



Elsewhere
Pak. PM to visit China to revive CPEC projects
ISLAMABAD
Prime Minister Imran Khan will visit China from October 7 to 8 to meet the country's top leadership and revive the stalled \$60 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects, according to a media report. The first phase of CPEC are close to completion. But the progress on CPEC next phase projects have slowed. PTI

FB suffers blow in EU court over hate speech
LUXEMBOURG
Facebook on Wednesday was dealt a major blow in the EU's top court, which ruled that national courts in Europe can order online platforms to remove defamatory content worldwide. EU regulators had sought U.S. tech giants to meet tightened European standards over hate speech and offensive content. AFP

Bangladeshi soldiers 'rape' Rohingya girl
DHAKA
The Bangladesh military said on Thursday it has ordered an investigation after a Rohingya family in a refugee camp accused Army troops of raping a 12-year-old girl. The inquiry comes as around a million Rohingya in vast camps in Bangladesh face increasing hostility two years after fleeing a military offensive in Myanmar. AFP

Pak., Taliban call on U.S. to resume peace talks
ISLAMABAD
Senior Afghan Taliban leaders and Pakistani officials on Thursday called for the resumption of talks to end the war in Afghanistan. The appeal was made during a rare Taliban visit to Islamabad, and comes after months-long U.S.-Taliban negotiations collapsed in September. AP

EU sceptical of Boris Johnson's Brexit plan, wants it reworked

British PM hopes to seal an exit agreement at the October 17-18 EU summit

REUTERS
BRUSSELS
European Union officials expressed doubt on Thursday that the latest British proposals on Brexit could yield an agreement before an October 31 deadline, with one saying Prime Minister Boris Johnson's plan "can't fly" as it stands.

But the bloc was careful not to dismiss the proposals too soon and both sides are treading carefully to avoid any blame should the tortuous divorce process end in a crash.

More talks between both sides' Brexit negotiators are due on Friday but the bloc has already made it clear that Mr. Johnson's plans – which principally involve arrangements for the border between EU member Ireland and the British province of Northern Ireland – are nowhere close to unlocking a deal.

They can only be a starting point to more talks, according to officials and diplomats dealing with Brexit in EU hub Brussels.

Hard border
"It does not contain any decent solution for customs. And it erects a hard border on the island of Ireland," said a senior EU official, saying the plan "can't fly" as it stands.

An EU diplomat said the plan would need to be fundamentally reworked to become acceptable. Time was short before EU leaders meet in Brussels on October 17-18 for a make-or-break Brexit summit, the person said.

Mr. Johnson hopes to seal an agreement then and take Britain out of the bloc two weeks later.



Exit plans: Boris Johnson speaking on the proposed Brexit deal in the House of Commons on Thursday. • AFP

However, the British Parliament has passed a law saying the country cannot leave without a deal and must ask for an extension if it gets nowhere at the EU summit.

Mr. Johnson vows to take Britain out on October 31 but has not explained how he would get around that. He has also pledged not to request another delay to Brexit, already postponed twice from its original date last March.

The EU is also worried about the lack of a parliamentary majority for any Brexit accord after a divorce deal it had struck with Mr. Johnson's predecessor, Theresa May, was rejected three times in the House of Commons.

The European Parliament, which must sign off on any final Brexit deal, has a group of lawmakers dealing with Brexit known as the Brexit Steering Group (BSG), who met with the bloc's negotiator Michel Barnier late on Wednesday.

"The BSG did not find these last minute proposals, in their current form, represent a basis for an agreement to which the European Parliament could give consent,"

said the latest draft of the lawmakers' statement seen by Reuters ahead of release. "The BSG has grave concerns about the U.K. proposal, as tabled, both in terms of its content and timing." In Dublin, Irish Junior Finance Minister Patrick O'Donovan said Mr. Johnson's offer was the basis for discussions but not of an agreement.

Talk with Irish PM
Jean-Claude Juncker, the head of the European Commission – the EU's executive negotiating Brexit for the other 27 member states – was due to talk to Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar later on Thursday.

The European Central Bank's Luis de Guindos said separately that markets may not be fully pricing in the negative impact of any disorderly Brexit.

"There are problematic points in the U.K.'s proposal and further work is needed. This work is for the U.K. to do, not the other way around," Commission spokeswoman Natasha Bertaud said.

Britain, however, stressed it was the EU's turn to move.

