



ELSEWHERE

Won't stop Fed chief if he offers to resign: Trump

WASHINGTON
U.S. President Donald Trump sharply criticised Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell on Friday and said he wouldn't try to stop the chief U.S. central banker if he offered to resign. Mr. Trump told reporters, "I'm not happy with Jay Powell." He had earlier questioned on Twitter who was "our bigger enemy," — Mr. Powell or Chinese leader Xi Jinping? REUTERS

British Sikh man choked to death in Thailand

LONDON
Amitpal Singh Bajaj, 34, a British Sikh man was earlier this month choked to death by a drunk Norwegian man after they got into an argument at a hotel in Thailand. Bajaj, his wife and son were in Thailand for a holiday and were staying in the Centara Hotel in Phuket at the time of the incident, the BBC reported. PTI

N. Korea launches more short-range missiles

SEOUL
North Korea fired what appeared to be two short-range ballistic missiles into the sea off its east coast on Saturday, the South Korean military said. Saturday's launch was the seventh by North Korea since U.S. President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un met in June. REUTERS

Hong Kong police fire tear gas to break up anti-govt. protests

4 subway stations closed down around the densely populated area of Kwun Tong

REUTERS
HONG KONG

Hong Kong police fired volleys of tear gas to break up anti-government protests in a gritty industrial suburb on Saturday after activists threw petrol bombs and bricks, as China freed a British consulate worker whose detention had fuelled tensions.

Four MTR subway stations were closed around Kwun Tong, a densely populated area of the Chinese-ruled city on the east of the Kowloon peninsula, but thousands packed the streets anyway, most carrying umbrellas against the sun.

Police used tear gas after some protesters threw Molotov cocktails and bricks and others tore up "smart" lamp posts equipped with surveillance cameras. Others had set up roadblocks with bamboo scaffolding. It was the first use of tear gas in 10 days after a series of mostly peaceful demonstrations in the former British colony.

There were no immediate reports of injuries.

'Give me democracy'

"Give me democracy or give me death," was spray-painted on a wall, an illustration how the demands of the protesters have expanded beyond the withdrawal of a Bill that would have allowed extraditions to China. The



I resist: Protesters confronting riot police at the Kowloon Bay area in Hong Kong on Saturday. ■AFP

government said in a statement the protesters "posed a serious threat to the safety of everyone" at the scene. "After repeated warnings to the protesters... police officers deployed tear gas and minimum force to disperse protesters," it said.

There were sporadic, smaller protests elsewhere in the territory which continued after nightfall. Police fired tear gas in a running battle with protesters blocking a highway in the Wong Tai Sin district, to the northwest of Kwun Tong.

The airport and the roads and railways leading to it operated normally despite plans by protesters to implement a "stress test" of transport links after weeks of unrest. The airport was forced to close last week after protesters thronged the main terminal for several days, grounding around 1,000 flights and occasionally clashing with police. The wider calls for democracy have plunged the city into an unprecedented crisis posing a direct challenge for Communist Party leaders in Beijing.

Demonstrators say they are fighting the erosion of the "one country, two systems" arrangement that enshrines a high degree of autonomy for Hong Kong since it was handed back from British to Chinese rule in 1997.

Hundreds took part in an "anti-fake news" protest,

with people waving the Hong Kong and China flags and targeting government-funded broadcaster RTHK.

A station spokeswoman, Amen Ng, rejected claims that RTHK was engaged in fake news.

British staffer freed

British consulate staffer Simon Cheng was detained for 15 days for violating public security management regulations, police in Shenzhen, across the border from Hong Kong, said on their Twitter-like Weibo account.

Police said Mr. Cheng was released as scheduled on Saturday and that his legal rights and interests had been observed. They also said Mr. Cheng had confessed to accusations against him, a commonly used comment by Chinese police, even though Cheng was not given a chance to defend himself in court. Mr. Cheng had now returned to Hong Kong, his family said on his Facebook page. Cathay Pacific Airways, which has become the biggest corporate casualty of the protests after China demanded it suspend staff involved in the demonstrations, protested against a planned rally by the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions around the airport's "Cathay City" HQ on Monday.

Trump, Macron find 'points of convergence' ahead of G7 meet

French President hosts U.S. counterpart at surprise lunch

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BIARRITZ

French President Emmanuel Macron and his U.S. counterpart Donald Trump have found "major points of convergence" on subjects including trade, Iran's nuclear programme and the wildfires consuming parts of the Amazon, a French presidency official said on Saturday.

After an unscheduled two-hour lunch before the opening of the G7 summit in Biarritz, Mr. Macron "created the conditions for a good degree of convergence within the (G7) group, after obtaining clarifications from Donald Trump" on key issues, the official said.

Regarding the escalating tensions between Washington and Tehran, for example, "Donald Trump confirmed that he does not see a conflict, that he wanted a deal with Iran," the official said. On the trade front, where Mr. Trump has threatened retaliation over France's new levy on U.S. tech giants who pay the bulk of their EU taxes in low-rate jurisdictions, Mr. Macron insisted that "there is no reason to spark a trade war over this," the official said.

