



Uber co-founder Kalanick to leave company's board

NEW YORK
Travis Kalanick, the co-founder of Uber, will resign from the board next week, the company announced on Tuesday. He was ousted as the CEO in 2017 with the company mired in numerous lawsuits. "Uber has been a part of my life for the past 10 years. At the close of the decade, and with the company now public, it seems like the right moment for me to focus on my current business and philanthropic pursuits," Mr. Kalanick said. **AP**

Russia extends detention of U.S. man in spy case

MOSCOW
A Russian court on Tuesday extended until late March the pre-trial detention of a U.S. man already held in jail for a year despite Western requests for his release. Paul Whelan, who also has Irish, Canadian and British citizenship, was arrested on December 28 last year for allegedly receiving state secrets. The Moscow City Court extended his detention till March 29. **AFP**



Fading hope: Rescue workers pulling out a body from the accident site in Indonesia on Tuesday. **REUTERS**

27 dead as bus plunges into ravine in Indonesia

Many passengers may be missing; police

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PALEMBANG

At least 27 people have died and more than a dozen were injured after a bus plunged into a ravine in Indonesia, officials said on Tuesday.

The bus careered into a 150-m ravine in South Sumatra province just before midnight on Monday and ended up in a river, according to the police.

The head of the local search and rescue team, Berty Kowaas, said divers were searching near the bus, which was half submerged. Rescuers were also scouring nearby slopes for the missing.

"The current in the river is quite strong so there's a possibility some victims were carried away," Mr. Kowaas told a local TV channel on Tuesday.

The accident happened

Senate leaders at an impasse over Trump impeachment trial

Democratic and Republican lawmakers have been arguing over rules and witnesses

ASSOCIATED PRESS
PALM BEACH

The fate of a Senate impeachment trial for President Donald Trump is at an impasse as Republican and Democratic leaders remained at odds over what form it would take and what witnesses would be called.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said he has not ruled out calling witnesses but also indicated that he was in no hurry to seek new testimony either. The Senate's top Democrat, Chuck Schumer of New York, responded that any trial without witnesses would be "Kafkaesque" and a "sham." He said he remained open to negotiating with Mr. McConnell, a Kentucky Republican.

"Let's put it like this – If there are no documents and no witnesses, it will be very hard to come to an agreement," Mr. Schumer said on Monday.

The House voted last Wednesday to impeach Mr. Trump, who became only the third President in U.S.



At odds: A file photo of Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer. **REUTERS**

history to be formally charged with "high crimes and misdemeanors." But the Senate trial may be held up until lawmakers can agree on how to proceed.

Mr. Schumer is demanding witnesses who refused to appear during House committee hearings, including acting White House Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney and former National Security Adviser John Bolton.

Mr. McConnell, who has all but promised a swift acquittal of the President, has resisted making any guaran-

tees, and has cautioned Mr. Trump against seeking the testimony of witnesses for fear of prolonging the trial. Instead, Mr. McConnell appears to have secured Republican support for his plans to impose a framework drawn from the 1999 impeachment trial of President Bill Clinton.

'Clinton model'

"We haven't ruled out witnesses," Mr. McConnell said on Monday in a TV interview. "We've said let's handle this case just like we did

with President Clinton. Fair is fair."

That trial featured a 100-0 vote on arrangements that established two weeks of presentations and argument before a partisan tally in which Republicans, who held the majority, called a limited number of witnesses. But Democrats now would need Republican votes to secure witness testimony – and Republicans believe they have the votes to eventually block those requests.

In a letter to all Senators on Monday, Mr. Schumer argued that the circumstances in the Trump trial are different from those of Mr. Clinton's, who was impeached after a lengthy independent counsel investigation in which witnesses had already testified numerous times under oath. Mr. Schumer rejected the Clinton model, saying waiting until after the presentations to decide on witnesses would "foreclose the possibility of obtaining such evidence because it will be too late."

