

Hong Kong protests undermine rule of law, social order: China

Beijing calls violence an 'undisguised challenge' to 'one country two system' model

REUTERS
BEIJING/HONG KONG

China on Tuesday condemned violent protests in Hong Kong as an "undisguised challenge" to the formula under which the city is ruled, hours after the police fired tear gas to disperse hundreds of protesters who stormed and trashed the legislature.

A representative of China's Hong Kong affairs office denounced the demonstrators, who are furious about a proposed legislation allowing extraditions to China, and said Beijing supports holding criminals responsible, state media said.

The former British colony of Hong Kong returned to China in 1997 under a "one country, two systems" formula that allows freedoms not enjoyed in mainland China, including freedom to protest and an independent judiciary.

Monday was the 22nd anniversary of the handover.

Beijing denies interfering, but for many Hong Kong residents, the extradition Bill is the latest step in a relentless march towards mainland control.

"Seriously violating the law, the act tramples the rule of law in Hong Kong, undermines social order and the fundamental interests of Hong Kong, and is an undisguised challenge to the bottom line of 'one country, two systems'," Xinhua news agency quoted a Hong Kong affairs office spokesman as saying. "We strongly condemn this act."

Debris, including umbrellas, hard hats and water bottles was among the few signs left of the mayhem that had engulfed parts of the city on Monday and overnight after



Smoked out: Protesters taking cover from the tear gas fired by the police in Hong Kong early on Tuesday. ■ AFP

protesters stormed and ransacked the Legislative Council, or mini-Parliament.

The police cleared roads near the heart of the financial centre, paving the way for business to return to normal.

Offices closed

However, government offices, where protesters smashed computers and spray-painted "anti-extradition" and slurs against the police and the government on chamber walls, were closed. The government's executive council meeting was due to be held in the Government House, officials said, while the legislature would remain closed for the next two weeks.

Millions of people have taken to the streets in the past few weeks to protest against the now-suspended extradition Bill that would allow people to be sent to mainland China to face trial in courts controlled by the Communist Party.

Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam has suspended the bill

and said it would lapse next year, but protesters want it scrapped altogether and have pressed her to step down.

Regina Ip, chairwoman of Hong Kong's pro-China New Peoples Party, said the protests had brought shame on Hong Kong. "In the long term, (this) will impact Hong Kong's business environment. I believe various negative consequences of damages in our economy and prosperity will soon emerge."

Starry Lee, chairwoman of the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong, also condemned the violence. "This is an insult to LegCo (Legislative Council), an insult to Hong Kong rule of law," she said.

Chinese censors have worked hard to erase or block news of the Hong Kong protests, wary that any large public rallies could inspire protests on the mainland.

Screens went black on BBC and CNN when they showed related reports in

Abide by treaty, warns U.K.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BELFAST

British Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt warned China on Tuesday of "serious consequences" if it breaches a bilateral agreement to preserve Hong Kong's freedoms. "Hong Kong is part of China and we have to accept that. But the freedoms are enshrined in a joint declaration" signed with former colonial ruler Britain, he said.

mainland China, as has happened during previous Hong Kong protests. Foreign news channels are only available in luxury hotels and a handful of high-end apartment complexes in China.

'Love of the motherland' State news agency Xinhua wrote an upbeat Chinese-language report about a government-arranged concert in Hong Kong to celebrate the handover anniversary, complete with descriptions of the audience singing the national anthem and how the performers showed their "ardent love of the motherland".

A state newspaper in China called for "zero tolerance" after the violence in Hong Kong.

"Out of blind arrogance and rage, protesters showed a complete disregard for law and order," the Global Times, published by the Communist Party's *People's Daily*, said in an editorial.

The U.N. human rights office in Geneva called on all sides to avoid violence.

Lawsuit filed for Trump's tax returns

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON

A House committee sued the Trump administration in Federal Court on Tuesday for access to U.S. President Donald Trump's tax returns, setting up a legal showdown over the records.

The House Ways and Means Committee said it needs the documents for a probe into tax law compliance by the President, among other things. It asked the court to order the administration to turn over the documents.

The committee originally demanded six years of Mr. Trump's tax records in April under a law that says the Internal Revenue Service "shall furnish" the returns of any taxpayer to a handful of top lawmakers.

But Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin told the committee in May that he wouldn't be turning over the returns to the Democratic-controlled House.

He concluded that the Treasury Department is "not authorised to disclose the requested returns and return information." The Justice Department in a legal opinion backed Mr. Mnuchin, saying the request lacked a legitimate legislative purpose and was an "unprecedented" use of congressional authority.

Zardari interview taken off air, sparks censorship fears in Pak.

Ex-President is facing probe over corruption cases

MEHMAL SARFRAZ
ISLAMABAD

On Saturday, journalist Hamid Mir interviewed former President and co-chairman of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), Asif Ali Zardari, in Parliament House in Islamabad. The interview was to be aired at 8 p.m. on Geo News on Monday.

The interview went on air but after a few minutes, it was taken off air without any explanation. Mr. Mir tweeted: "Interview of Asif Zardari stopped on Geo News within few minutes.. those who stopped it have no courage to accept publicly that they stopped it."

The incident started a debate on Twitter about media censorship in Pakistan and whether someone who is under arrest should be interviewed in the first place. Mr. Zardari is under arrest and being investigated for corruption, including a fake bank accounts case, by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB).

Mr. Mir told *The Hindu* that Mr. Zardari came to Parliament on a production order (with permission to attend a Parliament session), so there was nothing illegal about the interview. "Asif



Asif Ali Zardari

Zardari spoke to other journalists also but he gave me exclusive time separately. We broke the story the same day (Saturday). We ran the promo for the next two days, but finally when the interview started, it was stopped by Geo."

Mr. Mir added that he was told by Geo that they were under pressure but they only announced 'this interview cannot be broadcast today'. "I announced on Twitter that it was stopped from outside," he said.

Probe against Khan

Mr. Mir said Mr. Zardari mentioned about some investigation against Prime Minister Imran Khan in the U.K. "Maybe that's what bothered the government."

Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Ali Haider Zaidi of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) believes this interview should have never been done in the first place. "How can we interview criminals arrested for money launder-

ing? Will we interview someone arrested on drug possession charges? We have to draw the line somewhere," Mr. Zaidi told *The Hindu*.

Senator Mustafa Nawaz Khokhar, a spokesperson of PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, told *The Hindu* that this government believed in censorship like no other political party in Pakistan's history.

"When they can even ban harmless, innocent words in Parliament, they can ban anything and everything. Under what law they asked Geo News to take off an important interview? He hasn't been convicted of anything. This government is scared of the truth coming out and their lies being exposed. This is a shameless government."

Former Prime Minister and senior leader of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Shahid Khaqan Abbasi told *The Hindu* that "suppression of alternative viewpoints and dissent never works, not even in martial law regimes. We supposedly have democratic rule in Pakistan."

Some analysts say journalists always keep pushing the limits. "Lawfare is a tool for implementing political manipulations and achieving political goals," said one journalist on condition of anonymity.

U.S. brands Balochistan Liberation Army terrorist group

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

The U.S. on Tuesday designated militants fighting Pakistani rule in Balochistan as terrorists after it carried out deadly attacks targeting Chinese interests.

The State Department said it was classifying the Balochistan Liberation Army as

a global terrorist group, making it a crime for anyone in the United States to assist the militants and freezing any U.S. assets they may have.

The Balochistan Liberation Army "is an armed separatist group that targets security forces and civilians, mainly in ethnic Baloch areas of Pakistan," the State

Department said.

Pakistan has been fighting insurgents in the southwestern region since 2004, with the militants recently finding a new focus in rallying against China's investment that is part of its major Belt and Road initiative.

The Balochistan Liberation Army has targeted Chi-

na in Pakistan multiple times, including a brazen attack on the Chinese consulate in Karachi that killed four people in November.

In May, five people were killed after gunmen stormed the only five-star hotel in Gwadar, the port city which Pakistan is hoping to develop into a commercial hub.

U.S. lawmakers slam detention centres

It's a betrayal of America's values, say Democrats

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN
WASHINGTON

"Unconscionable", a "betrayal of our values" were some of the words Democratic lawmakers used on Monday to describe the detention centres for migrants along the U.S.'s southern border. Lawmakers said detained women had not been allowed to shower for 15 days, were told to drink out of a toilet bowl, and that the Customs and Border Police's (CBP) behaviour was "toxic".

