how much we've all indulged. We offer up lighter recipes as a way to make amends for our fourth-quarter behavior. Mea culpa, and pass the bran flakes.

I'd rather think about all those ingredients that don't make it into traditional American holiday fare, which is so often dominated by meat, potatoes, cream and pie (somehow a food group of its own). In a non-ascetic way, let's turn the spotlight on ingredients that sparkle in flavor and happen to be healthful at the same time.

Asian food has always excelled in this area, and lately I've been drawn to Vietnamese cooking, with its bright clean essence. Ingredients like fresh mint and cilantro, lemongrass, lime, ginger, and the pungent but cleansing fish sauce, made from fermented anchovies (stay with me!) that gives a bracing lift to any dish.

You can buy lemongrass and fish sauce at well-stocked supermarkets, Asian stores and specialty markets, and you can order it online. There are also jarred versions of lemongrass - just add a tablespoon of lemongrass paste to the dressing below and skip the step where the fresh minced lemongrass would have been added to the cooking water.

If the word julienne causes you to shrug, know that it just means cut into matchsticks. Feel free to shred the vegetables

if that's more happy-making. There's no reason to gnaw on a celery stick all January. Just grab some shrimp, herbs and some vibrant Asian ingredients, and march into the New Year with a spring in your step.

### VIETNAMESE SHRIMP SALAD

#### Ingredients

Serves 6 to 8  
Start to finish: 2 hours 30 minutes  
2 tablespoons finely minced lemongrass  
2 teaspoons kosher salt  
2 pounds peeled and deveined extra large shrimp  
2 tablespoons minced shallots  
2 teaspoons minced garlic  
3 tablespoons fresh lime juice  
2 tablespoons fish sauce  
2 tablespoons coarsely chopped fresh mint leaves  
2 tablespoons coarsely chopped fresh cilantro leaves  
10 ounces Boston, Bibb or butter lettuce leaves, torn into big pieces  
1/2 seedless cucumber, thinly sliced or julienned

2 large carrots, peeled and shredded or julienned  
1 cup slivered scallions, white and green parts

#### Preparation

Fill a large pot about 3/4 full with water, and add the lemongrass and salt. Bring the water to a boil over high heat, add the shrimp, and simmer for about 4 minutes, until the shrimp are just cooked. Drain the shrimp and lemongrass into a fine mesh strainer and rinse with cold water to stop the cooking. The shrimp will not completely cool, which is fine.

While you are waiting for the water to boil, combine the shallots, garlic, lime juice, fish sauce, mint and cilantro in a large bowl or container. After you have rinsed the shrimp and lemongrass in the strainer, shake to remove any excess water and add them to the dressing. Toss so the shrimp are fully coated with the dressing. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours, and up to 24.

When you are ready to serve, arrange the lettuce in a shallow serving dish. Then scatter over it most of the cucumber, carrots, and half the scallions. Distribute the shrimp with its dressing over the top of all, and then scatter over it the other half of the slivered scallions, and the handful of carrots and cucumbers remaining. Top with the peanuts if desired. Serve cool. — AP





# The secret to a better baked pasta? Don't cook your pasta

By Sara Moulton

If there's anything more comforting than boiled pasta in a sauce, it's got to be baked pasta in a sauce. The baking adds a crispy crust that is such a delicious contrast to the tender goodness of the dish.

The challenge is to how to get the pasta to turn out just right. Most baked pasta recipes instruct you to boil the noodles until cooked halfway before baking them. This allows the pasta to finish cooking in the oven as it bathes in the sauce. But this method has challenges. If you boil the noodles more than halfway, they'll be overcooked by the time you pull the finished dish out of the oven. I find it hard to get the pre-cooking time right.

And precooking the pasta, even halfway, takes work and dirties a large pot and colander. Then again, if you don't precook the pasta and instead add it dry to the sauce for baking, it will take much longer to become tender in the oven, even as it absorbs all the liquid in the sauce. Dry pasta needs to hydrate.

So what's a home cook to do? Use my simple no-cook method of precooking the pasta. Just soak the pasta in warm salted water before adding it to the other ingredients and sliding the mixture into the oven. Presoaking is a way to begin hydrating the pasta and washing away some of its starch, even as the salt in the water pre-seasons the pasta.

Yes, you'll dirty a bowl, but given that that's the same vessel in which you'll combine all the dish's ingredients, it's the only bowl you'll need. The soak requires 45 minutes, but it's hands-off time, freeing you up to prep the rest of the ingredients in the meantime. Then it takes no time at all to assemble the dish and pop it into the oven. Just 20 or so minutes later you can collect your reward: deeply-flavored baked pasta, creamy on the bottom and crispy on top. The perfect wintry entree. Add a salad and some crusty bread and be happy.

## BAKED PENNE WITH PROSCIUTTO AND FONTINA

### Ingredients

Start to finish: 1 hour 15 minutes (20 minutes active)

Servings: 6

1 pound penne pasta

Salt

Butter, for coating the baking pan

2 teaspoons minced garlic

1 cup heavy cream

2 cups low-sodium chicken broth

1 cup crushed tomatoes

1 to 2 teaspoons red pepper flakes, to taste (optional)

1-1/2 ounces finely grated Parmesan cheese

4 ounces coarsely grated fontina cheese

4 ounces thinly sliced prosciutto, chopped

### Preparation

In a large bowl, combine the pasta with enough lukewarm, well salted water to cover. Let stand for 45 minutes. Heat the oven to 450 F. Lightly butter a shallow baking dish (12-cup capacity with 2 to 2-1/2-inch sides). Drain the pasta and set aside. In the same bowl, combine all remaining ingredients, stirring well. Add the pasta, toss to combine, then season with a pinch of salt. Transfer the mixture to the prepared baking dish, pressing it down evenly. Bake on the oven's middle shelf until bubbly and browned, 20 to 22 minutes.

### Nutrition information per serving

590 calories; 240 calories from fat (41 percent of total calories); 27 g fat (15 g saturated; 0.5 g trans fats); 100 mg cholesterol; 1060 mg sodium; 63 g carbohydrate; 3 g fiber; 5 g sugar; 24 g protein. — AP





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Friday Times

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2016



## Sudoku 9x9 Puzzle - Sheet 5

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

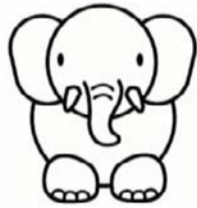
4			7					6
	8							3
5	9	1				7	4	2
	7		3		8		1	
			5	4	7			
	4		6		2		8	
7	3	2				4	6	1
	1						7	
9				6				8

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

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

### Animal Alphabet Challenge

Can you come up with an animal for each letter of the alphabet?



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	_____

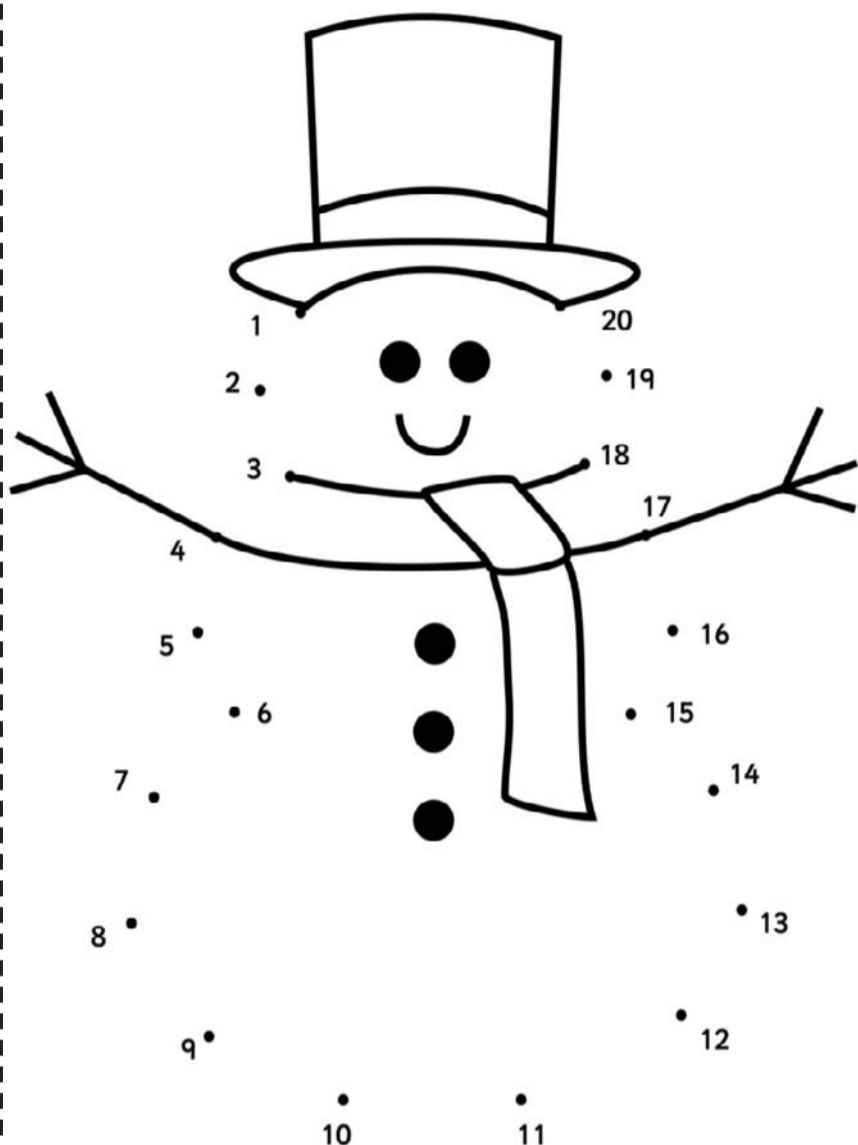
# 2017

How many "2017" outlines can you find below?  
Can you colour them in so that no 2017 is next to another 2017 of the same colour?





## Snowman Dot to Dot

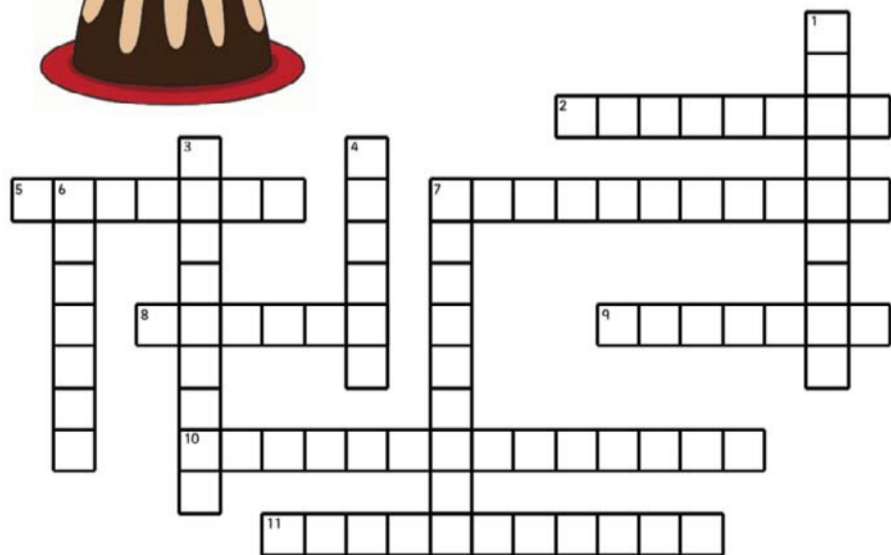


## Christmas Tree Maze

Can you find your way from the base of the Christmas tree all the way to the star?



# Christmas Food Crossword



### Across

2. Don't forget to put this inside your roast turkey.
5. Round green vegetables eaten as part of Christmas lunch.
7. Jewel red fruit often made into a sauce to have with roast turkey.
8. Layers of sponge, fruit, custard and cream.
9. German fruit bread often made with marzipan inside.
10. To remember St Nicholas dropping money down the chimney these are often put in stockings.
11. Spicy biscuits made in to a house or man.

### Down

1. Despite their name they don't contain meat.
3. Sweet rodents.
4. Bird often roasted at Christmas.
6. Traditionally made on Stir Up Sunday, this follows Christmas lunch.
7. A stripy, sweet, curved stick.





# Friday Times Travel

Where to expand  
your horizons this  
New Year's Eve



Matera's ancient 'sassi'



Sydney Harbour Bridge

It comes but once a year, but tends to go one of two ways: Either it's a firecracker of an evening or, dare we suggest, a bit of a damp squib. Deciding where to spend New Year's Eve is far from straightforward if your horizons expand beyond the familiar. If you're still stuck for inspiration but determined to escape from the norm, we have a few ideas on where to enjoy the countdown to 2017.

**Matera, Italy**

Located in the remote rural region of Basilicata, Matera is preparing for the limelight as European Capital of Culture in 2019. But why wait? See in the new year in this jaw-dropping Unesco World Heritage-listed city, which hosts a range of open-air festivals and celebrations. Explore the town's labyrinth of narrow alleys, and look out for the Presepe Narrante Di Matera, a 'live nativity scene' spread over 5km featuring 150 costumed performers.

Once a byword for urban poverty, Matera's 'sassi' (cave

dwellings) have become minimalist restaurants, trendy hangouts and boutique hotels. Eat at Baccanti, where former local boy and legendary film director Francis Ford Coppola has dined, sip a few cocktails at cafe-bar Area 8 ([area8.it/cafe](http://area8.it/cafe)) and head underground to sleep it off at the classy Sextantio Le Grotte Della Civita. Finally, clear your head the next day by walking over the brand new suspension bridge.

**New Orleans, USA**

New Orleans adds a unique flavor to everything it does, and New Year's Eve is no exception. Head over to Jackson Square to ring in 2017. The annual party there includes live music and a great view of the midnight fleur-de-lis drop to usher in the new year. The St Louis Cathedral, one of the best examples of French architecture in the US, serves as a regal backdrop for an impressive fireworks display over the Mississippi River. You may be surprised at how cold it can be in New Orleans at this time of year. Luckily, the venerable

Cafe Du Monde is just across the street. Open 24/7, closing only for Christmas Day, this purveyor of beignets and chicory coffee always helps ease the effects of one too many Hurricane cocktails.

**Melbourne, Australia**

If Sydney is the golden child for New Year's Eve in Australia, then Melbourne is the spunky sibling. Hole up at one of the city's renowned rooftop bars for a balmy summer night's tittle and front-row seats for the fireworks. For inner-city spots, Rooftop Bar atop Curtin House ([curtinhouse.com](http://curtinhouse.com)) and Loop Roof ([looprooftopbar.com.au](http://looprooftopbar.com.au)) are hallowed favourites for Melburnians, whilst boutique hotel QT Melbourne delights with a glam rooftop terrace (book ahead for those last two). Further afield, catch skyline views and eat tapas at Naked in the Sky in Fitzroy. The morning's salvation awaits in the shape of a delicious Melbourne brunch and, of course, a great cup of coffee.



Celebrate New Year's Eve with the locals in balmy Las Palmas



A floating walkway across West Lake, Hangzhou



#### Las Palmas, Gran Canaria

Partying in Europe at this time of year usually involves several layers of thermal underwear, but temperatures in the Gran Canarian capital of Las Palmas are a balmy average of 19°C. And while elsewhere the island is dominated by big resorts, this is a proper Spanish city mostly frequented by locals - particularly on New Year's Eve, when clubs and bars fill up with Canarios. The old quarter of Vegueta is a fun place to roam - start with dinner at Restaurante El Herreno, which makes traditional Canarian dishes with produce fresh from the market opposite, then head out to explore the many bars dotted among its narrow alleyways. After a few canas (local drink), most people converge on the marvelous city beach Playa de las Canteras, where fireworks light up the sky to welcome in the new year. Remember to BYO grapes - it's a Spanish tradition to eat 12 grapes, one for each stroke of midnight, or risk an entire year of bad luck.

#### Nassau, the Bahamas

Nearly every town in the Caribbean throws a New Year's bash, but Nassau does so with a particular flair. Junkanoo is the Bahamas' biggest, flashiest street carnival, and while it takes place multiple times a year, the largest celebrations happen on Boxing Day and New Year's Day. In the wee hours of the morning, elaborately costumed dancers take to the streets with their troupes, parading through downtown Nassau to ring in the new year with horns, drums, whistles and floats. Once the festivities subside, nap on the pearly sands of one of the popular New Providence beaches (Cable, Delaporte or Junkanoo Beaches to name a few). And when you start to feel hungry, head over to Arawak Cay for the weekend fish fry or snag some conch salad from the market at Potter's Cay.

