

ELSEWHERE



UN rights chief meddling in Brazil's internal affairs

BRASLIA Brazil President Jair Bolsonaro on Wednesday accused United Nations human rights chief Michelle Bachelet of meddling in his country's affairs after she criticised a rise in police violence in Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo states and "a shrinking civic and democratic space". REUTERS

Nepal media Bills erode freedom of speech: HRW

KATHMANDU Nepal's proposed media and communication laws will have a "chilling effect" on its citizens' right to free speech, Human Rights Watch warned on Wednesday. The government has said the laws improve reporting and discourage disinformation. But right activists say they could be used to suppress freedom of expression. AFP

Elizabeth Warren unveils \$3 trillion climate plan

WASHINGTON Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts has released an ambitious climate change plan, embracing goals laid out by former presidential rival Jay Inslee and calling for \$3 trillion in spending over a decade to combat global warming. Senator Kamala Harris of California is also expected to put forth a climate change plan. NYT

Iran to free 7 Indian crew members of seized vessel

STOCKHOLM The owner of the British-flagged Stena Impero tanker held in the Persian Gulf by Iran said he was told by the Iranian authorities that seven Indians, out of the 23-member crew, will be released. Erik Hanell, CEO of the shipping group, said it wasn't immediately clear when they would be freed. PTI

Hong Kong leader seeks an end to violence, promises dialogue

Govt. is withdrawing extradition Bill to fully allay public concerns, says Carrie Lam

REUTERS HONG KONG

Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam, who on Wednesday withdrew the controversial extradition Bill, expressed hope that the city will move forward from a "highly vulnerable and dangerous" place and find solutions.

"Lingering violence is damaging the very foundations of our society, especially the rule of law," a sombre Ms. Lam said as she sat wearing a navy blue jacket and pink shirt with her hands folded on a desk in front of her.

The withdrawal, a key demand of protesters but just one of five, came after unrest that drove the former British colony to the edge of anarchy as the government repeatedly refused to back down - igniting pitched battles across the city of seven million, the arrests of more than 1,000 protesters, and leaving a society deeply divided.

Many are furious about perceived police brutality and the number of arrests - 1,183 at the latest count - and want an independent inquiry. "The government will formally withdraw the Bill in order to fully allay public concerns," Ms. Lam said.

"I pledge that the government will seriously follow up the recommendations of the IPCC (Independent Police Complaints Council) report. From this month, I and my principal officials will reach out to the community to start a direct dialogue... we must find ways to address the discontent in society and look for solutions."

The protests began in March but snowballed in June and have since evolved into a push for greater de-



Easing tensions: Pedestrians looking at a monitor displaying a press conference by Chief Executive Carrie Lam in Hong Kong on Wednesday. AFP

mocracy for the city which returned to China in 1997.

The Bill would have allowed extraditions to mainland China where courts are controlled by the Communist Party.

It was not immediately clear if killing the Bill would help end the unrest. The immediate reaction appeared sceptical and the real test will be how many people take to the streets.

Some lawmakers said the move should have come earlier.

"The damage has been done. The scars and wounds are still bleeding," said pro-democracy legislator Claudia Mo. "She thinks she can use a garden hose to put out a hill fire. That's not going to be acceptable."

Limited room

In the voice recording obtained by Reuters, Ms. Lam said at a meeting last week that her room to find a political solution to the crisis was "very limited", as authorities

in Beijing now viewed the situation as a matter of national security. Beijing's apparent endorsement of the withdrawal of the Bill comes after the biggest popular challenge to Chinese President Xi Jinping's rule since he took power in 2012.

Others said the move was not enough. "This won't appease the protesters," said Boris Chen, 37, who works in financial services. "In any kind of time, people will find something they can get angry about."

Pro-Beijing lawmaker Cheung Kwok-kwan said Ms. Lam's announcement was not a compromise to appease those promoting violence, but a bid to win over moderates in the protest camp. "It was likely speaking to the so-called peaceful, rational, non-violent people who were unsatisfied with the governments response before," he said.

