

Business

Britain plans to add land for shale fuel exploration

LONDON

Tapping large tracts of oil and natural gas is seen as crucial to energy future

BY STANLEY REED

The British government said early Monday that it would make more land available for licensing for oil and natural gas exploration in the first such expansion since 2008.

The move, which had been anticipated by the energy industry, could prove to be a milestone in efforts by the government of Prime Minister David Cameron to encourage the extraction of natural gas and oil from shale rock. The government wants new sources of oil and gas to help replace Britain's declining offshore production in the North Sea, to create jobs and to ease growing dependence on fuel imports, especially from Russia.

Mr. Cameron and his colleagues have also observed that abundant shale gas and oil have increased the economic competitiveness of the United States, and they want to see if Britain, too, can benefit.

"Unlocking shale gas in Britain has the potential to provide us with greater energy security, jobs and growth," the business and energy minister, Matthew Hancock, said in a statement.

Even in Britain, shale gas exploration has been progressing at what seems to be a slow pace, but operators say that the gradual changes Mr. Cameron has made to Britain's regulations are giving the country a chance to emerge as an attractive destination for shale investment.

In addition, the limited drilling into British shale formations has indicated that the sites may have good potential. "Based on the recent changes in the regulatory regime and some of the more recent geological data, Britain looks like it might be a good place to invest," said Charles S. Leykum, chairman of United Oilfield Services, which provides hydraulic fracturing, known as fracking, in Europe.

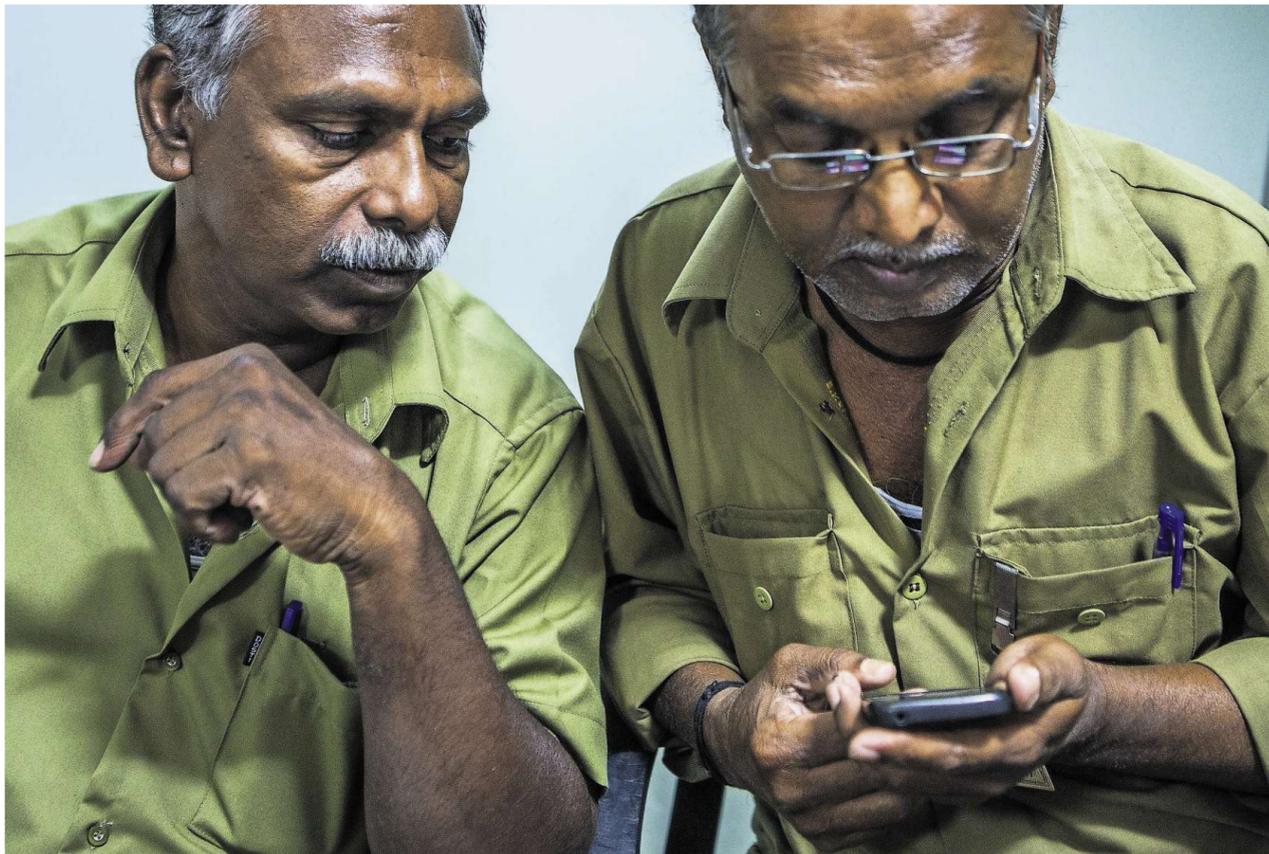
Other European governments have been harder to convince that shale gas is worth the potential political backlash. Many Europeans worry that the fracking technique used in shale production could pollute underground water supplies and lead to other environmental damage.