#### Hangzhou, China

Although the Chinese do not celebrate New Year as warmly as the Spring Festival (otherwise known as Chinese New Year, which falls on 28 January this year), it's a good time to visit southeast China, where the countryside is still green and vibrant. Visit the idyllic city of Hangzhou for a peaceful way to see in 2017. Follow the footpath alongside West Lake in the morning to see the mist covering the water, then climb the hill to visit Yongfu Temple. Spend the afternoon sipping tea at the teahouse there, surrounded by a grove of tea trees. Finish off your day with a slap-up meal in the luxurious Shangri-La Hotel, which stands on the shoreline of the lake.

#### Sydney, Australia

Australia's glitziest city puts on an extravagant show by utilizing its best asset - Sydney Harbor. In the run-up to the big fireworks display, vessels of all shapes and sizes decked out in dazzling white rope-light dance across the water to the sound of live music. The arrival of midnight triggers an eruption of pyrotechnics from no less than seven barges dotted along the harbor, not to mention the world's most famous coat hanger, the Sydney Harbor Bridge. For those not lucky enough to score an invite to a private waterside party, the best option is to join the million other people who flock to the harbor's shores. Cockatoo Island, one of the many harborside islands, offers the fabulous option of glamping, thereby solving the issue of a long walk or car ride home. Stave off the hangover at one of Australia's most iconic beaches, Bondi, where you can down a healthy brekkie at Speedos cafe or carb up at Icebergs Dining Room before jumping into the picture-perfect surf for a swim between the flags. - ([www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com))



Loop Roof is one of the best places to survey the skyline of Melbourne





00:20 Wheeler Dealers  
01:10 Salvage Hunters  
02:00 Marooned With Ed Stafford  
02:50 The Return Of The Monster Mako  
03:40 Cuban Chrome  
04:30 The Liquidator  
05:00 How Do They Do It?  
05:30 How Do They Do It?  
06:00 Blue Collar Backers  
06:50 Incredible Engineering  
Blunders: Fixed  
07:40 Sydney Harbour  
08:30 Catching Monsters  
09:20 Deadliest Catch  
10:10 Kings Of The Wild  
11:00 Running Wild With Bear Grylls  
11:50 Mega Trains  
12:40 Alcatraz: Escaping The Rock  
13:30 Fast N' Loud: Demolition Theatre  
14:20 Sacred Steel Bikes  
15:10 Street Outlaws (Season 3b Special)  
16:00 Fast N' Loud  
16:50 Fast N' Loud  
19:20 Fast N' Loud Clip Shows  
20:10 Fast N' Loud Clip Shows  
21:00 Fast N' Loud (Season 4 Specials)  
21:50 Sacred Steel Bikes  
22:40 Street Outlaws  
23:30 Alcatraz: Escaping The Rock

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  
03:05 Violetta  
04:15 The Hive  
04:20 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 Dog With A Blog  
07:25 Dog With A Blog  
07:50 Tsum Tsum Shorts  
07:55 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir  
08:20 Elena Of Avalor  
08:45 Star Darlings  
08:50 Liv And Maddie  
09:15 Jessie  
10:30 Good Luck Charlie: The Road Trip Movie  
12:10 Duck The Halls: A Very Mickey Christmas  
12:35 Austin & Ally  
13:00 Liv And Maddie  
13:50 Shake It Up  
14:40 Dog With A Blog  
15:30 Good Luck Charlie  
16:20 Girl Meets World  
17:10 Elena Of Avalor

17:35 Miraculous Tales Of Ladybug And Cat Noir  
18:00 The Next Step  
18:25 Descendants Wicked World  
18:30 Liv And Maddie  
18:55 Star Darlings  
19:00 Shake It Up  
19:25 Disney Mickey Mouse  
19:30 Austin & Ally  
19:55 Descendants Wicked World  
20:00 Backstage  
20:25 Tsum Tsum Shorts  
20:30 Duck The Halls: A Very Mickey Christmas  
20:55 Best Friends Whenever  
21:20 Jessie  
21:45 Jessie  
22:35 H2O: Just Add Water  
23:00 Binny And The Ghost  
23:25 Sabrina Secrets Of A Teenage Witch



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

05:35 Calimero  
05:50 Zou  
06:00 Loopdidoo  
06:15 Art Attack  
06:35 Henry Hugglemonster  
06:50 Calimero  
07:00 Zou  
07:20 Loopdidoo  
07:35 Art Attack  
08:00 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse  
08:30 Sheriff Callie's Wild West  
09:00 Goldie & Bear  
09:30 Miles From Tomorrow  
10:00 Miles From Tomorrow  
10:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse  
11:00 Sofia The First  
11:30 The Lion Guard  
12:00 Doc McStuffins  
12:30 Little Mermaid  
13:00 Sofia The First  
13:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse  
14:00 Jake And The Never Land Pirates  
14:30 Doc McStuffins  
15:00 The Lion Guard  
15:30 Sofia The First  
16:00 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse  
16:30 Doc McStuffins  
17:00 The Lion Guard  
17:30 PJ Masks  
18:00 The Adventures Of The Disney Fairies  
18:30 Goldie & Bear  
19:00 Jake And The Never Land Pirates  
19:30 Little Mermaid  
20:00 PJ Masks  
20:30 Sofia The First  
21:00 Minnie's Winter Bow Show  
22:00 Jake And The Never Land Pirates  
22:30 Jake And The Never Land Pirates  
23:00 The Adventures Of The Disney Fairies  
23:30 Mickey Mouse Clubhouse



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

13:15 Emmerdale  
13:45 Coronation Street  
14:15 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh  
15:10 Cash Trapped  
16:00 The Jonathan Ross Show  
16:55 Broadchurch  
17:50 The Doctor Blake Mysteries  
18:50 Emmerdale  
19:15 Emmerdale  
19:45 Coronation Street  
20:10 Cash Trapped



00:00 America's Book Of Secrets  
01:00 Ancient Aliens  
02:00 Missing In Alaska  
03:00 Ancient Discoveries  
03:50 WWII: Europe's Secret Army  
04:40 Your Bleeped Up Brain  
05:30 America's Book Of Secrets  
06:20 Cities Of The Underworld  
07:10 Ancient Discoveries  
08:00 Ancient Aliens  
09:00 Missing In Alaska  
10:00 Ancient Discoveries  
11:00 WWII: Europe's Secret Army  
12:00 Your Bleeped Up Brain  
13:00 America's Book Of Secrets  
14:00 Ancient Aliens  
15:00 Missing In Alaska  
16:00 Ancient Discoveries  
17:00 WWII: Europe's Secret Army  
18:00 Your Bleeped Up Brain  
19:00 Ancient Aliens  
20:00 Missing In Alaska  
21:00 Ancient Discoveries  
22:00 WWII: Europe's Secret Army  
23:00 Serial Killer Earth History HD  
00:20 Billion Dollar Wreck  
01:10 Britain's Bloodiest Dynasty  
02:00 Storage Wars  
02:25 Storage Wars: Best Of  
02:50 Banger Boys  
03:40 American Restoration  
04:05 American Restoration  
04:30 Pawn Stars  
05:00 Time Team  
06:00 Time Team  
06:50 Time Team  
07:40 Hoard Hunters  
08:30 American Restoration  
08:55 Alone  
09:45 Swamp People  
10:35 Ice Road Truckers  
11:25 American Restoration



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



00:30 World's Toughest Jobs  
01:20 Secret Space Escapes  
02:10 How The Universe Works  
03:00 Destroyed In Seconds  
03:25 Destroyed In Seconds  
03:50 Ultimate Survival  
04:40 How It's Made  
05:05 How It's Made  
05:30 World's Toughest Jobs  
06:20 Mythbusters  
07:00 Kenny The Shark  
07:25 Awesome Adventures  
07:50 Bad Dog  
08:40 How It's Made  
09:05 How It's Made  
09:30 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?  
10:20 Mythbusters  
11:10 Troy  
12:00 Troy  
12:50 Troy  
16:10 Kenny The Shark  
16:35 Awesome Adventures  
17:00 Battle Bots  
17:50 Now That's Funny  
18:40 What Could Possibly Go Wrong?  
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 Destroyed In Seconds  
23:15 Destroyed In Seconds



SHERLOCK HOLMES ON OSN MOVIES ACTION HD



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



00:10 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh  
01:00 Emmerdale  
01:30 Coronation Street  
02:00 Coronation Street  
02:30 Cash Trapped  
03:25 Big Star's Little Star  
04:20 Gino's Hidden Italy  
04:45 Tracey Ullman's Show  
05:15 The Doctor Blake Mysteries  
06:15 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh  
07:05 Cash Trapped  
08:00 Big Star's Little Star  
09:00 Gino's Hidden Italy  
09:30 Tracey Ullman's Show  
10:00 The Doctor Blake Mysteries  
11:00 Masterpiece With Alan Titchmarsh  
11:50 Cash Trapped  
12:45 Emmerdale



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



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



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



- 00:15 Louie
- 00:22 Louie
- 00:28 Fresh Beat Band Of Spies
- 00:52 Olive The Ostrich
- 00:57 Olive The Ostrich
- 01:01 Max & Ruby
- 01:24 Wanda And The Alien
- 01:34 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
- 01:44 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
- 01:55 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 02:16 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 02:38 Zack & Quack
- 02:58 Team Umizoomi
- 03:20 Louie
- 03:27 Louie
- 03:33 Olive The Ostrich
- 03:38 Olive The Ostrich
- 03:42 Paw Patrol
- 03:56 Paw Patrol
- 04:19 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
- 04:31 Dora The Explorer
- 04:54 Max & Ruby
- 05:03 Bubble Guppies
- 05:27 Little Charmers
- 05:40 Shimmer And Shine
- 06:02 The Snowman And The Snowdog
- 06:26 Zack & Quack
- 06:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 07:00 Paw Patrol
- 07:13 Paw Patrol
- 07:37 Dora The Explorer
- 08:00 Wanda And The Alien
- 08:11 Zack & Quack
- 08:22 Dora And Friends
- 08:46 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 09:10 Paw Patrol
- 09:20 Paw Patrol
- 09:35 Shimmer And Shine
- 09:58 Dora The Explorer
- 10:21 Paw Patrol
- 10:45 Little Charmers
- 10:57 Bubble Guppies
- 11:20 Fresh Beat Band Of Spies
- 11:40 Zack & Quack
- 11:52 Team Umizoomi
- 12:15 Louie
- 12:22 Louie
- 12:30 Fresh Beat Band Of Spies
- 12:53 Olive The Ostrich
- 12:58 Olive The Ostrich
- 13:03 Max & Ruby
- 13:26 Wanda And The Alien
- 13:37 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
- 13:48 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
- 14:00 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 14:22 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 14:45 Zack & Quack
- 15:05 Team Umizoomi
- 15:28 Louie
- 15:35 Louie
- 15:40 Olive The Ostrich
- 15:44 Olive The Ostrich
- 15:49 Paw Patrol
- 16:01 Paw Patrol
- 16:24 Ben & Holly's Little Kingdom
- 16:35 Dora The Explorer
- 16:59 Max & Ruby
- 17:07 Bubble Guppies
- 17:29 Little Charmers
- 17:41 Shimmer And Shine
- 18:05 The Snowman And The Snowdog
- 18:27 Zack & Quack
- 18:38 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 19:00 Paw Patrol
- 19:13 Paw Patrol
- 19:36 Dora The Explorer
- 20:00 Wanda And The Alien
- 20:11 Zack & Quack
- 20:22 Dora And Friends: Into The City!
- 20:46 Blaze And The Monster Machines
- 21:10 Paw Patrol
- 21:35 Shimmer And Shine



NO ESCAPE ON OSN MOVIES HD



- 00:00 Dark Angel
- 02:00 The Borderlands
- 04:00 The Mark: Redemption
- 06:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
- 08:00 Ladder 49
- 10:00 Justice League vs. Bizarro League
- 11:00 Avengers: Age Of Ultron
- 13:30 Sherlock Holmes
- 15:45 Last Action Hero
- 18:00 Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
- 20:00 13 Sins
- 22:00 Wanted



- 01:00 American Girl: Saige Paints The Sky
- 03:00 It Takes Two
- 05:00 Oz The Great And Powerful
- 07:15 Doctor Proctor's Fart Powder
- 09:00 Minions
- 11:00 Oz The Great And Powerful
- 13:15 Open Season: Scared Silly
- 15:00 Cinderella
- 17:00 Muppets Most Wanted
- 19:00 Gulliver's Travels
- 21:00 Monsterville: The Cabinet Of Souls
- 23:00 Cinderella



- 00:00 The Boy Next Door
- 01:30 No Escape
- 03:15 Jackie & Ryan
- 04:45 McFarland, USA
- 07:00 The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel
- 09:00 The Walk
- 11:00 Tracers
- 12:45 Maze Runner: The Scorch Trials
- 15:00 I'll See You In My Dreams
- 16:45 Insurgent
- 18:45 Tomorrowland
- 21:00 Pan
- 23:00 Tiger House



- 00:00 Other Plans
- 01:45 The A-Team
- 04:00 Overboard
- 06:00 The Single Moms Club
- 08:00 Coneheads
- 10:00 Overboard
- 12:00 The Beautician And The Beast

- 14:00 The Proposal
- 16:00 Coneheads
- 18:00 Pixels
- 20:00 Blue Streak
- 22:00 The Hooligan Factory



- 01:00 Rio, I Love You
- 02:45 Erin Brockovich
- 05:00 Escobar: Paradise Lost
- 07:00 I'll Follow You Down
- 09:00 Instinct
- 11:15 Escobar: Paradise Lost
- 13:15 Bottle Rocket
- 15:00 Wuthering Heights
- 16:45 Instinct
- 19:00 Identity
- 20:30 The Hurricane
- 23:00 Ex Machina



- 01:00 Bolts And Blip
- 02:45 Pim And Pom: The Big Adventure
- 04:30 Miffy The Movie
- 06:00 Baby Geniuses And The Treasures Of Egypt
- 07:30 Jungle Book: Mowgli's Adventure
- 09:15 Rugrats In Paris: The Movie
- 11:00 Barnyard
- 12:45 Pim And Pom: The Big Adventure
- 14:15 True Story Of Puss'n Boots
- 16:00 Rugrats Go Wild
- 18:00 Rugrats In Paris: The Movie
- 20:00 Gladiators Of Rome
- 22:00 True Story Of Puss'n Boots
- 23:30 Rugrats Go Wild



- 00:40 The Big Brain Theory
- 01:30 Weird Or What?
- 02:20 How To Build... Everything
- 02:45 How To Build... Everything
- 03:10 How Do They Do It?
- 03:35 Food Factory
- 04:00 Race To Escape
- 04:48 The Big Brain Theory
- 05:36 How To Build... Everything
- 06:00 How To Build... Everything
- 06:24 Weird Or What?
- 07:12 How Do They Do It?
- 07:36 Food Factory
- 08:00 How Do They Do It?
- 08:26 The Big Brain Theory

- 09:14 Weird Or What?
- 10:02 Race To Escape
- 10:50 How Do They Do It?
- 11:14 Food Factory
- 11:38 How To Build... Everything
- 12:02 Sci-Fi Science: Physics Of The Impossible
- 12:26 The Big Brain Theory
- 13:14 Weird Or What?
- 14:02 How Do They Do It?
- 14:26 Food Factory
- 14:50 Race To Escape
- 15:38 How To Build... Everything
- 16:02 Sci-Fi Science: Physics Of The Impossible
- 16:26 The Big Brain Theory
- 17:14 Weird Or What?
- 18:02 Race To Escape
- 18:50 The Big Brain Theory
- 19:40 Mythbusters
- 20:30 Mythbusters
- 21:20 How Do They Do It?
- 21:45 Food Factory
- 22:10 Outrageous Acts Of Psych
- 22:35 Outrageous Acts Of Psych
- 23:00 Mythbusters