One woman, Pearl, 69, said the protests were no longer about the Bill.

"Some of those guys may change their minds, maybe, but just a minority," she said of the protesters. "Some of them just want to create trouble and they will continue to do so."

Wrong timing

Leung Yiu-ting, president of the Hong Kong Education University student union, said the timing was wrong.

"Until the five demands are met, I don't think the protests and the social movement will stop," he said.

The protesters' other four demands are: the retraction of the word "riot" to describe rallies, the release of all arrested demonstrators, an independent inquiry into the police perceived brutality and the right for Hong Kong people to democratically choose their own leaders.

The Chief Executive's office did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the bill's withdrawal.

British lawmakers vote on Bill to block no-deal Brexit

PM Boris Johnson demands snap election on October 15

REUTERS LONDON

The British Parliament on Wednesday voted to prevent Prime Minister Boris Johnson taking Britain out of the European Union without a deal, but he sought an election just weeks before Brexit to free its hands.

After wresting control of the parliamentary agenda from Mr. Johnson, lawmakers voted 329-300 in the second, most important, reading of a Bill that would force the government to request a three-month Brexit delay rather than leave without a divorce agreement.

Mr. Johnson cast the legislative move in the House of Commons as an attempt to surrender to the EU over Brexit and demanded an October 15 snap election, a step that could free him of any constraints if he won a majority.

The second most powerful man in the Labour Party, John McDonnell, said the no-



Brexit supporters demonstrating in London. AFP

deal blocking legislation had to get assent from Queen Elizabeth, putting the law onto the statute book, before the party would agree to an election. This could, in theory, happen next Monday.

"We're... not going to be tricked or conned by Johnson so we're looking at every way in which, having secured the legislation, he can't wriggle out of abiding by the law and implementing it," Mr. McDonnell said.

Parliament's bid to tie Mr. Johnson's hands leaves Brex-

it up in the air, with possible outcomes ranging from a turbulent no-deal EU exit to abandoning the whole endeavour - both outcomes that would be unacceptable to swathes of the United Kingdom's voters.

Meanwhile, the British government on Wednesday announced a new immigration scheme that will allow European Union nationals to apply for a three-year right to remain in the country in the event of a possible no-deal Brexit.

'Parliament suspension lawful'

Scotland's highest court rules in favour of Johnson's decision

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE LONDON

A British judge on Wednesday ruled in favour of Boris Johnson's decision to suspend Parliament in a move that will provide some respite for the beleaguered Prime Minister.

Judge Raymond Doherty at the Court of Session in Edinburgh, Scotland's highest court, rejected a legal challenge by PM Johnson's opponents - one of three before the courts.

"This is political territory and decision-making, which cannot be measured by legal standards, but only by political judgements," judge Doherty said in his ruling.

"I do not accept the submission that the prorogation contravenes the rule of law," the judge said.

Joanna Cherry, an MP for the Scottish National Party (SNP), who was one of the people behind the challenge, said the judge had ruled that the court could

not pronounce itself on the exercise of government's power to suspend Parliament. "Seems we have lost," she tweeted.

Lawyer Jolyon Maugham, who also supported the challenge, said: "The idea that if the PM suspends Parliament the court can't get involved loses some ugly demons.

"If he can do it for 34 days why not 34 weeks or 34 months? Where does this political power end?" he wrote.

Kabul seeks clarification on U.S.-Taliban peace deal

It wants to analyse the risks and potential negative consequences

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE KABUL

The Afghan government expressed doubts on Wednesday about a prospective deal between the U.S. and the Taliban, saying officials need more information about the risks it poses.

U.S. special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad was in Kabul this week, when he shared with Afghan officials an agreement "in principle" that Washington has forged with the Taliban and would lead to a pull-out of American troops.

The prospect of a U.S.-Taliban deal has caused much concern among many Af-



Ashraf Ghani

Sediq Sediqqi, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's spokesman, said that while the Kabul administration supports any progress in an eventual peace process, it wants to prevent any negative consequences.

