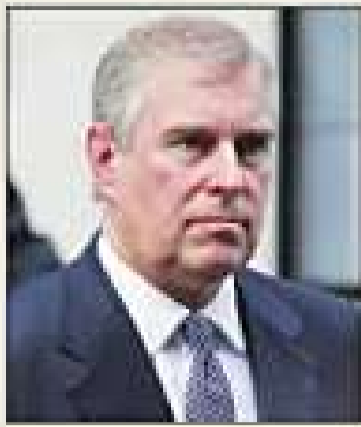


TOP OF THE WORLD



Prince Andrew

UK
No recollection of Epstein sex accuser: Andrew

London: Britain's Prince Andrew has said he does not remember meeting Virginia Roberts, one of US financier Jeffrey Epstein's alleged victims, who claims she was forced to have sex with the royal. But Andrew said in an interview with the BBC due to be broadcast on Saturday that his decision to remain friends with Epstein after he was convicted of soliciting prostitution from a minor was a serious error of judgement. "I have no recollection of ever meeting this lady, none whatsoever," Andrew said.

BOLIVIA
Five killed in clash as protests turn deadly

Sacaba: Bolivia's political crisis turned deadly after security forces opened fire on supporters of Evo Morales in a central town, killing at least five people, injuring dozens and threatening the interim government's efforts to restore stability following the resignation of the former president in an election dispute. Most of the dead and injured Friday in Sacaba near the city of Cochabamba suffered bullet wounds, Guadalberto Lara, director of the town's Mexico Hospital, told The Associated Press. He called it the worst violence he's seen in his 30-year career.

SUDAN
Six troops killed in attack by Yemeni rebels

Cairo: Officials in Sudan are saying an attack by Yemeni rebels has killed six members of a Sudanese paramilitary force that's been fighting in Yemen. The officials said Saturday that the attack earlier this week targeted a position on the Saudi-Yemen border held by Sudan's paramilitary Rapid Support Forces. Sudanese troops have been deployed in Yemen for years as part of the Saudi-led military coalition's war against Houthi rebels. Emirati and Sudanese troops were pulling out of Yemen in recent months.

US
California high school shooter dies of injuries

Los Angeles: The teenager who gunned down classmates at a California high school before shooting himself died Friday, leaving detectives baffled over the motive of a Boy Scout with no obvious alarm bells in his background. Nathaniel Berhow died in a hospital one day after shooting himself in the head at the end of a 16th birthday rampage that left two fellow students dead. Berhow had been in critical condition since police officers storming the campus found him lying among the wounded. The sheriff's department confirmed Berhow's death on Friday.

Sri Lankans cast vote for new president amid stray violence



EXPRESS IN COLOMBO

ARUN JANARDHANAN
COLOMBO, NOVEMBER 16

SRI LANKANS cast their vote on Saturday to choose the successor of President Maithripala Sirisena, in a day that saw stray poll-related incidents including an attack on minority voters. Polling booths closed with an overall turnout of about 80 per cent, with southern Sri Lanka recording the most votes, while the northern and eastern provinces that have a significant number of Tamil and minority voters recorded a lower turnout.

As many as 12,845 polling stations were set up across the country for 15.9 million voters. Polls opened at 7 am local time and concluded at 5 pm with overall voter turnout at almost 80 per cent, the National Elections Commission said.

The ruling United National Party (UNP) has fielded its candidate, Sajith Premadasa, against Gotabaya Rajapaksa, the former defence secretary during the war and the younger brother of former President Mahinda



At a polling centre in Sri Lanka on Saturday. Express

Rajapaksa. The current president, Sirisena, who defeated Rajapaksa in the 2015 election, did not contest this time.

The two frontrunners, Premadasa and Rajapaksa, voted in their respective home districts, Hambantota in the Deep South and near capital Colombo. Sirisena, who is supporting neither, voted in his home district Polonnaruwa. The ballot allows voters to choose their three top candidates in order of preference, which will determine the winner if no candidate secures over half the first place votes.

