

39 found dead in U.K. truck were Chinese

Chinese Embassy says it is in contact with the Essex Police to seek ‘clarification and confirmation’

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
GRAYS
The British police said on Thursday that 39 people found dead in a truck near London are believed to be Chinese nationals, in a case that has triggered national outrage over the people trafficking business.

Emergency workers discovered the bodies early on Wednesday inside the refrigerated container of a truck parked in an industrial area east of London, shortly after it had arrived on a ferry from Belgium.

The police are conducting the country’s largest murder probe in more than a decade into what Prime Minister Boris Johnson described as an “unimaginable tragedy”. The local police force, who have arrested the truck’s driver on suspicion of murder, said eight of the dead were women and 31 were men. “All are believed to be Chinese nationals,” the Essex Police said in a statement.



Looking for clues: British forensics experts searching the truck, found to be containing 39 bodies, at Waterglade Industrial Park in Grays, east of London, on Wednesday. ■AFP

China’s Foreign Ministry said its embassy staff in London were heading to the scene “to verify this situation”. An embassy spokesperson said Chinese authorities had read the reports with a “heavy heart” and were in close contact with police “to seek clarification and confirmation”. The deaths echoed the discovery of 58 Chinese immigrants hidden in a Dutch

truck in the English port of Dover in 2000. Only two survived. **‘Substantial operation’** With the help of immigration officials and the National Crime Agency (NCA), the Essex Police are leading the biggest murder probe in Britain since the 2005 London terror attacks that killed 52 people. Its officers searched three properties in Northern Ire-

land overnight in connection with the investigation. The addresses are believed to be linked to the arrested truck driver, a 25-year-old man from the province, who the police have remanded in custody until Friday. The police said a coroner would try to establish the cause of death of the 39 victims, before investigators attempt to identify each individual. The container section of

the articulated lorry came by ferry from the Belgian port of Zeebrugge into Purfleet on the River Thames estuary – a crossing that takes nine to 12 hours. Prosecutors in Belgium have launched their own probe and confirmed on Thursday the container had on Tuesday passed through Zeebrugge, one of the world’s busiest ports for cargo on trucks. The federal prosecutor’s office said its investigation “will focus on the organisers of and all other parties involved” and be carried out in close cooperation with Britain. In another incident on Wednesday, the police in Kent in southeast England said they had discovered nine people stowed away inside another truck, after stopping the vehicle on a motorway. After precautionary medical checks, they were handed over to immigration officials.

Kurdish forces start pullback from Syria-Turkey border

Russian troops begin patrols in the flashpoint frontier

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
QAMISHLI
Kurdish forces in northeastern Syria left several positions along the extensive border with Turkey on Thursday, complying with a deal that sees Damascus, Ankara and Moscow carve up their now-defunct autonomous region.

Even as troops withdrew, the Kurds’ top commander threw his weight behind a German-led plan for an internationally secured security zone in the country’s north. Russian forces have started patrols along the flashpoint frontier, filling part of the vacuum left by a U.S. troop withdrawal that effectively returned a third of the country to the Moscow-backed regime of President Bashar al-Assad. U.S. President Donald Trump has praised the agreement reached in Sochi



Filling the void: Turkey-backed Syrian fighters taking over areas between Tal Abyad and Kobane on Thursday. ■AFP

between NATO member Turkey and Russia, and rejoiced that U.S. personnel were leaving the “long blood-stained sand” of Syria, leaving just a residual contingent behind “where they have the oil.” The deal signed in the Black Sea resort by Syria’s two main foreign brokers gives Kurdish forces until Tuesday to withdraw to a line 30 km from the border. The Syrian Observatory

for Human Rights reported that the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) had pulled out of some areas at the eastern end of the border on Thursday. Fighters from the Kurdish People’s Protection Units (YPG) – the main component of the SDF – remained in many positions along the 440 km border, said the Britain-based war monitor’s head, Rami Abdel Rahman.

