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Notorious Texas highway speed traps will ruin your next road trip



Inside C5

# Southern DAILY

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Friday, December 22, 2017 | [www.today-america.com](http://www.today-america.com) | Southern News Group

## Defying Trump, over 120 countries at U.N. condemn Jerusalem

UNITED NATIONS (Reuters) - More than 120 countries defied President Donald Trump on Thursday and voted in favor of a United Nations General Assembly resolution calling for the United States to drop its recent recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. Trump had threatened to cut off financial aid to countries that voted in favor. A total of 128 countries backed the resolution, which is non-binding, nine voted against and 35 abstained. Twenty-one countries did not cast a vote. Trump's threat appeared to have some impact, with more countries abstaining and rejecting the resolution than usually associated with Palestinian-related resolutions. Nevertheless, Washington found itself isolated as many of its Western and Arab allies voted for the measure. Some of those allies, like Egypt, Jordan and Iraq, are major recipients of U.S. military or economic aid, although the U.S. threat to cut aid did not single out any country. A spokesman for Western-backed Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas called the vote "a victory for Palestine." Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu rejected the vote. Earlier this month, Trump reversed decades of U.S. policy by announcing the United States recognized Jerusalem -- home to major Muslim, Jewish and Christian holy sites -- as the capital of Israel and would move its embas-

tion," U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., Nikki Haley, told the 193-member General Assembly ahead of Thursday's vote. "We will remember it when we are called upon to once again make the world's largest contribution to the United Nations, and so many countries come calling on us, as they so often do, to pay even more and to use our influence for their benefit," she said. The status of Jerusalem is one of the thorniest obstacles to a peace deal between Israel and the Palestinians, who were furious over Trump's move. The international community does not recognize Israeli sovereignty over the full city. French U.N. Ambassador Francois Delattre said in a statement: "The resolution adopted today only confirms relevant international law provisions on Jerusalem." France voted in favor. Netanyahu described the resolution as "preposterous." "Jerusalem is our capital, always was, always will be. But I do appreciate the fact that a growing number of countries refuse to participate in this theater of the absurd," he said in a video on his Facebook page. Israel captured East Jerusalem in a 1967 war and Palestinians want it as the capital of a future state they seek. Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said in a tweet the vote was a clear international rejection of the Trump administration's "thuggish intimidation." Among the countries that abstained



Israeli forces fire towards Palestinians during clashes at a protest in the West Bank city of Bethlehem USA-TRUMP/ISRAEL-PALESTINIANS

Islands, Micronesia, Palau, Nauru and Togo joined the United States and Israel in voting no. Honduras' vote against the motion comes after the United States signaled it would recognize President Juan Orlando Hernandez as the winner of an election the Organization of America States said should be scrapped over fraud claims. Since Trump's election, Mexico has aligned its foreign policy more closely with Washington in what diplomats say is an attempt to curry favor in face of threats to withdraw from the NAFTA free trade agreement. "I just wanted to reiterate what the president had said yesterday and that that was the U.N. vote is really not the only factor that the administration would take into consideration in dealing with our foreign relations and countries who have chosen to vote one way or the other," she told reporters. According to figures from the U.S. government's aid agency USAID, in 2016 the United States provided some \$13 billion in economic and military assistance to countries in sub-Saharan Africa and \$1.6 billion to states in East Asia and Oceania. It provided some \$13 billion to countries in the Middle East and North Africa, \$6.7 billion to countries in South and Central Asia, \$1.5 billion to states in Europe and Eurasia and \$2.2 billion to Western Hemisphere countries, according to USAID.

### LOCAL

## Census Bureau: Texas added 400,000 people in a year

State population hits 28 million; South, West lead U.S. in gains

Texas grew numerically more than any state in the last year, mirroring data that shows the South and West leading the nation in population growth, according to U.S. Census Bureau figures released Wednesday. The Lone Star State added nearly 400,000 people, allowing it to remain the second most populous state in the country with 28 million residents. Stephen L. Klineberg, professor of sociology at Rice University and founder of the Kinder Institute for Urban Research, attributes most of the population growth in Texas over the last several years to the state's oil and gas industry peak. He said Texas must now focus on other ways to attract newcomers. "The real challenge for Texas, especially for Houston, is to build a growth capacity outside the oil and gas industry," Klineberg said on Wednesday. "It's all

a great challenge to recognize that the engines for its economic growth are no longer what they were." Wednesday's census report was a state-by-state breakdown from July 1, 2016, to July 1,



2017, and did not focus on individual cities such as Houston. For the first time since 2012-2013, net international migration decreased by 1.8 percent, but researchers still look to immigrants as a "significant factor" for U.S. population growth, according to the report. A little over 1.1 million people were added in the last year to the U.S. from other countries.



sy there. "The United States will remember this day in which it was singled out for attack in the General Assembly for the very act of exercising our right as a sovereign na-

on Thursday were Australia, Canada, Mexico, Argentina, Colombia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Philippines, Rwanda, Uganda and South Sudan. Guatemala, Honduras, Marshall



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Star Wars: The Last Jedi is currently crushing in theaters, but its dominance in the toy aisle isn't as impressive.

