

QUICK HITS

Russia Plans New Missile Systems to Counter US by 2021

Moscow: Russia will race to develop two new land-based missile launch systems before 2021 to respond to Washington's planned exit from a landmark nuclear arms control pact, it said on Tuesday. President Vladimir Putin said at the weekend that Russia had suspended the Cold War-era Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces Treaty, which bans both nations from stationing short- and intermediate-range land-based missiles in Europe. Moscow and Washington accuse each other of violating the treaty and Putin said Russia had acted after the United States announced it was withdrawing from the pact. Reuters

Still Time for Brexit Solution, Says Merkel

Tokyo: There is still time to find a solution to the impasse on Britain's withdrawal from the EU, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said in Japan on Tuesday. UK Prime Minister Theresa May's Brexit deal was rejected by parliament last month and she is trying to persuade the EU to accept changes to the agreement before the March 29 deadline for departure. "From a political point of view, there is still time," said Merkel. "That should be used, used by all sides. But for this it would be very important to know what exactly the British side envisages in terms of its relationship with the EU." Reuters

10 Killed in Paris Building Inferno, Suspect Arrested

Paris: At least 10 people, including a baby, were killed and over 30 injured in a fire at an eight-storey building here on Tuesday. A female suspect has been arrested in connection with the incident, the city prosecutor said. According to Paris' Fire Department, the death toll was not final as some of the injured were in a serious condition and firefighters were still searching the building where the fire broke out at about 1 am local time. Fifty people were evacuated by ladders from the blaze in the upmarket 16th arrondissement. IANS

Apple Retakes Position as Largest US Co by M-cap

New York: Apple is once again the world's most valuable company — but at a much lower level than its former peak. The iPhone maker reclaimed the mantle of world's largest stock by market capitalisation on Tuesday, edging out Amazon and Microsoft for the first time in two months. The list of the biggest names on Wall Street has been repeatedly shuffled this year, with each of the megacap technology names holding the top spot at some point. Bloomberg

Trump Inaugural Committee Hit with Federal Subpoena

Prosecutors ask members of President's inaugural committee to hand over documents linked to donations and spending

Washington: Escalating one of the investigations into President Trump's inaugural committee, federal prosecutors ordered on Monday that its officials turn over documents about donors, finances and activities, according to two people familiar with the inquiry. The subpoena seeks documents related to all of the committee's donors and guests; any benefits handed out, including tickets and photo opportunities with the president; federal disclosure filings; vendors; contracts; and more, one of the people said.

The new requests expand an investigation prosecutors opened late last year amid a flurry of scrutiny of the inaugural committee. And they showed that the investigations surrounding Trump, once centered on potential ties to Russia during the 2016 presidential election, have spread far beyond the special counsel's office to include virtually all aspects of his adult life: his business, his campaign, his inauguration and his presidency.

In the subpoena, investigators also showed interest in whether any foreigners illegally donated to the committee, as well as whether



Federal law prohibits foreign contributions to federal campaigns, political action committees and inaugural funds

her committee staff members knew that such donations were illegal, asking for documents laying out legal requirements for donations. Federal law prohibits foreign contributions to federal campaigns, political action committees and inaugural funds.

Prosecutors also requested all documents related to vendors and contractors with the inaugural committee, which raised a record

\$107 million and spent lavishly. People familiar with the subpoena said prosecutors are interested in potential money laundering as well as election fraud, though it is possible that the prosecutors do not suspect the inaugural committee of such violations. The prosecutors cited those crimes in the subpoena simply as justification for their demand for documents, the people said.

Only one individual was named as part of the subpoena's demand for documents: Imaad Zuberi, a former fund-raiser for President Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton who was seeking inroads with Mr. Trump, and whose company, Avenue Ventures, gave \$900,000 to the inaugural committee. A spokesman for the inaugural committee said it was still reviewing the subpoena and intended to cooperate with the investigation. A spokesman for the United States attorney's office in Manhattan declined to comment. ABC first reported that a subpoena was in the works.