IN BRIEF



Bolivia's Morales claims victory in disputed poll

LA PAZ
Bolivian President Evo Morales declared victory on Thursday in elections whose disputed results have triggered violent unrest, a general strike and Opposition charges that he is trying to steal the election to secure a fourth straight term. ■AFP

Lack of scrutiny on Rakhine terrorists: Suu Kyi

YANGON
Myanmar’s civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi has bemoaned the lack of global scrutiny on extremism and “terrorists” inside Rakhine state, where her country’s army stands accused of committing genocide against Rohingya Muslims. ■AFP

Former MBS adviser is new Saudi Foreign Minister

RIYADH
Saudi Arabia has appointed a new Foreign Minister with experience in Western capitals and loyalty to the crown prince. Prince Faisal bin Farhan – a one-time adviser to Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and currently Ambassador to Germany – will replace Ibrahim al-Assaf.

Pakistan PM Imran vows not to resign

ISLAMABAD
A defiant Imran Khan has vowed not to step down as Pakistan Prime Minister despite the Opposition mounting pressure on him. He dismissed next week’s planned mega sit-in as agenda-driven, saying it has sent a wave of joy in India. ■PTI

Zuckerberg open to scaling back Facebook’s digital coin plan

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON
Facebook chief executive Mark Zuckerberg opened the door on Wednesday to scaling back plans for the digital coin Libra if it cannot win approval as a new currency for global exchanges.

Mr. Zuckerberg made the comments as he faced a torrent of criticism on Capitol Hill over the cryptocurrency Facebook is seeking to roll out next year. “We clearly have not locked down exactly how this is going to work yet,” Mr. Zuckerberg told

members of the House Financial Service Committee. “The goal of Libra is to build a global payment system rather than a currency.” He acknowledged that Libra could be limited to digital payment systems using individual currencies – a less ambitious plan than creating a new coin linked to a basket of major currencies. “I personally am much more focused on being able to help innovate and build a global payment system than I am in any specific makeup of what a currency or re-

serve might look like.” Lawmakers did not hold back in their criticism of Facebook’s data practices and doubts about Libra. “In order to make a decision about Libra, we need to kind to dig into your past behavior and Facebook’s behavior with respect to our democracy,” said Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who peppered Mr. Zuckerberg with questions about the Cambridge Analytica scandal and Facebook’s decision not to fact-check political ads.

4 dead in protests against Ethiopian PM Abiy Ahmed

Supporters of critic take to the streets

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
ADDIS ABABA
At least four people were killed and dozens injured in protests in Ethiopia against Nobel Peace Prize laureate and Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, hospital and police sources said on Thursday.

Tensions remained high in parts of the country after supporters of a high-profile Opposition activist took to the streets on Wednesday, burning tyres and blocking roads following rumours of his mistreatment by state forces.

Jawar Mohammed, a member of the Oromo ethnic group who has been a public critic of Mr. Abiy, had accused security forces of



Abiy Ahmed

trying to orchestrate an attack against him. In a press conference on Thursday flanked by Opposition MPs, Mr. Jawar appealed for calm while accusing the authorities of stoking instability. The police have denied reports that Mr. Jawar’s security detail was being removed to leave the popular and outspoken figure vulnerable to attack.

Pak. filmmaker stirs #MeToo debate with rape allegation

Jami alleges assault by unnamed media tycoon 13 years ago

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
ISLAMABAD
Acclaimed Pakistani filmmaker Jamshed Mahmood Raza has added new momentum to the country’s fledgling #MeToo movement after airing allegations that he was raped by an unnamed media tycoon.

The director, who is popularly known as Jami, rocked Pakistani social media over the weekend after he published several tweets describing the alleged assault that happened 13 years ago.

“Why im so strongly supporting #metoo? cuz i know exactly how it happens now, inside a room then outside

courts inside courts and how a survivor hides confides cuz i was brutally raped by a very powerful person in our media world,” he wrote on Sunday evening. The tweets were in response to a backlash online after a Professor in the eastern city of Lahore committed suicide after allegedly being falsely accused of sexual harassment.

