

Hong Kong leader rules out concessions

Carrie Lam asks protesters to end violence and chaos, warns of lasting economic troubles

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
HONGKONG

Hong Kong's leader Carrie Lam warned on Friday that two months of pro-democracy demonstrations were causing economic chaos in the city but ruled out making concessions to "silence the violent protesters".

The embattled leader met with business leaders as thousands of pro-democracy activists staged a sit-in at Hong Kong airport, hoping to win international support for their movement.

Ms. Lam, whose support for a Bill to allow extradition to mainland China sparked the crisis, warned that the economic impact of the unrest threatened to be worse than the 2003 SARS outbreak in the financial hub.

"Compared to the economic downturn caused by SARS that we handled previously, which caused an economic storm, the situation this time is more severe," she said at an abruptly organised press conference.

"In other words, the economic recovery will take a very long time."



Demonstrators at the arrival hall of the Hong Kong International Airport on Friday. ■ REUTERS

The private sector and the tourism industry in particular have raised concerns about the economic impact of the ongoing protests on the city, with travel agencies reporting drops of up to 50% in group tour bookings and the tourism board warning of double-digit declines in visitor arrivals in the second half of July.

Hong Kong carrier Cathay Pacific has also warned that inbound bookings are down. Protesters have continued to stage almost daily rallies

which have seen increasingly violent confrontations with police, prompting several countries to issue Hong Kong travel warnings for their citizens.

Extradition Bill

The protests began two months ago over the controversial extradition Bill but have morphed into a broader movement demanding democratic reforms.

Ms. Lam has refused to cave in to the demands, which include a call for the

direct election of the city's Chief Executive, currently chosen by Beijing.

"As far as political solution is concerned, I don't think we should just sort of make concessions in order to silence the violent protesters," she said.

"We should do what is right for Hong Kong. And at this moment, what is right for Hong Kong... is to stop the violence, and to say no to the chaotic situation that Hong Kong has experienced in the last few weeks, so that

we can move on."

On Friday, activists staged a sit-in at Hong Kong airport's arrivals hall and held up signs in Chinese and English condemning police violence. "No rioters, only tyranny," the demonstrators chanted as they began a three-day action. "Save Hong Kong from tyranny and police brutality!" read one sign.

Protesters have staged increasingly inventive rallies across Hong Kong, and brought out supporters ranging from families to lawyers in a bid to show the broad backing for their demands.

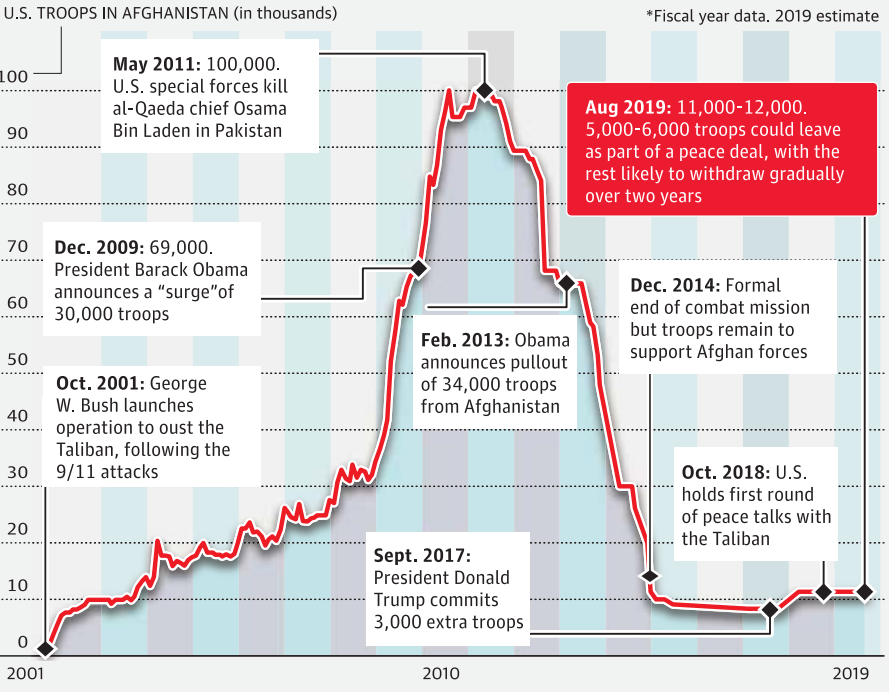
But the demonstrations have also increasingly descended into violence, with police firing tear gas and rubber bullets and protesters hurling bricks and bottles.

