

Hong Kong marks 6 months of protests

Organisers say 8,00,000 joined rally, biggest since recent polls; police arrest 11 people & seize weapons

REUTERS
HONG KONG

Hast crowds of black-clad demonstrators thronged Hong Kong on Sunday in the largest anti-government protests since local elections last month that boosted the pro-democracy movement seeking to curb controls by China.

It was the first time since August that the Civil Human Rights Front – organiser of million-strong marches earlier in the year that paralysed the Asian finance centre – had received authorities’ permission for a rally. It estimated turnout of 8,00,000 while police said 1,83,000.

Chants of “Fight for freedom! Stand with Hong Kong!” echoed as demonstrators, from students to professionals and the elderly, marched from Victoria Park towards the financial area.

As darkness fell, some protesters spray-painted anti-Beijing graffiti on a Bank of China building. Riot police



Show of strength: A protester wearing a Guy Fawkes mask waving a flag during a march, organised by the Civil Human Right Front, in Hong Kong on Sunday. •REUTERS

stood on guard, restrained as protesters yelled “dogs” and “cockroaches.”

The former British colony of 7.4 million people reverted to Chinese rule in 1997. It is governed under a “One Country, Two Systems” formula guaranteeing freedoms not allowed in mainland Chi-

na, but many fear Beijing is tightening the screws.

Universal suffrage
“It’s Christmas time soon but we’re not in the mood to celebrate anymore,” said Lawrence, a 23-year-old student.

He held a poster saying: “My 2020 wish is universal

suffrage”, a reference to demands for an open vote on the city leader, currently the unpopular Beijing-backed Carrie Lam.

China blames the six months of unrest on interference by foreign governments including the United States and Britain.

On Saturday, two leaders of the American Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong were denied entry to the neighbouring Chinese city of Macau, without explanation.

Lam under pressure
Ms. Lam says she has heard the people but has not offered concessions despite a resounding win for pro-democracy parties in local elections two weeks ago. They secured almost 90% of 452 district council seats in a record turnout.

At Sunday’s protest, chants of “five demands, not one less” rang out, referring to demands ranging from Lam’s resignation to an amnesty for detainees.

“I will fight for freedom until I die because I am a Hong Konger,” said June, a 40-year-old mother.

Police said they arrested another 11 people, aged 20 to 63, confiscating weapons including army knives, fire-crackers, bullets and a semi-automatic pistol.

FBI presumes shooting at U.S. Navy base was an act of terror

On social media, he charged that ‘Americans are anti-Muslim’

ASSOCIATED PRESS
PENSACOLA

The FBI is working under the presumption that a fatal shooting at a Florida naval base carried out by an aviation student from Saudi Arabia was an act of terrorism, the agency said on Sunday.

All international students at the Pensacola base have been accounted for, there have been no arrests, and the community is under no immediate threat, special agent Rachel L. Rojas said. A Saudi commanding officer has ordered all students from the country to remain at one location at the base, officials said.

Additionally, authorities believe the gunman made social media posts, in which he talked about U.S. support for Israel and charged that Americans are anti-Muslim, a U.S. official said on Sunday. Investigators also believe the



Mohammed Alshamrani

gunman visited New York City, including Rockefeller Center, days before the shooting and are working to determine the purpose of the trip, said the official, on condition of anonymity.

The FBI and others had said they were trying to determine whether the gunman, 2nd Lt. Mohammed Alshamrani, 21, of the Royal Saudi Air Force, acted alone. Alshamrani was a flight stu-

dent at Pensacola, where members of foreign militaries are routinely trained by the U.S.

Earlier in the week of the shooting, Alshamrani hosted a dinner party, where he and three others watched videos of mass shootings, another U.S. official said.

The U.S. has sought Saudi assistance to piece together information about the gunman and his motive.

Alshamrani opened fire inside a classroom at the base, killing three people and wounding two sheriff’s deputies, before one of the deputies killed him. Eight others were also hurt.

The official said one of the three students who attended the dinner party recorded video outside the classroom building while the shooting was taking place. Two other Saudi students watched from a car, the official said.

