Kamala Harris ends

her presidential bid

Slumping poll numbers trigger the move



Sudan tile factory fire

At least 23 people have died in a huge explosion that tore through a tile factory in Sudan's capital on Tuesday. The blaze also injured over 130 people, several critically, the government said, suggesting the death toll could rise as burn victims were being treated at local hospitals. AP

## Smoke grenade blast injures 2 in Indonesia

Indonesian police said a smoke grenade exploded on Tuesday near the presidential palace in Jakarta, wounding two soldiers. Police said the soldiers were exercising in Jakarta's National Monument Park when they spotted the

grenade on the ground. He

said it exploded when they

tried to pick it up. REUTERS

On the eve of President Donald Trump's meeting with his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron in London on the sidelines of the NATO alliance talks, the U.S. announced that it could levy duties up to 100% on \$2.4 bil lion in French imports into the country. The announcement comes after the office of the U.S. Trade Representative's (USTR) probe into France's Digital Services Tax (DST) concluded that a French tax measure is discriminatory towards specific U.S. technology companies.

The proposed tariffs could include French champagne, porcelain and some cheese varieties.

'301' probe

The '301' trade probe against France was launched in July after Mr. Macron signed the DST into law, aimed at taxing



U.S. threatens 100% tariffs on French goods

**Trade friction:** U.S. President Donald Trump with his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron, left, in London on Tuesday. • AFP

digital companies that did substantial business France. The DST is a 3% tax on the turnover of digital companies with global turnover of at least €750 million, of which €25 million is generated in France. U.S. tech giants, including Google, Amazon and Facebook, had called for the tax to be scrapped.

The probe found that the

tool authorised by Section 301 of the U.S. Trade Act of 1974, which the U.S. uses to assert its rights under trade agreements if it decides American industries are facing "unfair" foreign trade practices.

"USTR's decision today sends a clear signal that the United States will take action against digital tax regimes that discriminate or otherwise impose undue burdens on U.S. companies," U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer said via a statement released on Monday.

The USTR was focusing on countering the "growing protectionism of EU member states" and may also open 301 investigations into the digital services tax against Turkey, Austria and Italy, Mr. Lighthizer said.

announcement comes two days after the U.S. said it would consider increasing tariffs on EU im-

ceremonial address at the re-

opening on January 3, dur-

ing which he will outline his

new government's policies,

President Rajapaksa was

sworn in as Sri Lanka's se-

venth President on Novem-

ber 18 after he defeated the

ruling party candidate Sajith

Premadasa by more than 13

they added.

ports after a WTO panel ruled in U.S. favour in a case involving European subsidies to aircraft manufacturer Airbus. The U.S. had already levied taxes on certain EU farm products and civil aircraft in October, on the back of a related WTO ruling.

'Strong response'

French Finance Minister Bruno La Maire said that the EU would provide a "strong response" if the U.S. goes ahead with these tariffs.

While this particular round of tariffs does not impact India directly, the USTR's use of 301 probes is of relevance to the country. Deputy USTR Jeffry Gerrish had said in July that a '301 probe' was among the options the U.S. was considering at the time with regard to India. Currently, New Delhi and Washington are in the middle of a negotiation on a limited trade deal

## Swiss embassy staffer told not to leave Lanka

ASSOCIATED PRESS

A Sri Lankan court on Tuesday blocked a Swiss embassy staffer from leaving the country until December 9. It also asked her to give a statement to police about allegations that she was abducted and threatened to disclose embassy-related information.

The Sri Lankan government said evidence collected by its investigators did not support the sequence of events given by the Swiss embassy in Colombo.

Switzerland on Tuesday summoned Sri Lanka's Ambassador Karunasena Hettiarachchi to Bern to ex-



Bowing out: A file photo of Senator Kamala Harris during a

Democratic presidential primary debate in Atlanta. • AP

ASTEAD W. HERNDON

SHANE GOLDMACHER

Senator Kamala Harris of

California dropped out of

the Democratic presidential

race on Tuesday after

months of slumping poll

numbers, a dramatic come-

down after her campaign

The decision to drop out

of the race comes after

upheaval among staff and

disarray among her own al-

She told supporters in an

email on Tuesday that she

lacked the money needed to

fully finance a competitive

dent simply doesn't have

the financial resources we

need to continue," Ms. Har-

The announcement is both

dramatic and unexpected,

perhaps the most sudden

development to date in a

Democratic presidential

campaign where Ms. Harris

on Martin Luther King Jr.

Day with comparisons to

historic black politicians

such as Barack Obama and

She began her campaign

**Unexpected move** 

began in the top tier.

"My campaign for Presi-

promise.

campaign.

ris wrote.

with significant

My campaign for President simply doesn't have the financial resources we need to continue

KAMALA HARRIS California Senator

speech that day in Oakland, California, had more than 20,000 people in attendance, giving credence to the idea that she could become the first woman of colour to be elected President

Ms. Harris had struggled financially in recent months as her online fundraising slowed and large donors increasingly turned away from her campaign. In the third quarter of the year, she spent more than \$1.41 for every dollar she raised, burning through millions of her treasury.

