

ELSEWHERE



Slovenia's PM resigns, calls for snap poll

LJUBLJANA
Slovenian Prime Minister Marjan Sarec resigned on Monday and called for an early election, saying his minority government could not push through important legislation. The governing coalition of five centre-left parties, which took power in September 2018, held only 43 out of 90 seats in Parliament. REUTERS

Iran's Rouhani warns of threat to democracy

TEHRAN
Iran's President has warned of threats to the country's "democracy and national sovereignty", after a body of ultra-conservative rivals disqualified the candidates, weeks before polls. Mr. Rouhani's and his allies are locked in a fight with the Guardian Council over the move. AFP

Syria forces set to enter key rebel hub

MAARET AL-NUMAN
Syrian regime forces were poised on Monday to enter Maaret al-Numan, a town of strategic importance in the country's last major opposition bastion that is deserted after months of bombardment. Maaret al-Numan is a strategic prize lying on the highway linking Damascus to Aleppo. AFP

Donald Trump to unveil West Asia peace plan

WASHINGTON
U.S. President Donald Trump said on Monday he will unveil his West Asia peace proposal on Tuesday and that the Palestinians will eventually get along with it despite their refusal to engage on the subject. Mr. Trump will outline his plan in a meeting with Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu at the White House on Tuesday. REUTERS

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang visits virus-hit Wuhan as toll rises to 81

Prime Minister promises medical reinforcements and adequate market supply

REUTERS
SHANGHAI
Chinese Premier Li Keqiang will "inspect and direct" efforts to control a virus outbreak in the central city of Wuhan and promised reinforcements, as provincial authorities faced accusations from the public of a failure to respond in time. Mr. Li, clad in a blue protective suit and mask, thanked medical workers in Wuhan, the capital of Hubei province and the epicentre of the outbreak, as the death toll rose on Monday to 81.

"Li ... thanked frontline medical workers for their all-out efforts in treating patients and urged them to pay attention to their own protection," Xinhua news agency said. "He required efforts to guarantee medical resources supply, race against time to treat patients and ensure adequate market supply and stable prices." He said 2,500 more medical workers would arrive in the next two days. Mr. Li is the most senior leader to visit Wuhan since the outbreak began. He inspected efforts to contain the epidemic and was shown on state television leading medical workers in chants of "Wuhan jiaoyou!" – an exhortation to keep their strength up. He also visited the construction site of a new hospital due to be built in days. On China's heavily censored social media, where dissent is typically suppressed, local officials have borne the brunt of mounting public anger about the handling of the virus. Some lashed out at the Hubei Governor, who had to correct himself twice during a news conference over the



Pledge of support: Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, centre, speaking with medical workers at the Wuhan Jinyintan Hospital in central China's Hubei province on Monday. ■AP/XINHUA

Malaysia bans visitors; Berlin mulls rescue

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BEIJING
Malaysia's government has announced it will ban travellers from the central Chinese city of Wuhan and other parts of surrounding Hubei province beginning immediately.

number of face masks being produced in the province. "If he can mess up the data multiple times, no wonder the disease has spread so severely," one Weibo user said.

Virtual lockdown
Wuhan Mayor Zhou Xianwang told state broadcaster CCTV the city's management of the crisis was "not good enough" – rare public self-criticism for a Chinese official – and said he was willing to resign. The city of 11 million people is in virtual lockdown and much of Hubei, home to

A statement issued on Monday by the Prime Minister's Department said Malaysia would stop issuing visas for Chinese travellers from those areas. Normal visa procedures will resume once the "situation returns to normal", it said.

Meanwhile, Germany's Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said his country was considering evacuating its citizens from Wuhan. A consular team was expected to arrive in Wuhan later on Monday to provide Germans with assistance.

nearly 60 million people, is under travel curb. People are also complaining about being discriminated. "Hubei people are getting discriminated against," a Wuhan resident said on the Weibo.

A county in northern China is offering 1,000 yuan (\$145) to tipsters who report the presence of anyone from Wuhan who has not registered with authorities.

A small number of cases linked to people who travelled from Wuhan have been confirmed in more than 10 countries, including Thailand, France, Japan and

the U.S., but no deaths have been reported outside China. Cambodia confirmed its first case on Monday.

