

ELSEWHERE



Sirisena pardons killer of Swedish teen, sparks row

COLOMBO
Sri Lanka's President has pardoned a death-row prisoner, who murdered a Swedish teenager, just a week before he leaves office, sparking national outrage. Convicted killer Jude Jayamaha, from a high-profile family, walked out of Welikada prison on Saturday. The court had been told the victim's skull was fractured into 64 pieces. PTI

Iran announces discovery of massive oil field

TEHRAN
Iran has discovered a massive new oil field, President Hassan Rouhani announced on Sunday, a find that would boost its proven reserves by about a third in a rare piece of "good news" for an economy battered by U.S. sanctions. The 80-metre deep reservoir stretches nearly 200 km from Khuzestan's border with Iraq to the city of Omidyeh, he said. AFP

Bolivia's President agrees to new polls after damning OAS audit

The report found 'clear manipulations' in October 20 election won by Evo Morales

REUTERS
LA PAZ

Bolivian President Evo Morales agreed on Sunday to hold new presidential elections after an audit of the disputed October 20 vote found serious irregularities, while pressure mounted on the leftist leader to step down.

The Organization of American States' (OAS) report, issued on Sunday, said the vote should be annulled after it had found "clear manipulations" of the voting system that called into question Mr. Morales' win, with a lead of just over 10 points over main rival Carlos Mesa.

New electoral body

Mr. Morales, speaking at a press conference in La Paz, also said he would replace the country's electoral body. The department has come under heavy criticism after an unexplained halt to the vote count sparked widespread



Political crisis: Police officers taking part in a protest march against President Evo Morales in Santa Cruz. AFP

allegations of fraud and prompted the OAS audit.

Mr. Morales, who came to power in 2006 as Bolivia's first indigenous leader, has defended his win but had said he would adhere to the findings of the OAS audit.

The weeks-long standoff over the disputed election escalated over the weekend as police forces were seen

joining anti-government protests and the military said it would "confront the people" over the issue.

"The manipulations to the computer systems are of such magnitude that they must be deeply investigated by the Bolivian State to get to the bottom of and assign responsibility in this serious case," the preliminary OAS report said.

"The first round of the elections held on October 20 must be annulled and the electoral process must begin again," the OAS added.

Voting should take place as soon as conditions are in place to guarantee it being able to go ahead, including a newly composed electoral body, the OAS said.

Morales should resign

Luis Fernando Camacho, a civic leader who has become a symbol of the Opposition, said the report clearly demonstrated election fraud and reiterated his call for Mr. Morales to resign.

Mr. Mesa said Mr. Morales and Vice-President Alvaro Garcia Linaera should not preside over the electoral process or be candidates.

Meanwhile, Bolivia's Attorney General's office said that it had ordered an investigation into the members of the electoral tribunal.

Afghan presidential candidate boycotts recounting of votes

Won't accept addition of suspicious votes: Abdullah Abdullah

REUTERS
KABUL

The result of the Afghan presidential election may be further delayed, two officials said, after the main challenger to incumbent Ashraf Ghani said on Sunday he would not agree to the addition of hundreds of thousands of what he called suspicious votes to a planned recount.

The Afghanistan Independent Election Commission (IEC) said on Saturday that it would recount ballots from more than 8,000 polling stations - almost a third of the total - due to what it called discrepancies in their system.

But Abdullah Abdullah, who currently shares power with Mr. Ghani in a unity government, said Mr. Ghani's side was pushing to include some 3,00,000 additional votes which did not come through biometric devices used in polling and which

must be nullified. "The recounting process should stop, and if the Election Commission continue with recounting process without our observers, we will act," Mr. Abdullah told a cheering crowd of supporters in Kabul, accusing Mr. Ghani's camp of fraud, which Mr. Ghani denies.

"Abdullah's camp is afraid of the recount because they would lose," Daoud Sultan-zoy, a senior Ghani cam-



Number game: Afghan presidential candidate Abdullah Abdullah addressing his supporters in Kabul on Sunday. AP

campaign leader, told Reuters.

The standoff is likely to deepen the political crisis in Afghanistan after the September 28 presidential election, which was marred by allegations of fraud.

