

China warns protesters in Hong Kong

'Don't harm national security, don't challenge Basic Law and don't use city to undermine nation'

ATUL ANEJA
BEIJING

China on Monday made it plain that the rules governing Hong Kong were cast in stone and warned protesters, who have been pouring into the streets, that it fully backed the local authorities in confronting violent protests and defending the "rule of law".

In a media conference in Beijing, following weeks of protests, marked with sporadic violence, the spokesperson for Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of China's State Council, Yang Guang, asserted that there could not be any compromise with the enforcement of rule of law. He stressed that governance by law was the foundation of Hong Kong's sound business environment, and an important cornerstone for the region to maintain its prosperity and stability.

Crowds have been pouring into the streets, especially during weekends, for eight weeks to slam an extradition bill – now suspended – that would have cleared transfer of criminal suspects in Hong Kong to courts in China.

Spelling out China's zero-tolerance towards unlawful protests, Mr. Yang said: "We cannot just sit by and watch a small group of people recklessly trample on the rule of law." He added that if the backbone of rule of law was shaken, the prosperity and stability of Hong Kong would be in jeopardy.

Firm support

The official also made it explicit that there were no differences between central and local atrocities in Hong Kong which protesters and their backers could exploit. "The central government firmly supports Chief Executive Carrie Lam leading the



Chaos on streets: A protester throwing a tear gas canister back at the police in Hong Kong on Sunday. • AP

Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) government in the law-based governance, supports the Hong Kong police in their strict law enforcement, supports relevant departments of the SAR government and judicial organs in punishing the violent criminals in accordance with the law, and supports the peo-

ple who love both our country and Hong Kong in their action to defend the rule of law in the region," he observed.

On Monday, Beijing also hammered home the redlines, defined by the one country-two system formula, which allows Hong Kong substantial autonomy, in de-

fining and executing judicial, administrative and financial rules, while remaining a part of China.

Mr. Yang was unambiguous in listing three bottom lines – "no harm to national security, no challenge to the central government's authority and the Basic Law, and no using Hong Kong as a base to undermine China", while spelling out Beijing's most comprehensive response to the protests so far.

Asked whether the Hong Kong garrison of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) would be deployed to quell the protests, Mr. Yang said: "The Basic Law has clear statements on that question, and I have nothing to add."

Another Chinese official, Xu Luying who addressed the media conference signalled that mainland China and Hong Kong's future, based on economic integration, was inextricably tied.

Afghan presidential hopefuls fear for safety after Kabul blast

On Sunday, the office of Amrullah Saleh came under attack

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
KABUL

Candidates jockeying to become Afghanistan's next President lashed out at the incumbent Ashraf Ghani on Monday after deadly violence cast a shadow over the first official day of campaigning.

At least 20 people – most of them civilians – were killed and 50 others wounded on Sunday when a suicide attacker and gunman targeted the Kabul office of Ghani's running mate, Amrullah Saleh.

The violence served as a grim reminder of Afghanistan's woeful security situation and the sort of mayhem and murder that have beset previous polls.

"The government has not paid attention to the candidates' security," said Qadir



Security forces inspecting the site of attack in Kabul on Monday. • AP

because they see Mr. Ghani as using his office for an unfair advantage.

Mohammad Hakim Torsan, considered a long-shot candidate, said his supporters worry about a repeat of the kind of violence that marred previous polls, when insurgents launched frequent attacks.

"Most of the candidates are worried about the security, but they still have to campaign. The government must provide security for us and the people," Mr. Torsan said.

Interior Ministry spokesman Nasrat Rahimi said security forces had been preparing for the elections for eight months and taken "serious measures" to protect candidates, including the provision of armoured vehicles.

Five Sudanese protesters shot dead ahead of talks

Four students among those killed

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
KHARTOUM

Five demonstrators, including four students, were shot dead at a rally in Sudan on Monday, a day before protest leaders and ruling generals meet to resolve the remaining issues concerning the forming of a civilian administration.

The two sides have already signed a power-sharing deal that aims to set up a joint civilian-military ruling body which in turn would install civilian rule.