At least compared to Disney's admittedly high bar. According to data company Panjiva, which tracks the giant shipping containers that hit U.S. ports, 6,587 such containers holding Star Wars items came into the U.S. in the 7 months leading up to The Last Jedi.

It's also down 56% from the seven months leading up to Star Wars: The Force Awakens, but to be fair no movie, even a Star Wars film, is likely to equal those lofty numbers again.

After the shipments land in the U.S., they are distributed to stores like Walmart, Amazon.com, and Toys R Us. Panjiva research analyst Chris Rogers actually identifies that last store as one of the issues with the drop. Toys R Us recently filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy, and as a direct result, they have ordered less product this season as they look to restructure.

Rogers also identifies the market as a factor, saying that retailers are trying to get a sense of "what the steady state" of Star Wars is. The Force Awakens isn't exactly an accurate barometer, as the series was just returning after a long hiatus.

The consumer products and interactive media division isn't a critical piece for Disney, but that doesn't mean they don't want to fix the issue and get some positive momentum. That division reported operating income of \$373 million, which was a 12% decline. Much of that can be credited to the disappointing sales of Cars 3 toys, but you don't want to follow that up with a fumble of one of your biggest properties either.



There is good news though, as the Star Wars Lego empire seems to be continuing its dominance. They've shipped just as much Star Wars product as last year, and

Star Wars 'Last Jedi' Toy Shipments Down Sharply From 'Force Awakens'

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



continue to be something that appeals both to collectors and kids.

Don't expect Star Wars: The Last Jedi toys to go anywhere anytime soon, but it wouldn't be surprising to see Disney make some adjustments to reverse the downward trend.

Star Wars: The Last Jedi is in theaters now. (Courtesy https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/)

Related

For what it's worth, it's no surprise Star Wars toy sales are declining

With a new Star Wars movie on the horizon — "The Last Jedi" hits theaters Dec. 15 — a whole new wave of Star Wars toys and memorabilia will be in stores on Sept. 1, a day commonly known as "Force Friday."

According to Fortune Magazine, Jan. 20, 2016, Star Wars toys generated more than \$700 million in the U.S. in 2015 when the highly anticipated movie Star Wars: The Force Awakens came out in December that same year.

But last month, the New York Post published an article stating that "Star Wars fatigue may be settling in." Just in time for Force Friday, too.

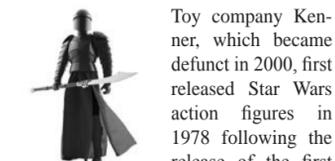
It stated that the franchise is "choking" the \$20.4 billion toy industry. And that the merchandise — from action figures to plastic light sabers — have started to decline this year.

However, as the article states, sales were up by 3 percent in the six months until June 30.

The same article claims the reason for the

"fatigue" stems from Disney's release of Star Wars movies in consecutive Decembers. "The Force Awakens" came out in December 2015. "Rogue One" was released the following December. And the newest film will be out soon.

Though marketing experts believe toy sales could very possibly be better than they were when the movie Rogue One came out last year, they certainly won't reach the same level they did when The Force Awakens was released.



Toy company Kenner, which became defunct in 2000, first released Star Wars action figures in 1978 following the release of the first

movie in 1977. The original line of figures ended in 1985 as sales declined. And if there's one word I could use to describe all the Star Wars figures that have come out since then, it would be "overwhelming."

Right now on toy shelves, consumers will find figures for "The Force Awakens", "Rogue One", and a line called "The

Black Series."

I can't find an exact number of how many individual Star Wars action figures have been released since 1978. But to help put it into perspective, since that time, there have been more than 30 variations of the droid character R2D2 released.

There were more than 100 different figures released between 1978 to 1985 alone. Some of which were the same character, but with different features than previously released.

And since the first days of Star Wars toys, a large portion of the character gallery in action figure form have been characters who had no significant role in any of the films other than a quick appearance in the background of any particular scene in any of the Star Wars movies or TV programs.

And with Disney now owners of the franchise, it's no surprise they would saturate the market with what's already a big money-maker.

Toy collectors like myself may take an interest in new figures being released as new movies are produced. But I can't imagine parents buying Chewbacca for instance from The Force Awakens for their kids, and then buying him again because he



now comes in The Last Jedi packaging with, maybe, different accessories. With the average price of action figures at the store being \$10, most parents aren't going to buy the same figures over and over again.