There are also possible environmental gains to be had from shale gas. For instance, gas burns cleaner than coal, which is still used extensively to generate electricity in many European countries. Despite that potential gain, France has banned fracking, while Germany has in place a de facto moratorium on the practice.

Some East European countries, which want to ease their dependence on Russia, have been more receptive to the shale gas industry. In Poland, for example, more than 50 wells have been drilled. Results have been inconclusive so far. Some large companies like Exxon Mobil and ENI of Italy have pulled out, but smaller companies are still trying to work out the techniques to tap the rocks.

The overall reluctance to exploit shale gas reduces Europe's energy options — a point highlighted by the confrontation between Russia and Ukraine. With gas production in the European Union declining and Germany phasing out nuclear energy, there seems little alternative but heavy reliance on Russia, which

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Auto-rickshaw drivers in Pune, India, testing a messaging program. In a country clogged with congestion, some start-ups let clients request a ride by using an app, website or call center.

Send a text, and hail a rickshaw

PUNE, INDIA

Start-ups use technology to help drivers find a steady stream of riders

BY MEGHA BAHREE

When Praveen Narayan Dusane first started driving an auto-rickshaw in this crowded college town, he had to hustle for every rupee. He could wait hours at a rickshaw stand for passengers. He fought with other drivers and haggled with passengers over the fares. Typically, he earned just 300 rupees, or about \$5, during a 12-hour shift.

Now Mr. Dusane simply checks the text messages on his cellphone for his schedule, with pickups usually coming every hour or so. Business is so brisk that he recently bought an apartment for \$33,000 and can afford to send his three school-age daughters to an English-language school.

"Earlier, I had to sometimes wait all day for a ride, and even then it was up to your luck, the kind of fare you got," said Mr. Dusane. "Now it's like you can see the money in front of you."

It is the advantage of the algorithm. In a country clogged with congestion, a handful of start-ups are using technology to connect auto-rickshaw drivers more easily with customers — an Indian twist to Uber and Lyft, the taxi-fetching apps.

Mr. Dusane's employer, Autowale, uses a program to map out potential routes and maximize pickups. AutoRaja has a dial-an-auto service in Chennai. In Bangalore, mGaadi offers rickshaw bookings via its website and app.

The three-wheeled, often black and yellow auto-rickshaws are ubiquitous in India, where public buses are rather abysmal, subways are limited and taxis are few and expensive. People can hail



A driver in Pune. Algorithms predict potential routes and assign pickup points accordingly.

auto-rickshaws off the streets, but getting one depends on a combination of negotiating skill and luck. Most drivers tend to charge a flat, inflated rate, instead of going by the meter, and they often turn down prospective customers if the distance is too short or to an area from which they might not get a fare back.

Autowale is trying to make the process easier by offering rickshaws on demand. Customers can request a rickshaw through the company's app or website, as well as through the more old-fashioned method, its call center. Passengers pay a convenience fee of about 33 cents per ride, on top of the fare. Autowale goes by the meter, with an average ride costing about \$3.33.

Although Uber was introduced in India last September, the service is expensive and does not compete in the same space. As in the United States, Uber, which operates in six Indian cities including New

Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Bangalore, focuses on the taxi market.

Autowale does not have all the gadgetry of Uber or Lyft. It does not use GPS, and most drivers do not have smartphones, which can be expensive. Instead, the founders created an algorithm that predicts an auto-rickshaw's potential route for the day and assigns pickups accordingly. They serve up the driver's schedule via basic text messages.

