

QUICK HITS

British PM May Presses EU for 'One More Push' on Brexit Deal

London: Prime Minister Theresa May on Friday called on the European Union for "one more push" to strike a Brexit compromise deal and told MPs that rejecting the agreement could mean Britain never leaves. "It needs just one more push," May told an audience of workers in Grimsby, a North Sea fishing port, adding that a vote against a deal meant "we might never leave the EU at all".

Uber Settles Dutch Probe for €2.3 Million

The Hague: US ride-hailing giant Uber is to pay more than €2.3 million to settle a Dutch criminal probe into the breach of local tax laws, prosecutors said on Friday. The Netherlands settlement is the latest in a series around the world which has forced the company to shell out millions over regulatory breaches. Dutch prosecutors opened an investigation in 2015 into UberPop, a service that linked amateur drivers with customers through a smartphone application, after a local court ruling banned the scheme.

Finnish Govt Resigns Over Failed Reforms

Helsinki: Finnish Prime Minister Juha Sipilä's centre-right government resigned on Friday after it failed to push a through a flagship social and health care reform package, just five weeks ahead of a legislative election. The wide-reaching reform has been a hard fought struggle over a decade and has divided successive governments. Sipilä called the failure of the reform "a major disappointment".

Trump Ex-Campaign Chief Manafort Sentenced to 47 Months in Prison

Convicted of hiding millions of dollars of income earned by political consulting in Ukraine

Alexandria: US President Donald Trump's former campaign chief Paul Manafort was sentenced to 47 months in prison on Thursday for tax crimes and bank fraud in the highest profile case yet stemming from Special Counsel Robert Mueller's Russia investigation.



Paul Manafort

It was the stiffest prison sentence given so far to an associate of the president in Mueller's probe into alleged Russian interference in the 2016 election but was significantly lighter than many expected.

Judge TS Ellis said the 69-year-old Manafort had committed "very serious crimes" but he rebuffed arguments by prosecutors from the Special Counsel's office for a longer sentence.

Advisory sentencing guidelines called for a prison term of between 19 and 24 years but Ellis dismissed

that as "excessive" and disproportionate to what other defendants have received for similar crimes. "The government cannot sweep away the history of all these previous sentences," the judge said. Manafort was convicted in August of five counts of filing false income tax returns, two counts of bank fraud and one count of failing to report a foreign bank account.

Prosecutors alleged that Manafort used offshore bank accounts in Cyprus and other countries to hide more than \$55 million he earned from political consulting services he provided to Ukrainian politicians.

The money was used to support a lavish lifestyle which included purchases of luxury homes and cars, antique rugs, and expensive clothes, including an \$18,500 python jacket.

His conviction was the culmination of a stunning downfall for a man who, in addition to Trump's campaign, worked on the White House bids of Gerald Ford, Ronald Reagan, George H W Bush and Bob Dole. AFP

Washington: US President Donald Trump said on Friday his former personal lawyer, Michael Cohen, who has since turned against him and pleaded guilty to multiple crimes, had asked him directly for a pardon but was rejected.

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"Additionally, he directly asked me for a pardon. I said NO." Cohen responded by calling Trump's assertions lies. "Just another set of lies by @POTUS @realdonaldtrump," he wrote in a tweet. Cohen is due to begin serving a three-year prison sentence on May 6 for lying to Congress last year about efforts to build a Trump tower in Moscow, along with other charges. Reuters

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US Judge Dismisses Stormy Daniels' Lawsuit Against US President

Milwaukee: A federal judge in Los Angeles on Thursday dismissed a lawsuit brought by adult-film actress Stormy Daniels to end a hush-money agreement she had with US President Donald Trump, court papers showed.

US District Judge James Otero dismissed the lawsuit because Trump and his former lawyer Michael Cohen have agreed not to enforce the nondisclosure agreement against Daniels, court documents showed.

The court specifically found that Stormy received everything she asked for in the lawsuit — she won, said Daniels' attorney, Michael Avenatti, in a Twitter post.

Daniels, whose real name is Stephanie Clifford, filed a lawsuit in March 2018 to rescind a nondisclosure agreement that kept her from discussing her alleged 2006 sexual relationship with Trump in the final weeks before the 2016 US presidential election.