'Ready to deal with any N. Korean gift'

May be it's a present where Kim sends me a vase as opposed to a missile test: Trump

REUTERS
PALM BEACH

President Donald Trump on Tuesday brushed off North Korea's warning of a "Christmas gift," saying the United States would "deal with it very successfully," amid concerns that Pyongyang might be preparing a long-range missile test.

China, North Korea's most important backer, meanwhile, urged Washington to take "concrete steps" as soon as possible to implement agreements reached during last year's summit



Donald Trump

between Mr. Trump and North Korea leader Kim Jong-un in Singapore.

North Korea warned this month of a possible Christmas gift for Washington after Mr. Kim gave the U.S. until the end of the year to pro-

pose new concessions in talks over his country's nuclear arsenal and reducing tensions between the adversaries.

"We'll find out what the surprise is and we'll deal with it very successfully," Mr. Trump told reporters at his Mar-a-Lago resort. "We'll see what happens."

"Maybe it's a nice present," he quipped. "May be it's a present where he sends me a beautiful vase as opposed to a missile test."

In issuing its warning, North Korea accused Wash-

Hong Kong police clash with protesters on Christmas Eve

Tear gas used to disperse crowd in shopping district

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
HONG KONG

Hong Kong marked Christmas Eve with tear gas, petrol bombs and mall clashes on Tuesday night as battles between democracy activists and the riot police swept through a major shopping district.

The evening's unrest was the most sustained in what has otherwise been a few weeks of comparative calm for a city upended by more than six months of violent protests.

Thousands of black-clad protesters – some wearing Santa hats and reindeer antlers – took to the streets of Tsim Sha Tsui, a usually bustling tourist district.

Clashes soon erupted, with the riot police firing multiple rounds of tear gas to disperse protesters throughout the evening, including outside the famous Peninsula Hotel. Rubber bullet casings were also seen on the ground.



Not so festive: Riot police confronting protesters during a rally on Christmas Eve in Hong Kong on Tuesday. **AP**

The police said a "large group of rioters" had built barricades, damaged traffic lights and dug up bricks on the area's major thoroughfares and vandalised stores. Some threw petrol bombs in one district, they added.

Meanwhile, flashmob rallies were held in multiple malls across the financial hub, with protesters chanting anti-government slogans. In Harbour City, a luxury mall, the police used pepper spray and batons when a group of plainclothes officers were discovered and surrounded. The officers made multiple arrests as the crowds threw ob-

jects and heckled them.

Flashmob rallies formed in at least four other locations on Tuesday night, with the police trying to disperse crowds shouting chants and heckling officers.

Footage posted on social media from a mall in Yuen Long district showed a man barging into a police officer and leaping one storey below in a bid to avoid arrest.

In a statement, the police said officers were responding to reports that protesters were vandalising shops in the mall and that the man who fell was taken to hospital in a conscious state and arrested for assault.

New construction seen at Pyongyang missile site

Revealed in a satellite image of Dec. 19

ASSOCIATED PRESS
SEOUL

A new satellite image of a factory where North Korea makes military equipment used to launch long-range missiles shows the construction of a new structure.

The release of several images from Planet Labs comes amid concern that North Korea could launch a rocket or missile as it seeks concessions in stalled nuclear negotiations with the U.S. One of the satellite images taken on December 19

shows the completion of a new structure at the March 16 Factory near Pyongyang, where North Korea is believed to be developing and manufacturing vehicles used as mobile launchers for long-range ballistic missiles.

Jeffrey Lewis, director of the East Asia nonproliferation program at the Middlebury Institute, said in an email that the construction seemed to be an expansion of the factory, which would be "big news."

122 Chinese held in Nepal for cybercrime

REUTERS
KATHMANDU

The police in Nepal have detained 122 Chinese men and women in its biggest crackdown on crime by foreigners entering the country on tourist visas, officials said on Tuesday.

The chief of police in Kathmandu, Uttam Subedi, said the Chinese nationals are suspected of cybercrime and hacking into bank cash machines.

