

QUICK HITS

Venezuela's Guaidó Names New Board for US-based Oil Subsidiary

Caracas: Venezuela's opposition leader Juan Guaidó took another step on Wednesday in an international bid to economically starve President Nicolás Maduro's regime, announcing the appointment of a new board for Citgo, the US-based arm of state oil firm PDVSA. Guaidó—who has been recognised as acting president by more than 50 countries and also heads the opposition-controlled National Assembly legislature, which appointed the new board—is locked in a battle with Maduro for control of the crisis-hit country. The US has sanctioned key regime financial assets including Citgo, and on Wednesday President Donald Trump once more refused to rule out military action against the leftist leader. Announcing the new six-member board on Twitter, Guaidó said it "will be made up of qualified Venezuelans, who are free of corruption and without any partisan affiliation". AFP

Egypt Parliament Extends President's Term Limits

Cairo: Egypt parliament has overwhelmingly approved constitutional changes to remove term limits for President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi, allowing him to stay on power possibly until 2034. The changes are part of a package of amendments that will be further examined before final approval in the chamber and a national referendum. On Thursday, 485 lawmakers in the 596-seat body backed the amendments. Parliament Speaker Ali Abdel-Aal said they would now be discussed by the Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee for 60 days before being put to a referendum. The national referendum will likely take place before early May. AP

US Fails to Halt Iran Bid to Free Frozen Billions

The Hague: An international court on Wednesday ruled Iran can proceed with a bid to unfreeze assets in the US, rejecting Washington's claims the case must be halted because of Tehran's alleged support for international terrorism. Washington had argued that Iran's "unclean hands"—a reference to Tehran's suspected backing of terror groups—should disqualify its lawsuit to recover \$2 billion in assets frozen by the US Supreme Court in 2016. The International Court of Justice in The Hague threw out some of the US challenges, and said it had the right to hold full hearings at a later date as to whether Tehran will get the money back. Chief judge Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf said the UN's top court "unanimously rejects the preliminary objections to admissibility raised by the US". AFP

Google, Facebook Forced to Pay Creators Under New EU Rules

Law to help artists, musicians, publishers get fair remuneration for use of their content

Brussels: Online platforms will be required to compensate publishers and creators for the content that appears on their websites, under new European Union copyright rules agreed on Wednesday that could shrink access to online media in Europe.

The new rules mean music producers and publishers could come gunning for more money from Alphabet Inc's Google and Facebook Inc to compensate for the display of their songs, video and news articles.

If artists and music producers refuse to grant platforms licences, tech firms will be required to remove uploads.

The new European rules make digital platforms liable for content posted by users on their sites.

Copyright Reforms Hit Tech Firms

IF ARTISTS and music producers refuse to grant platforms licences, tech firms will be required to remove uploads.

IF PUBLISHERS don't waive their rights, web firms won't be able to display longer fragments of news articles under headlines.

ONLINE PLATFORMS in existence for less than three years and with less than €10 million in revenue and fewer than 5 million monthly users are exempted from installing upload filters.

YOUTUBE and Instagram will be required to install upload filters to prevent users from uploading copyrighted materials.

New rules mean music producers and publishers could come gunning for more money from Google and Facebook to compensate for their songs, video and news articles

lishers, who often get significant internet traffic to their sites from search and social, are allowed to waive their rights and let platforms display the content for free.

The rules create new liabilities for tech firms, chipping away at previous protections that absolved them of legal responsibility for what users posted on their sites. Those carve-outs were designed to help web firms grow in the early days of the internet but now officials want them to shoulder more responsibility for the material their users create, such as terror content, hate speech, and fake news.

The agreement on copyright still needs to be rubber-stamped by the European Parliament and the bloc's member states, which is typically a formality. Bloomberg

speech activists saying they could result in censorship online.

The rules "will enable creators to be remunerated fairly by large online platforms that today are siphoning the value of the creative sector while failing to compensate creators," said VAéronique Desbroses, Director General of GESAC, a European umbrella association of authors and composers.

As part of the new rules, the EU is requiring tech firms to negotiate licences for songs or video clips before publishing user uploads of content that incorporates them, and remove or block material that lacks

appropriate permissions.

"This law will fundamentally change the internet as we know it," said Julia Reda, a member of the European Parliament from Germany's Pirate Party and staunch opponent of the copyright package's concerns of censorship. Platforms "will have no choice but to deploy upload filters, which are by their nature both expensive and error-prone."

