London attacker was set free last year

The accused was convicted in 2012 for being part of a plot to blow up the London Stock Exchange

The 28-year-old British man who killed two people in a stabbing spree on London Bridge before the police shot him dead had been released from prison after a previous conviction for terrorism offences, prompting political recriminations ahead of an election.

Wearing a fake suicide vest and wielding knives, Usman Khan went on the rampage on Friday afternoon at a conference on criminal rehabilitation beside London Bridge. He was wrestled to the ground by bystanders and then shot dead by the

Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who faces a snap election on December 12, said it was a terrorist attack and vowed to end a practice whereby serious offenders can be automatically let out of prison early, as the Opposition attacked the policy.

Khan, whose family is



Taking stock: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Home Secretary Priti Patel visiting the scene of a stabbing on London Bridge on Saturday. • REUTERS

Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, was convicted in 2012 for his part in an al-Qaeda-inspired plot to blow up the London Stock Exchange. He was released in Decemsubject to 2018

"This individual was known to authorities, having been convicted in 2012 for terrorism offences," Britain's

top counter-terrorism police officer, Neil Basu, said in a statement. "Clearly, a key line of inquiry now is to establish how he came to carry out this attack."

Two people – a man and a woman – were killed in the attack, which took place days before London is due to host NATO leaders, including U.S. President Donald Trump. A man and two women were injured and remain in hospital, Mr. Basu said. The police searched an address in Stafford, central England, as they continued their investigation.

The Opposition Labour Party criticised the government's record on crime. "There are big questions that need to be answered," London Mayor Sadiq Khan, the most senior Opposition politician in Britain in a position of power, told Sky News. "One of the important tools judges had when it came to dealing with dangerous, convicted criminals... was their ability to give an indeterminate sentence to protect the public," he said. "(That) was taken away from them by this government."

'Changes needed'

Mr. Johnson said sentencing rules needed to be toughened up. "I have long said that this system simply isn't working," he said after visiting the scene of the attack.

"It does not make sense for us, as a society, to be putting people convicted of terrorist offences, serious violent offences, out on early release.

The Conservatives defended an independent decision taken a few weeks ago to

Dutch police arrest homeless man day after knife assault

Three teens were injured in the attack on a street in The Hague

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

The Dutch police arrested a homeless man on Saturday over a knife assault in a busy shopping street in The Hague in which three teenagers were wounded.

The 35-year-old suspect was detained in the centre of the city a day after the stabbing which caused panic as shoppers hunted Black Friday bargains.

The police had earlier said they were investigating "several scenarios" and that it was "too early to speculate" about whether there was a possible terror motive.

The attack happened just hours after a terror suspect stabbed two people to death in London.

"Following the stabbing incident in Grote Marktstraat, a 35-year-old man has just been arrested in the centre of The Hague. The



Following the marks: Forensic experts looking for clues at the scene of the crime at The Hague on Friday. • AP

man has no fixed place of residence," the police said on Twitter. "He will be transferred to a police station will questioned."

The victims were a 13year-old boy and two 15year-old girls, none of whom knew each other, the police

They were all treated in

hospital but released over-

The attacker ran off after the stabbings at a department store in the city centre, triggering a huge manhunt involving police helicopters.

"I saw two girls screaming and running away. A man fled. He jumped very athletically over benches to get away," a witness said.

Iraqis ignore PM's vow to quit, continue protests

Demand complete overhaul of system

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

NASIRIYAH Iraqis kept up anti-government protests in Baghdad and the south on Saturday, unsatisfied with the premier's vowed resignation and insisting on the overhaul of a system they say is corrupt and beholden to foreign powers.

Protesters have hit the streets since early October in the largest grassroots movement Iraq has seen in decades.

Facing pressure from the street and the country's top

Shiite cleric Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, Prime Minister Adel Abdel Mahdi announced on Friday that he would submit his resignation to Parliament, due to

meet on Sunday.

But demonstrations have not subsided, with crowds in the capital and across the Shiite-majority south sticking to their weeks-long demand of complete regime change. "Abdel Mahdi's resignation is only the first step, and now all corrupt figures must be removed and judged," a protester said.

Elders join youth in Hong Kong rallies

Pro-democracy activists continue battle against 'police brutality and unlawful arrests'

REUTERS ASSOCIATED PRESS HONG KONG

Secondary school students and retirees joined forces to protest in Hong Kong on Saturday, the first of several weekend rallies planned across the city, as pro-democracy activists vowed to battle what they say are police brutality and unlawful

A local boys' band belted out songs to tell protesters that "the whole Hong Kong is supporting you." Speakers reminded the crowd that it wasn't time to celebrate and



People participating in an anti-government protest on Saturday. • REUTERS

that the fight for real autonomy must persist. The protesters are angry over creeping Hong Kong that they say is

eroding their rights promised when the former British colony returned to Chinese rule in 1997.

