

# Hong Kong rally cut short by police tear gas

Protesters marched to the U.S. Consulate to thank Trump for supporting their cause by passing a law

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
HONG KONG

In the largest of three rallies on Sunday along the waterfront on the Kowloon side of Victoria Harbour in Hong Kong, a key thoroughfare was packed with demonstrators, from hardened masked protesters to families and the elderly. They chanted “Five demands, not one less” and “Disband the police force” as they marched.

That rally followed two other marches earlier on Sunday as protesters sought to keep the pressure on city leader Carrie Lam after the recent win by the pro-democracy camp in district council elections and the gaining of U.S. support for their cause.

“If we don’t walk out, the government will say it’s just a youth issue, but this problem affects all of us,” Lily Chau, 30, said as she pushed her toddler in a stroller at the march in Kowloon. “If we are scared, the government will continue to trample on our



**Face-off:** Police running towards protesters on Nathan road in Hong Kong on Sunday. ■ AFP

rights.” Police estimated that 16,000 people attended the Kowloon rally.

### ‘Minimum force used’

The Kowloon march was cut short after riot police fired tear gas and arrested a few people. A police statement said minimum force was deployed after “hundreds of rioters hurled smoke bombs” and bricks.

Marchers berated police

as they scrambled to flee the tear gas, shouting “Dirty cops” and “Are you trying to kill us?” Some protesters dug up paving stones and threw them on the street to try to slow the police down.

More tear gas was fired at night after dozens of hardcore protesters set up roadblocks and vandalised some shops and restaurants linked to China.

Tensions started on Satur-

day night after police used pepper balls against protesters and a man was hit in the head by an unidentified assailant while clearing the street.

### Only one demand met

Ms. Lam has said she’ll accelerate dialogue but has refused to offer any new concessions since the elections. Her government has accepted only one demand: withdrawing extradition legislation that would have sent suspects to mainland China for trial.

Elaine Wong, an office worker who was at the Kowloon march, called the recent election win “an empty victory.” “We have, in fact, not won any concessions for our demands,” she said. “We must continue to stand out to remind the government of our unhappiness.”

The two earlier marches on Sunday appealed to President Donald Trump for help and demanded that police stop using tear gas.

Waving American flags, black-clad protesters marched to the U.S. Consulate to thank Mr. Trump for signing into law last week legislation supporting their cause and urged him to swiftly sanction Lam and other officials for suppressing human rights.

Some held banners reading “Let’s make Hong Kong great again” – a riff on Mr. Trump’s 2016 campaign pledge to make America great again. One showed him standing atop a tank with “Trump” emblazoned on the front and side.

In Geneva, China accused the U.N. high commissioner for human rights, Michelle Bachelet, of emboldening “radical violence” in Hong Kong.

In an opinion piece published in Hong Kong’s *South China Morning Post* newspaper, Ms. Bachelet called for an “independent and impartial judge-led investigation into reports of excessive use of force by the police.”

# China introduces mandatory face scans for phone users

New customers need to record themselves to get connection

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
BEIJING

China will require telecom operators to collect face scans when registering new phone users at offline outlets starting on Sunday, according to the country’s information technology authority, as Beijing continues to tighten cyberspace controls.

In September, China’s Industry and Information Technology Ministry issued a notice on “safeguarding the legitimate rights and interests of citizens online”, which laid out rules for enforcing real-name registration.

The notice said telecom operators should use “artificial intelligence and other technical means” to verify people’s identities when they take a new phone number.

A China Unicom customer service representative told



China seeks to leverage AI as facial recognition technology gains traction. ■ GETTY IMAGES

AFP that the December 1 “portrait matching” requirement means customers registering for a new phone number may have to record themselves turning their head and blinking.

Though the Chinese government has pushed for real-name registration for phone users since at least 2013 – meaning ID cards are linked to new phone numbers – the move to leverage AI comes as facial recogni-

tion technology gains traction across China, where the tech is used for everything from supermarket checkouts to surveillance.

Chinese social media users reacted with a mix of support and worry over the December 1 facial verification notice.

“This is a bit too much,” wrote one user on Twitter-like Weibo. “Control, and then more control,” posted another.

While researchers have warned of the privacy risks associated with gathering facial recognition data, consumers have widely embraced the technology – though China saw one of its first lawsuits on facial recognition last month. In November, a Chinese professor filed a claim against a safari park in Hangzhou for requiring face scans for entry, according to the local court.

