

POLITICAL PULSE 2/19/19
INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDANT READERS

VENEZUELA SANCTIONS

SEVERAL WEEKS AGO, THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION IMPOSED SANCTIONS AGAINST VENEZUELA'S STATE-OWNED OIL COMPANY, PETRÓLEAS DE VENEZUELA, IN AN EFFORT TO TOPPLE THE GOVERNMENT OF PRESIDENT NICOLÁS MADURO.

SINCE PRESIDENT MADURO TOOK OFFICE, VENEZUELA'S ECONOMY HAS SHRUNK BY HALF, AND ECONOMISTS SAY THE NEW SANCTIONS COULD LEAD TO A FURTHER 26% REDUCTION.

RUSSIA, VENEZUELA'S BIGGEST OIL INVESTOR, SAID IT WOULD REMAIN COMMITTED TO THE COUNTRY AND PLANS TO INCREASE ITS OUTPUT THERE. THIS DEAL AND OTHERS LIKE IT WILL ALLOW PETRÓLEAS DE VENEZUELA TO CONTINUE FUNCTIONING. HOWEVER, THE BLOW TO VENEZUELA'S ECONOMY WILL CAUSE THE ALREADY CRITICAL SCARCITY OF FOOD AND MEDICINE TO WORSEN, AND ATTEMPTS TO PROVIDE AID HAVE BEEN HALTED AT THE BORDER.

U.S GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS HAVE INDICATED THAT PRESIDENT TRUMP HAS NOT RULED OUT ESCALATING TO MILITARY INTERVENTION TO REMOVE PRESIDENT MADURO FROM OFFICE.

BREXIT UPDATE

SEVERAL OFFICIALS HAVE SAID A VOTE ON IRISH UNIFICATION COULD BE IMMINENT IN THE EVENT OF A NO-DEAL BREXIT.

A NO-DEAL BREXIT MEANS THAT THE UNITED KINGDOM WOULD LEAVE THE EUROPEAN UNION IMMEDIATELY ON MARCH 29th, WITH NO TRANSITION PERIOD AND NO AGREEMENTS REGARDING A FUTURE RELATIONSHIP IN PLACE.

SINN FEIN, IRELAND'S LEFT-WING REPUBLICAN POLITICAL PARTY, HAS ALREADY CALLED FOR A VOTE ON IRISH UNIFICATION AFTER BREXIT. CABINET MINISTERS BELIEVE A NO-DEAL BREXIT COULD CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT OF CHAOS AND UNCERTAINTY THAT WILL LIKELY SPUR THE BORDER POLL TO TAKE PLACE.

HOWEVER, A UK GOVERNMENT SPOKESPERSON SAID THAT THE MAJORITY OF NORTHERN IRELAND CONTINUES TO SUPPORT THEIR PLACE IN THE UNION, AND CIRCUMSTANCES REQUIRING A BORDER POLL HAVE NOT BEEN SATISFIED.

POPE ABUSE SCANDAL

FOR THE FIRST TIME, POPE FRANCIS HAS ACKNOWLEDGED THE GROWING SCANDAL OF MEMBERS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH SEXUALLY ABUSING NUNS, AND HAS COMMITTED TO TAKING ACTION TO FIGHT THE PROBLEM.

THE POPE STATED THAT THE CHURCH HAS ALREADY BEGUN THE PATH TO ENDING THIS MISCONDUCT, CITING HIS PREDECESSOR POPE BENEDICT XVI'S ACTION AGAINST A FRENCH ORDER WHOSE PRIESTS HAD COERCED NUNS INTO "SEXUAL SLAVERY." MANY FEEL THAT THE POPE'S WORDS DID NOT INSPIRE CONFIDENCE IN AN IMMINENT RESOLUTION, AND FIND THE LACK OF TANGIBLE RESULTS DESPITE HIS CLAIM THAT THE CHURCH HAS BEEN DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM FOR A LONG TIME DISHEARTENING.

OTHERS, HOWEVER, BELIEVE THAT ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE ISSUE IS THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS A LASTING SOLUTION.

Trending Now Readers

Amanda Hampton

2/25/19

Shawn Mendes Calvin Klein Campaign

SHAWN MENDES HAS BECOME CALVIN KLEIN'S NEWEST BRAND AMBASSADOR, AND HIS RECENT AD CAMPAIGN HAS FANS IN A FRENZY. THE TWENTY-YEAR-OLD SINGER-SONGWRITER TOOK TO INSTAGRAM TO SHARE TWO PHOTOS FROM THE SHOOT, WHICH FEATURE MENDES POSING IN PAIRS OF CALVIN KLEIN BOXER BRIEFS. THE PHOTOS HAVE GARNERED OVER 8 MILLION LIKES AND 480 THOUSAND COMMENTS. THE CAMPAIGN WAS ROLLED OUT ON WEDNESDAY, AND INCLUDES A VIDEO FEATURING CURRENT BIG NAMES LIKE KENDALL JENNER, NOAH CENTINEO, AND A\$AP ROCKY ALONG WITH MENDES.

Amy Schumer Cancels Tour Dates Due to Pregnancy Complications

AMY SCHUMER IS CANCELLING THE REMAINDER OF HER COMEDY TOUR DUE TO PREGNANCY COMPLICATIONS. IN AN INSTAGRAM POST ON FRIDAY, SHE TOLD FANS THAT SHE WAS SUFFERING FROM HYPEREMIS GRAVIDARUM, A TYPE OF SEVERE MORNING SICKNESS THAT CAN CAUSE VOMITING TO CONTINUE THROUGHOUT THE DAY. THE COMEDIAN AND ACTRESS STATED THAT SHE AND HER BABY WERE DOING FINE, BUT SHE IS CURRENTLY TOO SICK TO TRAVEL. SCHUMER WAS PREVIOUSLY HOSPITALIZED AND CANCELLED A TEXAS TOUR STOP IN NOVEMBER DUE TO HYPEREMESIS.