About 400,000 election officials have been placed on duty and over 60,000 police personnel and over 8,000 Civil Defence Force (CDF) personnel were deployed to maintain law and order.

While isolated incidents were reported, predictions of widespread violence were not realised. A senior Sri Lanka Police officer said there were several Army roadblocks at Palali and surrounding areas in the Tamil-populated northern province. While it was alleged that some roadblocks were an attempt to discourage Tamil voters from going to polling booths, the officer said the blocks were removed after the police reported them to the Election Commission.

The firing incident was reported early on Saturday near Anuradhapura against a convoy of buses. An official who monitored the developments said the buses were carrying mostly Muslim voters from Puttalam to Mannar, where they had registered to vote.

"Attack was to prevent a large number of Muslims going to polling booths. Unidentified gangs tried to create roadblocks against a convoy of buses arranged by a Muslim politician who supports ruling party candidate Sajith Premadasa. After police forces intervened and removed the blocks, some buses were fired upon from a distance. At least three buses were damaged but no injuries were reported," the official said.

Police spokesman Ruwan Gunasekera said 26 people were arrested for law violations, including clicking photos inside polling stations. The Colombo-based Centre for Monitoring Election Violence (CMEV) reported 69 incidents till 10 am.

Tamil areas that witnessed unusually busy polling in the 2015 election saw a lower turnout due to factors including a heavy downpour in Jaffna in the afternoon and an indifference to Premadasa and Gotabaya, said sources.

Kusal Perera, a political commentator based in Colombo, said the reduced voter percentage in the north and east are significant. "Unlike in 2015, people in the north and east had no reason to rush to the polling booths this time. While Gotabaya continues to be unpopular among Tamil and Muslim minority voters, Sajith's UNP has failed to keep promises they made after their 2015 victory," he said. WITHPTI

GENEVA

CLIMATE PROTESTERS BLOCK PVT JET TERMINAL

Dozens of climate activists blocked access to the private jet terminal at Geneva airport Saturday, demanding a halt to the "absurd" mode of luxury transportation. Around 100 people took part, organised by pressure group Extinction Rebellion, large groups sitting in front of three entrances to block access to the building for several hours

Leaked files expose how China organised mass detentions of Muslims

AUSTIN RAMZY &
CHRIS BUCKLEY

HONG KONG, NOVEMBER 16

THE STUDENTS booked their tickets home at the end of the semester, hoping for a relaxing break after exams and a summer of happy reunions with family in China's far west.

Instead, they would soon be told that their parents were gone, relatives had vanished and neighbors were missing - all of them locked up in an expanding network of detention camps built to hold Muslim ethnic minorities.

The authorities in the Xinjiang region worried the situation was a powder keg. And so they prepared.

The leadership distributed a classified directive advising local officials to corner returning students as soon as they arrived and keep them quiet. It included a chillingly bureaucratic guide for how to handle their anguished questions, beginning with the most obvious: "Where is my family?"

The directive was among 403 pages of internal documents that have been shared with *The New York Times* in one of the most significant leaks of government papers from inside China's ruling Communist Party in decades. They provide an unprecedented inside view of the continuing clampdown in Xinjiang, in

which the authorities have corralled as many as a million ethnic Uighurs, Kazakhs and others into internment camps and prisons over the past three years.

The party has rejected international criticism of the camps and described them as job-training centers that use mild methods to fight Islamic extremism. But the documents confirm the coercive nature of the crackdown in the words and orders of the officials who conceived it.

Even as the government presented its efforts in Xinjiang to the public as benevolent and exceptional, it discussed and organized a ruthless and extraordinary campaign in these internal communications. Senior party leaders are recorded ordering drastic and urgent action against extremist violence, including the mass detentions, and discussing the consequences with cool detachment.

