

Protesters block Hong Kong airport, flights hit

Pro-democracy activists barricaded roads and disrupted other transport links to the airport

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
HONG KONG

More than a dozen flights were cancelled on Sunday as thousands of pro-democracy activists blocked routes to Hong Kong's airport, a day after protesters and police fought pitched battles in some of the worst violence seen in the city since unrest began three months ago.

At least 16 flights were cancelled, the airport's website said, with the departure hall packed with a backlog of passengers who had struggled to make it to the terminals.

Earlier, operators of the Airport Express train suspended services after the station was besieged, while black-clad protesters - hid-



Escalating tensions: A barricade that was set on fire during a protest near a metro station in Hong Kong. ■ REUTERS

ing from CCTV cameras under umbrellas - built barricades at the bus terminus and attempted to stop traffic on the main road leading to the facility.

Stranded travellers were

forced to abandon their lifts and drag their luggage along the airport road.

Sunday's action is the latest in three months of increasingly violent protests sparked initially by opposi-

tion to a proposed law that would have allowed extraditions to mainland China, but which morphed into a broader anti-government movement.

Outside one airport terminal, protesters set off fire extinguishers, piled luggage trolleys into makeshift road barricades and smashed surveillance cameras before being driven away by police.

"It's out of our control," said Andy Tang, 26, returning to Australia from a week's holiday in Hong Kong. "So there's no point getting annoyed about it."

Pitched battles

The airport is covered by an injunction banning protesters from entering - im-

posed after a shutdown in August, which ended in ugly clashes - but protesters have routinely ignored legal moves to ban their actions.

On Sunday, city sanitation workers were seen clearing debris and removing graffiti after a night of pitched battles between protesters and police.

Hardcore demonstrators on Saturday hurled petrol bombs at government buildings and police, who responded with tear gas and water cannon laced with chemical dye before making mass arrests.

Hong Kong is bracing for more disruption on Monday, with calls for a general strike and the start of a university boycott.

China's prisons swell after a surge in arrests of Muslims

Government is pursuing a 'strike hard' security campaign

CHRIS BUCKLEY

The Chinese government has built a vast network of re-education camps and a pervasive system of surveillance to monitor and subdue millions from Muslim minorities in the Xinjiang region.

Now China is also turning to an older, harsher method of control: filling prisons in Xinjiang.

The region in northwest China has experienced a record surge in arrests, trials and prison sentences in the past two years, according to a *New York Times* analysis of previously unreported official data.

As the Chinese government pursues a "strike hard" security campaign aimed overwhelmingly at minorities in Xinjiang, the use of prisons is throwing into doubt even China's limited protections of defendants' rights.

Courts in Xinjiang - where largely Muslim minorities, including Uighurs and Kazakhs, make up over half of the population - sentenced a total of 230,000 people to prison or other punishments in 2017 and 2018, significantly more than in any other period on record in decades for the region.

During 2017 alone, Xinjiang courts sentenced almost 87,000 defendants, 10 times more than in the previous year, to prison terms of five years or longer. Arrests increased eight-fold; prosecutions five-fold.

The police, prosecutors and judges in the region are working in unison to ram through convictions, serving the Communist Party's campaign to eradicate unrest and convert the largely Muslim minorities into party



A statue of Chairman Mao shaking hands with a Uighur villager in Hotan, southwestern Xinjiang, China. ■ NYT

loyalists. Arrests, the critics said, are often based on flimsy charges, and trials are perfunctory, with guilty judgments overwhelmingly likely. Once sentenced, prisoners face potential abuses and hard labour in overcrowded, isolated facilities.

No disclosure

Xinjiang, like other parts of China, does not disclose how many people are in prison, and the regional government did not answer faxed questions about incarceration and the legal statistics. Not all the people imprisoned in Xinjiang are from Muslim minorities, and not all charges are baseless.

"It's as if the whole population is treated as guilty until proven innocent," said Sean Roberts, an anthropologist at George Washington University who studies Uighurs, whose religion, Turkic language and traditions set them apart from China's Han majority. "These internment camps and prisons are not going away and stand as a warning to the population that they better be more loyal to the party."

Han Chinese residents have been largely spared from the wave of detentions,

according to experts as well as data from Han-majority parts of Xinjiang.