"The government wants us to desert the front-liners and young protesters, but we will stick with them," rally organiser Tam Kwok-sun, 64, said to loud cheers from the crowd. "Sometimes their actions are violent and aggressive, but we are more unhappy with the government's behavior."

"I came out for the peaceful protest in June when there was more than one million people, but the government did not listen to our demands," said a 71-yearold woman in Hong Kong's Central district who only gave her name as Ponn.

"I have seen so much police brutality and unlawful arrests. This is not the Hong Kong I know," said Ms. Ponn.

Although the protests were sparked by an extradition bill that was later scrapped, demonstrators have been making "five demands" that include universal suffrage in choosing the city's leader and an independent inquiry into the use of force by the police.

Two held for 'meddling' in Hong Kong affairs

One is a Belizean, the other Taiwanese

REUTERS

China has arrested a citizen of Belize for allegedly colluding with people in the U.S. to meddle in the affairs of Hong Kong, the official Guangdong Communist Party newspaper reported on Saturday, citing authorities.

Lee Henley Hu Xiang, a Belizean businessman who lives in China, had funded key members of "hostile forces" in the U.S. to undermine China's national security, and supported activities

that led to chaos in Hong Kong, the Southern Daily said. It did not give details.

Mr. Lee was arrested in the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou on Nov. 26 by the Guangzhou State Security bureau, the report said.

Separately, the newspaper confirmed that a Taiwanese man, Lee Meng-Chu, was also arrested by the police in Shenzhen on October 31, for allegedly stealing state secrets for foreign forces after he made a trip to Hong Kong in August to support "anti-China" activities.

+ 'Attack on Swiss Embassy staffer worrying'

Sri Lanka's Human Rights Commission calls for thorough and impartial probe

Sri Lanka's Human Rights Commission has expressed "deep concern" over a recent incident involving a Swiss Embassy employee in Colombo, who was attacked by a group of unknown men, and has sought a "thorough and impartial" probe.

"The Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka is deeply concerned by media reports that an employee of a diplomatic mission in Sri Lanka had recently been abducted by a group of unknown persons who had allegedly demanded that she provide them information pertaining to Sri Lankans who have sought protection through that Embassy," said the Commission's chairperson in a letter to the police

On Wednesday, the Fo-

reign Ministry of Switzerland said one of its local staff members was "detained against her will on the street and threatened at length" by unidentified men, who "forced her to disclose Embassy-related information". The Swiss envoy in Colombo also met Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa and Foreign Minister Dinesh Gunawardena to brief them about the incident, Bern said in a state-

Last week, the Sri Lanka police said that all airports were on high alert to stop police detectives from leaving the country without permission. The announcement was made after a top officer

left the island and reportedly sought asylum in Switzerland, following alleged death threats in Sri Lanka.

tha Silva, was probing key cases of murder and abductions reported in the island's civil war years and soon after, when former President Mr. Mahinda was in power, and his brother Gotabaya Rajapaksa – Sri Lanka's newly elected President – served as the Defence Secretary.

'Taking a serious look'

Mr. Mahinda and Sri Lanka's Foreign Ministry have said the government would take a serious look into the alleged

Amid some media reports that Sri Lankan authorities were denied access to the

Embassy employee, Swiss authorities on Friday said in a statement that the victim was not in a state to testify The senior officer, Nishan- due to "deteriorating" health.

The Human Rights Commission said unearthing those responsible was "absolutely essential" to strengthen public confidence in law enforcement and to dispel public fears.

"When the public entertains such fears, it has a chilling effect on democratic rights and freedoms. Not only must justice be done on behalf of the young woman who may be traumatised by the abduction, but the larger issue of the need to reassure the public also must be addressed," the Commission

Seeking equality



Taking aim: An activist uses a slingshot during a protest against gender violence and patriarchy in Santiago, Chile on Friday. Chileans have since October 18 been protesting against social and economic inequality. • AFP

Climate protesters occupy German coal mines

SUDOKU

2			8	2			9	6
5			3	2			8	7
	4						1	
1			6					
		5		3		6		
					7			3
	5						6	
3	1			6	2			59
4	7				1			9
DIFFICULTY RATING:								

