

ELSEWHERE



Don't want to provoke China, says Malaysia PM

KUALA LUMPUR
Malaysia does not want to take a confrontational stance towards China over the disputed South China Sea and Beijing's alleged mistreatment of its minority Uighur Muslims, Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad said in an interview published on Saturday. **REUTERS**

18 injured as S. Korea tanker blast sparks fire

SEOUL
A huge blast on an oil tanker in a South Korean port on Saturday sparked a raging fire that spread to a nearby vessel, leaving 18 people injured, authorities said. All 25 of those on board the Cayman Islands-flagged tanker and the 21 people on the second ship have been rescued, according to the Coast Guard. **REUTERS**

Robert Mugabe buried in his village

KUTUMA
The body of Zimbabwe's former President Robert Mugabe was buried on Saturday in a low-key ceremony in his village after weeks of wrangling over his final resting place. Family members threw white roses into the grave as the coffin was lowered to its final resting place in the courtyard of his rural home, about 90 km west of Harare. **AFP**

Pompeo subpoenaed as House Democrats press impeachment

Committees seek documents related to President Trump's Ukraine phone call

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

Democrats charged aggressively into an impeachment investigation of President Donald Trump on Friday, ordering Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to turn over Ukraine-related documents and scheduling testimony for witnesses to alleged abuse of power by the U.S. leader.

Three House committees gave Mr. Pompeo one week to produce the documents, saying multiple State Department officials have direct knowledge of Mr. Trump's efforts to enlist the Ukraine government's help in his U.S. campaign for re-election.

"The Committees are investigating the extent to which President Trump jeopardised national security by pressing Ukraine to interfere with our 2020 election and by withholding security assistance provided by Congress to help Ukraine counter Russian aggression," they said.

Release of complaint

Public support is growing for impeachment after the release of an anonymous whistleblower's complaint on Thursday, reportedly made by a CIA analyst who had worked in the White House.



Under the scanner: President Donald Trump and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo at a news conference in New York. **AP**

It accused Mr. Trump of pressuring Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky in a July 25 phone call to supply dirt on former Vice-President Joe Biden.

The complaint also revealed that White House aides sought to hide the record of the call in a highly secure computer system normally used only for the country's most top-secret intelligence.

Congressional investigators on Friday announced interviews starting next week with five State Department officials, including former Ambassador to Ukraine Marie Yovanovitch, whom Mr. Trump reportedly forced out

earlier this year for resisting his efforts to pressure Kiev to probe Mr. Biden.

Envoy to Ukraine resigns
The list also includes U.S. special representative on Ukraine Kurt Volker, who resigned on Friday after being ordered to answer questions in the impeachment investigation, said a source familiar with the matter.

The whistleblower complaint said Mr. Volker met senior Ukrainian officials on how to "navigate" Mr. Trump's demands of Mr. Zelensky.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi declared that the impeachment investigation

would move quickly, saying evidence from the whistleblower's complaint against Mr. Trump of abuse of power and an attempted cover-up was unambiguous. "The clarity of the President's actions is compelling and gave us no choice but to move forward," Ms. Pelosi said.

In a series of tweets, Mr. Trump attacked Democrats – including Adam Schiff, the lawmaker named by Ms. Pelosi to lead the impeachment probe – calling them liars, while also taking aim at the "partisan" whistleblower and the "Fake News Media and their partner, the Democrat Party".

In a video leaked from a private gathering Mr. Trump held on Thursday with U.S. diplomats in New York, Mr. Trump made clear he was battling for his survival. "We're at war. These people are sick," Mr. Trump says in the video obtained by Bloomberg.

Mr. Schiff said on Friday his committee will issue more subpoenas next week and conduct a closed-door briefing with the Inspector General of the Intelligence Community, the official who conducted a preliminary probe into the whistleblower complaint and deemed it credible.

Amid deadly violence, Afghans vote in presidential election

Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah are the main rivals

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
KABUL

Afghans voted in presidential elections amid tight security on Saturday, even as insurgents attacked polling centres in a series of blasts and clashes across the country that left at least two people dead.

The first-round vote marks the culmination of a bloody election campaign that, despite a large field of candidates, is seen as a close race between President Ashraf Ghani and his bitter rival Abdullah Abdullah, the country's Chief Executive.

Wary authorities placed an uneasy Kabul under partial lockdown, flooding streets with troops and banning trucks from entering the city in an effort to stop would-be suicide bombers targeting residents as they cast their votes.

Two-hour extension

Polls closed at 5 p.m. after a two-hour extension due to long queues of people still waiting to vote, the Election Commission said.

Compared to previous elections, the initial toll appeared relatively light, though authorities provided little information about reported blasts and ongoing armed clashes with the Taliban in various provinces.

A security official said that two civilians had been killed and 27 wounded in Taliban bombings and mortar attacks at polling centres across the country.

Serious security incidents were reported in several provinces, including Kunduz, Nangarhar, Kabul, Bamian and Kandahar.