Trump has denied having an affair with Daniels. Cohen has said the agreement, under which Daniels was paid \$130,000, was struck to help Trump capture the White House. Reuters

Widespread Power Outage Leaves Venezuela in Darkness

Caracas: Much of Venezuela plunged into darkness on Thursday evening, creating chaos as people struggled to navigate their way home amid what appeared to be one of the biggest blackouts yet in a country where power failures have become common. The power outage began just as commuters were leaving work. Hundreds crammed the streets of Caracas, forced to walk because subway service was stopped.

President Nicolas Maduro blasted the outage as an "electrical war" directed by the US in a statement on Twitter. His information minister, Jorge Rodriguez, said right-wing extremists intent on creating pandemonium by leaving the South American nation without power for several days were behind the blackout, but he offered no proof.

"A little bit of patience," Rodriguez urged on state television. "If you're in your home, stay in your home. If you're in a protected space or at work, it's better for you to stay there." But as night wore on in Caracas, patience was running thin. Residents shouted out expletives and Maduro's name in a sign of mounting frustration. AP

Norway Sovereign Wealth Fund, World's Biggest, to Dump Oil and Gas Stocks

Oslo: Norway's sovereign wealth fund, the world's biggest and which is fuelled by petrodollars, will dump stakes in oil and gas exploration and production companies to reduce its exposure to black gold, the government said on Friday. While the decision was based solely on financial considerations and not on the environment or climate change, a divestment by an investor worth more than \$1 trillion was seen as a major blow to polluting fossil fuels.

The government of Norway, the biggest oil and gas producer in western Europe, said it was specifically targeting exploration and production companies, "rather than selling a broadly diversified energy sector."

"The objective is to reduce the vulnerability of our common wealth to a permanent oil price decline," Finance Minister Siv Jensen said in a statement, stressing the move should not be interpreted as a lack of confidence in the future of the oil sector.

A government proposal is expected to sail through parliament. Sovereign funds are state-owned investors in various kinds of assets that aim to generate revenue for government programmes and pensions.



Offshore oil rig

The Norwegian decision follows a headline-making 2017 recommendation by the Scandinavian country's central bank, which manages the fund, aimed at limiting the state coffers' exposure to a steep drop in oil prices, as in 2014.

Oil and gas represent almost half of Norway's exports and 20% of the state's revenues. Revenue from state-owned oil and gas companies are placed in the sovereign wealth fund — commonly referred to as the "oil fund" but formally known as the Government Pension Fund Global — which Oslo then taps to balance its budget.

At the end of 2018, the fund had holdings worth around \$37 billion in the oil sector, with significant stakes in Shell, BP, Total and ExxonMobil among others.

Friday's proposal concerns \$7.5 billion of those stakes, Jensen told reporters. AFP

Here's How Zuckerberg is Protected from Bullets, Bombs and Angry Staff



Mark Zuckerberg

San Francisco: When Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg first got 24/7 executive protection, there was a problem: He kept wandering off.

Sources said that in the early 2010s, the world-famous tech cofounder didn't always keep his security team — initially just one person — in the loop on his plans. He might decide on a whim to leave the office, go for a jog, or to a bar, leaving his staff scrambling to keep up.

Since then, however, the billionaire executive has grown more accepting of the constant presence of executive protection, according to insiders.

Armed executive protection officers stand on constant guard outside Zuckerberg's gated homes in the Bay Area, at least one of which also features a panic room. If he goes to a bar, his team will sweep through ahead of time to make sure it's safe.

They will vet any new doctors, and they will assess his instructors if he wants to take up a new hobby. He is driven everywhere, with the security team monitoring traffic and adjusting his route accordingly.

During company all-hands meetings, members of Zuckerberg's Praetorian Guard sit at the front of the room and are dotted throughout the crowd, just in case an employee tries to rush him. They wear civilian clothes to blend in with non-security employees. Zuckerberg doesn't typically work in a cordoned-off office like a traditional corporate executive. Instead, his regular desk is on the floor of Facebook's open-plan office, just like everyone — but executive-protection officers sit near his desk while he works, in case of security threats. Facebook's

offices are built above an employee parking lot, but it's impossible to park directly beneath Zuckerberg's desk because of concerns about the risk of car bombs.