The reactions came after more than a dozen members of the U.S. Congress, including high-profile freshman lawmaker from New York City, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, and presidential candidate from Texas, Joaquin Castro, toured two border facilities in El Paso and Clint, Texas, as part of a trip organised by the Congressional Hispanic Caucus.

On the same day (Mon-



Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez

day), ProPublica, a news outlet, carried a report on a Facebook group whose members - current and former border agents - made light of migrant deaths, posted racist messages and sexist memes.

The Facebook group formed in 2016 has around 9,500 members, according to ProPublica. One post about Monday's congressional visit urged border agents to throw a "burrito at these *****", referring to Ms. Ocasio-Cortez and her colleague, Congresswoman Vernonia Escobar.

One group member spec-

ulated that the graphic photograph of Oscar and Valeria Martinez, the father and daughter pair who drowned at the end of June in the Rio Grande, was fake, suggesting that the Democrats and liberal parties were behind it.

"Just left the 1st CBP facility. I see why CBP officers were being so physically & sexually threatening towards me. Officers were keeping women in cells w/ no water & had told them to drink out of the toilets. This was them on their GOOD behavior in front of members of Congress," Ms. Ocasio-Cortez wrote on Twitter.

'Toxic behaviour'

She said the women were held in tents and moved indoors just prior to the Congressional visit and that they were not allowed to shower for 15 days and "were allowed to start bathing four days ago (when visit was announced)."

"While mgmt was telling us it was a 'secure facility' where members of Congress had to check their phones,

we caught officers trying to sneak photos, laughing." Ms. Ocasio-Cortez tweeted on Monday, adding: "CBP's 'good' behavior was toxic. Imagine how they treat the women trapped inside."

"There was a toilet, but there was no running water, for people to drink. In fact one of the women said that she was told by an agent to drink water out of the toilet. "These are the conditions that have been created by the Trump administration," Mr. Castro said after the visit. He was heckled as he spoke.

Congresswoman Rashida Talib was also heckled as she spoke about her visit. "We don't care about sharia law. We care about Jesus Christ," one heckler said.

"The entire system is broken, rotten, and rife with abuse," Joseph Kennedy III, a Massachusetts lawmaker and part of the group that toured detention facilities, wrote on Twitter, describing the over-crowding and adding that the CBP was very resistant to Congressional oversight.

IN BRIEF



Christine Lagarde to head European Central Bank

BRUSSELS
EU leaders have nominated International Monetary Fund chief Christine Lagarde to be the new president of the European Central Bank. Ms. Lagarde announced she would step down from the global lender. ■ AP

Indian among 9 injured in Yemeni rebels attack

RIYADH
An Indian national was among nine people injured in an attack by Yemeni rebels on Abha international airport in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday, a spokesperson of the Saudi-led military coalition said. ■ PTI

Bezos pays out \$38 billion in divorce settlement

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
WASHINGTON

MacKenzie Bezos, wife of the world's richest man Jeff Bezos for 26 years, is set to walk away with a whopping \$38 billion in the world's biggest divorce settlement with the Amazon founder and CEO.

Ms. MacKenzie, 49, an author, will become the world's fourth-richest woman, and has already promised to give away at least half of her fortune, CNN Business reported.

Ms. MacKenzie has said she had "a disproportionate amount of money to share" and promised to work hard at giving it away "until the safe is empty".

The couple finalised their



Jeff and MacKenzie Bezos

divorce in April, entitling Ms. MacKenzie to 25% of the couple's joint Amazon stocks worth around \$38 billion, the report said.

Even with the settlement, Mr. Bezos will be the richest individual in the world with an estimated net worth of \$118 billion, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index.

14 sailors killed in Russian submarine fire

REUTERS
MOSCOW

Fourteen Russian sailors on board a deep water research submarine were killed in a fire on Monday while carrying out a survey of the sea floor, the Russian Defence Ministry was quoted as saying by Russian news agencies.

A Russian news outlet, RBC, cited an unnamed military source as saying the vessel was a nuclear-powered AS-12 deep sea submarine, but there was no official confirmation of that.

President Vladimir Putin ordered an inquiry into the accident, which took place in Russian waters.

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