

Hong Kong invokes emergency powers

Lam says the colonial era laws allow govt. to ‘make any regulations whatsoever’ in public interest

REUTERS
HONG KONG

Hong Kong’s embattled leader Carrie Lam invoked colonial-era emergency powers on Friday for the first time in more than 50 years in a dramatic move intended to quell escalating violence in the Chinese-ruled city.

Ms. Lam, speaking at a news conference, said a ban on face masks would take effect on Saturday under the emergency laws that allow authorities to “make any regulations whatsoever” in whatever they deem to be in the public interest.



Face of protests: Demonstrators marching on a street in Hong Kong on Friday. ■ GETTY IMAGES

China’s Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office praised the move in a statement that said the protests were evolving into a “colour revolution”, a term coined to refer to popular uprisings in Ukraine and other former Soviet states that swept away long-standing rulers, with interference from external forces.

“Hong Kong has reached a critical moment to stop the

chaotic situation with more effective measures,” it said. “The current chaotic situation in Hong Kong cannot continue indefinitely.”

The emergency laws allow curfews, censorship of the media, control of harbours, ports and transport, although Ms. Lam did not specify any particular action that might follow beyond the mask ban. But it was far from clear if the introduction of

emergency powers would deter the protesters.

Crowds took to the streets even before the decision was announced, swelling as night fell. Banks and shops in the busy Central district closed early in anticipation of violence as some protesters burned Chinese flags and chanted “You burn with us”, and “Hong Kongers, revolt”.

Thousands of demonstrators gathered in other parts

of the territory, filling shopping malls and blocking roads as protests looked set to continue into the night. Bus routes were suspended and rail operator MTR closed stations.

Hidden identity
Many protesters wear masks to hide their identity due to fears employers could face pressure to take action against them.

“Almost all protesters wear masks, with the intention of hiding their identity. That’s why they have become more unbridled,” said Ms. Lam. “We can’t keep the existing regulations idle and let violence escalate and the situation continue to deteriorate.” Ms. Lam described the territory as being in serious danger, but not in a state of emergency.

Pro-Beijing groups had been pushing for a mask ban but it was not clear how the government would implement it in a city where many of its 7.4 million residents wear them every day to protect against infection following the outbreak of the deadly SARS in 2003.

Police can stop anyone in public and ask them to remove a mask if the officer believes it may prevent identification, according to the law. Exceptions are made if the person wearing a mask can prove they need it for medical, religious or professional reasons.

Trump aides pushed Ukraine to commit to probe Biden

They drafted a statement for Zelensky to serve as a commitment

KENNETH P. VOGEL
MICHAEL S. SCHMIDT
WASHINGTON

Two of President Donald Trump’s top envoys to Ukraine drafted a statement for the country’s new President in August that would have committed Ukraine to pursuing investigations sought by Mr. Trump into his political rivals, three people briefed on the effort said.

Their work on the statement is new evidence of how Mr. Trump began driving senior diplomats to bend American foreign policy to the President’s political agenda in the weeks after the July 25 call between the two leaders.

The statement was worked on by Gordon Sondland, the U.S. Ambassador to the European Union, and Kurt Volker, then the State Department’s envoy to Ukraine, according to the three people in the know.



Legal tangle: Kurt Volker leaving after being questioned by House investigators in Washington on Thursday. ■ AP

Wrong and appalling: Romney

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

Republican Senator Mitt Romney, a frequent critic of Donald Trump, said on Friday it was “wrong and appalling” for the President to urge China and Ukraine to launch investigations of a chief political rival, Joe Biden.

“By all appearances, the President’s brazen and unprecedented appeal to

China and to Ukraine to investigate Joe Biden is wrong and appalling,” tweeted Mr. Romney, the Republican presidential nominee in 2012.

Earlier this week, Chuck Grassley, the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, broke with Mr. Trump to defend a whistleblower, who filed a complaint against President Trump.

U.S., allies push FB for access to encryption

REUTERS
WASHINGTON

The U.S., the U.K. and Australia have called on Facebook Inc to not go ahead with end-to-end encryption across its messaging services unless law enforcement officials have backdoor access, saying encryption hindered the fight against child abuse and terrorism.

The U.S. and U.K. also signed a data agreement that would fast track requests to technology companies for information.

