

ELSEWHERE



Khamenei rules out talks with U.S.

TEHRAN Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Sunday again ruled out negotiations with Washington, a day before the 40th anniversary of the hostage crisis at the U.S. Embassy in Tehran. AFP

IS claims responsibility for Mali attacks

BAMAKO The Islamic State (IS) on Saturday claimed responsibility for a devastating raid that killed 49 Malian troops as well as a blast that led to the death of a French soldier. Friday's assault on a Malian military outpost at Indelimeane in the eastern Menaka region near Niger killed 49 soldiers. AFP

Spain's far-right party could double its tally

MADRID Spain's far-right Vox party could nearly double its number of parliamentary seats in next weekend's general election, according to an opinion poll published on Sunday. While the Socialist Party looks set to see its number of seats slip to 121 from 123 last time round, Vox will see tally jump to 46 from 24, said the poll. AFP

Court grants bail to Nobel winner Yunus

DHAKA A court in Dhaka granted bail on Sunday to microcredit pioneer and Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus over the firing of three employees by Grameen Communications. The three employees filed the cases in July, saying they were terminated illegally after seeking to form a trade union. Mr. Yunus has faced several investigations by the government of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. AP

Protests at Hong Kong's upmarket mall turn violent

Several demonstrators suffer injuries after face-to-face conflict with city police

REUTERS HONG KONG

Hong Kong anti-government protesters crowded an upmarket shopping mall in running clashes with police on Sunday, with several suffering bloody wounds a day after parts of the Chinese-ruled city became a battleground.

A human chain in Cityplaza, in the eastern suburb of Taikoo Shing, turned into a bloody face-to-face conflict with police, running up and down escalators where families with young children had been window shopping just minutes before and watching skating on the ice rink.

Restaurant vandalised Police said protesters had vandalised a restaurant after a peaceful chanting of slogans. Several people were wounded, one man in a white tee-shirt being beaten



Riot act: Policemen arresting a protester inside the City Plaza mall in the Tai Koo Shing area in Hong Kong on Sunday. AFP

with sticks by protesters. Another man lay in a pool of blood on the pavement. Media reports said a knifeman had attacked four people. Broadcaster RTHK said Democratic district Councillor Andrew Chiu was among the wounded and that part of his ear had been bitten off.

It was not immediately possible to verify the reports. Police made several arrests as protesters shouted "black police!", a reference to their perceived brutality. Police fired pepper spray at reporters when they got too close. One journalist was ar-

rested. There were also scuffles, confrontations and vandalism in malls in the New Territories towns of Tai Po, Tuen Mun and Sha Tin, where police fired pepper spray as protesters hurled abuse. Pro-democracy protesters in Hong Kong, which Britain returned to Chinese rule in 1997, battled police across the main island on Saturday, furious at Communist Party leaders in Beijing and perceived Chinese meddling with Hong Kong's freedoms, which China denies.

Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam will fly to China this week to discuss how to make it easier for Hong Kong people to live and work on the mainland, her office said on Sunday. Ms. Lam will arrive in Beijing on Tuesday for a meeting the next day of the "leading group" for developing the Greater Bay Area of southern China.

In world's biggest listing, Saudi Aramco to float IPO

This is part of Riyadh's plan to diversify its economy

REUTERS DHAHRAN

Saudi Arabia's giant state oil company finally kick-started its initial public offering (IPO) on Sunday. It announced its intention to float on the domestic bourse in what could be the world's biggest listing as the kingdom seeks to diversify its economy away from oil.

But in its long-awaited announcement, Aramco, the world's most profitable company, offered few specifics on the number of shares to be sold, pricing or the date for a launch.

Bankers have told the Saudi government that investors will likely value the company at around \$1.5 trillion, below the \$2 trillion valuation touted by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman when he first floated the idea of an IPO nearly four years ago.



co's ability to achieve value, and boost it on the long-term," Aramco Chairman Yasir al-Rumayyan told a news conference at the company's headquarters in the eastern city of Dhahran. The company will spend the next 10 days talking to investors and sounding out their interest and the price range will follow, he said.