Sunni leaders back Hariri to return as Lebanon’s PM

Formal consultation to designate the premier begins today

REUTERS
BEIRUT

Lebanon’s leading Sunni Muslim politician, Saad al-Hariri, reemerged as a candidate for Prime Minister on Sunday when businessman Samir Khatib withdrew his candidacy to lead a government that must tackle an acute economic crisis.

Mr. Hariri quit as Prime Minister on October 29, prompted by mass protests against an entire political

class blamed for state corruption and steering Lebanon into the worst economic crisis since the 1975-90 civil war.

Under the country’s power sharing system, the PM must be a Sunni Muslim. Mr. Hariri has continued to govern in a caretaker capacity.

There were differences between Mr. Hariri, who is aligned with Western and Gulf Arab states, and his adversaries, including the Iran-

backed Shi’ite group Hezbollah, on a new Cabinet.

Grand Mufti of Lebanon, Sheikh Abdul Latif Derian, informed Mr. Khatib that a “consensus has been reached to name Mr. Hariri Prime Minister.”

Formal consultations to designate the PM will take place on Monday. President Michel Aoun must designate the candidate with the maximum support among Lebanon’s 128 lawmakers.

Suu Kyi gambles reputation in Rohingya case

OIC will call on the ICJ tomorrow to announce steps to restrain Myanmar

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
YANGON

From democracy champion to defending Myanmar against genocide charges, the shock decision by civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi to face the UN’s top court risks further damaging her image overseas and deepening the siege mentality at home.

“We stand with you,” proclaim billboards across Myanmar, sporting beaming portraits of the Nobel laureate as she prepares to face

the International Court of Justice (ICJ) over the Rohingya crisis. Her supporters are printing off T-shirts, organising rallies and even signing up to VIP tours to The Hague to offer their backing.

Political parties and some rebel groups have fallen over themselves to give their support, in a country where the Rohingya garner little sympathy and are widely regarded as illegal immigrants.

Yet overseas, in the West



High stakes: A woman on a motorcycle riding past a huge billboard of Aung San Su Kyi and three Ministers. •AFP

and in Muslim countries, Ms. Suu Kyi’s reputation lies in tatters with multiple awards and even an honorary citizenship revoked.

Critics say “The Lady” has become an apologist for a murderous military intent on wiping out the country’s Rohingya Muslims.

The spectacle of Ms. Suu Kyi standing up in court on behalf of the nation might play well at home but she risks suffering a fatal blow to what remains of her global reputation. “If she’s only going to use the visit to demonstrate defiance and continue to defend the indefensible, then it only widens the impasse,” Yangon-based analyst David Mathieson said.

On behalf of Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, a 57-nation grouping, Gambia will call on the ICJ on December 10 to announce measures to prevent any further genocide by Myanmar.

ELSEWHERE



No segregation of men & women at Saudi eateries

RIYADH
Women in Saudi Arabia will no longer need to use separate entrances from men or sit behind partitions at restaurants in the latest measure announced by the government as part of its reform push. AP

Air strikes kill 5 pro-Iran fighters in Syria: monitor

BEIRUT
Air strikes by unidentified warplanes have killed five pro-Iran fighters in Syria’s eastern province of Deir Ezzor near the Iraqi border, a U.K.-based war monitor said. The strikes targeted “positions of Iranian forces”, it said. AFP

France may delay reform timing as strikes continue

Will fight until plan is dropped: CGT

REUTERS
PARIS

The French government has said it would see through planned pension reforms but tried to assuage union anger with promises of a gradual introduction of the new system that has sparked nationwide strikes.

Transport systems were paralysed for a fourth day on Sunday as unions at state railway SNCF and Paris public transport system RATP extended their strike against the changes. “I am determined to take this pension reform to its completion,” Prime Minister Edouard Philippe told *Journal du Dimanche* newspaper.

On Wednesday, Mr. Phi-

lippe will present a detailed outline of the reform, which aims to end special regimes under which some workers can retire in their early fifties and replace them with a unified system with equal rights for everyone.

Ahead of a meeting of ministers on Sunday afternoon, several cabinet members offered to soften the reforms. “I want the state budget to be balanced, but let’s not be dogmatic ... the calendar is open to discussion,” Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said.

Hardline CGT union leader Philippe Martinez said it would fight until the government completely dropped the plan.

