

ELSEWHERE



**U.S. Supreme Court to take up gun control case**

WASHINGTON

The U.S. Supreme Court will address gun control on Monday for the first time in nearly 10 years. In a country where guns kill nearly 40,000 people every year, the nine-member court will look at a case involving the Second Amendment to the Constitution, which enshrines “the right of the people to keep and bear arms.” **AFF**

**At least 208 killed in Iran unrest: Amnesty**

LONDON

At least 208 people are believed to have been killed during a crackdown on protests in Iran last month that followed a sharp fuel price hike, Amnesty International said. “The organisation said the toll is based on credible reports.” **AFF**

## Malta PM to resign over journalist’s murder probe

### Decision after two weeks of protests

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
VALLETTA

Malta's Prime Minister Joseph Muscat, under fire over his handling of the murder of journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia, said on Sunday he would step down after his replacement is chosen in January.

The announcement came after two weeks of mounting pressure and popular protests calling for Mr. Muscat to quit for his handling of the probe into Ms. Galizia's car bomb killing in 2017.

Mr. Muscat said he would resign after his successor is chosen by January 12.

On Sunday, the Labour leader got the unanimous backing of party MPs, a day after tycoon Yorgen Fenech was charged with complicity in the murder.



Joseph Muscat

The investigation has rocked the Mediterranean island, reaching the highest echelons of government.

Critics, including members of Ms. Galizia's family, have accused Mr. Muscat, 45, of protecting those involved in murdering the popular journalist and blogger who exposed cronyism and sleaze within the tiny country's political and business elite.

## UN chief opens climate summit with call for hope over ‘surrender’

Representatives are in Madrid for a two-week meeting on tackling global warming

REUTERS  
MADRID

The world must choose hope over surrender in the fight against climate change, UN secretary-general Antonio Guterres said on Monday, warning a summit in Madrid that governments risked sleepwalking past a point of no return.

Two weeks of talks aimed at bolstering the 2015 Paris Agreement to curb global warming began against a backdrop of unusually severe weather disasters this year, from fires in the Arctic, Amazon and Australia to intense tropical hurricanes.

Mr. Guterres, a former Portuguese Prime Minister and leading advocate of more ambitious action to reverse the upward march of



Antonio Guterres at the COP25 in Madrid. • GETTY IMAGES

greenhouse gas emissions, urged governments to avoid a “path of surrender” that would endanger the health and safety of all.

“Do we really want to be remembered as the generation that buried its head in the sand, that fiddled while the planet burned?” Mr. Guterres told an opening session at the summit, held in a hangar-like conference centre.

**Youth-led activism**

He urged delegates to resolve an important outstanding issue from the Paris accord: rules on carbon

trading, seen as vital for kick-starting faster action to reduce emissions.

Micha Kurtyka, Poland's Climate Minister who led the last round of U.N. climate negotiations in December last year, had earlier said a surge in youth-led climate activism underscored the urgency of the task.

“They have the courage to speak up and remind us that we inherited this planet from our parents,” Mr. Kurtyka said.

Existing pledges made under the Paris accord fall short of the kind of transformational action needed to avert the most disastrous consequences of global warming in terms of sea-level rise, drought, storms and other impacts, scientists say.

## China imposes sanctions on U.S. over Hong Kong unrest

It suspends U.S. warship visits to the city, slaps curbs on NGOs

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
BEIJING

China suspended U.S. warship visits and sanctioned American NGOs on Monday in retaliation for the passage of a Bill backing pro-democracy protesters in Hong Kong.

The financial hub has been rocked by nearly six months of increasingly violent unrest demanding greater autonomy, which Beijing has frequently blamed on foreign influence.

Last week U.S. President Donald Trump signed the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act, which requires the President to annually review the city's favourable trade status and threatens to revoke it if the semi-autonomous territory's freedoms are quashed.



**Countermeasures:** A file photo of crew members on the deck of the USS Blue Ridge during a port call in Hong Kong. •AFF

“In response to the unreasonable behaviour of the U.S. side, the Chinese government has decided to suspend reviewing the applications for U.S. warships to go to Hong Kong for (rest and) recuperation as of today,” Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said at a regular press briefing.

Mr. Hua said they would also apply sanctions to a number of U.S.-based NGOs, without giving much details.

Sanctions will apply to NGOs that had acted “badly” over the recent unrest in Hong Kong, she said, including the National Endowment for Democracy, Human Rights Watch and Freedom House.

## Gotabaya seeks Pakistan’s help to fight drug trafficking, extremism

MEERA SRINIVASAN  
COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has sought Pakistan's help in tackling drug trafficking and Islamist extremism, his office said on Monday.

“Drug trafficking and addiction is a grave evil that my country is confronted with. We wish to seek Pakistan's assistance to eradicate this menace”, the President said in a statement, following his meeting with visiting Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi. President Rajapaksa also requested the government of Pakistan to help Sri Lanka in the fight against Islamist extremism, the statement said.