Aramco also did not mention what measures it has taken to beef up security following unprecedented attacks on its oil plants in September.

Sources have said the oil company could offer 1%-2% of its shares on the local bourse, raising as much as \$20 billion-\$40 billion. A deal over \$25 billion would top the record-breaking one of Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba in 2014.

"Today is the right opportunity for new investors to reap the benefits of Aram-

The IPO is designed to turbo-charge Prince Mohammed's ambitious economic reform agenda by raising billions to build non-energy industries and diversify revenue streams. Mr. Rumayyan said a decision on an international listing for Aramco shares will be made in the future, without giving a time frame or venue for the overseas listing.

Aramco accounted for about one in every eight barrels of crude oil produced globally from 2016 to 2018, it said on Sunday.

Ukraine, not Russia behind DNC hack, claimed Manafort

Kiev entered Democratic Party servers and planted evidence to frame Moscow, believed Trump aide



Not my President: A protest against U.S. President Donald Trump in New York on Saturday. AP

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE WASHINGTON

Documents released by the U.S. Department of Justice on Saturday indicated that a top adviser to then-candidate Donald Trump said as early as the summer of 2016 that Ukraine, not Russia, was behind a hack of Democratic party emails.

Mr. Trump and his surrogates have suggested that Kiev hacked Democratic National Committee (DNC) servers and planted evidence to frame Russia, as a way of undermining the legitimacy of

the U.S. leader's election. Mr. Trump has pressured Ukraine's President to investigate that debunked conspiracy theory as well as his election rival Joe Biden - a move at the crux of an impeachment investigation against him in the House of Representatives.

The hundreds of pages of documents out on Saturday were part of an initial tranche released to U.S. media outlets BuzzFeed and CNN, which sued the government for access to notes from the investigation con-

ducted by special counsel Robert Mueller into Russian meddling in the 2016 election. Instalments of the internal documents from the Mueller probe will be released every month for the next eight years, BuzzFeed said. Campaign chairman Paul Manafort spread the theory among his aides that Ukraine - not Russia - had hacked the DNC, deputy campaign manager Rick Gates told the FBI, according to a heavily redacted summary of an interview conducted by the agency.

Judge blocks Trump's insurance proclamation

REUTERS WASHINGTON

A federal judge in Oregon on Saturday temporarily blocked a Trump administration proclamation that would have required prospective immigrants to prove they would have U.S. health insurance within 30 days of their arrival or enough money to pay for "reasonably foreseeable medical costs."

Judge Michael Simon in U.S. District Court in Portland, Oregon, granted a 28-day temporary restraining order that prevents the rule

from taking effect on November 3. The legal challenge against it will continue. In an order, Judge Simon said the potential damage to would-be immigrants and their families justified a nationwide block.

Facing a likely risk of being separated from their family members and a delay in obtaining a visa to which family members would otherwise be entitled is irreparable harm, he wrote. Seven U.S. citizens and an advocacy organisation had filed a lawsuit to block the rule.

Sri Lanka election panel chief withdraws TV censorship order

He had banned political programmes on state channel

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's Election Commission chief on Sunday backed down from plans to censor a state-owned TV station following criticism that his actions were supporting the main Opposition candidate at this month's presidential polls.

In a surprise move, Commission chairman Mahinda Deshapriya had banned any political programming on the Independent Television Network (ITN) after accusing the channel of harming the campaign of frontrunner Gotabaya Rajapaksa.

"After considering many representations by several parties that my order was



Supporters of Gotabaya Rajapaksa at a rally in Bandaragama. REUTERS

discriminatory, I revoke the (censorship) order issued on ITN," Mr. Deshapriya said in a letter to the broadcaster. The censorship order, which had been due to come into effect midnight on Sunday,

came after ITN aired a programme alleging loyalists to the previous regime thwarted a graft probe into ex-President Mahinda Rajapaksa's family. Independent poll-monitoring group the People's Action for Free and Fair Elections said privately-owned TV stations were worse than ITN in violating campaign laws and in supporting one candidate.