I started collecting action figures myself about 10 years ago after finding some of my old action figures I had as a kid back in the early 90s, from the Warren Beatty film "Dick Tracy". It was a hobby I grew passionate about — focusing on collecting the toys I had as far back as the 80s — HeMan and the Masters of the Universe,

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, ThunderCats, and especially Star Wars. The pop culture of my youth. And toys I no longer had.

Though I keep my collection to what are generally called "vintage," when it comes to Star Wars, I do get a few newer figures from time to time.

I was at Walmart on Force Friday back in 2015, when people were waiting anxiously for "The Force Awakens" to come out. I was checking out the new figures for the movie, seeing what was out. I overheard two people who were looking over the new figures asking each other "what'll be worth something in the future."

I wanted to intrude and tell them "nothing."

When it comes to Star Wars action figures worth money, whether they're old or recently released figures, there aren't much that are actually worth anything over \$100.

Just in the original line alone from 1978, the number of action figures worth a decent amount of money because there's a substantial amount of collectors wanting them, is not very high. I could probably count the number of valuable figures on both hands.



If any new figures released in the last 10 years that would have monetary value to them are very few and far between. Toys today produced in much larger quantities than they used to be. So, demand for them after they're taken off shelves is going to be low. There's too much emphasis on what Star Wars toys might be worth in the future. Old Star Wars told have that money-aura about them. But a lot of it is something like an urban legend. In reality, there's a ton of old toys available at low prices at garage sales, eBay and antique stores.

Otherwise, fatigue in Star Wars merchandise is completely understandable. It'll be interesting to see what sales look like when The Last Jedi comes out. And Disney is a creative industry. I'm sure they'll figure out how to market those toys in a more unique way to appeal to audiences and fans. The toys have lasted this long, after all. (Courtesy http://www.jcdailyunion.com/news/)

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# A Snapshot Of The World



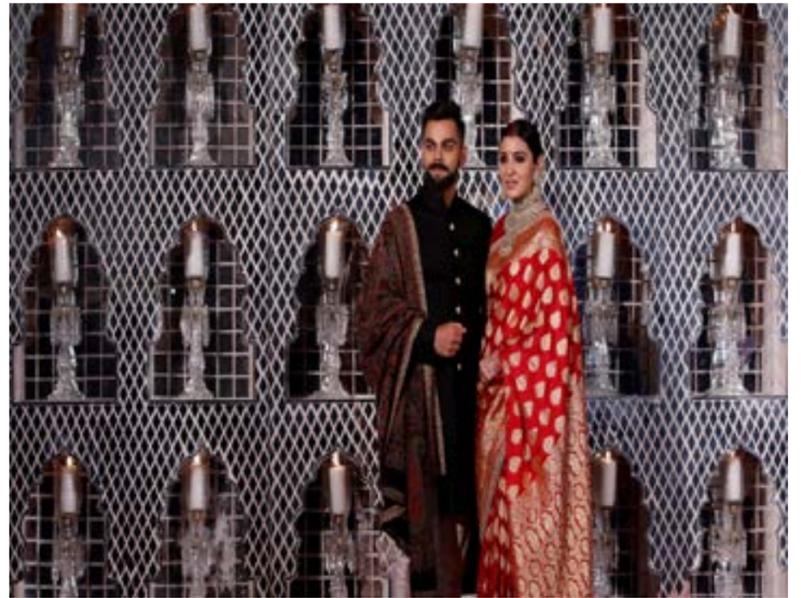
Participants stand next to a model of a high speed rail during train development ceremony in Nakhon Ratchasima



U.S. President Donald Trump speaks flanked by Vice President Mike Pence and Senator Tim Scott after the U.S. Congress passed sweeping tax overhaul legislation, on the South Lawn of the White House in Washington USA-TAX/



Cardinals celebrate the funeral of the former Archbishop of Boston Cardinal Bernard Law in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican



India's cricket team captain Virat Kohli and his wife, Bollywood actress Anushka Sharma, pose during a photo opportunity at their wedding reception in New Delhi



Arrimadas, leader of Ciudadanos in Catalonia, votes at a polling station in Barcelona



A portrait and the coffin of Kim Jong-hyun, the lead singer of top South Korean boy band SHINee, is carried during his funeral at a hospital in Seoul, South Korea SOUTHKOREA-BOYBAND/SHINEE



U.S. President Trump celebrates with Congressional Republicans after passage of GOP tax bill on the South Lawn of the White House in Washington



Indonesian policemen hold rifles while guarding recaptured U.S. citizen and inmate Christian Beasley, who escaped from Kerobokan Prison, at Badung police station in Denpasar, Bali



A demonstrator dressed as Santa Claus holds a Palestinian flag as Israeli troops fire tear gas during a protest near the border with Israel in the east of Gaza City

## Delivery Companies On Overdrive This Holiday Season

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



NEW YORK -- 'Tis the season to be shopping and shipping at Li-Lac Chocolates in Brooklyn where more than 20 percent of their sales will be shipped for the holidays.