‘Trust victims’ Amid the backlash, Mr. Jami pleaded with social media users to trust victims of sexual assault and avoid ignoring their accusations. “I told my few close



School headmaster Siraj Ud Doula leaving the court on Thursday. ■AFP

Nusrat Jahan Rafi was doused in kerosene and set on fire on April 6 after she made a sexual harassment

complaint against the principal of her rural Islamic seminary. The head teacher, who a court in the southern coastal town of Feni found had ordered the brutal killing from jail after being arrested over the harassment claim, was among those sentenced to death. Others included activists from the ruling Awami League party and some students – including two women – who either participated in the killing or guarded the gates of the seminary while it took place.

“The verdict proves that nobody will get away with murder in Bangladesh. We have the rule of law,” prosecutor Hafez Ahmed told reporters after the verdict in a crowded courtroom. Rafi was lured to the rooftop of the seminary in Sonagazi where her attackers pressed her to withdraw the complaint she had filed with the police. When she refused, she was tied up, doused in kerosene and set on fire. She suffered burns to 80% of her body and died in hospital four days later.

Jailed Uighur intellectual wins EU rights award

EU Parliament seeks Tohti’s release

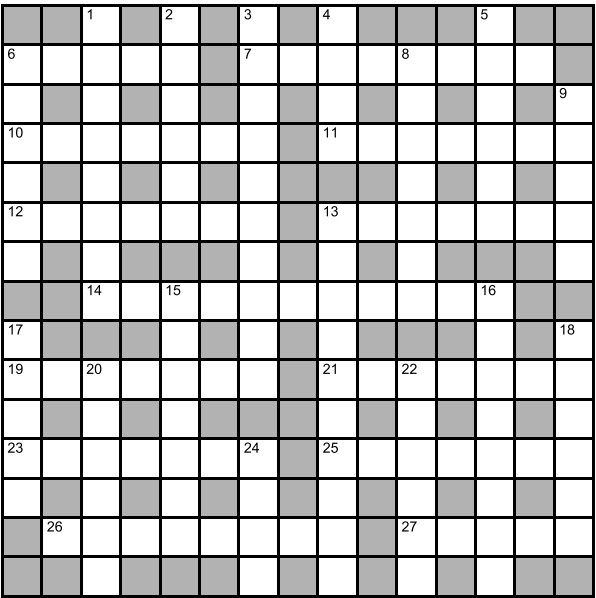
AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
STRASBOURG
The European Parliament on Thursday awarded the Sakharov Prize for human rights to Uighur intellectual Ilham Tohti, who has been sentenced to life imprisonment in China for “separatism”.

The outspoken former Professor of economics at a Beijing university was sentenced in 2014. European Parliament head David Sassoli urged China to immediately release Ilham Tohti as he announced the award, which was certain to sow diplomatic tensions with Beijing. “Despite being a voice of moderation and reconcilia-



tion, he was sentenced to life in prison following a show trial in 2014,” Mr. Sassoli told a plenary session of Parliament. “By awarding this prize, we strongly urge the Chinese government to release Tohti and we call for the respect of minority rights in China,” added the top MEP from Italy.

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12764



■ ACROSS

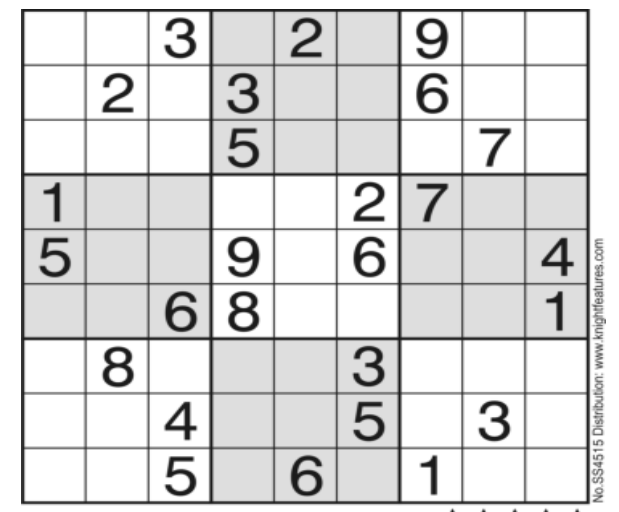
- 6 Stone rail? (5)
- 7 Wrap up area under muscle (8)
- 10 It had canines in front (7)
- 11 Cheap material, has to show silk (7)
- 12 Medical examiner finds trap empty (7)
- 13 Event to carry out, involve him (7)

