

QUICK HITS

Japan's Asahi Buys Fuller's Beer Business

**London:** Japanese brewer Asahi has agreed to buy the beer business of London Pride-maker Fuller's for £250 million (\$327 million), the pair announced on Friday. As well as purchasing the production and distribution operations of Fuller's beer, cider and soft drinks, Asahi's European arm will also take over the wine wholesaling business and the centuries-old Griffin Brewery. This will see Fuller's focus on being a "premium pub and hotel operator", a statement said. Under the deal, Fuller's will retain ownership of its brand name while Asahi will hold the global licence to use the trademark. Fuller's was founded in 1845. Its main brewing facility is the Griffin in Chiswick, west London, where beer has been produced since 1654. AFP

Taliban Name Co-Founder as Negotiator for US talks

**Kabul:** The Taliban have appointed a co-founder of the movement as the new head of their political office in Doha, where talks have been held since Monday with US officials seeking to end 17 years of conflict in Afghanistan. "The esteemed Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar has been appointed... head of the political bureau," Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said in a statement released late on Thursday. "This step has been taken to strengthen and properly manage the ongoing negotiations process with the United States," he added. AFP

Mexico Fuel Explosion Death Toll Rises to 107

**Mexico City:** The death toll from a fiery pipeline explosion in central Mexico reached 107 on Thursday, the government announced, with 40 people also injured in the blast last week. Last Friday, the fuel line in Hidalgo state was deliberately punctured, drawing hundreds of people looking to gather gasoline before it ignited. Mexico is regularly rocked by deadly explosions at illegal pipeline taps, a dangerous but lucrative business whose players include powerful drug cartels. AFP

Germany: Police Evacuate Train due to Bomb Threat

**Berlin:** Some 500 passengers have been evacuated from a train in Germany due to a bomb threat, police said on Twitter on Friday, adding that they had also cleared some platforms at a station in Frankfurt. The passengers were all evacuated safely from the train in Germany's financial capital, police said. Police stopped the high-speed train that was travelling from Zurich to the northern German city of Kiel at Frankfurt Sued after they received a bomb threat via phone, a police spokesman said. He said police had not yet found anything suspicious. Reuters

# Ex-Trump Adviser Stone Indicted in Mueller Probe

Counts include witness tampering and making false statements

David Kocieniewski & Andrew M Harris

**New York | Washington:** Roger Stone, a longtime Republican strategist and sometime confidant of President Donald Trump, was arrested in Fort Lauderdale, Florida on Friday after being indicted by a grand jury as part of the US probe into possible coordination between the Trump campaign and Russia before the 2016 US election.

Stone, 66, is facing seven counts: one count of obstruction of an official proceeding, five counts of false statements and one count of witness tampering, according to the US justice department.

According to the indictment, by June or July 2016, Stone told "senior Trump campaign officials" that he knew that WikiLeaks had damaging information about the Clinton campaign. After the release by WikiLeaks on July 22, 2016, of emails stolen from the Democratic National Committee, a senior Trump campaign official "was directed" to contact Stone about other damaging material, and he later told the Trump campaign about potential future releases, according to the indictment.

At the time of his false testimony,



Roger Stone

Stone was still in possession of many of the emails and text messages, including some from October 4, 2016, according to Friday's filing. Stone and a high-ranking member of the Trump Campaign exchanged communications, and Stone said the group that had access to the stolen emails would release "a load every week going forward".

A self-described political showman and dirty trickster whose career dates to the Nixon administration, Stone was a Trump campaign aide until his abrupt departure in August 2015, but he remained an informal adviser.

Stone has given varying accounts about whether he had advance knowledge that WikiLeaks would

post a cache of private emails stolen from the Democratic National Committee, some of which embarrassed Democratic leaders and led to the resignation of the party chairman in the final weeks of the 2016 presidential campaign.

Even so, he has acknowledged exchanging private Twitter messages with an account claiming to be Guccifer 2.0, a hacker persona linked to the Russian government. A US indictment of 12 Russian hackers thought to be responsible for the DNC email theft referred to an unnamed American close to senior members of the Trump campaign who was in contact with the hackers. Stone told CNN just after the July indictment that he was "probably" that person.

