

Brazil braces for release of ex-President

Lula may be freed after SC overturns rule requiring convicted criminals to go to jail after losing first appeal

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
CURITIBA

Lawyers for Brazilian leftist icon Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva on Friday filed a request for his release from prison following a Supreme Court ruling that threatens to deepen political divisions.

Dozens of supporters outside the federal police headquarters in the southern city of Curitiba where Mr. Lula has been held since April 2018 cheered and waved "Free Lula" signs as lawyer Cristiano Zanin exited the facility after speaking to the popular ex-President.

Mr. Lula is among several thousand convicts who could be freed after the Supreme Court's decision late on Thursday to overturn a rule requiring convicted criminals to go to jail after losing their first appeal. They would remain free until they had exhausted their rights to appeal their conviction — a process critics say could take



Bursting with joy: Supporters of jailed former President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva celebrating outside the Supreme Court in Brasilia on Thursday. ■AP

years in cases involving people able to afford expensive lawyers.

Many of those affected by the 6-5 ruling are political and business leaders caught up in a massive corruption probe dubbed the 'Car Wash' that began in 2014.

"We have already filed the

request and we will speak to (federal judge) Carolina Leb-bos," Mr. Zanin told reporters, adding he hoped their request could be expedited.

Mr. Lula was "very serene" and the Supreme Court ruling had given him "hope that there could be justice," he said. "Our judi-

cial battle continues, our focus is to get the legal case nullified."

Mr. Lula, who led Brazil through a historic boom from 2003 to 2010, earning him the gratitude of millions of Brazilians for redistributing wealth to haul them out of poverty, is serving eight

years and 10 months for corruption. He was sentenced to almost 13 years in jail in February in a separate corruption case and still faces another half dozen corruption trials.

Mr. Lula, 74, has denied all the charges, arguing they were politically motivated to keep him out of the 2018 presidential election that was won by far-right President Jair Bolsonaro.

"I'm coming for you, wait for me!" Lula's girlfriend, Rosangela da Silva, tweeted after the Supreme Court announced its decision.

If he is freed, Mr. Lula's criminal record will prevent him from resuming his political career. He was the founder of the Workers Party (PT). That could change, however, if the Supreme Court were to decide in a separate case that Justice Minister Sergio Moro, who convicted Mr. Lula when he was a judge in 2017, had been biased.

Death of student triggers outrage in Hong Kong

Protesters blame police, hold vigil for 22-year-old

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
HONG KONG

Thousands in Hong Kong held vigils on Friday night for a student who died from a fall during recent clashes with the police, triggering fresh outrage from the pro-democracy movement.

Although the precise chain of events leading to 22-year-old Alex Chow's fall last weekend is unclear and disputed, his death on Friday morning was the first student fatality during the five months of demonstrations.

Protesters have made alleged police brutality one of their movement's rallying cries and have seized on the death. At the spot where Mr. Chow fell, thousands queued for hours to lay flowers, light candles and write condolence messages. "Today we mourn the loss of a



Protesters offering prayers at the car park where Alex Chow was found unconscious. ■AP

freedom fighter in Hong Kong," Joshua Wong, a prominent pro-democracy campaigner, said on Twitter.

"The atmosphere in Hong Kong is like a ticking bomb," added Lo Kin-hei, a local pro-democracy councillor and activist. "HKers don't trust the police will give us the truth."

The police have repeatedly denied any allegations of

wrongdoing in relation to Mr. Chow's death. The lead officer in the case, Superintendent Ewing Wu, again insisted on Friday that the police were not at fault.

"As for the allegations that police chased the deceased or that we pushed him and caused him to fall, the police hereby make a solemn statement again that nothing of the kind happened," Mr. Wu told reporters. "At this stage, we are investigating the cause of Chow's death instead of investigating police officers," Mr. Wu said.

The Hong Kong government expressed "great sorrow and regret" on Friday over the incident. In Beijing, the Foreign Affairs Ministry declined to comment directly but said "eliminating disorder" was Hong Kong's most urgent task.

IN BRIEF



Iran earthquake kills five, leaves 300 injured

TEHRAN
An earthquake rocked northwestern Iran before dawn on Friday, killing at least five people and injuring more than 300 in crumbling and collapsed buildings. The 5.9-magnitude quake struck about 120 km southeast of the city of Tabriz, the Iranian Seismological Centre said. Some 40 homes were levelled by the quake and over 200 head of cattle killed. AFP

No agreement on China tariff rollback, says U.S. President

Trump contradicts Beijing's claim from earlier this week

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Friday that he has not agreed to rollback tariffs on Chinese imports, dampening recent optimism for a major de-escalation in the U.S.-China trade war.

