

# Hong Kong protesters seek leader's exit

Despite Carrie Lam's decision to suspend the extradition Bill, demonstrations have continued

REUTERS  
HONG KONG

Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam apologised on Sunday as hundreds of thousands of black-clad protesters maintained calls for her to resign over her handling of a Bill that would have allowed people to be sent to mainland China for trial.

The Chief Executive issued the rare apology one day after she indefinitely delayed the extradition Bill, which sparked one of the most violent protests in the city in decades.

## Lam's pledge

A government spokesman said that poor government work over the Bill had led to "substantial controversies and disputes in society, causing disappointment and grief." Ms. Lam "apologised to the people of Hong Kong for this and pledged to adopt a most sincere and humble attitude to accept criticisms and make improvements in serving the public," the statement added.



Lam should go: People in Hong Kong demanding the ouster of its leader on Sunday. • REUTERS

Protesters formed a sea of black along roads, walkways and train stations across Hong Kong's financial centre to vent their frustration and anger at the Bill and the government's handling of the

resulting demonstrations.

Saturday's dramatic suspension of the Bill was one of the most significant political retreats by the Hong Kong government since Britain returned the territory to China

in 1997, and it threw into question Ms. Lam's ability to continue to lead the city.

Some of Sunday's marchers held signs saying, "Do not shoot, we are Hong Kongers" — an appeal to police

who fired rubber bullets and tear gas at protesters on Wednesday, injuring more than 70 people.

Loud cheers rang out when activists called through loud hailers for Ms. Lam's resignation and the cry "step down" echoed through the streets.

## Throwback to 2014

The protests have plunged Hong Kong into political crisis, just as months of pro-democracy "Occupy" demonstrations did in 2014, heaping pressure on Ms. Lam's administration and her official backers in Beijing. The city's independent legal system was guaranteed under laws governing Hong Kong's return from British to Chinese rule 22 years ago, and is seen by business and diplomatic communities as its strongest asset.

Asked repeatedly on Saturday if she would step down, Ms. Lam avoided answering directly and appealed to the public to "give us another chance."

# 'U.S. doesn't want war with Iran'

Pompeo vows to guarantee free passage through Hormuz

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
WASHINGTON/DUBAI

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo vowed on Sunday that the U.S. will guarantee free passage through the vital Strait of Hormuz, as he accused Iran of recent attacks on oil tankers and the downing of a U.S. drone.

Mr. Pompeo confirmed in an interview with CBS that a U.S. MQ-9 "Reaper" drone was shot down June 6 with a missile fired from Yemen "that we assess had Iranian assistance."

Mr. Pompeo would not be drawn on what options the U.S. is considering to protect shipping — or to punish Iran — in the wake of Thursday's attacks on two tankers in the Gulf of Oman, but reiterated that President Donald Trump is not seeking war with Iran.

"What you should assume is we are going to guarantee freedom of navigation throughout the Strait," he said in an interview on "Fox News Sunday."

Iran has denied the U.S. charges as "baseless" and

said they were made without "a shred of factual or circumstantial evidence."

"We don't want a war. We've done what we can to deter this," Mr. Pompeo said.

The Secretary would not lay out U.S. evidence for Iran's involvement in the Gulf of Oman explosions, but insisted: "It's unmistakable what happened here."

"These were attacks by the Islamic Republic of Iran on commercial shipping, on the freedom of navigation, with the clear intent to deny transit through the Strait."

The Pentagon had previously released a video showing what it said was an Iranian boat that pulled up alongside one of the stricken tankers and removed a limpet mine attached to its hull.

## Tankers arrive in UAE

Earlier on Sunday, the two damaged tankers arrived safely at locations off the Emirati coast.

The Japanese-owned *Kokuka Courageous* was carrying highly flammable metha-

nol through the Gulf of Oman on Thursday when it came under attack along with the Norwegian-operated *Front Altair*.

The Japanese vessel's Singapore-based owners BSM Ship Management said in a statement on Sunday that it had "arrived safely at the designated anchorage" and that its crew were "safe and well". The other ship, the *Front Altair*, was under safe tow by tug boats towards an area off the coast of the eastern Emirati port of Fujairah.

