

# China backs move to suspend Bill

Foreign Ministry assures people of Hong Kong that their rights and freedoms will be fully protected

REUTERS  
BEIJING/HONG KONG

China's government said on Saturday that it supported the decision of Hong Kong's leader to suspend an unpopular Bill that would allow extraditions to China and which sparked a week of protests.

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang called the decision an attempt to "listen more widely to the views of the community and restore calm to the community as soon as possible". "We support, respect and understand this decision," Geng Shuang said in a statement, hours after Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam announced the Bill's suspension.

## United in opposition

Opposition to the Beijing-backed Bill united an unusually wide cross-section of Hong Kong. Critics feared that the proposed law would subject people to China's notoriously opaque and politicised courts and it was seen as the latest move by Beijing to weaken freedoms promised to the former British



Against police excesses: A protest on Friday in Hong Kong against the actions of the city's police force during the recent demonstrations. ■ AFP

colony when it was handed back over to China in 1997.

"The rights and freedoms enjoyed by Hong Kong residents are fully protected in accordance with the law. The facts are obvious to all," the Chinese Foreign Ministry statement said. "Maintaining Hong Kong's prosperity and stability is not only in the interests of China, but also in the interests of all countries

in the world." A separate statement by the Chinese central government agency that handles Hong Kong-related affairs said the extradition Bill was "necessary and justified" to plug what it called loopholes in current laws. It said China continues to support the extradition Bill and "pays close attention" to public opposition to the legislation.

The extradition Bill deliberations started in February and Ms. Lam had pushed to have it passed by July.

But the protests changed the equation. Cracks began to appear on Friday in the support base for the Bill with several pro-Beijing politicians and a senior adviser to Ms. Lam saying discussion of the Bill should be postponed for the time being. *Sing Tao*

newspaper reported on Saturday that China's top official overseeing Hong Kong policy, Vice-Premier Han Zheng, met Ms. Lam in Shenzhen in recent days.

Ms. Lam declined to confirm whether or not the meeting had happened, but took ownership for the decision to suspend the Bill and said she had support from the central government.

## 'Lam has lost credibility'

Pro-democracy politicians, responding to Ms. Lam's announcement, said a suspension was not enough. "Carrie Lam has lost all credibility among Hong Kong people. She must step down," said Claudia Mo, a legislator and member of the pan-democratic camp, which has opposed the Bill.

The U.S. consulate in Hong Kong welcomed the move and urged "great care and taking into account the views of the local and international community should the Hong Kong government pursue any amendments to its extradition laws, particularly as they relate to mainland China".

# Targeting tankers in the Gulf

Weaponising the Hormuz Strait may prove to be dangerous

STANLEY JOHNY  
CHENNAI

The attack on two oil tankers in the Gulf of Oman, which connects the Arabian Sea with the Strait of Hormuz, has raised tensions between the U.S. and Iran. Within hours of Thursday's attack, the U.S. blamed Iran. The U.S. Central Command also released a video footage that Washington claimed showed men on an Iranian boat removing a mine from one of the tankers.

## Why is Strait of Hormuz important?

■ The Gulf lies between Iran and the Arabian Peninsula. Besides Iran and Saudi Arabia, Oman, the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait and Iraq also share the Gulf coastline. As all these countries are energy-rich, the Gulf has naturally emerged as a major trade route. Strait of Hormuz is a choke-point between the Gulf and the open ocean. With Iran on its northern coast and the UAE and an Omani enclave on the south, the Strait, at its narrowest point, has a width of 34 km. A third of crude oil exports transported via ships pass through the Strait, which makes it the world's most important oil artery.

## The last 'Tanker War'

■ In the 1980s, when Iran and Iraq were locked in a protracted conflict, both sides targeted each other's energy vessels in the Gulf and on the Strait of Hormuz. Iraq started the 'Tanker War' by targeting ships carrying Iranian fuel in 1981. Three years later, Iran started attacking vessels carrying Iraqi fuel, turning the Gulf waters into a war zone. According to a report by the U.S. Naval Institute, in total, 340 ships were attacked and



Cooling touch: An Iranian Navy boat spraying water to extinguish fire on a tanker in Oman on Thursday. ■ AP

# Attacked Japanese vessel heads to UAE port

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
DUBAI

A Japanese tanker, one of two vessels attacked in sensitive Gulf waters this week, was heading to port on Saturday, its owners said.