Mr. Trump's remarks appeared to push back against Beijing's claims this week that the two sides had agreed to remove tariffs in stages as part of a partial deal announced last month.



Donald Trump

"They would like to have a rollback. I haven't agreed to anything," he told reporters at the White House. "China would like to get somewhat of a rollback, not a

complete rollback, because they know I won't do it."

Chinese Commerce Ministry spokesman Gao Feng announced on Thursday that U.S. and Chinese officials had "agreed to rollback the additional tariffs in stages, as progress is made towards a (final) agreement."

"They would like to make a deal much more than I do," Mr. Trump said, adding that the initial agreement will be signed "in our country," possibly in Iowa.

Trump asked to pay \$2 mn in damages

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
NEW YORK

A New York judge on Thursday ordered Donald Trump to pay \$2 million for using his former charity to further his political and business interests.

Justice Saliann Scarpulla of the New York Supreme Court told him to pay the damages to a group of non-profit organisations. The civil law suit accused Mr. Trump of using the Trump Foundation funds to settle lawsuits, promote his Trump-branded hotels, and for personal spending.

Mauritius elects incumbent Prime Minister for 5-year term

Will continue to work toward progress: Jugnauth

REUTERS
PORT LOUIS

Mauritius' ruling Militant Socialist Movement (MSM) has won more than half of the seats in Parliament, securing incumbent Prime Minister Pravind Kumar Jugnauth a five-year term, the final election results showed on Friday.

Thursday's vote was dominated by calls for fairer distribution of wealth on the



Pravind Kumar Jugnauth

prosperous Indian Ocean island of 1.3 million people.

MSM won 38 of the 62 seats up for grabs while its rivals, the Labour Party and the Mauritian Militant Movement (MMM), garnered 13

and 9 seats respectively, the election commission said.

Two seats on the island of Rodrigues were won by the Organisation of the People of Rodrigues (OPR) party.

Mr. Jugnauth, 57, became Prime Minister in 2017 when his father stepped down from the post, and has already introduced a minimum wage to try and improve wealth distribution. "I have obtained a clear mandate to continue to work towards progress and development in this country," he told his supporters after the count in his constituency.

In Presidential election, local is the national in Sri Lanka's east

Voters are viewing the poll under two lenses — their suffering during the civil war years and soon after, and the local, communal contradiction

MEERA SRINIVASAN
BATTICALOA

Hardly any election-related poster is visible in Batticaloa town, much like the rest of Sri Lanka, since the Election Commission banned banners and cut-outs last month. All the same, voters appear all set for the November 16 presidential poll, going by the many pocket meetings here, where voters are thrashing out positions.

Residents of Batticaloa district, and those in neighbouring Trincomalee and Ampara — which together form Sri Lanka's scenic Eastern Province along the east coast — consider this election crucial. Not only because they get to choose a new national leader, but also because the poll's outcome might impact the delicate lo-

cal dynamic of this multi-ethnic district.

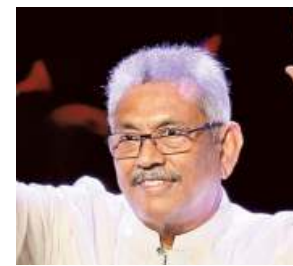
Ties within the community were complex to start with, as Tamils (mostly Hindus and Christians) and Tamil-speaking Muslims — the two identify as separate ethnic groups in Sri Lanka — in the province compete for limited local administrative powers and resources.

And then, when Batticaloa suffered a suicide bombing in the serial blasts that shook Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday this April, local relations faced a risk of serious deterioration, especially since investigators traced the attacks to Zahran Hashim, an Islamist radical from Kattankudy town here. It led to an instant perpetrator-victim binary in the district, since almost all the victims at the Zion

church blast were Tamils. "Thankfully, the tensions didn't spiral into violence. While things appear calmer on the surface, the mutual suspicion between Tamils and Muslims is very much there," said Kanthavel Kandepala, a social worker in Batticaloa town.

Conversations with many residents indicated that voters are using two predominant lenses this poll season.