Another officer said the Chinese Embassy knew about the raids and had supported the detentions.

Protesters harden position in Iraq

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BAGHDAD

Iraqi anti-government protesters stepped up their demonstrations on Tuesday, with authorities in Baghdad increasingly paralysed as they seek a way out of a political impasse.

Once again the capital's iconic Tahrir Square began filling early in the day, as protesters voiced their opposition to names tipped for Prime Minister in a ruling system they view as inept and ridden with corruption.

After dwindling in recent weeks following a string of killings of protesters, the civil disobedience campaign has rediscovered its vigour



Burning issue: A protester at a roadblock in Basra. **AFP**

as political parties wrangle over a replacement for outgoing premier Adel Abdel Mahdi. While a pro-Iran camp has tried to impose a candidate, Iraqi President Barham Saleh has reportedly put up resistance.

For Iraqis protesting since

October 1, the system installed by the U.S. after it led a military coalition to overthrow dictator Saddam Hussein in 2003 has become overly beholden to neighbouring Iran and is beyond reform. Protesters say a long-promised economic revival

never arrived in OPEC's number two oil producer, with more than half of all crude revenues siphoned off by crooked politicians and their cronies.

"Every hour they come up with a new candidate, but we want someone independent," said one young demonstrator in Basra.

The protesters are calling for a new constitution, a new electoral law and a complete overhaul of the political system. On Tuesday, Parliament voted to reform the electoral law, establishing a first-past-the-post system to replace the complex mix of proportional representation and list voting.

3 Indians dead in Sri Lanka road accident

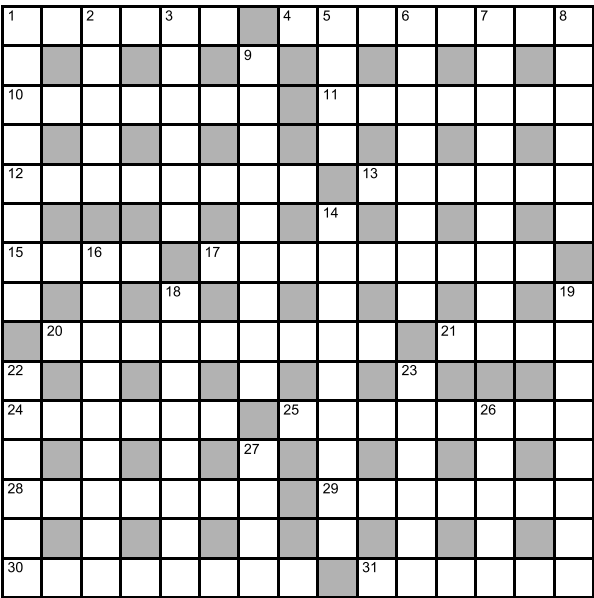
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
COLOMBO

Three Indians were among four people killed in a van-container truck collision in Sri Lanka's southern Kurundugahahetekma area on Monday night, according to a media report.

The deceased Indians belong to the same family – a 44-year-old woman, her 18-year-old son and another relative. Their names were not revealed. The woman's husband and 10-year-old daughter were injured and were shifted to Karapitiya Hospital.

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12815

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ACROSS

- 1 Empty cafe with authentic breakfast food (6)
- 4 Perhaps, expert comes before kid, with rookie somewhere in the middle (8)
- 10 Issue shady bluish money, at the start (7)
- 11 Officer's gut feel oddly ignored (7)

(set by Spinner)