Prosecutors have pursued the possibility that the inaugural committee made false statements to the Federal Election Commission, according to people familiar with the matter. NYT

Apple Agrees to €500M Tax Settlement with France

Paris: Apple said on Tuesday it had reached an agreement with French authorities to settle 10 years of back taxes, becoming the latest US company to reach a deal with France which has led a European push for higher taxes on tech giants.

French news weekly L'Express reported that Apple had paid nearly €500 million to resolve the case in a confidential settlement reached in December.

In 2016, Apple was ordered by the European Commission to pay €13 billion in back taxes to Ireland. Apple declined to disclose the amount paid, but a source familiar with the case confirmed the figure to AFP. "The French tax administration recently concluded a multi-year audit on the company's French accounts and an adjustment will be published in our public accounts," Apple said in a statement. "We know the important role taxes play in society and we pay our taxes in all the countries where we operate, in complete conformity with laws and practices in force at the local level," said the company. AFP

Trapping Indian Students? Really Mr. Trump?

Seema Sirohi

Washington: Who would have thought that with all the social problems bubbling up in Donald Trump's America, the US government would spend its considerable talents and energy on trapping Indian students.

At least 129 Indian students are in various US detention centres for allegedly participating in "immigration fraud" by enrolling in a fake university run by undercover agents. They wanted to maintain their visa status but are now staring at criminal proceedings and possible deportation.

The undercover brigade was obviously done entrapping potential terrorists and drug czars and students working minimum wage jobs off campus were top of the list.

It is the largest mass arrest of Indians in the US — think about that. And there may be more arrests in the coming days. Tens of mostly well-meaning young Indians whose real crime was dreaming the American dream and make a better life are now in US prisons.

The whole affair smacks of Devyani Khobragade multiplied many times over with huge diplomatic and political implications unless something changes quickly. The spectacle of hundreds of Indian students sitting in US jails for months on end as they await court hearings would be disastrous for the larger relationship.

Surely, sensible people in the State Department and the White House know that but will they stop the turbo-charged Immigration and Customs Enforcement — aptly abbreviated to ICE — from becoming a wrecking ball, that too in election season?

ICE should focus on the eight "recruiters" — the con men who lured the students to the phony "Farmington University" for personal gain. Indian students should be allowed to leave the country or transfer to other universities if they so desire.

The Indian Embassy and the consulates are working overtime to help the affected students. It doesn't help that the students are spread across this vast country. Consular access hasn't been easy. Providing the students legal help, finding a common strategy, navi-

gating different jurisdictions and securing their release is no small task. But India's new ambassador Harsh Shringla has jumped right in, supported ably by his team for this baptism by fire.

Various Telegu NRI associations — most of the students are from Andhra Pradesh — are pitching in but the magnitude of the problem requires high-level intervention from the US side.

It's unfortunate the students walked right into Trump Administration's policy trap, conjured up by a man called Stephen Miller, the Cruella de Vil of immigration policy.

Miller is a scary man of 33 years with too much power and too little heart. He is out to "save Americans from immigrant criminals" and wants no refugees and preferably no more brown people coming in.

Miller and like-minded hardliners have given ICE a wide mandate, which essentially allows detention and deportation at will. There are no second chances. No one is a Miller fan and at times even Trump has called his interventions extreme.

Miller's many policy memoranda are behind the multiple ICE crackdowns — be it students or H-1B visa seekers. He has found ways to trap people in a Catch-22 in unique ways, which raise questions about the rule of law.

Take the "Notice to Appear," a stratagem that traps you in a Kafkaesque nightmare. Many of the detained students have received such notices, which basically ensure that you are damned if you do, and damned if you don't.

A student is required to appear before an immigration judge but dates are not available for weeks on end and an actual hearing may be months away because of backlogs. In the meantime, he is deemed "out of status" and thus illegal and can be punished for that.

