

ELSEWHERE



Sudan agrees to hand over Bashir to ICC

Iran celebrates 1979 Islamic Revolution

Iran celebrated the anniversary of its 1979 Islamic Revolution on Tuesday amid growing tensions between Tehran and the U.S.

Iraqi commander killed in U.S. strike remembered

Iraqi officials on Tuesday commemorated Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, the senior commander killed in last month's U.S. drone strike that targeted powerful Iranian general Qasem Soleimani.

15 Rohingya refugees die after boat capsizes

At least 15 Rohingya refugees died and many more were missing after a vessel packed with people trying to reach Malaysia capsized in the Bay of Bengal, a Bangladesh coast guard official said on Tuesday.

Coronavirus poses 'very grave' threat to the world, says WHO

'Number of cases in China falling, epidemic may be over by April'; over 1,000 dead

REUTERS GUANGZHOU/GENEVA The coronavirus outbreak in China may be over by April, the country's senior medical adviser said on Tuesday, but deaths surpassed 1,000 and the World Health Organization (WHO) warned of a global threat potentially worse than terrorism.

The world must "wake up and consider this enemy virus as public enemy number one," WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told reporters.

As the epidemic squeezed the world's second-biggest economy, Chinese firms struggled to get back to work after the extended Lunar New Year holiday, hundreds of them saying they would need loans running into billions of dollars to stay afloat.

Company layoffs were beginning despite assurances by President Xi Jinping that widespread sackings would be avoided, as supply chains for global firms from car manufacturers to smartphone makers ruptured.

China's foremost medical adviser on the outbreak, Zhong Nanshan, told Reuters that the number of new cases was falling in some provinces and forecast the epidemic would peak this month.

"I hope this outbreak or this event may be over in something like April," added Mr. Zhong, 83, an epidemiologist who won fame for his role in combating an outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome in 2003.

World stocks resumed rising towards record highs on Mr. Zhong's comments.

The World Health Organization (WHO) said on Tuesday 1,017 people had died in



Fighting back: A researcher working on a vaccine for COVID-19, at the Imperial College School of Medicine, London.

China, where there were 42,708 cases. Only 319 cases have been confirmed in 24 other countries and territories outside mainland China, with two deaths: one in Hong Kong and the other in the Philippines.

Mr. Tedros was less sanguine, saying the coronavirus should be regarded as akin to a terrorist attack.

Renamed COVID-19 "With 99% of cases in China, this remains very much an emergency for that country, but one that holds a very grave threat for the rest of the world," he said.

The first vaccine was 18 months away, said the WHO boss, urging global unity to prevent "far more cases and far higher costs" from the disease - now officially named COVID-19 by the WHO.

Mr. Tedros said that "co" stands for "corona", "vi" for "virus" and "d" for "disease", while "19" was for the year, as the outbreak was first identified on December 31, 2019.

U.K. team tests vaccine on mice

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE LONDON

A team of U.K. scientists believe they are among the first to start animal testing of a vaccine for the new coronavirus.

Researchers at Imperial College London said their goal was to find a way to halt the spread of virus. "At the moment we have just put the vaccine that we've generated from these bacteria into mice".

Infected mother in China gives birth to healthy baby

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA BEIJING

A 33-year-old Chinese woman infected with coronavirus has given birth to a healthy baby girl with no infection in northwest China's Shaanxi Province, state media reported on Tuesday.

The Chinese woman was in the 37th week of pregnancy when she gave birth via caesarean to a baby weighing 2,730 g.

The infant, whose first nucleic acid test associated with the novel coronavirus was negative, is receiving intensive care.

Indian national infected with coronavirus in UAE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA DUBAI

An Indian national has been diagnosed with the novel coronavirus in the UAE, bringing the total number of confirmed infection cases to eight, the country's Health Ministry has said.

The UAE Ministry of Health and Prevention

(MoHAP) said on Monday that the Indian national was infected after he interacted with a recently diagnosed person.

On Sunday, the Ministry said that two new patients, a Chinese national and a Filipino, had been diagnosed with the disease and were being treated.

China denies role in cybertheft following Equifax accusations

U.S. 'indicted' four military hackers for personal data theft

ASSOCIATED PRESS BEIJING

China denied involvement in any hacking activities on Tuesday after the U.S. indicted four members of the Chinese military for allegedly breaking into the computer networks of the Equifax credit reporting agency and stealing the personal information of tens of millions of people.

The Justice Department accused Beijing on Monday of engineering one of the biggest hacks in history targeting consumer data of some 145 million Americans.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said China was committed to "firmly oppose and combat cyberattacks of any kind," adding that it is a staunch defender of cybersecurity and its institutions "never engage in cybertheft of trade secrets."

Mr. Geng also turned the accusation back on the U.S.,



Data breach: U.S. accused China of stealing consumer data of some 145 million Americans.

saying past events had shown Washington is "engaging in large-scale, organized and indiscriminate cyberstealing, spying and surveillance activities on foreign governments, enterprises and individuals."