Preliminary results scheduled for later this week might be delayed again, according to two officials at the EC, who declined to be named as they are not authorised to speak publicly about the count.

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U.S. court refuses to ban work permits for H-1B holders' spouses

Obama-era rule has been challenged by Saves Jobs USA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
WASHINGTON

In a temporary relief to thousands of Indians living in America, a U.S. court has refused to strike down, for the time being, an Obama-era rule that allowed spouses of H-1B visa holders to work in America.

The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows the U.S. companies to employ foreign workers in speciality occupations.

A 2015 rule issued by U.S. President Donald Trump's predecessor Barack Obama allowed work permits for certain categories of H-4 visa

holders, primarily spouses of those having H-1B work visas waiting for their Green Card, to work in the U.S.

Indians, in particular women, were the greatest beneficiary of this rule, which has been challenged by several U.S. workers with the current Trump administration supporting their cause, saying that it wants to rescind the rule.

'Determine the merits'

A three-judge bench of the U.S. Courts of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit on Friday sent the case back to a lower court noting

that it is "best to remand" to give the district court an opportunity to thoroughly assess and finally determine the merits in the first instance.

"Accordingly, we reverse the district court's grant of summary judgment and remand for further proceedings consistent with this opinion," the federal court said in its order on the lawsuit by Saves Jobs USA, which comprises of American workers who claim that they have been laid off due to the policy of the Obama administration to provide work permits to H-4 visa holders.

Spain votes to end political stalemate

Opinion polls show the Socialists in the lead but with fewer seats than April's election

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MADRID

Spain voted on Sunday in its fourth general election in as many years amid heightened tensions over the separatist push in Catalonia that has fuelled a surge in support for upstart far-right party Vox.

The repeat polls were called after Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez failed to secure support from other parties following an inconclusive election in April which saw his Socialist party win the most votes, but no working majority in parliament.

However, opinion polls suggest this new election will fail to break the deadlock. Neither the left nor the right look likely to win a ruling



Poll equations: Christian nuns casting their ballot papers for the general election in Barcelona on Sunday. AP

majority in Spain's 350-seat Parliament.

The Socialists are on track to finish top again, but with slightly fewer seats than April's election, while the main opposition conserva-

tive Popular Party (PP) may strengthen its presence.

But the most striking development could be the rise of the far-right Vox party, which could even jump to third-largest in Parliament,

Former FBI agent still missing; Iran

REUTERS
DUBAI

Iran's Foreign Ministry said on Sunday that the whereabouts of former FBI agent Robert Levinson, missing since visiting Iran's Kish Island in 2007, remain unknown, and it denied a report that Tehran had opened a criminal case against him.

Mr. Levinson disappeared while on a trip to the island in the Persian Gulf. Iran has repeatedly denied knowledge of his disappearance or of his whereabouts. "Levinson has a judicial case in our country as he is missing," Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said.

Violence mars Hong Kong's New Territories

Pro-democracy protesters vandalise train station, shopping malls and block roads

REUTERS
HONG KONG

Police fired tear gas to break up rallies as black-clad activists blocked roads and trashed shopping malls across Hong Kong's New Territories on Sunday on the 24th straight weekend of anti-government protests.

Protesters vandalised a train station in the central new town of Sha Tin and smashed up a restaurant perceived as being pro-Beijing, overturning banqueting tables and smashing glass panels, two weeks before district council elections in the



A protester being detained by the police in Hong Kong. Reuters

Chinese-ruled city.

Violence spilled out onto the streets of Tuen Mun outside the "V city" mall, with running battles between riot

police and protesters.

The rail station was closed in Sha Tin, amid scuffles between police and protesters young and old, on a day of

planned shopping mall protests throughout the territory. Shopping districts across the harbour on the main island were quiet.

"Radical protesters have been gathering in multiple locations across the territories," police said in a statement.

The violence later spread to the Kowloon district of Mong Kok, one of the world's most densely populated areas. Police used water cannon to try to clear the main artery of Nathan Road, which runs south to the harbour.

Jordan to retake lands leased by Israel

King Abdullah II announces Ghumar and Al-Baqoura's return to 'full sovereignty'

REUTERS
NAHARAYIM

Jordan has pulled out of a 25-year-old landmark agreement that allowed Israeli farmers to cultivate in two pieces of agricultural land that was leased by Israel.