In the end, it's the US universities that will hurt. At least 186,000 Indian students were enrolled in various universities in 2018, the second highest after China. American educational institutions made \$39 billion in fees off foreign students and Indians supplied the second-largest chunk. The White House and Miller should think about that.



ANIRBAN BORA

Workplace Messaging Startup Slack to Go Public

Washington: Workplace messaging startup Slack said on Monday it had filed a confidential registration for an initial public offering, becoming the latest of a group of richly valued tech enterprises to look to Wall Street.

California-based Slack's filing comes under a special provision of securities laws enabling startups to begin the IPO process without disclosing details of their financing.

The statement offered no information on the date or amount of money expected to be raised. Some reports say Slack will use the direct listing, a method used by Spotify, that allows insiders to sell existing shares without issuing new stock, streamlining the IPO process and avoiding big investment banking fees.

Slack, which claims some 10 million users in 150 countries, has raised more than \$1 billion from investors with the latest valuing the company at \$7.1 billion, making it one of the most richly valued "unicorns" — startups with private funding worth at least \$1 billion. Slack, which offers real-time messaging for the workplace, is used to help improve communication and help companies get around email overload. It offers free services for small teams and paid plans with additional options. AFP

Zuckerberg Sees 'Positive' Force of Facebook Despite Firestorm

San Francisco: Mark Zuckerberg has said he sees Facebook as a largely "positive" force for society as the embattled social network marked its 15th anniversary. Even as Facebook is facing a wave of criticism over issues of manipulation, misinformation, abuse and other social ills, Zuckerberg said on Monday it would be a mistake "to overly emphasise the negative" impacts of social media and the internet.

The Facebook co-founder and chief executive said he sees profound social changes "as networks of people connected via the internet replace traditional hierarchies and reshape institutions from government to business to media."

In a post on his Facebook page, he argued that "while any rapid social change creates uncertain-



Mark Zuckerberg

ty, I believe what we're seeing is people having more power, and a long term trend reshaping society to be more open and accountable over time."

He said Facebook and other social networks have fundamentally changed how people interact with their communities and institutions. AFP

FB Bans 4 Myanmar Ethnic Rebel Groups

Yangon: Facebook has blacklisted four more of Myanmar's ethnic rebel groups, the platform announced Tuesday as it struggles to control rampant hate speech, misinformation and incitement on its platform.

For years the social media giant has been lambasted for its slow and ineffectual response to incendiary posts, particularly against the country's Rohingya Muslims.

The company has embarked on a huge PR campaign over the last year to prove it is taking action in a country with an estimated 20 million Facebook accounts. AFP

Crypto Exchange CEO Dies with Password to Clients' \$200 M

Toronto: Digital-asset exchange Quadriga CX has a \$200-million problem with no obvious solution — just the latest cautionary tale in the unregulated world of cryptocurrencies. The online startup can't retrieve about C\$190 million (\$145 million) in Bitcoin, Litecoin, Ether and other digital tokens held for its customers, according to court documents filed Jan. 31 in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Nor can Vancouver-based Quadriga CX pay the C\$70 million in cash they're owed.

Access to Quadriga CX's digital "wallets" — an application that stores the keys to send and receive cryptocurrencies — appears to have been lost with the passing of Quadriga CX Chief Executive Officer Gerald Cotten, who died Dec. 9 in India from complications of Crohn's disease. He was 30.

Cotten was always conscious about security — the laptop, email addresses and messaging system he used to run the 5-year-old business were encrypted, according to an affidavit



from his widow, Jennifer Robertson. He took sole responsibility for the handling of funds and coins and the banking and accounting side of the business and, to avoid being hacked, moved the "majority" of digital coins into cold storage.

His security measures are understandable. Virtual currency exchanges suffered at least five major attacks last year. Japan, home to some of the world's most active digital-asset exchanges, has also hosted two of the biggest known

crypto hacks: the Mt. Gox debacle of 2014 and the theft of nearly \$500 million in digital tokens from Coincheck Inc. last January.