Death toll in Iraq clashes rises to 44

PM Mahdi says there is no ‘magic solution’ to problems, makes reform pledges

REUTERS
BAGHDAD

The death toll from days of violent demonstrations across Iraq surged to 44 on Friday, most of them killed in the last 24 hours, as unrest rapidly accelerated across the country despite a plea from the prime minister for calm.

In an overnight TV address, Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi said he understood the frustration of the public but there was no “magic solution” to Iraq’s problems. He made reform



On the rampage: Anti-government protesters burning an armoured police vehicle during a protest in Baghdad. ■ AP

pledges, but these drew a scornful response from demonstrators.

The violent demonstrations have escalated by the day since they first erupted

on Tuesday, sweeping across the country spontaneously, without public backing from any organised political group.

Security forces have fired live ammunition at crowds of mainly young men, and gunmen have occasionally fired back. Hundreds of people have been wounded, including members of the security forces as well as demonstrators.

Police and medical sources have put death toll at 44. Curfews were imposed in a number of cities.

Not released by Kiev
The Ukrainians never released it. But if they had, Mr. Trump’s aides would have effectively pressured a foreign government to give credence to allegations intended to undercut one of the Democratic Party’s leading 2020 presidential candidates – former Vice President Joe Biden – without leaving Mr. Trump’s fingerprints on it.

Mr. Volker spent Thursday on Capitol Hill being questioned by House investigators as Democrats pursued their impeachment inquiry into Mr. Trump’s actions. He disclosed a set of texts in September, in which William J. Taylor Jr., the top American diplomat in Ukraine, alluded to Mr. Trump’s decision earlier in

the summer to freeze a military aid package to the country. He told Mr. Sondland and Mr. Volker: “I think it’s crazy to withhold security assistance for help with a political campaign.”

After speaking with Mr. Trump, Mr. Sondland texted back that there was no quid pro quo, adding, “I suggest we stop the back and forth by text.”

The statement worked on in August by Mr. Sondland and Mr. Volker was among the topics that came up during the closed-door questioning of Mr. Voker on Capitol Hill.

The statement was written with the awareness of a top aide to the Ukrainian President, as well as Rudy

Giuliani, Trump’s personal lawyer and the de facto leader of a shadow campaign to push the Ukrainians to press ahead with investigations, according to one of the people briefed on it.

The statement would have committed Ukraine to investigating the energy company Burisma, which had employed Hunter Biden, the younger son of former Vice President Joe Biden.

The idea behind the statement was to break the Ukrainians of their habit of promising American diplomats and leaders behind closed doors that they would look into matters and never follow through, the people briefed on it said. ■ NY TIMES

UAE to invest \$5 billion in Pak. oil refinery project, says report

The venture will be launched in Hub, Balochistan province

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ISLAMABAD/DUBAI

The United Arab Emirates will invest a whopping \$5 billion in an oil refinery project in cash-strapped Pakistan by the end of the year, the Gulf nation’s envoy was quoted as saying by a media report on Friday.

“This project will show the strength of UAE-Pakistan relations and how the UAE is focusing on investment in and future of Pakistan,” UAE Ambassador to Pakistan Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi was quoted as saying by the Arab News.

“We are going to launch very soon one of the biggest

investments in a refinery project in Hub (in Pakistan’s Balochistan province),” Mr. Al-Zaabi said.

It is going to be a \$5 billion investment venture between Mubadala Petroleum Company of Abu Dhabi, Pak Arab Refinery Limited (Parco) and OMV (OMV Pakistan Exploration Gesellschaft), he said.

According to the report, which was carried by major Pakistani newspapers on Friday, the project was a result of “extensive discussions” between Mubadala Petroleum, Pakistan’s Petroleum Ministry as well as Parco and OMV.

The envoy said the two

countries were moving forward on new projects and investment. The UAE Ambassador said that the two governments were “finalising the minute details of this refinery project”.

Many meetings have taken place on the oil refinery project, he said. A delegation from the UAE, headed by the chief executive officer of Mubadala Petroleum, had met with the Board of Investment chairman and the Petroleum Minister during a visit to Pakistan a few months ago. “They have discussed this project in detail. We are going to launch it very soon,” Mr. Al-Zaabi said.