The United Arab Emirates called on world powers "to secure international navigation and access to energy" after the incident on Thursday.

The *Kokuka Courageous* was carrying highly flamma-

ble methanol through the Gulf of Oman when it was rocked by explosions, causing a blaze that was quickly extinguished. The Japanese tanker's Tokyo-based operator Kokuka confirmed on Saturday that the vessel was heading to port in the UAE.

Maritime experts would then seek to transfer its highly flammable cargo to shore, according to an unnamed official quoted by Japanese state media.

more than 30 million tonnes of shipping damaged between 1981 and 1987. This also caused over 400 seaman deaths. Among the ships severely damaged was the *USS Samuel B. Roberts* of the U.S. Navy.

## What's next?

■ With ships again coming under attack in the Gulf region, memories of the 'Tanker War' are being revived. If Iran is actually behind the recent attacks, it may be playing a risky game, demonstrating what it can do in the event of a war. If Tehran is not behind the attacks,

some other powers are using the Gulf trade lanes to stoke further tensions. Either way, the weaponisation of the Strait of Hormuz is a dangerous game. In the 1980s, the 'Tanker War' was largely a war of economic attrition. Also, the conflict was between Iran and Iraq, two relatively similar powers. This time, there are other risks. Given the existing tensions, more attacks on shipping vessels could trigger an all-out war. Further, this time, the conflict is between the U.S. and Iran. The scope of a direct war will be much bigger than what it was in the 1980s.

# 'Maldives should not try balancing ties with India and China'

Nasheed says Male cannot afford to have defence ties with Beijing; terms Modi's recent visit 'positive'

MEERA SRINIVASAN  
COLOMBO

The Maldives should not try to balance relations with India and China, according to Mohamed Nasheed, Speaker and former President. "In my personal view, the Maldives shouldn't even try to do that. Those who think it is possible to balance ties with these two powers are being naïve," he told *The Hindu*, on the sidelines of a press conference in Colombo.

"This is not to say we should be hostile with Chi-

na," Mr. Nasheed said. "We will be happy to maintain cultural ties with China. But we can't afford to have defence cooperation. Development or economic partnership too will be hard if China doesn't change its *modus operandi*." A vocal critic of China-backed development initiatives during the previous Yameen administration, Mr. Nasheed has in the past sought an audit of the ongoing projects in the Maldives.

His comments come a week after Prime Minister

Narendra Modi visited the island nation, on his first visit abroad after being re-elected to office. Describing Mr. Modi's recent visit "very productive and positive", Mr. Nasheed said it showed "that India really values the relationship".

## 'Solidarity visit'

Maldivian Vice-President Faisal Naseem, Mr. Nasheed, some Ministers and about 65 parliamentarians are on a "solidarity visit" to Sri Lanka, nearly two months after

the Easter terror attacks. The leaders called on Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe and Speaker Karu Jayasuriya among others.

In a "symbolic gesture", the contingent flew Sri Lankan airlines, the state carrier, and all members of the visiting team are staying at Hotel Cinnamon Grand, one of the three hotels that were bombed on April 21. Describing terror as the "single biggest issue" facing nation states, Mr. Nasheed sought collective action in the re-

gion in combating the threat.

Asked about the government's initiatives to tackle extremism, amid reports of dozens of Maldivians joining jihadist wars abroad, he said: "We know who they are, and where they are. The government and security forces have a good grip on the situation." Observing that a few in the Maldives were drawn to a radical version of Islam, he said: "President Solih has been able to engage with religious-minded people on this issue."

# Iran seeks 'positive signals' on n-deal

Rouhani says Tehran cannot stick to the pact unilaterally

REUTERS  
DUSHANBE

Iran will continue scaling back compliance with a nuclear deal unless other signatories to the pact show "positive signals", the Iranian President said on Saturday.

Iran stopped complying in May with some commitments in the 2015 nuclear deal that was agreed with global powers, after the U.S. unilaterally withdrew from the accord in 2018 and ratcheted up sanctions on Tehran. "Obviously, Iran cannot stick to this agreement unilaterally," President Hassan Rouhani told Russian, Chi-



Iranian President Hassan Rouhani. ■ REUTERS

nese and other Asian leaders at a conference in Tajikistan.

"It is necessary that all the sides of this agreement contribute to restoring it," he said, adding that Iran needed to see "positive signals" from other signatories to the

pact, which include Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said Moscow would adhere to the agreement and urged other signatories to follow suit. "We believe that the only sensible decision is for all deal participants to honour commitments," Mr. Putin told the conference. France and other European signatories to the nuclear deal have said they wanted to save the accord, but many of their companies have cancelled deals with Tehran, under pressure from the U.S.

