

Protesters, police clash in Hong Kong

This comes on the fifth anniversary of a decision by China to curtail democratic reforms

REUTERS
HONG KONG

Hong Kong police fired tear gas and water cannon on Saturday and pro-democracy protesters threw petrol bombs in the latest in a series of chaotic clashes that have plunged the Chinese-ruled city into its worst political crisis in decades.

Police fired round after round of tear gas and protesters took cover behind umbrellas between the local headquarters of China's People's Liberation Army and the government. Protesters also threw bricks dug up from pathways at police.

Protest numbers had dwindled by the early hours of Sunday, with just a few hundred demonstrators and some riot police visible.

Fire bombs thrown

The water cannon unleashed blue-dyed water, to make it easier for police to identify protesters. Riot police then marched on foot towards the neighbouring Admiralty district, followed by 20 police cars, where protesters had thrown fire bombs from flyovers, some landing close to police. Others shone blue



Burning issue: A protester throwing a bottle onto a burning barricade after clashing with police at an anti-government rally in Hong Kong on Saturday. • GETTY IMAGES

and green lasers at police lines. There were unconfirmed reports of an off-duty policeman being wounded.

In the neighbouring Wan-chai bar and restaurant district, police fought running battles with protesters, some beating them with truncheons, according to Reuters witnesses.

There were several arrests. "We have to keep protesting, we cannot let China

take back Hong Kong now," said Evelyn, a 25-year-old asset manager, chanting "gangster" at police outside a subway station across the harbour in Kowloon district.

Asked what she would do if authorities did not respond to protesters' demands, she said: "Maybe I will leave Hong Kong. I absolutely cannot live under Chinese rule."

The protests, which at one point blocked three key

roads, came on the fifth anniversary of a decision by China to curtail democratic reforms and rule out universal suffrage in Hong Kong.

"The behaviours of the radical protesters gravely breach the public peace and pose a serious threat to the safety of police officers on duty and members of the public at the scene," the government said in a statement.

Telegram app to protect users' identity

REUTERS
WASHINGTON

Telegram, a popular encrypted messaging app, will allow users to cloak their telephone numbers to safeguard Hong Kong protesters against monitoring by authorities, according to a person with direct knowledge of the effort.

The update to Telegram, planned for release over the next few days, will allow protesters to prevent mainland Chinese and Hong Kong authorities from discovering their identities in the app's large group chats.

Hong Kong Protesters, who take their cues from more than 100 groups on Telegram, use encrypted apps like Telegram to mobilise swiftly through multiple group chats, with less risk of police infiltration, an in-depth report published by Reuters earlier in August said.

Taliban launches attacks in Kunduz amid talks with U.S.

At least three civilians are killed and 41 wounded

REUTERS
KUNDUZ

Taliban forces attacked the northern Afghan city of Kunduz on Saturday, setting off hours of gun battles, even as U.S. negotiators move closer to finalising a deal with the insurgents for the withdrawal of American troops from the country.

Heavy fighting began in Kunduz after Taliban fighters attacked from several directions early in the morning, forcing Afghan forces to rush in reinforcements to prevent the insurgents from gaining control of the city.

At least three civilians were killed and 41 wounded were taken to hospitals, said Ehsanullah Fazli, head of the public health department in Kunduz city.

36 insurgents killed

Government officials in Kunduz and Kabul said the Taliban was seeking shelter inside homes and some of the fighters had entered the main hospital in the city.

The Interior Ministry said at least 36 Taliban insur-



Battle-ready: Afghan security forces arriving in Kunduz during a fight against Taliban on Saturday. • AP

gents were killed in ground and air operations in three areas of Kunduz city and clearance operations were under way.

An air strike in Zakhil area killed 20 Taliban, including two commanders, Afghan security officials said. Taliban spokesmen were not immediately available to confirm the casualty figures.

"Security forces are repelling the Taliban attack on some parts of Kunduz city. Their top priority is to protect the civilians," said Sediq Sediqqi, a spokesman for the

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said in a tweet that Afghan forces were under heavy pressure in different parts of the city.

The fighting in Kunduz, which the Taliban came close to capturing twice in recent years, came as expectations have grown that U.S. and Taliban negotiators in Doha were close to securing an agreement that would see a timetable for the withdrawal of thousands of U.S. troops.