Gotabaya gets relief from court

Petition challenging the presidential candidate’s citizenship has been dismissed

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

A Sri Lankan court on Friday dismissed a petition challenging the validity of presidential hopeful Gotabaya Rajapaksa’s Sri Lankan citizenship, clearing the way for his candidacy in the November 16 presidential election.

The petitioners had sought interim relief, arguing that Mr. Rajapaksa – who resumed his Sri Lankan citizenship in 2005, three years after he became an American citizen – had obtained his documentation “fraudulently”.

Counsel for the petitioners – activists Gamini Viyanagoda and Chandraguptha Thenuwara – and the respondents, including Gota-



Gotabaya Rajapaksa

baya Rajapaksa and his brother and former President Mahinda Rajapaksa, principally argued over whether then newly sworn-in President Rajapaksa had the powers to sign his brother’s citizenship document – on November 21, 2005 – two days after he was sworn in,

and before a Cabinet was appointed. Submissions from both sides were heard over three days and concluded on Friday. At 6 p.m., the three-judge panel unanimously ruled dismissing the petition.

Dozens of lawyers, prominent politicians and journalists had gathered in the packed court room where some black-cloaked lawyers rejoiced even before the judge pronounced the full order, drawing instant flak from the President of the Court of Appeal Yasantha Kodagoda.

Meanwhile, hours ahead of the ruling that could have potentially impacted Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (People’s Party or SLPP) candidate Mr. Gotabaya’s bid, his

eldest brother and former Speaker Chamal Rajapaksa placed his deposit to run for presidency as an independent candidate, sparking speculation over the Rajapaksa camp’s apparent ‘Plan B’ for the polls, should the ruling go against their candidate.

However, with the legal challenge out of the way, war-time Defence Secretary Gotabaya – seen to be a polarising figure especially among Tamil and Muslim minorities – will now be able to contest polls, facing the ruling United National Party (UNP)’s Sajith Premadasa, the leftist Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna’s Anura Kumara Dissanayake and former Army commander Mahesh Senanayake, among others.

ELSEWHERE



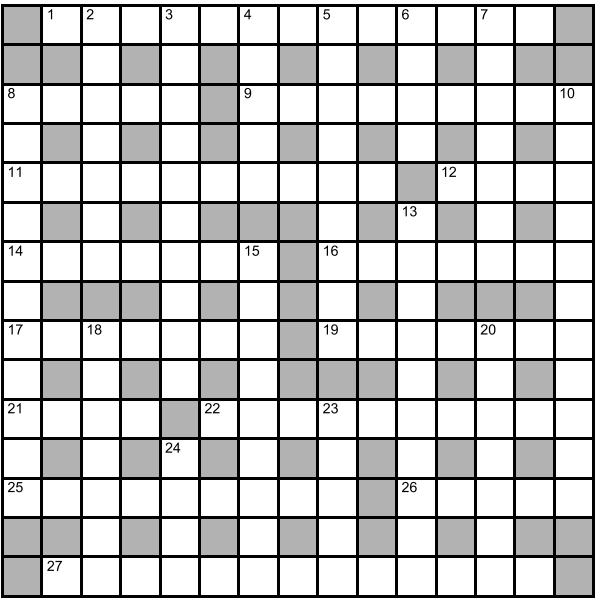
Prince Harry to sue Sun, Mirror for privacy breach
LONDON

Britain’s Prince Harry is set to sue the *Sun* and the *Daily Mirror* over allegations of illegal interception of voicemail messages. He and his wife have accused a section of British press of “bullying” behaviour. ■ REUTERS

Houthi offer of truce in Yemen ‘positive’: Riyadh
RIYADH

Saudi Arabia gave a “positive” response on Friday to a truce offer from Houthi rebels in Yemen and called for its implementation. Since 2015, Riyadh has led a military coalition against the Houthis, who are backed by Iran. ■ AFP