# U.S. allows Iraq to import Iranian gas

Gives 3-month extension to waiver

REUTERS  
BAGHDAD

The U.S. has allowed Iraq to import Iranian gas for its power grid for another three months by extending a waiver to sanctions — but insists that Baghdad seek alternative sources.

Iraq has had several extensions to the waiver first granted last year after Washington reimposed sanctions on Tehran's oil sector forbidding countries from purchasing Iranian energy.

"An additional 120-day waiver was granted to allow

Iraq to continue to pay for electricity imports from Iran," the U.S. State Department said in an emailed statement.

An Iraqi government source said the extension was given during a phone call between Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi and U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

Iraq relies heavily on Iranian gas to feed several power stations, importing roughly 1.5 billion standard cubic feet per day via pipelines in the south and east.

## ELSEWHERE



## No backstop is as bad as no-deal Brexit: Irish PM

DUBLIN  
Ireland will not allow the Northern Ireland "backstop" clause in Britain's EU withdrawal agreement to be dropped because doing so would be as big a threat to the country as Britain leaving without a deal, Prime Minister Leo Varadkar said on Saturday. ■ REUTERS

## Nepal schools make Mandarin compulsory

KATHMANDU  
A Chinese government's proposal of covering salaries of teachers in Nepal who teach Mandarin have prompted many private schools in the nation to make it mandatory for students to learn the language, according to a media report. The move came at a time when the Chinese involvement in Nepal is surging, largely on the back of Beijing's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative. ■ PTI

# China confirms its vessel hit Philippines boat

Denies that collision was a 'hit and run'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
MANILA

Beijing confirmed on Saturday that a Chinese vessel hit a Philippine fishing boat in a collision which has increased tensions in the disputed South China Sea, but denied claims that it was a "hit and run".

The Chinese trawler sailed away after the incident near Reed Bank that sank the fishing boat, sparking outrage from Philippine authorities and media.

The Chinese Embassy in Manila said the crew of trawler *Yuemaobinyu 42212* "bumped into" the Philippine boat and then left due to safety fears. "The Chinese captain tried to rescue the Filipino fisherman, but was afraid of being besieged by other Filipino fishing boats," the statement said.

It went on to say the incident was not a "hit-and-run", as some Philippine authorities had claimed, because the trawler "confirmed the fishermen from the Filipino boat were res-



Rescued fishermen moving to another ship in Philippines, on Friday. ■ AP

cued". However, the 22 fishermen told a very different story, saying they had spent hours in the water awaiting help. They were eventually picked up by a Vietnamese boat and brought home on Friday aboard a Philippine Navy vessel.

The Philippine Coast Guard has started an investigation of the incident which President Rodrigo Duterte's spokesman branded as "outrageous and barbaric".

Reed Bank, claimed by Manila and Beijing, is within the Philippines's 200-nautical-mile exclusive economic zone and far from China's nearest major landmass.

# Muslim MPs to reconsider move to quit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
COLOMBO

Nine Sri Lankan Muslim Ministers, who resigned recently in the wake of growing anti-minority sentiments in the country following the Easter suicide bombings, are likely to rejoin their office on the request of chief Buddhist prelates. Along with the nine Ministers, two provincial Governors also resigned on June 3.

"There will be a meeting on June 18 to reconsider our positions since we have been asked to return to our ministerial positions," A.H.M. Haleem, who was one of the Ministers to quit, told reporters on Saturday. Mr. Haleem, who was the Minister of Posts, said they are reconsidering their decision after the chief Buddhist prelates urged them to return to the government.

There are 19 Muslims lawmakers in the 225-member Parliament and nine of them held Cabinet, State and deputy ministerial positions.