Investors are worried about the impact on travel, tourism and broader economic activity. The consensus is that in the short term, economic output will be hit as authorities impose travel restrictions and extend the Lunar New Year holiday.

The number of confirmed cases in China rose to 2,835. Hong Kong, with eight confirmed cases, has banned entry to people who had visited Hubei in the past 14 days.

Pak. Pashtun leader critical of Army held

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PESHAWAR
A prominent Pakistani Pashtun minority leader, known for criticising the country's powerful military, was arrested on Monday on alleged sedition charges, leading to calls for his immediate and unconditional release.

Manzoor Pashteen, 27, chief of the rights-based alliance Pashtun Tahaffuz Movement (PTM), attended a gathering on January 18 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Dera Ismail Khan city, where he had allegedly said that the 1973 Constitution violated basic human rights, Dawn newspaper reported. He was arrested along with nine others.

'Prince Andrew provided zero cooperation on Epstein probe'

U.S. prosecutors and the FBI had asked him for an interview

ASSOCIATED PRESS
NEW YORK
Britain's Prince Andrew has provided "zero cooperation" to the American investigators who want to interview him about his dealings with the late millionaire sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, a U.S. prosecutor said Monday. U.S. Attorney Geoffrey Berman said prosecutors and the FBI had contacted Prince Andrew's lawyers and asked to interview him. "To date, Prince Andrew has provided zero cooperation," said Mr. Berman. Prince Andrew announced last year that he



was withdrawing from his royal duties amid renewed public attention to a woman's claim that she had several sexual encounters with the Prince at Epstein's bestest, starting at the age of 17. The woman said that after meeting Epstein in Florida

in 2000, the millionaire flew her around the world and pressured her into having sex with numerous older men, including Prince Andrew, two senior U.S. politicians, a noted academic, wealthy financiers and the attorney Alan Dershowitz, who is now part of President Donald Trump's impeachment defence team. All of those men have denied the allegations.

Ms. Giuffre has said she had sex with Andrew three times at Epstein's request, including once in London in 2001 at the home of Epstein's girlfriend, Ghislaine Maxwell.

Billie Eilish sweeps Grammys with 5 awards

She won the top four prizes: album, record, song of the year and best new artist

BEN SISARIO
LOS ANGELES
The 62nd annual Grammy Awards anointed a new star in Billie Eilish, even as the mood on Sunday night was darkened by the death earlier that day of basketball great Kobe Bryant, who spent much of his NBA career playing at the Staples Centre, the arena where the show was held.

Ms. Eilish, an 18-year-old auteur with a moody and idiosyncratic aesthetic, won five awards, including the four most prestigious and competitive prizes – album, record and song of the year, and best new artist. She was the first artist to sweep the top awards since Christopher Cross in 1981, besting competition from Lizzo, Lil Nas



Ultimate win: Billie Eilish with the awards in Los Angeles. ■AP

X, Ariana Grande. *Bad Guy*, a No. 1 hit, took record and song of the year – the latter prize recognises songwriting – while *When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?* won album of the year and best pop vocal album.

Finneas O'Connell, her brother, accepting with her for song of the year, noted that they record together in a bedroom in their family home. "This is to all the kids that are making music in their bedroom today," he said, holding the trophy.

"You're going to get one of these." Mr. Finneas, as he is known, also won producer of the year and an engineering award.

Lil Nas X, a gleeful master of internet memes, won two for his "country-trap" hybrid *Old Town Road*: best pop duo/group performance and best music video.

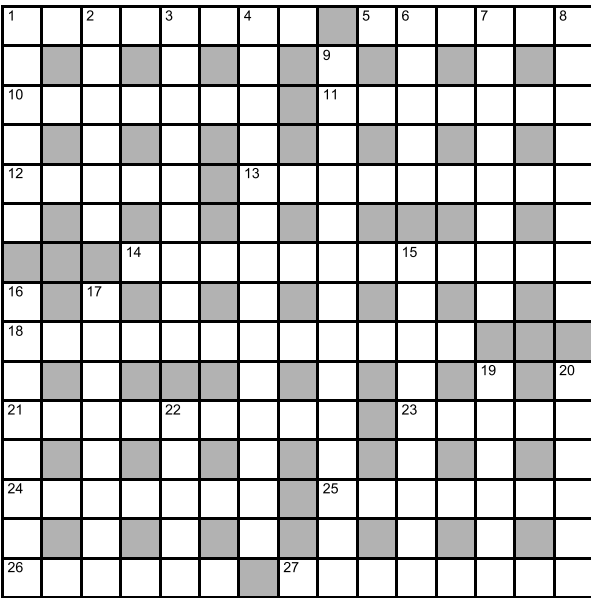
Lizzo won two prizes: urban contemporary album for the deluxe version of *Cuz I Love You* and traditional R&B performance in the song *Jerome*.