- 00:20 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
- 01:10 What If We Get Married?
- 02:00 My Big Fat Fabulous Life
- 02:25 Say Yes To The Dress
- 02:50 Love, Lust Or Run
- 03:15 Cake Boss
- 03:35 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
- 04:20 Little People, Big World
- 04:45 Little People, Big World
- 05:10 Toddlers & Tiaras
- 06:00 Little People, Big World
- 08:30 Outdaughters: Busby Quints
- 09:20 Sister Wives
- 09:45 Sister Wives
- 10:10 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners
- 11:00 Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners
- 11:50 Love, Lust Or Run
- 13:55 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
- 14:45 Oprah: Where Are They Now?
- 15:35 Cake Boss
- 16:00 Cake Boss
- 16:25 Cake Boss
- 16:50 Cake Boss
- 17:15 Cake Boss
- 17:40 Buddy's Family Vacation
- 18:05 Buddy's Family Vacation
- 18:30 Love, Lust Or Run
- 18:55 Love, Lust Or Run
- 19:20 Outdaughters: Busby Quints
- 20:10 Sister Wives
- 20:35 Sister Wives
- 21:00 Outdaughters: Busby Quints
- 21:50 Sister Wives
- 22:40 Coach Charming
- 23:05 Coach Charming
- 23:30 Breaking Amish



- 00:00 In Search Of Aliens
- 01:00 Ancient Aliens
- 02:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 03:00 Ancient Discoveries
- 03:50 Warriors
- 04:40 Engineering Disasters
- 05:30 In Search Of Aliens
- 06:20 America's Book Of Secrets
- 07:10 The Universe
- 08:00 Ancient Aliens
- 09:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 10:00 Ancient Discoveries
- 11:00 How The States Got Their Shape
- 12:00 Engineering Disasters
- 13:00 In Search Of Aliens
- 14:00 Ancient Aliens
- 15:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 16:00 Ancient Discoveries
- 17:00 How The States Got Their Shape

- 18:00 Engineering Disasters
- 19:00 Ancient Aliens
- 20:00 America's Book Of Secrets
- 21:00 Ancient Discoveries
- 22:00 Warriors
- 23:00 Serial Killer Earth



- 00:20 Billion Dollar Wreck
- 01:10 Britain's Bloodiest Dynasty
- 02:00 Storage Wars: Best Of
- 02:25 Storage Wars: Best Of
- 02:50 Banger Boys
- 03:40 Banger Boys
- 04:30 Pawn Stars
- 05:00 Time Team
- 06:00 Time Team
- 06:50 Time Team
- 07:40 Hoard Hunters
- 08:30 Swamp People: Swamp Christmas
- 09:20 Ozzy & Jack's World Detour
- 17:40 Pawn Stars Australia
- 19:20 Big Rig Bounty Hunters
- 19:45 Big Rig Bounty Hunters
- 20:10 Mountain Men
- 21:00 Pawn Stars
- 21:25 Pawn Stars South Africa
- 21:50 America's Greatest Prison Breaks
- 23:30 Forged In Fire



- 00:40 Suspicion
- 01:30 A Crime To Remember
- 02:20 The Perfect Murder
- 03:10 Nowhere To Hide
- 04:00 Suspicion
- 04:48 I Almost Got Away With It
- 05:36 Tabloid With Jerry Springer
- 06:24 Beauty Queen Murders
- 07:12 Blood Relatives
- 08:00 I'd Kill For You
- 08:50 I Almost Got Away With It
- 09:40 Tabloid With Jerry Springer
- 10:30 Beauty Queen Murders
- 11:20 Blood Relatives
- 12:10 Swamp Murders
- 13:00 I'd Kill For You
- 13:50 I Almost Got Away With It
- 14:40 Tabloid With Jerry Springer
- 15:30 Beauty Queen Murders
- 16:20 Blood Relatives
- 17:10 I Am Homicide
- 18:00 I'd Kill For You
- 18:50 I Almost Got Away With It
- 19:40 Tabloid With Jerry Springer
- 20:30 Beauty Queen Murders
- 21:20 Blood Relatives
- 22:10 Momsters: When Moms Go Bad



OVERBOARD ON OSN MOVIES COMEDY HD

WORD SEARCH

Baby Shower

Find and circle all of the Baby Shower words that are hidden in the grid. The remaining 32 letters spell a secret message.

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

- |             |              |                |                |
|-------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|
| ACTIVITIES  | CONFETTI     | GIFTS          | PARTY FAVORS   |
| APPETIZERS  | DECORATIONS  | GLASSES        | PLATES         |
| BABY        | EVENT        | GREETING CARDS | PRIZES         |
| BAKING      | FAMILY       | GUESTBOOK      | PUNCH          |
| BALLOONS    | FESTIVE      | GUESTS         | SANDWICHES     |
| BANNER      | FINGER FOOD  | HOSTESS        | SPOONS         |
| BIRTH       | FLOWERS      | INVITATIONS    | STREAMERS      |
| CAKE        | FORKS        | KNIVES         | TABLES         |
| CAMERA      | FRIENDS      | MOTHER         | THEME          |
| CELEBRATION | GAMES        | MUSIC          | TRADITION      |
| CHAIRS      | GIFT OPENING | NAPKINS        | WRAPPING PAPER |
| COFFEE      |              |                |                |

Yesterday's Solution

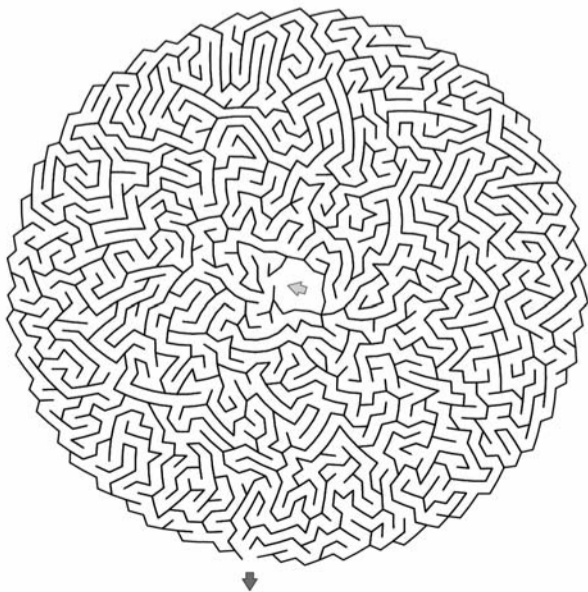
Baby

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

- |              |           |          |             |
|--------------|-----------|----------|-------------|
| ALERT        | DADDY     | LULLABY  | RUBBER DUCK |
| AWAKE        | DIAPER    | MILK     | SIPPY CUP   |
| BLANKET      | DROOL     | MOBILE   | SKIN CARE   |
| BODYSUIT     | FEED      | MOMMY    | SLEEP       |
| BOOSTER SEAT | FORMULA   | MONITOR  | SMALL       |
| BOTTLE       | GIGGLE    | NURSERY  | SMILE       |
| BOWL         | GRIN      | ONESIE   | SPOON       |
| CAR SEAT     | HIGHCHAIR | PACIFIER | STROLLER    |
| CARRIER      | HOODIE    | PARENTS  | SWING       |
| COLIC        | INFANT    | PLAY     | TEDDY BEAR  |
| CREAM        | INNOCENT  | POWDER   | TEETHER     |
| CRIB         | JUMPER    | RASH     | TIRED       |
| CRYING       | LAUGH     | RATTLE   | WIPES       |

The hidden message is:  
THE LITTLEST FEET MAKE THE BIGGEST FOOTPRINTS IN OUR HEARTS

CHALLENGING MAZE



CROSSWORD 1469

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15			16								17		
18		19	20			21							
22			23			24	25				26		
		27								28	29		
30	31	32								33			
34	35					36	37			38	39	40	41
42					43							44	
45			46				47				48		
49					50		51				52		
53			54	55						56	57		
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61	62	63				64		65			66	67	68
69						70					71		
72			73		74						75		
76			77								78		

ACROSS

- The part of the nervous system of vertebrates that controls involuntary actions of the smooth muscles and heart and glands.
- Muslims collectively and their civilization.
- A benevolent aspect of Devi.
- A conspicuous disparity or difference as between two figures.
- A personal attractiveness that enables you to influence others.
- Advanced in years.
- A trivalent metallic element of the rare earth group.
- Pouring from or as if from a sluice.
- Migratory American songbird.
- Animal reproductive body consisting of an ovum or embryo together with nutritive and protective envelopes.
- Brief episode in which the brain gets insufficient blood supply.
- Surveillance of some place or some person by the police (as in anticipation of a crime).
- Correspondence in the sounds of two or more lines (especially final sounds).
- An informal term for a father.
- Title for a civil or military leader (especially in Turkey).
- A member of the Iroquoian people formerly living east of Lake Ontario.
- Oval reproductive body of a fowl (especially a hen) used as food.
- Sluggish tailless Australian arboreal marsupial with gray furry ears and coat.
- Used of physical heat.
- Select as an alternative.
- Keep in mind or convey as a conviction or view.
- Dried bark of the cascara buckthorn used as a laxative.
- Dignified manner or conduct.
- Cubes of meat marinated and cooked on a skewer usually with vegetables.
- (Sumerian) Water god and god of wisdom.
- An implement used to propel or steer a boat.
- Filled with fear or apprehension.
- A state in midwestern United States.
- (music) A short recitative that is melodic but is not an aria.
- Of concern to or concerning the internal affairs of a nation.
- In the Arabian Nights a hero who tells of the fantastic adventures he had in his voyages.
- A loose sleeveless outer garment made from aba cloth.
- System of measurement based on centimeters and grams and seconds.
- Orient once again, after a disorientation.
- According to need (physicians use PRN in writing prescriptions).
- Headdress that protects the head from bad weather.
- A great raja.
- A sweetened beverage of diluted fruit juice.

DOWN

- Any culture medium that uses agar as the gelling agent.
- Medium-sized tree having glossy lanceolate leaves.

- Optical instrument consisting of a pair of lenses for correcting defective vision.
- Being nine more than ninety.
- The wife of a sheik.
- Xerophytic evergreen shrubs.
- A colorless and odorless inert gas.
- (prefix) Bad or erroneous or lack of.
- A small island.
- Marked by excessive complacency or self-satisfaction.
- Large European marine food fish.
- An unreduced or unbroken completeness or totality.
- A British imperial capacity measure (liquid or dry) equal to 1/60th fluid dram or 0.059194 cubic centimeters.
- Primitive chlorophyll-containing mainly aquatic eukaryotic organisms lacking true stems and roots and leaves.
- An isolated fact that is considered separately from the whole.
- Capital and largest city of Iraq.
- An uproarious party.
- A tool with a flat blade attached at right angles to a long handle.
- Sightlessness (especially because of a structural defect in or the absence of an eye).
- West Indian tree having racemes of fragrant white flowers and yielding a durable timber and resinous juice.
- Someone who consumes food for nourishment.
- The capital of Mali.
- Law intended to eradicate organized crime by establishing strong sanctions and forfeiture provisions.
- A republic in West Africa on the Gulf of Guinea.
- Russian writer of plays and novels and short stories.
- Characterized by dignity and propriety.
- A technician who is highly proficient and enthusiastic about some technical field (especially computing).
- One of the often brightly colored and branching hornlike structures on the back of the nudibranch (and other related mollusks) that serve as gills.
- A lady's bedroom or private sitting room.
- Remove offensive capability from.
- Submerged freshwater perennials.
- An elaborate party (often outdoors).
- A former monetary unit in Great Britain.
- Type genus of the Soleidae.
- Port city that is the capital and largest city of Latvia.
- In or of the present month.
- Tough Asiatic grass whose culms are used for ropes and baskets.
- Thin fibrous bark of the paper mulberry and Pipturus albidus.
- A United Nations agency created to assist developing nations by loans guaranteed by member governments.
- A stick that people can lean on to help them walk.
- An undergarment worn by women to support their breasts.
- A midwestern state in north central United States in the Great Lakes region.

Yesterday's Solution

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

Daily SuDoku

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

Yesterday's Solution

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

## DON'T CUT THE CORD TOO FAST: A PAUSE BENEFITS NEWBORNS

**WASHINGTON:** Don't cut that umbilical cord too soon: A brief pause after birth could benefit most newborns by delivering them a surge of oxygen-rich blood. New recommendations for US obstetricians, the latest in a debate over how quick to snip, suggest waiting "at least 30 seconds to 60 seconds after birth," for all healthy newborns.

That's double what often happens now. It's common in the US for doctors to cut the cord almost immediately, within 15 to 20 seconds of birth, unless the baby is premature. Cutting the cord is a memorable moment in the delivery room, and Wednesday's advice from the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists won't interfere if dads want to help. An extra half minute may not seem like much, but a lot of oxygen-rich blood reaches the baby through the umbilical cord shortly after birth, said Dr Maria Mascola of ACOG's Committee on Obstetric Practice. It may flow for up to five minutes, she said, but much of the placental blood transfers in that first minute - and there's increasing evidence that it has some health benefits. Here are some things to know:

### Does the cord really matter?

It can give a boost to what Dr Tonse Raju of the National Institutes of Health calls the amazing transition that happens as the baby takes his or her first breath. In the womb, the placenta acts as the fetus' lungs. But within seconds of birth, the circulation changes and lungs once filled with fluid inflate as the baby inhales air. Cut access to lingering placental blood in the cord too soon, and the baby misses extra oxygen to supplement those early breaths. Before the 1960s, it wasn't uncommon to wait five minutes or more to cut the cord. Then, for unclear reasons, doctors began clamping and cutting almost immediately. "Unfortunately, the value of immediate clamping has never been shown," said Raju, a perinatology specialist at NIH's National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. He wasn't involved with the new recommendation. —AP

## MARRIAGE WITH ROBOTS: SCI-FI OR A NEW REALITY ?

**LONDON:** Sex with robots is "just around the corner", an expert told a global conference in London this week featuring interactive sex toys and discussions on the ethics of relationships with humanoids. "Sexbots" are a staple of science fiction—the idea of robots as sex partners is explored, for instance, in recent films and television series like "Ex-Machina" and "Westworld." But some specialists believe the first animated lovers made of metal, rubber and plastic, programmed to provide sexual bliss, will take a step into reality just months from now.

"Sex with robots is just around the corner, with the first sexbots coming... sometime next year," artificial intelligence expert David Levy told the International Congress on Love and Sex with Robots at Goldsmiths, University of London. US California-based company Abyss Creations next year will start marketing sex robots that are billed as life-like, with the ability to talk and move like humans.

Ultimately, Levy said, people should entertain the thought of marriage with robots as early as 2050. The conference in London showcased some of the latest developments in robotic sex toys, such as gadgets which allow couples to kiss, no matter how far apart they are. The "Kissenger", which attaches to your mobile phone, contains sensors to detect the pressure of a kiss and transmit it to your partner's device in real time. It has been under

development for several years.

Now students at Tokyo's Keio University are developing the "Teletongue", aimed at providing "remote oral interaction" and designed to be "kinky", according to co-creator Dolhathai Kaewsermwong. It allows couples to send licking sounds and sensations through cyberspace using a "lollipop", creating an "immersive experience", she explained.

### 'Moral panic'

Lynne Hall, of the University of Sunderland's school of computer science, in northeast England, said that robots could create "a fantastic sexual experience". "There are lots of benefits to sex with robots... it's safe, you never catch any disease, you can control it," she told the conference. She rejected the idea that robots would replace or threaten sex with humans, however. "We are somehow fed by moral panic... 'It's disgusting... nobody will ever have sex with a human again'," Hall told the conference. "But people are regularly watching porn... and they are still having sex with humans," she said.

Levy, the author of "Love and Sex with Robots", from which the annual conference takes its title, said marriage to robots would be the next logical step. "As sex with robots becomes more and more commonplace... we shall come face to face with the very real possibility of marriage to robots," the former international chess master

said. And why not? Robots of the future will be "patient, kind, protective, loving", never "jealous, boastful, arrogant, rude," Levy said—"unless of course you want them to be". "All of the following qualities and many more are likely to be achievable in software within a few decades," he added. Levy is convinced that rapid changes in attitudes to sex and marriage in recent years point to a world where "more and more people come to accept sex and love with robots".

### 'Robot personhood'

In his vision, robot parents could become a social norm, with laws to acknowledge "robot personhood" and make marriage and parenting by humanoids more than just a fantasy. "The time is fast approaching when the theoretical debate must evolve into laws, and the consequences of those laws will be staggering," he said. For now, however, sexual relations with humanoids are a step too far for many.