The Taliban, who unleashed a string of bombings during the two-month election campaign, claimed to have conducted hundreds of attacks against Afghanistan's "fake elections".

Mr. Ghani, having voted at a Kabul high school, said the most important issue was finding a leader with a man-



Low turnout: Afghan women arriving to cast their votes in the presidential election in Kabul on Saturday. **REUTERS**

date to bring peace to the war-torn nation.

"Our road map (for peace) is ready, I want the people to give us permission and legitimacy so that we pursue peace," said Mr. Ghani, who is seeking a second term.

Some 9.6 million Afghans are registered to vote, but many lack faith that after 18 years of war any leader can unify the fractious country.

Observers from the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission said turnout appeared to be low, especially among women.

Still, many voters braved insurgent attacks and long queues to cast a ballot.

7 tuskers found dead in Sri Lanka

Wildlife authorities suspect poisoning, launch probe

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

As many as seven elephants have been found dead in the north-central part of Sri Lanka, prompting wildlife authorities to launch a probe into what they say appears to be a case of poisoning.

"We suspect that the animals have been poisoned. We are conducting post-mortem examinations to establish the cause of their death," said Chandana Sooriyabandara, Direct-General of the Wildlife Department. On Friday, locals who found elephant carcasses in Habarana, in Anuradhapura district, alerted authorities and by Saturday, the toll went up to seven. All of them were female elephants, Mr. Sooriyabandara told *The Hindu*.

The area surrounding Habarana is among the main elephant habitats of the country, adjoining the Minneriya National Park and Polonnaruwa. Sri Lanka currently has an elephant population of nearly 5,500 and the authorities' suspicion that the seven elephants were poisoned has raised alarm over a heightening human-animal conflict in the island. Official da-



The body of one of the elephants in Sigiriya. **AFP**

ta points to nearly 300 elephant deaths in 2018 due to electrocution, railway track accidents, 'hakka patas' or traps made of explosives, and gunshots. Animal welfare activists also criticise the use of elephants in temple processions. Earlier this week, Tikiri, the skinny 70-year-old elephant that sparked a social media uproar after being forced to take part in an annual Buddhist pageant, died.

Serious blow

Experts consider the loss of seven elephants this week a serious blow to the country's elephant population. All seven animals found dead were said to have been 10 to 15 years old, "in the

prime of their lives", according to Jayantha Jayawardena, managing trustee of the Biodiversity and Elephant Conservation Trust, an NGO.

"It takes 22 months for an elephant to give birth to a calf and usually, elephants take a four- to five-year break before conceiving again," he said. Much of the conflict, in his view, arises as villagers' homes have been built on corridors that elephants use for internal migration. "Elephants generally walk about 12 miles a night to find food on the way. Now, when they find paths blocked by these houses, they break in and then stumble upon crops. It is like a buffet for them," explained Mr. Jayawardena, who has been studying Asian elephants for 40 years. All the same, he argues that while the villagers' actions against the animals might seem harsh, they were "fully justified". "No villager would like to see an elephant killed, but when the animal damages their crops, they are affected badly."

"They lose their entire income, what can they do," he said, suggesting that the animal and the villagers were both victims.

U.K. watchdog could probe PM Johnson

REUTERS
LONDON

The government of London said it had referred Prime Minister Boris Johnson to Britain's police watchdog for potential investigation over allegations of misconduct involving a U.S. businesswoman while he was Mayor of London.

The Greater London Authority said on Friday that it had referred a "conduct matter" concerning Mr. Johnson to the Independent Office for Police Conduct.

The referral follows allegations, first reported by *The Sunday Times*, that when Mr. Johnson was Mayor, he failed to declare close personal links to tech entrepreneur Jennifer Arcuri, who received thousands of pounds in public business funding and places on official trade trips.

Asked about the referral, Mr. Johnson's spokesman said: "The Prime Minister as Mayor of London did a huge amount of work when selling our capital city... Everything was done with propriety and in the normal way."

Tanker docks in Dubai after release by Iran

Its seizure was seen as a tit-for-tat move after the capture of an Iranian vessel

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
DUBAI

The British-flagged oil tanker *Stena Impero* docked in Dubai on Saturday after sailing from the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas where it was held for more than two months, according to pool footage and a tracking website.

The vessel docked at Port Rashid in Dubai on Saturday after halting off the coast overnight, according to data from ship tracking website MarineTraffic.com.

Pool reporters at the commercial port confirmed the ship had moored, while video images showed the Swedish owned vessel

docked and surrounded by several small boats, including at least one flying the United Arab Emirates flag.

The ship's seizure back in July was widely seen as a tit-



Coast is clear: Staff of *Stena Impero* signing papers before leaving Iran's Bandar Abbas port on Friday. **REUTERS**

for-tat move after authorities in the British overseas territory of Gibraltar detained an Iranian tanker on suspicion it was shipping oil to Syria in breach of EU sanctions. Teh-

ran repeatedly denied the cases were related.

The *Stena Impero* sailed from Iran and into international waters of the Gulf on Friday morning, according to local authorities.