One, based on their suffering during the civil war years and soon after. For many voters, there is a lingering discomfort with prominent candidate Gotabaya Rajapaksa, a war-time Defence Secretary and brother of former President Mahinda Rajapaksa. They are likely to back his main opponent in the race, Sajith Premadasa, fielded by



For many voters, there is a lingering discomfort with Gotabaya Rajapaksa.

the incumbent government.

The other, is the lens of the local, communal contradiction. A few local Tamil politicians, including renegade LTTE-members ex-Chief Minister Sivanesathurai Chandrakanthan or 'Pillayan' — said to command some local support — and Vinayagamoorthy Muralitharan or 'Karuna Amman', are

backing Mr. Rajapaksa.

According to locals, this camp has been trying to tap on the Tamil-Muslim hostility, with an openly anti-Muslim rhetoric and assurances of more powers to Tamils. "Whether it is Tamils or the small Sinhalese community here, there are many who can't stand the Muslims. They tend to be drawn to that sort of message," said a private sector employee in Trincomalee, requesting anonymity. "But they are a minority. Most people who stand for democratic rights are backing Sajith," he said.

Muslim votes

Sri Lanka's two main Muslim parties have aligned with Mr. Premadasa this election, but for residents of the predominantly-Muslim town of Kat-

tankudy, the choice is not all that straightforward.

Partly because a former governor of the province A.L.A.M. Hizbullah, said to have considerable local support, is running for President. Moreover, many Muslims are disillusioned with the Rajapaksa — associated with hardliners behind the anti-Muslim violence in the past few years — as well as the current government that neither prevented the Easter blasts nor tackled the subsequent orchestrated attacks that targeted Muslims.

"It is time to think of a leader who will be good for the whole country, not just us," said A.L.M. Sabeel, secretary of the Kattankudy Mosques' Federation and a member of the local urban council. And that is why

some like him are backing Anura Kumara Dissanayake of the leftist Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP), knowing well that his chances in this contest are slim.

While voters think about retaining democratic space or building an alternative force, they also emphasise the need for a more fundamental shift in the long-term. A local inter-religious group has held at least 12 pocket meetings in the run-up to the poll.

"We don't name any candidate but encourage participants to vote for the leader who might give us some space and freedom to dissent or agitate...we have to consolidate democratic forces with urgency," said Fr. Rajan Rohan, of the local St. John's church.

Iran claims it shot down 'foreign' drone

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
TEHRAN

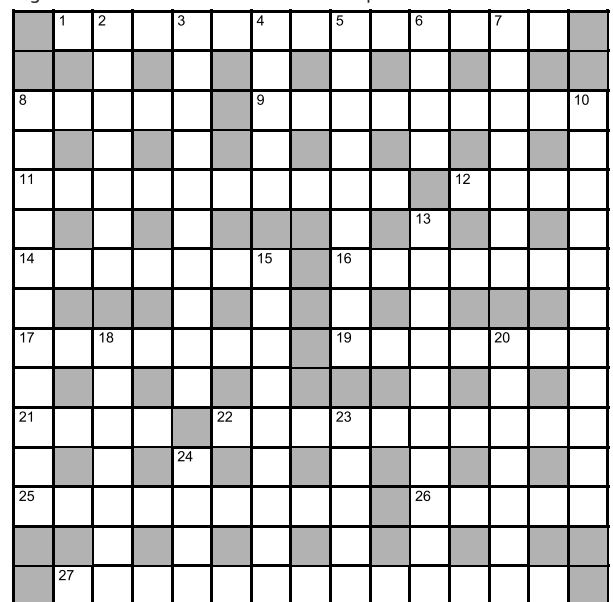
Iran shot down an unidentified drone that "infiltrated" near Bandar-e-Mahshahr port on the Gulf coast on Friday, Iranian media reported. IRIB, a state broadcaster, aired a six-second video purporting to show the interception of the drone by an Iranian anti-missile battery.

Units acted "in response to a violation of our airspace by a drone (that) infiltrated", IRIBNEWS said, citing Brig. General Alireza Sabahi Fard, commander-in-chief of aerial defence.

IRNA quoted provincial governor Gholamreza Shariati: "Unknown drone... (belonged) without doubt to a foreign country."