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12748



■ **ACROSS**

1 Kite say around shore finds lifeless snails at last in small amounts (5,3,5)

8 Throws husband off the edge of the roof (5)

9 They are interested in shooting stars? (9)

11 Drink one beverage with spot of Scotch at the end of day to relax (4,2,4)

12 Search around to get hold of right frame (4)

14 Pointed out injured duck, nearly dead (7)

16 One seen in circus trick, smooth reportedly (7)

17 Entrance of exotic sirens around middle of night (7)

19 Oddly Britain struggles in fight for visionary goal (7)

21 They are charged in public houses for a little naughty love (4)

22 Mock fellows retained by expert to reorganise files on disk (10)

25 Silly Republican ass in US beginning to crow, he’s self-obsessed (9)

26 Scoundrel killing a little rare animal (5)

27 Drama, difficult to understand, pretend to be uninterested (4,4,2,3)

■ **DOWN**

2 Endlessly upset about sanction, director withdrew (7)

3 Contaminated herbs – medic gets dishonoured (10)

(set by Dr. X)

4 Big politician overwhelmed by alcoholic spirit (5)

5 Retired journalist, badly off, about to meet investor (9)

6 Unusual hazard after Republican replaces Democrat (4)

7 Oddball in Spanish island going topless – blunder in retrospect (7)

8 Removal of one offending issue containing ten revolting illustrations (11)

10 Where a diver might be experiencing difficulty (2,4,5)

13 Got roaring drunk, showing great enthusiasm (6,2,2)

15 Daisy foolishly consumes bit of strong spirit leading to indigestion (9)

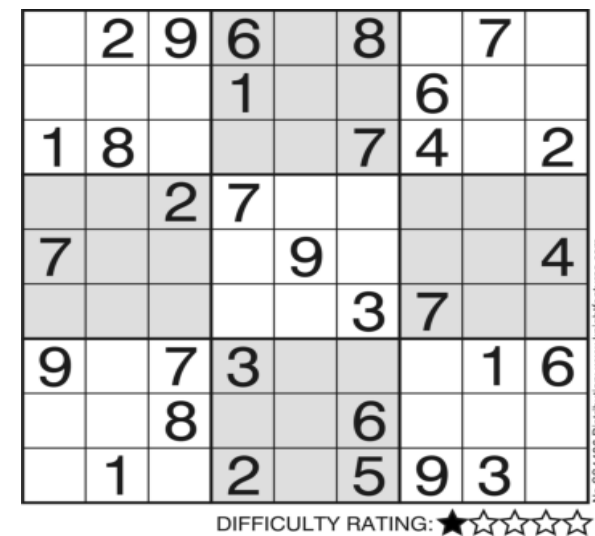
18 Popular girl consuming ecstasy, intimate after losing bit of awareness (7)

20 Extremely risqué, wearing wet pant (7)

23 Some facades arbitrarily knocked back and demolished (5)

24 Terse husband concealed sorrow (4)

SUDOKU



Solution to puzzle 12747

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

Solution to yesterday’s Sudoku

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

FAITH

Rama vows to protect

Though the elimination of Ravana is the purpose of Rama avatar, acharyas and interpreters of Valmiki Ramayana aver in one voice that the doctrine of Saranagati is the central theme in the kavya. This truth stands out against Rama’s efforts to hide His Paratva under the guise of a human being, pointed out Damal Sri Ramakrishnan and Srimati Perundevi in a discourse. Rama’s commitment to dharma is the essence of His character, nature and personality. In the very first verse of the Aranya kanda, Valmiki points out that Rama’s countenance and appearance reflect His unassailable and self controlled nature even as He walks forth into Dan-dakaranya forest with His Kodanda strung in position. This is indicative of the purposes of His incarnation, to protect the good, destroy the evil and establish dharma.

The sages in the forest are aware of His divine nature and welcome Rama, Sita and Lakshmana with great joy, warmth and customary hospitality. They explain the many practical difficulties they face at the hands of the rakshasas whenever they try to perform yagas and yagnas. Their total faith in Rama makes them acknowledge their inability to protect themselves from the powerful rakshasas. They point out that Rama is their lord and king, whether He remains in Ayodhya or in the forest. Hence it is only proper that Rama should ensure that they are able to perform their sacrifices without any hindrance.

Rama vows to protect those who have sought unconditional refuge in Him. So He gives topmost priority to this promise even as He upholds Dasaratha’s word. Later, when He accepts Vibhishana, Rama reiterates His dharma that cannot reject anyone including Ravana if he seeks Him.