

The Economist

Should Jerusalem be Israel's capital?

AI: the battle of the brains

The true cost of America's tax reform

Our books of the year

DECEMBER 9TH-15TH 2017

The corruption of South Africa



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The ANC, South Africa's ruling party, will soon vote on ditching the Zumas. To avoid a dire, two-decade dynasty of dysfunction, it should jump at the chance: leader, page 13. The promise of fairness and prosperity as apartheid ended has been tainted by corruption and "state capture", page 21. Big Western companies have been caught up in the intrigue, page 23

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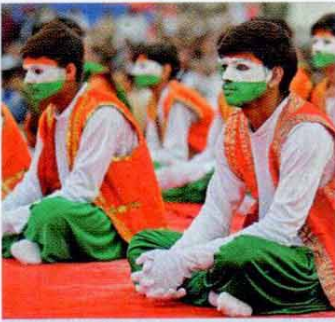
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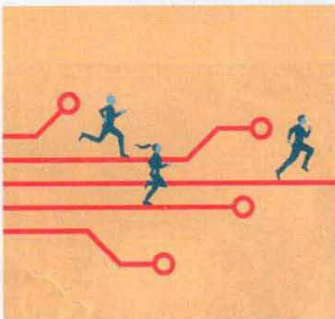
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Politics



Donald Trump announced that America would recognise **Jerusalem** as Israel's capital, the only country in the world to do so. He said moving America's embassy from Tel Aviv was a matter of when, not if. Regional Arab and Muslim leaders, and America's allies in Europe, were virtually united in dismay at the decision.

Yemen's former dictator, Ali Abdullah Saleh, was killed near Sana'a, the capital. He had broken from his Houthi rebel allies and embraced talks with the Saudi-led coalition fighting them. The Houthis quickly repaid what they saw as a betrayal, and gained territory in Sana'a, where crowds celebrated Saleh's death.

The Gulf Co-operation Council summit in Kuwait, scheduled for two days, lasted hardly 15 minutes before breaking up in acrimony. The isolation of **Qatar** by its neighbours is said to have been the main cause. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates had previously announced a new alliance, potentially rendering the GCC superfluous.

Saad Hariri officially withdrew his resignation as **Lebanon's** prime minister. He had announced that he was stepping down in a speech made from Saudi Arabia on November 4th, starting a guessing game about how much influence the Saudis were wielding.

Zimbabwe's new president, Emmerson Mnangagwa, unveiled a new cabinet in the wake of Robert Mugabe's downfall. He kept most of his predecessor's worst ministers,

appointed generals to the foreign and agriculture ministries, and brought no technocrats or opposition figures into government as had been mooted. Opposition politicians and human-rights organisations were aghast.

A plea bargain

Michael Flynn, Donald Trump's first national-security adviser, pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI about his contacts with Russian officials. Mr Trump said he was not concerned about what Mr Flynn might reveal to Robert Mueller, the special counsel investigating the whole affair.

Al Franken was told by his Democratic colleagues in the Senate, including Charles Schumer, the party's leader in the chamber, to resign over claims of **sexual misconduct**. John Conyers, meanwhile, resigned from the seat in the House that he has held for the Democrats since 1965 amid claims of sexual harassment.

The Supreme Court permitted the latest version of the Trump administration's **travel ban** to come fully into force while its constitutional merits are argued in the lower courts, rescinding a decision six months ago that allowed for only a partial ban. The latest restrictions apply differently to travellers from eight countries.

Values voters



The aftermath of **Honduras's** contested presidential election turned violent. President Juan Orlando Hernández led Salvador Nasralla by 1.6 percentage points when the vote count ended ten days after the election. Opposition supporters cried foul and want a full recount. Clashes with police

left several people dead. The two sides agreed to negotiate.

Colombia's "fast-track" year for passing laws to implement the peace process ended with mixed results. Congress approved a transitional justice plan for former guerrillas, but failed to approve political reforms and laws to help coca farmers switch to other crops.

Andrés Manuel López Obrador of the left-wing Morena party, the early front-runner in **Mexico's** presidential election, sparked fury by proposing amnesty for drug kingpins who agree to abandon violence. His comments came as legislators prepared a law to formalise the role of the armed forces in the drug war.

President Nicolás Maduro's socialist government in **Venezuela** threatened to suspend presidential elections next year if America does not withdraw its "rude" economic sanctions. He also announced plans to create an oil-backed digital currency: the petro.

Bright tsar

Vladimir Putin launched his bid for re-election as **Russia's** president. His main rival, Aleksei Navalny, is not allowed to run.

Russia was banned by the International Olympic Committee from participating in the **Winter Olympics** because of the "systematic manipulation" of procedures to uncover doping. Athletes who can prove they are clean will be allowed to compete at the games, to be held in South Korea, but under a neutral flag.

Horst Seehofer decided to step down as premier of Bavaria, amid a power struggle in his Christian Social Union party (CSU). The CSU only operates in Bavaria, but is allied in **Germany's** parliament with Angela Merkel's Christian Democrats and is trying to help her form a government.

A judge in **Spain** revoked the arrest warrants issued for Carles Puigdemont, the presi-

dent of the Catalonia region, and four Catalan ministers, because they showed a willingness to return to Spain from Belgium, where they fled after declaring Catalonia's independence in October. But the judge said they could still face charges of sedition.

Falling out

The government of **Australia** proposed a series of laws to curb foreign interference in politics, in response to a series of scandals involving firms or people linked to the Chinese government. **China** has denied that it was meddling and accuses Australian media of "anti-China hysteria".

Australia's parliament legalised **gay marriage**, less than a month after Australians signalled strong support for same-sex weddings in a non-binding vote.

Taiwan's parliament voted to remove all memorials around the country to Chiang Kai-shek, the strongman who ruled China before fleeing to Taiwan after losing the civil war to the Communists.



An agreement creating the world's largest **marine protected area** came into force. Covering 2m square kilometres in the Ross Sea off the coast of Antarctica, the agreement establishes a "no-take" zone that prevents minerals or animals from being removed from the area. New Zealand and the United States brokered the deal, which was supported by the 25 member countries of the commission for the conservation of Antarctic life.

The first Michelin dining guide for **Bangkok** accorded a coveted star to a street stall serving crab omelette.