**कार्यालय जोधपुर विकास प्राधिकरण, जोधपुर**  
क्रमांक :- 265 :: ई-निविदा सूचना संख्या :- पश्चिम /02/2019-20 :: दिनांक :- 7/6/19  
जोधपुर विकास प्राधिकरण, जोधपुर को ओर से प्राधिकरण एवं राजकीय विभाग में नियमानुसार उपयुक्त श्रेणी में पंजीकृत उम्मेदवारों से निविदा कार्यों हेतु अल्पकालीन ई-निविदाएं आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। इन कार्यों को अनुमानित लागत, निविदा बंधे जाने तक प्राप्त करने की दिनांक, निविदा, त्रुटि आदि सम्पूर्ण विवरण वेबसाइट [www.jodhpurjda.org](http://www.jodhpurjda.org) एवं [www.sppp.raj.nic.in](http://www.sppp.raj.nic.in) पर देखी जा सकती है।  
कार्य की अधिकतम अनुमानित लागत :- राशि ₹. 224.81 लाख।

S.No	UBN CODE/TENDER ID/ITEM NO	6	JOD1920WSOB000053	06	
1	JOD1920WSOB000048	01	7	JOD1920WSOB000054	07
2	JOD1920WSOB000049	02	8	JOD1920WSOB000055	08
3	JOD1920WSOB000050	03	9	JOD1920WSOB000056	09
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**E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE**  
E-Procurement Tenders are invited for supply of Line DP set for 33 KV (TN-1555) (UBN JVV1920GLOB00012). Details regarding Quantity, Tender Cost, Earnest Money, Schedule date of tender opening for aforesaid tenders are available on our website at [www.jdvvn.com](http://www.jdvvn.com) and also at <http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in>  
Samwad/C/689/2019-2020 SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER (MM&C)  
दिनांक 14/06/2019

**OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER (PPP) P.W.D., RAJASTHAN, JAIPUR**  
No.F.7 (160)/PPP/2014-15/D-258 Date: 03-06-2019

**NIT No. 03/2019-20 EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**

On behalf of Hon'ble Governor of Rajasthan, Public Works Department, Rajasthan (India) invites Expression of Interest (Eoi) for appointment of Environment Specialist in specified format are invited for Consultancy Services for preparation of Environment Management Plan Development for ADB/WB funded highways under Rajasthan State Highway Development Programme (RSHDP) and its implementation.  
The Eol document can be viewed or / and downloaded from website: <http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in> and <http://www.roadsofrajasthan.gov.in> from 04-06-2019. Any further amendments to the Eol documents shall only be made available on above websites as such prospective Consultants are expected to visit the above websites for the same.  
UBN No. 192050B00520

(Dinesh Kumar Agarwal)  
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**BANGALORE DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**  
T. Chowdaiah Road, Kumara Park West, Bengaluru - 560 020

No. BDA/EE/East Divn./TEN/01/2019-20 Date: 14.06.2019

**NOTICE INVITING REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) (TWO COVER SYSTEM) CALL-2**

(Through GoK e-Procurement platform <http://eproc.karnataka.gov.in>)  
Tenders are invited through GoK e-Procurement platform by the Executive Engineer, East Division, BDA, HSR Shopping Complex, HSR Layout, Bengaluru-560 102 on behalf of the Commissioner, BDA, Bengaluru from eligible tenderers. Name of the work : Development of BISMA Layout in Sy. No. 1,5,6,7 and 12 to 23 of Konadasapura Village, Bidarahlali Hobli, Bengaluru East Taluk, Bengaluru under Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode.  
For further details, please log on to <http://eproc.karnataka.gov.in> or call e-procurement Helpdesk on 080-22371090/22340060.  
Sd/- Executive Engineer, East Division, BDA, Bengaluru

**SOUTHERN RAILWAY**  
(CONSTRUCTION ORGANISATION)

**E-TENDER**  
NOTICE NO.14-CECNMS-19-20-OM-13 DATED: 14.06.2019

For and on behalf of The President of India, The Chief Engineer, Construction, Southern Railway, Egmore, Chennai - 600 008 invites e-tender for the following work(s) as per Notice Inviting Tender (NIT) in our portal [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in). The tenderers / Contractors intending to apply for the tender need to get enrolled in the portal [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) and only online tenders will be accepted. The Cost of the Tender Form and the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) should be paid through the online payment gateway available in the website by way of Multiple Banks' Net Banking, Debit Card and Credit Card.

Approximate Cash Value in (₹)	Earnest Money Deposit (₹)	Cost of Tender Form (₹)	Period of Completion in Months	Closing Date @ 15.30 Hrs.
7,90,31,141.20	5,45,200	10,000	Six	09.07.2019

For further details please refer to the website portal [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) or contact Office of the Chief Administrative Officer, Construction, E.V.R. High Road, Egmore, Chennai - 600 008.  
Chief Engineer (Construction), Egmore, Chennai - 600 008.