Before the emails were made public in October of 2016, Stone gave a speech and posted a series of tweets that seemed to foreshadow their disclosure and acknowledge that he served as a "backchannel to Assange", referring to WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange. Since then he has denied any prior knowledge of the stolen emails. US prosecutors and intelligence agencies say that hackers commissioned by the Russian government were responsible for the theft. Bloomberg

## Coca-Cola, Pepsi Jointly Tout Plastic Recycling

**Davos:** The bosses of Coca-Cola and Pepsi promised on Thursday that "huge progress" would be made by 2030 to reduce plastic waste, which contaminates humans, wildlife and oceans.

Soft drink archrivals James Quincey and Ramon Laguarta participated in a panel on the plastic economy, a recurring theme at the World Economic Forum in Davos, alongside Dow Chemical boss Jim Fitterling and others.

These three companies are part of the new Alliance to End Plastic Waste announced with great pomp in mid-January by about 30 multinationals. "We can reduce the amount of plastics in the system, both in our beverages and in our snack businesses," said PepsiCo's Laguarta. "I am quite optimistic by 2030 that we will be solving the problem," he added.

The new Alliance to End Plastic Waste—also comprised big energy, petrochemical and plastic manufacturing firms—said it would donate \$1 billion (£890 million) to "minimise and manage plastic waste and promote solutions for used plastics".

About eight million tonnes of plastic

are thrown into the sea every year, according to the Earth Day advocacy group—the equivalent of a rubbish truck-load every minute.

Activists and green experts are sceptical about the intentions of firms such as Procter & Gamble, Chevron and ExxonMobil, and voiced doubt over the effectiveness of the alliance's clean-up plan.

Coca-Cola CEO Quincey, however, said the group's joint commitment was already showing benefits.

"There are countries where we have already solved the problem," he said.

The bosses said there was no question of abandoning plastic altogether. "We must recover the plastic bottles", to recycle them and create a circular economy," said Quincey.

Pressure to ban plastic is growing, however. The European Union wants to ban certain single-use plastics such as plates, cutlery, and drinking straws by the end of 2021.

Experts say up to 80 percent of all litter in the oceans is made of plastic, much of it from items such as plastic shopping bags or cold-drink bottles used just once. AFP

## 75 Countries Launch WTO Ecommerce Talks

**Davos:** Ministers from 75 countries launched talks towards drawing up global commerce rules amid growing calls for technology to be more closely regulated internationally.

The talks were announced by the EU's top trade official, Cecilia Malmstrom, on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos, and are to include the US and China, the world's biggest economies.

The launch of the negotiations at the World Trade Organization is a rare win for international co-operation, with Beijing and Washington locked in a trade war and repeated threats to multilateralism by US President Donald Trump.

Trump has specifically blasted the WTO for slighting US trade interests to the benefit of China.

Malmstrom in a tweet hailed a "historical morning in Davos" that showed that the WTO "can take on challenges of the 21st century".

"Electronic commerce is a reality in most corners of the world, so

## We Don't Sell People's Data: Zuckerberg

**San Francisco:** Facebook co-founder and chief Mark Zuckerberg on Thursday renewed his defence of the social network's business, arguing that targeting ads based on interests was different from selling people's data. "If we're committed to serving everyone, then we need a service that is affordable to everyone," Zuckerberg said in an opinion piece published in the Wall Street Journal. "The best way to do that is to offer services for free, which ads enable us to do."

2018 was a horrific year for Facebook, marked by a series of scandals over data protection and privacy and concerns that the leading social network had been manipulated by foreign interests for political purposes. Despite the scandals, Facebook revenue and user numbers have continued to grow.

Making ads relevant, and less annoying, involves understanding people's interests, according to Zuckerberg. Facebook uses "signals" such as pages users "like" and what they share about themselves to target advertising. "Sometimes this means people assume we do things that we don't do," Zuckerberg said of the business of supporting the social network with targeted ads. "For example, we don't sell people's data, even though it's often reported that we do." AFP



## Macedonia Name Change Deal: From Pastries to Passports

**Athens:** From statue plaques to school books and trade agreements, the proof of a historic deal between Greece and Macedonia to change the latter's name—a process that needs to be ratified by Greek parliament—lies in the small print.

Macedonia's parliament recently backed a constitutional revision to change the country's name to the Republic of North Macedonia. But for the deal to go through, ending one of the world's longest diplomatic disputes, the change must also be approved by Greek MPs. And even then, there is no shortage of minutiae to be ironed out over coming years.