Kabul is "concerned, therefore we seek clarification about this document so that we can carefully analyse the risks and potential negative consequences, and prevent any danger it may cause," Mr. Sediqqi said on Twitter.

The statement is Kabul's first such reaction to the prospective deal, which Mr. Khalilzad presented on Monday.

Google fined for sharing data on children

REUTERS WASHINGTON

Google, which owns YouTube video service, will pay \$170 million to settle allegations that it broke federal law by collecting personal information about children, the Federal Trade Commission said on Wednesday.

YouTube had been accused of tracking viewers of children's channels using cookies without parental consent and using those cookies to deliver million of dollars in targeted advertisements to those viewers.

The settlement is the largest since a law banning collecting information about children under age 13 came into effect in 1998.

Tehran set to scale back on nuclear commitments

Talks between Iran and EU members are under way

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE TEHRAN

President Hassan Rouhani said Iran will announce a new step in scaling back its nuclear commitments by Thursday as it seeks sanctions relief from the U.S., which responded by imposing even more restrictions.

Iran and three European countries - Britain, France and Germany - have been engaged in talks to reduce tensions and save a 2015 nuclear deal that has been unravelling since U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew from it in May last year.

"I don't think that... we will reach a deal so we'll take



Hassan Rouhani

Rouhani when the Iranian leader visits New York for the annual United Nations General Assembly.

"Sure, anything is possible," he told reporters. But Mr. Rouhani has already ruled out a summit without sanctions relief, and on Wednesday the Trump administration issued its third set of sanctions on Iran in less than a week.

In the latest salvo, the Treasury Department put on its blacklist a shipping network of 16 entities, 10 people and 11 vessels that it said was selling oil on behalf of Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards' Qods Force.

the third step and we will announce the details today or tomorrow," Mr. Rouhani told a cabinet meeting on Wednesday.

Mr. Trump made clear on Wednesday that he was still interested in meeting Mr.

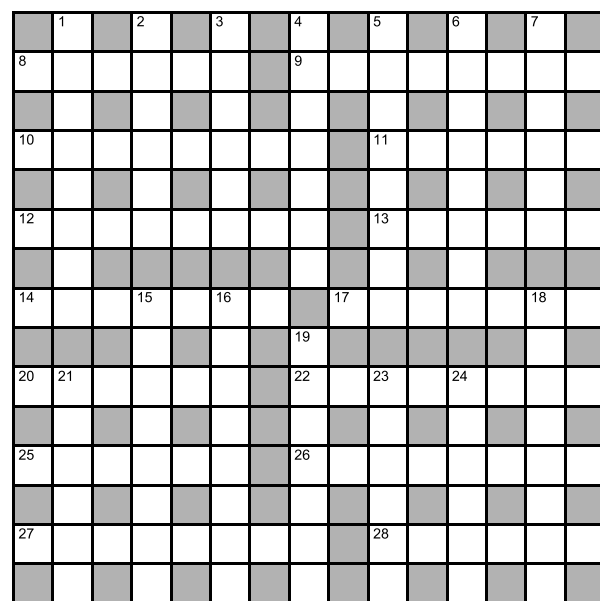
'Detention of children by U.S. grave violation'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE GENEVA

The U.S. government's recent decision to remove legal limits on how long migrant children can be detained clearly flouts international law, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights said on Wednesday.

Michelle Bachelet voiced concern over the move by President Donald Trump's administration to allow migrant children and their families to be detained for unlimited periods. "We believe that arbitrary separation of families constitutes unlawful interference with family life and grave violation of the rights of child".