The expanding population in prisons raises questions about Xinjiang officials' recent avowals that most of the inmates in re-education camps - a separate system of incarceration - have been released.

Beijing's claim disputed

Uighur activists and overseas Uighurs with relatives in the camps have disputed Beijing's claim that the camps are shrinking. Interviews and government documents indicate that former camp inmates may be pressed into assigned labour or other kinds of detention.

And Uighurs living abroad said a sizable fraction of people held in re-education camps end up in prisons.

A sizable fraction of Uighurs sent to prisons were businesspeople, professionals and academics, said Habiulla Altay, a Uighur tea merchant who left China in 2016 and has settled in Switzerland.

"The government thinks they are dangerous because they have money and knowledge and often have been abroad," he said. ■ NY TIMES

7 dead in Texas shooting

Gunman hijacked a postal truck and opened fire at random

ASSOCIATED PRESS
TEXAS

The death toll in a West Texas shooting rampage increased to seven on Sunday as authorities investigated why a man stopped by State troopers for failing to signal a left turn opened fire on them and fled, shooting more than 20 people as he drove before being killed by officers outside a movie theatre.

Odessa police spokesman Steve LeSueur said that at least one person who was shot remained in life-threatening condition on Sunday. Authorities say the gunman was a white male in his 30s, but police have not released a name or possible motive.

The shooting began on Saturday afternoon at an interstate traffic stop where gunfire was exchanged with



Police directing traffic in Odessa, Texas. ■ AP

police, setting off a chaotic rampage during which the suspect hijacked a mail carrier truck and fired at random as he drove in the area of Odessa and Midland, two cities in the heart of Texas.

Police initially reported possible multiple shooters, but Odessa police Chief Michael Gerke later said there was only one male suspect.

The suspect shot "at innocent civilians all over Odessa," according to a statement from Odessa police.

A trooper and two police officers were shot before the suspect was killed.

Authorities say the trooper was in serious but stable condition on Saturday, and the other officers were stable.

U.S., Taliban on 'threshold' of a deal on Afghanistan

Militants attack Pul-e Khumri after Kunduz

REUTERS
KABUL

U.S. and Taliban negotiators are close to a deal that would open the way for peace in Afghanistan, a top U.S. official said on Sunday, as the insurgents followed their weekend assault on the strategic centre of Kunduz by attacking a second northern city.

Zalmay Khalilzad, the Afghan-born U.S. diplomat overseeing negotiations for Washington, said ahead of his visit to Kabul for consultations after wrapping up the ninth round of talks with Taliban officials in Qatar.

"We are at the threshold of an agreement that will reduce violence and open the door for Afghans to sit together to negotiate an honourable and sustainable

peace and a unified, sovereign Afghanistan that does not threaten the United States, its allies, or any other country," he said in a Twitter post.

The comment came as Taliban fighters attacked Pul-e Khumri, in the northern province of Baghlan, just a day after a major show of strength by hundreds of fighters who overrun parts of Kunduz, a strategic city the insurgents have twice come close to taking in recent years.

The Interior Ministry said in a statement on Sunday that 20 Afghan security force members and five civilians were killed, and at least 85 civilians were injured in Kunduz city during clashes with the Taliban fighters.

ELSEWHERE



Indian-American attorney to become federal judge

WASHINGTON
Indian-American attorney Shireen Mathews has been nominated as a judge of the U.S. District Court for California. If confirmed, she will be the first Asian American woman to serve as an Article III federal judge in the Southern District. ■ FTI

EU negotiator says no change in Brexit deal

LONDON
EU's chief Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier said on Saturday the bloc will not change the divorce deal agreed with Britain and that he is "not optimistic". He said the contentious backstop mechanism must remain. ■ AFP

80 years after Second World War, Germany asks Poland's forgiveness

'I bow before the Polish victims of German tyranny'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WIELUN

German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier on Sunday asked Poland's forgiveness for history's bloodiest conflict during a ceremony in the Polish city of Wielun, where the first World War II bombs fell 80 years ago.

"I bow before the victims of the attack on Wielun. I bow before the Polish victims of German tyranny. And I ask your forgiveness," Mr. Steinmeier said in both German and Polish.