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12776

Log on to crossword.thehindu.com for more puzzles



ACROSS

- Exhibit signs of anxiety and tension! Be distressed by troubles (4,4,5)
- Husband, worthless, abandons wife in hurry (5)
- One-man concert put up without preparation (9)
- Naughtily thirsting about hot garment worn in bed (10)

- Split resulting from losing head in rage (4)
- Guesses temperature in Eskimos (7)
- Following mess, Conservative leader quits leading to speculation (7)
- Nazi police in horrific tapes break spirit (7)
- Terrible colic, a suffering essentially relating to the abdomen (7)
- Love to get married? Outstanding (4)
- Trouble after scoundrel's arrested by angry English cop for misdemeanour (10)
- Principal shot in aisle brutally (9)
- Sighed and concluded love's lost (5)
- Violation of duty by authority frequently beginning to result in raid (6,2,5)

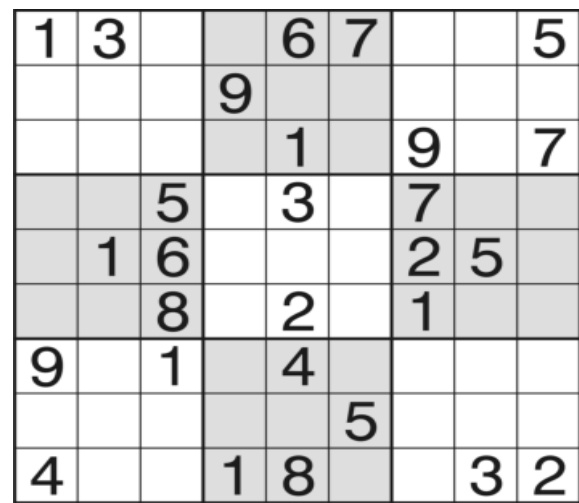
DOWN

- Apprehension shown by essentially diffident son in darkness (7)
- Concerning current vote for largely outrageous gangster (10)

(set by Dr. X)

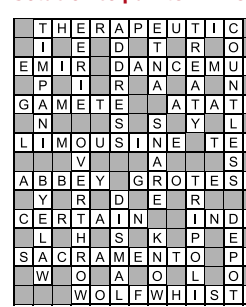
- Beastly sound is near, inspiring dread in the heart (5)
- Poor sci-fi novel is sleep-inducing (9)
- Succulent plant given by a miss needs sun (4)
- Friend pulled up strap to show safety feature in vehicle (3,4)
- Passing fancy or on intimate terms (4,2,5)
- Where raindrops might be viewed with distrust (5,1,5)
- Marvellous description of criminal mastermind? (5-5)
- Marine predator shifts slyly to trap individual (9)
- Writes in brief recess about English poet (7)
- Archipelagos where one finds beaches surrounding a little lagoon (7)
- Islamic religious leader found in Mecca, lifeless (5)
- Old South American in mountain camp (4)

SUDOKU

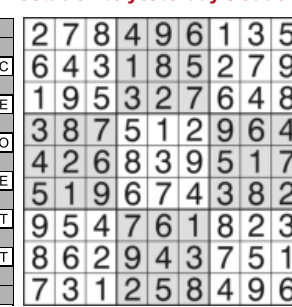


DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to puzzle 12775



Solution to yesterday's Sudoku



FAITH

Fall from power

Nammazhvar, in his Thiruvaimozhi, urges us to surrender to the Lord. His oru nayakamai verse shows us the need to surrender at once. We must not keep postponing surrender, said Kidambi Narayanan in a discourse. Nammazhvar gives the example of a king who loses a war and, as a consequence, his kingdom. He loses all his wealth and takes to begging. His only possession now is a begging bowl. Ashamed to be seen begging during the day, the king goes out to beg at night. One night, he struggles to find his way around because of the darkness. He steps on a stray dog lying in his path and falls. The begging bowl rolls away. Hearing the commotion, many people gather round him. They recognise him as the former king. They pity him for his fall from power, and their pity is even more humiliating than his loss of power.

Nammazhvar gives this as an example to make us realise the importance of surrendering at the Lord's feet. We must not be enamoured of power and wealth, for we will lose them just as the king did. Nampillai, in his commentary, says the fate of this king is very similar to Ravana's.

Ravana is a king who is finally killed in battle by Rama. His wife Mandodari comes to see him and laments thus: "Even Indra, the chief of the celestials, was afraid of Ravana, and yet here he lies, killed by a human being. You lived in an inaccessible place and you could assume any form you wanted. How is it you have been killed by Rama? When your brother Khara was killed, it was clear that Rama was no ordinary man. Hanuman entered your city, which even devas could not. A bridge was built across the ocean and I was certain that Rama was more than a mere mortal. You allowed your senses to overpower you and you have paid for it."