"China is also a victim of this," Mr. Geng said.

The accusation is the latest against Chinese suspected of breaching the computer networks of American corporations, including steel manufacturers, a hotel chain

and a health insurer. It comes as the Trump administration has warned against what it sees as the growing political and economic influence of China, and efforts by Beijing to collect data for financial and intelligence purposes and to steal research and innovation.

Experts and officials say the theft represents Beijing's interest in accumulating as much information about Americans as possible.

Govt. seeks 7 to 9 years in jail for Trump ally Roger Stone

He faced charges in Mueller's probe into 2016 presidential poll

REUTERS WASHINGTON

Prosecutors on Monday sought U.S. President Donald Trump's longtime adviser Roger Stone to serve a sentence between seven and nine years in prison.

Stone is due to face sentencing by U.S. District Court Judge Amy Berman Jackson on February 20, after a jury in November found the self-proclaimed dirty trickster guilty on se-

ven counts of lying to Congress, obstruction and witness tampering.

The government said that under U.S. sentencing guidelines, he faces a range of seven years and three months to up to nine years, and told Jackson he "should be punished in accord" with those.

Mr. Stone is one of several people close to Mr. Trump who faced charges stemming from then-Special Counsel Robert Mueller's in-

vestigation into Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election.

During the trial, prosecutors pressed their case that Stone lied to lawmakers about his outreach to WikiLeaks - the website that disclosed many hacked Democratic emails ahead of the 2016 election that proved embarrassing to Democratic rival Hillary Clinton - to protect Mr. Trump from looking bad.

Arab village in Israel vandalised by suspected Jewish extremists

Car tyres were punctured, slogans scrawled on mosque

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE JISH

Dozens of cars in an Israeli Arab village were vandalised overnight, police said on Tuesday, with slogans sprayed on a mosque indicating the involvement of Jewish extremists.

The slogans "Jews awaken" and "Stop assimilating" were scrawled on a mosque and another building in Jish, a small village in the Galilee just south of Israel's border with Lebanon.

Police said they were investigating the incident.

The tyres of over 150 cars were punctured, Jish council head Elias Elias said, adding



Hate crime: A building on which slogans were sprayed overnight in the northern Israeli Arab village of Jish.

that it was not the first time the mixed Muslim and Christian village had been targeted.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu "firmly con-

demned" the jish vandalism and slogans, vowing to "find the outlaws and bring them to justice. "We won't tolerate any attacks on our citizens," he said in a statement.

Pak. court accepts Saeed's plea to club 6 terror financing cases

Verdict delayed even as trial concluded in two cases

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA LAHORE

An anti-terrorism court in Pakistan on Tuesday accepted a plea by Mumbai attack mastermind and Jamat-ud-Dawa chief (JuD) Hafiz Saeed to club all six terror financing cases against him and his aides, and announce the verdict on completion of the trial.

The anti-terrorism court or ATC had indicted Saeed and others on December 11 in terror financing case in day-to-day hearings.

"The anti-terrorism court of Lahore accepted the plea of Saeed and his close aides seeking delay in the verdict



Hafiz Saeed

in two concluded terror financing cases against them till the trial in other four such pending cases is complete, a court official said.

According to the petition, four other terror financing

cases against Saeed, Zafar Iqbal, Yahya Aziz, Abdul Rehman Makki are pending before the same ATC. "As evidence has been in progress, the court may announce the verdict in six cases, including the ones already concluded once the trial is completed," it said.

The deputy prosecutor general opposed Saeed's plea and argued that the trial in two cases against him and others has already been completed and under the law the court may announce the verdict. He requested the court to reject Saeed's plea and announce the verdict.

U.K. unveils laws to stop early release of terrorists

Bill comes after recent London attacks

REUTERS LONDON

Britain will end the automatic early release of convicted terrorists under new fast-tracked legislation to be introduced to Parliament on Tuesday.

The new Bill follows an attack earlier this month by an Islamist militant just days after he was set free halfway through his jail term, despite authorities believing he still posed a threat to the public.

The government had already promised tougher rules on terrorism after another former convict killed two people and wounded three before being shot dead by police near

London Bridge in November.