Emma Yann Zhang, a PhD student at London's City University who worked on the Kissenger prototype, believes there is still a long way to go before people will accept the idea. In a pilot study conducted by the Imagineering Institute in Malaysia, partnered with City University, participants were asked about their perceptions of sex robots, including the potential for intimacy and attraction. —AFP

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PAGE



Kuwait Times

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**KNCC PROGRAMME FROM THURSDAY TO WEDNESDAY  
(22/12/2016 TO 28/12/2016)**

<b>SHARQIA-1</b> SING 12:15 PM SING 2:30 PM SING 4:45 PM SING 7:00 PM PASSENGERS 9:15 PM PASSENGERS 11:45 PM		SING 5:15 PM SING 7:30 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 9:45 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 12:30 AM		13 DAYS 9:45 PM 13 DAYS 12:05 AM
<b>SHARQIA-2</b> PASSENGERS 12:30 PM PASSENGERS 3:00 PM MOANA 5:30 PM PASSENGERS 8:00 PM PASSENGERS 10:30 PM PASSENGERS 1:00 AM		<b>MARINA-3</b> PASSENGERS 11:30 AM PASSENGERS 1:45 PM PASSENGERS 4:15 PM PASSENGERS 6:45 PM PASSENGERS 9:15 PM PASSENGERS 11:45 PM		<b>AL-KOUT.1</b> PASSENGERS 11:45 AM PASSENGERS 2:00 PM PASSENGERS 4:15 PM PASSENGERS 6:30 PM PASSENGERS 9:00 PM PASSENGERS 11:30 PM
<b>SHARQIA-3</b> DANGAL -Hindi 12:45 PM MOANA 4:00 PM DANGAL -Hindi 6:15 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 9:30 PM PASSENGERS 12:15 AM		<b>AVENUES-1</b> COLLATERAL BEAUTY 12:30 PM SING 2:45 PM TAHT AL TARABEZA 5:00 PM AL MAA WA AL KHOUDRAH WA AL WAJEH AL HASSAN 7:15 PM AL MAA WA AL KHOUDRAH WA AL WAJEH AL HASSAN 9:30 PM AL MAA WA AL KHOUDRAH WA AL WAJEH AL HASSAN 11:45 PM		<b>AL-KOUT.2</b> MOANA 12:30 PM MOANA 2:45 PM MOANA 5:00 PM MOANA 7:15 PM AL MAA WA AL KHOUDRAH WA AL WAJEH AL HASSAN 9:30 PM TAHT AL TARABEZA 11:45 PM
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<b>FANAR-2</b> SING 11:45 AM SING -3D 2:00 PM SING 4:15 PM SING 6:30 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 8:45 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 11:30 PM		<b>AVENUES-6</b> PASSENGERS 12:15 PM PASSENGERS 2:30 PM PASSENGERS 5:00 PM PASSENGERS 7:30 PM PASSENGERS 10:00 PM PASSENGERS 12:30 AM		<b>BAIRAQ-3</b> PASSENGERS 12:00 PM PASSENGERS 2:30 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 5:15 PM PASSENGERS 8:00 PM PASSENGERS 10:30 PM PASSENGERS 1:00 AM
<b>FANAR-3</b> ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 12:45 PM 13 DAYS 3:30 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 5:30 PM 13 DAYS 8:15 PM COLLATERAL BEAUTY 10:30 PM 13 DAYS 12:45 AM		<b>AVENUES-7</b> MOANA 11:45 AM MOANA 2:00 PM THE GIRL WITH ALL THE GIFTS 4:30 PM THE GIRL WITH ALL THE GIFTS 9:30 PM THE GIRL WITH ALL THE GIFTS 12:05 AM		<b>PLAZA</b> DANGAL -Hindi 3:15 PM NO FRI VANGAVEETI -Telugu 3:30 PM FRI DANGAL -Hindi 6:30 PM DANGAL -Hindi 9:45 PM
<b>FANAR-4</b> PASSENGERS 12:00 PM PASSENGERS 2:30 PM PASSENGERS 5:00 PM PASSENGERS 7:30 PM PASSENGERS 10:00 PM PASSENGERS 12:30 AM		<b>AVENUES-8</b> 13 DAYS 11:30 AM SING 1:30 PM SING 3:45 PM 13 DAYS 6:15 PM 13 DAYS 8:15 PM 13 DAYS 10:30 PM 13 DAYS 12:45 AM		<b>LAILA</b> MOANA 3:45 PM SING 6:15 PM PASSENGERS 8:30 PM PASSENGERS 11:00 PM
<b>FANAR-5</b> MOANA 11:30 AM DANGAL -Hindi 2:00 PM DANGAL -Hindi 5:15 PM DANGAL -Hindi 8:30 PM DANGAL -Hindi 11:45 PM		<b>AVENUES-9</b> MOANA 1:00 PM MOANA 3:30 PM MOANA 6:00 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 8:30 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 11:15 PM		<b>AJIAL.1</b> DANGAL -Hindi 2:45 PM DANGAL -Hindi 6:00 PM DANGAL -Hindi 9:15 PM
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<b>MARINA-2</b> SING 12:45 PM SING 3:00 PM		<b>360° 2</b> 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 ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 9:00 PM ROGUE ONE:A STAR WARS STORY 11:45 PM		<b>AJIAL.3</b> 10 KALPANAKAL - Malayalam 3:45 PM 10 KALPANAKAL - Malayalam 6:30 PM 10 KALPANAKAL - Malayalam 9:00 PM
		<b>360° 3</b> MOANA 12:30 PM LAF WA DAWARAN 2:45 PM 13 DAYS 5:15 PM 13 DAYS 7:30 PM		<b>AJIAL.4</b> DANGAL -Hindi 3:30 PM DANGAL -Hindi 6:45 PM DANGAL -Hindi 10:00 PM

# Friday Times BUSINESS

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2016

GCC SUKUK ISSUANCE SET TO REBOUND IN 2017



Obama helped repair economy, restless voters chose Trump

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MIAMI: A shopper carries a bag with merchandise as she shops at a Polo Ralph Lauren store in Miami. The Commerce Department issued its November report on consumer spending, which accounts for roughly 70 percent of US economic activity. —AP

## THE PARADOX OF 2016 FINANCIAL MARKETS

A VOLATILE CALM AS TRADERS FRET ABOUT BOUTS OF WILD PRICE SWINGS

**LONDON:** Traditional measures of volatility at historic lows and Wall Street stocks at new record highs went hand-in-hand in 2016 with traders fretting about bouts of wild stock-price swings and currency flash-crashes. The past year has been nothing if not paradoxical for financial markets - a landscape that will probably persist in 2017.

The proliferation of automated trading and passive investing, extreme levels of speculative positioning in an increasingly regulated broking world suggest investors should brace for periodic turbulence even if markets are mostly calm. While the measures of future or implied price volatility look remarkably subdued, they are disguising a minefield in individual securities and currencies, and - during particular periods - micro market storms that may become magnified as US interest rates rise and other central banks step back from years of anaesthetizing money-printing. An analysis of intraday volatility across major equity, bond and currency markets shows that episodes of sudden, extreme market volatility has become more commonplace in

the last two years, even though implied volatility has been contained.

With the world's biggest investment banks shrinking market-making activities and balance sheets to comply with post-crisis regulations, the scope for sudden market shocks is rising. "Trades often move in bigger size, quicker, and in blocks," said Charlie Bristow, co-head of rates trading at JP Morgan. "The speed at which order book depth can go from high to low is a new phenomenon, and it won't go away if volatility remains where it is."

Officials at the Bank for International Settlements have said that the VIX index is no longer the default barometer of investor sentiment and risk appetite - that's now the dollar - and that bouts of extreme volatility will be more commonplace. Not much of a concern, Claudio Borio, head of the BIS' monetary and economic department, says, along as such bouts pose no threat to institutions' stability or market functioning.

### Get me blocks

Part of the issue is that markets are now

driven by lightning quick, complex, computerised trading programmes at the big banks and investment funds. Many of these algorithmic models pick up the same 'buy' and 'sell' signals, magnifying price swings.

These conditions triggered the "flash crash" in sterling on Oct. 7, which the BIS is investigating with input from the Bank of England. The pound dived and rebounded by about 10 percent in a few minutes in early Asian trading that day, an unprecedented swing for a major currency at an hour when the market is at its lowest ebb.

Market participants generally agree that algorithmic machine trading that makes up much of the global currency market played a role, while some have speculated the initial move may have come from electronic news gathering software or other parameters used in trading programs.

"We have moved towards more transparent and more automated markets. What that means is that when something happens, firstly everyone knows about it and, secondly, it tends to happen very quickly," said Vlad

Khandros, global head of market structure and liquidity strategy at UBS.

In equities, the surge in the use of exchange-traded funds which provide investors access to markets at a much lower cost than traditional actively-managed portfolios has significantly altered trading. Roughly 10 percent of a full-day's average trading volume across US exchanges now happens at the close, UBS estimates, nearly double levels seen a few years ago, as ETFs are benchmarked to closing prices.

Institutional investors who buy and sell in large quantities are getting increasingly averse to trading intra-day on traditional exchanges when volumes are light.

"What we keep hearing from clients is 'get me blocks'," said UBS' Khandros, referring to large transactions that brokers help facilitate. This creates a self-fulfilling cycle of higher trading volumes concentrated in smaller windows on any given day leaving markets prone to sudden swings when no large investor is around to step in. — Reuters

# GCC SUKUK ISSUANCE SET TO REBOUND IN 2017 AFTER DROP

## CONVENTIONAL BONDS MORE ATTRACTIVE FOR ISSUERS

**DUBAI/SYDNEY:** After slumping in 2016, issuance of Islamic bonds from the Middle East looks likely to rebound next year as Gulf states take advantage of unsatisfied demand, but investors may shun the long end of the curve.

As governments scrambled to cover budget deficits due to low oil prices this year, they overwhelmingly turned to conventional debt - a shift from the traditional pattern in which sukuk and conventional bonds had roughly equal shares of the region's international bond issuance. In the first half of 2016, governments in the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council raised just \$1.1 billion or 5 percent of their total debt issuance through longer-term sukuk, against 38 percent a year earlier, Moody's estimated. Saudi Arabia's \$17.5 billion debut bond in October was entirely conventional.

Meanwhile, GCC corporate and project-related sukuk issuance totaled \$2.5 billion in the first eight months, up marginally from \$2.3 billion a year ago but down sharply from \$5 billion in 2013 and \$6.5 billion in 2014, Standard & Poor's estimated. With cheap oil tightening liquidity in their banking systems, Gulf governments were forced to rely more on foreign investors rather than Islamic banks and funds, which pushed them towards conventional debt.

Also, as oil prices sagged, govern-

ments were in a hurry to raise money and did not want to spend extra time planning sukuk issues - which tend to be more complex than conventional bonds - or explaining their intricacies to investors. Sukuk documentation can vary across the GCC in terms of structure, legal requirements and compliance with sharia standards, noted Ruslena Ramli, head of Islamic finance at Malaysia's RAM Ratings.

"In the GCC, sukuk issuances are typically supported by real assets. Identifying sufficient assets to support sukuk issuances may add to the funding timeline and affect the overall financing cost."

### UPSWING NEXT YEAR

Issuance may become more normal in 2017. With oil rebounding and austerity policies in place, GCC governments are somewhat less pressed for cash and have more time to plan sukuk.

Also, this year's dearth of new sukuk has left unsatisfied demand among Islamic investors, including banks that need high-grade sharia-compliant bonds to meet liquidity standards.

"Sukuk are very much in demand and global sukuk issuance is on an upswing," said Mohieddine Kronfol, chief investment officer for global sukuk and Middle East fixed income at Franklin Templeton Investments. "Going forward we should expect sovereign issues to be less lumpy

and more diverse in format and currency," he said. Saudi Arabia is believed to be considering an international sukuk issue in the first quarter of 2017. Bahrain could sell sovereign sukuk in that period, though the central bank told Reuters no decision had been made.

Conventional bonds look likely to retain one attraction for Gulf issuers, however, because long maturities above 10 years seem more feasible for conventional debt.

"The sukuk market still lacks a significant investor base for the long end of the curve. Sukuk buyers are traditionally more involved in five- and 10-year paper," said a Dubai banker. Saudi Electricity Co (SEC) issued 30-year sukuk in 2013 but secondary market trading in its bonds suggests demand is weaker for that maturity than for conventional debt. Its 30-year sukuk is at a premium of 75-80 basis points over the 30-year tranche of the Saudi sovereign bond, against an initial 50 bps in October.

For shorter tenors, SEC's 2022 and 2023 sukuk are almost flat to Saudi sovereign bonds maturing in 2021 and 2026. Given the pricing advantage of conventional paper at the long end, Riyadh could choose maturities of five and 10 years for a sukuk issue next year, said Doug Bitcon, head of fixed income funds and portfolios at Rasmala Investment Bank. — Reuters



**CARACAS:** An employee waits during an inspection by the National Superintendency of Costs and Prices in a warehouse in Caracas on Wednesday. The National Superintendency of Costs and Prices intervened in the clothing company EPK to order it to immediately cut prices by more than 30 percent, under a supervised sale in the chain's 31 stores throughout the country. —AFP

## JUMBO DEALS LIFT SOVEREIGN BOND SALES TO RECORD HIGH

**LONDON:** Emerging governments and companies have raised close to \$450 billion on global bond markets in 2016, with sovereign sales hitting record highs, and issuance next year will likely be robust as borrowers scramble to repay maturing debt. The year got off to a slow start after emerging market assets were roiled by violent selloffs in January. But Argentina's \$16.5 billion deal in April - its first in 15 years - sounded the starting gun for big-ticket deals.

Qatar followed in May, selling \$9 billion while Saudi Arabia's sold a mammoth \$17.5 billion in October. Even Russia, under sanc-

tions from the West, managed to raise \$3 billion, returning to international markets after three years. "2016 was dominated by some jumbo jet action in Saudi, Argentina, Qatar, and we will see more jumbos next year, that's for sure," said Paul Greer, senior EM debt trader at Fidelity International.

Total bond sales by governments amounted to \$128.8 billion in 2016 while net issuance - taking into account maturities - stood at \$101.9 billion, or more than double 2015 levels, according to mid-December data from JPMorgan. Next year, JPMorgan expects issuance to total \$104.7 billion, but sees net

sales falling at \$68 billion - a third below this year. Issuance is likely to increase in coming years due to a sharp increase in debt repayments, as bonds issued after the 2008 crisis start maturing.

Greer said Argentina and Saudi would likely return next year with significant deals, but warned that the overall outlook for emerging markets remains unclear following the election of Republican Donald Trump to the White House. "Once Trump gets into the White House and we start to get clearer picture of the policies he will proceed with and how the relationship between the US and

## News

in brief

### Kuwait oil price up by 49 cents to \$50.80 pb

**KUWAIT:** The price of Kuwaiti oil went up by 49 cents to \$50.80 per barrel Wednesday after being at \$50.31 pb the day before, said Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) yesterday. At the global level, the price went down after news regarding an increase in Libyan production in the last three months surfaced. The increase was also attributed to an upsurge in American crude reserves last week. The price of the Brent crude went down by 89 cents to settle at \$54.46 per barrel, the same predicament for the West Texas Intermediate which went down by 69 cents to \$52.49 pb.

### OAPEC: Oil supply, demand should rebalance by H1 2017

**CAIRO:** Supply and demand in global oil markets should rebalance during the first or second quarter of next year, the head of the Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries' (OAPEC) Executive Bureau said yesterday. "There will be a rebalancing of supply and demand in the first or second quarter of 2017," Talal Nasser Al-Athbi told Reuters on the sidelines of an OAPEC meeting in Cairo. OAPEC, unlike the similarly named Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), does not set oil production policy for its member countries. It was established in 1968 and has 11 members: Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates. Membership is open to Arab countries whose oil revenues make up a large percentage of gross domestic product.

### Suez Canal revenues fall to \$389.2m in Nov

**CAIRO:** Egypt's Suez Canal revenues fell 6.9 percent to \$389.2 million in November from \$418.1 million in October, the canal authority website said yesterday, the lowest since February 2015. Revenues fell 4.7 percent year on year since November 2015 when they were at \$408.4 million. The canal is the fastest shipping route between Europe and Asia and one of Egypt's main sources of foreign currency. Egypt has been struggling to revive its economy since a 2011 uprising scared away tourists and foreign investors. Its \$8 billion expansion, inaugurated by President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi in August 2015, was intended to help revive the ailing economy by doubling daily traffic and increasing annual revenue to more than \$13 billion by 2023. That boon has yet to materialize. But an official from the Suez Canal Authority said last month the waterway was expected to generate \$5.7 billion in revenues this year.