That is the main demand of a nationwide protest movement that led to the

April ouster of long-time leader Omar al-Bashir and has since demanded that the military council which took his place cede power to civilians.

But ahead of the talks, five protesters were killed on Monday in Al-Obeid, the capital of North Kordofan state, a doctors committee linked to the protest movement said in a statement.

"Five martyrs succumbed to direct wounds from sniper bullets during a peaceful rally in Al-Obeid," the committee said.

The reason for the rally was not immediately clear.

Trump calls black lawmaker 'racist'

He says calling his critic Cummings' district 'rodent infested mess' is not racist

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON

Facing growing accusations of racism for his incendiary tweets, President Donald Trump is seeking to deflect the criticism by labelling a leading black congressman as himself racist.

In the latest rhetorical shot at non-white lawmakers, Mr. Trump said his weekend comments referring to Rep. Elijah Cummings' majority-black Baltimore district as a "disgusting, rat and rodent infested mess" where "no human being would want to live" were not racist.

Instead, Mr. Trump argued, "if racist Elijah Cummings

would focus more of his energy on helping the good people of his district, and Baltimore itself, perhaps progress could be made in fixing the mess."

"His radical 'oversight' is a joke!" Mr. Trump tweeted on Sunday.

Speaking in television interviews, acting chief of staff Mick Mulvaney said Mr. Trump was reacting in frustration to the Democrats' unrelenting investigations and talk of impeachment.

"I understand that everything that Donald Trump says is offensive to some people," Mr. Mulvaney said. But he added, "The President is



Elijah Cummings. • AFP

pushing back against what he sees as wrong. It's how he's done it in the past, and he'll continue to do it in the future."

At a hearing last week, Mr. Cummings accused a top administration official of wrongly calling reports of

filthy, overcrowded border facilities "unsubstantiated."

"When the President hears lies like that, he's going to fight back," Mr. Mulvaney said.

Mr. Trump's tweets on Saturday also charged that Cummings' district, which includes Johns Hopkins Hospital, the Social Security Administration and the national headquarters of the NAACP, is "considered the worst run and most dangerous anywhere in the U.S."

Condemnation followed from Democrats over the weekend, including some of the party's presidential candidates.

U.S., China revive talks, keep expectations low

Delegations to meet in Shanghai today

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BEIJING

Two months after U.S.-China talks aimed at ending a tariff war broke down, both sides are trying to temper hopes for a breakthrough when negotiations resume on Tuesday.

"I don't know if they're going to make a deal," Mr. Trump said on Friday. "Maybe they will, maybe they won't. I don't care." He repeated his claim that the U.S. is prospering by "taking in tens of billions of dollars" from his tariff hikes on Chinese products. In reality, those are paid by U.S. com-

panies and consumers who buy Chinese goods.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer are due to meet on Tuesday and Wednesday in Shanghai with a delegation led by China's economy czar, Vice Premier Liu He.

China is resisting U.S. pressure to roll back plans for government-led development of industry leaders in robotics, artificial intelligence and other technologies. U.S. complains those efforts depend on stealing or pressuring foreign firms to hand over technology.

ELSEWHERE



Putin opponent Navalny was poisoned: doctor

MOSCOW
Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny was "poisoned" by an unidentified toxic substance and doctors have sent him back to jail despite his condition, his lawyer and personal physician said on Monday.

Chinese 'cyber-dissident' given 12-year jail term

BEIJING
China's first "cyber-dissident", whose website reported on sensitive topics, including human rights, was sentenced to 12 years in prison on Monday for leaking State secrets, a court said. Huang Qi ran a website called "64 Tianwang". • AFP

Death toll in Nigeria Boko Haram attack rises to 65

23 died in attack on a funeral, 42 killed as they chased jihadists

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
GAJIRAM

An attack this weekend by Boko Haram fighters on a funeral in northeast Nigeria has left 65 people dead, almost triple the initial toll, a local official said on Sunday.

Dozens more bodies were discovered following the assault on Saturday by gunmen on a village close to the regional capital Maiduguri. "It is 65 people dead and 10 injured," local government chairman Muhammed Bulama said.