“We already have very close, friendly and warm relations with Sri Lanka. Pakistan hopes to further develop

them widening the scope of cooperation,” Mr. Qureshi said, adding that his government was willing to work with Sri Lanka to “conserve and develop” Buddhist heritage in Pakistan. “We are eagerly waiting for your visit to Pakistan at your earliest,” Mr. Qureshi added, Mr. Gotabaya's office said.

The visit comes days after Mr. Gotabaya's meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi.

The Pakistan Foreign Minister also met Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa to convey a special message from his Prime Minister Imran Khan, a statement said.

In a letter hand-delivered to Mr. Mahinda, Mr. Khan extended an invitation to him to visit Pakistan. Mr. Mahinda has accepted the invitation, his office said. “We're

happy Sri Lanka is back in experienced hands,” Mr. Qureshi said.

The discussion focused on topics, including trade, fighting terrorism, youth affairs, unemployment, agriculture and cricket.

Several foreign dignitaries and envoys have been reaching out to the Rajapaksa brothers, Sri Lanka's newly-elected President and newly-appointed PM, over the last two weeks.

On Monday, Mr. Gotabaya tweeted: “I was pleased to meet with the Special Representative of the State Council of the People's Republic of China and Director-General of the Department of Asian Affairs of the Chinese Foreign Ministry, Mr. Wu Jianghao and had cordial discussions on #China - #LKA relations.”

## ‘Trump won’t take part in impeachment probe’

White House cites lack of ‘fairness’

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
WASHINGTON

The White House said on Sunday that U.S. President Donald Trump and his lawyers would not participate in a congressional impeachment hearing this week, citing a lack of “fundamental fairness.”

Mr. Trump's aides responded defiantly to the first of two crucial deadlines he faces in Congress this week as Democrats prepare to shift the focus of their impeachment inquiry from fact-finding to the consideration of possible charges of misconduct over his dealings with Ukraine.

“We cannot fairly be expected to participate in a hearing while the witnesses are yet to be named and while it remains unclear



Donald Trump

whether the committee will afford the President a fair process through additional hearings,” White House counsel Pat Cipollone wrote to Judiciary panel's Chairman Jerrold Nadler, according to a copy of a letter seen by Reuters.

Mr. Nadler has given the White House a Friday deadline to say whether Mr. Trump will mount a defence in broader impeachment proceedings.

## U.S. to impose tariffs on Brazil and Argentina

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump on Monday accused Argentina and Brazil of hurting American farmers through currency manipulation and said he'll slap tariffs on their steel and aluminum imports to retaliate.

Mr. Trump also called on America's central bank to take action to prevent other countries from devaluing their currencies.

Both South American nations were among a group of U.S. allies that Mr. Trump had exempted from steel and aluminum tariffs in March 2018. The President's threat to reverse that decision and impose the metals tariffs on Argentina and Brazil is another example of his mercurial approach to trade policy.

## Eight children among 13 from Pakistan killed in Jordan fire

‘Electric fault in their corrugated metal home likely cause’

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
AMMAN

Thirteen Pakistanis, including eight children, died on early Monday when a blaze tore through their corrugated metal home in a rural area of western Jordan, authorities said.

Rescue services said “13 people died and three others were injured when fire broke out in a corrugated metal house” on a farm in South Shuna, around 50 km west of Amman.



The remains of the home razed in fire in South Shuna, Jordan. •AFF

The makeshift building was home to two Pakistani families working as agricultural labourers, they said.

Fire service spokesman Iyad al-Omari told state television channel Al-Mamlaka that eight children, four women and a man had died in the blaze at around 2:00 a.m., which was likely caused by an electrical fault.

Jordan is home to thousands of Pakistanis, many of them agricultural labourers.

House fires in Jordan are often caused by the use of cheap but dangerous forms of heating while the occupants are asleep.

## Siberia pipeline cements China-Russia bond

Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping oversee inauguration of the ‘Power of Siberia’

ATUL ANEJA  
BEIJING

Chinese President Xi Jinping and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin on Monday remotely inaugurated the “Power of Siberia” gas pipeline – a massive cross-border undertaking not only central to China's energy security but also for bolstering special ties between Beijing and Moscow. The 30-year project is anchored by a \$400 billion gas deal.

From the Atamanskaya compressor station on the

border with China, Alexi Miller, the head of the Russian gas giant Gazprom, which has played a leading role in conceiving and implementing the project, invited Mr. Putin and President Xi to the inaugural via a video link.

“Dear Vladimir Vladimirovich, allow me to give a command to open the pipeline valve,” Mr. Miller said, addressing President Putin, the Russian news agency Tass reported.