He also has access to a large glass-walled conference room in the middle of the space near his desk that features bullet-resistant windows and a panic button. There's also a persistent rumour among Facebook employees that he has a secret "panic chute" his team can evacuate him down to get him out of the office in a hurry. Business Insider

China Supports Huawei's Bid for US Legal Redress

Beijing: The Chinese government's top diplomat, State Councillor Wang Yi, said on Friday that China supports Huawei Technologies' bid for legal redress in the US, adding that Chinese companies should use "legal weapons" and not be "silent lambs".

The Chinese telecom equipment maker has sued the US government, saying a law limiting its US business was unconstitutional, as Washington has sought to counter what it sees as China's growing threat to US economic competitiveness and security.

The lawsuit marks another rift between China and the US, which spent most of 2018 slapping import tariffs on billions of dollars worth of each other's goods.

In December, Huawei's chief financial officer Meng Wanzhou was arrested in Canada at the United States' request and faces possible extradition.

Speaking at a news conference on the sidelines of China's annual meeting of parliament, Wang said recent actions aimed at certain people and companies were "deliberate political suppression" and that the Chinese government would take "all necessary measures" to safeguard their interests.

"At the same time, we support relevant companies and individuals to take up legal weapons to safeguard their rights and interests, and not be silent lambs," Wang said.

"What we must protect today is not only a company's rights and interests, but the legitimate development interests of a country and its people," he said.

By contrast, foreign firms in China have long feared speaking out about unfair conditions, concerned they might be the target of political retribution and not have legal recourse due to the ruling Communist Party's tight control of courts.

Huawei, a privately owned firm, has faced criticism around the world that it could be employed as an intelligence-gathering arm of the Chinese government.

It has embarked on a public relations and legal offensive as Washington lobbies allies to abandon its products when building 5G networks, centering on a 2017 Chinese law requiring companies cooperate with national intelligence work. Reuters



Huawei logo

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Tesla Gets \$520M Funding for First Chinese Plant

Shanghai: Electric carmaker Tesla has won more than \$520 million in loans from Chinese banks to build its first overseas car plant near Shanghai, the first foreign automaker to wholly own a factory in China.

The funding, announced on Thursday, is an important boost for the California-based firm, which has been in negotiations with Beijing for years over building the plant in the world's biggest electric car market.

The US giant will make its Model 3 sedans at the factory — initially targeting 3,000 cars a week before ramping up annual production to 500,000 — which it plans to have operational by the end of the year.

Tesla chief executive officer Elon Musk was in China in January for the groundbreaking of the factory, where he said he planned to approach local banks for the money to get the plant built and into production.

Musk is betting on China's growing market for electric cars as Beijing pushes the industry away from fossil fuel vehicles.

Manufacturing locally is expected to help Tesla avoid some of the impact of trade tensions between the US and China, as well as reduce its production costs.

According to a regulatory filing, Tesla has secured \$521 million from four domestic banks — the Industrial & Commercial Bank of China, the Chinese Construction Bank, Agricultural Bank of China, and the Shanghai Pudong Development Bank. AFP

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

Lawyer Sorry for 'Tainting' Ghosn's Fame with Workman Disguise



Lawyer representing Ghosn

to leave detention on bail. Ghosn sparked confusion and some derision by walking out of a Tokyo jail on Wednesday after more than 100 days in custody, sporting a blue construction worker's jacket, a light blue cap and a facemask. Lawyer Takashi Takano said the bizarre get-up was a bid to protect Ghosn's privacy, and particularly to avoid media tracking him to the residence where he will live while out on bail. But Takano acknowledged the plan backfired, with the world's media instead snapping photos and filming video of Ghosn, transformed from his previously suave executive image. "The disguise was all planned and carried out by me," Takano wrote in a blog article posted on Friday. "Due to my amateur plan, the fame he has built over a lifetime was tainted." "I caused tangible and intangible damage to many people. I feel sorry about that," he added. AFP

A lawyer representing ex-Nissan chief Carlos Ghosn on Friday apologised for "tainting" the tycoon's reputation by suggesting he disguise himself as a workman.

