# Rouhani warns West to stay out of Gulf

## Iranian President promises to unveil a regional peace plan at this week's high-level meetings at the UN

ASSOCIATED PRESS
TEHRAN

Iran's President called on Sunday on Western powers to leave the security of the Persian Gulf to regional nations led by Tehran, criticising a new U.S.-led coalition patrolling the region's waterways as nationwide parades showcased the Islamic Republic's military arsenal.

President Hassan Rouhani separately promised to unveil a regional peace plan at this week's upcoming high-level meetings at the United Nations, which comes amid heightened Mideast tensions following a series of attacks, including a missile-and-drone assault on Saudi Arabia's oil industry.

The U.S. alleges Iran carried out the September 14 attack on Saudi Arabia's oil facilities, which caused oil prices to spike by the biggest percentage since the 1991 Gulf War. While Yemen's Iranian-allied Houthi rebels claimed the assault, Saudi Arabia says it was "unquestionably sponsored by Iran."

For its part, Iran denies being responsible and has warned any retaliatory attack targeting it will result in an "all-out war." That's as it has begun enriching uranium beyond the terms of its 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, which the U.S. unilaterally withdrew from over a year earlier.

Mr. Rouhani spoke from a riser at the parade in Tehran, with uniformed officers from the country's military and its paramilitary Revolutionary Guard beside him. The cleric later watched as goose-stepping soldiers carrying submachine guns and portable missile launchers drove past as part of "Holy Defense Week," which marks the start of the Iran-Iraq war in 1980.

Mr. Rouhani said Iran was willing to "extend the hand of friendship and brotherhood" to Persian Gulf nations and was "even ready to forgive their past mistakes."

"Those who want to link the region's incidents to the Islamic Republic of Iran are lying like their past lies that have been revealed," the President said. "If they are truthful and seek security in the region, they must not send weapons, fighter jets, bombs and dangerous arms to the region." He added that the U.S. and Western nations should "distance" themselves from the region.

"Your presence has always been a calamity for this region and the farther you go from our region, the more security would come for our region," he said.

**Military might:** Iran's President Hassan Rouhani and military officials at the "Sacred Defence Week" parade in Tehran. It marks the start of the Iran-Iraq war in 1980. ▪AFP

# Iran to release British-flagged tanker

REUTERS
STOCKHOLM

Stena Impero, the British-flagged tanker detained by Iran on July 19, may be released within hours, the head of the Swedish firm that owns the vessel said on Sunday.

The Stena Impero was detained by Iran's Revolutionary Guards in the Strait of Hormuz waterway for alleged marine violations, two weeks after Britain seized an Iranian tanker off Gibraltar. That vessel was released in August.

Swedish public broadcaster SVT quoted Stena Bulk chief executive Erik Hanell as saying: "We have received information this morning that it seems like they will release Stena Impero within a few hours. So we understand that the political decision to release the ship has been taken."

# Hong Kong police foil bid to disrupt airport

## Protesters deface Chinese flag

Police officers detaining an anti-government protester in Sha Tin, Hong Kong, on Sunday. ▪REUTERS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
HONG KONG

Pro-democracy protesters clashed with riot police outside a mall on Sunday, with some activists vandalising a nearby subway station and defacing a Chinese flag, but plans to disrupt the airport did not materialise.

Police fired brief volleys of tear gas and rubber bullets in the northern town of Sha Tin late Sunday afternoon, capping a day which saw thousands rally peacefully inside a mall before the mood soured.

Authorities reduced rail and bus links to the city's airport while police stepped up security checks in a successful bid to stop a crowd from massing at the bustling transport hub.

The airport – the world's eighth busiest – has become a frequent target for demonstrators pushing for greater democratic rights and police accountability.

**'Stress test'**

Online forums used by the largely leaderless movement had called for a "stress test" of the airport on Sunday, code for disrupting travel links or occupying buildings.

Instead thousands gathered inside a mall in the northern town of Sha Tin to sing protest songs and make origami cranes, the latest rally in what has now been 16 consecutive weekends of protests and clashes.

Many shops inside the complex shuttered but the unsanctioned rally remained civil for much of the afternoon.

"Even if we are very tired, we can't give up on our rights," a teacher at the rally, who have her surname as Ching, told AFP.