The company promises drivers higher and more predictable income, along with fewer dead miles — those without passengers on board. In return, the company receives a commission of 10 percent to 15 percent from the drivers. Autowale, which is not yet profitable, posted revenues of about \$335,000 last year.

It is also looking into insurance for its drivers, which is rare in India. Last month, Malaya Swami, an Autowale driver, fractured his arm after a car

backed into his auto-rickshaw. He is now unable to work for six weeks.

Autowale gave him a loan of about \$80 to cover part of his expenses and has offered him work recruiting other drivers, so he has a chance to earn some money while recovering. The start-up is in talks with insurance companies to cover all its drivers.

"I like my work," said Mr. Swami. "I'm waiting for my hand to get O.K. so I can get back to driving my auto."

The first iteration of Autowale — founded by Janardan Prasad and Mukesh Jha, friends since college — was a flop.

They initially developed a network of 400 auto-rickshaws across Pune, a city of 3.1 million with about 60,000 auto-rickshaws. But they had too many rickshaws and not enough passengers for the unknown service.

"What had failed was a lack of commitment on both sides," said Mr. Prasad. "It was kind of like dating. You have to commit to try to make it work."

In the summer of 2011, they revamped their model and started out with five drivers, promising them a specific income, even if they did not get enough passengers. To commuters, they promised an auto-rickshaw if they booked one.

"We said to them, 'Work with us for six months, and we'll give you the rides and the fares and improve your income,'" said Mr. Prasad. Within three months they had 75 drivers in their system and were handling as many as 100 trips a day.

Autowale now works with 850 drivers — including about 250 regulars — and transports nearly 100,000 passengers a year.

After a successful trial in Bangalore, Autowale is planning to roll out service there and in three other Indian cities as soon as it can raise money for expansion.

Autowale has faced its share of grow-

Digital art fine enough for a frame

Bits

JENNA WORTHAM

Jake Levine, an entrepreneur in New York, likes the kind of art that tends to be popular on the Internet — cleverly Photoshopped pictures, and animated images like GIFs — and wanted a way to get it off his computer and onto a wall, alongside more traditional works like photographs and paintings.

But how do you hang pixels on a wall?

He considered his options. Yes, digital picture frames were inexpensive and widely available, but they tended to be small and unsophisticated. And it seemed wasteful to hang a tablet or an expensive monitor on a wall, where it would be tempting to use the device for web browsing or watching movies instead of enjoying a piece of art.

Eventually, he put together a digital canvas by using an inexpensive monitor and a computer called a Raspberry Pi. The display was controlled by a simple web app that allowed him to select images online and to change them instantly, with a click.

It was promising enough that Mr. Levine decided to quit his job as the general manager of Digg, a news site, and to focus on building these screens full time.

Mr. Levine named his company Electric Objects and raised \$1.7 million through a seed round of venture financing in April to rent an office and hire employees. To generate feedback, he also used the money to build and send out a hundred prototypes to other entrepreneurs and artists. He plans to sell a polished version of his prototype for \$299 later this year.

The first time I heard about the company, I wasn't sure that the concept had broader market appeal, largely because I'm not convinced that people would want more screen devices in their homes. As someone who owns a tablet, a smartphone and a laptop, I definitely didn't. I have even resisted buying a television. But after seeing a prototype, I was impressed by the simplicity of the machine.

And if people are willing to buy stand-alone gadgets to play music, monitor their health and help manage their homes, why not purchase one for culture and art?

Mr. Levine isn't the only entrepreneur who sees a market here. Several competitors, including Instacube and FRM, are working on similar approaches to digital installations for the home.

Yugo Nakamura, a co-founder and creative director of FRM, based in Tokyo, said he saw his digital frame as a service for creators and fans of visual culture.

"If we look to the future, screens will be seen as a dominant medium, like the canvas was for centuries," he said in an email. "It's what we create with these tools that will be remembered most."

He said people would be drawn to the art that the screen fosters, and not only to the device itself. The hardware is secondary to the art.

"I'm not sure if our experiment will 'rule the future' so to speak, but the timing seems right," he said.

Both Mr. Levine and Mr. Nakamura plan to cultivate networks of artists who create works exclusively for the screens, which people could buy through an online store.