### Egypt wheat reserves enough to last until early April

**CAIRO:** Egypt's strategic wheat reserves are sufficient to last until the beginning of April, the country's Supply Minister Mohamed Ali Meselhy said in a cabinet statement late on Wednesday. The new reserve figure was released after Egypt's state-owned General Authority for Supply Commodities (GASC) bought 360,000 tonnes of Russian, Argentine and Romanian wheat on Tuesday in a tender. Meselhy said the government had bought a total of 840,000 tonnes of wheat. Egypt is the world's biggest importer of wheat.

### US yields

The risk for emerging markets is that Trump's plans to boost spending further lifts the dollar and US Treasury yields, potentially increasing developing nations' borrowing costs.

This is not necessarily a disadvantage, given stronger US growth usually feeds through to developing economies, including through commodity prices.— Reuters

## MISTRY FIRES FIRST LEGAL SALVO AGAINST TATA

**MUMBAI:** Lawyers for Cyrus Mistry, the ousted ex-chairman of Indian conglomerate Tata, yesterday fired the opening salvo of a legal case pitting their client against company patriarch Ratan Tata. Advocate Gopal Mukherjee told the first hearing of a company's disputes tribunal that Mistry had been unfairly sacked as Tata boss in October because he had informed the board about alleged corporate malfeasance at the steel-to-salt giant. "Shareholders believed various acts of mismanagement within the Tata Group. Mistry was removed because he wanted to investigate these malpractices," Mukherjee said at the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) hearing in Mumbai.

Mistry claims that he was illegally removed as chairman of Tata Sons, the holding company of the \$103 billion Tata Group, at a board meeting on October 24. He says he was dismissed without adequate prior notice and at the behest of Tata, 78, who is back in the hot seat at India's biggest conglomerate after making way for Mistry in 2012.

Mistry's dismissal shocked India's business community and saw Tata take interim charge of the sprawling conglomerate that he led for more than two decades. Tata, who was said to be unhappy with the direction that Mistry was taking India's most famous family conglomerate, claims the latter was fairly removed after losing the support of Tata Sons board members.

The pair have been engaged in an unsavoury public battle since the ouster, releasing accusations and counter-accusations against each other almost daily, plunging the world-renowned group into turmoil. Mistry was last week stripped of his directorships of IT giant Tata Consultancy Services, Tata Industries and Tata Teleservices as Ratan Tata called for all operating companies to purge the 50-year-old from their boards. He was due to be booted off the boards of Indian Hotels Ltd, Tata Motors, Tata Steel and Tata Chemicals this week but resigned instead, promising to take his battle against his former employer to court.

The tribunal instructed Mistry's counsel to provide detailed evidence of his claims to the court within a week. Tata Sons will then have seven days to file their response. The judge hopes to hold the final hearings on January 31 and February 1, 2017. "Tata Sons believes that the petition is not maintainable in law and the court will hear Tata Sons on this issue at the outset at the next hearing," the conglomerate said in a short statement after yesterday's proceedings. —AFP

## EX-BSI BANKER JAILED FOR 30 MONTHS IN 1MDB-LINKED CASE

**SINGAPORE:** A Singapore court jailed a former wealth manager for Swiss bank BSI for 30 months yesterday on charges of perverting the course of justice in a case linked to a money-laundering investigation involving Malaysian fund 1MDB. Prosecutors said Yeo Jiawei, the third BSI banker sentenced in the city-state this year, urged witnesses to lie to police and destroy evidence during the investigation of illicitly transferred funds linked to the Malaysian sovereign wealth fund, 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB). "There was planning and premeditation for the commission of the offence," District Judge Ng Peng Hong said. Prosecutors said Yeo, 33, played a central role in the illicit movement of S\$23.9 million (\$16.54 million) of 1MDB-linked funds both while he was working at the now defunct BSI Bank Singapore, and afterwards.

Yeo repeatedly denied any wrongdoing during the month-long trial. Defence lawyer Philip Fong told Reuters Yeo was "seriously considering appealing the conviction and sentence". Singapore authorities have called the 1MDB-linked investigation the most complex, sophisticated and largest money laundering case they have handled. Singapore's central bank in May ordered the closure of the operations in Singapore of the Swiss private bank and asked the Attorney General's Chambers to investigate six members of its senior management and staff.

Two other former BSI staffers have been convicted and sentenced on charges stemming from the money-laundering investigation linked to 1MDB. Switzerland has begun criminal proceedings against the bank, in the biggest international crackdown on financial entities dealing with 1MDB. —Reuters



**TOKYO:** A man uses a mobile phone in front of an electronic stock indicator of a securities firm in Tokyo yesterday. Shares were meandering in thin trading yesterday in Asia, as investors wound down ahead of the holidays. —AP

## BAILOUT LOOMS IN ITALIAN BANK'S FUNDING SCRAMBLE

MONTE DEI PASCHI DI SIENA FAILS TO ROPE IN AN ANCHOR INVESTOR

**MILAN:** Troubled Italian lender Monte dei Paschi di Siena edged closer to a state bailout yesterday as its last-ditch plan to raise billions of euros risked falling short. BMPS, the world's oldest bank and Italy's third-biggest, launched a bid to sell fresh shares this week under plans to raise five billion euros (\$5.2 billion) in new capital.

The result of the share offer was due to be released later yesterday or early today but the bank acknowledged late Wednesday that it had failed to attract an anchor investor after pinning its hopes on a big Qatari takeover.

A separate debt-for-equity swap offer, which is also part of the plan to replenish its coffers, reaped just over two billion euros, the bank also said. The plan additionally entails selling off 27.6 billion euros in bad loans. BMPS is at the centre of a crisis in Italy's banking sector-made up of some 700 banks-which is buckling under the weight of bad loans estimated to total 360 billion euros.

Shares in the bank have fallen over 80 percent in the past year and it achieved the worst results in a July stress test by the European Banking Authority. The Italian parliament approved on Wednesday a 20-billion-euro bailout package that would aim to stem the woes of the ailing banking sector.

Analysts say the "weak appetite"

among private investors so far towards bolstering the bank's coffers by 5 billion euros raises the likelihood of a state injection. "The low probability of achieving this amount increases (the) odds of some kind of government rescue," said Ipek Ozkardeska, of London Capital Group, said in a note to clients.

### Preserve savings

But the government has several options depending on how much the bank manages to pull off itself, said economist Lorenzo Codogno, of LC Macro Advisors Limited and a former senior Italian finance ministry official. "If the shortfall is limited, the government could step in and inject probably up to another billion" without triggering a so-called bail-in, meaning shareholders must also take a write-down on some of the debt they are owed, he said.

But, he added, that "If the whole operation fails, the government would have to intervene" with a "precautionary recapitalisation". This means shareholders and holders of junior bonds, a risky class of debt, must contribute to saving the bank. Just over 40,000 private individuals hold BMPS bonds.

The government is studying a scheme to compensate any losses that high-street savers would suffer. It is keen to avoid a repetition of scenes sparked by last year's rescue of four

small banks that led to heavy losses for small savers, prompting demonstrations and at least one suicide. Finance Minister Carlo Padoa-Schioppa on Wednesday said that the Italian banking system "is solid, even if there are some crisis situations" and insisted that the 20 billion euros set aside was "sufficient".

### 'Short-term relief'?

Ozkardeska, of LCG, said European banking stocks were expected to remain under pressure. "Finding a solution to rescue Monte Paschi could trigger a short-term relief rally in the sector, yet the European banks will certainly remain on a slippery ground for a longer period of time," she added.

Shares in BMPS were up slightly in late morning trading in Milan, rising 1.7 percent to 16.6 euros, amid hopes that the various possibilities will amount to some kind of viable solution. Founded in Siena in 1472, BMPS has been in trouble for years. Weakened by the disastrous purchase in 2007 of the Antonveneta bank at twice the estimated value, it quickly drifted into scandal when its management team was accused of fraud and misuse of funds.

It subsequently ran up huge losses and has had to raise capital twice since 2014. Monte dei Paschi has admitted to having only four months' worth of liquidity left. —AFP

## TRUMP NAMES BILLIONAIRE ICAHN TO ADVISE ON REGULATORY REFORM

**WASHINGTON:** President-elect Donald Trump said Wednesday he is naming billionaire Carl Icahn, a vocal critic of government over regulation, to serve as a special advisor to overhaul “strangling regulations.” The 80-year-old Icahn, who is known as aggressive, activist investor in the companies he is involved with, will not be a government employee, will not receive a salary and will not be bound by ethics rules requiring him to divest his investments. Icahn already reportedly helped Trump pick

candidates to fill his cabinet, including the Environmental Protection Agency. “Carl was with me from the beginning and with his being one of the world’s great businessmen, that was something I truly appreciated,” Trump said in a statement.

“He is not only a brilliant negotiator, but also someone who is innately able to predict the future especially having to do with finances and economies. His help on the strangling regulations that our country is faced with will be invaluable.”

Icahn said that “Under President Obama, America’s business owners have been crippled by over \$1 trillion in new regulations and over 750 billion hours dealing with paperwork. It’s time to break free of excessive regulation and let our entrepreneurs do what they do best: create jobs and support communities.”

Like Trump, Icahn is a New York City native. He began his career on Wall Street in 1961, and has held substantial or controlling positions in numerous American companies

over the years, including RJR Nabisco, Texaco, Philips Petroleum, Western Union, Gulf & Western, Viacom, Revlon, Time Warner, Motorola, Chesapeake Energy, Dell, Netflix, Apple, and eBay. Icahn also owned the last glitzy Trump casino in Atlantic City, New Jersey, the Trump Taj Mahal, until it finally failed a closed last month, after going through two bankruptcy reorganizations since it opened in 1990. Icahn took over the casino in 2014, but said it had lost \$350 million over just a few short years. — AFP

## PETROBRAS SELLS STAKES IN OFFSHORE OILFIELDS TO FRANCE’S TOTAL

**RIO DE JANEIRO:** Brazil’s state-controlled oil company Petrobras is selling stakes in two big offshore oilfields and two power plants to France’s Total in a deal worth \$2.2 billion, both companies announced Wednesday.

The agreement comes under a previously announced Petrobras asset sale aimed at raising billions of dollars for the indebted group. The transaction will see Total get pumping rights to significant parts of

two deepwater, pre-salt oilfields off Brazil’s southeastern coast whose discovery in 2007 was seen as a resource bonanza. Total will pick up 22.5 percent of the lara field and 35 percent of the Lapa field, which started operation on Tuesday.

The French company will also become 50-percent owner of two thermal energy plants, Romulo de Almeida and Celso Furtado, in the northeastern state of Bahia.

The transaction comes at a time of relatively low prices for oil-and amid a huge corruption scandal involving Petrobras that saw the company’s rating downgraded and its debt pile of over \$120 billion become worrisome. Total’s CEO, Patrick Pouyanne, said in Paris that “these deals will considerably reinforce Total’s presence in Brazil by giving us access to the remarkable pre-salt resources and allowing us to integrate into the promising integrated gas chain in the country.”

He later told AFP that Brazil is a “land of opportunity” for Total. “I often say that you should look for oil and gas where (we know) they are. There is a lot in Brazil, and the moment in time helps us, because in fact they are a country experiencing difficulties,” he said. “They are looking for partners. They decided to open up to foreign investment (in oil), and that gives us the chance to talk with Petrobras and see what common ground we can find.” Petrobras chief Pedro Parente said in Rio de Janeiro the deals should offer some strategic advantages and savings. “And they should help us to reduce our debts,” he stressed. — AFP



**MIAMI:** A job applicant attends a job fair in Miami Lakes, Florida. The Labor Department reported on the number of people who applied for unemployment benefits a week earlier. — AP

## TRUMP PICKS ‘DEATH BY CHINA’ AUTHOR FOR TRADE ADVISORY ROLE

**NEW YORK:** US President-elect Donald Trump named Peter Navarro, an economist who has urged a hardline on trade with China, to head a newly-formed White House National Trade Council, the transition team said on Wednesday.

Navarro is an academic and one-time investment adviser who has authored a number of popular books and made a film describing China’s threat to the US economy as well as Beijing’s desire to become the dominant economic and military power in Asia. Trump’s team praised Navarro in a statement as a “visionary” economist who would “develop trade policies that shrink our trade deficit, expand our growth, and help stop the exodus of jobs from our shores.”

Trump, a Republican, made trade a centerpiece of his presidential campaign and railed against what he said were bad deals the United States had made with other countries. He has threatened to hit Mexico and China with high tariffs once he takes office on Jan 20. Navarro, 67, is a professor at University of California, Irvine, and advised Trump during the campaign. His books include “Death by China: How America Lost its Manufacturing Base,” which was made into a documentary film. As well as describing what he sees as America’s losing economic war with China, Navarro has highlighted concerns over environmental issues related to Chinese imports and the theft of US intellectual property. China is paying close attention to Trump’s transition team and the possible direction of policy, a spokeswoman for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said after being asked about Navarro’s appointment.

“Cooperation is the only correct choice. We hope the US works hard with China to maintain the healthy, stable development of ties, including business and trade ties,” the spokeswoman, Hua Chunying, told a daily press briefing. While Trump in the statement praised the “clarity” of Navarro’s arguments and the “thoroughness of his research,” few other economists have endorsed Navarro’s ideas.

Marcus Noland, an economist at the Peterson Institute for

International Economics, likened a tax and trade paper authored by Navarro and Wilbur Ross, who has been named as Trump’s commerce secretary, to “the type of magical thinking best reserved for fictional realities” for what he said was its flawed economic analysis.

### ‘Don’t poke the panda’

Navarro has also suggested a stepped-up engagement with Taiwan, including assistance with a submarine development program. He argued that Washington should stop referring to the “one China” policy, but stopped short of suggesting it should recognize Taipei, saying: “There is no need to unnecessarily poke the Panda.” China considers Taiwan a renegade province and has never renounced the use of force to bring it under its control. China’s foreign minister, Wang Yi, said in an interview carried on Thursday in the Communist Party of China’s official newspaper that China-US relations face new uncertainties but with mutual respect for core interests they will remain stable. “Only if China and the United States respect each other and give consideration to other’s core interests and key concerns can there be long-term, stable cooperation, and effect win-win mutual benefit,” Wang said.

After his Nov. 8 election win, Trump stoked China’s ire when he took a telephone call from Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen in a break with decades of precedent that cast doubt on his incoming administration’s commitment to Beijing’s “one China” policy. In an opinion piece in Foreign Policy magazine in November, Navarro and another Trump adviser, Alexander Gray, reiterated the president-elect’s opposition to major trade deals, including the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). “Trump will never again sacrifice the US economy on the altar of foreign policy by entering into bad trade deals like the North American Free Trade Agreement, allowing China into the World Trade Organization, and passing the proposed TPP,” Navarro and Gray wrote. — Reuters

## CONSTRUCTION, TOURISM FUEL NEW ZEALAND GROWTH

**WELLINGTON:** New Zealand’s economy exceeded expectations to grow 1.1 percent in the September quarter on the back of booming construction and record tourist numbers, official data showed yesterday. The strong performance from July to September topped market forecasts of 0.9 percent and took annual economic growth to 3.0 percent.

Statistics New Zealand said 13 of the 16 industries used to gauge gross domestic product were positive, pointing to a broad-based expansion in economic activity. The stand-out sectors were construction, up 2.1 percent, and transport, which surged 3.7 percent over the quarter.

“It is clear that the economy is still benefitting from the combination of high net migration, strong tourism flows and low interest rates,” Capital Economics analyst Paul Dales said. The strong economic activity was likely to spur New Zealand’s stubbornly low inflation rate, easing pressure on the central bank to further cut interest rates from a record low of 1.75 percent, he added.

New Zealand recorded a record 3.45 million international visitors in the year to November 30, while net migration over the same period was an all-time high of 70,400. Finance Minister Steven Joyce said it was a welcome boost for the economy as the rural sector, once New Zealand’s biggest export, struggled. — AFP



## OBAMA HELPED REPAIR ECONOMY, BUT RESTLESS VOTERS CHOSE TRUMP

**WASHINGTON:** Barack Obama's first job as president: Piece together the shards of a shattered US economy. It wasn't smooth and it wasn't fast, but Obama ultimately succeeded.

