

Brexit bill set to clear parliament

London

British MPs are set to give the green light Wednesday to a key Brexit bill whose turbulent passage through parliament has dealt damaging defeats to Prime Minister Theresa May, but it faces further opposition from the upper house. The House of Commons is expected to vote to approve the EU (Withdrawal) Bill, which would repeal the 1972 law which made Britain a member of the European Union.



France abandons plan for new airport

Paris

France abandoned plans for a new \$709.80 million airport in western France in favour of expanding an existing airport in Nantes. Supporters of the proposed airport, designed to handle four million passengers a year initially, argued it would aid economic development in the Loire-Atlantique region and that the existing inner-city airport was congested and a security risk.



I want to make clear we will gauge the new Austrian government by its actions, and I told the chancellor this. That is what counts and the things I have just heard on Europe policy make me confident we can achieve very close cooperation."

-Angela Merkel,
German Chancellor



Trump's first year successes

Donald Trump has presided over the most buoyant economic conditions of any recent U.S. president in his first year, but his unpopularity could prevent him from capitalising on it in November's midterm election.

Trump has achieved some substantive goals, including passing a significant tax cut, appointing Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch and

defeating so-called Islamic State in Syria. However, his job approval rating from Gallup remains stuck below 40 percent -- the lowest since President Bill Clinton in 1993.

Congress has passed the most sweeping overhaul of U.S. tax system in more than 30 years, cutting the corporate rate from 35 percent to 21 percent. Trump has rolled back 67

of President Obama-era regulations, stimulating businesses and fueling a \$5.4 billion rise in stock market value.

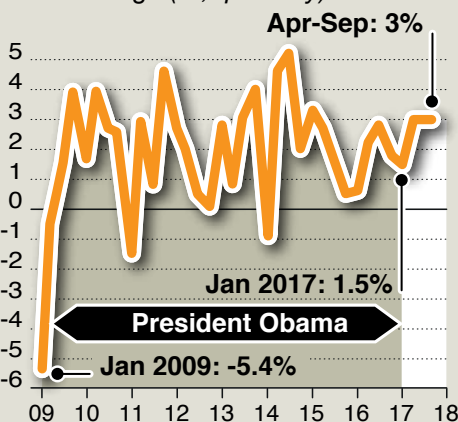
Trump also ended 2017 with more than 1.8 million new jobs -- but his jobs growth trails Obama's record in five of the last eight years -- and the economy expanded by at least 3 percent for two quarters in a row.

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Economy: GDP has expanded from 1.5% to 3% for two quarters

GDP change (% quarterly)



Tax reform: Will cost \$1.5 trillion over 10 years. Corporate tax rate cut from 35% to 21%. Companies will only be taxed on U.S. earnings

Sources: BEA, Bureau of Labor Statistics, White House Pictures: Associated Press © GRAPHIC NEWS

Inspired buys British School

Manama

Inspired, a leading global operator of premium schools, announced that it has acquired 100% of the British School of Bahrain (BSB) bringing its portfolio to over 30 schools in 10 countries.

Bahrain Economic Development Board (Bahrain EDB) worked with Inspired during the setup process and will continue to support the growth and expansion plans of Inspired in the Kingdom.

"We are delighted to support Inspired and we will continue to work with them to expand and grow as a premium and innovative school operator," Dr. Simon Galpin, Managing Director of Bahrain EDB said.

Inspired is a leading premium schools group in Europe, Australia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America educating over 24,000 students across a global network of over 30 schools in 10 countries.

Inspired said it will



Nadim M Nsouli, Founder & Chairman of Inspired

actively evaluate expansion opportunities for the school in Bahrain due to the increasing demand for premium education.

BSB has around 2,500 students in Bahrain.

"We believe this represents an exciting development for both Inspired and BSB and look forward to working with the BSB leadership team to build upon the

schools' impressive history of providing families in Bahrain with a world class international education," Nadim M Nsouli, Founder & Chairman of Inspired said.

Julie Anne Gilbert, Head of School, stated, "We are excited to join the Inspired community of schools that will provide multiple opportunities for growth for BSB's teachers and students."

Volkswagen sells record 10.74m vehicles in 2017

Frankfurt

German automaker Volkswagen had record sales of 10.74 million vehicles last year, but saw its bid to

keep the title of world's largest carmaker reportedly disputed by the rival Renault Nissan Mitsubishi alliance.

Volkswagen sales rose 4.3

percent from 10.30 million in 2016, when Volkswagen passed Japanese rival Toyota to become the globe's largest auto producer for that year.

The figures show the Wolfsburg-based company continuing its effort to move past a scandal that broke in September 2015 over cars it had rigged to cheat on diesel emissions tests. Sales last year were boosted by a strong December, when sales rose 8.5 percent. For the year, the company saw big jumps in Russia and Brazil, and significant gains in China and the United States.

"We are thankful for the trust of our customers," CEO Matthias Mueller said in a statement. (AP)