Photos released by the Iranian agency Fars News on Saturday showed the black and red-hulled tanker sailing from Bandar Abbas in southern Iran the previous day.

The images also showed the captain apparently signing the ship's release documents before it left port, and the crew – dressed in red overalls and safety gear – lifting anchor ahead of the journey.

Hong Kong marks 5th anniversary of 2014 protests

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
HONG KONG

Renewed clashes broke out in Hong Kong on Saturday night as police used water cannon and tear gas to disperse protesters hurling Molotovs and bricks after tens of thousands rallied peacefully in a nearby park.

Huge crowds had gathered to mark the fifth anniversary of the "Umbrella

Movement", the failed pro-democracy campaign that laid the groundwork for the massive protests currently engulfing the finance hub.

Tens of thousands crammed into a park outside the city's Parliament, the same site that was the epicentre of the 2014 protests. But smaller crowds took over a main road opposite the building with groups of hard-

core activists in masks throwing bricks and petrol bombs at the nearby Central Government Offices.

Police responded with water cannon laced with pepper solution and tear gas volleys, though the crowds soon dispersed at the sight of riot police.

Many of those attending Saturday's rally defended the use of violence by more

hardcore activists and said Beijing's refusal to grant democracy – coupled with the ongoing erosion of freedoms – had hardened their resolve.

Earlier on Saturday, Joshua Wong, a prominent student leader who served a short jail sentence for his role in organising the 2014 protests, announced that he would stand in upcoming district council elections.

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

U.S. academic denied entry in Hong Kong

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
HONG KONG

An American academic on Saturday said he was denied entry into Hong Kong, days after he testified in a congressional hearing alongside prominent democracy activists from the Chinese city.

Dan Garrett said he was turned away after landing on Thursday for "unspecified immigration reasons" – something he said was a first in 20 years of travelling to and living in Hong Kong.

The week before, Mr. Garrett had appeared in Washington before the Congressional Executive Commission on China alongside prominent Hong Kong activists.

The congressional hearings – coupled with a proposed Bill in Congress aimed at defending civil rights in Hong Kong – have sparked a furious response from Beijing.

U.S. military again hits IS in southern Libya

Drone strike killed 17 militants in an unidentified location, says the Pentagon's Africa Command

ERIC SCHMITT
WASHINGTON

For the third time in a week, the U.S. military carried out an airstrike on Thursday against Islamic State (IS) fighters in southern Libya amid indications that the terrorist group was seeking to exploit the country's civil strife to increase its recruitment. The Pentagon's Africa Command said in a statement on Friday that the strike – which other officials said was carried out by an Air Force Reaper drone based in neighbouring Niger – killed 17 militants in an unidentified location in southwest Libya.

No safe haven

"We will continue to pursue ISIS-Libya and other terrorists in the region, denying them safe haven to coordinate and plan operations in Libya," Rear Adm. Heidi Berg, the command's director of intelligence, said in the statement, noting that the



In this August 2016 photo, Libyan forces allied with the UN-backed government fire at IS positions in Sirte. **REUTERS**

strike was coordinated with the Libyan government in Tripoli.

The strike was the latest in a flurry of attacks in a largely ungoverned portion of the country. Earlier, the Africa Command said that on September 19, an airstrike killed eight IS fighters in a compound in Murzuq, Libya, nearly 600 miles south of Tripoli, the capital. Five days

later, the military said it killed 11 more fighters in an airstrike in the same area.

Taken together, the three missile attacks were the first U.S. airstrikes this year in Libya against IS or Qaeda fighters, after the military conducted six aerial attacks last year, most recently in November 2018.

Nathan Herring, a spokesman for the Africa Com-

mand at its headquarters in Stuttgart, Germany, declined to provide further details about the latest strike, saying analysts were still assessing its results.

Clandestine networks

Frederic Wehrey, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the author of *The Burning Shores: Inside the Battle for the New Libya*, cited social media reports in Libya saying that the strikes had targeted Malik Khazmi, a major IS facilitator and recruiter from Bani Walid.

Mr. Wehrey, who last visited Libya in June, said that Khazmi had been an important IS recruiter and architect of its clandestine fighter networks since 2014, surfacing in pivotal combat areas like Derna, Tripoli and Sirte, before fleeing into the southern desert.

Until a drone strike against al-Qaida fighters in southern Libya in March

2018, the Pentagon had focussed its counterterrorism attacks in the country almost exclusively on IS fighters and operatives farther north. Over several months in 2016, the military conducted nearly 500 airstrikes in the coastal city of Sirte to destroy the Islamic State's stronghold there.

Many IS leaders, like Khazmi, fled south before the fall of Sirte, and from there have been trying to exploit the country's security vacuum and civil strife to increase recruiting and reconstitute an effective guerrilla force, analysts said. Mr. Wehrey cautioned that in the remote and politically fractured landscape of southern Libya, the line between who is a militant or terrorist or militiaman is frequently blurred, and there is the potential for these strikes to err and inflame ethnic and tribal tensions. "There's been collateral damage in the past," he said. **NY TIMES**