The problem is, Robertson said she can't find his passwords or any business records for the company. Experts brought in to try to hack into Cotten's other computers and mobile phone met with only "limited success" and attempts to circumvent an encrypted USB key have been foiled, his widow, who lives a suburb of Halifax, said in the court filing. Bloomberg

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

Hawaii Considers Raising Legal Smoking Age—to 100

Would-be cigarette smokers in the US state of Hawaii might have to wait a very long time for their first legal drag, after a lawmaker introduced a Bill that would bar sales to anyone under the age of 100. The proposed law, introduced by local Democratic representative Richard Creagan, would effectively amount to a cigarette ban by 2024. Hawaii already has some of the toughest laws on cigarette sales but Creagan — an emergency room doctor — believes more needs to be done to ban "the deadliest artifact in human history", according to his proposed Bill. Under current law, you must be 21 years old to purchase cigarettes in Hawaii. Nationwide, the minimum age is 18 or 19. Creagan's proposal calls for raising the cigarette buying age to 30 by next year, 40 in 2021, 50 in 2022 and 60 in 2023. By 2024, the minimum age would be 100. He said the Bill is structured to withstand any legal challenge. AFP

Japan Deputy PM Blames Childless Women for Population Decline

Japan's deputy Prime Minister Taro Aso has come under fire for blaming childless women for the country's declining population, the media reported on Tuesday. During a speech, Aso, 78, denied that the elderly were the cause of the decline and increasing social security costs, CNN reported. "There are lots of strange people who say the elderly are to blame, but that is wrong," said Aso. "The problem is with those who didn't give birth." After being grilled by an Opposition lawmaker during a budget committee session, Aso said on Monday that he would retract the remark "if it caused misunderstanding". IANS

US President Invites Bullied Boy Named Trump to Annual Speech

When US President Donald Trump delivers his second State of the Union speech to Congress on Tuesday, his guests will include Joshua Trump, a sixth grader passionate about science and animals. The youngster isn't a member of the president's family, but instead a boy from Wilmington, Delaware, who has been bullied in school as a result of his last name, according to a short statement issued by the White House. "He appreciates science, art and history," the statement said. "He also loves animals and hopes to pursue a related career in the future," it continued, adding young Trump's hero and best friend is his Uncle Cody, a member of the US air force. "Unfortunately, Joshua has been bullied in school due to his last name. He is thankful to the first lady and the Trump family for their support," the statement concluded. AFP