The larger goal is not simply to reproduce famous photos and paintings, but to support a growing community of artists who create computer animations and images.

"The reason people aren't paying for digital art is because the experience doesn't feel viable," Mr. Levine said. "It mostly feels like taking the offline art world and porting it online."

Zoë Salditch, a curator who has experience working with experimental and new-media artists, is developing the network of artists at Electric Objects. She said that using screens to display interactive or digital art was quite common in the art world, but not yet among consumers.

"You see this kind of device in a hacked version in galleries all the time," she said. But it can be difficult and expensive for art aficionados who don't have a hardware and software background to recreate it.

"This device makes it an all-in-one," and available at a much lower price, she said.

Ms. Salditch is working on building an "artists in residence" program through the company that supplies a stipend and a prototype of the screen to a number of digital artists, to encourage them to create pieces designed specifically for the device.

Robin Sloan, author of a futuristic novel called "Mr. Penumbra's 24-Hour Bookstore," has been playing around

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World Cup sponsors reluctant to push for overhaul at FIFA

FRANKFURT

Graft fears don't deter companies from making sizable ad investments

BY JACK EWING

Sponsors were unusually vocal after the latest accusations of corruption at FIFA, the organizer of the World Cup, surfaced just before the soccer tournament began in June.

Sony, the electronics and entertainment giant, called for an investigation of possible irregularities in choosing a site for the 2022 World Cup. Adidas, the German sportswear manufacturer, warned that "the negative tenor of the public debate around FIFA at the moment is neither good for football nor for FIFA and its partners." Their sentiments were echoed by others, including Coca-Cola, Visa, Hyundai and Budweiser.

But now that the matches in Brazil are over, it is unlikely that sponsors will pound their fists and demand changes.

FIFA's corporate partners have a long history of enduring serial FIFA controversies in silence, and that is unlikely to change. There is just too much money at stake.

"These sponsorships don't come

cheap," said Simon Chadwick, a professor of sports business strategy at the Coventry University Business School in Britain. He estimated that companies spend up to \$100 million for sponsorship rights and a similar sum on related advertising and merchandising. "The last thing you are going to do is say things that are going to undermine this multi-million-dollar investment."

It was unusual for sponsors to say anything at all when, in the months before World Cup play began in Brazil, longstanding accusations resurfaced that bribes had influenced the decision to award the 2022 World Cup to Qatar. The country was seen as an odd choice

FIFA's corporate partners have a long history of enduring controversies in silence, and that is unlikely to change.

for a soccer tournament because of its scorching summer heat and dearth of world class players.

FIFA has long faced controversy, with allegations of sexism, homophobia, lack of transparency, insensitivity to player safety and outright corruption. The bribery charges are not the first in recent FIFA history. Another well-known example involved a Swiss company that

sold World Cup marketing rights and collapsed in 2001, leaving tens of millions of dollars of unpaid debts to FIFA.

The company, ISL, paid bribes to several top FIFA officials, the organization's own ethics committee concluded last year, though it said Sepp Blatter, the longtime FIFA president, was not among the bribe takers.

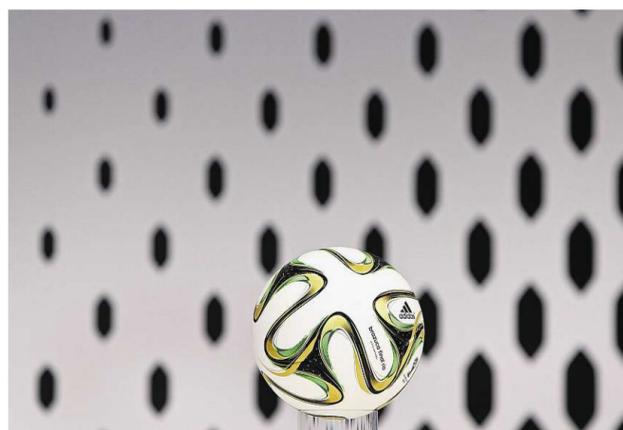
Such scandals present sponsors with a dilemma. Any comments they make only generate more negative publicity and risk souring their relationships with FIFA. But silence looks like complacency.

Jan Simon, an assistant professor at the IESE Business School in Spain, said that sponsors could turn the situation to their advantage by taking a stand.