(set by Arden)

- 14 Reach outside of the city, avoid an agitation (11)
- 19 Change of heart, happy to agree (7)
- 21 Do first grade, follow second language (7)
- 23 Woken regularly wearing shoe, how to tie the laces? (7)
- 25 ...and scurried as a non-entity (4-3)
- 26 Serviceman, providing no cover for politician (8)
- 27 Rattle by imbibing doubled drink (5)
- DOWN
 - 1 Bugged by symbol of socialism (8)
 - 2 Limousine capital (6)
 - 3 Harry wasn't lured by a desire to see places (10)
 - 4 Regularly poses questions, essentially calling one's attention (4)
 - 5 Spooks said to be very few (6)
 - 6 Told to employ on the phone, it's trap (6)
 - 8 Polish image, it marks the boundary (7)
 - 9 Remains and supports (5)
 - 13 Representative of a Bishop goes through service road, perhaps (10)
 - 15 Breastbone of bird in total (7)
 - 16 Land of plenty – the Spanish artists work on both sides (8)
 - 17 Small country making aqualung (5)
 - 18 After sometime starts new company, yes as a separate unit (6)
 - 20 Unit of force went off and on (6)
 - 22 Partly drains it, usually it's not moved (2,4)
 - 24 Colour of money on time (4)

The crossword is also available online at crossword.thehindu.com

SUDOKU



Solution to puzzle 12763								
S	C	O	N	T	R	A	V	E
S	I	A	P	P	H	V	I	T
M	I	S	E	R	I	T	A	L
E	I	P	N	U	G	D	R	
A	R	C	H	A	N	G	E	L
R	L	U	E	E	C	I		
C	R	E	O	L	E	S		
A	P	E	T	T	R	I	O	
M	E	M	E	N	T	O		
P	A	T	T	E	V	I	O	
A	C	C	R	A	L	A	M	E
I	H	R	I	O	R	G	I	
G	R	E	A	S	E			
N	T	O	H	E	O	O	S	
R	E	I	N	S	T	A	T	E

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

Undesirable pleasures

It takes discerning capacity to know good from bad. Some people are so full of desire, that they cannot tell good from bad. So, they hanker after what they should not, and never think of what they should in fact be seeking, said M.A. Manickavelu in a discourse. Vallalar makes this clear in his Deivamanimalai, which is in praise of Lord Muruga, the deity of Kanda Kottam, in Chennai. Suppose water in which rice has been cooked is stored in a place for many days, it begins to stink and becomes useless. Imagine a place where such water is stored. If a man desires it, what will we think of him? Desiring worldly pleasures is like desiring this stinking water, for material possessions are akin to the stinking water. And yet there are those who think that such pleasures are like nectar. To attain these passing joys, they do not hesitate to do wrong. Uttering untruths becomes second nature to them.

Avvaiyar says in one of her verses, that if a person gives false evidence in court, then his house will be overrun with weeds, and Moodevi will take up residence in his house. Vallalar gives the example of a flower, to push home the point about how the wicked seek worldly happiness. He talks of a particular flower, whose petals are gentle. When the wind blows, the flower sways and its gentle petals suffer. Before gold jewels can be made, the gold is heated to make it malleable, and then it is shaped. The different pieces are then soldered, and finally the jewel is polished.

The gold thus goes through many stages before it becomes a beautiful piece of jewellery. Like the flower that suffers due to the breeze and the gold that goes through painful processes, so do those who lack virtue torture themselves seeking pleasures.