The president will leave behind an economy far stronger than the one he inherited. Unemployment is 4.6 percent, a nine-year low. Stocks keep ascending to new highs. An additional 20.2 million Americans have health insurance coverage. The nation has shifted toward cleaner energy sources: natural gas, wind and solar. But those achievements have yet to erase the scars of the 2008 financial crisis. Polling after the November election showed that nearly two-thirds of voters described the economy as "not so good" or "poor." Those voters chose to pass the presidency to Donald Trump, a Republican who railed against a weak economy and promised to unwind many of Obama's policies.

The contrast between Obama and his successor helps to explain why the economic progress of the past eight years has yet to resonate with much of the country. Obama set policies with a professorial calmness and often spoke with a stoic resolve, just as Trump barnstormed the country by talking at a gut level to supporters who saw the recovery leaving their communities behind.

"Historians will remember President Obama for his rational, evidence-based approach," former economic adviser Alan Krueger said, "as opposed to the emotional, visceral style of the two presidents who will bookend his time in office." Staring down the gravest economic catastrophe since the Great Depression, Obama focused on solutions rather than villains, an approach that aides say will be appreciated over time. "A lesser president," Krueger added, would have "upended our economic system for short-term political gain." Economic problems that had been simmering for decades started to boil with the Great Recession of 2007 to 2009. It suddenly became Obama's responsibility to address problems that were both immediate and generations in the making, a difficult task given the tensions with Republicans who controlled the House of Representatives beginning in 2011.

Trump highlighted the deeper troubles that many Americans still felt. Job options had already been dwindling for workers with a high school diploma, but the pain of that trend intensified with the downturn and slow recovery. Trump blamed the challenges confronting the middle class on cheap foreign workers and flawed trade deals. The costs of housing, prescription drugs and higher education are still climbing faster than wages, leaving many Americans feeling poorer. Basic trust in institutions such as the government has plunged. The Trump campaign saw the low unemployment rate as masking profound weaknesses. A smaller proportion of Americans at the prime working age of 25 to 54 hold jobs compared to the mid-1980s. Whereas Obama introduced regulations to limit climate change and protect workers without ever halting economic growth, Trump said those regulations stopped the economy from accelerating as it once had.

Trump pledged to repeal and replace Obama's health care program. Stocks shot up on hopes he will overturn Wall Street regulations passed after the financial crisis. The president-elect hopes to dramatically slash tax rates, while Obama increased the top marginal rate for wealthier Americans.

"Trump's victory is very harmful to his legacy - Obama understood that," said Stephen Moore, a fellow at the conservative Heritage Foundation who advised the Trump campaign. "It's why he campaigned so hard for Hillary Clinton." But once in office, Trump may find that Obama has given him a gift with this economy. Trump faces none of the pressure - as Obama did - to instantly stabilize global financial markets. Trump can jawbone manufacturers to keep factory jobs stateside, rather than devoting billions of dollars to rescue General Motors and Chrysler. Trump can push a friendlier Congress to increase spending on infrastructure, an Obama agenda item that House Republicans ignored. — AP



**DENVER:** Vice President Joe Biden watches as President Barack Obama signs the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act during a ceremony at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science in Denver. He was a first-term senator-turned-president. A former law professor with little experience in economics or management. When he walked into the White House he had one, clear job: Piece together the shards of a shattered US economy. — AP

## GREECE WANTS SPEEDY REVIEW OF BAILOUT REFORMS: TSIPRAS

### DELAYS COULD HARM OUTLOOK AND RECOVERY

**ATHENS:** Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras said yesterday Athens wanted a speedy conclusion to a now-stalled review of bailout reforms, warning delays could hinder economic recovery after years of recession. Athens's European lenders last week suspended short term debt relief for the nation after Tsipras's leftist administration granted a one-off Christmas bonus to pensioners without consulting creditors.

Greece is following reforms outlined in a bailout programme worth up to 86 billion euros. It is its third since 2010, and regular reviews of reforms and approval by lenders are vital for Athens to continue receiving tranches of financial aid. "Our aim is to conclude the second review in a timely manner so there is no question hovering over the positive momentum (of the economy)," Tsipras told a conference in Athens. "Greece now has the basic preconditions in place which would allow it to autonomously enter money markets in 2017." The country was on the cusp of strong recovery after seven years of deep recession, Tsipras said at the launching of an equity fund in coop-

eration with the European Investment Bank, the long-term financing arm of the European Commission.

Tsipras said the economy was on course for rebounding by 2.7 percent in 2017 and 3.1 percent in 2018. "It's my deep conviction ... there isn't a European institution which would want this roadmap disrupted, of emerging from this deep tunnel the Greek economy found itself in for many years," he said. "Nobody would want to revisit the uncertainty over the country's prospects, and certainly nobody would want to discourage investors who are starting to regain confidence, thus weakening the prospects of recovery," he said.

On Wednesday, Greece and eurozone negotiators discussed guarantees that Athens could offer to make sure the pensioner payout was a one-off measure not to be replicated, eurozone and Greek officials told Reuters. Greece promises return to markets despite spat with lenders.

Tsipras also promised to return the country to international bond markets in 2017, despite delays in a bailout review

and a spat with rescue lenders over a pre-Christmas welfare program.

Tsipras said that an easing of Greece's chronic fiscal problems would lead to a market return - for only the second time since the country first requested an international bailout in 2010. "Greece now has the fundamental elements in place to be on course to access markets in 2017 on its own," Tsipras said during an event in Athens organized by the European Investment Bank.

In response, creditors suspended debt relief measures which they described as unilateral. Greece has seen a dramatic rise in poverty since the start of the financial crisis, with nearly a quarter of the country out of work and receiving no state benefits. The Christmas payout was granted before more pension cuts are due to take effect next year. Thousands of elderly Greeks waited in line outside banks yesterday to cash their checks. In central Athens, pensioner Constantinos Skouras said he didn't qualify for the new benefit but was happy for those who did. — Agencies

## GOLD STEADIES AS DOLLAR SLIPS

**LONDON:** Gold steadied yesterday, as the dollar slipped and market participants waited for US economic data due later in the day. The United States will release a third revision of third-quarter gross domestic product, durable goods orders for November, and weekly initial jobless claims.

Spot gold was little changed at \$1,131.17 an ounce by 1101 GMT, while U.S. gold futures were down 0.1 percent at \$1,132.40

an ounce. "Traders have already positioned themselves for a neutral to lower end of the year for gold, with the next support level in the \$1,123 area, as the focus remains on the hawkish message of the Fed, which signalled three rate increases in 2017," ActivTrades chief analyst Carlo Alberto de Casa said. The Federal Reserve raised US interest rates last week for the first time in a year, lifting the dollar to a 14-year high.

Strong economic data could prompt the Fed to raise rates sooner rather than later, which would put pressure on gold prices. Higher rates lower demand for non-interest-paying bullion, which is priced in the US currency. The dollar index was down 0.2 percent against a basket of six main currencies, but was still trading less than a percent away from the 14-year high. "The dollar is very strong and gold is going to be under

pressure till Donald Trump takes over the US presidency and the focus will shift to how his policies are unfolding," Ronald Leung, chief dealer at Lee Cheong Gold Dealers in Hong Kong, said. Holdings of the SPDR Gold Trust, the world's largest gold-backed exchange-traded fund, continued to fall on Wednesday, losing 0.4 percent to hit 824.54 tonnes. Holdings are down over 12 percent since November. — Reuters

## OILERS BEAT COYOTES

**GLENDALE:** Edmonton's fourth line combined for seven points, Cam Talbot stopped 28 shots and the Oilers beat the Arizona Coyotes in regulation for the first time in 26 games with a 3-2 NHL victory on Wednesday. Arizona had gone 21-0-4 its previous 25 games against the Oilers, including a pair of wins this season. Edmonton jumped on the Coyotes with two goals in the first period and pushed the lead to 3-0 in the second to beat Arizona for the first time since Jan. 25, 2011. Arizona's points streak had been tied for sixth-most against one opponent in NHL history. Mark Letestu had a goal and two assists, and linemate Matt Hendricks had a goal and an assist. Fellow fourth-liner Zack Kassian had two assists for the Oilers, who have won four of five. Martin Hanzal had a goal and Oliver Ekman-Larsson scored with 6.1 seconds left for the Coyotes, who have lost three straight.

### FLYERS 3, CAPITALS 2

Steve Mason and the Flyers didn't want to waste their recent winning streak. Mason made 36 saves before stopping three straight shots in the shootout, Jakub Voracek and Wayne Simmonds scored in the tiebreaker and Philadelphia beat the Washington Capitals 3-2. Michael Raffl and Claude Giroux scored in regulation for Philadelphia, which snapped a two-game skid that followed a 10-game winning streak. "It's definitely good to get back in the win column," Mason said. "You go on a 10-game winning streak and you can't let it slide. You can't let it slide and counteract everything we did on the winning streak." Philadelphia's streak ended with Saturday's loss at Dallas. The Flyers then fell to the Predators in a shootout at home on Monday night.



**GLENDALE:** Connor McDavid #97 of the Edmonton Oilers skates with the puck during the second period of the NHL game against the Arizona Coyotes at Gila River Arena. — AP



**TUSCALOOSA:** Alabama running back Bo Scarbrough leaps over an Auburn player during the second half of the Iron Bowl NCAA college football game. — AP

## SABAN: PLAYOFFS THE REASON FOR PLAYERS SKIPPING BOWLS

**TUSCALOOSA:** Alabama coach Nick Saban believes it's hard to blame players for skipping the bowl games when the playoffs have overshadowed most of them anyway. Saban reiterated concerns Wednesday that he has voiced before that switching to the playoff format would diminish the importance of other bowl games, and he says that has happened. LSU tailback Leonard Fournette and Stanford tailback Christian McCaffrey have announced they won't play in their teams' bowls to focus on preparing for the NFL draft.

"Everybody's interested in the play-off," Saban said after practice. "Nobody's interested in anything else. So now that that's trickled down to

the players, how can you blame the players for that? I can't blame the players for that.

"What every player has to decide, and what I would say to every player, is I think every player probably benefits from playing really, really well. When you play in big games and you play really, really well, I think it enhances your value as a player. That's what I think. Every player would have to make the decision on whether is that more important relative to protecting yourself. I think that's every player's choice and every player's decision."

Tide tight end OJ Howard said of players skipping bowl games that he can see both sides and "you can't be

mad at the kids, because you can see where they're coming from." Howard believes it's unlikely a Tide player would make that call. "Coach Saban, he would encourage us to do it but I really don't think a lot of guys on our team would want to do it," said Howard, who returned for his senior season instead of entering the NFL draft. "We build such a bond offseason training hard with each other, no one would quit on anybody without anything bad happening. Unless it's an injury that takes you away from the season, but no one would, I don't think, just quit on us." Alabama plays Washington in the Peach Bowl on Dec 31 at the Georgia Dome in Atlanta. — AP

## DUKE'S ALLEN: NO EXCUSE FOR TRIP

**GREENSBORO:** For the third time in a year, Duke's Grayson Allen got caught tripping an opponent in a game. If the Blue Devils guard is going to get more punishment from coach Mike Krzyzewski for it, don't expect to hear the details. Allen picked up a technical foul for tripping Elon's Steven Santa Ana on a drive in the first half of a 72-61 win Wednesday night. That earned him a seat on the bench for the final 4:15 of the half and the start of the second half, though he returned to the game with about 16 minutes left.

Afterward, Allen met with Santa Ana and Elon coach Matt Matheny to apologize before hanging his head and fighting back tears while talking to reporters in the locker room. "Just talking about what led up to it is just an excuse," Allen said. "There's no excuse for it." Krzyzewski called it "unacceptable," though he wouldn't publicly reveal any other measures or reprimands. "I handle things the way I handle them," Krzyzewski said. "I think I've handled this correctly and moving forward I will continue to handle it correctly, and I don't need to satisfy what other people think I should do. "I'm a teacher and a coach. And I'm responsible for that kid, so I know him better than anybody. So to think that it's the last thing that's said about this to him is wrong. Obviously, we will do more. It doesn't mean you have to see it, or anybody else has to see it."

### A pattern

Teammate Matt Jones said he tried to console the emotional Allen afterward. "I love Grayson, he's my brother," Jones said. "We've been to battle, we've won a (national) championship together. We won plenty of games together. So there's nothing really you can say. "I just gave him a really big hug, told him, 'I love you.' That's all that was, and let the silence kind of fill the void. There's nothing really you can say about it." It's officially a pattern for Allen, who was twice caught tripping opponents last winter. On Feb 9, Allen received a flagrant foul for extending his leg to trip Louisville's Ray Spalding after he fell to the court and Spalding tried to go by him. Roughly two weeks later, Allen kicked up his left leg to trip Florida State's Xavier Rathan-Mayes as Rathan-Mayes tried to run by from behind. Allen wasn't called for a foul there, but the Atlantic Coast Conference later reprimanded him. The Blue Devils don't play again until opening ACC play at Virginia Tech on Dec 31. "That's out of my control," Allen said when asked whether he was worried about a suspension. "I can't worry about something out of my control now." — AP



**GREENSBORO:** Duke's Grayson Allen (3) shares a laugh with an official in the second half of an NCAA college basketball game against Elon. — AP

## NEW INGREDIENTS ADD FLAVOR TO COOK'S SPOILED TEST RECIPE

**MUMBAI:** England are still licking their wounds after a humiliating series defeat in India but some positives can be found amid the carnage of a disastrous tour, particularly with the emergence of a pair of batting prospects for the side's fragile top order.

Before the series began, captain Alastair Cook had opened with nine different players since Andrew Strauss retired four years ago and while he has gone on to become England's highest ever run-scorer, finding a partner had proved more difficult. Ben Duckett was not convincing enough to nail down a top order spot, with his suspect technique against Bangladesh's spinners in a two-test series there in October forcing selectors to look elsewhere for an opening batsmen in India. England instead opted to risk handing Haseeb Hameed a test debut in the first of five matches against India at Rajkot, the 19-year-old walking out to the middle as the country's youngest ever opener.

The teenager showed great skill and maturity to score two half-centuries in three tests before his trip was curtailed by an unfortunate finger injury. Left-hander Keaton Jennings arrived as his replacement and made a similarly impressive impact, hitting a century on debut and then a fifty in the final test in Chennai to add a little gloss to an otherwise miserable 4-0 series thumping. "The one thing we came here needing to find was top-quality batters to bat with Cooky and Rooty (Joe Root) at the top of the order," England assistant coach Paul Farbrace told reporters.

### Solid top five

"Haseeb has shown, one huge plus from this series... there's a young man with an unbelievable technique, a fantastic attitude and more importantly looks like he's got the right mental approach to play for a long time to come. "We came with a couple of gaps in our batting order and we think we've probably got the right people now... so that's a real bonus." The emergence of Hameed and Jennings should also allow batting mainstay Root to drop down a place to number four, a spot which became almost impossible to fill during the seven tests in South Asia.

Gary Balance and Duckett both performed poorly before Moeen Ali enjoyed some success at four in the last three tests against India but the all-rounder gave the hosts plenty of chances as he often sought quick runs instead of controlled aggression. Jonny Bairstow, meanwhile, has enjoyed a breakthrough year, scoring the second most test runs (1,470) in world cricket behind team mate Root (1,477) and he could complete a strong top five for England along with Cook, Hameed and Jennings.

There are already calls for him to hand over wicketkeeping duties to Jos Buttler, a move that would free him up to contribute more for the side as a specialist batsman. England started the year with a series victory in South Africa and followed it up with a home win against Sri Lanka. They led Pakistan 2-1 after three tests but have since lost six of their last eight matches against South Asian opponents. The defeats have increased the pressure on Cook to step down as captain but Farbrace suggested the management wanted him to continue in his position at least until the Ashes series in Australia at the end of next year. — Reuters



**CHENNAI:** England's cricket captain Alastair Cook walks in the field after losing the test cricket series against India during their fifth day of the fifth cricket test match. — AP



**CHENNAI:** India's Ravichandran Ashwin bowls during their fifth day of the fifth cricket test match against England. — AP

## SPIN KING ASHWIN NAMED ICC CRICKETER OF THE YEAR

**MUMBAI:** India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin was named the International Cricket Council (ICC) Cricketer of the Year yesterday for taking 48 wickets and scoring 336 runs in eight tests during the voting period. The 30-year-old Ashwin, the world's top-ranked test bowler, became the third Indian to win the Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy while also scooping the ICC Test Cricketer of the Year award for the period from Sept. 14, 2015 to Sept. 20, 2016.