## ELSEWHERE



### Iraq Parliament approves PM’s resignation

BAGHDAD

Iraq’s Parliament approved the resignation of Prime Minister Adel Abdul Mahdi on Sunday, amid ongoing anti-government demonstrations in the capital that saw one protester shot dead. Parliament enacted Mr. Mahdi’s resignation without putting it to a vote, according to two parliamentarians in attendance. Existing laws do not provide clear procedures for MPs to recognise the PM’s resignation. AFP

### 19 killed as bus plunges into frozen river in Russia

MOSCOW

A passenger bus plunged off a bridge onto a frozen river in Siberia on Sunday, killing 19 of the more than 40 people on board, authorities said. A tyre on the bus burst as it was crossing the bridge over the Kuenga river in eastern Siberia’s Zabaikalsky region. The vehicle, which was travelling from Sretensk to Chita, skidded off the road and onto the ice. AFP

### Plane crash kills nine, injures three in U.S.

WASHINGTON

A plane crash in the U.S. state of South Dakota killed nine people, including two children, and injured three others on Saturday while a winter storm warning was in place, officials said. The Pilatus PC-12, a single-engine turboprop plane, crashed shortly after takeoff from the Chamberlain airport, the Federal Aviation Administration said. AFP

# Swiss embassy staffer’s claims don’t add up: Lanka

Colombo seeks access to the woman

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
COLOMBO

Sri Lanka on Sunday raised doubts about claims by a Swiss embassy staff member that she was abducted and demanded access to the woman who has said she was forced to hand over sensitive information.

The alleged abduction came one day after a top Sri Lanka police officer sought asylum in Switzerland.

Sri Lanka’s Foreign Ministry said that Swiss Ambassador Hanspeter Mock was briefed on Sunday about the inquiry and told that the staffer’s account did not add up. “The Ambassador was

presented with clear evidence that the sequence of events and timeline of the alleged incident.. did not in any way correspond with the actual movements of the alleged victim on that date,” said a Ministry statement.

Police had interviewed witnesses and secured technical evidence, including Uber records, CCTV footage, telephone records and GPS data, it added.

The Ministry insisted that the employee be interviewed and also undergo a medical examination. The Swiss embassy has said the woman is suffering from “deteriorating health”.

# Pakistan Foreign Minister to meet Gotabaya, Mahinda

Qureshi is scheduled to meet them in Colombo today

MEERA SRINIVASAN  
COLOMBO

Pakistan’s Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi is scheduled to meet President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa in Colombo on Monday.

The visiting Pakistan Foreign Minister will also meet his Sri Lankan counterpart, Foreign Minister Dinesh Gunawardena. “The two sides will exchange views on the entire gamut of bilateral relations and matters pertaining to regional and international issues,” said a statement



Shah Mahmood Qureshi

from the Pakistan High Commission in Colombo.

The visit comes a day after President Gotabaya returned from his first state visit abroad, to New Delhi. Islamabad and Colombo

have had historically close ties, spanning political, trade and military ties. Mr. Qureshi is the second foreign official to visit Sri Lanka, after External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar flew in to meet Mr. Gotabaya in Colombo on November 19.

Soon after Sri Lanka’s presidential poll outcome was known, Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan was among the regional leaders who sent early wishes to Mr. Gotabaya. Mr. Khan also spoke to Mr. Gotabaya over telephone and invited him to Pakistan, it added.

# Will strengthen sentencing system: PM

London attacker was freed after serving less than half of a 16-year sentence

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
LONDON

Prime Minister Boris Johnson vowed on Saturday to strengthen Britain’s sentencing system after a convicted terrorist released early from prison stabbed two people to death and wounded three in a London Bridge attack.

Members of the public were hailed as heroes for preventing greater loss of life by tackling Usman Khan before police shot him dead.

**IS claims responsibility** Khan had been conditionally released from jail last December after serving less

than half of a 16-year prison sentence for terrorism.

On Saturday, the Islamic State group released a statement claiming responsibility for the attack.

“The person who carried out the London attack... was a fighter from the Islamic State, and did so in response to calls to target citizens of coalition countries,” IS said, referring to a multi-country alliance against the group.

The latest attack came less than two weeks before Britain’s general election, and thrust the issue of terrorism into the heart of the campaign.



Boris Johnson

Mr. Johnson pledged to introduce minimum 14-year sentences for serious terrorist offences, while some convicted might never be released, and to scrap early re-

lease if he wins a majority.

“It’s absolutely clear that we can’t carry on with the failed approaches of the past,” said Mr. Johnson, who became leader of the Conservative Party – which has been in power since 2010 – in July.

But Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn appeared to raise doubts about the Tories’ handling of the parole and wider justice system in light of the attack. “We need to investigate the way all aspects of the criminal justice system operate,” he said, branding the London Bridge incident “a complete disaster”.

# Bangladesh court jails 3 over 2018 road crash

2 students died, sparking mass protests

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
DHAKA

A Bangladeshi court on Sunday sentenced three transport workers to life for a road crash last year that killed two students and triggered major anti-government protests.

Hundreds of thousands of students across the country took to the streets after the two teenagers were hit by an out-of-control bus that had been illegally racing through the streets of Dhaka in July 2018.

The three workers, including two drivers, were

found guilty of culpable homicide, prosecutor Tapash Kumar Paul told reporters. “We are happy with the verdict,” he said.

The rallies, which began over anger at road safety but soon morphed into opposition to the government, lasted more than a week and paralysed Dhaka’s traffic.

As the demonstrations spread across the country, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina launched a heavy crackdown and over 150 people were injured after police fired tear gas and rubber bullets.