The airport sit-in is the second time the demonstrators have brought their message to the busy travel hub, hoping to garner support from international arrivals.

"Ask me about Hong Kong" read signs in different languages attached to the sleeves of some of the protesters.

Push for peace in Afghanistan

A peace deal to end Afghanistan's 18-year-long conflict could see the U.S. pulling out thousands of troops in exchange for promises from the Taliban that it will sever ties to militant groups like al-Qaeda



Source: Graphic News

China orders Cathay Pacific to suspend staff backing protests

REUTERS
HONG KONG/BEIJING

China's aviation regulator on Friday demanded that Hong Kong flag carrier Cathay Pacific Airways suspend personnel who have engaged in illegal protests in the city from staffing flights into its airspace from August 10.

Hong Kong has been embroiled in increasingly violent anti-government street protests for the past two

months, which a top Chinese official described this week as the greatest crisis since its return from British to Chinese rule in 1997.

Last week, a Cathay pilot was among over 40 people charged with rioting for allegedly taking part in violent clashes with the police near Beijing's main representative office in the city.

On Friday night, the Civil Aviation Administration of

China said the Cathay crew who engaged in the protests pose a threat to aviation safety in mainland China, according to a statement on its website.

The aviation authority ordered Cathay to provide identification information for its crew on mainland-bound flights. Crew members without the authority's approval will not be allowed into its airspace.

37 dead in ethnic clashes in Chad

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
N'DJAMENA

At least 37 people have been killed in fighting this week between rival ethnic groups in Chad, President Idriss Deby said on Friday.

"The intercommunal conflict has become a national concern," Mr. Deby said. He said that in just three days, 37 people were killed in Ouaddie, a strategic area bordering Sudan.

Trump reassures NRA on gun control

President says group's views 'can be fully represented and respected'

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump said on Friday that he has reassured the National Rifle Association that its views about the right to bear arms won't be ignored in Washington's response to recent mass shootings.

Mr. Trump said he is talking with the NRA and others to make sure that their "very strong views can be fully re-

presented and respected".

"I am the biggest Second Amendment person there is, but we all must work together for the good and safety of our Country," Mr. Trump tweeted.

"Common sense things can be done that are good for everyone!"

The NRA, however, is uncompromising when it comes to gun control. Association Chief Executive

Wayne LaPierre said in a rare public statement on Thursday that some federal gun control proposals "would make millions of law-abiding Americans less safe and less able to defend themselves and their loved ones".

Mr. Trump did not say specifically how the NRA's position could be reconciled with the push for new gun control measures.

On Thursday, Senate Ma-

jority Leader Mitch McConnell said he now wants to consider background checks and other action.

At the same time, Mr. Trump said he has a "greater influence now over the Senate and the House", which can be used to rally Republicans around stronger federal background check laws as Congress and the White House work on a response to the mass shootings in U.S.

ELSEWHERE



Trump names new acting intelligence director

WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump on Thursday named Joseph Maguire, the nation's top counterterrorism official, as acting National Intelligence Director, part of a shake-up at the agency that oversees 17 U.S. spy agencies. He is set to replace Sue Gordon. AP

U.S. sends Hezbollah financier to prison

WASHINGTON

A Lebanese businessman designated by U.S. as a financial supporter of Hezbollah was sentenced to five years in prison and ordered to forfeit \$50 million. Kassim Tajideen, 63, pleaded guilty in December last to one count. AFP

Brexit turmoil drives Britain towards recession

GDP falls 0.2% in the April-June period

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

Britain's economy unexpectedly shrank in the second quarter of the year on Brexit turmoil, official data showed on Friday, placing the country on the verge of recession.

Gross domestic product fell 0.2% in the April-June period, the first time the economy has contracted in almost seven years, the Office for National Statistics said in a statement.

The data, which was worse than market expectations for zero growth and also reflects global economic strains, sent the pound sliding against the euro and dollar.

Another contraction in the current third quarter

would put Britain in official recession, ahead of the nation's expected withdrawal from the EU at the end of October. "The latest data reveal an economy in decline and skirting with recession as headwinds from slower global economic growth are exacerbated by Brexit-related paralysis," said IHS Markit economist Chris Williamson.