Children saw their parents taken away, students wondered who would pay their tuition and crops could not be planted or harvested for lack of manpower, the reports noted. Yet officials were directed to tell people who complained to be grateful for the Communist Party's help and stay quiet. The key disclosures in the documents include:

■ President Xi Jinping, the party chief, laid the groundwork for the crackdown in a series of

speeches delivered in private to officials during and after a visit to Xinjiang in April 2014, just weeks after Uighur militants stabbed more than 150 people at a train station, killing 31. Xi called for an all-out "struggle against terrorism, infiltration and separatism" using the "organs of dictatorship," and showing "absolutely no mercy."

■ Terrorist attacks abroad and the drawdown of American troops in Afghanistan heightened the leadership's fears and helped shape the crackdown. Officials argued that attacks in Britain resulted from policies that put "human rights above security," and Mr. Xi urged the party to emulate aspects of America's "war on terror" after the Sept. 11 attacks.

■ The internment camps in Xinjiang expanded rapidly after the appointment in August 2016 of Chen Quanguo, a zealous new party boss for the region. He distributed Mr. Xi's speeches to justify the campaign.

■ The crackdown encountered doubts and resistance from local officials who feared it would exacerbate ethnic tensions and stifle economic growth. Chen responded by purging officials suspected of standing in his way, including one county leader who was jailed after quietly releasing thousands of inmates from the camps. NYT

IMPEACHMENT HEARING

Trump asked about Ukraine probe: US official

NICHOLAS FANDOS
WASHINGTON, NOVEMBER 16

AN OFFICIAL from the US Embassy in Kyiv confirmed to House impeachment investigators Friday that he had overheard a call between President Donald Trump and a top US diplomat in July in which the president asked whether Ukraine was going to move forward with an investigation he wanted.

The official, David Holmes, testified privately that he was at a restaurant in Kyiv when he overheard Trump on a cellphone call loudly asking Gordon Sondland, the US ambassador to the European Union, if Ukraine's president had agreed to conduct an investigation into one of his leading political rivals. Sondland, who had just come from a meeting with top Ukrainian officials and the country's president, replied in the affirmative.

"So, he's going to do the investigation?" Trump asked, according to a copy of Holmes' opening statement posted by CNN and confirmed by *The New York Times*.

Sondland, a wealthy hotelier and political donor turned ambassador, told Trump that President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine "loves your a***" and would conduct the investigation and do "anything you ask him to," according to Holmes' statement.

Holmes asked if it was true that Trump did not care about

FRANCE TO HOST PUTIN, ZELENSKY IN BID TO END CONFLICT

Paris: Russian President Vladimir Putin will meet his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Paris on December 9 for their first face-to-face encounter, seeking to end the half-decade conflict in Ukraine, the French presidency said Friday.

The leaders will join French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel for the four-way summit aimed at resolving the conflict in the east of Ukraine, where pro-Moscow separatists have declared breakaway regions, the Elysee Palace said. PTI

Ukraine. Sondland, he testified, agreed. As per Holmes' account, the ambassador said Trump cared only about the "big stuff." Holmes noted Ukraine had "big stuff" going on, like a war with Russia.

But Sondland had something else in mind. He told Holmes he meant "big stuff" that benefits the president, like the "Biden investigation" that his lawyer Rudy Giuliani was pushing for, because it affected him personally. NYT

IRAN PROTESTS OVER PETROL PRICE HIKE



People protest against the increased petrol price in Tehran on Saturday. Reuters

■ One civilian was killed and other people injured in Iran's Sirjan, the semi-official news agency ISNA said Saturday, a day after protests in the central city over a petrol price hike

■ "Unfortunately someone was killed," Sirjan's acting governor Mohammad Mahmoudabadi said in the report, adding the cause of the death and whether 'the individual was shot or not' was still unclear

■ Mahmoudabadi said that 'security forces did not have permission to shoot and were only allowed to fire warning shots... which they did'. He said it was a 'calm gathering' that was exploited by some who 'destroyed public property, damaged fuel stations...' PTI

AFTER FIVE MONTHS OF UNREST

For first time since protests began, China deploys PLA troops in Hong Kong

K J M VARMA
BEIJING/HONG KONG,
NOVEMBER 16

CHINA ON Saturday deployed its troops in Hong Kong for the first time since the unprecedented pro-democracy protests began more than five months ago, with soldiers in plain clothes clearing the roadblocks.