She stopped buying advertisements, both online and on television, slashed staff in New Hampshire and retrenched to Iowa, where she spent the Thanksgiving holiday with her family. But it was not enough, as

the determination was made that she did not have enough financial resources to compete, even as a supportive super PAC began reserving ads on Tuesday, the day she told people she was dropping out. NY TIMES

# Putin signs Bill targeting journalists and bloggers

Govt. to register them as foreign agents

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Russian President Vladimir Putin has signed a Bill into law that gives the government the right to register bloggers, journalists and social media users as foreign agents. The Bill extends an exist-

ing law involving foreignfunded media outlets. That was adopted in 2017 in response to the decision by the U.S. Justice Department to label the Russian state-funded RT television a foreign

The law can apply to anyone who distributes content produced by media out-

North Korea has celebrated

the completion of leader

Kim Jong-un's signature con-

struction project, a new city

near the sacred mountain

where his family claims its

roots, with state media on

Tuesday calling it the "epi-

A massive celebration in-

volving fireworks was held at

the city near Mount Paektu

on Monday, the official KCNA

ruling party mouthpiece,

ceremony attended by thou-

The Rodong Sinmun, a

REUTERS

tome

civilisation".

news agency said.



agents and receives payments from abroad. Individuals registered as foreign agents will be subject to additional government scruti-

The move has been criticised by many Russians for further restricting freedom

Kim unveils a 'modern mountainous city'

North Korea is projecting Samjiyon as a 'socialist utopia' with the latest amenities

**Dream come true:** Kim Jong-un cutting the ribbon during a

ceremony at Samjiyon, North Korea. • REUTERS/KCNA

sands of people, while state

television showed beige,

green and purple buildings

is envisaged as what North

# Sri Lanka's President suspends Parliament ahead of snap polls

"French DST discriminates

against the U.S. digital com-

panies", as per a USTR state-

ment, which said the tax was

inconsistent with prevailing

tax principles due to its re-

troactivities, application to

revenue rather than income

and extraterritorial applica-

tion. The statement said the

tax was aimed at penalising

The '301' probe is a trade

specific U.S. tech firms.

Move gives govt. freedom to rule sans obstruction from MPs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has prorogued the Parliament for one month and fixed January 3, 2020 for the commencement of the next session, a move that will give his minority government freedom to rule without obstruction from the Opposition.

The Parliament should have met on Tuesday, according to the schedule.

Mr. Rajapaksa issued a special gazette notification overnight proroguing the legislature, which said the Parliament would be recon-



Gotabaya Rajapaksa

vened on January 3. The President is constitutionally empowered to do

so," officials said.

an example of a mountai-

nous modern city under so-

cialism, an epitome of mod

ern civilisation," KCNA said.

KCNA said it could accom-

modate 4,000 families and

has 380 blocks of public and

industrial buildings in "hun-

gest economic initiatives Mr.

Kim has launched as part of

his drive for a "self-reliant

economy, as Pyongyang calls

for Washington to lift eco-

nomic sanctions in their de-

nuclearisation talks. But its

construction was delayed

chiefly due to shortages in

construction materials and

labour as a result of U.S.

The city is one of the lar-

dreds of hectares".

His party – Sri Lanka People's Front – lacks the working majority in the 225-mem-

ber Assembly and ending the session will give him freedom to govern without obstruction from

# Iraq parties, allies debate new PM as violence hits shrine city

Talks include Iran's Revolutionary Guards, Hezbollah members

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Iraqi politicians and their regional allies gathered in Baghdad on Tuesday to discuss a way out of two months of protests that brought down the government, as violence hit southern cities.

Demonstrators demanding root-and-branch reform have flooded the capital and the Shiite-majority south since October in one of the largest grassroots movement in the country. In the shrine city of Najaf, 35 protesters were wounded when armed

guards fired shotguns and tear gas on crowds on Tuesday.

Seen as a threat to the ruling elite, the rallies were met with a heavy-handed response from security forces that has left over 420 people dead and nearly 20,000 wounded.

Prime Minister Adel Abdel Mahdi formally resigned last Saturday.

Among those attending the negotiations are two key allies of Iraq's main Shiite parties: Iran's Revolutionary Guards commander Major General Qasem Soleimani and Lebanese power-broker Mohammad Kawtharany, a high-ranking political source said. "Soleimani is in Baghdad to push for a particular

candidate to succeed Abdel

Mahdi," the source said,

without providing details. Mr. Kawtharany, who is Lebanese militant group Hezbollah's pointman on Iraq, "is also playing a large role in persuading Shiite and Sunni political forces on

this", the source added. The U.S. said Soleimani's presence showed that its arch-foe Iran was again "interfering" in Iraq.