"If it (the movement) stretches to 100 days, 200 days or even 1,000 days and we still don't get what we want, we will continue to come out."

Tensions rose later in the afternoon.

Masked activists paraded a Chinese flag through the mall that had been torn down from a nearby government building. It was later thrown into a nearby river.

Groups of masked protesters then vandalised ticket machines in Sha Tin's subway before riot police rushed in to close the station down.

Police snatch squads made multiple arrests.

# Travel firm Thomas Cook battles to keep afloat

REUTERS
LONDON

The British government has plans in place to bring home stranded holidaymakers if Thomas Cook goes out of business, an event that would likely spark chaotic scenes at resorts and airports around the world.

The bosses of the world's oldest travel company were still meeting lenders and creditors in London on Sunday to try to thrash out a last-ditch deal to keep the company afloat.

The company's board will then meet in the early evening to decide the company's fate, with it potentially going into administration in the early hours of Monday.

Running hotels, resorts, airlines and cruises, Thomas Cook has 600,000 customers on holiday, meaning governments and insurance companies could be forced to step in and bring them home if the company goes out of business. The government and the aviation regulator have drawn up a plan to step in and use other airlines to bring Britons home if needed.

It needs to find another £200 million to see it through the winter months when it needs to pay hotels for their summer services.

# Israel's Arab party backs Gantz for PM

## Avigdor Lieberman says he will endorse neither Netanyahu nor Gantz

REUTERS
JERUSALEM

Israel's Arab-dominated Joint List party moved on Sunday to back the centre-left bloc of Benny Gantz, who is challenging Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's right-wing alliance, to form a new government.

With final results all but in, neither Mr. Gantz nor Mr. Netanyahu command a majority in 120-seat Parliament, so the Arab List's decision to end its usual policy of withholding support for any candidate in the wake of elections could nudge President Reuven Rivlin to ask Mr. Gantz to form a government.

Mr. Rivlin, who began consulting with party leaders on Sunday to discuss who should lead the country after no clear victor emerged from Tuesday's election, suggested Mr. Gantz and Mr. Netanyahu join forces.

No party drawn from the 21% Arab minority has ever been part of an Israeli government. But an increased turnout saw the Joint List win 13 seats, making it the third largest grouping.

This would provide an outlet to voice Arab complaints of discrimination in Israeli society and give a bigger platform to Arab parties.

Ayman Odeh

"We want to bring an end to the era of Netanyahu, so we recommend that Benny Gantz be the one to form the next government," party head Ayman Odeh said.

Joint List's support does not mean it will sit in the governing coalition, but its backing gives Mr. Gantz's centre-left bloc 57 seats, compared to Mr. Netanyahu's right-wing bloc of 55.

Mr. Netanyahu denounced the Arab party support of Mr. Gantz.

Meanwhile, former Defence Minister Avigdor Lieberman, whose party Yisrael Beitenu won eight seats, told Mr. Rivlin on Sunday he would not recommend either candidate. He could play a kingmaker's role in shaping the final outcome.

## ELSEWHERE

**EU's Juncker says not too late for Brexit deal**

MADRID

There is still time for London and Brussels to make a Brexit deal, European Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker said in remarks published on Sunday, as the clock runs down to a October 31 deadline. AFP

**Tanzania not sharing details on Ebola: WHO**

NAIROBI

The World Health Organization has accused Tanzania of failing to provide information on suspected cases of Ebola in the country. East African nations have been on high alert over an outbreak of Ebola in the Democratic Republic of Congo. AFP

# Doctors, nurses can work in U.K. sans TOEFL, IELTS

## OET enough for health care professionals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Doctors, nurses, dentists and mid-wives who wish to practice in the U.K. will no longer have to appear for English language tests like TOEFL and IELTS as the country will now accept scores of Occupational English Test (OET), which the candidates have to anyway clear for registering with the relevant health care regulator.

The OET is an international English language test that assesses the language communication skills of health care professionals, who seek to register and practise in an English-speaking environment.

The candidates had to earlier take OET to register with Nursing and Midwifery Council and the General Medical Council, which are the two health care boards in the U.K., as well as TOEFL or IELTS like exam to apply for visa.