No deal if U.K.'s offer is final, says Ireland

REUTERS
DUBLIN

If Britain's latest proposals for an agreement on leaving the European Union are its final offer, then a no-deal Brexit lies ahead, Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney said on Thursday.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Wednesday announced proposals focusing on how to avoid a hard border with Ireland.

"My judgement is that Boris Johnson does want a deal and that the paper that was published yesterday was an effort to move us in the direction of a deal. But... if that is the final proposal, there will be no deal," Mr. Coveney told Parliament.

"There are a number of fundamental problems with that proposal but I think it is also true to say there is a progression towards the space we need to be in other elements of the proposal," he added.

Two problems

The first is that there is no indication of how border infrastructure to deal with customs issues can be avoided. Secondly, it is unclear if the proposals would give Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party an effective veto.

"We cannot support any proposal that suggests that one party or indeed a minority in Northern Ireland could make the decisions for the majority," he said.

Four officers killed in knife attack at Paris police HQ

Staffer behind the attack had issues with managers: report

REUTERS
PARIS

A 45-year-old IT assistant at the police headquarters in central Paris went on a knife rampage inside the building on Thursday, killing three police officers and an administrative worker before he was shot dead by an officer, French officials said.

The officials declined to say what the motive was for the attack, which took place at lunch-time, and they said they were still trying to understand if there was a terrorism link.

But sources close to the police were quoted by French media as saying that the attacker had a grievance with his managers.

'Criminal incident'

Jean-Marc Bailleul, a police union leader, described the incident as criminal rather than an act of terror. "It was a moment of madness" Mr. Bailleul told BFM TV.

The area around the police headquarters, which is close to Notre-Dame Cathedral, was sealed off and a metro station was shut for security reasons as the attack unfolded.



Crime scene: Police cordoned off the area near the Paris police headquarters on Thursday. • AFP

The dead, three men and a woman, included three police officials and a police administrative assistant, according to Paris prosecutor Remy Heitz. Another person was wounded as is undergoing surgery.

Mr. Heitz said police were searching the attacker's home, and that anti-terrorist investigators were evaluating what had happened, for any terrorist links.

Speaking outside the police headquarters, French Interior Minister Christophe Castaner said the attacker was known to his colleagues and had worked for some time in the IT department.

"He had never presented any behavioural issues, he had never presented the slightest cause for alarm before going on his deadly rampage today," Mr. Castaner said.

A police official and member of the collective "Police up in Anger", which lobbies for better conditions for officers, was quoted by francinfo radio as saying the assailant had experienced issues with his supervisor.

"I know there were tensions between him and his direct supervisor," Christophe Crepin told francinfo. "I do not think this is a terrorist act."

Trump asks China to probe Bidens

REUTERS
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump called on China as well as Ukraine to investigate his potential 2020 election rival Joe Biden, doubling down as Democrats began an impeachment inquiry against him.

Facing possible removal from office precisely for seeking foreign help against his political challengers, Mr.

Trump said he wanted Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky and Chinese leader Xi Jinping to go after Biden.

"I would say that President Zelensky, if it were me, I would recommend that they start an investigation into the Bidens," Mr. Trump said. "If they were honest about it they would start a very simple investigation on the Bidens," he said.

"Likewise, China should

start an investigation into the Bidens, because what happened in China is just about as bad as what happened with Ukraine." Asked if he would ask Mr. Xi to do the same, he replied, "It's certainly something we can start thinking about."

Mr. Biden's campaign called Mr. Trump's comments "a grotesque choice of lies over truth and self over the country."

Scottish whisky, French cheese come under U.S. trade tariffs

Duties come after WTO ruling that Airbus got undue subsidies

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

From whisky and wine to parkas and cashmere sweaters, the U.S. has released a list of imported European products slapped with tariffs in the battle between Washington and Brussels over aircraft subsidies.

Washington announced it would put a 10% tariff on large civil aircraft imported from the four European partners of Airbus – Germany, France, Spain and the U.K. – after Wednesday's World Trade Organization (WTO) decision that ruled the company received undue subsidies.

The U.S. tariffs on \$7.5 billion (€6.8 billion) worth of European goods include more than 150 products, principally from those four nations but also across Europe, that will face a 25% tariff from October 18.

'A nice victory'

President Donald Trump, tweeting early on Thursday morning, called the WTO decision "a nice victory" and claimed the European Union had "for many years treated the USA very badly on Trade".

The Trump administration intends to hit French, Spanish and German wines

– exempting Hungarian Tokay – as well as the U.K.'s Irish and Scottish single-malt whiskies with the tariffs.

