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'U.S. could ease curbs on Huawei if deal is reached'
U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said on Sunday that President Donald Trump might ease U.S. restrictions on Huawei if there was progress in the trade row with China — but absent a deal, Washington would maintain tariffs to cut its deficit. **REUTERS**

'Don't allow a Muslim Prabhakaran to be born'

COLOMBO
Warning against the emergence of a "Muslim Prabhakaran", Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena has called for unity among all communities in the country. Speaking in Mullaitivu, Mr. Sirisena urged the Sri Lankan public "not to leave room for a 'Muslim Prabhakaran' to be born," *Colombo Gazette* reported. **PTI**

New extradition Bill rocks Hong Kong

Protest against proposed law, which will allow expulsion of suspects to China, unites lakhs of marchers

**REUTERS
HONG KONG**

Hong Kong was plunged into a fresh political crisis on Sunday night after hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets to thwart a proposed extradition law that would allow suspects to be sent to mainland China to face trial.

After seven hours of marching, organisers estimated that 10,30,000 people took part, far outstripping a demonstration in 2003 when half that number hit the streets to successfully challenge government plans for tighter national security laws.

A police spokesman said police estimated 2,40,000 were on the march "at its peak".

'Withdraw and resign'

Sunday's outpouring was already raising the pressure on the administration of Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam and her official backers in Beijing. "She has to with-



Preserving autonomy: Protesters in Hong Kong marching along a downtown street against the proposed amendments to an extradition law. **AP**

draw the Bill and resign," veteran Democratic Party lawmaker James To told crowds gathering outside the city's Parliament and government headquarters in the Admiralty business district on Sunday night. "The whole of Hong Kong is against her."

Riot police armed with batons and helmets were gathering while government-funded broadcaster RTHK reported that they used pepper spray on six masked men trying to block the road.

Ms. Lam had yet to comment on the rally and the fu-

ture of the Bill, which is due to be debated in the Legislative Council on Wednesday and could be passed into law by the end of June. Ms. Lam has tweaked the amendments but refused to pull the Bill, saying it is vital to plug a long-standing "loophole".

The demonstration capped weeks of growing outrage in the business, diplomatic and legal communities, which fear corrosion of Hong Kong's legal autonomy and the difficulty of ensuring basic judicial protections in mainland China.

United in opposition

Opposition to the Bill has united a broad range of the community, from usually pro-establishment business people and lawyers to students, pro-democracy figures and religious groups.

The amendments would simplify case-by-case arrangements to allow extradition of wanted suspects to jurisdictions, including mainland China, Macau and Taiwan, beyond the 20 with which Hong Kong already has extradition treaties.

Opponents of the Bill question the fairness and transparency of the Chinese court system and worry about Chinese security forces contriving charges.

Palestinians hit out at U.S. envoy's comments

Also warn of taking the issue to ICC

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
RAMALLAH**

Palestinian leaders said that a U.S. envoy's comments on Israel having the right to annex at least parts of the occupied West Bank showed that "extremists" are involved in White House policy on the issue.

In a statement late on Saturday in response to U.S. Ambassador to Israel David Friedman's comments, a Palestinian government spokesman said some of those leading U.S. policy on the issue were "extremists" lacking in "political maturity."

The Palestinian Foreign Ministry said it was looking into filing a complaint with the International Criminal Court (ICC) on the issue. Palestine Liberation Organisation secretary general Saeb Erekat on Twitter called Mr. Friedman an "extreme ambassador of the settlers." "Their vision is about annexation of occupied terri-



Palestinian official Saeb Erekat. **REUTERS**

tory, a war crime under international law," he said.

Mr. Erekat also renewed a Palestinian call for countries to boycott a June 25-26 conference in Bahrain to discuss economic aspects of a peace deal the White House has been working on.

In an interview published on Saturday, Mr. Friedman said some degree of annexation of the West Bank would be legitimate. "Under certain circumstances, I think Israel has the right to retain some, but unlikely all, of the West Bank," he said.

Europeans are in no position to criticise Iran, says Javad Zarif

'Western policies have only caused damage in the region'

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
TEHRAN**

European countries are in "no position" to criticise Iran, Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said on Sunday ahead of a visit by his German counterpart Heiko Maas.

Mr. Maas is due in Tehran on Monday, against a backdrop of Iranian pressure for Europe to uphold commitments made under a 2015 nuclear deal since abandoned by the U.S.

"Europeans are certainly in no position to criticise



Mohammad Javad Zarif. **REUTERS**

Iran, even about issues that have nothing to do with" the agreement, Mr. Zarif said.

European and Western

policies "have only caused damage in the region," Mr. Zarif said.

"Now some countries like Germany have stopped selling arms to Saudi Arabia for bombarding the people of Yemen, some other countries haven't done so," he added.

"In general, the West has allowed the autocratic regimes in our region to commit crimes."

Mr. Zarif said that Europeans have "a duty" to ensure that Iran's economic relations return to normal.

Trump confident of getting Mexico's cooperation

**REUTERS
WASHINGTON**

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Sunday that his administration will release additional details of its agreement with Mexico as he denied a news report that there were no new major commitments made by Mexico to stem a flow of Central American migrants at the U.S. southern border.

"...I have full confidence, especially after speaking to their President yesterday, that they will be very cooperative and want to get the job properly done," he tweeted. "Importantly, some things not mentioned

in yesterday press release, one in particular, were agreed upon. That will be announced at the appropriate time," he added. He did not elaborate on what that matter was.

The agreement expands a controversial programme that sends migrants seeking asylum in the U.S. to Mexico while their cases are being processed and boosts security at Mexico's southern border.