The government's official forecaster last month warned that Britain would slide into a year-long recession should it leave the EU without a deal.

Bank of England Governor Mark Carney recently warned that a no-deal Brexit could undermine sectors of the economy such as the car industry and farming.

Chechnya sends former IS members to schools, not jails

They share their experiences about the perils of extremism

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
GROZNY

Zalina Gabibulayeva, a mother of five, says she was "tricked" into joining the jihadists in Syria five years ago. Now, repentant and repatriated to Russia's Chechnya, she goes to schools to teach others of the dangers of extremism.

Countries around the world are grappling with the question of how to treat citizens who went to the Islamic State "caliphate" and have since decided to return.

That problem is felt particularly keenly in Russia, which has seen thousands of people leave to fight alongside jihadists in Syria, according to President Vladimir



Kheda Saratova

mir Putin.

While some Western nations have stripped IS recruits of citizenship or banned them from coming back, Russia has repatriated women and children.

Most of Russia's IS recruits came from Muslim-majority Caucasus repu-

blics, such as Chechnya.

The republic, however, has welcomed in women like Ms. Gabibulayeva – with the expectation that some will go to work to prevent young Muslims from becoming radicalised. "It's very difficult for (the women) to talk about their experience but we get them to understand it's a way to show they repent," says Kheda Saratova, who sits on the rights council of Chechnya's leader Ramzan Kadyrov.

Ms. Saratova hopes Russian authorities will remove their ban on repatriating women from Syria and Iraq. The activist says around 200 women and children have already been brought back.

Huawei unveils 'Harmony' as a rival to Android

First version to launch later this year

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
DONGGUAN

Chinese telecom giant Huawei unveiled its own operating system on Friday, as it faces the threat of losing access to Google's Android platform, amid escalating U.S.-China trade tensions.

The highly anticipated operating system is considered crucial for the tech titan's survival as it confronts a looming White House ban on U.S. companies selling technology products to Huawei, which could remove its access to Android.

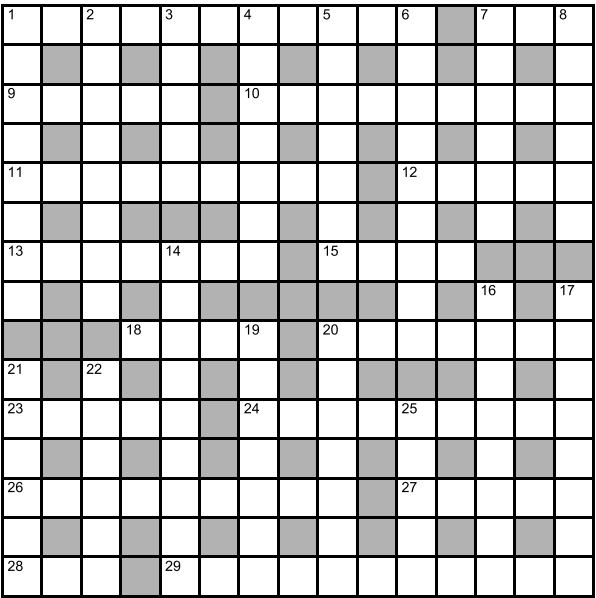
Richard Yu, the head of Huawei's consumer business, revealed HarmonyOS – HongMeng in Chinese – at a press conference in Dongguan. He said the first version would launch later this

year in its smart screen products, before expanding across a range of smart devices, including wearable technology, over the next three years. "If you're asking when will we apply this to the smartphone, we can do it at any time," he said.

"If we cannot use it (Android) in the future, we can immediately switch to the HarmonyOS." But Mr. Yu said Huawei had no plan to "launch a smartphone with HarmonyOS" while noting that "our backup plan is always ready".

Mr. Yu said HarmonyOS was "future oriented" and designed to be "more smooth and secure", which he said was "completely different" from Android and iOS.