Cheeses from across Europe, including pecorino, stilton and cheddar – which is specifically exempted – will be taxed under the new rules.

Olives, olive oil and mussels from Spain will also face the 25% tariff, as will Germany's coffee – both caffeinated and decaffeinated.

"Made in England" cashmere, woolen anoraks and bed linen will have the 25% surcharge added, while Germany's exports of industrial tools will be affected.

28 die in anti-government rallies in Iraq

Disenchanted youth demand jobs, services and an end to endemic corruption

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BAGHDAD

Thousands of protesters clashed with riot police in Iraq's capital and across the south on Thursday, the third day of mass rallies that have left 28 dead.

Defying curfews, tear gas and live rounds, they gathered to vent their anger against corruption, unemployment and poor services in the biggest challenge yet to Prime Minister Adel Abdel Mahdi.

As dusk fell in Baghdad, crowds swelled around the capital's oil and industry ministry, pledging to march to the capital's emblematic Tahrir (Liberation) Square.

"We'll keep going until the government falls," pledged



Growing unrest: Security forces closing a bridge leading to the Green Zone as protesters demonstrate in Baghdad. • AP

22-year-old Ali, an unemployed university graduate.

"I've got nothing but 250 lira (20 U.S. cents) in my pocket while government officials have millions," he said.

Most demonstrators carried

the Iraqi tricolour while others brandished flags bearing the name of Hussein, the Prophet Mohammed's grandson and a revered figure in Shiite Islam.

Riot police and Army troops fired at the ground

from automatic weapons mounted on military vehicles, the bullets ricocheting into the crowd.

The three days of demonstrations have left 28 people dead, including two police officers, and over 1,000 people have been wounded.

More than half of those killed in the last three days have been in the southern city of Nasiriyah, where six protesters were shot dead and dozens wounded on Thursday.

Nearby Amarah has also seen bloodshed, with medics and security sources reporting four protesters shot dead on Thursday.

Later, two protesters and a police officer were killed in Diwaniyah.

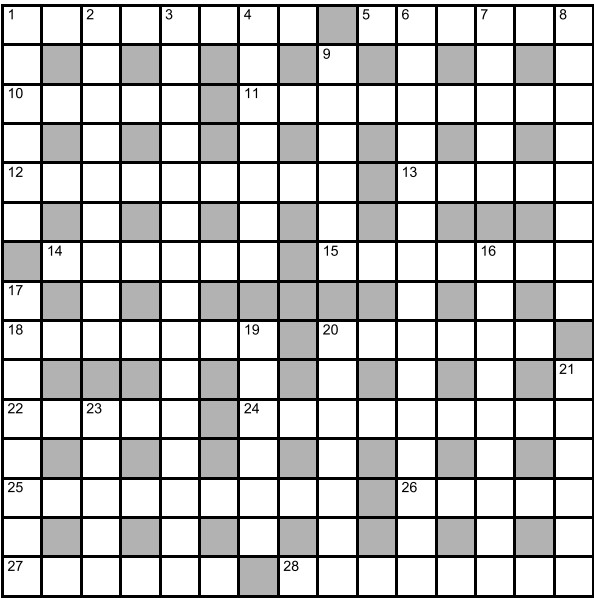
Hong Kong likely to ban face masks

REUTERS
HONG KONG

Hong Kong has loosened guidelines on the use of force by police as it struggles to stamp out anti-government protests that have rocked the Asian financial hub for nearly four months, according to documents seen by Reuters on Thursday.

The city is also expected to ban face masks, media reported. The loosening of restrictions on the use of force came into effect shortly before some of the most violent turmoil seen in the protests on Tuesday, with police firing about 1,400 rounds of tear gas and protesters throwing petrol bombs and sticks.

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12747



ACROSS

- 1 What a fisherman might do to get a percussion instrument? (8)
- 5 Display cut over top of point (6)
- 10 Inn and house leased on retirement (5)
- 11 Secretary's back to go over main point before start of rehearsal (9)

- 12 Concernment from venerable problem around college (9)
- 13 Looks after saint about to embrace death (5)
- 14 Jewelled crowns from India stolen by rogue around a square (6)
- 15 Vain President abandoned course of action with anger (7)
- 18 Issue about man pursuing model boiled over (7)
- 20 Pastry in bowl contains a topping of nuts (6)
- 22 A warning around river – no longer anchored (5)
- 24 Want to capture leader of insurgents and confine for string of offences (5,4)
- 25 Leave quickly and frantically seek lad taking daughter on date (9)
- 26 Love to sleep around? Model is available (2,3)
- 27 Craved and ended up consuming ecstasy (6)
- 28 Basic construction of triangle (8)