Mr. Bulama said more than 20 people died in the initial attack on a funeral gathering and dozens more



Men carry a body for burial in Budu near Maiduguri. • AFP

died as they tried to chase away the jihadists.

The leader of an anti-Boko Haram militia Bunu Bukar Mustapha said 23 people were killed as they returned from the funeral and "the re-

maining 42 were killed when they pursued the terrorists".

Mr. Bulama said the attack may have been in retaliation for the killing two weeks ago of 11 Boko Haram fighters by local residents.

At least 52 dead in Brazil prison riot

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
RIO DE JANEIRO

At least 52 inmates were killed in a prison riot in northern Brazil on Monday as rival gang factions fought each other, an official said.

Sixteen of the dead were decapitated while others apportioned in the second major violence to rock the country's overpopulated and deadly prison system in as many months. Fighting broke out in the Altamira Regional Recovery Center at around 7:00 a.m. (1530 IST).

Two guards were taken hostage during the hours-long clashes, which were brought under control at around midday. They were eventually freed.

British warship arrives in Gulf to escort U.K.-flagged tankers

U.K. rules out swapping seized oil tankers with Iran

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

A British warship dispatched to the Gulf to escort U.K.-flagged ships amid heightened tensions with Iran has arrived in the region, the Defence Ministry said.

HMS Duncan was sent to help accompany vessels through the Strait of Hormuz after Iran seized a British-flagged tanker there earlier this month, in what London called an act of "State piracy".

The Royal Navy destroyer joins frigate HMS Montrose, which is due to undergo maintenance in nearby Bahrain in late August. It will be replaced by another frigate,



Safe transit: The British destroyer, HMS Duncan, will support the safe passage of ships through the Strait of Hormuz. • AFP

HMS Kent, later this year.

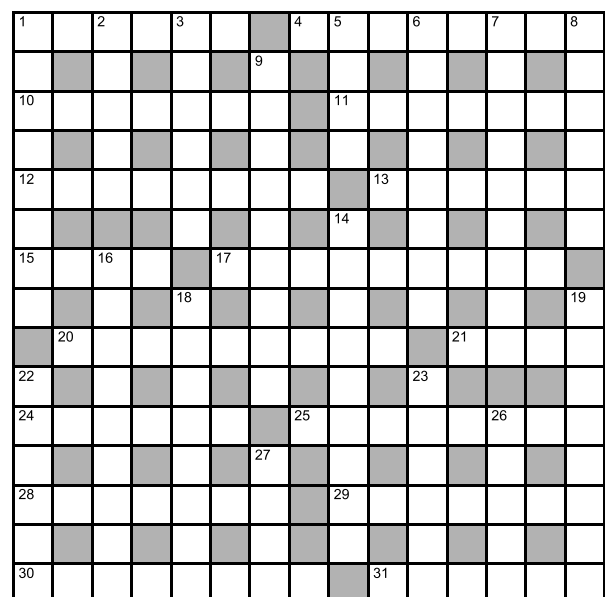
Britain has said it wants to establish a European-led maritime protection force in the Gulf to protect vulnerable shipping.

HMS Montrose has so far accompanied 35 merchant vessels during 20 separate

transits, according to the Royal Navy.

British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab has ruled out swapping seized oil tankers with Iran. "There is no quid pro quo," Mr. Raab said. "This is not about some kind of barter," he added.

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12691

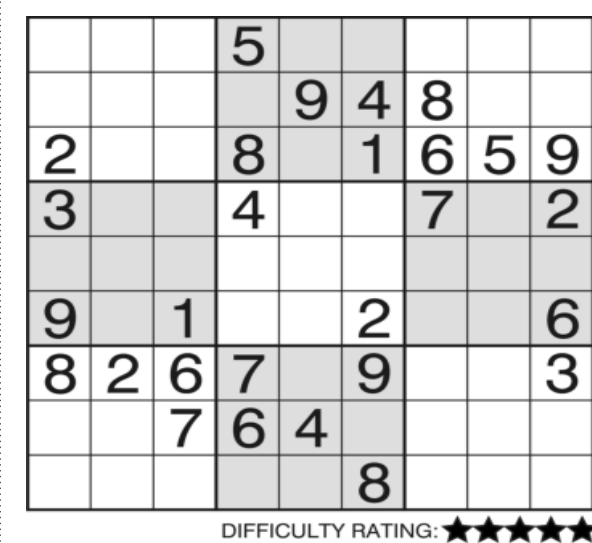


ACROSS

- Wordplay is hard to take advantage of (6)
- A ball with very small proceeds (8)
- Scrub bishop filled with filth (7)
- Fractured season beginning to derail around first of January (7)

