

## ELSEWHERE



## Hong Kong leader faces heat at town hall meeting

HONG KONG  
Hong Kong's embattled leader endured a barrage of criticism at a town hall meeting on Thursday night. Chief Executive Carrie Lam faced more than two hours of grilling at a public "dialogue session", the first time her pro-Beijing administration has sat down with its critics in 16 consecutive weeks of unrest. **AFP**

## Earthquake rocks Indonesia, kills 20

JAKARTA  
A strong earthquake on Thursday killed at least 20 people and damaged a bridge, a hospital and other buildings on one of Indonesia's less populated islands. The magnitude 6.5 quake was centred 33 km northeast of Ambon. Parts of a building at an Islamic university collapsed. **AP**

## 30 killed in landslide at Chad gold mine

N'DJAMENA  
A landslide at an illegal gold mine in Chad has killed about 30 people, a Minister said on Thursday. The mine in the Tibesti region near the Libyan border collapsed early on Tuesday and more victims might still be buried in the rubble. Unsafe methods and a lack of oversight mean accidents are common at such mines. **REUTERS**

## Bangladesh to build wall around Rohingya camps

DHAKA  
Bangladesh is set to erect barbed-wire fencing, guard towers and cameras around Rohingya camps, the Home Minister said on Thursday citing security concerns. Dhaka has been growing frustrated with the collapse of a repatriation attempt to encourage them to return home to Myanmar. **AP**

# 'White House sought to conceal records of Trump's Ukraine call'

Whistleblower says officials 'witnessed the President abuse his office for personal gain'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
WASHINGTON

The White House moved to "lock down" all records of U.S. President Donald Trump's phone call seeking Ukraine's interference in the 2020 U.S. election, a whistleblower's complaint released on Thursday alleges, in the latest explosive episode in the rapidly unfolding impeachment drama.

The top-secret complaint, declassified by the administration and released by Congress, caps a stunning week of revelations that have put Mr. Trump in the sharpest political and legal jeopardy of his presidency.

White House officials told the whistleblower they had likely "witnessed the President abuse his office for personal gain" in the July call with Ukraine leader Volodymyr Zelensky, according to the document.

In the days that followed, "I learned from multiple U.S. officials that senior White House officials had intervened to 'lock down' all records of the phone call, especially the official word-for-word transcript of the call that was produced," the whistleblower said.

The anonymous official



**Facing questions:** Intelligence chief Joseph Maguire testifying before a House panel. **AFP**

presented the nine-page complaint on August 12 to the inspector general of the intelligence community, a Trump appointee who found it a credible and "urgent concern" and forwarded it to the acting Director of National Intelligence (DNI).

## Maguire testimony

But the DNI, Joseph Maguire, at first refused to deliver the complaint to Congress, raising concerns from Democrats that members of Mr. Trump's administration were improperly protecting the President.

"This is a cover up," House speaker Nancy Pelosi had told reporters.

On Thursday, Mr. Ma-

guire, testifying before the House Intelligence Committee, said that he believed the whistleblower had "acted in good faith" and followed the law, but he withheld the complaint from Congress because Mr. Trump's call was subject to executive privilege.

The Democratic-led House of Representatives has opened an impeachment inquiry to remove the President from office for abuse of power.

## Trump calls it a joke

Mr. Trump on Wednesday dismissed as a "joke" the grounds laid out for the impeachment inquiry into him, as Democrats stood firm in

accusing the President of a "mafia-style shakedown" of his Ukrainian counterpart.

"They are getting hit hard on this witch hunt because when they look at the information, it's a joke," said the President, who struck an uncharacteristically subdued tone at his first news conference since the launch of impeachment inquiry.

The call summary - which is not a verbatim transcript - shows Mr. Trump saying that U.S. Attorney General Bill Barr and the President's personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani would be in touch about probing the Ukraine-related activities of Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden and his son.

# Johnson loses fresh parliamentary vote

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
LONDON

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson suffered yet another setback on Thursday after MPs rejected his call to briefly suspend their business for his party's conference, highlighting the hostility he faces in Parliament just weeks before Brexit.

In his seventh successive defeat in Parliament, MPs voted to reject his call for three days off next week to hold his Conservative party's annual conference.

Parliament usually holds a recess during all the main party's conferences, but the

vote came as tensions among MPs reached boiling point over Britain's EU exit next month.

The Supreme Court on Tuesday ruled that Mr. Johnson's decision to suspend Parliament for five weeks was unlawful.