ELSEWHERE



Ranil's party failed the Tamil people: Sirisena

COLOMBO
Sri Lanka's President Maithripala Sirisena on Friday accused Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe's party of not doing enough to bring in a new Constitution to address the problems of Tamils. "These gentlemen in the government wasted the last four years trying to bring in a new Constitution. They failed the Tamil people..." he said at a gathering in Jaffna. PTI

9/11 plotter, 4 others to go on trial in 2021

WASHINGTON
Alleged 9/11 plotter Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and four others held at the Guantanamo Bay prison camp will finally go on trial in 2021, almost two decades after the attack, *The New York Times* reported on Friday. A military judge set the date for January 11, 2021, said the paper. AFP

Bashir charged with illegal use of funds

KHARTOUM
Sudan's ousted President Omar al-Bashir, who was deposed in April following months of mass protests against his rule, was charged in court on Saturday with illegal acquisition and use of foreign funds, offences that could land him behind bars for more than a decade. AFP

U.S. blacklists Iranian tanker and its captain

Vessel was headed to Syria: Pompeo

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

The U.S. has blacklisted the Iranian tanker *Adrian Darya*, saying that it had "reliable information" the vessel was transporting oil to Syria in defiance of wide-ranging sanctions on the regime of Bashar al-Assad.

Previously known as *Grace I*, the vessel was seized in July by British Royal Marines and held in Gibraltar for six weeks on suspicion it was delivering oil for Tehran's ally Damascus. The British territory released the ship - despite U.S. protests - after it said it had received written assurances from Iran that the vessel would not head for countries under European

Union (EU) sanctions. Tehran later denied it had made any promises about the ship's destination. "We have reliable information that the tanker is under way and headed to Tartus, Syria," U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo tweeted on Friday.

The U.S. Department of Treasury said the vessel was "blocked property" under an anti-terrorist order, and "anyone providing support to the *Adrian Darya* 1 risks being sanctioned".

The ship's captain, Akhilesh Kumar, was also blacklisted under the order. Since its release from Gibraltar, the ship has been bouncing around the Mediterranean, its every move followed with intense speculation.

U.S. moving ahead with new tariffs on Chinese imports

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

Washington is moving ahead Sunday with new tariffs on Chinese imports as it steps up a campaign aimed at coercing Beijing to sign a new trade deal.

The additional 15% tariffs, affecting a portion of the \$300 billion in goods from China that so far has been spared, will take effect on Sunday, according to the

U.S. Trade Representative's office. President Donald Trump on Friday ruled out any further postponement.

Economists at the Washington-based Peterson Institute for International Economics estimate \$112 billion in goods will be affected.

More than \$250 billion worth of China's \$540 billion in exports to the U.S. (2018 figure) are already subject to tariffs.

Pak. forms high-level panel to hold talks with Sikhs over girl's conversion

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LAHORE

Under pressure, the government in Pakistan's Punjab province has constituted a high-level committee to negotiate with Sikhs angry over the abduction and forced conversion of a teenage girl from the community.

The girl's family alleged that she was converted to Islam at gunpoint and forced to marry a Muslim boy. The

girl's advocate says she converted and married of her own will. An FIR has been registered against six people in the case, Muhammad Jamil, Nankana City Police Investigation Officer said.

1 suspect arrested

Police have arrested one of the suspects named Arsalan, a friend of the prime accused Mohammad Hassan who married the Sikh girl.

The girl was sent to a shelter home in Lahore on Friday on the court's order.

The Punjab government has formed a high-level committee led by Punjab Law Minister Raja Basharat which has been sent to Nanakana Sahib, some 80 km from Lahore, to calm the situation. The panel will negotiate with a 30-member committee formed by Pakistan's Sikhs over the incident.

N. Korea objects to Pompeo's 'rogue behaviour' remark

REUTERS
SEOUL

A recent remark by U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo about "North Korea's rogue behaviour" will make talks more difficult, the North's KCNA news agency on Saturday quoted its Vice-Foreign Minister Choe Son-hui as saying.

"We recognised that North Korea's rogue behaviour could not be ignored," Mr. Pompeo said on Tues-

day. The comment was unreasonable and provocative, Mr. Choe said, according to the news agency. "Pompeo has gone so far in his language and it made the opening of the expected working-level negotiations more difficult," he said. Mr. Choe also warned that North Korea's expectations of talks with the U.S. are gradually disappearing and the country is being pushed to re-examine all measures.

U.S. not involved in failed Iran rocket launch: Trump

President's photo tweet raises concerns among experts that he may have revealed surveillance secrets

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump on Friday released a photograph of an apparently failed Iranian rocket launch and said that the U.S. had nothing to do with it.

Tehran has made no official comment on the indications from aerial photos that a rocket exploded on Thursday on the launch pad at the Semnan Space Center in northern Iran.

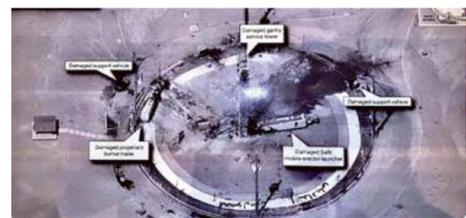
But Mr. Trump tweeted a high-resolution picture of the location, with annotations pointing to damaged vehicles and the launch gantry, saying it involved Iran's Safir satellite rocket. "The United States of America was not involved in the catastrophic accident during final

launch preparations for the Safir SLV Launch at Semnan Launch Site One in Iran," Mr. Trump said in a tweet. Publicly available satellite photos also show what appears to have been the rocket's explosion on its launch pad.