- (set by Spinner)
- After six balls, near defeat! (8)
 - Handy fuel wasted by American (6)
 - Exploit group after money (4)
 - Style fest turned into medium for viral propagation in Africa (6,3)
 - Check fraud's caravan (9)
 - Spotted amongst returning brigade yesterday (4)
 - Everyone runs around the day before pre-university course (1,5)
 - Firm overwhelmed by extraordinary income of money (8)
 - Be suspended, having patched up bad clutch (7)
 - Perhaps a very small mark that's red? (7)
 - Awareness to retain differentiator, creating anticipation (8)
 - Cold reduced and fizzled out (6)
 - DOWN
 - Renders each version on point (8)
 - In part, snob leverages aristocrat (5)
 - Control ultimately helps one producing spells (6)
 - Physician's patent, say, for medical apparatus? (4)
 - Corrected exactly after commercial by editor (8)
 - Clue fairly complicated? Not Spinner's, precisely! (9)
 - Deal accepts demand draft for hamper (6)
 - Call to embrace theism destroyed by science (9)
 - Steps from affected castes gaining voice (9)
 - Solo needs tightening up of unresolved parts (5,4)
 - Piece together animal insignia missing tail (8)
 - Erudite is dead cute, somehow (8)
 - Cleans up wife's remains (6)
 - Mellow following England's win (6)
 - Beer poured into empty mugs for men (5)
 - Periods – a girl's everyday suffering, basically (4)

SUDOKU



Solution to puzzle 12690

8	5	9	1	2	4	6	3	7
7	1	4	3	6	9	8	5	2
6	2	3	5	8	7	9	4	1
3	8	5	2	7	6	1	9	4
4	7	2	9	1	5	3	8	6
1	9	6	8	4	3	2	7	5
5	4	1	6	9	8	7	2	3
2	3	8	7	5	1	4	6	9
9	6	7	4	3	2	5	1	8

FAITH

Avatars praised

Andal talks of Lord Mahavishnu's vibhava avatars in Her Thiruppavai, said Sujatha Raghavan in a lecture. In verse twenty-three, She describes His beauty in the reclining posture, and His majestic gait when He struts like a lion. The Lord is described as a lion that is asleep in a cave. When the slumbering lion wakes up, it shakes its thick mane, rolls its fierce red eyes looking around and comes out with a loud roar, befitting its stature as the king of beasts. "So must you come out, Krishna," the Gopikas in Andal's verse pray to Him. "Come out like the lion that You are, and be seated on Your throne. And then listen to us, as we place our request before You," say the Gopikas. The Lord is charming, whether He sits, stands or reclines, and this is brought out here. Krishna is as protective of His devotees as Narasimha was of Prahlada. Did Narasimha not come out of a pillar to take care of Prahlada, just as a mother rushes to protect her child?

Verse ten may be taken as a reference to Lord Rama, for Kumbhakarna is mentioned here. Kumbhakarna, the asura who spent most of his life sleeping, was defeated by Rama. In this pasuram, the Gopikas are trying to wake a girl who does not respond. The door remains closed, and she does not open it for her waiting companions. So, the other Gopikas ask her if Kumbhakarna had gifted to her his ability to sleep for many hours at a stretch.

In verse twelve, Andal talks of Rama as manathukku inyaan – the One who is pleasing to the heart. Krishna killed Bakasura, and Rama vanquished Ravana. Whether He comes as Rama or Krishna, He destroys evil and establishes dharma. While Andal celebrates Lord's other avatars, it is Krishna avatar who is celebrated throughout Thiruppavai.