MPs reconvened on Wed-

nesday but, in a stormy session, Mr. Johnson vowed to press ahead with his plan to leave the EU, no matter what. His inflammatory language drew accusations - including from his sister Rachel - of stoking divisions in a country still split over the 2016 referendum for Brexit.

# UNP names Sajith Premadasa as presidential candidate

He will face Gotabaya and Dissanayake in the Nov. 16 poll

MEERA SRINIVASAN  
COLOMBO

United National Party (UNP) deputy leader and Cabinet Minister Sajith Premadasa will run for President, Sri Lanka's ruling party announced on Thursday, ending weeks of uncertainty and apparent infighting over candidacy.

Mr. Premadasa, 52, is the son of late President Ranasinghe Premadasa. In the November 16 election, he will face Gotabaya Rajapaksa, a former Defence Secretary and brother of Leader of Opposition Mahinda Rajapaksa, from the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna, and Anura Kumara Disanayake, who leads the leftist Janata Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP).

The UNP's working committee on Thursday unanimously endorsed Mr. Premadasa, nominated by party leader and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe. The development follows an internal struggle among supporters of three contenders - Mr. Wickremesinghe, Speaker Karu Jayasuriya and Mr. Premadasa. With the party grassroots throwing its weight behind Mr. Premadasa, he emerged the final choice, party sources said, adding that he was the "only candidate who can beat Gota".

## Contest picks up

With the UNP naming Mr. Premadasa, the contest - primarily between him and Gotabaya Rajapaksa - is set to pick up in the coming weeks. All the same, Mr. Disanayake drew a huge crowd to the JVP rally held at Colombo's sea front Galle Face Green mid-August, pointing to potentially growing support for the party.



Sajith Premadasa

Sri Lanka follows a preferential voting system for its presidential election, where voters can mark up to three preferences in candidates. If no candidate gets past the 50% mark as first preference, a run-off count will be held.

Pitching himself as a "decisive leader" and "efficient administrator", war-time Defence Secretary Mr. Rajapaksa has been holding regular pocket meetings with his supporters, including professionals. National security and economic development have been recurring themes in his speeches that come months after the deadly Easter terror attacks.

Mr. Premadasa, in turn, is seeking to build on his rural outreach that he began through the Housing Ministry he currently helms. In the rallies he has held in the last few weeks, in anticipation of his candidacy, he has promised jobs for the youth and an economy that reaps benefits for all.

The Rajapaksa are known to appeal to the Sinhala-Buddhist nationalist electorate of the island's south, especially after their administration ended the war in 2009, defeating the LTTE militarily. However, minority Tamils of the north and east, the Muslims, and Malayaha Tamils living in Sri Lanka's hill country deci-

sively voted against the Rajapaksa government in 2015, playing a crucial role in propelling the President Maithripala Sirisena-PM Wickremesinghe combine to power.

The UNP-led ruling coalition includes partners representing the Muslim and Malayaha Tamil minorities. Though in Opposition, the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), which represents the Tamils of the north and east, has been closely engaging with the UNP-government since the regime change in 2015, particularly on constitutional reform that has remained its chief demand in relation to the Tamil national question.

Following the UNP's announcement on Thursday, TNA Leader R. Sampanthan said the alliance was yet to make a decision on which candidate to support. "The party has unanimously chosen its candidate. That is a healthy sign. We will give the matter deep consideration after nominations are filed and candidates make known their policy positions, particularly in regard to the national question. We will take a decision after that," he told *The Hindu*.

Chandra Schaffter, General secretary of the Tamil Progressive Alliance (TPA) that is currently part of the government, said the alliance would support whoever the UNP officially nominated. Speaking to *The Hindu*, he said: "But it is also important that the party holds together now," referring to the tension within the party. "We have certain requests and concerns in regard to the Malayaha Tamil community, we will discuss them with the candidate," he said.

# Ex-French President Jacques Chirac is dead

He championed the cause of a united Europe & stood against the U.S.-led Iraq war

JAMES F. CLARITY  
JOHN TAGLIABUE

Jacques Chirac, who molded the legacy of Charles de Gaulle into a personal power base that made him one of the dominant leaders of France across three decades and a vocal advocate of European unity, died on Thursday at his home in Paris. He was 86.

Mr. Chirac was elected to two consecutive terms as President, beginning in 1995, having already served as Prime Minister under centrist and Socialist presidents.

At his death, he was most remembered for his defiant stand against the U.S.-led war in Iraq, his ability to preside over a State in which power was divided between the left and the right - comi-



**Statesman's departure:** Jacques Chirac in Paris. **REUTERS/FILE**

ty that is hardly imaginable today - and his championing the European Union.