The bloc also agreed to grant publishers new legal rights to help them seek compensation from all types of online services that display snippets of their articles. Pub-

Trump Weighing Extension for China Deadline

Washington: President Donald Trump is considering pushing back the deadline for imposition of higher tariffs on Chinese imports by 60 days, as the world's two biggest economies try to negotiate a solution to their trade dispute, according to people familiar with the matter.

The president said on Tuesday that he was open to letting the March 1 deadline for more than doubling tariffs on \$200 billion of Chinese goods slide, if the two countries are close to a deal that addresses deep structural changes to China's economic policies—though he added he was not "inclined" to do so.

The people said that Trump is weighing whether to add 60 days to the current deadline to give negotiations more time to continue.

"I think it's going along very well," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office this week. "They're showing us tremendous respect."

A spokeswoman for US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer declined to comment.

Chinese officials had initially



proposed an extension of 90 days, but that was knocked back by the U.S. side, people familiar with that request said.

Asian stocks steadied and U.S. stock futures climbed. Treasuries slipped and the yen dipped.

Lighthizer and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin are in Beijing for the latest round of high-level talks with Chinese Vice Premier Liu He on Thursday and Friday. A meeting between Lighthizer and

Chinese President Xi Jinping is being tentatively scheduled for this week. Trump's willingness to extend the deadline may depend on the outcome of that meeting, one of the people said.

Trump has indicated he will need to meet Xi to agree on a final deal. While no date has been set, a White House aide this week said the U.S. president still wants to meet his Chinese counterpart soon in a bid to end the trade war. Bloomberg

Ex-FBI Chief Says He Feared Trump would Kill Russia Probe

Washington: The former acting director of the FBI has said that President Donald Trump's firing of his predecessor James Comey set off alarms of a threat against the Russia meddling investigation and sparked discussions of invoking the Constitution to remove Trump.

In an interview with the CBS investigative programme "60 Minutes", Andrew McCabe said he moved

quickly to shore up the Russia investigation after Comey was sacked on May 9, 2017, in case Trump then fired him to shut down the probe.

"I think the next day, I met with the team investigating the Russia cases," McCabe said in an excerpt of the interview released on Thursday.

"I was very concerned that I was able to put the Russia case on absolutely solid ground in an indelible

fashion that were I removed quickly and reassigned or fired, that the case could not be closed or vanish in the night without a trace."

According to 60 minutes correspondent Scott Pelley, McCabe also confirmed previous reports that senior officials of the FBI and Justice Department discussed using the US Constitution's 25th Amendment to remove Trump. AFP

Judge Rules Manafort Lied to FBI, Mueller

Washington: Paul Manafort broke his plea deal by repeatedly lying to prosecutors after he agreed to cooperate with Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election, a judge ruled on Wednesday.

His misrepresentations touched on areas of central interest to Mueller's prosecutors. Manafort lied about his contacts with a Russian translator, Konstantin Kilimnik, who Mueller says has ties to Russian intelligence services, the judge concluded. Some of the contacts with Kilimnik came while Manafort was running President Donald Trump's campaign, and some occurred after Trump's election, according to prosecutors.

Manafort also lied about the nature of a \$125,000 payment to a law firm and about a matter under a separate Department of Justice investigation, according to U.S. District Judge Amy Berman Jackson in Washington.

The ruling doesn't bode well for Manafort, 69, when he stands before Jackson for sentencing on March 13 for pleading guilty to two conspiracy counts. Manafort faces as many as 10 years in prison, and Jackson may still conclude that he no longer deserves any leniency for attempting to cooperate in a dozen debriefings on a wide range of topics. Bloomberg

May Faces Defeat in No-Deal Brexit Vote

London: Prime Minister Theresa May risks another humiliating Brexit defeat at the hands of her own eurosceptic MPs on Thursday, with just weeks to go until Britain officially leaves the EU.

Parliament will hold a symbolic vote endorsing May's Brexit strategy but Conservative Party hardliners could abstain, threatening defeat for May. Eurosceptics in the party's European Research Group are worried that a vote in favour could be seen as ruling out leaving the EU without a deal.

"Conservative MPs really ought not to be associated with anything, express or implied, which seems to take no deal off the table," said leading ERG member Steve Baker.

"Compromising no deal would be the daftest negotiating strategy and not in the national interest."

A senior source within the ERG said the group would abstain, according to the Daily Telegraph, which would spell almost certain defeat for May given Labour's opposition to the motion.

But Brexit Secretary Stephen Barclay, who opened Thursday's debate, sought to reassure leave-supporting MPs, saying that it was



still government policy to leave next month, deal or no deal.