Mr. Trump also pushed back at a *New York Times* report that the deal consisted of commitments previously agreed by Mexico, calling it a "false report."

Parliament warns Sirisena against scuttling Easter attacks investigation

'Any public servant summoned is obliged to give evidence'

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
COLOMBO**

Sri Lanka's Parliament warned President Maithripala Sirisena not to scuttle an investigation into security lapses before the Easter suicide bombings, the Speaker's office said on Sunday.

The warning came after Mr. Sirisena said he would not cooperate with the parliamentary probe and would not allow defence or police officials to testify before the committee. Mr. Sirisena called an emergency Cabinet meeting on Friday to op-

pose the legislature's investigation into the attacks.

"Any public servant summoned by the PSC [Parliamentary Select Committee] is obliged to give evidence," Speaker Karu Jayasuriya said in a two-page response to Mr. Sirisena. "Officials are fully aware of the serious consequences if they fail to respond."

Officials at the Speaker's office said Mr. Jayasuriya made it clear to Mr. Sirisena that he will not call off the PSC and it will continue its public hearings. Evidence

before the parliamentary select committee, which began its publicly televised sittings late last month, has placed Mr. Sirisena in a poor light, suggesting that he failed to act on advance warning of the attacks.

Mr. Sirisena told his police top brass on Friday that he would not allow any police, military or intelligence personnel to testify. However, senior Defence Ministry sources said that in view of the Speaker's latest warning, they will have to cooperate with the committee.

Incumbent Tokayev set to win Kazakh election

He was handpicked by Nazarbayev

**REUTERS
ALMATY**

Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, the interim President of Kazakhstan handpicked by veteran leader Nursultan Nazarbayev as his successor, was to confirm his position on Sunday in an election triggered by Mr. Nazarbayev's resignation.

Hundreds of people protested on Sunday, criticising the election as undemocratic. But the smooth transition is positive news for its neighbours Russia and China as well as for foreign energy and mining companies who have invested hundreds of billions of dollars in the Central Asian state.

For many of its 12 million registered voters, Mr. Tokayev, a former Prime Minister and Foreign Minister,



A voter casting her franchise in Nur-Sultan. **REUTERS**

was the only familiar face among seven candidates in a brief and uneventful campaign.

Hundreds of people chanting "Shame!" staged protests in Almaty and Nur-Sultan, the capital that was named after Mr. Nazarbayev on Mr. Tokayev's suggestion.

'EU is now willing to re-open Brexit deal'

Hunt quotes conversation with Merkel

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON**

British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt, a contender to replace Theresa May as Prime Minister, said on Sunday that German Chancellor Angela Merkel had indicated that the European Union (EU) was willing to renegotiate the Brexit divorce deal.

Mr. Hunt said he spoke with Ms. Merkel at this week's D-Day commemorations and was convinced that changing Ms. May's agreement was possible.

"She said that of course with a new British Prime Minister we would want to look at any solutions you have," he told Sky News. "I'm absolutely clear that if we take the right approach to this, the Europeans would be willing to nego-

tiate on the package." Mr. Hunt did not specify if he was referring to the withdrawal agreement which the EU has repeatedly insisted cannot be re-opened, or to the accompanying political declaration on future relations.

Meanwhile, former Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson, the frontrunner to replace Ms. May as Conservative leader and Prime Minister, said in an interview published on Sunday that he would refuse to pay Britain's £39 billion divorce bill until the EU agrees better withdrawal terms. He also signalled that he would scrap the backstop and try to settle the border issue once London and Brussels were negotiating their future relationship.

Bangladesh fishermen block highway

Several thousand fishermen blocked Bangladesh's busiest highway on Sunday, police said, as protests escalated over a two-month fishing ban in the Bay of Bengal.

The fishermen say the 65-day blockade — intended to replenish fish stocks — is driving them out of business. Their one-hour protest at the coastal town of Sitakunda caused tailbacks on the main road linking Dhaka and Chittagong.

Local police chief Suman Banik said the demonstration by 3,000 fishermen and their families was peaceful. They only cleared the road after a government administrator and a local Member of Parliament promised to help.

U.S. writer sues publisher after losing book deal due to tweet

Tynes had posted the photo of a worker eating on train

**ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON**

A writer who faced social media backlash for calling out a transit worker eating on a train sued her publisher on Friday after it cancelled her book deal over the controversy. Lawyers for Jordanian-American writer Natasha Tynes filed suit against publisher Rare Bird Lit. Inc. She's seeking \$13.4 million in damages.

In May, Ms. Tynes tweeted a picture of a worker eating on a Washington Metro train with the message: "When you're on your morning commute & see wmata employee in UNIFORM eating on the train I thought we were not allowed to eat on the train. This is unacceptable. Hope wmata responds."



Jordanian-American writer Natasha Tynes

Scores of Twitter users criticised her for shaming the black worker.

No ban on eating

A transit worker union official said at the time that woman had been taking a break while going from one job to another. The union official also noted that Metro Transit

police no longer enforces the ban on eating and drinking on trains. Ms. Tynes later apologised, deleted the tweet and took down her personal website.

But the publishing house condemned her comments and said it was cancelling her book deal. Ms. Tynes "did something truly horrible today in tweeting a picture of a metro worker eating her breakfast on the train this morning and drawing attention to her employer," Rare Birds said.

In the lawsuit, Ms. Tynes's lawyers say the company's inflammatory statements forced their client to temporarily flee back to Jordan with her family because they endured weeks of online harassment, including death threats and racial slurs.

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