Poland suffered some of the worst horrors of Second World War II: nearly six million Poles died in the conflict that killed more than 50 million people overall.



Frank-Walter Steinmeier

That figure includes the six million Jews who died in the Holocaust, half of them Polish. "It was Germans who committed these crimes against humanity in Poland. Anyone calling them things of the past, or claiming that the vile rule of terror of the National Socialists in Europe was a mere footnote of German history, is passing judg-

gement on him or herself," Mr. Steinmeier added in the presence of his Polish counterpart.

The line appeared to be a clear reference to the German far-right, whose co-leader Alexander Gauland once called the 12-year Third Reich a "speck of bird poop" on an otherwise glorious German past.

"As Germany's Federal President, let me assure you that we will not forget," Mr. Steinmeier said.

"We want to, and we will, remember. And we will bear the responsibility that our history imposes upon us."

Poland's President Andrzej Duda denounced Germany's attack on Poland.

'Catastrophic' Dorian hits Bahamas

REUTERS
MIAMI

Hurricane Dorian became the strongest storm in modern records to hit the northwestern Bahamas and is expected to pound the islands with up to two days of torrential rain, high waves and damaging winds as parts of Florida evacuated before it took aim at the U.S. mainland.

The U.S. National Hurricane Center said Dorian was over Abaco as a Category 5 storm on Sunday with maximum sustained winds of 285 km per hour and gusts of more than 322 kph.

After churning over the Bahamas, Dorian is expected to veer northwest toward Florida.

Pope gets stuck in elevator, firefighters rescue him

He apologises to the people for delay

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
VATICAN CITY

Thousands of people who were gathered in St. Peter's Square for the traditional Sunday on-the-dot-of-noon appearance by Pope Francis were watching for the window of the Apostolic Palace to be thrown open so they could listen to the pope's remarks and receive his blessing. But after seven minutes, people were looking at each other quizzically - no pope?

Then Pope Francis popped out and answered their question, "First of all I must excuse myself for being late. I was blocked in an elevator for 25 minutes."

Apparently referring to electrical power, the Pope explained that there was a



Pope Francis

"drop in tension," causing the elevator to get stuck.

"Thank God the firefighters intervened," he said, referring to Vatican State's fire department.

The Vatican didn't say if the Pope was alone in the elevator or accompanied by any of his aides.

China, U.S. kick off new tariffs

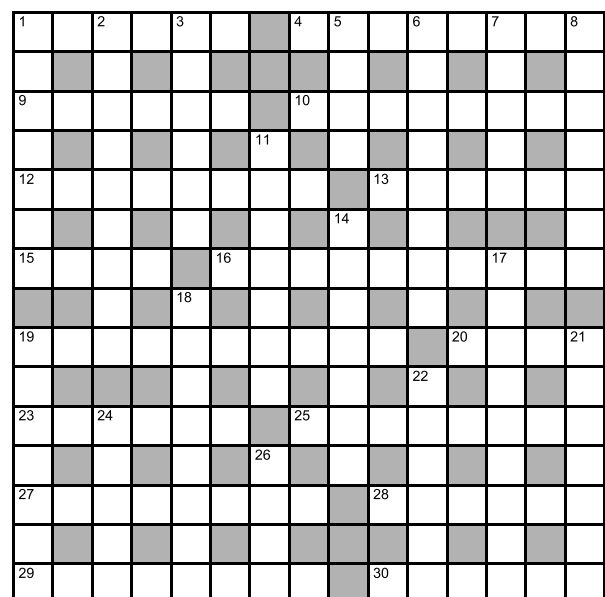
REUTERS
BEIJING

China and the U.S. began imposing additional tariffs on each other's goods on Sunday, the latest escalation in a bruising trade war, despite signs that talks would resume some time this month.

The Trump administration on Sunday began collecting 15% tariffs on more than \$125 billion in Chinese imports, including smart speakers, Bluetooth headphones and footwear.

In retaliation, China started to impose additional tariffs on some of the U.S. goods on a \$75-billion target list. Beijing did not specify the value of the goods that face higher tariffs from Sunday.