"That is a great opportunity from a brand point of view to say, 'We are the company that wants change to happen,'" said Mr. Simon, who teaches sports management. "If that change doesn't happen, we will take our money and put it in places where those beliefs are really put into action."

But it is not clear that sponsors get much credit from fans for being principled. In that regard, the German sportswear maker Puma offers a cautionary tale.

Last year Puma terminated its sponsorship of the South African Football Association after accusations of wide-



Every World Cup match used a Brazuca ball from Adidas, helping to sell millions of them.

spread match fixing. (FIFA was accused of knowing about the match fixing but taking little action.)

"Puma abides by an inflexible code of ethics in all areas of its business operations and expects its partners to adhere to the same values," Puma, which is not a FIFA sponsor, said at the time.

But the decision to take the high road

may have simply opened up space for a competitor. Within months, Nike stepped in as uniform and equipment supplier for the South African national team. Nike's statement in January announcing the sponsorship made no mention of the match fixing scandal. Nike, which is also not a FIFA partner,

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BUSINESS MEDIA ENERGY

Shifting images of race sweep over toy industry

‘Doc McStuffins,’ a doll based on a nonwhite character, crosses over

BY ELIZABETH A. HARRIS
AND TANZINA VEGA

Jade Goss, age 2, looks as if she just stepped out of the wildly popular “Doc McStuffins” cartoon.

“She has the Doc McStuffins sheets. She has the Doc McStuffins doll. She has the Doc McStuffins purse. She has Doc McStuffins clothes,” said Jade’s mother, Melissa Woods, of Lynwood, Calif.

“I think what attracts her is, ‘Hey, I look like her, and she looks like me,’” Ms. Woods said of the character, an African-American child who acts as a doctor to her stuffed animals.

With about \$500 million in sales last year, Doc McStuffins merchandise seems to be setting a record as the best-selling toy line based on an African-American character, industry experts say.

Its blockbuster success reflects, in part, the country’s changing consumer demographics, experts say, with more children from minority backgrounds providing an expanding, less segregated marketplace for shoppers and toy-makers.

But what also differentiates Doc — and Dora the Explorer, an exceptionally popular Latina character whose toy line has sold \$12 billion worth of merchandise over the years, Nickelodeon executives say — is her crossover appeal.

“The kids who are of color see her as an African-American girl, and that’s really big for them,” said Chris Nee, the creator of Doc McStuffins. “And I think a lot of other kids don’t see her color, and that’s wonderful as well.”

Nancy Kanter, general manager of Disney Junior Worldwide, which developed “Doc McStuffins” — and who suggested the character be African-American in the first place — said Doc’s wide-ranging fan base could be gleaned from a spreadsheet. “If you look at the numbers on the toy sales, it’s pretty obvious that this isn’t just African-American families buying these toys,” Ms. Kanter said. “It’s the broadest demographics possible.”

Industry experts say that children still tend to gravitate toward toys and characters that look like them, with parents clamoring for more nonwhite dolls and protesting in online petitions when a company drops a black or an Asian doll, as American Girl did in May.

“Right now there are more multicultural children being born under the age of 5,” said Lisa Williams, chief executive of World of EPI, the company behind Positively Perfect Dolls, a line of multi-

cultural dolls sold at Walmart stores around the country. “They are no longer the minority; they are actually the majority of children. The demand is there.”

Recent census data supports Ms. Williams’s point of the growing marketplace for nonwhite dolls and characters: Last year, roughly half of all infants in the United States were minorities, and minority children under 18 are expected to outnumber non-Hispanic whites of the same ages by 2018.

These days, any toy whose sales reach several hundred million dollars, as Doc’s have, is considered significant, given the toy industry’s estimated \$22 billion business nationwide. In the past, none of the toys based on Tiana — including a recent black Disney princess; Little Bill, a television series starring an African-American boy; or even Michael Jackson in the 1980s — have enjoyed such a prosperous shelf life as Doc’s, according to the NPD Group, a market research company.

Margaret Beale Spencer, a professor of comparative human development at the University of Chicago whose research has focused on children, race and identity, said children from all backgrounds derive meaningful lessons from their toys.

“Children’s play is serious business,” Dr. Spencer said. “They are getting ideas about who they are from these objects. There are messages about one’s confidence, one’s sense of self in terms of what I look like and being powerful.”