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12701



■ ACROSS

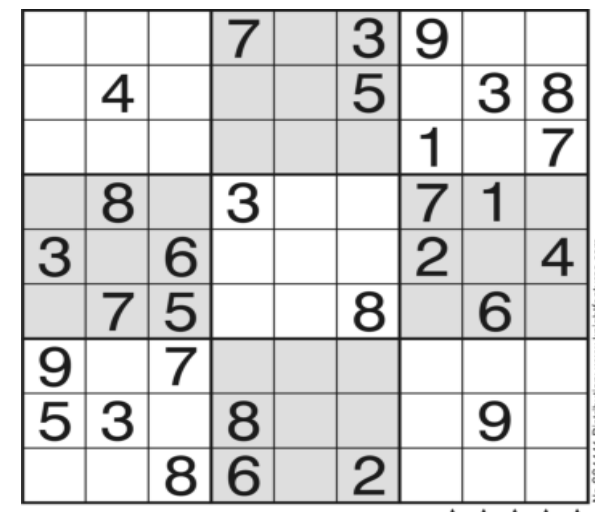
- 1 With complaining wife everyone comes here to pray (7,4)
- 7 Decline, it's not the full story (3)
- 9 Talk of heads that are free (5)
- 10 Account of how one hurried back with some food (9)

(set by Arden)

- 11 Unrelated, perhaps remains the same (9)
 - 12 Good score – in short keen to get fifty (5)
 - 13 Sorrowful trend, maybe decelerating (7)
 - 15 Period to review issue (4)
 - 18 Back a back (4)
 - 20 Associated with anonymous business opening (7)
 - 23 My private breed (5)
 - 24 Arranged loan, Spain gets capital (9)
 - 26 It's a big comedown from a height in a curtain (9)
 - 27 Reading every compass (5)
 - 28 Feel sorry in a way, while in Paris (3)
 - 29 Prefer two boys facing each other, it will give one a jolt (8,3)
- DOWN
- 1 Aquatic creatures in half the country (part of Great Britain excluded) (8)
 - 2 Devotee says work can wait (8)

- 3 In record time becomes clumsy (5)
- 4 Comprehensive information on the boy (7)
- 5 A game – make it short (7)
- 6 Raising and going away, regularly seen inside (9)
- 7 Booze partly lost in godowns (6)
- 8 Criminals crossing English river (6)
- 14 Overlap India and China, allow an economic union (9)
- 16 Follow people to the water outlet (8)
- 17 Cheers erupt from mid-level for an astronomer (8)
- 19 Part that puts husband in a daze (7)
- 20 Agreement as soon as there is TV coverage (7)
- 21 Excels at regular intervals, the song is sweet (6)
- 22 Cooler inside, are they esoteric? (6)
- 25 For example, Tata's average is picking up (5)

SUDOKU



Solution to puzzle 12700

G	A	M	R	C	F	A	C					
R	S	T	S	E	H	N	P					
U	N	C	L	A	S	P	T	I	E	R	C	E
M	A	C	I	I	A	A	U	U				
P	A	T	E	L	L	A	N	T	A	R	E	S
Y	E	L	N	M	R	H						
F	L	O	T	U	S	E	A	T	E	R	S	
F	A	L	G	E	R	A	E	M	U	L	A	T
R	E	L	L	E	M	U	L	A	T	E		
C	O	N	S	O	L	E	R	A	W	D	E	A
E	I	I	I	N	J	I	R	N	I			
M	A	L	D	I	V	E	S	A	R	G	O	N
L	L	I	Y	H	P	E						

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

Ignorance is evil

The understanding of the real and the unreal continues to be muddled in people since days of yore. This is because they are influenced by the prevailing varied opinions of people on spiritual and philosophical matters that are mostly based on their personal predilections.

For instance, the Charuvakas, who are well versed in the Vedas, are strong opponents of Vedic knowledge. Guided by the materialistic outlook, their orientation is towards to whatever is worldly. They believe in the reality of what is seen and experienced and hence feel the body mind complex in an individual is more real than the self within which exists and functions in a subtle manner. By firmly establishing the presence of the atma in every living being as the only enduring reality, Adi Sankara paves the way for people to get rid of their ignorant perspective on life and values of human existence, pointed out Nannilam Sri Rajagopala Ganapadigal in a discourse. Even among non-believers, some would say that the body alone is real, and some the life force is real; while some others would argue that the senses, intellect, mind etc as real.

The acharya has endeavoured to interpret Vedic truths with regard to the self and the material world to enable people to analyse the validity of the various perspectives. He affirms that ignorance that deludes is the greatest enemy for man. This is dispelled only by the grace of the Guru who as Dakshinamurthy is source of this knowledge. When one possesses true knowledge, there is no room for ignorance to prevail just as in the presence of light darkness automatically cannot exist. Teachers of spiritual knowledge are hence honoured for they impart the most valuable knowledge, Self knowledge that liberates one from the bonds of samsara.