# Nearly 70 dead in clashes in Syria’s Idlib

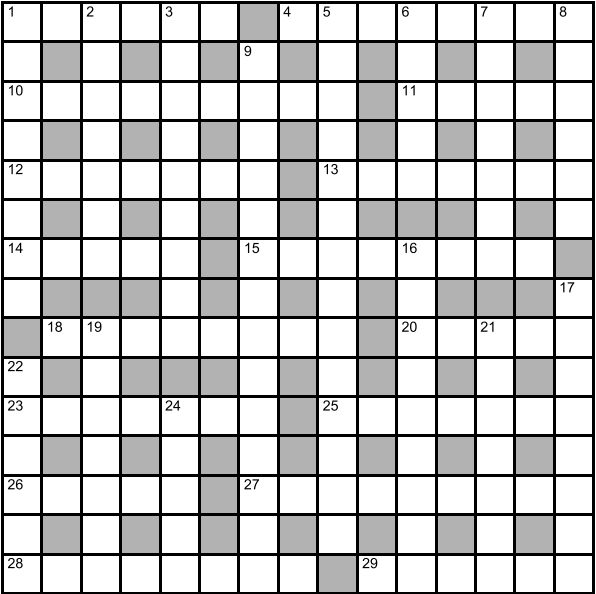
AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
SURMAN

Two days of clashes between regime forces and armed groups in Syria’s last major opposition bastion have killed nearly 70 on both sides, undermining a months-long ceasefire agreement, a war monitor said on Sunday.

The battles in the northwestern province of Idlib are “the most violent” there since a Russian-brokered ceasefire deal came into effect in August, said Rami Abdul Rahman, head of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

## THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12795

Log on to crossword.thehindu.com for more puzzles



To play an interactive version of this crossword online, scan the QR code

### ■ ACROSS

- 1 Place to relax – will make one happy (6)
- 4 Fuss over break point finds acceptance (8)
- 10 Adopt lethal procedure till the end (3,3,3)
- 11 Painting frames, Hindu leader and a Buddhist monk (5)

- 12 An American setter goes in for prayer (7)
- 13 A grave occasion for peace keepers in the wild (7)
- 14 Consecutive characters said to be stuck to one with gum (5)
- 15 Imply it’s cosy (8)
- 18 Cards not returned to capital (8)
- 20 Fire below to suppress revolt (5)
- 23 Definitely underweight on local religious practice (7)
- 25 A resume cut to size (7)
- 26 Wealthy man, named a jerk (5)
- 27 News break in a London borough on de-stressing (9)
- 28 Bend in a river, you can find a toxic plant (8)
- 29 A man in detention, said to be a peasant (6)

### ■ DOWN

- 1 Protective cover at a prime ground (3,5)

(set by Arden)

- 2 Finally one will rise, without clue on poetry (7)
- 3 Carol caught cold getting money once... (9)
- 5 ...set to a Dame Fonteyn’s “Yom Kippur” (3,2,9)
- 6 Empty pan, fill it with uncooked seafood (5)
- 7 She’s involved in sex – what will you get finally? (7)
- 8 Bother to pay up when head’s turned 180 degrees (6)
- 9 Unforeseen turn of events in “Oliver” (5,2,3,4)
- 16 Animal crosses Mumbai suburb, it’s preserved (9)
- 17 Everything’s green, may be it will trigger a reaction (8)
- 19 Base ring, missing the odd count, perhaps (7)
- 21 Cruel to bring it back in touch (7)
- 22 Drink some of it, trust in God (6)
- 24 Head off with headgear from the city (5)

## SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★☆☆☆☆

### Solution to puzzle 12794

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

### Solution to yesterday’s Sudoku

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

## FAITH

# Sadana for chitta suddhi

None can understand the truth of Brahman and statements such as ‘Brahman is limitless as the sky,’ at best can serve as partial and temporary truths. Suppose the following directions are given to a person who has to reach a particular place; there is a car in front of it, and a bird is perched on the roof. These indications are temporary and by the time the person reaches the place, the car and the bird may have left the place. But still, using other cues, the person may identify the destination. Just as the example of showing the moon as being present between the branches is to enable one to catch the glimpse of it, though it is nowhere near the branches, sacred texts help in the spiritual quest by showing the possible ways to make the leap to grasp the truth, pointed out Swami Vidyashankara Saraswati in a discourse.

In this context, Adi Sankara’s works, his Prakarana granthas and hymns in praise of the many deities continue to inspire each one with this desire to know and experience Brahman through sadana. Sastras advise the practices of worship and upasanas to maintain chitta suddhi, which alone can help to overcome the hurdles of worldly attractions. The house that is cleaned does not remain so after a couple of days, though it is well locked. Dust and dirt accumulate and the cleaning process has to be repeated. So too, the purity of mind can be maintained only by constant vigil against evil and unnecessary thoughts that easily enter and pervade to settle down. The truth of the imperishable Brahman and atma against all else that is perishable has to get embedded in one’s consciousness. This is the sadana that enables one to cross samsara to salvation. The acharya also teaches that it is only through God’s grace that He can be realised.