Statue of Limitations? Facebook Draws Line over Museum Nudes

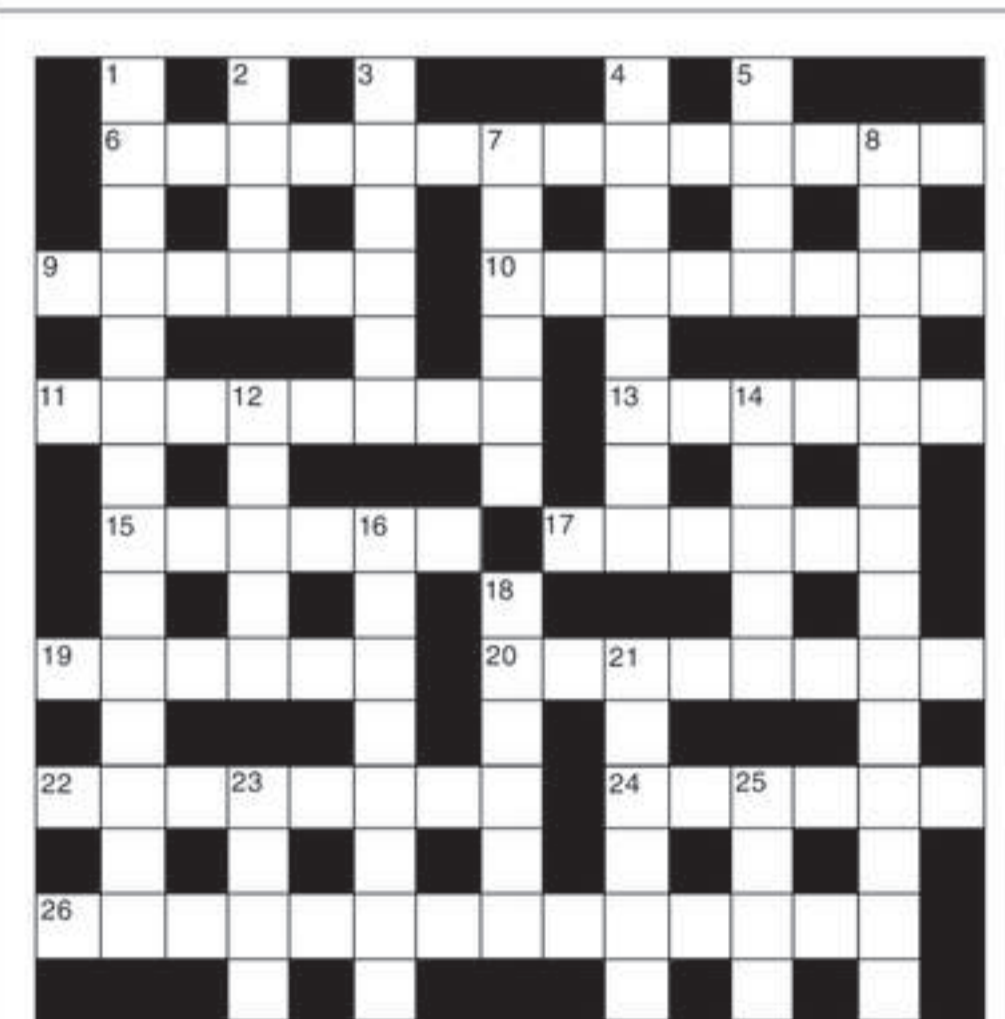
A Geneva art museum says Facebook prohibited it from promoting an upcoming exhibit with images of two statues — a half-naked Venus and a nude, kneeling man. The Museum of Art and History took to Twitter to say it had wanted to post pictures of the statues on Facebook to promote the "Caesar and the Rhone" exhibit that opens on Friday, but the social media platform "prevented us from it, because of their nudity". The museum instead put the images on Twitter on Friday with the French word for "censored" over the statues' presumably private parts, adding: "Maybe it's time that this platform changes its policy for museums and cultural institutions?" AP

Banksy Painting that Self-Destructed On Display in Germany

A Banksy painting that shocked onlookers as it partially shredded itself after being sold at auction is on display in Germany. The Frieder Burda museum in Baden-Baden said on Monday that "Girl with Balloon", which self-destructed last year after an unidentified European collector successfully bid \$1.4 million at a Sotheby's auction, will be shown from February 5 through March 3. The painting, retitled "Love is in the Bin" after the shredding, will then be moved to the Staatsgalerie Stuttgart museum on permanent loan. "Girl With Balloon", which depicts a small child reaching up toward a heart-shaped red balloon, was originally stenciled on a wall in east London and has been endlessly reproduced, becoming one of Banksy's best-known images. AP

Crossword

7323



ACROSS
6 It's ground then shredded for nominal payment (10,4)
9 Grave maybe that may identify one's source (6)
10 Downgrade top representative after start of riot (8)
11 Withdraw cover off commercial plant (8)
13 Major work involves sort of square tent (3,3)
15 Old people welcome trainee fore-caster (6)
17 Some poetry entertains Tanzanian to some extent (6)
19 Agree property should include name (6)
20 Relevant stuff (8)
22 Novel container cook designed in HQ (8)
24 Unusual thing marshal did to artillery ultimately (6)
26 Sort of outré gang slang that's heard after watershed (6,8)