Mr. Trump himself seemed contented after the lunch, which came after a series of combative tweets that suggested he was in no mood to compromise with this G7 peers.



Culinary diplomacy: U.S. President Donald Trump with French counterpart Emmanuel Macron in Biarritz on Saturday. ■AP

China hits out at Trump following new tariffs

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BEIJING

China on Saturday angrily hit out at the latest U.S. tariff hikes on its goods, saying that a "bullying" Washington would eventually "eat its own bitter fruit".

Mr. Trump on Friday increased existing and planned tariffs on a total of \$550 billion in Chinese goods, in response to new tit-for-tat levy hikes announced earlier that day by Beijing on \$75 billion of U.S. imports.

A Chinese Commerce Ministry spokesman on Saturday denounced Washington's "unilateral and bullying trade protectionism". The tariff increase "seriously

undermines the multilateral trading system and the normal international trade order, and the U.S. will surely eat its own bitter fruit. "The Chinese side strongly urges the U.S. side not to misjudge the situation, not to underestimate the determination of the Chinese people, and immediately stop its mistaken actions, otherwise all consequences will be borne by the U.S.," he said.

By the end of the year, the feud will affect nearly all imports and exports between the two countries, with U.S. companies — many of whom rely on China for inputs — particularly worried by the rapidly changing conflict.

Iran oil tanker now heading towards Turkey

Greece had refused to aid the vessel

ASSOCIATED PRESS
DUBAI

An Iranian-flagged oil tanker being pursued by the U.S. changed its listed destination to a port in Turkey early on Saturday after Greece said it wouldn't risk its relations with America by aiding it.

The crew of the *Adrian Darya 1*, formerly known as the *Grace 1*, updated its listed destination in its Automatic Identification System to Mersin, Turkey, a port city in the country's south and home to an oil terminal.

Iranian state media and officials did not immediately acknowledge the new reported destination of the *Adrian Darya*, which carries 2.1 million barrels of Iranian crude oil worth some \$130 million. Nor was there any immediate reaction from Turkey.

The ship-tracking website MarineTraffic.com showed the *Adrian Darya's* position as just south of Sicily in the Mediterranean Sea. At current speeds, it estimated the *Adrian Darya* would reach



Iranian oil tanker *Adrian Darya 1* in Gibraltar earlier this month. ■REUTERS

Mersin in about a week.

The *Adrian Darya's* detention and later release by Gibraltar have added fuel to the growing tensions between Washington and Tehran. In U.S. federal court documents, authorities allege the *Adrian Grace's* true owner is Iran's Revolutionary Guard.

The U.S. declared the Guard a foreign terror organisation in April, the first time America named a military force of a nation as such, giving it the legal power to issue a warrant for the vessel's seizure.

Johnson asks EU to 'get rid of' backstop

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BIARRITZ

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Saturday that the European Union (EU) needed to drop its insistence on the so-called Irish backstop to avoid a "no deal" Brexit.

"I don't want a 'no deal' Brexit. I say to our friends in the EU, if they don't want a 'no deal' Brexit then we have got to get rid of the backstop from the treaty," Mr. Johnson told reporters on the way to the G7 summit in Biarritz, France.

He also responded to EU Council president Donald Tusk, who earlier urged Mr. Johnson not to go down in history as "Mr. No Deal". "If Donald Tusk does not want to go down as Mr. No Deal Brexit then that point should be borne in mind too," Mr. Johnson said.

During a press conference in Biarritz, Mr. Tusk had warned: "One thing I will not cooperate on is a 'no deal', and I still hope that Prime Minister Johnson will not like to go down in history as Mr. No Deal."

Brazil records highest number of fires since 2013

Figures released a day after President authorised military deployment to control the situation

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
REUTERS
PORTO VELHO

Hundreds of new fires are raging in the Amazon rainforest in northern Brazil, official data showed on Saturday, amid growing international pressure on President Jair Bolsonaro to put out the blazes.

Official figures show that 78,383 forest fires were recorded in Brazil so far this year, the highest number for any year since 2013, and experts say the clearing of land during the months-long dry season to make way for crops or grazing has accelerated the deforestation.

More than half of the fires are in the Amazon, and some 1,663 new fires were ignited between Thursday and Friday, according to the National Institute for Space Research (INPE).

Global outrage

The new data came a day after Mr. Bolsonaro authorised the deployment of the military to fight the fires and crack down on criminal activities in the region. The blazes have stirred outrage



Lungs on fire: A tract of Amazon being burnt and cleared by loggers in Porto Velho, Brazil, on Friday. Land gets cleared at this time of the year to make way for crops. ■REUTERS

globally, with thousands protesting in Brazil and Europe on Friday.

