

Morales' exit knocks Bolivia into a vacuum

Shops and properties attacked, gangs roam streets; Opposition Senator offers to be interim President

REUTERS
LA PAZ

Bolivian President Evo Morales said on Sunday he was resigning to ease violence that has gripped the South American nation since a disputed election, but he stoked fears of more unrest by saying he was the victim of a "coup".

The departure of Bolivia's first indigenous President, one of a wave of leftists who dominated Latin America's politics at the start of the century, came when the military abandoned him amid sustained unrest over a disputed October 20 re-election.

Vice President Ilvoro García Linares also resigned.

Foes celebrated his departure but also moved swiftly to find a temporary successor. With Mr. Morales' deputy and many allies in government gone with him, Senate second Vice-President Jeanine Añez said she was willing to take control.

"If I have the support of



People celebrating the resignation of Bolivian President Evo Morales (top) in La Paz on Monday. • AFP

those who carried out this movement for freedom and democracy, I will take on the challenge, only to do what's necessary to call transparent elections," said Senator Añez, who is constitutionally next in line to assume the presidency.

Looting, fighting and roadblocks convulsed Bolivia on Monday after Mr. Morales' resignation created a power vacuum. Overnight, gangs roamed the highland capital and other cities, businesses were attacked and

properties were set on fire. Schools and shops were largely closed, while public transport halted, roads were blocked, and rival political groups clashed on the streets.

"I am afraid of what will happen, everything is a mess in the city. There are fights between neighbours," said Patricia Paredes, a 35-year-old secretary in La Paz.

Mr. Morales, 60, flew out of La Paz and was believed to still be in Bolivia — but his whereabouts were unclear.

Some of Mr. Morales' leftist allies in Latin America decried the turn of events as a "coup," including Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and Argentine President-elect Alberto Fernandez.

Asylum offer
Mexican Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard said his country would offer Mr. Morales asylum if he sought it.

Nicaragua's government also came to Mr. Morales' defence, issuing a statement that decried the situation as

a coup and a display of "fascist practices."

Bolivia under Mr. Morales had one of the region's strongest economic growth rates and its poverty rate was cut in half, though his determination to cling to power and seek a fourth term alienated many allies, even among indigenous communities.

General Williams Kaliman, the head of Bolivia's armed forces, on Sunday said the military had asked Mr. Morales to step down to help restore peace and stability after weeks of protests over the vote.

The Organization of American States exhorted Bolivian lawmakers to meet urgently to resolve the crisis.

At a press conference, Mr. Morales' election rival Carlos Mesa asked the police and civilian groups to guarantee the arrival of legislators across the political spectrum to the central Plaza Murillo to formalise Mr. Morales' resignation and push forward new elections.

Crisis en España

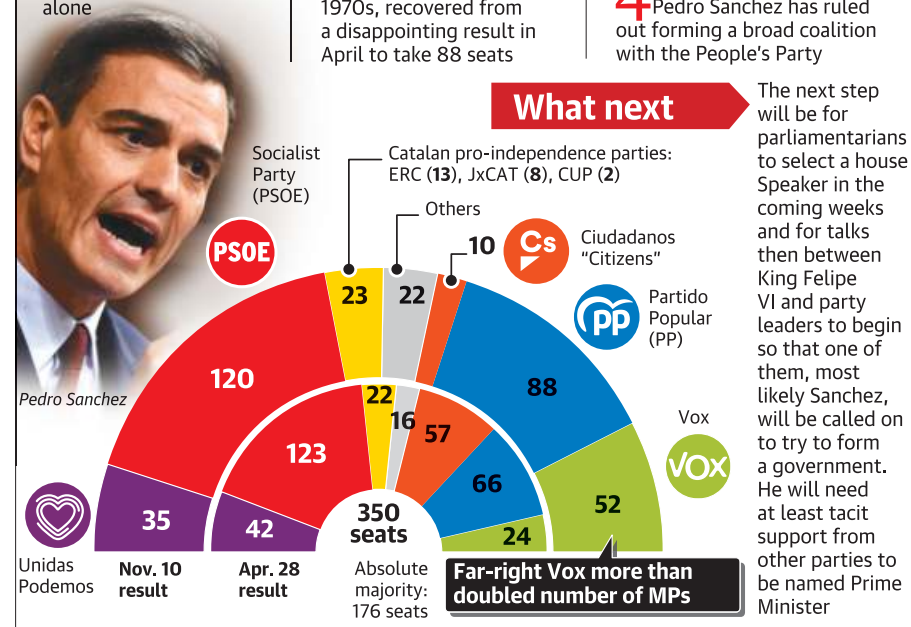
The ruling Socialist party of Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez won Sunday's election — Spain's second this year and fourth since 2015 — but once again failed to secure a majority in a vote which saw the far-right Vox party vault into third place