DOWN
1 Tory magazine's left activity watched by many (9,5)
2 Part of church partially collapsed (4)
3 Leased hospital department in debt (6)
4 Training ate into boring item (5,3)
5 Self-righteous person parking in odd positions (4)
7 Cleric shuffled round (6)
8 People stand for this Countryman on the motorway (8,6)
12 Fellow has some water for shaving (5)
14 King George hosts individual who's beyond help (5)
16 Stupor alters greatly after hospital intervenes (8)
18 Obama arranged to tour Spain in early life (6)
21 It's difficult controlling husband nonetheless (6)
23 First Presbyterian announces his arrival on radio (4)
25 Dull poet's given up (4)

SOLUTION TO No. 7322
ACROSS: 6 Curtain raisers. 9 Nepali. 10 Entirely. 11 Scornful. 13 Salute. 15 Fennel. 17 Karpov. 19 Scheme. 20 Misplace. 22 Big Apple. 24 Old hat. 26 Anglo-Americans.
DOWN: 1 Science fiction. 2 Orca. 3 Tariff. 4 Fantasia. 5 Tsar. 7 Needle. 8 Relative clause. 12 Rinse. 14 Lapel. 16 Exemplar. 18 Ampere. 21 Stolid. 23 Axle. 25 Deal.

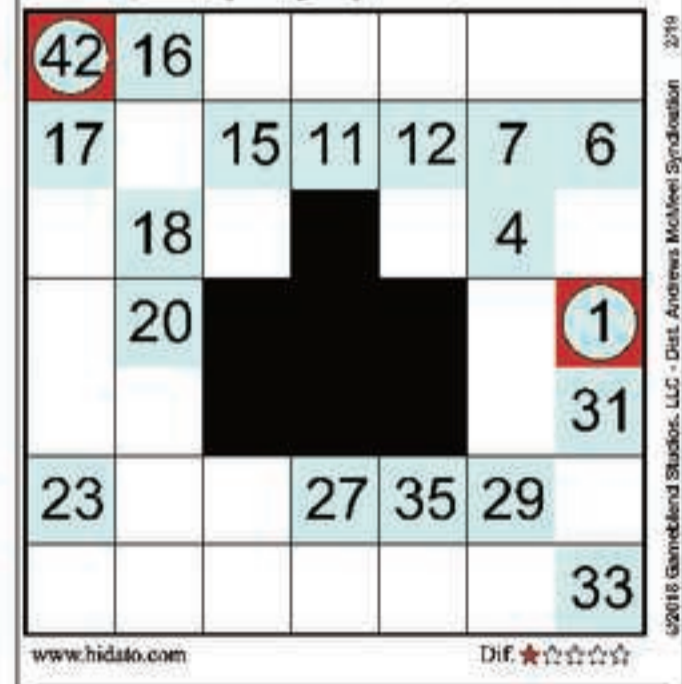
Dilbert

by S Adams



HIDATO

FIND THE PATH - SOLVE THE PUZZLE



Yesterday's puzzle solution.
Hidato Sol. 217
61 63 64 65 68 70 71 73 74 75
62 66 57 66 67 68 22 72 76
58 59 56 21 23 2
53 54 55 64 20 3
52 50 26 25 19 4
51 49 28 27 16 14 7
48 46 29 16 17 6
47 45 30 16 14 7
43 44 40 38 31 32 33 13 11 8
42 41 39 37 36 35 34 12 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 largest city in Hawaii (8)	
2 towering hairdo (7)	
3 without a bit of dirt (9)	
4 request for medical opinion (8)	
5 causing irritation (11)	
6 not on the inside (8)	
7 most like a ruby in color (7)	

NO	HO	LU	CK	IVE
BEEH	LESS	ING	RNAL	FRUS
DDE	RE	LU	REFE	TR
ST	AT	EXTE	RRAL	SPE

Yesterday's Answers: 1. DEADLINE 2. OVERCOMMIT 3. VENTILATE 4. REINVENTING 5. MERCHANTS 6. SCORNFUL 7. ACING 217