On receiving Mr. Putin's

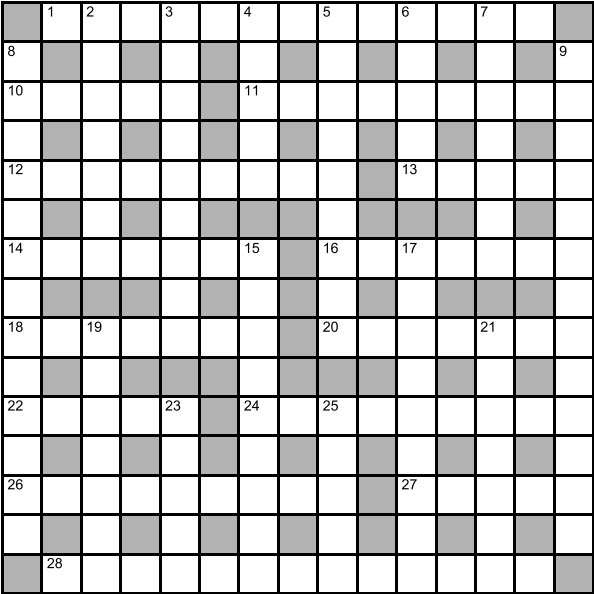


A worker at a gas processing plant under construction in Amur, Russia. •REUTERS

permission, Mr. Miller said: “Dear Vladimir Vladimirovich, Dear Xi Jinping, the valve has been open. Gas is flowing to the gas transmission system of the People's Republic of China.”

### THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12796

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#### ■ ACROSS

- Prime Minister stops us work overtime – New Delhi shows how it's done (5,8)
- Carried over, investment made totally (5)
- Billy's plant, note plastic cover (9)
- Magazine, carry to the top (9)

(set by Arden)

- Dramatic capture of a violin maker (5)
  - Chose to shift depot (5)
  - The last number had a billion short – count (9)
  - Capital account, one's under credit (5)
  - Outstanding on court, time to settle (3,4)
  - Old fashioned Kentish dictum, perhaps (5,2,3,3)
  - Paternalistic, free, they carry an opposite charge (13)
  - Discharge under a river – master point, in a way (9)
  - Signal booster will adequately shoot, they say (9)
  - Annual investment by a normal man, actually (7)
  - Burden of work on media (7)
  - Insect gains height in fall (5)
  - Bar allowing others inside (5)
- #### ■ DOWN
- Only ration distributed in the province (7)
  - Erode stole central funds earlier (9)

### SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

**Solution to puzzle 12795**

P	L	E	A	S	E	A	D	O	P	T	I	O	N
I	C	C	E	T	A	R	N	E					
A	L	L	T	H	E	W	A	Y	A	R	H	A	
M	O	I	T	O	W	E	A	T					
A	N	G	E	L					F	U	N	E	
T	U	L							I	E			
E	L	E	M	I					I	N	T	I	
R	K	I	N	G					O	A			
S	C	O	H	E					R	E	B	E	
T	O	N	S	U	R	E			M	E	A	S	
I	O	R							E	L	T	R	
N	A	B	O						A	N	N	E	
G	L	A							L	T	D	S	
O	L	E	A	N	D	E	R		P	E	A	H	

**Solution to yesterday's Sudoku**

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

### FAITH

## Greatness of Thiruppavai

A verse in Thiruvaimozhi speaks of Nammazhvar's greatness. It is a pasuram about the deity of Tholaiyillamangalam in Tirunelveli district. Nammazhvar sings this pasuram as Parankusa Nayaki, a girl pining for the Lord's love. The friend of Parankusa Nayaki says that Parankusa Nayaki's words are praised the world over. And this is indeed true of Nammazhvar's words. This is how Nampillai interprets a portion of the verse. Other commentators who agree with this interpretation are Peria Vachan Pillai, Vadakku Thiruveedhi Pillai and Pillan. Prativadhi Bhayankaram Annangarachar swami gives a different interpretation. For Nammazhvar's words as Parankusa Nayaki, one commentary is insufficient. Many are needed.

As in the case of Nammazhvar's Thiruvaimozhi, Andal's verses also have several commentaries. That is why Thiruppavai is referred to as the seed of the Vedas, said M.A. Venkatakrishnan in a discourse.

Thiruvaimozhi is the essence of the Vedas, but Thiruppavai is the seed. This is not to suggest that the Vedas came from the Thiruppavai. The Vedas cannot be assigned a date. They have no fixed beginning. That being the case, how can the Thiruppavai be the seed of the Vedas? And yet, there is nothing illogical about the claim.

A tree bears fruits, which contain seeds. But we plant a seed and from it grows a tree. And all the parts of a tree are contained in that tiny seed. If we plant the seed of a mango, we get a mango tree. If we plant a jackfruit seed, we get a jackfruit tree. Thus the qualities of a mango tree are inherent in the mango seed. In the same way all the truths given in the Vedas are contained in the Thiruppavai, which is, therefore, the seed of the Vedas.



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