## Chirac's vision

His vision, he argued in 2000, was "not for a United States of Europe, but for a United Europe of States."

Mr. Chirac had also been a highly visible Mayor of Paris

for 18 years, using that office as a springboard into national politics. Only years later would his mayoralty emerge as the source of a damaged reputation: In 2011, he was convicted of embezzlement and misusing public funds to finance his political party while running the city.

Historically, French politi-

cians have seldom been tarnished by their financial peccadilloes, and that was the case with Mr. Chirac: He received a two-year suspended sentence, with his legacy largely intact.

Pascal Perrineau, a Professor of political science at the Paris School of International Affairs, a part of Sciences Po, said there were three main reasons for Chirac's popularity. One was that he was able "to implant the idea of a President who is an ordinary person: a President who goes jogging, a president who rides a Vespa."

To his opponents, Mr. Chirac was a political chameleon, able to adjust his policies according to his reading of what voters wanted. **NY TIMES**

# Khashoggi's death happened under my watch: crown prince

He accepts responsibility for the killing of scribe in Istanbul

REUTERS  
RIYADH

Saudi Arabia's crown prince said he bears responsibility for the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi last year by Saudi operatives "because it happened under my watch," according to a PBS documentary to be broadcast next week.

It is the first time that Mohammed bin Salman has publicly indicated personal accountability for the killing inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul by operatives seen as close to him.

The death sparked a global uproar, tarnishing the crown prince's image and



Mohammed bin Salman. **AP**

imperilling ambitious plans to open up cloistered Saudi society. He has not since visited the U.S. or Europe.

"It happened under my watch. I get all the responsibility, because it happened under my watch," he told

PBS' Martin Smith, according to a preview of a documentary, *The Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia*, set to air on October 1.

Asked how the killing could happen without him knowing about it, Mr. Smith quotes Prince Mohammed as saying: "We have 20 million people. We have 3 million government staff."

When Mr. Smith asked whether the killers could have taken private government jets, the crown prince responded: "I have officials, Ministers to follow things, and they're responsible. They have the authority to do that."

# U.S. imposes sanctions on Castro, family

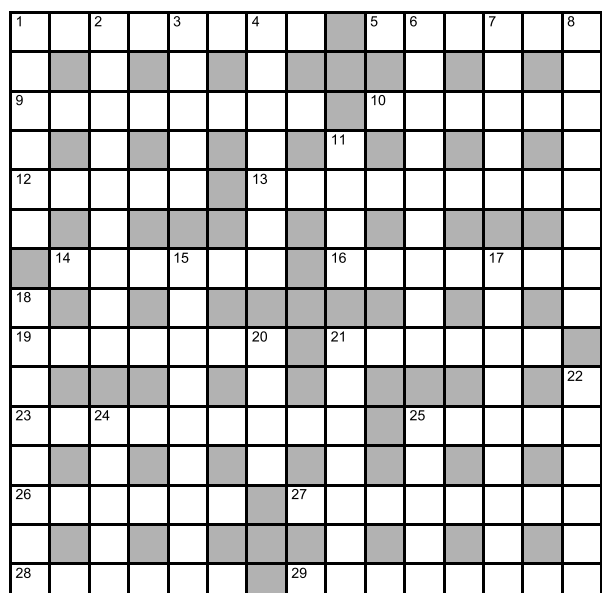
REUTERS  
WASHINGTON

The U.S. on Thursday imposed sanctions on Cuban Communist Party leader Raul Castro, accusing him of "gross violations of human rights" as it sought to step up pressure on Havana over its support of Venezuela's socialist President, Nicolas Maduro.

The sanctions will block Mr. Castro and his immediate family from entering the U.S., Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said.

Mr. Pompeo also accused the Cuban leader of overseeing "a system that arbitrarily detains thousands of Cubans and currently holds more than 100 political prisoners."

## THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12741



(set by Lightning)

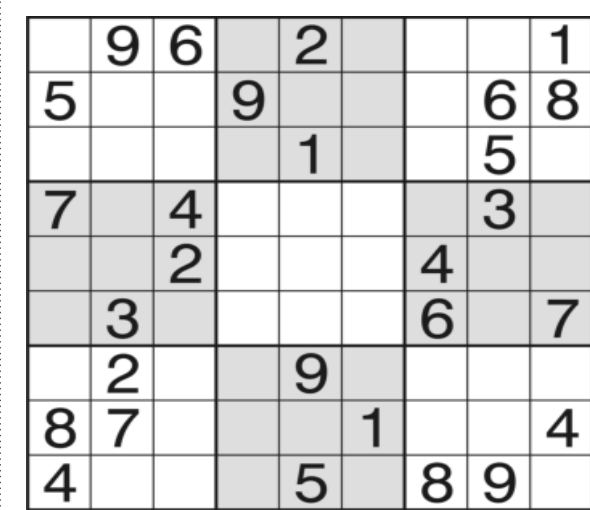
- 13 Be rough in fracas with one next door (9)
- 14 Had her engaged somewhat to follow exactly (6)
- 16 Hundred start off to see European right fielder in baseball (7)
- 19 Silent after website's last part of altered sentence (7)
- 21 A religious education housing may be known only to few (6)
- 23 Chimney's bottom - replace if broken (9)
- 25 Stuffing caught inside dish (5)
- 26 Proxy generally withheld what's vital to one's life (6)
- 27 Caretaker of plants angered by accident beside river (8)
- 28 Strike from French engineer going after permit (6)
- 29 Solemn payment always accommodated (8)

- 3 Ultimately fear heading off to seaside on extremely hot day (5)
- 4 Support ball initially with a long spear (7)
- 6 Doctor teaches one at first to be artistic (9)
- 7 Acceptable to pack plaything going north to Japanese city (5)
- 8 It rarely becomes formal (8)
- 11 Element's atomic number - 1 plus a large number before 100 (4)
- 15 Apparatus with potential energy men quit assembling (9)
- 17 Sped past deer approximately east with difficulty (9)
- 18 Reprimand a fine fellow going inside construction framework (8)
- 20 Weapon returned by master for evaluation (4)
- 21 Normal to declare on time (7)
- 22 Release detailed classified information (6)
- 24 Sovereign place by old river flowing north (5)
- 25 Concoct soft toffee (5)

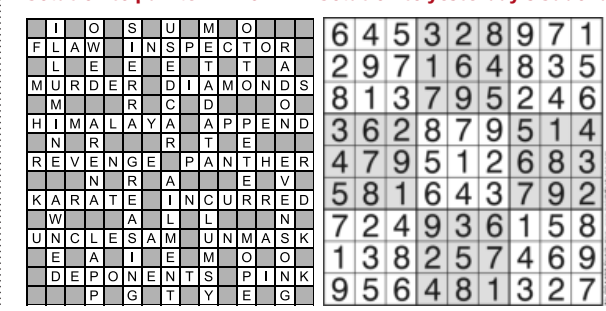
- **ACROSS**
- 1 Centure nation backing help in retrospect (8)
- 5 Sailor with a large animal (6)
- 9 Old boy's leaving one thousand to deal with barrier (8)
- 10 Attendant to escape with gold ornament in the end (6)
- 12 Start off at upward slope of trail (5)

- **DOWN**
- 1 Retracted statement, say empty and tired (6)
- 2 Engineer made trams in capital city (9)

## SUDOKU



Difficulty Rating: ★★☆☆☆



## FAITH

### When Sita turns Vaidehi

Soorpanakha is bowled over by Rama's handsome appearance, and wants to marry Him. She is, however, humiliated by Lakshmana and goes wailing to her brother Khara. But when asked to narrate what happened, she has only words of praise for Rama. She should have abused Him, but instead she says good words about Him. That is a great quality of Rama, said Akkarakkani Srinidhi in a discourse. Even when those who, strictly speaking, should have been angry with Him, end up singing His praise.

Soorpanakha says that Rama and Lakshmana, sons of Dasaratha, are handsome, strong, wise and composed. They have the attributes of celestials, says Soorpanakha, adding that she is unable to tell whether they are gods or not. Khara's 14000-strong force is destroyed single-handedly by Rama. While this battle is taking place, Sita takes refuge in a cave, and Lakshmana stays guard. When the battle with the demons is over and Khara has also been eliminated, Sita emerges from the cave. She is very pleased with her husband's acts of courage, and here Valmiki refers to Her as Vaidehi.

There is a significance to the use of the name Vaidehi here. When Rama was banished to the forest, Sita wanted to accompany him but Rama had rejected the idea pointing to the dangers in the forest. Sita had angrily wondered whether Her father, the King of Videha, would have got Her married to Rama if he had known Rama would be so lacking in courage. Now that Rama has got rid of 14000 demons all alone, Sita is pleased at this proof of His courage. There is no reason for Her father to feel He has chosen the wrong man for his daughter. That is why Valmiki now uses the name Vaidehi - meaning daughter of the King of Videha - here.