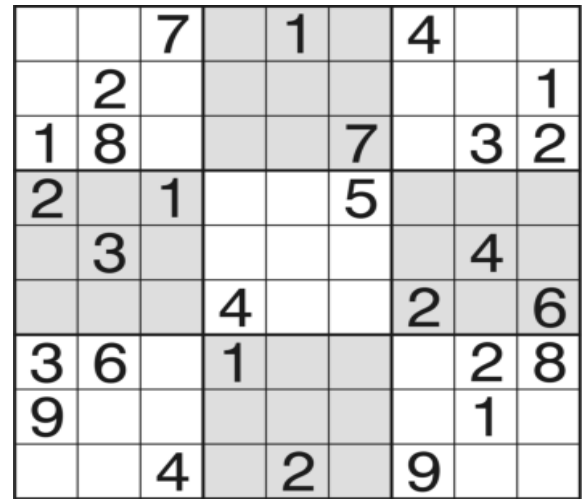
- 12 A purist's probably at a higher level (8)
- 13 Wipe crumpled suits with a little ethanol (6)
- 15 Every retiring man gets a cent (4)
- 17 Metal superhero becomes scrap dealer? (9)
- 20 'People of action' – describes settler's bosses! (9)
- 21 Employed American editor (4)
- 24 Beginning from zero, set up home (6)
- 25 Goodbye, we're unfortunately in the midst of decline! (8)
- 28 I used to set beyond boundaries! (7)
- 29 Run one into the ground with ludicrous house tax, showing no love (7)
- 30 A little amount of publicity inherent in questionable links with extremists, basically (8)
- 31 Senior people saluted in mutiny, forcing out egregious leader (6)

DOWN

- 1 Caught and healed on getting relevant injection (8)
- 2 On inhaling drug, steals garments (5)

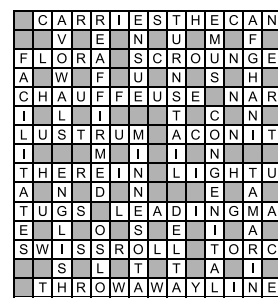
- 3 Plane returned for pet (6)
- 5 Staple food item's cost having no upper cap! (4)
- 6 Aggressive investor is taking on bars of gold (8)
- 7 Railings of stairs bent out of place with the passage of time (9)
- 8 Shouted when worn out, let out a cry of pain (6)
- 9 Sign laws protecting a community upfront (9)
- 14 Under too much pressure as dead criminal retreats to hideout! (9)
- 16 One recruited by extraordinary orchestra wanting a singer (9)
- 18 Ultimately protested one's idea of alienation (8)
- 19 Admires person of age taking a test endlessly (8)
- 22 Secures boats having model turbines (6)
- 23 Formula found by head of department (6)
- 26 Make qualification inherently uniform! (5)
- 27 Genuine currency (4)

SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★☆

Solution to puzzle 12814



Solution to yesterday's Sudoku



FAITH

Efficacy of Bhakti

According to Sanatana dharma, God is antaryami, that is, He dwells equally within each being. The Isavasya states that the Lord dwells in the heart of all things of whatever there is in the universe. He is manifest in each and every aspect of creation and as the indweller sustains all of it at all times. It goes without saying that He is the essence in all of us. But each one has to go beyond the statement and feel this truth in his heart, experience it and believe in it, pointed out Sri R. Krishnamurthy Sastrigal in a discourse. This can happen only when one's mind is constantly preoccupied with His presence within. Then the human mind which is like a mirror is able to reflect this inner reality. When sun's rays fall on the mirror it gets reflected. But when it falls on mud it is not seen.

The mind is like plain glass that has to be coated with the mercury of bhakti to reflect the God within. Bhishma, Kunti, the Pandava brothers, etc, are filled with devotion to Krishna whom they see as the Supreme Lord. But Duryodhana lacks devotion and this is reflected in his attitude to Krishna whom he regards as a mere cowherd boy who is given to tricks of Maya.

In the last verse of the Bhagavad Gita, Sanjaya says that wherever there is Krishna, the Lord of Yoga, and Partha, the skilled archer, there will surely be victory, welfare and morality. The point is that wherever there is God, it only indicates success, joy and goodness. His presence is always auspicious. There is no doubt about it. But only when Bhakti bhava by which one expresses trust and love to God becomes central in one's consciousness, it can turn one to a state of attaining oneness with God to the exclusion of other distractions of life.



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