Meanwhile, Agriculture Minister Tereza Cristina Dias insisted that Brazil was "taking care" of the Amazon, and that international concerns over the fires needed to cool down. "The news is worrying, but I think we have to

lower the temperature. The Amazon is important, Brazil knows that, and Brazil is taking care of the Amazon," she said. Earlier this month, Mr. Bolsonaro blamed the fires on non-government organisations, suggesting that they deliberately started them after their funding was cut.

The growing crisis threa-

tens to torpedo a trade deal between the European Union (EU) and South American countries that took 20 years to negotiate.

Warning from businesses

Also, Brazilian business leaders have warned that the backlash over Brazil's environmental record could sink

its efforts to join the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). EU Council president Donald Tusk told reporters at the G7 on Saturday that it was hard to imagine European countries ratifying a trade pact with the Mercosur bloc as long as Brazil fails to curb the fires ravaging the Amazon, which is considered to be the "lungs of the planet" and crucial to keeping climate change in check.

French President Emmanuel Macron, who has taken the lead in piling pressure on Mr. Bolsonaro over the fires, had earlier accused him of lying about Brazil's stance on climate change.

Environmental specialists say the fires have been accompanied by increasing deforestation in the Amazon region, which in July quadrupled compared to the same month in 2018, according to data from INPE.

Stung by the international outcry, Brazil distributed a 12-page circular to foreign Embassies, outlining data and statistics defending the government's reputation on the environment.

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

U.S. to open Greenland consulate

Washington wants to step up its presence in the Arctic area

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON

The Donald Trump administration is planning to open a U.S. consulate in Greenland for the first time in decades amid increased strategic and economic interest in the Danish territory.

The State Department said in a letter to Congress that re-establishing a consulate in Nuuk is part of a broader plan to increase the U.S. presence in the Arctic.

The U.S. has a "strategic interest in enhancing political, economic, and commercial relationships across the Arctic region," said the letter to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

President Donald Trump sparked a diplomatic dispute with Denmark earlier this month after he proposed that the U.S. buy Greenland and the Danish government rejected the idea. Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen called it an "absurd discussion." Mr. Trump fired back that her



A view of the Apusaijok glacier, near Kulusuk, a settlement on the southeastern shore of Greenland. ■AFP

comments were "nasty" and cancelled a trip to Denmark.

'A wonderful woman'

On Friday, though, Mr. Trump said he had spoken with Ms. Frederiksen and called her "a wonderful woman." "We had a great conversation," he said. "We have a very good relationship with Denmark... Very nice. She put a call in and I appreciated it very much."

A permanent diplomatic presence would allow the U.S. to "protect essential equities in Greenland while developing deeper relation-

ships with Greenlandic officials and society," the letter said. The U.S. opened a consulate in Greenland in 1940 after the Nazi occupation of Denmark. It closed in 1953. The new one would open next year in the capital of the semi-autonomous territory. The State Department said it has already assigned a Greenlandic affairs officer working out of the U.S. Embassy in Copenhagen.

Greenland is situated in a geographically important region and holds a potential treasure trove of natural gas and rare earth minerals.

Bangladesh police kill 2 Rohingya men

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
TEKNAP

Bangladesh police said they had shot dead two Rohingya refugees during a gunfight in a refugee camp on Saturday after the pair were accused of killing a ruling party official.

Rights activists said they believe the two Rohingya men were killed by police in what appeared to be a staged encounter.

The incident comes two days after a second failed attempt to repatriate the refugees, which saw not a single Rohingya turn up to return across the border to Myanmar's conflict-scarred Rakhine state.

Local police inspector Rasel Ahmad said the two Rohingya men were shot and critically injured during a manhunt for suspects after Omar Faruk, a youth wing official of the Awami League party, was killed earlier this month, allegedly by armed refugees.

U.S., Taliban resume talks

This is the ninth round of dialogue

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
DOHA

The U.S. and the Taliban met in Doha on Saturday, an American source close to the negotiations said, resuming potentially decisive talks to allow Washington to drawdown militarily in Afghanistan.

"Talks resumed this afternoon," the U.S. source said.

The second day of the two sides' ninth round of dialogue had been due to begin on Friday but "both sides decided to postpone it until Saturday", the Taliban's Doha spokesman Suhail Shaheen said, citing "other engagements".

'Progress made'

"We have made progress and are now discussing the implementation mechanism and some technical points," he said on Saturday, referring to discussions that took place on Thursday. "The agreement will be completed after we agree on these points," he said.



U.S. special representative Zalmay Khalilzad. ■AFP

Any deal would be announced before the media as well as representatives from neighbouring countries and China, Russia, and the UN, he added. Washington is hoping to strike an agreement with the Taliban by September 1.

Also, the Taliban claimed on Saturday to have killed seven members of the U.S. military in an attack on a convoy near Bagram airfield. Col. Sonny Leggett, a spokesman for U.S. forces in Afghanistan, said some local businesses had been damaged but denied that coalition troops were injured.