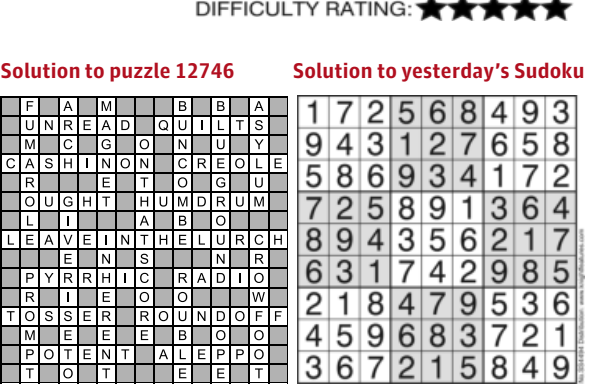
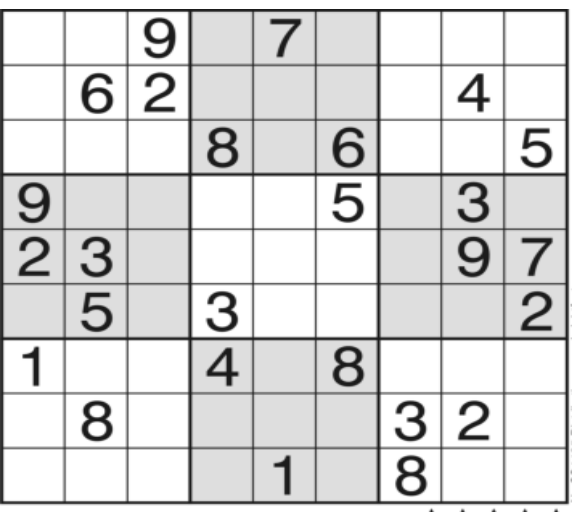
DOWN

- 1 Associate in firm, sexually attractive, concealing a little romp (6)
- 2 Sycophant in plot to suppress a report (9)

(set by Dr. X)

- 3 A liberal date beginning to tantalise with trendy thong – unable to think clearly (3,4,3,5)
- 4 Blunder including son in assignments (7)
- 6 What a postman might do to try to achieve more than seems possible? (4,3,8)
- 7 Expert wearing an item of clothing (5)
- 8 Worried stiff about idiot on ecstasy (8)
- 9 Associate goes to collect long sheaths for shoelaces (6)
- 16 New train set assembled without delay (9)
- 17 One killing with impudence in a crime (8)
- 19 Select detectives to probe mysterious assassination of President (6)
- 20 Determined to preserve essence of ancient outdoor theatre (5-2)
- 21 Vindictive prince trapped foreign correspondent (3,3)
- 23 Old magistrate, reviewing incessantly, confines rogue at last (5)

SUDOKU



FAITH

Pinnacle of bhakti

The azhwars represent many subtle facets of devotion and their hymns are excellent indicators to even the uninitiated to turn to God and seek salvation. Among them, Tiruppannashwar represents the pinnacle of bhakti, pointed out Mukkur Sri Srinivasan in a discourse. He is believed to be an amsa of the Lord's Srivatsa mark and also an 'Ayonija,' that is, one who is not born of human parents. He is brought up by a family of singing minstrels known as the Panars who used to live on the southern banks of the River Kaveri. His only passion is for Lord Ranganatha though he has not entered the temple and his devotion would overflow as soulful songs in praise of the Lord.

Once when he is thus engrossed in mystic trance, the temple priest, one Loka Saranga, comes to the river to collect water in a pitcher for the Lord's abhisheka. Finding the Panar in the way, he expects him to move; but the Panar is totally unaware of what is happening being lost in God experience. So the priest throws a piece of stone that hits him on his forehead. Immediately, the Panar is apologetic, and chiding himself for his thoughtlessness, moves away. But the priest is in for a surprise when the Lord makes him realise the mistake of hurting a true devotee. The Lord commands him to carry the Panar on his shoulders and bring him to the temple the next day. He does so and when the Panar is in the presence of the Lord he breaks into a series of hymns in praise of the Lord from His feet to His crown.

The import of these hymns contains the essence of all what the Vedas and the Upanishads convey through so many words, rhetoric, stories, anecdotes, etc. It reinforces the Lord's compassion and grace that sustains an unbreakable bond between Him and His devotees.