The Hong Kong administration, however, has distanced itself from the troop deployment, saying Beijing has sent the soldiers

on its own without any request.

Soldiers from the Hong Kong Garrison of People's Liberation Army (PLA) — the world's largest military — have been deployed for the first time in more than five months of civil unrest in Hong Kong, as dozens marched from their Kowloon garrison to help clear roadblocks, Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported.

It was also the first time in over a year that the PLA local garrison has been involved in the public community work.

EXPLAINED
Conditions, precedent of PLA troop deployment

AS PER Hong Kong law, the People's Liberation Army cannot interfere in local affairs, but can be deployed if the local government requests it. One exception is that the garrison can act in matters of relief efforts, such as during clean-up after a typhoon in 2018. China has downplayed the incident, with officials saying the soldiers were not in uniform and had volunteered during their break. Activists have, nevertheless, voiced concerns that the incident could set a "grave precedent".

THE RING MAY NOT HAVE BEEN FOUND IF NOT FOR 'THE BIGGEST BURGLARY IN ENGLISH LEGAL HISTORY'

Oscar Wilde's stolen golden ring recovered by 'art detective'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
AMSTERDAM, NOVEMBER 16

A GOLDEN ring once given as a present by the famed Irish writer Oscar Wilde has been recovered by a Dutch "art detective" nearly 20 years after it was stolen from Britain's Oxford University.

The friendship ring, a joint gift from Wilde to a fellow student in 1876, was taken during a burglary in 2002 at Magdalen College, where the legendary dandy studied. At the time it was valued at 35,000 pounds (40,650 euros, \$45,000).

The trinket's whereabouts remained a mystery for years and



A painting of Oscar Wilde at a former UK jail. Reuters/file

there were fears that the ring — shaped like a belt and buckle and made from 18-carat gold — had

even been melted down. But Arthur Brand, a Dutchman dubbed the "Indiana Jones of the

Art World" for recovering a series of high-profile stolen artworks, used his underworld connections to finally find it.

Mark Blandford-Baker, home bursar of Magdalen College, said they were "very pleased to have back a stolen item that forms part of a collection relating to one of our more famous alumni." "We had given up hope of seeing it again," he told AFP.

The ring was a present from Wilde and fellow student Reginald Harding to their friend William Ward in 1876 while the Irishman was a student at Magdalen, one of the three dozen colleges that make up Oxford University.

The ring bears the inscription in Greek that says "Gift of love, to one who wishes love." It also has the initials of: "OFOFWW + RRH to WWW" on the inside.

Disaster struck in 2002 when a former college cleaner named Eamonn Andrews broke into Magdalen, got drunk on whisky from the college bar, then stole the ring and two unrelated medals. The college at the time offered a 3,500-pound reward for the ring's safe return — but after he was caught, the burglar told a court that he had sold the golden band to a scrap dealer.

"Rumours started in 2015 in the art underworld that a

Victorian ring has surfaced 'with some Russian writing on it,'" Brand told an AFP correspondent, who saw the ring at an apartment in Amsterdam.

Together with a London-based antiques dealer named William Veres, their enquiries eventually led them to George Crump, a man whom Brand described as a "decent man with knowledge of the London criminal underworld because of his late uncle, a well-known casino owner."

Through Crump, Brand and Veres managed to track down and negotiate the safe return of the stolen ring. The story of his latest find may have a final twist worthy of one of Wilde's tales.

Wilde's ring may have never been discovered were it not for another heist, when a gang of elderly criminals raided a vault in London's jewellery district in 2015 in what was described as the "biggest burglary in English legal history."

"There are very strong indications that the appearance of the ring is linked to the 2015 burglary at Rumour Garden Safe Deposit. Rumours that the ring has reappeared first started a few weeks after the burglary," said Brand. "And I was given the ring right in front of the Hatton Garden Safe Deposit... which I thought was a bit of English humour."