"It's an absolute pleasure to be awarded with this great honor," said Ashwin, who won the man of the series awards in each of India's last four test series before the five-match rubber against England. "It feels great to follow the likes of Sachin Tendulkar and Rahul Dravid in being named as the ICC Cricketer of the Year. To also win the ICC Test Cricketer of the Year makes it even better."

During the September-to-September voting period, Ashwin took 48 wickets and scored 336 runs in eight Tests. He also snared 27 Twenty20 international wickets. The Chennai native consolidated top spot in the International Cricket Council (ICC) Test bowling charts after he took a series-leading 28 wickets in the five games against England, which wrapped up this week. Quinton de Kock, South Africa's wicketkeeper-batsman, was named one-day international cricketer of the year after he scored 793 runs in 16 50-over games. And the West Indies' Carlos Brathwaite won international Twenty20 performance of the year for his 10-ball 34 not out, including four sixes in the final over, to clinch a

stunning victory over England in the World Twenty20 final.

### Other awardees

South Africa wicketkeeper-batsman Quinton de Kock was named ODI (one-day international) Player of the Year, while West Indies' Twenty20 captain Carlos Brathwaite won the T20 Performance of the Year award. Brathwaite was honored for belting four consecutive sixes in the final over off England's Ben Stokes to lead West Indies to victory in the World T20 final earlier this year.

Bangladesh medium pacer Mustafizur Rahman was adjudged Emerging Cricketer of the Year, while Afghanistan wicketkeeper-batsman

Mohammad Shahzad was named the Associate and Affiliate Cricketer of the Year. Four England players made the ICC test team of the year, captained by Alastair Cook, with their recent drawn series in Bangladesh and 4-0 loss in India falling outside the voting period. India test captain Virat Kohli was named as captain of the ODI Team of the Year.

Test team: David Warner (Australia), Alastair Cook (England, captain), Kane Williamson (New Zealand), Joe Root (England), Adam Voges (Australia), Jonny Bairstow (England, wicketkeeper), Ben Stokes (England), Ravichandran Ashwin (India), Rangana Herath (Sri Lanka), Mitchell Starc (Australia), Dale Steyn (South Africa), Steve Smith (Australia). — Agencies

## BRUISED AMIR SET FOR BOXING DAY

**MELBOURNE:** Pakistan spearhead Mohammad Amir is expected to play the Boxing Day Test against Australia despite stiffness and a bruised thigh, officials said yesterday. The left-arm seamer, who completed a five-year ban for spot-fixing last year, left the field during the first Brisbane Test on a motorised stretcher after falling on the Gabba turf.

He appeared in agony but returned a short time later and continued to bowl. Amir was also hit on the thigh by a Mitchell Starc full toss. "There's quite a bit of bruising on his

thigh," Pakistan batting coach Grant Flower told reporters. "He's feeling a bit stiff but he's all right." Flower said he expected the team to field the same bowling attack in Melbourne that narrowly lost the gripping first Test by just 39 runs. "I think the guys are fit enough to go through. I think our attack would probably be the same," he said. "It's just one of those things that we've had for a while, we don't have that all-rounder batsman, batsman-bowler. But it's one of those things so the guys will just have to get through it." — AFP



CLEVELAND: Cleveland Cavaliers' Kyrie Irving (2) drives past Milwaukee Bucks' Tony Snell (21) during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Wednesday, Dec. 21, 2016. —AP

## CAVALIERS POST CONVINCING WIN OVER BUCKS

**LOS ANGELES:** The Cleveland Cavaliers beat the Milwaukee Bucks for the second time in as many days on Wednesday, and this time, they didn't need overtime to do it. Kyrie Irving scored 31 points and handed out a career-high 13 assists and LeBron James scored 29 points and pulled down nine rebounds in a 113-102 victory over the Bucks in Cleveland.

The victory came a day after the Cavaliers needed overtime to edge the Bucks 114-108 in Milwaukee and it came with Kevin Love again sidelined by a sore knee and guard J.R. Smith sidelined by a broken thumb that saw him exit Tuesday's contest. Even with the absentees, the Cavaliers exceeded their season average of 13.5 three-pointers per game with 15. After both James and Irving played long minutes in Tuesday's win, Cavaliers coach Tyronn Lue was careful with his stars.

He pulled James with 5:06 left in the first half to rest, even though James had made three straight three-pointers on three Cavaliers possessions. "Bron had it going but I had to get him out," Lue said. "He was mad, but so what?" Added James: "He said, 'I'm coming to get you after this play. I wished he would've changed his mind. It's cool though. We won.'"

Irving scored 14 points in the third quarter, when the Cavaliers stretched a 59-54 halftime lead to 92-77 going into the final period. Eastern Conference leaders Cleveland won their third straight game and their 21st of the season. Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 28 points and Jabari Parker added 27

for the Bucks. "They're the champs. They showed that again tonight," Bucks coach Jason Kidd said. "They never panic. They've seen everything. For a young team like ourselves, we're going through that. Hopefully we can learn from our mistakes." Cleveland next face the Brooklyn Nets on Friday, before hosting the Golden State Warriors in a Christmas Day clash between last year's championship finalists.

### GRIZZLIES 98, PISTONS 86

Marc Gasol matched a career high with 38 points on 14-of-17 shooting, and Memphis beat Detroit in a matchup of slumping teams. The Grizzlies ended their three-game losing streak, while Detroit dropped its fourth straight. Memphis was boosted by the return of Chandler Parsons, who missed the previous 17 games with a bone bruise on his left knee. He had two points and two rebounds in 15 minutes. Jon Leuer and Reggie Jackson led the Pistons with 18 points apiece. Andre Drummond had 13 points and 19 rebounds.

### TIMBERWOLVES 92, HAWKS 84

Andrew Wiggins scored 19 points and Karl-Anthony Towns had 17 points and 18 rebounds in Minnesota's victory over Atlanta. Zach LaVine added 18 points for the Timberwolves, who earned consecutive wins for the first time since April 5-9 last season. Dennis Schroder finished 21 points and Paul Millsap had 18 points and 10 rebounds for Atlanta, which has dropped six of seven at home. The Hawks have lost during that span

to four teams with losing records: New Orleans, Detroit, Orlando and Minnesota.

### THUNDER 121, PELICANS 110

Russell Westbrook had 42 points and 10 rebounds to lead Oklahoma City over New Orleans. Alex Abrines scored nine of his 18 points during a pivotal 11-0 run early in the fourth quarter. The surge gave the Thunder a 100-87 lead with 9:18 left, and the Pelicans never got within eight after that. Enes Kanter finished with 14 points and 14 rebounds. Anthony Davis had 34 points and 15 rebounds for New Orleans. Jrue Holiday added 23 points and 10 assists, and Terrence Jones scored 21 for the Pelicans, who have lost nine of 12.

### WIZARDS 107, BULLS 97

John Wall had 23 points and nine assists, and Washington rallied past Chicago for its third road victory of the season. Trey Burke and Marcus Thornton came off the Washington bench to spark a decisive fourth-quarter burst. Chicago closed to 97-93 with less than 3 minutes left, but Bradley Beal, Marcin Gortat and Wall followed with baskets to seal it. Beal finished with 21 points, while Gortat had 14 points and 11 rebounds. Burke scored 10. Jimmy Butler led a balanced Bulls offense with 20 points, and Dwyane Wade added 19. Rajon Rondo had 10 assists.

### ROCKETS 125, SUNS 111

James Harden had 27 points and 14 assists, propelling Houston past Phoenix for

its 11th victory in 12 games. Eric Gordon added 24 points off the Rockets' bench, shooting 7 of 13 on 3-pointers. Patrick Beverley finished with 18 points, nine assists and nine rebounds. Houston made 18 of 38 attempts from 3-point range. Devin Booker's 28 points led the Suns, who have lost four in a row.

### KINGS 94, JAZZ 93

DeMarcus Cousins scored 21 points and Sacramento rallied from a 20-point deficit to defeat Utah. The Kings used an 11-3 run, led by Ty Lawson and five free throws by Cousins, to take a 91-89 lead with 25.9 seconds remaining. It was their first lead since the opening quarter. The Jazz led by 20 in the third, but their defense disappeared in crunch time. Gordon Hayward led Utah with 28 points and 10 rebounds, while Rudy Gobert had his ninth consecutive double-double with 17 points and 14 boards. He and Timberwolves big man Karl-Anthony Towns are tied for the longest active streaks in the NBA.

### MAVERICKS 96, TRAIL BLAZERS 95

Harrison Barnes had 28 points and Dallas held off a furious rally by Portland that ended when Damian Lillard missed a 3-pointer at the final buzzer. Deron Williams added 23 points for the Mavericks, who led by 25 early in the third quarter. Lillard finished with 29 points, including 20 in the third period. It was Portland's fourth straight loss. Lillard's 3-point attempt at the buzzer came under intense pressure from former Trail Blazers guard Wesley Matthews. — AP

## IRISH FA SEEKS 'URGENT' FIFA MEETING OVER FINE

**LONDON:** The Irish FA on Wednesday sought an "urgent" meeting with FIFA president Gianni Infantino to protest over a 15,000 Swiss franc fine imposed for Northern Ireland's tribute to Britain's war dead. The Irish FA board expressed "severe disappointment" at the fine (14,000 euros/\$14,600) imposed by FIFA's disciplinary commission on Monday. The English FA has already said it would try to appeal against a 45,000 Swiss franc fine imposed for wearing poppy armbands as a tribute in their November 11 Armistice Day game against Scotland.

Scotland were fined 20,000 Swiss francs for making the same gesture while Wales were also fined 20,000 Swiss francs for their remembrance tribute the same day. FIFA said all had breached a ban on political symbols on kit during official games. "The board of the Irish FA wishes to express its severe disappointment that the FIFA disciplinary committee issued the association with a fine and a reprimand for acts of remembrance at the Northern Ireland v Azerbaijan game on Armistice Day," said a statement. "In the weeks leading up to the match on November 11, the Irish FA had discussions with FIFA to get guidance on what was permitted within the laws of the game. Having followed that guidance in the delivery of the acts of remembrance at the match, it is extremely disappointing that the FIFA disciplinary committee came to the conclusions that it did."

The Irish FA said it cannot appeal under FIFA regulations and would not pursue any further legal action. "However, the association will write to the president of FIFA to arrange an urgent meeting to seek clarity on this issue going forward." FIFA disciplinary committee chairman Claudio Sulser said Monday the world body was not making judgments on "specific commemorations as we fully respect the significance of such moments in the respective countries". But he said "rules need to be applied in a neutral and fair manner across FIFA's 211 member associations". — AFP



Ephraim 'Shakes' Mashaba

## SOUTH AFRICA SACK COACH MASHABA OVER INSULTS

**JOHANNESBURG:** South Africa coach Ephraim 'Shakes' Mashaba was fired yesterday for insulting top football officials last month, the national association said. The sacking was expected after heated exchanges between the 66-year-old and South African Football Association (SAFA) president Danny Jordaan following a World Cup qualifier.

Mashaba refused to accept the touchline congratulations of the official when South Africa defeated Senegal 2-1 to become co-leaders of a qualifying group for the 2018 finals in Russia. Soon after, the coach became embroiled in a verbal slanging match with Jordaan and Dennis Mumble, chief executive of the national association.

Mashaba had been angered by public criticism from Jordaan and Mumble the previous month over the failure of South Africa to qualify for the 2017 Africa Cup of Nations in Gabon. Charges of gross misconduct, gross insubordination and violation of SAFA communication policy were laid against Mashaba. The former defender with Soweto-based domestic giants Orlando Pirates was found guilty of all charges.

### Resurgent team

"Due to the seriousness of the coach's actions, we had to release our head coach with immediate effect," said Mumble in a statement. "We shall immediately institute a search for a new head coach familiar with African football competitions. "(He) will be expected to continue the quest to qualify for the world's apex football competition (World Cup). "It is regrettable that we had to face the events of the past month at a time when the national team is experiencing a resurgence in its quest to qualify for the 2018 World Cup."

Former South Africa goalkeeper

Roger de Sa, who recently quit then struggling Ajax Cape Town, has been mentioned by the media as a possible replacement. Mozambique-born De Sa guided Pirates into the 2013 CAF Champions League final, which they lost to Al Ahly of Egypt. Another candidate, if available, would be Mamelodi Sundowns handler and former South Africa striker and coach Pitso Mosimane.

He went one step further than De Sa and steered Sundowns to the CAF Champions League title this year, beating Zamalek of Egypt in the final. Cape Town City coach Eric Tinkler has also been mentioned in media speculation along with Uganda handler Milutin Sredojevic and unemployed former Dutch star Ruud Krol, who enjoyed success with Pirates.

The Mashaba disciplinary hearings lasted five days amid reports that the coach, reportedly paid 500,000 rand (\$36,000, 34,000 euros) a month, was prepared to quit in return for a pay-off. SAFA posted an annual loss of 40 million rand this month and wanted to avoid a financial settlement. A successful coach with national under-age team, Mashaba delivered mixed results in his latest stint as handler of Bafana Bafana (The Boys).

Having led the team to the 2015 Cup of Nations in Equatorial Guinea with surprising ease, he was asked by reporters why he needed to take so many suitcases to the tournament. "Because we will be in Equatorial Guinea for almost a month as we are going to win the Cup of Nations, and I need a lot of clothes," was his cocky reply. South Africa were eliminated after the first round having lost to Algeria and Ghana and drawn with Senegal despite scoring first in all three games. His rollercoaster ride continued with failure to make the 2017

Cup of Nations finals, finishing an embarrassing third behind Mauritania in a mini-league won by Cameroon. Bafana fared better in World Cup eliminators, beating Angola home and away in a knockout tie and, after drawing in Burkina Faso, overcoming group favourites Senegal in Polokwane. South Africa, who won the Cup of Nations in 1996, were ranked 12th in Africa and 60th in the world by FIFA yesterday.

### Five Ephraim 'Shakes' quotes

Sacked South Africa coach Ephraim 'Shakes' Mashaba was never short of an opinion. AFP Sport selects five quotes from his many media conferences:

"The duty of the captain is to attend the coin toss and tell the players which side of the field they will be playing from" (Simplifying captaincy)

"The last time I saw Gambia play was two and a half years ago. I do not believe in this thing you journalists call 'spying'." (His casual approach backfired as minnows Gambia surprisingly drew 0-0 with South Africa in Durban)

"I hate each and every member of the South African Football Association responsible for this decision. I hate them." (Furious reaction to the inability of SAFA to get some footballers released by clubs for national duty)

"Stop calling me arrogant. If you want to write things about me, clarify them, because you are giving the wrong impression to people." (Mashaba on the warpath against his critics)

"I am not a quitter and that is why I bought the jacket I am wearing today. You thought I would come here as a grey-haired old man. Instead, I am young, well-dressed and fresh." (Another Mashaba lecture to the media) — AFP

## ARGENTINA, FRANCE TAKE FIFA RANKING HONORS

**ZURICH:** Lionel Messi's beaten Copa America finalists Argentina end the year top of FIFA's world rankings while France, defeated in the Euro 2016 final, were named 'mover of the year'. Argentina finish 2016 out in front of arch rivals Brazil to inherit the 'team of the year' title from Belgium, displaced from the FIFA summit by the Edgardo Bauza-coached Albiceleste in April. In all the Argentineans won 10 of their 15 games, with one of their three losses coming in the continental showpiece on penalties to Chile in June. France too lost their own continental showpiece in extra time to Portugal on home soil but were named mover of the year after gaining the most ranking points with 13 wins out of 17 games.

### FIFA top 10 rankings:

- |              |                 |
|--------------|-----------------|
| 1. Argentina | 6. Colombia     |
| 2. Brazil    | 7. France       |
| 3. Germany   | 8. Portugal     |
| 4. Chile     | 9. Uruguay      |
| 5. Belgium   | 10. Spain — AFP |

## SAKHO OUT OF NATIONS CUP

**LONDON:** Injured West Ham United striker Diafra Sakho is facing a two-month lay-off, ruling the Senegal international out of the Africa Cup of Nations, Hammers' manager Slaven Bilic revealed yesterday. Bilic reported: "He had a back operation and he's going to be out for six to eight weeks. Of course it will rule him out for the African Nations Cup."