1 The Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) captured 120 seats — three fewer than in April election. It is still far from the absolute majority of 176 needed to form a government alone

2 The conservative People's Party (PP), which alternated in government with the Socialists for decades after Spain emerged from General Francisco Franco's dictatorship in the 1970s, recovered from a disappointing result in April to take 88 seats

3 Far-right party Vox — with its hard line against Catalan separatism, immigration and feminism — surged into third place. It won 52 seats, up from 24 in April

4 Acting Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez has ruled out forming a broad coalition with the People's Party



Man set on fire in day of Hong Kong fury

Police shot a masked protester, aggravating the protests that paralysed the city

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
HONG KONG

A police officer shot a masked protester in an incident shown live on Facebook and a man was set on fire on Monday during one of the most violent days of clashes in Hong Kong since pro-democracy unrest erupted more than five months ago.

Protesters, who had already begun a city-wide day of action aimed at paralysing the international financial hub, reacted to the morning shooting in which a person was wounded, by rampaging



Uproar on the streets: People running for cover as police fire tear gas in Hong Kong on Monday. • REUTERS

through train stations, barricading streets and vandalising shops throughout the day.

A masked assailant also doused a man with a flammable liquid and set him ablaze during an argument,

with the horrifying scene captured on mobile phones and posted online. Police said a protester carried out that attack and accused black-clad "rioters" of an array of other violent acts, including throwing a petrol bomb inside a train carriage.

Later, Hong Kong chief executive Carrie Lam held a press conference to denounce the violence and vow it would not lead to any government concessions. "I am making this statement clear and loud here, that will not happen," Ms. Lam said.

'Sharif still on no-fly list, his health at risk'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LAHORE

The danger to Nawaz Sharif's health is increasing due to a delay in his travel abroad for treatment, his party has said, as the ailing former Pakistan Prime Minister awaits removal of his name from the no-fly list.

The 69-year-old PML-N chief agreed on Friday to go to the U.K. for the treatment. However, the government could not remove Mr. Sharif's name from the no-fly list.

Socialists win Spain election, but fall short of majority mark

Far-right Vox party soars, becomes third biggest party

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MADRID

Spain's Socialist premier Pedro Sanchez emerged as winner but weakened from Sunday's repeat election that propelled the far-right Vox into third place in a result set to deepen years of political turmoil.

The ballot, the fourth in as many years, failed to end months of parliamentary deadlock following an inconclusive April poll.

The Socialist leader, who had called the vote to streng-

then his hand, ended up losing three seats in a poll that weakened his potential allies and strengthened the right.

The final results showed the Socialists taking 120 of the parliament's 350 seats (28% of the votes) while Vox secured 52 (15%) — more than double its mandates in the outgoing Assembly.

Vox only made its parliamentary debut in April when it won 24 mandates in the biggest showing by the far-right since Spain returned to democracy after

dictator Francisco Franco's death in 1975.

In second place was the right-wing Popular Party, which took 88 mandates (nearly 21%), up from 66 in the previous poll.

"The results will make forming a government more difficult due to the parliament's deep fragmentation and the rise of Vox," Teneo analyst Antonio Barroso said, warning that the divisions "were so problematic" that it was impossible to rule out yet another election.

Sri Lanka elections: hopes on Gotabaya run high in the South

People here see in him a strong leader, who ended war, built infrastructure

MEERA SRINIVASAN
MONARAGALA

"I brought my child along just so he can see our leader, even if from a distance," said Sepalika Harshani, 29, carrying her toddler under an umbrella.

She was among thousands who flocked to Wellaway town in Sri Lanka's southern Monaragala district on Saturday afternoon, braving the rain. They had come for the rally of Gotabaya Rajapaksa, candidate from their favourite political clan, in the final lap of the November 16 presidential poll campaign.

"I would be very happy if someone like him becomes President of this country. He got us freedom," Ms. Harshani said, referring to the war's end in 2009 under the Raja-

paksa administration. Mr. Gotabaya, brother of former President Mahinda Rajapaksa was Defence Secretary, directing the military that defeated the rebel Tigers.

Nineteen-year-old A.P.D. Seuvandi, too, was there to catch a glimpse of the leader she has decided to vote for next weekend.

"They saved the country," the first-time voter said. She was barely nine when the war ended but has grown up listening to a popular story of its end; one quite different from what Tamils of the north and east would tell.

"He will make the country safe again, develop it and improve education standards for us." For many Sri Lankans, Safety has become a major concern after the East-

er Sunday terror attacks in April.