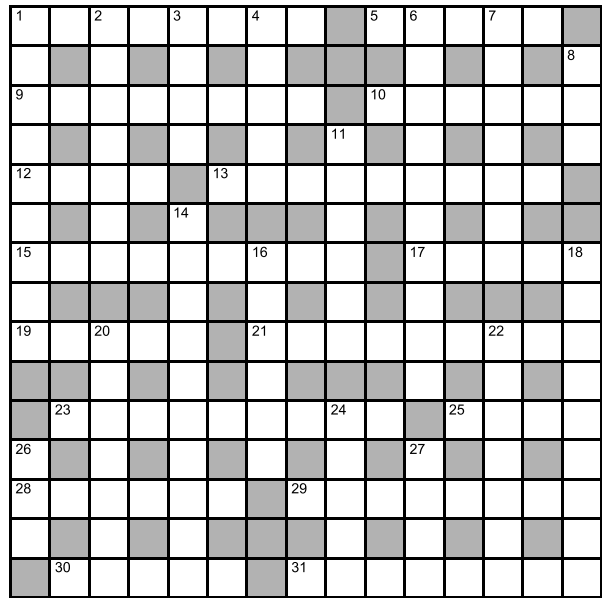
The emergency measures, which the government wants to become law by the end of the month, will mean convicted terrorists cannot be released before the end of their sentence without an assessment of whether they are still a risk. They will have to serve at least two-thirds of their sentence before being assessed.

The government said around 50 people currently in jail would see their release blocked as a result of the change to the law

The government plans to boost deradicalisation measures in prison.

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12856

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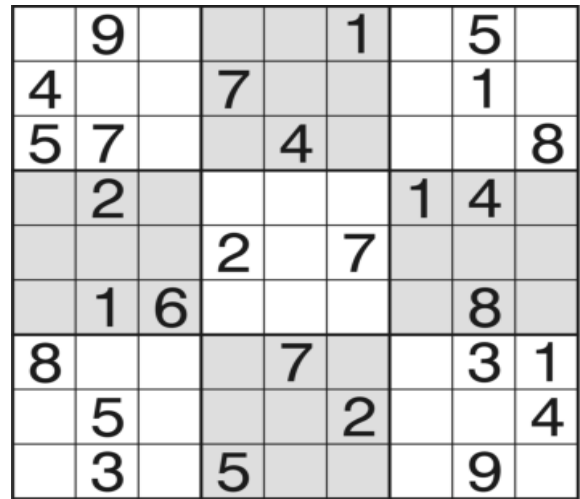


(set by Gridman)

- 13 Suffering Syd in France very hardy in extremity with disease (9)
15 Bagels Dad stuffed into carryall (9)
17 Wise person leaves one kind (5)
19 Saint's assistant is sober (5)
21 Cleaning woman takes one runaway flirt suspiciously in ski lift (9)
23 Practice that makes pupils see more clearly (9)
25 Note: Mensahib left sahib out (4)
28 Still green, aunt gripped no end repeatedly (6)
29 Friend bumped into all but top of plant (8)
30 Gangleader's real, withering angry look (5)
31 Stand still - by the way, an insect is in extremely agreeable surrounding (8)

- 3 American magazine's back issue (4)
4 Ultimately positive and so all-inclusive (5)
6 She has lessons to learn and tests to pass (10)
7 Listener, as a consequence, is worldly (7)
8 This is just not on! (3)
11 Greek character abducting model is seen as a disgrace (6)
14 Peasant in helicopter hovering around Israeli city (10)
16 Male animal gets meat regularly in container (6)
18 In an undertone, drunk to say one is not in (5,4)
20 Clothes appear crumpled on many (7)
22 I retain strange disinclination to act (7)
24 Lambaste a saint propagating rubbish all around (5)
26 Objection's up for awkward boat (3)
27 At first, suffering motorists observe grimy industrial haze (4)

SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

Solution to puzzle 12855 Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

Grids showing the solutions for the crossword and Sudoku puzzles.

FAITH

Greatness of Thiruppugazh

Kartikai pengal, the maidens who brought up Lord Muruga, wanted to acquire the ashtamasiddhis (eight extraordinary powers). Lord Siva told them that these were difficult to attain. Ordinary mortals cannot attain the ashtamasiddhis, said R. Narayanan, in a discourse. Saints who have these siddhis, usually do not display them. The eight siddhis are anima, mahima, garima, laghima, praapti, praakaamya, Isitva and vasitva. Anima is the ability to make oneself smaller than an atom. Mahima is the ability to make oneself larger at will. Garima is the ability to increase one's weight. Laghima, likewise, is the ability to decrease one's weight at once.

Praapti is the ability to go wherever one pleases, whenever one wishes to. Praakaamya is the ability to obtain anything at will. This includes the ability to exit one's body and inhabit another. Isitva is the power to create, protect and destroy. Vasitva is the ability to control everything. From a reading of these properties of the eight siddhis, it seems as if none by God Himself can have these siddhis. But there have been saints who have had this power. Thirumoolar, for example, was easily able to leave his body and enter another's.

Arunagirinatha says that if one reads Thiruppugazh, which he wrote in praise of Lord Muruga, then the ashtamasiddhis will come within one's reach. He says that if we read the Thiruppugazh, we need not fear death. We will not experience sorrow. We need not fear our enemies. Arunagirinatha prays that when Yama, the god of death comes with his rope, to separate the soul from the body, Lord Muruga should appear, with the comforting words "Do not be afraid." He says that he conquered the three malams and obtained jnana, and then through Muruga's grace, he sang the Thiruppugazh.



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