Under the deal, part of the 1994 Jordan-Israel peace treaty, two territories straddling the border were recognised as under Jordanian sovereignty but with special provisions allowing Israeli farmers to work the land and visitors to tour the Isle of Peace park in the area.

But in 2018, Jordan said it did not want to continue the



Jordanian soldiers gathering around a tent ahead of a ceremony at Naharayim on Sunday. AFP

arrangement, in what was widely seen as a sign of increasingly strained diplomatic relations.

King Abdullah formally declared on Sunday the end of the special regime, which most Jordanians saw as a hu-

miliation that perpetuated Israeli "occupation" of Jordanian territory.

"I announce the end of the work in the special annex in the two areas Ghumar and Baqoura [Naharayim in Hebrew], in the peace treaty and impose our full sovereignty on every inch of them," the king said in a speech marking the start of a new parliamentary session.

For the Israelis farming the land, the agreement's expiry is a sharp blow. "It was like a punch to the face," said Eli Arazi, 74, a farmer whose community worked one of the land parcels in Baqoura.

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12777

Log on to crossword.thehindu.com for more puzzles

Grid for crossword puzzle 12777 with numbers 1 through 28.

ACROSS

- 1 Revised total contains only a little error (8)
5 Information concealed by Anti-Terrorism Squad operatives (6)
10 Almost mention about eating beef! That's dangerous (5)
11 Confusing and clamorous after English exit without agreement finally (9)

DOWN

- 1 Short mock trial is most appropriate (6)
12 Actress flying first-class enters flight (9)
13 Fish in river snatched by hawk (5)
14 Silly sot, entering drunk, went berserk (4,2)
15 Rushed to drink peg, getting soused (7)
18 Charge to consume alcoholic drink? On the contrary, it's on the house (7)
20 Insane Conservative ruined (6)
22 Ready to eat special American dish (5)
24 Immature one lost temper after a little objection typically (2,7)
25 Restraining journalist interrupting band (9)
26 Germanic God triumphed, conquering capitals of Troy and Asgard (5)
27 Reckon one million spent for property (6)
28 Accepting suggestion on reflection, agree to resolve unclear situation (4,4)

(set by Dr. X)

SUDOKU

9x9 Sudoku grid with some numbers pre-filled.

Solution to puzzle 12776

9x9 grid showing the solution for puzzle 12776.

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

9x9 grid showing the solution for yesterday's Sudoku.

FAITH

Greatness of Acharyas

Service to one's Acharya is superior to serving God Himself. And this is demonstrated in Sabari moksha, said Akkarakkani Srinidhi, in a discourse. Sabari had served Matanga maharishi with great devotion. Moksha, therefore, was guaranteed to her. She stayed on in the ashrama, knowing Rama would arrive, and she welcomed Him with offerings of fruits, which Rama gladly accepted, because He was pleased with her Acharya bhakti. When Sabari departed from the earth, she asked Rama to be witness to her departure. So, it was her devotion and service to her Acharya, sage Matanga, which earned moksha for her. Vedanta Desika observed that what an Acharya confers with his two eyes, what even three eyes, eight eyes or a thousand eyes cannot do. The usual interpretation is that Siva, the three eyed deity and Brahma is the eight eyed one, and Indra is the thousand eyed one.

But scholar Prativadhi Bhayankaram Annangarachariar came up with a unique interpretation of Desika's verse. He said that having mentioned Brahma and Siva, there would be no point in mentioning Indra, who was lower down in the hierarchy than Siva and Brahma. So, the thousand eyes must be a reference to Vishnu. What Desika is saying is that even Siva, Brahma and Vishnu cannot do for us, what an Acharya can do. Such is the greatness of an Acharya. Vaishnavite Acharya Thirukkoshthiyur Nambi said that an Acharya imparts a glow to his disciple, so that when the jivatma reaches Sri Vaikuntha, it shines like Sri Devi Herself!

When Ramanujacharya went to Thirukkurungudi, the deity of the temple there marvelled at people paying attention to Ramanuja, while they had not paid heed to the Lord Himself. So, He asked Ramanuja to be His teacher. Because of this, the deity came to be called Vaishnava Nambi.