At the same time, she notes that children of different races or ethnicities do view some toys differently. “When little white girls embrace Doc McStuffins, for them Doc McStuffins is a girl, and Doc McStuffins is powerful,” Dr. Spencer said. “For a little black girl, it may be all of those things, but also that she’s black.”

Natalie Elisabeth Battles, a toddler who lives with her family in Little Rock, Ark., is so taken with Doc McStuffins that she sometimes wears a doctor’s coat to preschool.

“To be able to identify with someone of her own race doing something positive” is valuable, her mother, Jennifer, said. “I know she’s only 3, but I think the message reaches her.”

Despite the new success of a few non-white dolls, a decision in May by American Girl to discontinue two dolls provoked an outcry among some parents. Frustrated parents protested on the company’s Facebook page, contending that the action was a step backward.

A spokeswoman for American Girl said the company still offered several other dolls of color.

But the flap highlighted continuing gaps in toyland, with parents of Asian children and toy analysts saying that Asian dolls may be the scarcest of all.



Natalie Elisabeth Battles, 3, of Arkansas is so taken with her Doc McStuffins toys that she wears a doctor’s coat to school. “I think the message reaches her,” her mother said.



Ayman Mohyeldin, left, was pulled out of Gaza after Twitter posts about an Israeli airstrike that killed four boys used the hashtag #horror.

Fast news, without reflection

THE MEDIA EQUATION, FROM PAGE 1

by the limits of television technology at the time. CNN put all viewers on a kind of war footing, with its live broadcasts from the first Gulf war in 1991.

But in the current news ecosystem, we don’t have to wait for the stentorian anchor to arrive and set up shop. Even as some legacy media outfits have pulled back, new players like Vice and BuzzFeed have stepped in to sometimes remarkable effect. Citizen reports from the scene are quickly augmented by journalists. And those journalistic boots on the ground begin writing about what they see, often via Twitter, before consulting with headquarters about what it all means.

Bearing witness is the oldest and perhaps most valuable tool in the journalist’s arsenal, but it becomes something different delivered in the crucible of real time, without pause for reflection. It is unedited, distributed immediately and globally, and immediately responded to by the people formerly known as the audience.

It has made for a more visceral, more emotional approach to reporting. War correspondents arriving in a hot zone now provide an on-the-spot moral and physical inventory that seems different than in times past.

That emotional content, so noticeable when Anderson Cooper was reporting from the Gulf Coast during Hurricane Katrina in 2005, has now become routine, part of the real-time picture all over the web.

The absence of the conventional layers of journalism — correspondents filing reports that are then edited for taste and accuracy — has gotten several journalists in trouble, mostly for responding in the moment to what they saw in front of them.

A reporter from The Wall Street Journal wondered on Twitter what the patients at a Gaza hospital thought of Hamas’s leadership’s setting up shop in the same location. Ayman Mohyeldin, an NBC News correspondent, was purportedly pulled out of Gaza after several Twitter posts about an Israeli airstrike that killed four Palestinian boys, accompanied by the hashtag #horror.

Diana Magnay of CNN found herself reassigned to Moscow after she complained on Twitter that she was being threatened by Israelis who were watch-

ing the attacks on Gaza from a hill in Israel, calling them “scum.”

And it’s not just a one-way broadcast. Ms. Magnay’s name-calling caused an immediate uproar on the Internet. A Sky News reporter, Colin Brazier, was upbraided on Twitter after going through the belongings of the victims of the downed aircraft in Ukraine during a live shot. He promptly apologized.

And after removing Mr. Mohyeldin from Gaza, NBC News was widely criticized on social media, including by many journalists, and it is worth noting that he was reinstated to the assignment. The megaphone goes both ways.

The public has developed an expectation that it will know exactly what a reporter knows every single second, and news organizations are increasingly urging their correspondents to use social media to tell their stories — and to extend their brand. (Unless the reporter says something dumb. Then, not so much.)

Anne Barnard, a reporter for The New York Times covering the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, was pursued on Twitter for ... not tweeting. She still sees value in being able to use the service. Interviewed on NPR, Ms. Barnard said: “I think overall it brings more benefits than problems. I think we just — again, we have to remember our primary work is the reporting we’re doing on the ground. You know, our job isn’t to tweet in real time.”

Twitter’s ability to carry visual information had made it an even more important part of the news narrative. A message may be only 140 characters, but we all know a picture is worth many, many words.