In the island's southern hinterland, almost every local, including those supporting Mr. Gotabaya's main opponent Sajith Premadasa, assert that "a majority here will vote for Gotabaya." Past election results are proof enough for that sentiment. Even in 2015, an election that former President Mahinda Rajapaksa lost, most of the southern districts gave him over 60% of the vote share.

Diverse reasons

The reasons pulling voters towards Mr. Gotabaya this time go beyond war "victory". Some of them are looking for respite from the everyday economic strain they associate with the incumbent government, or are utterly disenchanted with it, like daily-waged labourer D.M. Jayaratne. "This government



Cheering their hero: Supporters of Gotabaya Rajapaksa at a campaign rally in Neluwa village in Galle. • AP/FILE

came to power saying they would catch corrupt thieves. Nothing happened in the last five years. Instead, they robbed the Central Bank," he said, referring to the "bond scam", in which a former head of the apex bank was accused of manipulating bond auctions in 2015, causing a loss of millions. The scandal was a big blow to the government that rose to pow-

er months earlier on the promise of "good governance".

Election vs. real issues

Further, Mr. Jayaratne sees Mr. Gotabaya as a strong leader who will not "give into Tamil demands" for wartime accountability and self-rule.

Many voters, across Monaragala [Uva Province] and the neighbouring Hambantota

[Southern Province] district, began their poll analysis with a reading of the two main candidates. But invariably, they spoke about pressing local concerns.

They pointed to land hunger, in the wake of mega development projects in Hambantota — a Chinese-built port and an adjoining industrial zone proposed over 15,000 acres. They are worried about loss of livelihoods and falling incomes. "There are no jobs here," was a common refrain.

Both, the Rajapaksas and Mr. Premadasa are closely associated with the southern districts — either by familial links, or their parliamentary seats.

The constant fear of further marginalisation is making some voters consider a shift towards Mr. Premadasa. While it may not dull the Rajapaksa sheen yet, it points to

Mr. Premadasa's growing base, especially in the rural areas.

For K. L. Pradeepa Priyadarshini, Mr. Premadasa's candidacy brings back the hope she felt during his father Ranasinghe Premadasa's rule in the early 1990s. "Hearing about his poverty alleviation programmes on radio, I felt here is a national leader who has finally spoken about our need for food and water," said the Hambantota-based farmer.

Not who, but what

Supporters of Mr. Gotabaya are nostalgic about the past. Mahinda Rajapaksa ended the war, built roads and expanded rural electricity. But those drawn to Mr. Premadasa are looking at what he might do in future.

Some voters are tired of thinking about who to vote for. They'd rather think

about what to vote for.

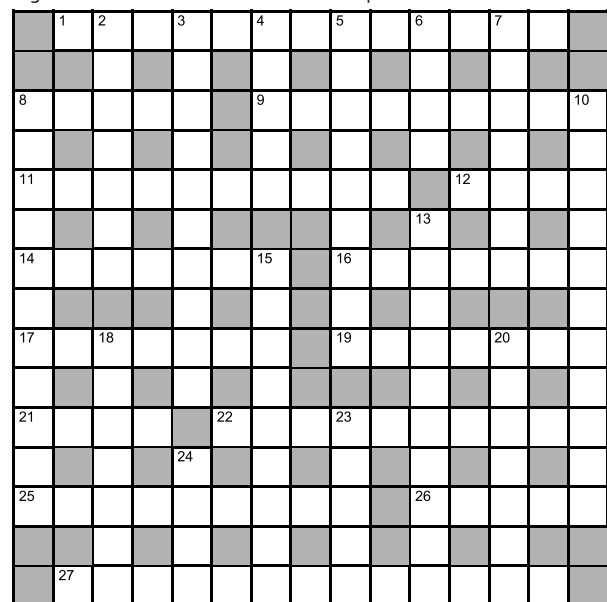
A group of women farmers in Monaragala district are basing their decision on candidates' manifestos.

"We are looking at what they have said about women, farmers, national unity, rural debt, especially microfinance-induced debt, and education policy," said S.A. Shanthy. They also challenged the idea of "national security" that has become a chief election issue, in the wake of the Easter bombings. To ensure national security, "we don't need a strong leader. We just need sound policies."

"Whose security are they talking about?" asked P.G. Podinona. "Seeing the number of security guards around some candidates, it's obvious who feels most insecure in this country. Whereas some of us don't even have a dog to guard us."