One of the causes of the dispute was Greece's longstanding concern that Macedonia sought to usurp the heritage of Alexander the Great, one of history's greatest conquerors and a hero-figure to most Greeks today.

The previous nationalist government in Skopje built giant statues to Alexander and his father Philip, and commissioned books that blurred the Greek identity of ancient Macedonians.

Under the deal signed at the Prespes Lakes district in June, the monuments will stay in place, but Skopje is obliged to add plaques to explain their Hellenistic identity. The 20-article agreement states that within six months of it coming into force, Macedonia "shall review the status of monuments, public buildings and infrastructure on its territory, to ensure respect for (ancient Hellenic) patrimony". Authorities must also remove all public imagery of the Sun of Vergina, an ancient symbol associated with Alexander's family that adorned Macedonia's first post-independence flag until 1995.

No reference is made to the present modified flag, a stylised yellow sun on a red field with just eight rays instead of the Vergina

Sun's sixteen. The nationality of the renamed state's citizens will remain Macedonian. Greece will have some adjustments to do here, having called its neighbours "Skopjans" for the last 27 years. However, official travel documents are henceforth supposed to say "Macedonian/citizen of the Republic of North Macedonia".

The official language will be listed as Macedonian as well. But to underscore the difference from the Greek spoken by the ancient Macedonians, before the arrival of the Slavs from the 6th century onwards, the agreement specifies that the modern Macedo-

**A perhaps trickier challenge lies in establishing a common policy on the designation of local products**

nian language belongs to "the group of south Slavic languages". Country codes for licence plates will change to NM or NMK, but for all other purposes—such as sports events—they will remain MK and MKD.

A perhaps trickier challenge lies in establishing a common policy on the designation of local products, some of whom have borne the name "Macedonian" in the Greek province of Macedonia for decades. This includes Macedonian wine but also Macedonian halva, a flour-based sweet of Turkish origin popular on both sides of the border.

Under the agreement, Athens and Skopje pledge to "encourage" their respective business communities to "reach mutually accepted solutions" to this trademark conundrum.

The process is likely to take years. AFP



Catherine Deneuve

## Catherine Deneuve Gets \$1 Million in Saint Laurent Gown Auction

**Paris:** A beaded dress worn by Catherine Deneuve when she first met Alfred Hitchcock in 1969 was among dozens of her glamorous gowns sold at an auction in Paris on Thursday.

The French actress parted with close to 130 one-of-a-kind styles crafted for her by close friend Yves Saint Laurent. They included a shimmering gold number worn by Deneuve to the Oscars.

The auction raised €900,625 (\$1.02 million), according to auction house Christie's.

"Catherine Deneuve is a very beautiful actress. She was always very, very well dressed by Saint Laurent, (so) it was an unexpected opportunity to see all the dresses, and possibly even buy one, if I (could) find the right size," Isabelle Lugagne, a 76-year-old retired graphologist told Reuters.



The actress, a fashion fan often spotted at Parisian catwalk shows, put the dresses up for sale after parting with a house in Normandy, northern France, where she had stored them for decades.

Deneuve, 75, has not said what the funds will be used for.

Aside from the lot of 130 Haute Couture looks, a further 170 items are on sale in an online auction running until January 30. Reuters

### TIPS, TRIVIA & TRENDS YOUR DAILY DIET OF FUN AND FACTS

#### CNN Anchor Apologises for Birther Tweet on Kamala Harris

A CNN host has apologised for a tweet which appeared to suggest that Kamala Harris, the first Indian-origin senator, needs to prove that she was born in the US and is eligible to be the president. Chris Cuomo said during an appearance on ABC's The View that he "screwed up" and that the tweet, which he sent on Tuesday, was misinterpreted. "I screwed up. I wrote a tweet while I was doing my radio show," Cuomo told The View. The tweet drew swift criticism on Twitter, with some saying that Cuomo was giving weight to the false claim that Harris is not eligible to run for president because her parents are immigrants. Cuomo said that his tweet was intended to make the point that Harris should not have to defend herself against those accusations. He added that he made his point "poorly". Responding to a question, Cuomo said he was simply trying to "get ahead" of the latest "birther" conspiracy after letting similar rumours about former President Barack Obama devolve to the point where he had to prove he was a citizen. PTI