# Student, officer injured in U.S. school shooting

ASSOCIATED PRESS

A student with a gun con fronted a school resource officer at a Wisconsin high school on Tuesday morning and both were wounded, police said, in the second such shooting at a school in the State in as many days.

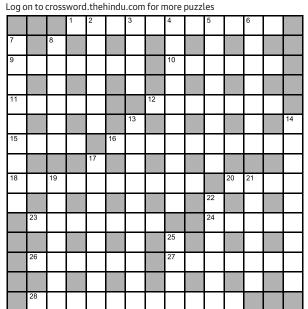
The latest shooting happened at Oshkosh West High School just after 9 a.m. The student and the officer were taken to hospital, but no one else was injured in the shoot-

On Monday, a police officer responding to a situation at Waukesha South High School shot an armed male student in a classroom.

## ran photos of Mr. Kim smilcovered in snow. ing as he cut a ribbon at the The city named Samjiyon

modern

**THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12797** 



To play an interactive version of this crossword online, scan the QR code ACROSS 1 Manage to get a part of the fist in front of the inept individual

9 Jedi, fierce, hiding an inspiring instructor (7) 10 Recall upset More logging into

a Malavsian website (6) 11 Disagree after the force removes Charlie in the blink of

an eye (5)

12 Solid agreement (7) 15 Leaders of the firm are shrewd,

Korea calls a "socialist uto-

pia" with new apartments,

hotels, a ski resort and com-

mercial, cultural and medi-

The town "has turned into

cal facilities

tactful, and swift (4)

16 Offend the Pole in the midst of the drunken strangers (10) 18 Renter behind the perjury by

20 Overheard the Scottish inventor's incredulous shout

the superior military officer

23 Individual in good standing?

24 Imperial decree making a queen leave with a surprised squeak (5)

26 Confident that the dried-up copper has been locked up (6)

27 Finger-operated stopper returned after Gita comes in

28 Tensely sail out to get deep down (11)

DOWN

2 Dissenting chorus on the radio with some animal sounds (6) 3 Witty joker discarded hard beet

4 Spoofing a parliamentarian

acting after eating egg and fish outside (10)

## (set by Neyartha)

5 A browser's launch target?

6 Softly removed peculiar contraption on the outer ear

7 Oddly knew of the noisy fight after the female's entry resulting in a disruption (9)

8 Celebrity shortened a round thin wooden strip for some hospital signs (6)

13 Circus hen played with the model to get the potato chips that one might prefer the most (10)

identity undergoing turmoil at the end) on an unknown insect (6,3)

14 Revolutionary trial (with

17 A dry diet developed after considering universal opinion

19 Brisk state (7)

for a cow (6)

21 A shift from the right to the left is needed in the open fireplace for well-being (6) 22 Club's support from the south

25 Part of the wide-angle lens coverage shows the light bulb in a presentation (4)

is behind the second helping

## **SUDOKU**



Sc	Solution to puzzle 12796 So														olution to yesterday's Sudoku									
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П		Α		Е		Е		М		R		О		Т	ı	^	4	_	4	0	^	0	^	Ė
С	Α	R	Т	R	Т	Д	G	Е		Α	М	Α	Т	Т	l	6	4	/		3	9	Ø	2	5
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## **FAITH**

## Love for devotees

Sugreeva wondered how Rama would tackle Vali. So, he told Rama about the killing of Dundubhi. Dundubhi was huge, but Vali picked up Dundubhi with ease, dashed him to the ground, and killed him. Dundubhi was reputed to have the strength of a thousand elephants and yet Vali had flung him across a distance of one yojana. Rama showed Sugreeva how much stronger He was by just using His toe to toss the skeleton of Dundubhi one thousand yojanas. But Sugreeva was unconvinced. He said that Rama had kicked away the skeleton, which would not be as heavy as the body of Dundubhi. So Sugreeva wanted further proof of Rama's ability, said Akkarakkani Srinidhi in a discourse. Rama then shot an arrow, which pierced seven trees and returned to Rama's quiver. And only then was Sugreeva confident that Rama could help him in the fight against Vali.

Vali and Sugreeva engaged in combat, with Rama promising to strike an arrow at Vali. But while the two monkeys engaged in a fight, Rama did not intervene, and Sugreeva was beaten up and chased by Vali. Sugreeva took refuge in mount Rishyamukha, for Vali would not enter this area, because of a curse. But why did Rama not kill Vali? Although He said it was because He could not distinguish between the two brothers and was afraid He might hit Sugreeva, the real reason was different.

When Rama and Lakshmana had first met Sugreeva, the latter had offered a seat to Rama, but not to Lakshmana. Rama could not excuse this, for Lakshmana was devoted to Rama. So, although Sugreeva had honoured Rama, the lack of respect to Lakshmana could not be tolerated by Rama. That is why He allowed Sugreeva to take blows from Vali initially. That is the kind of concern He has for His devotees.