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12720



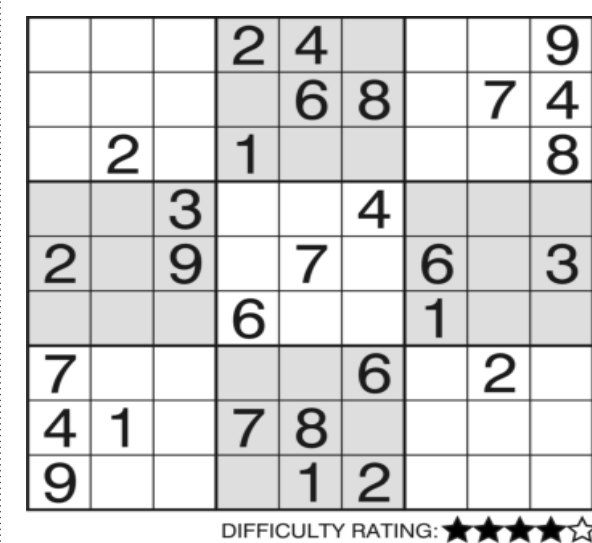
ACROSS

- 1 Tie up fancy undergarment (6)
- 4 Chemical substance that can fence a house? (8)
- 9 A blind test for infection (6)
- 10 Shroud over established concern (8)
- 12 Fancied criminal aiding me (8)
- 13 No even benefit to badly televised grasslands (6)

DOWN

- 1 Going forth, Iceland's taking to court (7)
- 2 Violent, evil Arabs - they keep changing (9)
- 3 Reportedly find kiss to be beautiful (6)
- 5 Noise of an animal? Alright to keep at home (4)
- 6 Phantom's personality (8)
- 7 You hang in a balance and turn the other way (5)
- 8 Hates exams, half-dead at start (7)
- 11 Allowance covers one working (7)
- 14 Power key on a keyboard (7)
- 17 Income from sovereign bonds (9)
- 18 Hen seems suspect, finding traps (8)
- 19 Hormone protection stops at nothing (7)
- 21 Empty nester lets out, seeking a payment (7)
- 22 Returns from party upstairs, finding husband not home (6)
- 24 Apparently almost endless difficulty in breathing (5)
- 26 Agreement with a detective agent (4)

SUDOKU



Solution to puzzle 12719

P	I	T	T	A	B	L	E	
A	R	S	E	A	R	N	O	
L	E	A	S	T	A	R	G	M
A	V	I	K	A	E	S	A	
C	L	E	A	N	S	O	U	T
E	L	G	U	E	T			
P	L	A	I	N	T	S	C	O
M	E	R	A	T	I	C	B	E
O	H	A	J	E	S	A		
I	N	D	I	E	I	R	R	I
O	E	T	M	U	E	B	E	T
C	O	M	E	A	G	A	I	N
R	U	I	N	O	T	E	E	A
E	N	R	O	L	S	R	I	G

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

Trust in God

When Rama and Sita arrive at the ashram of Sage Atri, they are welcomed warmly by the sage and his wife Anasuya. Anasuya tells Sita that She did the right thing by leaving behind the comforts of the palace to follow Rama to the forest. Anasuya says that a woman, who wishes to be with her husband in prosperity and adversity, is virtuous. Such a woman will be glad to be with her husband, whether he lives in a palace or in a forest. A woman cannot have a better friend than a husband who protects her always. Women like Sita will reap rich rewards for their conduct. Sita replies, "Even if my husband had lacked all the virtues He is well known for, I would still be reverent towards Him. My husband is compassionate and as caring to me as a mother or a father would be. He is as affectionate towards all the other Queens, as He is towards His mother Kausalya. He sees all the wives of King Dasaratha as His mothers."

Sita's words would be the words of any true devotee, said Akkarakkani Srinidhi, in a discourse. A man visiting the Sri-rangam temple noticed Parasara Bhatta there, and wondered what he did for a living. One day he asked Bhatta, "How do you manage your expenses, when you seem to have no occupation?" Bhatta replied, "The Lord's palm faces His devotees, to reassure them that He will save them. But even if His palm were to be turned away from me, I will still continue to place my trust in Him. He will take care of me." If He decides to save us, can anyone stop Him? If he does not save us, who else can? He cares for us as a mother does for her child. When asked what his income was, Chanakya replied, "I am not worried about my income. When a child is born, milk flows from the mother's breasts. It is God who makes this happen. Will He not provide for me?"