"The U.K. Home Office has streamlined English language testing ensuring that doctors, dentists, nurses and midwives, who have already passed an English language test accepted by the relevant professional body, do not have to sit another test before entry to the U.K. on a Tier 2 visa," said Sujata Stead, CEO, Cambridge Boxhill Language Assessment, which conducts the OET.

The change will apply to all Tier 2 (General) visa applications submitted from October 1.

# Sirisena forms panel to probe Easter attacks

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's President Maithripala Sirisena on Sunday ordered a fresh inquiry into the Easter suicide bombings that hit Sri Lanka killing at least 258 people.

Mr. Sirisena said the commission has wide judicial powers to gather evidence on those responsible for the attack, and to probe security and intelligence lapses. The five-member panel is to report back with recommendations within three months.

The inquiry was launched amid fears voiced by the Catholic Church that a parliamentary probe and police investigation into the attacks are not independent.

# Trump says Biden was subject of his call to Ukraine President

## He pressed Zelensky for damaging information on his rival's son

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump on Sunday confirmed he did discuss former Vice-President Joe Biden and corruption allegations in a phone call with Ukraine's leader, as Mr. Trump's opponents called for his impeachment.

A whistleblower's complaint sparked off accusations that Mr. Trump had sought to persuade President Volodymyr Zelensky to provide damaging information on Mr. Biden, Mr. Trump's possible 2020 election challenger.

Mr. Trump confirmed that the conversation, held in July, had addressed alleged corruption involving Mr. Biden and his son Hunter, and he floated the possibility that a transcript could be released.

Joe Biden

"We had a very great conversation, very straight, very honest conversation. I hope they can put it out," Mr. Trump said, repeating that he had done nothing wrong.

The *Wall Street Journal* reported that Mr. Trump pressed Mr. Zelensky about eight times on the call to investigate possible corruption involving Mr. Hunter, who worked with a Ukrainian natural gas company while his father was Vice-President.

Mr. Biden said that Mr. Trump's actions appeared "to be an overwhelming abuse of power."

Influential congressman Adam Schiff, chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, on Sunday said that his own reservations about impeachment were fading over Mr. Trump's Ukraine call.

# 26 killed in Pakistan bus crash

ASSOCIATED PRESS
ISLAMABAD

A bus crash in northern Pakistan killed 26 people on Sunday after its brakes failed on a winding mountain road, police said.

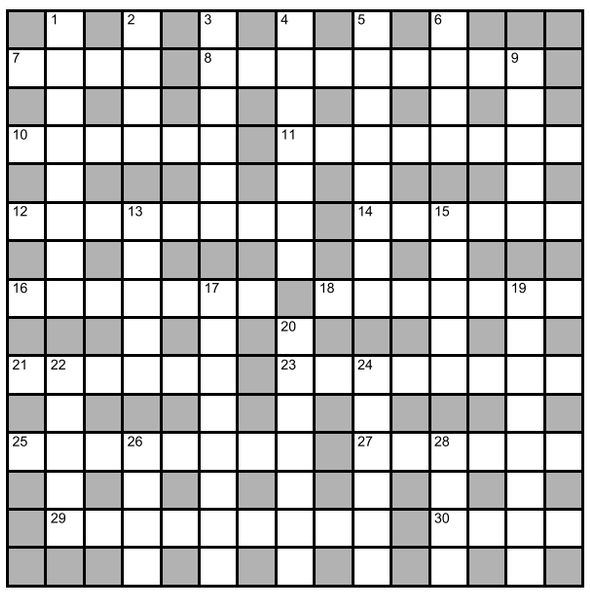
Another 20 passengers were injured when the bus smashed head-on into a dirt embankment.

Such road accidents are common in Pakistan, where motorists largely disregard traffic rules and safety standards on worn-out roads. Last month, a speeding bus fell off a road into a river in the northwest, killing 24 passengers.

Rescue efforts were hampered by the remote terrain near the town of Chilas on the route between the cities of Rawalpindi and Skardu.

## THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12737

(set by Incognito)



**ACROSS**

7 Complain: "It's a small bed" (4)
8 Making clear evil anger is bad (9)
10 Ms. Earhart, America's enterprising lady in air, for starters (6)
11 Mac's Croatian dressing (8)
12 If grants can be organised for firing from aircraft at ground targets ... (8)
14 Goes around bistro redevelopment (6)
16 Little bone of sinuous snake is cut lengthwise easily, in the beginning (7)
18 Legendary female I dream about after end of film (7)
21 Walks or stays? (6)
23 Increases soldiers in August mobilisation, after loss of uniform (8)
25 Pub date dances around commencement of soiree in capital (8)
27 Comedian Hardy's duck's organ (6)
29 Ok, a sarong is designed for animals down under (9)
30 Flog political functionary (4)

**DOWN**

1 Burns' steamer sails behind cape (8)
2 Isabella hides murder victim (4)
3 Revolting Bulgarians throw buns to get sheep (6)
4 Anger on small road is normal (7)
5 Pub note rewritten; includes one male singer (8)
6 Dance bar doesn't have love for gramophone record, for example (4)
9 General allowance (5)
13 House-trained hornets fly away excitedly! Goodbye! (5)
15 Enigma solver's explosive device, I hear (5)
17 Girl hugs star in American city (3,5)
19 Riptide flows around head of Navajo brave (8)
20 Sketch box containing egg (7)
22 Main container (5)
24 Great river carp (6)
26 Champ's new skin disorder (4)
28 State: Moon's over Washington (4)

## SUDOKU

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
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| | | | 9 | 3 | | | 1 | 4 |
| | | 5 | 2 | 1 | | | 7 | |
| 7 | | 4 | 1 | | | | | |
| 6 | 1 | | | | | | 4 | 2 |
| | | | | | 7 | 1 | | 9 |
| | 4 | | | 9 | 2 | 5 | | |
| 2 | 3 | | | 7 | 6 | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |

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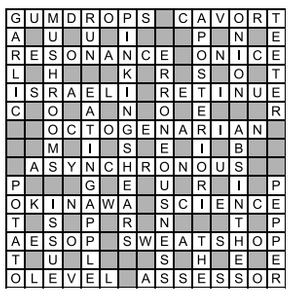
DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

**Solution to puzzle 12736**



**Solution to yesterday's Sudoku**

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 6 | 9 | 8 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 5 | 1 |
| 1 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 3 |
| 7 | 3 | 8 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 9 | 6 | 4 |
| 3 | 7 | 1 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 9 |
| 9 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 8 | 7 | 3 | 6 |
| 8 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 2 |
| 6 | 8 | 3 | 1 | 7 | 2 | 4 | 9 | 5 |
| 2 | 9 | 4 | 3 | 8 | 5 | 6 | 1 | 7 |
| 5 | 1 | 7 | 9 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 8 |

## FAITH

# Bhakti for emancipation

Devotion is an overwhelming experience felt in one's inner being when the human soul longs to reach the Lotus feet of the Lord. The restless human mind is given to fear and all kinds of phobias when it is involved in worldly affairs. All this only makes one further rooted in the cycle of birth. Akrura exemplifies the truth that true devotion and jnana are complementary and not antithetical, pointed out Sri B. Damodhara Dikshitar in a discourse.

Kamsa entrusts Akrura with the mission of bringing Krishna and Balarama to Mathura. In all humility, Akrura understands that though he is worldly minded and engaged in the service of Kamsa, he is now most lucky and fortunate to be able to see Krishna in person. He sets forth to Gokula, with his mind fully engrossed in Krishna. Akrura ruminates on the greatness of the Lord and His incarnations that provide a chance for ordinary people to know about the Highest Truth. His mind revolves around his hopes and expectations about the Lord. He also wishes for the removal of all obstacles. So much takes place in his mind about the forthcoming meeting with Krishna. As he enters Gokula, he feels the vibrations of the place sanctified by the Lord's presence. He sees the footprints of the Lord on the ground and he rolls on the sands to savour the divine contact with His Lotus feet. He is caught in the river of spiritual joy. Adi Sankara, the famous exponent of Advaita Siddhanta, extols bhakti as the state of mind that finds solace in God even as the rivers find their refuge in the ocean. He asserts that bhakti is the best path for emancipation of the human soul. The mind gets attracted to the Lord even as iron filings gets drawn to the magnet or when the creeper reaches out to the tree for support.