Meanwhile, Sri Lanka's Ilankai Tamil Arasu Katchi, the chief constituent of the Tamil National Alliance, on Sunday pledged support to ruling UNP's presidential candidate Sajith Premadasa. The other members of the alliance are expected to declare their position soon.

Boris Johnson apologises for Brexit delay

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE LONDON

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Sunday apologised for not taking Britain out of the European Union by October 31, while Brexit figurehead Nigel Farage said he will not stand in next month's general election.

"It is a matter of deep regret," Mr. Johnson told Sky News, before criticising U.S. President Donald Trump for saying that his Brexit deal with Brussels would prevent a future Britain/U.S. trade agreement.

With the Tories relying on Brexit supporters to gain a majority on December 12, a strong showing by Mr. Farage's Brexit Party will split the leave vote.

Airbnb bans 'party houses' after deadly Halloween shooting

5 people were killed in the California incident last week

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE NEW YORK

Airbnb's boss announced on Saturday that the online platform, which offers private homes for rent for short periods, is banning "party houses" after a deadly shooting at a Halloween event in California.

Five people were killed and others wounded in a Thursday night shooting in Orinda, California, in a house that had been rented on Airbnb.

"Starting today, we are banning 'party houses' and we are redoubling our efforts to combat unauthorised parties and get rid of abusive host and guest conduct, including conduct that



Brian Chesky, CEO and co-founder of Airbnb. REUTERS

leads to the terrible events we saw in Orinda," Airbnb co-founder and CEO Brian Chesky said on Twitter. To do this, Airbnb will increase "manual screening of high-risk reservations flagged by our risk detection technology," create a "dedicated 'party house' rapid response team," and take "immediate action" against those who violate guest policies, Mr. Chesky wrote.

Michael Wang, the owner of the home where the shooting took place, told The San Francisco Chronicle that he rented his house to a woman who said she was organising a family reunion for a dozen people.

The sheriff's department said they were responding to a noise complaint at the house around the time the shooting was reported. Three people died at the scene, while two more passed away after being hospitalised, police said.

'Whistleblower must come forward'

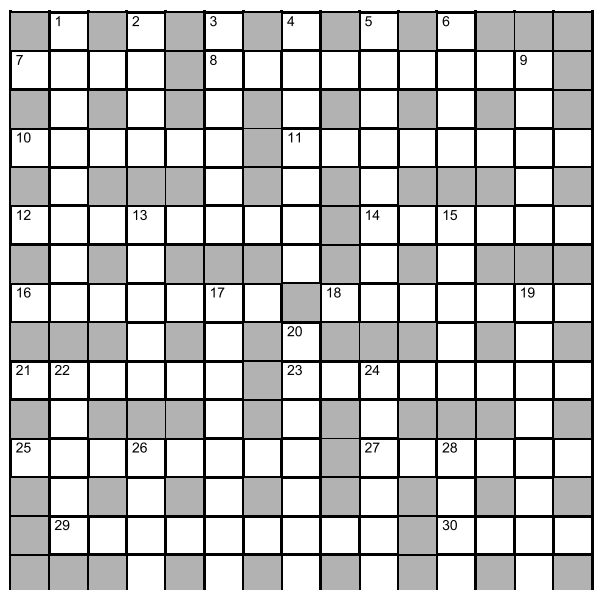
AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE WASHINGTON

Donald Trump called on Sunday for the unmasking of the whistleblower whose complaint launched the House impeachment investigation against the U.S. President. This comes amid an intensifying effort by Republican lawmakers to attack the credibility of the whistleblower.

Described only as an intelligence official who once worked at the White House, the whistleblower was the first to raise concerns about Mr. Trump's attempt to pressure Ukraine to investigate Joe Biden. "The Whistleblower got it so wrong that HE must come forward," Mr. Trump said.