Third try

Tehran was believed to have been planning a third attempt to loft a satellite into space, after two launches in January and February failed to place satellites in orbit.

Iran's Minister for Communications and Information Technology Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi rejected reports that a satellite had been lost, but did not comment on the alleged launch-pad explosion. "Apparently there were reports that the



A screengrab of U.S. President Donald Trump's tweet that apparently shows an image of a failed rocket launch attempt at the Safir SLV Launch site in northern Iran. • AFP

third attempt to put the satellite in orbit were unsuccessful. In fact, Nahid 1 is alright, and is right now in the laboratory. Reporters can come visit the laboratory, too. #transparency," he tweeted. Mr. Azari Jahromi later posted a selfie of himself in what appeared to be a laboratory

alongside some equipment, tweeting: "Me & Nahid 1 right now, Good Morning Donald Trump!"

Level of resolution

Intelligence experts said Mr. Trump may have exposed a previously unknown level of resolution U.S. spy satellites

have achieved, or that, somehow, U.S. intelligence was able to get a closer shot of the launch site from an over-flying aircraft.

Shadows and glare on Mr. Trump's picture suggested it was a snapshot of the original taken with a cellphone, presumably in a secure environment like the White House Situation Room.

CNBC reported that a defence official confirmed the photo of the launch pad was included in Friday's White House intelligence briefing.

Speaking to reporters late Friday, Mr. Trump said he had the authority to release the picture. "They had a big problem," he said of Iran's launch. "We had a photo and I released it, which I had a right to do."

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

U.K. protesters rally against PM's decision to suspend Parliament

Up to 1,00,000 people marched in London, say organisers

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

Protesters wielding pro-democracy placards and European Union (EU) flags rallied on Saturday in dozens of British cities against Prime Minister Boris Johnson's controversial move to suspend Parliament weeks before Brexit.

In the biggest demonstration, thousands of whistleblowing, drum-banging people gathered raucously outside the gates of Downing Street in London chanting "Boris Johnson shame on you!" "I'm absolutely disgusted by what's happening here," said attendee Maya Dunn, 66, a Dutch citizen living in Britain, who accused Mr. Johnson of "riding roughshod over everybody".

The demonstrations come ahead of an intense political week in which Mr. Johnson's opponents will go to court to block his move to



In resistance: Demonstrators holding up placards outside Downing Street on Saturday, in protest against Prime Minister Boris Johnson's move to suspend Parliament. • AFP

suspend Parliament from mid-September and legislate against leaving the EU without an agreement.

In London, participants heard speeches from Opposition politicians on a stage erected on Whitehall before marching through Westminster. Some held hand-written signs reading "defend democracy: resist the parlia-

ment shutdown" and "wake up UK! Or welcome to Germany 1933". Organisers using the slogan #StopTheCoup claimed as many as 1,00,000 people had turned out in London. Finance Minister Sajid Javid on Saturday defended the move. "It doesn't usually sit for some time in September and early October," he told BBC radio.

Russian Opposition holds new protest march

Moscow is to hold election this month

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MOSCOW

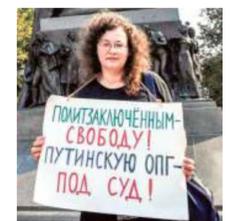
Russia's Opposition held a new protest march in central Moscow on Saturday, despite a ban by authorities, a week before regional elections in the capital.

Demonstrations have been held on an almost weekly basis since July after authorities denied most Opposition candidates registration in the elections for city Parliament next Sunday.

Moscow prosecutors warned that the latest rally, called by Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny for 2 p.m. (1100 GMT) on part of the city's Boulevard Ring, was not authorised and participants would "bear responsibility."

"This is our city"

Hundreds gathered at the start site of the announced "March against political repressions" and began a slow walk along the route, occasionally chanting "This is



A woman holding a poster that reads 'Free political prisoners!' in Moscow. • AFP

our city" and "Freedom to political prisoners!". The gathering was noticeably calmer than previous similar protests, when police blocked the crowd and made thousands of sometimes violent arrests.

Police on Saturday merely told people to leave the street and walk along the pedestrian areas without intervening or deploying rows of riot police, whose actions have been criticised over the past weeks.

Tamil family moved to remote island

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MELBOURNE

A Tamil family of four - including two Australian-born toddlers - has been moved to a remote island off the coast of Indonesia, despite a court order blocking deportation, its lawyer said on Saturday.

The family - fighting to remain in Australia because it fears persecution in Sri Lanka - was moved to Christmas Island detention facility overnight, lawyer Carina Ford said, speaking in Melbourne.

The island is a remote Australian territory around 350 km south of Java. The detention centre there had been closed for years.

The family's case has become a new flashpoint over the Australian government's hard-line immigration policies, which include turning away refugees arriving by boat and de facto offshore detention, both measures condemned by the UN.