#### S Korean Men Lead World's Male Beauty Market

South Korean men have become the world's biggest male spenders on skincare, a market that grew by 44% in the country between 2011 and 2017, a media report said on Friday. A recent survey by data and analysis consultancy service GlobalData found that about three quarters of South Korean men undertake a beauty or grooming treatment—from salon hair treatments to at-home facials—at least once a week, CNN reported. This figure is even higher for Generation Z respondents, with 58% of those born after 2000, saying they pamper themselves with "lengthy" beauty or grooming treatments at least once per week, compared to 34% of South Korean men overall. This phenomenon can be explained in part by the influence of K-pop (Korean pop), according to Roald Malingkay, director of the Korea Institute at The Australian National University. The trend may also result from pressure on men to compete in a tough job market, according to James Turnbull, a writer and lecturer based in the city of Busan, South Korea. Turnbull told CNN that Korean companies routinely ask job applicants for photographs on their resumes. IANS

#### Queen urges Divided Britons to 'Seek Common Ground'

Queen Elizabeth II has urged people to seek "common ground", in remarks being seen as a veiled reference to the toxic debate surrounding Britain's departure from the European Union. Though her remarks were similar to her Christmas Day address, the timing of her decision to revisit them on Thursday is important. British lawmakers last week threw out the divorce deal Prime Minister Theresa May had struck with the EU, and attempts to find a replacement have been gridlocked. In her speech marking the 100th anniversary of the Sandringham Women's Institute, the monarch urged people to respect other points of view and suggested "coming together to seek out the common ground and never losing sight of the bigger picture". The queen remains publicly neutral and does not express her views. AP



#### Canada Newspaper's Editor & Publisher Found Guilty of Peddling Hate

The publisher and editor of a Toronto newspaper were found guilty on Thursday of promoting hate over articles and images that encouraged rape and denied the Holocaust. The editor-in-chief James Sears, 55, (top) and publisher LeRoy St. Germaine, 77, (below) argued at trial that "Your Ward News" was satire. But, according to local reports, the judge ruled that the evidence of "unrelenting promotion of hate" in its pages was overwhelming. This included references to women as chattel and conspiracy theories about Jews. Sentencing of the pair for willfully promoting hatred against identifiable groups is scheduled for April 26. They each face a fine of Can\$5,000 (\$3,750) or up to six weeks in prison. "We have Jesus on our side and we're going to appeal," Sears told reporters after the verdict. "I find it very hard to believe that what we published about Jews and women, which a lot of it is right out of the Bible (sic), is hate speech in Canada," he said. AFP