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

4	О	2	9	ш	Э	3	Ø	/
8	5	3	6	4	7	1	2	9
1	9	7	8	2	3	5	6	4
					9			
5	4	9	2	8	1	7	3	6
3	1	6	5	7	4	8	9	2
7	2	5	1	9	8	6	4	3
6								
9	8	4	7	3	6	2	5	1

Say the govt. is not doing enough to phase out the fossil fuel AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

SPREMBERG

Thousands of activists on Saturday occupied several opencast coal mines in eastern Germany, seeking to put pressure on the government to phase out the fossil fuel a divisive issue in the country's rust belt. Wearing masks and

dressed in white, hundreds of campaigners stormed into the Jaenschwalde Ost mine while another 450 sat down on a railroad connected to the site. Similar action hit the Welzow-Sued mine, also in the Lausitz basin.

Meanwhile, which operates another - the Vereinigtes Schleenhain site – south of Leipzig said about 1,200 protesters blocked a coal-excavator, forcing the group to

halt operations. "We have nothing against peaceful protests and the ex-



they protest against open-cast mining on Saturday. • REUTERS

ercise of democratic rights, but we reject all forms of breach of laws and violence," MIBRAG chairman Armin Eichholz said in a statement.

Both MIBRAG and Czechcontrolled LEAG which operates the two Lausitz mines said they were filing legal action against the protesters. The Police were able to

clear the mines only after several hours. In these mining regions, thousands of jobs depend on coal. But some residents are also threatened with the loss of their homes over a planned expansion of

Underlining the division over the coal industry, dozens of pro-coal militants also gathered in the Lausitz "Ende Gelaende wants to

destroy our infrastructures, it's not the right way to do it... we need coal in the region," Thomas Hauke, 62, said, referring to the anticoal group organising the most harmful to human health and the environment. 'Another year lost'

protest. All three mines hit

on Saturday produce lignite,

a low-grade type of brown

coal that is considered the

Calling Saturday's coordinat-

ed action a success, a spokeswoman Ende Gelaende (Game Over) said around 4,000 turned up for the blockades and related protests.

"Despite all the nice speeches and promises, 2019 was another lost year for the climate," said Nike Malhaus. The occupation is being

supported by other environmental groups, including the German branch of Fridays for Future which is also holding a protest at a power station in the region. Campaigners say the go-

vernment's plans to phase out coal by 2038 announced this year do not go far enough. They want that date brought forward for Germany to meet its international commitments to slash carbon pollution.

"Germany pretends to be a pioneer in climate protection abroad, yet its climate policy making is disastrous," said Ms. Malhaus.

The mining industry in the Lausitz basin, which stretches all the way into Poland, is vital to the local economy. LEAG is one of the region's largest employers with 8,000 workers. Opposition to the government's plants to shut down coal mines was seen as a factor behind a surge for the far-right AfD party in regional elections in September. The local council in Cottbus, a city a few kilometres from the Lausitz basin, passed a motion condemning the occupation with the support of all parties except the Greens.

Ms. Malhaus admitted there was "a climate of defiance towards our movement on the local level".

But she also pointed to local support in the Lausitz. "We have a lot of campaigners here so it's not true to say that all inhabitants of this region are in favour of coal," she said.

ELSEWHERE



of 'real ballistic missile'

North Korea on Saturday warned Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe that he could soon see a "real ballistic missile". In the wake of a recent launch by Pyongyang, Mr. Abe had termed the fired weapons "ballistic missiles" that violated UN resolutions, "It can be said that Abe is the most stupid man ever known in history as he fails to distinguish a missile from multiple launch rocket system while seeing the photo-accompanied report," a Foreign Ministry official said in a statement. "Abe may see what a real ballistic missile is in the not distant

Hafiz Saeed may be indicted on Dec. 7

Mumbai terror attack mastermind and chief of the banned JuD, Hafiz Saeed, will be prosecuted for terror financing charges by an anti-terrorism court here next month, an official said on Saturday. An Anti-Terrorism Court in Lahore held a hearing against Saeed and his accomplices on terror financing on Saturday and fixed December 7 as the date for his indictment and others in the case, PTI

China bans 'fake news' created with AI, bots

China has issued new rules

banning online video and audio providers from using artificial intelligence (AI) and virtual reality technologies to produce "fake news", which has been generalised to mean anything from a mistake to a parody or a deliberate misinterpretation of facts. The rules come into effect on January 1. The regulations particularly stressed the dangers of "deepfakes," or technology that manipulates videos to appear genuine but which depict events or speech that never happened. AFP