Beyoncé's concert special *Homecoming* won best music film.

Michelle Obama won best spoken word album for the audio version of her book *Becoming*. NY TIMES

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12843

Log on to crossword.thehindu.com for more puzzles



ACROSS

- 1 Sizzling tale by model involved in fling – it's clandestine (8)
- 5 Taking wicket, speaks sharply back and provokes (6)
- 10 Insolent girl spent earnings causing concern (7)
- 11 Orders to arrest old associate in historical Asian island (7)

- (set by Dr. X)
- 12 Make a hash of examination at Centre for bachelor's degree (5)
 - 13 Fantastic coder cracking perfect system (9)
 - 14 Ordering to speak softly, facing commotion in class (12)
 - 18 Where a film star might be fully informed (2,3,7)
 - 21 Good crowd in concert beginning to enjoy performance (9)
 - 23 Blunder resulting from losing head in panic (5)
 - 24 Trampled bag returned contains a little rare rum (7)
 - 25 Essentially immoral den near work offering many services (3-4)
 - 26 Leader of battalion fired craftier army camp supplier (6)
 - 27 Veil worn by informer following humiliating blunder (8)
- DOWN
- 1 Spineless charge to stifle press (6)
 - 2 List of corrections given by scoundrel in time (6)

- 3 Vile man leaving ditch caught by Holmes in disguise (9)
- 4 No for President Trump again! Help to change unstable political scenario (4,10)
- 6 Money to wipe out hint of scandal for good (5)
- 7 Devilish hound trapped by intellect in mystery novel (8)
- 8 Wise man checking rate of progress is very modern (5-3)
- 9 What a persistent salesperson aims to get? An opportunity to progress (1,4,2,3,4)
- 15 Union workers interrupting a meet (9)
- 16 Warring sides about to settle feuds (8)
- 17 Stalwart taking nice girl out attracted attention (5,3)
- 19 Plant with edible seed about to decay (6)
- 20 Line secured by mate leaving a launch (6)
- 22 Manage to get hold of girl band (5)

SUDOKU



Solution to puzzle 12842

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

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku


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

FAITH

Sacred Thirumurugattrupadai

Thirumurugattrupadai is one of the works in the Sangam era anthology titled Pathupaattu. It is a devotional poem, where all six divine abodes of Lord Muruga find place. It has a further distinction. It is included in the Tamil Saivite canonical texts known as Thirumurai. It is, in fact, the eleventh Thirumurai in this collection. While the six abodes of Lord Muruga have been in continuous worship till date, the names by which we refer to some of these places are different from the names which Nakkeerar uses for them in his verses. So, it is clear that they were known by those names in the past. Tiruchendur, for example, is referred to as Thirucheeralaiavai in Thirumurugattrupadai. Palani is referred to as Thiru Avinankudi. Every letter in Thirumurugattrupadai has the power of a mantra, which explains its popularity, elaborated S. Gangadharan, in a discourse. Even those not familiar with the other Sangam works, learn to recite this hymn in praise of Lord Muruga.

The lines in praise of the deity of Palani begin with a description of the people who go to meet Lord Muruga, to pay obeisance to Him. Leading the procession are sages. The appearance of these sages is described vividly by the poet. Their garments are fashioned out of the bark of trees. Their hair is as white as a conch. A deer skin is draped across their chests. Their appearance is skeletal, with their rib cage protruding. The next line gives us an idea as to why they look so thin. They eat very little, foregoing food for several days, says the poet. There is no malice in them, and they do not wish anyone ill. Their minds are free of anger. Because of their jnana, they are natural leaders. They are not prey to temptations of the flesh, and therefore, they are free from suffering.



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