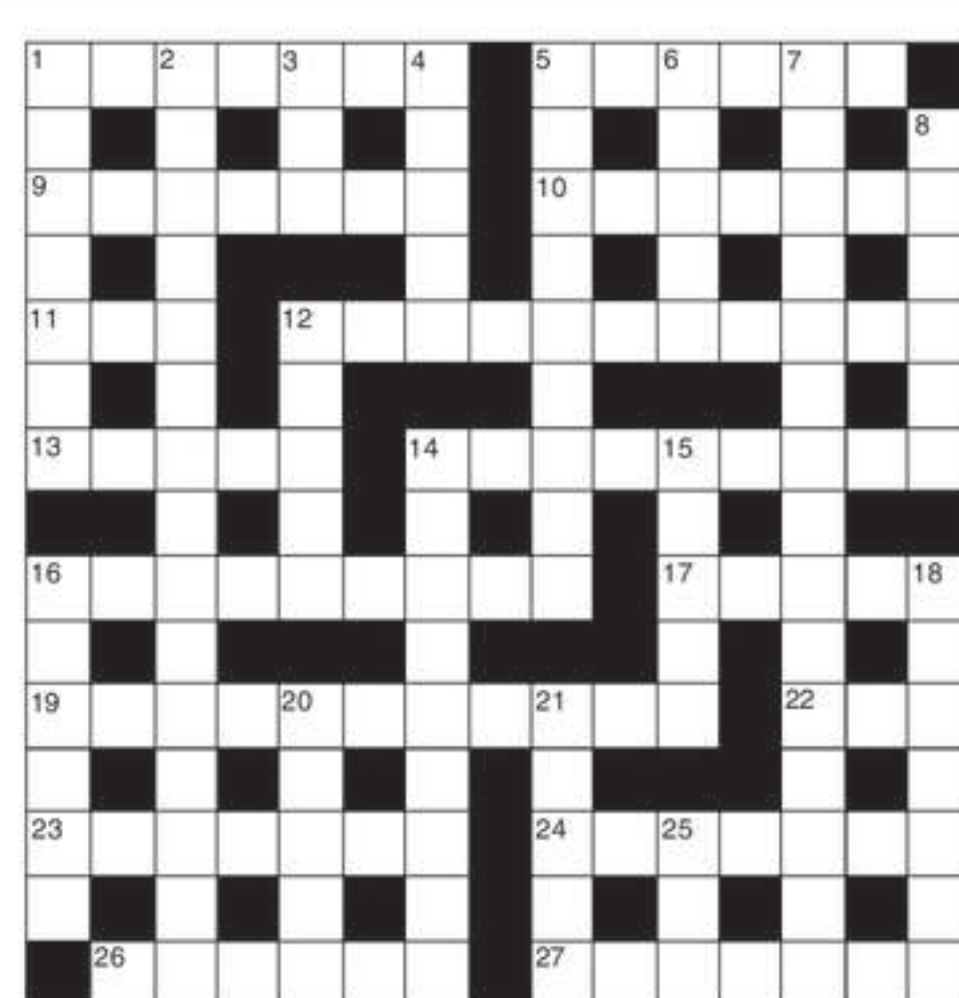
#### Tokyo Supreme Court Upholds Sterilisation Rule for Gender Change

A Tokyo court has upheld a law effectively requiring transgenders in Japan seeking to legally change their gender to be sterilised, the media reported on Friday. Takakoto Usui (in pic), a transgender man who wants to change the gender listed on his official documents, had appealed to the supreme court seeking to overturn Law 111, which requires applicants to "permanently lack functioning" reproductive parts to qualify for gender affirmation, CNN reported. The court unanimously rejected Usui's case on Thursday, ruling the 2003 law constitutional. "It is unthinkable in this day and time that the law requires a sex-change operation to change gender," Usui's lawyer Tomoyasu Oyama told CNN on Friday. "When the law was established 15 years ago, LGBT people had to make a bitter decision and swallow the conditions to pave a narrow way for official change of gender. With this decision, I hope lawmakers will change the law to support the wishes of the LGBT community." The court initially said the law was intended to prevent "problems" in parent-child relations which could lead to societal "confusion", and avoid "abrupt changes" to society. IANS



### Crossword

7314



- DOWN**
- Unruly tenant holds midnight function (7)
  - Restore normality after ruining pie with spice and ketchup (4,2,3,6)
  - Spain sustains operating unit (3)
  - Learner in the past absorbed rare composition (5)
  - Stroking round posh child who's abandoned (9)
  - Last parts of buffalo that should be stewed? (5)
  - Councillor tucked into short pig snack, cooked like these? (4,11)
  - Lewis's lion beginning to teeter at an angle (6)
  - Lighter, naked, holding last of clothing (5)
  - Healthy advice to tobacco users: "Like coke"? (9)
  - Many long to grasp this yarn (5)
  - Pulses make a variety of broths (6)
  - Dwayne's drunk but upright (7)
  - Initially you usually can cultivate agave properly (5)
  - French writer climbs small tree (5)
  - Leave a former Portuguese colony (3)

- SOLUTION TO No. 7313**
- ACROSS:** 1 Felt-tip pens. 9 Fulsome. 10 Overly. 11 Flu. 12 Illicit. 13 General. 14 Awn. 15 Bosom. 17 Lotus. 18 Frill. 20 Tunic. 22 Oil. 24 Illness. 25 Dripped. 26 Fox. 27 Kon-Tiki. 28 Pensive. 29 Spend-thrift.
- DOWN:** 1 Falkland Islands. 2 Lion cub. 3 Theft. 4 Ploughman. 5 External. 6 Saturation point. 7 Africa. 8 Cycles. 16 Satisfied. 18 Frisky. 19 Lee side. 21 Chianti. 23 Ladder. 25 Depth.
- © The Daily Mail

### Dilbert

by S Adams