"First inspections are under way and no hot spots have been identified following the fire," the vessel's owners said in a statement on Sunday. It said all crew members were in Dubai, where they will "assist with the debrief to the owner's legal team and the appropriate authorities, before returning home". The UAE's Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed al-Nahyan on Saturday called on world powers "to secure international navigation and access to energy".

# Saudi Crown Prince warns countries against 'exploiting' Khashoggi murder

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
RIYADH

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman warned against "exploiting" the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi for political gains, in what appeared to be a veiled attack on Turkey.

Turkey's ties with Saudi Arabia have come under strain since the brutal murder last October of Khashoggi in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul. Turkish officials were the first to report the murder and have continued to press Saudi Arabia for information on the wherea-



Saudi Prince Mohammed bin Salman. • AFP

bouts of his dismembered body, which has yet to be found. "The death of Jamal Khashoggi is a very painful crime," Prince Mohammed told pan-Arab daily *Asharq al-Awsat* in an interview pu-

blished on Sunday. "Any party exploiting the case politically should stop doing so, and present evidence to the (Saudi) court, which will contribute in achieving justice," he added, without directly naming Turkey. The Prince, however, added that he wants strong relations with "all Islamic countries including Turkey". The CIA has reportedly said the murder was likely ordered by Prince Mohammed.

Prince Mohammed said the kingdom was committed to "full justice and accountability" in the case.

# Israel PM's wife convicted of misusing public funds

Sara Netanyahu pleads guilty to buying catered meals using state funds despite the presence of a cook

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
JERUSALEM

An Israeli court on Sunday convicted the wife of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of fraudulently using state funds for meals, under a plea bargain which saw her admit to lesser charges.

While the ruling cut short a high-profile trial, the Netanyahu family's legal woes are far from over: the veteran Premier himself faces possible indictment for bribery, fraud and breach of trust in the coming months.

In a deal approved by judge Avital Chen at Jerusa-

lem magistrates' court, Sara Netanyahu was found guilty of exploiting the mistake of another person. She was also fined 10,000 shekels (\$2,800) and ordered to reimburse the state a further 45,000 shekels. "The deal reached between the sides is worthy and appropriately reflects the deeds and their severity on the criminal level," Mr. Chen said in his ruling.

Ms. Netanyahu was initially charged in June 2018 with fraud and breach of trust for buying catered meals despite the presence of a cook at the PM's official residence.

The amended indictment, approved on Sunday, dropped the graft charges.

In a small room at the Jerusalem magistrates' court, packed with journalists, Ms. Netanyahu told the judge she was aware of the charges. Her lawyer and a prosecutor then requested that the court accept the deal. "As in every plea bargain, each side makes concessions, sometimes hard concessions," prosecutor Erez Padan said. "It is right and proper for the public interest to bring this case to an end."

Ms. Netanyahu's attorney



Sara Netanyahu. • AFP

loopholes to receive state funding for her household's relatively high expenses.

The original charges accused her of paying \$1,00,000 for hundreds of meals from a variety of well-known Jerusalem businesses while falsely declaring that there were no cooks available at the residence.

She is also being sued by a former cleaner who claims she mistreated her. In 2016 a court awarded some \$47,000 in damages to a former housekeeper who accused her of repeated workplace abuse in a similar case.

## ELSEWHERE



### Sudan ex-President Bashir charged with graft

Sudan's ex-President Omar al-Bashir was charged with corruption-related offences on Sunday, as he appeared in public for the first time since he was overthrown in April. "The prosecution... accused him of... possession of foreign currency, accepting gifts in an unofficial manner," said prosecutor Alaa al-Din Abdallah. • REUTERS

### Pak. issues death warrant for mentally ill prisoner

A court in Pakistan has issued a death warrant for a mentally ill prisoner, paving the way for his execution on June 18 amidst growing concern among human rights groups, a media report said on Sunday. Ghulam Abbas, 36, was sentenced to death in 2006 by a court in Rawalpindi for stabbing one of his neighbours. • PTI

### Iran to increase stock of enriched uranium

Iran will announce further moves on Monday to scale back compliance with the nuclear pact, increasing stocks of enriched uranium and production of heavy water at Arak reactor. "Iran's Atomic Energy Organisation tomorrow... will announce preparatory steps that have been taken to further decrease Tehran's commitments..." Tasnim agency said. • REUTERS

### 'China prepared for long trade battle with U.S.'

The U.S. has underestimated the Chinese people's will to fight a trade war and Beijing is prepared for a long economic battle, a Communist Party journal said on Sunday. China would not give way on major principles in its negotiations with the U.S. on ending the dispute, the commentary in *Qiushi*, or *Seeking Truth*, said. • REUTERS

# Trump launches fresh attack on London Mayor

Calls Sadiq Khan a 'national disgrace'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump launched a fresh attack on Saturday on London Mayor Sadiq Khan, backing a right-wing British columnist who has been widely accused of Islamophobia.