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12778

Log on to crossword.thehindu.com for more puzzles



ACROSS

- 1 Within certain limitations, like a shot putter aims to throw? (2,3,2,2,4)
- 8 Nearly get rid of revolutionary abducting leader of opposing faction (5)
- 9 Ultimate provocation when rogue starts to break rule (4,5)

- 11 Wife felt heart-broken after a bit of bickering (6,4)
- 12 Maverick is slyly concealing smack (4)
- 14 Permits to trap local birds (7)
- 16 Largely better after boy knocked back potion (7)
- 17 Restrains model leaving set, despite receiving money (7)
- 19 American transcendentalist's sermon spreading across England (7)
- 21 Bustle resulting from child swallowing a little ring (4)
- 22 One constantly checking mirror, relative in car isn't subtle (10)
- 25 Increase in loudness resulting from goal in soccer perhaps (9)
- 26 Tenant going topless in lodge (5)
- 27 Stop near edge of immense chasm to enter one abandoned grave discovered by chance (13)

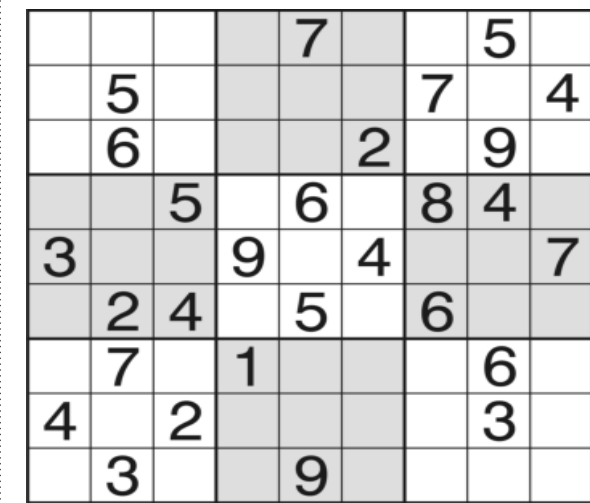
DOWN

- 2 Character smuggling heroin and ecstasy close to Cochin dock (7)

(set by Dr. X)

- 3 Sees renegade perhaps crossing border (10)
- 4 To whom Muslims pray in central Lahore (5)
- 5 Individual in pub caught with ecstasy in mouth (9)
- 6 Split with husband after mounting depression (4)
- 7 Former British nobleman losing head in row (7)
- 8 Blow up many after a large programme in desert (2,9)
- 10 Where Brexit future is being decided by formulating its new terms (11)
- 13 Agree about fixing mess in evaluation (10)
- 15 Helped to bring charges against director over slur (9)
- 18 Charge finally gone after corrosion breaks pin (7)
- 20 Hush! It's problematic to restrain primarily zestful dog (4,3)
- 23 Lot catching a little unsettling respiratory infection (5)
- 24 Champion wins money and crown (4)

SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Solution to puzzle 12777

A	D	J	S	T	E	D	A	G	E	N	T	S
P	U	E	L	O	I	A	O					
T	O	X	I	C	E	Q	I	V	O	C	A	L
E	T	U	G	R	E	H	I					
S	T	A	I	R	C	A	S	E	T	R	O	U
T	P	I	N	S	H	I	E	U				
L	O	S	T	I	T	S	T	E	E	P	E	D
O	S	E	B	I	E	G	O	E				
F	R	E	E	L	I	C	R	A	Z	E	D	
F	L	R	L	M	T	H						
P	A	S	T	A	O	N	A	V	E	R	A	G
I	C	N	T	N	A	S	R					
S	H	A	C	K	L	I	N	G	W	O	T	A
T	N	E	C	E	A	E	I					
E	S	T	A	T	E	G	R	E	V	A	R	E

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

Guru Nanak's message of love, peace, equality

On the occasion of the 550th birth anniversary of Shri Guru Nanak Devji, it is pertinent to recall His teachings of love, peace, equality and brotherhood.

Guru Nanak says God is omnipresent (sarav viapak) in all creations and visible everywhere to the spiritually awakened. He stresses that God must be seen from "the inward eye," or the "heart" of a human being; devotees must meditate to progress towards enlightenment. He emphasises the revelation through meditation, as its rigorous application leads to communication between God and human beings.

Maya, defined as illusion or "unreality," is one of the core deviations from the pursuit of God and salvation: people are distracted from devotion by worldly attractions which give only elusive satisfaction. However, Guru Nanak emphasises Maya as not a reference to the unreality of the world, but of its values.

In Sikhism, the influences of ego, anger, greed, attachment, and lust — known as the Five Evils — are believed to be pernicious. The fate of people vulnerable to the Five Evils is separation from God, and the situation may be remedied only through intensive devotion.

Guru Nanak has also asked His followers to empower women. Not only did He emphasise on His ideals, He Himself followed them vigorously.

When Guru Nanak left for His heavenly abode, nine other Gurus embraced His teachings and worked to spread His message.

Surjit Singh Flora