Tim Cook Changes Twitter Name to 'Tim Apple'

A day after US President Donald Trump absent-mindedly addressed Tim Cook as "Tim Apple" at a conference, the Apple CEO has changed his Twitter name to "Tim Apple" — replacing his surname with the company logo. The Trump quip, made at a meeting of the American Workforce Policy Advisory Board at the White House on Wednesday, quickly went viral. The subtle sarcasm from Cook as he joined the joke parade making rounds on social networking platforms has earned him respect, splits of laughter and back pats from people around the world. "Guys, @tim\_cook changed his name to 'Tim Apple' and it's the most legendary 'Tim Apple' sub tweet of all time," Alex Whitcomb, Manager of Audience Development at news website The Wire, tweeted on Thursday. Twitterati called out to other big company leaders and suggested them to follow Cook and do the same. "Jeff Amazon, Elon Tesla, Mark Facebook, Jack Twitter, Sundar Google, Satya Soft, lets get the gang together," another user tweeted. However, the Apple icon as Cook's present Twitter name is visible only to Apple users. To Android and Windows users it appears as a blank or grey square. IANS



Tim Cook and Donald Trump

German Man Gets Life for Poisoning Colleagues' Sandwiches

A German man has been sentenced to life behind bars after poisoning his co-workers' sandwiches, leaving one in a coma and two others with serious kidney damage. The 57-year-old man, identified only as Klaus D because of German privacy rules, was caught on CCTV putting a suspicious powder on a colleague's sandwich at a business in the city of Schloss Holte-Stukenbrock. When authorities searched his home, they found a primitive chemistry laboratory in the basement and a substance that Judge Georg Zimmermann described as "more dangerous than all combat agents used in World War Two". Two of the defendants' colleagues, a 27-year-old man and 67-year-old man, suffered chronic kidney damage from poisoning with lead and cadmium. Both men face a heightened risk of cancer. A 23-year-old trainee fell into a coma after ingesting mercury and now has permanent brain damage. The defendant refused to speak during his trial and his motives remain unclear — but prosecutors believe he wanted to see his colleagues' physical decline. The judge said the court considered the crimes to be as serious as homicide, according to German news agency dpa. He found the defendant guilty of attempted murder and sentenced him to life in prison. The judge also ordered that he should remain in prison after completing the life sentence, which in Germany typically means serving 15 years, because he remains a danger to the public. Independent



Sandwich

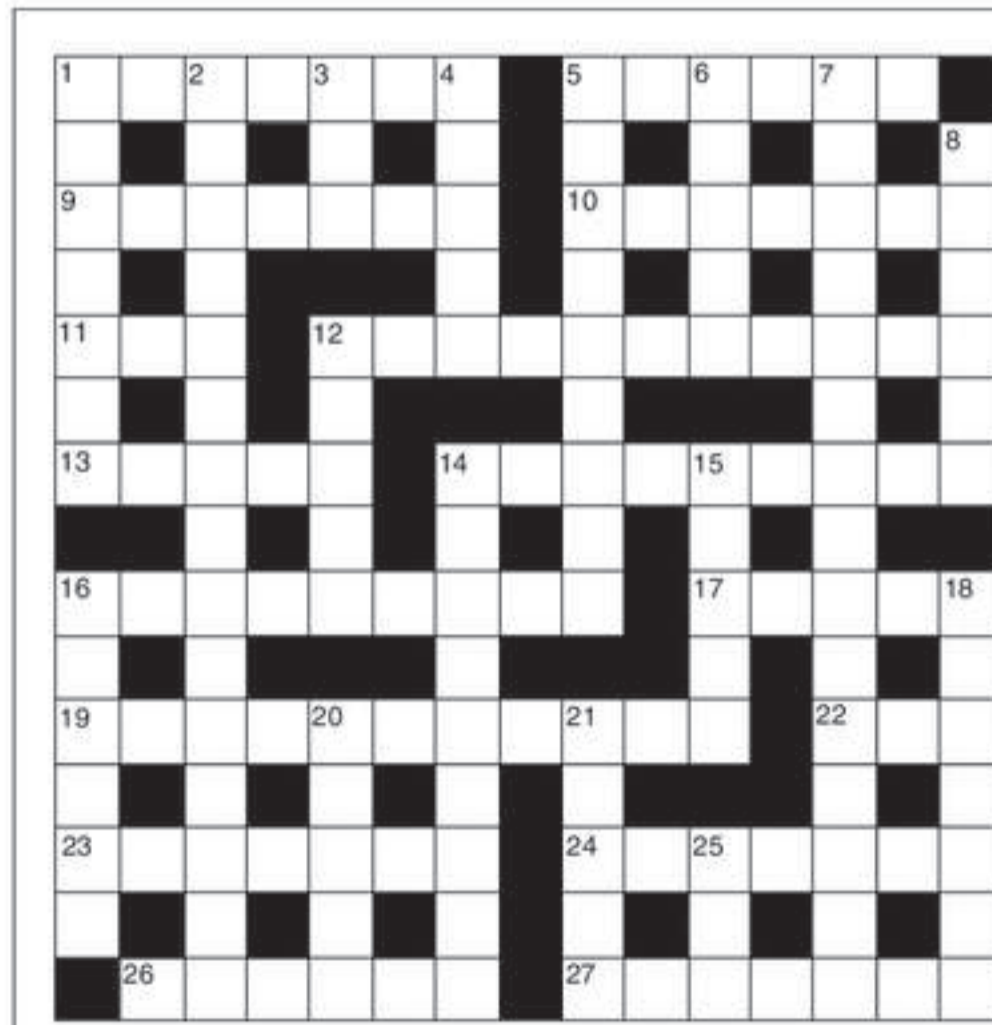
SpaceX Capsule Splashes Down Off Florida Coast