Mr. Trump attacked his latest denunciation of the Mayor to a retweet by Katie Hopkins about crime in "Khan's Londonistan" — using a term widely perceived as a pejorative reference to the British capital's Muslim population and Mr. Khan's Pakistan ancestry. "LONDON needs a new Mayor ASAP. Khan is a disaster — will only get worse!" Mr. Trump wrote in response to Ms. Hopkins's tweet, later adding the Mayor was "a national disgrace who is des-



Mayor of London Sadiq Khan. • REUTERS

troying" the city. Earlier this month, the President's plane had not even touched down in London for the start of a state visit when he tweeted that Mr. Khan was a "stone cold loser."

Mr. Khan had criticised the red carpet treatment being given to Mr. Trump for the visit. Mr. Trump said the Mayor should "focus on crime in London, not me," and made a derisive reference to Mr. Khan's height.

# Power outage hits Argentina, Uruguay

REUTERS  
BUENOS AIRES

Power had been restored to one-third of Argentina by early afternoon, hours after a massive blackout hit South America on Sunday morning, leaving tens of millions without power.

Argentina's grid "collapsed" around 7 a.m. local time, leaving the entire country without power, said its Energy Secretariat. The outage also cut electricity to swaths of neighbouring Uruguay and Paraguay. Argentina's energy agency said in a statement it had begun investigating the causes of the outage.

The massive blackout left Buenos Aires dark, hobbling public transportation, cutting off water supply and crippling phone and Internet communications.

# Ghana's free high school programme earns accolades as well as brickbats

Enrolment has increased but infrastructure is inadequate

MASLIN NIR  
ACCRA

At dawn on a recent Tuesday, Jane Newornu, 18, pulled on her school uniform, stuffed her books into her knapsack and ran off to school.

Her twin sister, Jennifer, watched with envy. Ms. Jennifer was staying home from school on a two-month hiatus mandated by the government. The twins, like all high school students in Ghana, now must take turns.

The problem is the result of the tumultuous roll-out of a government programme intended to expand access to free secondary education. When President Nana Akufo-Addo took office in 2017, he made good on one of his chief campaign promises: tuition-free high school for all. The programme has



A girl getting ready to go to school in Accra. • NYT

proved so popular — 4,30,000 students are enrolled this school year, up from 3,08,000 in 2016, according to the Education Ministry — that demand has overwhelmed capacity.

Under what Ghana's government calls a two-track system, some children go to

school while others take a break. Supporters say it is a temporary solution while more teachers are hired and schools are built and put it down to growing pains.

But many parents, watching their children sit idle for two months, are furious. If sidelined, children slip behind in their studies, some adults and students say, then free school comes at too high a cost.

But the government is unwavering in its support of the new system, saying it delivers adequate education to more children. Before the programme, 67% of children who attended elementary went on to secondary school. But since the new programme began, it climbed to 83% in 2018, according to the Education Ministry. • NY TIMES

THE HINDU GROUP

**WISH YOUR WORKPLACE CONVERSATIONS WERE MADE THIS EASY?**

Presenting

## STEP

### FOR WORKING PROFESSIONALS

A comprehensive course for everyone looking to improve their workplace interactions.

- 20-hour Online Course** featuring workplace scenarios
- 6 Coach Calls** focusing on professional speaking and writing
- 6 LIVE Classes** on Professional Emails

**Introductory Offer:**

~~₹6999~~

**₹2999**

**Offer valid for first 50 learners only**

Scan the QR code

To know more, visit [BIT.LY/STEPFORWORK](https://bit.ly/stepforwork)

Standardised Test of English Proficiency

from THE HINDU GROUP