The 26-year-old forward has made only two Premier League appearances this season, and will now miss the crucial festive period and Cup of Nations in Gabon. Sakho last featured in the 1-1 draw at Manchester United on November 27, opening the scoring after 90 seconds before going off midway through the second half. Bilic feels his squad will cope with the absence of Sakho and ruled out the possibility of going into the transfer market for striking options with Andy Carroll and club-record signing Andre Ayew returning to fitness. — AFP

# BAYERN HAMMER 10-MAN LEIPZIG TO OPEN UP LEAD

**BERLIN:** Robert Lewandowski led Bayern Munich to a 3-0 triumph in their Bundesliga showdown against ten-man RB Leipzig that opened up a three-point lead over their rivals. Coach Carlo Ancelotti hailed a "perfect" first half in which Bayern's Thiago Alcantara and Xabi Alonso scored early goals before Leipzig winger Emil Forsberg was shown a red card for a dangerous tackle. That left the visitors to play an hour at Munich's Allianz Arena a man down.

Leipzig goalkeeper Peter Gulacsi then conceded the penalty which Lewandowski converted on 45 minutes to put Bayern 3-0 up at the break. The result put Munich three points clear of their battered opponents at the top of the German league table heading into the winter break. Leipzig briefly knocked Bayern off top spot early this month and the two have been in a neck-and-neck battle since. Ancelotti highlighted his side's first half display.

"We were very aggressive and quickly established control, which gives us self-confidence, but we must still improve," said the Italian. There was a minute's silence for the victims of Monday's truck attack in Berlin at Munich, Cologne, Ingolstadt and Hoffenheim, but it was most poignant at the capital's Olympic stadium. Hertha Berlin hosted Darmstadt seven kilometers from

Breitscheidplatz where a lorry ploughed into a busy Christmas market on Monday, leaving 12 dead and at least 48 injured.

Fans in Berlin held up thousands of lights during a poignant minute's silence before kickoff. The Hertha squad had earlier laid a wreath at the site. A second-half free-kick by Marvin Plattenhardt and a Salomon Kalou header sealed Hertha's 2-0 win to stay fourth. In Munich, Ancelotti pulled a surprise by leaving Germany forward Thomas Mueller and French winger Franck Ribery on the bench.

## Thiago on target

Thiago Alcantara and Douglas Costa started and the selection paid off with 17 minutes gone. Captain Philipp Lahm fired in a cross, Lewandowski hit the post, but Thiago was waiting in the middle to convert the rebound. A mistake by Leipzig's Naby Keita, who had recovered from a thigh injury, saw Bayern grab their second on 25 minutes.

Arturo Vidal robbed the Guinea midfielder of possession, Lewandowski sprinted clear and Thiago slipped the ball to Alonso, who fired home. A header by Leipzig captain Willi Orban forced Bayern goalkeeper Manuel Neuer into a diving save just before disaster struck for the visitors on 30 minutes. Left

winger Forsberg was sent off when his tackle caught Philipp Lahm on the Achilles tendon and referee Felix Zwayer pulled out a red card.

"He knew straight away that he had made a mistake, he's already apologised and we all can make mistakes," said Leipzig coach Ralph Hasenhuettl. Gulacsi then conceded the penalty as it finished 3-0 at the break. Bayern were then to let their opponent chase the ball as they enjoyed 75 percent possession, but the hosts battered the Leipzig goal in the closing minutes.

"I am proud of what the team has achieved this season, but this was a lesson for us and compliment to Bayern on the way they played," added Hasenhuettl.

Hoffenheim, the only unbeaten team in Germany's top flight, stay third after their tenth draw in 16 games as it finished 1-1 at home to Werder Bremen. Hoffenheim's striker Sandro Wagner claimed his ninth league goal this season before Bremen's ex-Arsenal winger Serge Gnabry rescued a point. Cologne striker Anthony Modeste gave his side a first-half lead before Bayer Leverkusen's Brazil defender Wendell equalised in a 1-1 draw. Ingolstadt remain second from bottom after their 2-1 home defeat to mid-table Freiburg, for whom Florian Niederlechner netted twice. — AFP



**MUNICH:** Bayern's Thiago, left, and Leipzig's Diego Demme challenge for the ball during the German Bundesliga soccer match between FC Bayern Munich and RB Leipzig at the Allianz Arena stadium. — AP

## LEIPZIG LEARN TOUGH LESSON

**BERLIN:** Ralph Hasenhuettl admitted 10-man RB Leipzig had been taught a tough "lesson" as leaders Bayern Munich handed out a 3-0 hammering to their nearest Bundesliga rivals. Bayern coach Carlo Ancelotti hailed a "perfect" opening 30 minutes in which Thiago Alcantara and Xabi Alonso scored early goals before Leipzig winger Emil Forsberg was shown a red

card for a dangerous tackle.

It left the visitors to play an hour on Wednesday at Munich's Allianz Arena a man down in the top-of-the-table clash. Leipzig goalkeeper Peter Gulacsi then compounded his team's problems by fouling Douglas Costa to concede a penalty which Robert Lewandowski converted on 45 minutes to make it 3-0. The result left Munich three points clear of

their battered opponents at the top of the German league table heading into the winter break.

"That was a lesson, it was a top show from Bayern," admitted Leipzig coach Hasenhuettl. "Our system only works when everyone is in sync and we had a few players who weren't 100 percent fit. "You can't do much to defend against Bayern when they play like that."

## FIVE THINGS WE LEARNED ABOUT THE BUNDESLIGA

**BERLIN:** Five things we learned from the final round of Bundesliga matches before the winter break with Bayern Munich leading the table and Andre Schubert the seventh coach fired since September:

### Sacking spree

Borussia Dortmund CEO Hans-Joachim Watzke has slammed the merry-go-round culture of Bundesliga sackings after Andre Schubert on Wednesday became the seventh coach fired since September in Germany's top flight. "It's crazy when you regularly change key personnel," said the Dortmund boss. "You have to be careful that you don't pulverize any long-term structural work by trying to straighten things out on a day-to-day basis. "If you are convinced of the work of a coach or sports director, you have to go through one or two troughs." Ex-Wolfsburg coach Dieter Hecking is tipped to succeed Schubert, who took Gladbach from bottom to fourth last season, but his team earned just six points in their last ten league games. He joins Dirk Schuster (Augsburg), Norbert Meier (Darmstadt), Markus Kauczinski (Ingolstadt), Dieter Hecking (Wolfsburg), Bruno Labbadia (Hamburg) and Viktor Skrypnyk (Werder Bremen) who have been sacked this season.

### Draxler's January exit

Julian Draxler is widely tipped to leave Wolfsburg when the transfer window opens on January 1. The 23-year-old World Cup winner has repeatedly said he wants to leave and was thrown out of the squad for their recent 5-0 drubbing at Bayern. He did not bother to join teammates celebrating last Saturday's 1-0 win over Frankfurt. The French media claim Paris Saint Germain want to sign Draxler, while Arsenal and Juventus are also reportedly interested. But Wolfsburg will want a high price having paid Schalke 35 million euros (\$37.3m) for Draxler in August 2015.

### Shaky Dortmund

Borussia Dortmund boasts one of the Bundesliga's best attacks, including Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, Marco Reus and Mario Goetze, but drew all their last three games in 2016. They came from behind each time to claim a point against Cologne, Hoffenheim and Augsburg leaving coach Thomas Tuchel tearing his hair out. "We've lost our threat and made insanely simple mistakes," fumed Tuchel after Tuesday's 1-1 draw with Augsburg. "Our bite, energy, our structure in every league game we let those things go missing. "We're sleepy, there's sloppiness in the technical things we do and in tactical things. It's been a factor this season." Tuchel has some clear problems to fix in the winter break, especially after Ji Dong-Won gave Augsburg the lead in Tuesday's 1-1 draw after defender Martin Hinteregger ran through five Borussia players.

### RB boss sets Europa goal

RB Leipzig came off a poor second to Bayern in Wednesday's duel, but their backer, Red Bull's co-founder Dietrich Mateschitz has set a minimum goal of Europa League qualification this season. "We know that four teams qualify for the Champions League and two go into the Europa League—that's our basic goal," the billionaire Austrian told Swiss newspaper Blick. Despite being humbled at Bayern, Leipzig enjoyed a record 13-match unbeaten run at the start of their debut Bundesliga season. They have won 11 of their first 16 games to leave them trailing Bayern by three points. Mateschitz has changed his expectations having told Sport Bild before the season that he expected a midtable finish.

### Hummels' hairdresser malfunction

Bayern Munich defender Mats Hummels dyed his hair blond for Wednesday's 3-0 win over RB Leipzig after losing a bet at the Oktoberfest beer festival. The 28-year-old World Cup winner, who normally has dark hair, went peroxide for the top-of-the-table showdown at Munich's Allianz Arena. Hummels lost a game of skittles during a visit to Munich's Oktoberfest, the world's most popular annual beer festival. — AFP



**MILAN:** Inter Milan's midfielder Ever Banega of Argentina (3rd L) celebrates with teammates after scoring a goal during the Italian Serie A football match between Inter Milan and Lazio on December 21, 2016 at the 'San Siro Stadium'. —AFP

## ICARDI BRACE GIVES INTER FESTIVE CHEER

**MILAN:** Mauro Icardi took his Serie A goal tally to a league-leading 14 with a brace in a 3-0 win over Lazio that gave Inter Milan's fans some unexpected festive cheer. Icardi hailed Inter's fourth win in a row, while Lazio boss Simone Inzaghi was left bemoaning second half lapses.

"A team like ours can't be conceding three goals in the space of 11 minutes," he said. Lazio travelled to the San Siro looking for a win that would have pushed Inzaghi's team up to second five points behind Juventus. But the visitors, who won both fixtures against Inter last season, failed to make the most of a promising opening half when Ciro Immobile and Felipe Anderson came close to scoring.

Lazio paid the price in 11 second-half minutes, first when Argentina midfielder Ever Banega pounced on a defensive mistake by Sergej Milinkovic-Savic to beat Federico Marchetti with a searing strike into the top corner. Icardi headed Inter's second two minutes later. The Argentine moved two goals past Roma striker Edin Dzeko and Andrea Belotti of Torino in the Serie A goal standings just nine minutes later with his second of the night.

Inter remain in seventh place but their ninth win of the campaign and fourth in six games under new coach

Stefano Pioli closed the gap on Juventus, who will face AC Milan in Doha for the Italian Super Cup on Friday, to 12 points. Inter are finally on a winning run after beating Hapoel Beer-Sheva in their final Europa League group game and Icardi told Sky Sport: "That's four consecutive wins now. It's a step forwards for everyone after the results we had at the start of the season."

"If we keep on working as hard as we are, we'll get the rewards at the end of the season." Pioli, sacked by Lazio in April after a heavy defeat to city rivals Roma, reshuffled for the visit of his old club with Joao Mario and Felipe Melo both suspended and Chilean defender Gary Medel out injured. Lazio suffered a blow prior to kick-off when Stefan Radu pulled up in the warm-up to be replaced by Gil Patric. But the Rome team put on the early pressure.

### Crucially failed

It took just 30 seconds for Immobile to threaten an early goal, only for Inter 'keeper Samir Handanovic to block. When Senad Lulic pounced on the rebound, Danilo D'Ambrosio came to the rescue. Inter midfielder Ivan Perisic missed one chance, but at the other end Handanovic was at full stretch to save Immobile's daisycutter with one hand.

Anderson then skipped past four players on a diagonal run into the area only to see his shot come off the leg of D'Ambrosio. From the corner, Sergej Milinkovic-Savic nodded just over. Lazio made a bright start to the second half. But a messy attempt by Milinkovic-Savic to control the ball outside the area saw Banega step in, steal possession and unleash a drive that flew past Marchetti and into the top corner.

Lazio were punished again when Icardi sneaked around his marker as he waited for D'Ambrosio's cross from the right and planted a low header past the Lazio 'keeper. Inzaghi went all-in, replacing Patric with Keita Balde on the hour. Four minutes later, the Senegal striker's angled strike in the area brought a reflex stop from Handanovic.

But any hopes of a Lazio fightback were buried on 65 minutes when Icardi moved off his marker at Banega's corner and his first-time drive sneaked inside the net. "We crucially failed to pull level after their opening goal," said Inzaghi. "From Banega's opener, our whole game changed and that's what disappoints me." Icardi should have had his hat-trick, but was stopped by Marchetti on 71 minutes then saw a late strike hit the woodwork. —AFP

## BALOTELLI SENT OFF AS MONACO CLOSE GAP

**PARIS:** Mario Balotelli and Younes Belhanda were sent off in the dying seconds as Ligue 1 leaders Nice stumbled into the winter break with a 0-0 draw at Bordeaux, allowing Monaco to trim the gap at the top to two points. Paris Saint-Germain eased the pressure on coach Unai Emery by beating Lorient 5-0.

Bordeaux had suffered three successive defeats—conceding eight goals in their last two outings—and a frustrating evening for Nice ended disastrously with Balotelli and Belhanda dismissed for off-the-ball incidents. Lucien Favre's side will now start 2017 without two key players after the pair were shown straight red cards in the closing stages.

"I look forward to seeing the images. We'll see if it's a foul," said Favre, after Balotelli was given his marching orders for lashing out at Bordeaux defender Igor Lewczuk. "In the end, I was disappointed after these two red cards because that's going to be a few matches (suspension)." Radamel Falcao scored a penalty in a 2-1 win over Caen as Monaco rebounded from their defeat at home to Lyon last weekend.

The Colombian striker won and converted a spot-kick shortly after half time for his 11th goal of the season before Tiemoue Bakayoko scored for the second game running at the Stade Louis II. Herve Bazile grabbed a consolation for Caen in stoppage time. "We're very happy with what we've done during the first part of the season," said Monaco coach Leonardo Jardim. "It's the 10th match in a row where we've been playing every three days. There was a bit of tiredness and fatigue, but we have 42 points. It's only the second time in club history (at the halfway stage)."

### Cavani increases tally

Edinson Cavani struck his league-best 18th goal this term as reigning champions PSG snapped a three-game winless run with a five-goal demolition of bottom side Lorient at the Parc des Princes. Emery had challenged his players to finish 2016 on a high after a series of disappointing results and Belgium international Thomas Meunier opened the scoring with a superb 25th-minute lob.

Lorient centre-back Zargo Toure turned a cross from Lucas into his own net for PSG's second just before the break, and captain Thiago Silva headed in a third minutes after the restart. Cavani tucked away a penalty after he was brought down in the area, with Brazilian international Lucas racing onto a fine Marco Verratti pass to seal a resounding victory. "It was important to win today," said Emery, with PSG heading into the break trailing Nice by five points as they chase a fifth consecutive French title. "We've dropped some important points along the way. We must lose fewer of them in the future. During the second half of the season we're going to improve to reduce the gap."

Lyon claimed their fourth win in a row with France internationals Alexandre Lacazette and Nabil Fekir on target in a 2-0 triumph over Angers. Bafetimbi Gomis scored his 10th goal of the campaign to help Rudi Garcia's Marseille beat Bastia 2-1 and extend their winning run. Marseille looked destined to leave Corsica with just a point after Alexander Djiku levelled on 83 minutes, but on-loan Tottenham Hotspur forward Clinton Njije swept home an injury-time winner. —AFP

## BARCELONA TRASH HERCULES 7-0

**MADRID:** Turkey international Arda Turan scored a hat-trick as holders Barcelona thrashed third-division side Hercules 7-0 in the second leg of their Copa del Rey last-32 tie. Turan struck his second hat-trick in as many weeks—following a quickfire treble against Borussia Moenchengladbach in the Champions League a fortnight ago—as Barca eased into the last 16 following an 8-1 aggregate win.

Luis Enrique rested his formidable front three of Lionel Messi, Luis Suarez and Neymar but the floodgates opened once Lucas Digne broke the deadlock on 37 minutes at the Camp Nou. Ivan Rakitic added a penalty before half-time with Rafinha and Paco Alcacer the others to get on the scoresheet.

Luciano Vietto and Wissam Ben Yedder also scored three goals each as last year's beaten finalists Sevilla pumelled fourth tier Formentera 9-1 in Andalusia, completing a 14-2 victory over the two legs. Rodrigo netted both goals for Valencia in a 2-1 win over Leganes in an all-La Liga affair, with the former progressing 5-2 on aggregate. Eibar, Deportivo La Coruna and Osasuna also advanced to the next round. —AFP

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MUNICH: Bayern Munich's Polish striker Robert Lewandowski celebrates after the third goal for Munich during the German first division Bundesliga football match FC Bayern Munich vs RB Leipzig. — AFP



# Bayern hammer 10 man Leipzig