Often, it is a single image that comes to represent big, complicated events. The children fleeing napalm in Vietnam, an incinerated soldier along a “highway of death” during the Gulf war or the hooded prisoner standing on a box in Abu Ghraib.

Barbie Zelizer, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania’s Annenberg School for Communication, says social media has not fundamentally altered the vocabulary of war.

“It is a difference of degree, not of kind,” she said. “There are more pictures more frequently from more people, but they still serve the same purpose, which is to give us a glimpse, a window, into conflict.”

But we no longer have to wait for those moments.

Tyler Hicks, a longtime photographer for The Times, was at a hotel in Gaza City across from the beach where the four Palestinian boys died. He tweeted the news immediately and took a photo that was hard to glance at. In a final act of witness, he wrote about what it was like to be standing there.

He said that he felt horrified, but that in a clinical sense, he also felt exposed. “If children are being killed, what is there to protect me, or anyone else?”

The act of witness, a foundation of war reporting, has been democratized. The same device that carries photos of your mother’s new puppy or hosts aimless video games also serves up news from the front.

Many of us cannot help looking because of what Susan Sontag has called “the perennial seductiveness of war.” It is a kind of rubbernecking, staring at the bloody aftermath of something that is not an act of God but of man. The effect, as Ms. Sontag pointed out in an essay in The New Yorker in 2002, is anything but certain.

“Making suffering loom larger, by globalizing it, may spur people to feel they ought to ‘care’ more,” she wrote. “It also invites them to feel that the sufferings and misfortunes are too vast, too irrevocable, too epic to be much changed by any local, political intervention.”

So now that war comes to us in real time, do we feel helpless or empowered? Do we care more, or will the ubiquity of images and information desensitize us to the point where human suffering loses meaning when it is part of a scroll that includes a video of your niece twerking? Oh, we say as our index finger navigates to the next item, another one of those.

As war becomes a more remote, mechanized activity, posts and images from the target area have significant value. When a trigger gets pulled or bombs explode, real people are often on the wrong end of it. And bearing witness to the consequences gives meaning to what we see.

Britain plans more drilling for shale fuel

SHALE, FROM PAGE 14

supplies about one-third of the gas consumed in the European Union.

People in the industry say that the response to Britain’s new round of licensing will be an important indicator of whether the government’s policies are succeeding. So far, the British shale industry has been the province of a few small companies, limiting the amount of capital that could be applied to drilling programs. Those limitations seem to be easing: Total of France made a shale gas investment in Britain earlier this year, and Centrica, a British utility, and GDF Suez, a French energy company, both announced similar moves last year.

According to Cameron Ramos, a spokesman for the British Department of Energy and Climate Change, applications for licenses will be judged not by price but according to company commitments to drill and do other work. It will probably be several months before new licenses are awarded.

According to a map published by the government, a large portion of Britain will now at least theoretically be open to bids from energy companies for drilling rights. However, the government expects new bids to focus on land near existing license areas in the Midlands, central Scotland, and an area of southwest England known as the Weald Basin.

Over the past two years the British Geological Survey, a research organization, has published estimates showing that there could be substantial amounts of oil and gas locked in the shale rock in these regions.

Based on these estimates, the area with the most potential is a rock formation known as the Bowland Shale, which stretches from the Irish Sea resort of Blackpool eastward to Nottingham and which the geological survey estimated could have as much as 1,300 trillion cubic feet of natural gas — a very large amount — in place. If 10 percent of that gas could be produced, it would be enough to satisfy British consumption at current rates for around 50 years.

Whether any of this potentially vast resource can be commercially exploited will not be known until energy companies are able to complete extensive drilling and testing programs. So far, the industry has drilled only a handful of wells in Britain.

Mr. Cameron is trying to speed exploration through a combination of streamlining regulation and offering rewards for local communities. Under government proposals announced in May, local communities would receive 20,000 pounds, or \$34,000, for each horizontal well drilled. Because each shale gas site would most likely include several wells with several lateral branches, this requirement could add up to a substantial sum.

The government is also trying to reduce the hurdles that companies need to clear before drilling, but application procedures can still be agonizingly slow. The West Sussex County Council in southern England last week turned down a proposal for a well by Celtique Energie, a small exploration company, that had been pending for almost a year. The council said the proposed site had unsafe highway access and would have had a negative impact on the surroundings.