An unmanned capsule from Elon Musk's SpaceX splashed down into the Atlantic Ocean on Friday morning after a short-term stay on the International Space Station, capping the first orbital test mission in NASA's long-delayed quest to resume human space flight from US soil later this year. After a five-day mission on the orbital outpost, Crew Dragon autonomously detached about 2:30 am EST (07:30 GMT) on Friday and sped back to earth reaching hypersonic speeds before an 8:45 a.m. EST (13:45 GMT) splash-down in the Atlantic, about 200 miles off the Florida coast. A SpaceX rocket launched the 16-foot-tall capsule from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida last Saturday. The first-of-its-kind mission, ahead of SpaceX's crewed test flight slated for June, brought 400 pounds of test equipment to the space station, including a dummy named Ripley, outfitted with sensors around its head, neck, and spine to monitor how a flight would feel for a human. Reuters



SpaceX capsule splashdown

Crossword 7350



cles with no tears (3-4)  
DOWN  
1 Check Unionist party cover for old soldiers (7)  
2 Mac needs amateur trained for video games site (9,6)  
3 Remove top of angling device to catch this? (3)  
4 Tyroleans sing this sort of melody without introduction (5)  
5 Capricious Barry goes wild about Rita abroad (9)  
6 Jump over 13 (5)  
7 Wacky unit built to house new fashion designer, Mr X maybe? (7,8)  
8 It's used in school periods with ruler (6)  
12 Copy one non-drinker in party (5)  
14 Some hear broadcast about Kelvin — he's working at last (9)  
15 Military policeman that is left outside in drive (5)  
16 Bring up priest first for worship (6)  
18 Expert fish worker (3,4)  
20 The pick of the Pre-Raphaelites (5)  
21 Monday almost worried traveller (5)  
25 A brief stop over in Riyadh (3)

ACROSS  
1 Attempt to conserve maple for its delicate branches (7)  
2 Build up a major rail junction, so to speak (6)  
9 Not everyone tucked into calamari — they're foul (7)  
10 Wave glass container holding last of water (7)  
11 The purpose of helping in strenuous effort (3)  
12 Strike by port (American) causing harm (11)  
13 Ordinary green plain (5)  
14 Artist managed to acquire a single paper supplier (9)  
16 Medic studies this page before unnamed verse collection (9)  
17 Beat university in pool (5)  
19 Broadcast last flights from here (3,8)  
22 Name, classy book: 'The Heart of the Matter' (3)  
23 Ready to throw up odd cases one put in rear of junk (7)  
24 Portuguese island media lambasted artist (7)  
26 Remote rocky object from space (6)  
27 Doctor departs holding old arti-

SOLUTION TO No. 7349  
ACROSS: 1 Package deal. 9 Yule log. 10 Shoebox. 11 Lay. 12 Fictive. 13 Corrupt. 14 Lac. 15 Media. 17 Prior. 18 Genus. 20 Siren. 22 Tom. 24 Outgroup. 25 Acronym. 26 All. 27 Vibrant. 28 Italics. 29 Exterminate.  
DOWN: 1 Police constable. 2 Calcium. 3 Angle. 4 Easy chair.