"The House has passed legislation by a big majority... to say we're leaving on March 29 and the legislation takes precedence" over a non-binding vote to take no deal off the table, he told parliament.

Leading Brexiteer Liam Fox warned colleagues that defeat for the government would raise doubts about whether a renegotiated deal could get through parliament, making the EU less likely to make an offer.

"Our European partners will be watching our debate and listening today to see if they get the impression that if they were to make those concessions parliament would definitely deliver," said Fox. AFP

Amazon Scraps Plan to Build Headquarters in New York City

San Francisco: Amazon.com Inc said it's pulling out of a plan to build a headquarters in New York City, after a backlash from some residents and politicians. The e-commerce giant had pledged to hire 25,000 tech workers in coming years with an average salary of \$150,000.

Almost immediately after Amazon announced last year that it chose Long Island City in Queens as one of two sites to build new corporate offices, local lawmakers and community organisers began to question the project.

Amazon was criticised for almost \$3 billion of financial incentives the company won from the city and New York state. There were also concerns that an influx of new, highly paid workers might have pushed out existing residents and added to congestion on the already-overcrowded subway.

"We do not intend to re-open the HQ2 search at this time," Amazon said. The Seattle-based company plans to proceed with other major new offices in Northern Virginia and Nashville. Bloomberg

Apple Ex-Lawyer Faces Insider Trading Charges

San Francisco: At Apple Inc, former top lawyer Gene Daniel Levoft was responsible for making sure employees didn't violate insider-trading laws. It turns out he was the one who was buying and selling shares illegally, according to US authorities.

Levoft, who until last year was Apple's senior director of corporate law, repeatedly traded on non-public revenue-and-earnings filings dating back to 2011, the Securities and Exchange Commission and federal prosecutors said on Wednesday.

The illegal investments led to about \$277,000 in profits, while allowing him to avoid \$377,000 of losses, according to the US attorney's office in Newark, New Jersey, which filed criminal charges against Levoft.

For instance, in July 2015, Levoft, 45, learned that Apple wouldn't meet analysts' third-quarter forecast for iPhone sales, the SEC said in a related civil complaint. That

month, he sold about \$10 million of Apple stock—virtually all of his holdings. When the company reported earnings, its shares plunged more than 4%. Levoft avoided losing about \$345,000, the SEC said.

Levoft's attorney, Kevin Marino, said he is reviewing both the SEC's civil complaint and the criminal charges. Levoft is slated to appear in federal court next week, according to Marino.

The allegations are an embarrassment for Apple, which is now reviewing policies it has implemented to prevent illicit share transactions. The company has had a mostly clean record on financial reporting issues since shareholders accused its co-founder Steve Jobs of options backdating in the mid-2000s. Bloomberg

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

Prince Philip Will Not Be Prosecuted over Car Crash

Prince Philip, the 97-year-old husband of Britain's Queen Elizabeth, will not face prosecution over a car crash last month that injured two women and left his Land Rover flipped on its side. Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, escaped unhurt from the collision on January 17 when he pulled out onto a main road, colliding with an oncoming car near the royals' Sandringham residence in eastern England. The other



driver, a 28-year-old woman, suffered cuts to her knee and a 45-year-old woman passenger in the car, which also had a nine-month-old baby on board, sustained a broken wrist. The accident prompted a debate in Britain as to whether Philip should still be driving at his age. He received a warning from police for driving without a seatbelt just two days after the crash and earlier this month voluntarily gave up his driving licence. "We took into account all the circumstances in this case, including the level of culpability, the age of the driver and the surrender of the driving licence," the Crown Prosecution Service said in a statement on Thursday. "We have decided that it would not be in the public interest to prosecute." Reuters

Bradley Cooper Wins Award for Directing his Dog



Actor-director Bradley Cooper has won the Oscar award from animal rights organisation People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) for directing his dog in A Star Is Born. According to people.com, PETA's film and television division on Tuesday awarded Cooper the "Oscar" award "for his enlightened decision to cast his own canine companion in A Star Is Born rather than using one supplied by a notorious animal exhibitor". Cooper cast Charlie as his dog in the self-directed musical drama, which also stars Lady Gaga, because they already had the bond he wanted to portray on the big screen. IANS

'Tinder for Cows' Matches Livestock in the Mood for Love

A Tinder-inspired app is helping farmers match up potential partners for their cattle. Called "Tudder"—a mix of dating app Tinder and udder—it lets farmers swipe right on cattle they like the look of. They are then directed to a page on the SellMyLivestock website where they can browse more pictures and data about the animals before deciding whether to buy. Valuable information is available on matters like milk yield and protein content, or calving potential, explained Doug Baimner, CEO of Hectare Agritech which runs SellMyLivestock and Graindex, a UK-based online agritech trading platform. "Matching livestock online is even easier than it is to match humans because there's a huge amount of data that sits behind these wonderful animals that predicts what their offspring will be," he said. Launching in time for V-Day, the makers believe Tudder is the first matchmaking app for livestock. Reuters