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12722



ACROSS

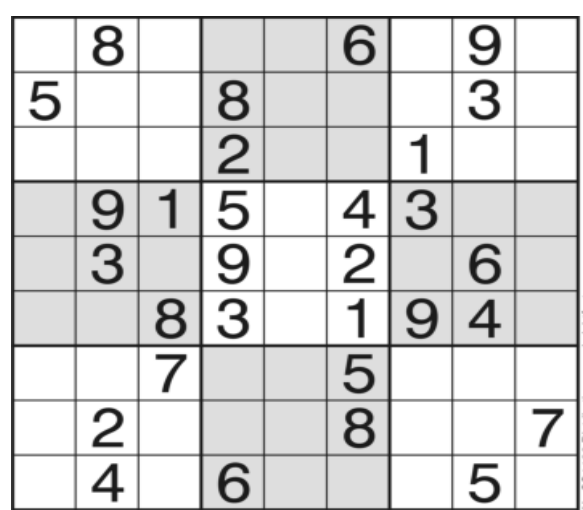
- 8 In Bath, it was said, England & UK are breaking up (6)
9 Someone on a talent show, concerned with fresh delivery (8)
10 Emperor emptied complete treasury before rule (8)
11 Celebrity sketch (6)

- 12 Follow journalist pursuing audiophile, apparently well read (3-5)
13 Make a slip with assignment (6)
14 Extremely slow if it's most crowded (7)
17 Unfortunately, obtrude on stronghold (7)
20 Long American tower (6)
22 Consolidated around 50 plus small private shares, for one (8)
25 Cool red diamond cut in interwoven pattern (6)
26 Demerits for crazy sounds from Spooner's dog (3,5)
27 Bats once, runs short of second base to abandon (8)
28 Something pleasant heard from someone satisfied (6)

(set by Hypatia)

- 3 Run from employment (6)
4 To meddle with MP in assembly is imprudent (7)
5 Study before getting bored by father's colleague (8)
6 Romper with large pocket for baby? (8)
7 Say Hastings, picked up novel about a priest (6)
15 Link post in Twitter - it's secured fast and quickly released (4-4)
16 Second wife, on getting close, doesn't start cursing (8)
18 Launch baker (5,3)
19 Model's married one you can hardly catch - an acrobat! (7)
21 Small queen guarding bee's nest getting bit (6)
23 Steps taken by the upwardly mobile? (6)
24 Groomed players to eat when drunk (6)

SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

Solution to puzzle 12721
NAVAJOPHARITSEE
OIAFOUEIN
MUSICHALINPUT
AASODNPII
DOGTROT YOGHURT
IEAEOQKY
SUDANNAUTILUS
MADSRNIP
NNAZARETHSWEAR
SQAOUGA
TAUTESRULEOUT
AAAXBSSATIT
KARMAELECTORAL
EIMLESGIE
SPARSITYTRIPOD

FAITH

Hymns that protect

Gnanasambandar's hymns offer promise of protection to people against evil forces, seen and unseen. In two special pathigams the saint's words act like the very nectar or amrita to bring back the dead to life. The first instance happens during Gnanasambandar's stay at Tirumarukal when the saint sings a soulful pathigam in praise of the Lord to revive a merchant who had succumbed to snake bite.

A more wonderful event takes place when the saint sings a pathigam at the Kapali temple in Myslapore resulting in the miraculous rebirth of Poompavai, pointed out Purasai Sri Natarajan in a discourse. She is the only daughter of Sivanesan, an ardent Siva devotee and an admirer of Gnanasambandar, who has willed his daughter and all his wealth to the saint. But her untimely death leaves Sivanesan heartbroken. Nevertheless, he carefully preserves her mortal remains in a pot. Gnanasambandar learns about Poompavai's fate when he visits Kapali temple. Discerning the will of God, he addresses the girl in the form of bones and ashes in the pot to come out with the term "varuga," and also utters the powerful rhetorical phrase "Poithiyo" with absolute faith in God which means, "How can you go away?" The word, on a par with Omkara, becomes the life giving amrita. 'If it is true that people are born in this world to lead lives of devoted service to the Lord and His devotees and to participate in festivals held in His honour and glory, you make yourself present before all assembled here,' he sings.

When the pathigam is completed, the pot splits up like a lotus bloom and Poompavai emerges as a twelve-year-old girl with folded palms, leaving the entire assembly of believers and non-believers, and even the celestial beings, spell-bound in astonishment, says Sekkizhar.