"Getting gifts on time is super important they just can't be late, we really rely on the carrier to deliver when they promise they will," co-owner Anthony Cirone said.

This year Christmas lands on a Monday, giving retailers one less day to get gifts delivered on time. UPS, Fedex and the U.S. postal service are working on overdrive to collectively deliver over 60 million packages a day -- even weekends -- a 50 percent increase over normal volume.

DHL hired 6,000 additional workers to keep up with demand on this year's shipping orders that have climbed up 26 percent over last year.

"Are you seeing any glitches in your delivery system?" CBS News asked Jeff Ivory, DHL's vice president of sales.

A conveyer belt at DHL's warehouse in New York City.

CBS NEWS

"One of the challenges that we always have is people actually going to be home when we go for delivery. We have to cope with deliveries by putting on more flights to make sure that we have the appropriate amount of seasonal workers for delivery," Ivory said.

It's been non-stop for shipping companies

this holiday seasons as e-commerce orders have exploded. Friday will only add to the shipping craze as more businesses are offering free shipping.

Ordering gifts in time for Christmas? These dates are key

Max Wolff, Phoenix Group's chief economist, said shipping companies are struggling to keep up with online growth.



"The sheer volumes are so high and if you are growing your ecommerce 30-40 percent, year over year, are you growing your trucks and drivers 30 percent year over year? The answer is no," Wolff said.

The surge in holiday shipping has caused

some delays. Companies say they'll deliver packages right up until Christmas Eve with some even allowing customers to pick up their presents on Christmas Day. (Courtesy <https://www.cbsnews.com/news>)

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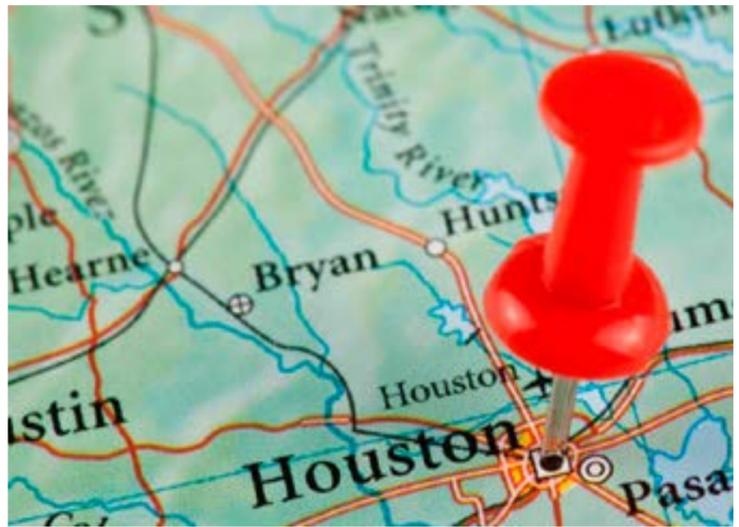
Notorious Texas highway speed traps will ruin your next road trip

By John Boyd and Heather Leighton

There's an awful lot of all-together awesomeness waiting to be discovered on Texas' roughly 80,000 miles of highways.

safe. More people were killed in traffic accidents on Texas roads in 2016 (3,773 deaths) than in any year dating back to at least 2003, according to Texas Department of Transportation data.

or west on SH 105. Between Dickinson and Galveston Where it is: The last stretch of I-45 southeast of Houston before you cross the bridge onto Galveston Island.



Where it is: Along Interstate 45 entering Rice Between Cleveland and Shepherd Where it is: Slow down when

coming out of Cleveland on US-59. There's a hill that readers say officers often wait for speeders.

Companies say workers will see some of tax windfall

WASHINGTON - AT&T, Comcast, Wells Fargo and Boeing - among other major companies - are trying to build goodwill in the wake of President Donald Trump's tax cuts by finding ways to pass along some of their likely savings to employees.

than workers. Trump was quick to celebrate an announcement by Dallas-based AT&T that it would pay a \$1,000 bonus to 200,000 workers once the tax bill passed Wednesday is signed into law.

class, even though multiple analyses show it largely showers benefits on the wealthy and corporations. The president suggested that other companies would be making similar announcements.



AT&T's general counsel says the company is confident that it will prevail in court.

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