The British government said that it would make sure that the industry took special precautions in sensitive areas like national parks, but environmental groups seemed unlikely to be satisfied.

“The government has fired the starting gun on a reckless race for shale that could see fracking rigs go up across the British countryside, including sensitive areas such as those covering major aquifers,” Greenpeace UK said in a statement.

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With a text, a rickshaw on demand

INDIA, FROM PAGE 14

ing pains. As the customer base has increased, there have been quality concerns.

Satish Chandra, 77, who has been a regular customer since 2012, complains of rude drivers, late pickups and inadequate responses from the call center. “The service has deteriorated,” he said.

Mr. Prasad said the company had resolved some of the earlier problems and was also focused on driver training. At its office, which doubles as a training space, Autowale conducts regular workshops.

For example, the company had to teach some older drivers how to read text messages and how to get a number from a text to call a customer.

Training sessions have also included some basic phrases in English: “good morning,” “you’re welcome” or “have a good journey” when dropping off a passenger at the airport.

One of the main areas of focus has been teaching drivers the concept of customer retention. The chances of encountering repeat customers are high, and Autowale instructs its drivers that if they do not behave properly, they dilute the brand and their incomes.

“The key is to earn with respect and dignity and in a professional manner,” Mr. Prasad said.

Digital artworks that are suitable to hang on wall

BITS, FROM PAGE 14

with an Electric Objects prototype. He says that these kinds of devices play to our current cultural fascination with image creation and sharing on sites like Facebook, Pinterest, Instagram and Tumblr, but in a much more meaningful way.

“The whole social Internet is built on images,” he said.

“And there’s no denying that all of these systems seem to want us to consume more images, faster, all the time. Which ends up being kind of gross, I think.”

The Electric Objects device has some social features, like allowing people to see what their friends have displayed in their homes and to choose to display the same images. But it won’t allow checking email, for example.

For Mr. Sloan, who has also worked at media companies like Twitter and CurrentTV, the screen’s minimalist nature is what makes it so appealing: It allows only one image to be shown at a time.

“It actually insists upon a slower, more thoughtful pace” of cultural consumption, he said.

That’s exactly the kind of retro-futuristic experience that Mr. Levine hopes people will be willing to pay for.

World Cup sponsors reluctant to push for overhaul at FIFA

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declined to comment. FIFA maintains that it has taken corrective action. The organization has hired Michael J. Garcia, a former United States prosecutor in New York, to conduct an independent investigation into how the 2018 and 2022 World Cups were bid and awarded. The 2018 tournament will be played in Russia.

“FIFA just underwent an extensive governance reform process following the principles of good governance, transparency and zero tolerance toward any wrongdoing,” the organization said in an email response to questions.

The tone of the statements by sponsors has been several notches below

“That is a great opportunity from a brand point of view to say, ‘We are the company that wants change to happen.’”

outrage, raising questions about how aggressively they will push for change.

“Anything that detracts from the mission and ideals of the FIFA World Cup is a concern to us,” Coca-Cola said in a statement, “but we are confident that FIFA is taking these allegations very seriously and is investigating them thoroughly.” Neither Coca-Cola nor any of the other sponsors contacted would

comment on what action they might take to prevent future scandals at FIFA.

If any sponsor has the ear of FIFA grandees, it is Adidas. The relationship between Adidas and FIFA goes back decades and has been profitable for both.

During the World Cup in Brazil, every match began with a referee plucking a special edition Adidas ball from a pedestal. The product placement helped sell 14 million of the so-called Brazuca balls, part of what the company estimated would be 2 billion euros, or nearly \$2.7 billion, in soccer-related revenue this year.

Jan Runau, an Adidas spokesman, said the company was concerned about the Qatar accusations, but also “very happy” with its FIFA partnership. Mr. Runau pointed out that FIFA has been successful in building the World Cup into the global phenomenon that it has become.

“When you look at FIFA, you have to see these two sides of the coin,” Mr. Runau said. “On the one hand, there are these allegations, which are not good, but also the development of the World Cup.”

For now, sponsors are awaiting the results of the investigation led by Mr. Garcia, the former prosecutor. The report is expected to be completed in September and submitted to FIFA’s internal adjudicatory committee. Despite insisting that it is committed to transparency, FIFA does not plan to publicly release the independent investigator’s report.