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12771

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(set by Incognito)

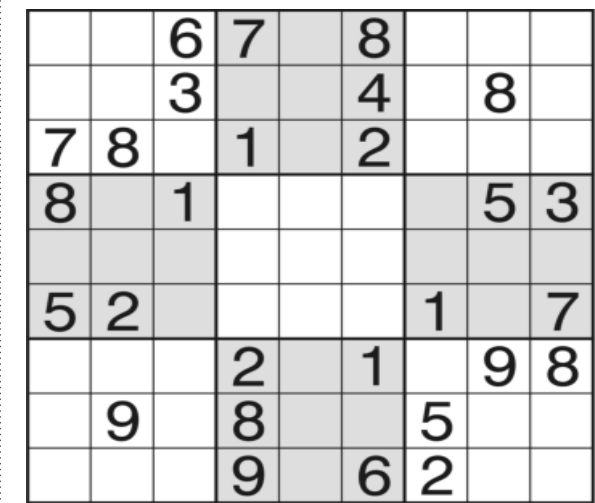
- 14 Initially, athletic persons held copper showing keen insight (6)
16 Heartless boy with another heartless boy finally (2,3,2)
18 Ceased wandering around Portugal and fled (7)
21 "Fruit" by King is more unseemly (6)
23 Veteran's grandfather clock (3-5)
25 For example, sun-fish and bird (8)
27 Tear out packet and eat like a bird (4,2)
29 Leader's gift? Hides papers! (9)
30 Again, dyke protects Indiana Jones (4)

- 5 Girl goes ahead, I hear, and gives wrong information (8)
6 Only men allowed to return guns (4)
9 Ring is fixed in the middle of hooter - it can be used for hanging (5)
13 Spring endlessly with Indian dress (5)
15 Half plum held by French friend produces a savoury taste (5)
17 Iris' bust is broken leading to a painful condition (8)
19 Esmeralda endlessly creates gems (8)
20 Hybrid ass left lemon-grass strewn (7)
22 Arise and dress (3,2)
24 Second-in-command Levy's carrying a record (6)
26 Regrets ruse going awry (4)
28 Cocaine, to some extent, is a killer (4)



To play an interactive version of this crossword online, scan the QR code

SUDOKU



Solution to puzzle 12770

Grid with solution numbers for puzzle 12770

FAITH

Bhishma, warrior & devotee

Bhishma as the commander in chief of the Kaurava army is a warrior par excellence who is committed to dharma, duty and righteousness and he treads the limits of these sensitive issues with remarkable insight. But he scores as a devotee par excellence as well and this is revealed in his famous hymn Bhishma Stuti that he offers to Krishna on seeing Him in person during his dying moments, pointed out Sri B. Sundarkumar in a discourse.

Overwhelmed on seeing Krishna, Bhishma recalls the war and of his fight with Arjuna and Krishna on the second day and confesses how he had rained the most powerful arrows incessantly on them. Krishna knew only too well of Bhishma's intent which was to make Him take up arms so that his pledge would be fulfilled. So, under the pretext of shielding Arjuna from danger, He had descended from the chariot, and, holding the Sudarshana chakra in His hand, He had rushed at Bhishma. Notwithstanding the upper garment that had slipped from His body, with His chest pierced with arrows and flowing with blood, with sweat and dust all over His body and his forehead covered by lovely locks of hair, with strides causing tremors, He had rushed towards Bhishma like a lion attacking an elephant. None but the Lord could be so magnanimous towards His devotee, says Bhishma with heartfelt emotions.

For, the Lord knew that it was Bhishma's Kshatriya dharma to confront Him in battle and graciously had accepted it as his prayer. He also knew that Bhishma had meditated only on Krishna Nama when he aimed the powerful astras and accepted these as flowers offered in worship. Bhishma fought with the sole desire to be granted entry into Vaikunta which could happen only with God's grace.