Dog Named 'Donald Trump' Wasn't Killed over Politics, says Sheriff

A Minnesota sheriff says a dog named Donald Trump wasn't shot and killed over a political rivalry, despite false claims circulating on social media that have spurred "violent threats" against some county residents. The Jackson County Sheriff's Office concluded the person who shot Donald Trump the dog on Sunday was "legally protecting their livestock" on private property. The shooter has not been identified. "Facts have been misrepresented on social media sites," Sheriff Shawn Haken's office said in a statement about the dog's death. "Unfortunately, people are now posting multiple threats of violence towards citizens in the area and justifying the threats based on these inaccurate posts on



social media." The dog's owner, Randal Thom, is an avid supporter of the president and has been featured in dozens of news stories for frequenting his rallies. Some social media users claimed a neighbour, who they believed to be a Democrat, intentionally killed Thom's dog. AP

Crossword

7331

29 Catherine put on curlers to do some gliding? (6-5)

DOWN

1 Building brand with rock star, I'm in a mess (6,3,6)

2 Very costly game at home against rogues, ignoring odds (7)

3 Previously stocked uranium, not very much (5)

4 What taxis left in congested open area (9)

5 Pudding, one in a pot, stirred about (7)

6 Engineers cool new resource that helps one brush up (9,6)

7 Friendly set tours Ulster area (6)

8 Is pub concealing oxygen pressure line? (6)

16 Pilot turned on engine finally, making low sound (9)

18 Medium club covers constant, very short length (6)

19 Get firm to study doggie ale that's gone off (7)

21 Bill's in river, a very low stretch of water (4,3)

23 Rubbish heap includes leaves (6)

25 Carroll's part of Outer Hebrides (5)

- ACROSS
- 1 Withdraw old food to subdue European mayor (11)
- 9 Leader of rebellion ignored publication (7)
- 10 Repeated phrases about Post Office scams (3-4)
- 11 Confessional loves sound of dove (3)
- 12 Infernal middle of fire with swirling smoke (7)
- 13 Saw lead choking pet dog (7)
- 14 Area of grassland hidden in Middle Ages (3)
- 15 Bath University hosted in NASA complex (5)
- 17 Some Arab horses can't stand (5)
- 18 GP says, neglecting last of old Italian family (5)
- 20 Fear old man in control of engineers (5)
- 22 Back standard strike (3)
- 24 Romantic singer, rare old one, found in Costa Rica (7)
- 25 14 females consume party starter (4-3)
- 26 It helps foot to balance ultimately (3)
- 27 Busy, yet ready to start playing Monopoly? (2,3,2)
- 28 Good man stops fighting with the Spanish layabout (7)

Dilbert

by S Adams

I DISCOVERED I CAN INSULT OUR BOSS IF I MAKE IT SOUND LIKE AN OLD SAYING.

HE THINKS ALL OLD SAYINGS ARE WISE.

HERE HE COMES.

DID YOU READ MY EMAIL?

A MAN WHO SENDS EMAIL HAS NOTHING TO SAY.

HIDATO

FINISH THE PATH - SOLVE THE PUZZLE

Complete the grid so that numbers 1 - 31 connect horizontally, vertically or diagonally.

Yesterday's puzzle solution.

29 28 27 26 25
30 22 23 24 36
21 31 33 34 35 37
20 32 1 2 4 38
19 18 17 3 39 5 6
16 15 40 13 7
14 12 11 8
10 9

7 LITTLE WORDS

Find the 7 words to match the 7 clues. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of letters in each solution. Each letter combination can be used only once, but all letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.

CLUES SOLUTIONS

1 frothy Italian coffee drink (10) _____

2 hipster toast topper (7) _____

3 stereotypical suburban fence (6) _____

4 clever discernments (8) _____

5 repeated (10) _____

6 more tempestuous (8) _____

7 procedure using a scalpel (7) _____

STOR CA CA CK CINO
AVO ER DO INSI IT
PI MIER GHTS PUPC RG
SU ERY ATED RE ET

Yesterday's Answers: 1. RUEFULLY 2. HEADPHONES 3. FILMOODER 4. EARNIS 5. SHARING 6. GIFTED 7. TERRIFIED