Iran hopes to use Russian fund to counter U.S. sanctions

‘Budget of resistance’ with \$5 bn from Moscow in the works

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
TEHRAN

Iran’s President Hassan Rouhani announced on Sunday a “budget of resistance” against U.S. sanctions targeting the country’s vital oil sector, backed by a \$5 billion Russian investment.

Mr. Rouhani said the aim was to reduce “hardships” in Iran where a shock fuel price hike last month triggered nationwide demonstrations that turned deadly.

After unilaterally withdrawing from a 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers last year, the U.S. imposed sanctions on Tehran, including on oil exports,



Hassan Rouhani

which it aims to squeeze to zero in a campaign of “maximum pressure”.

Iran has suffered a sharp economic downturn, with a plummeting currency sending inflation skyrocketing. Mr. Rouhani told Parlia-

ment that the budget of 4,845 trillion rials (\$36 billion), was devised to help Iran’s people overcome difficulty. “We know that under the situation of sanctions and pressure, people are in hardship. We know people’s purchasing power has declined,” he said.

The budget would benefit from a \$5 billion “investment” from Russia which was still being finalised, said Mr. Rouhani.

“We hope that \$5 billion in capital will enter the country, either through plans that have already been finalised or which will be finalised next year,” he said.

Kim has much to lose through hostility: Trump

N. Korea conducted new weapons test

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump warned on Sunday that North Korea’s Kim Jong-un had “everything” to lose through hostility towards the U.S., after Pyongyang said it had carried out a major new weapons test.

“Kim Jong-un is too smart and has far too much to lose, everything actually, if he acts in a hostile way,” Mr. Trump tweeted in response to the unspecified test.

The announcement of Saturday’s test came just hours after the U.S. President said he would be “surprised” by any hostile action from the North, emphasising his “very good



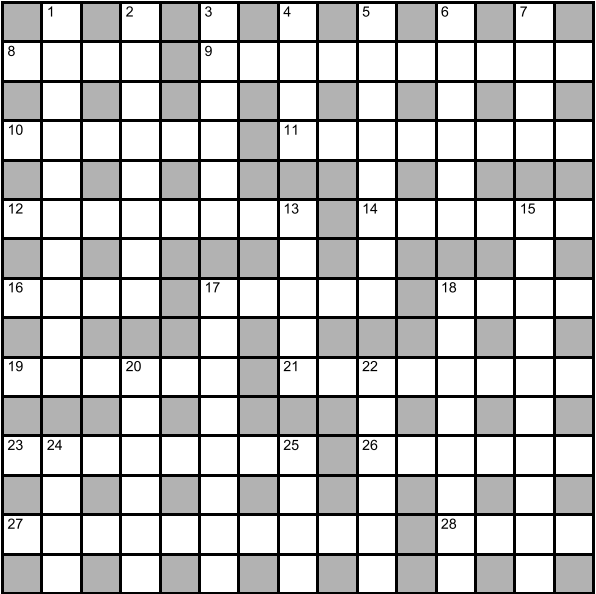
Donald Trump

relationship” with Mr. Kim.

Both leaders have met three times since June 2018, but with little progress towards denuclearisation. Pyongyang has set a December 31 deadline for the U.S. to make new concessions to kickstart stalled talks.

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12801

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ACROSS

- 8 Choirmaster released frisky hamster to find fibre (4)
- 9 Council too formulated cooking medium (7,3)
- 10 Bachelor’s grandmother’s fruit (6)
- 11 Tolerates some entrails (8)
- 12 European steamer carries some paper for landed proprietors (8)

DOWN

- 1 Korean lac’s moulded into a reptile (5,5)
- 2 Cherish drink without a drop of rum? Certainly (8)
- 3 Rush back carrying a piece of ice around end of April and get a sweet (6)

(set by Incognito)

- 14 Money we returned to get nut (6)
- 16 Call for a servant (4)
- 17 Primarily computer science is about latest trend in electronic components (5)
- 18 Indian Foreign Office data (4)
- 19 Invigorating spice? (6)
- 21 Horses run around East Australia’s coast (8)
- 23 Job’s violent antic using a couple of eggs after 5 (8)
- 26 Massage boy gets queen some device to make her impregnable (6)
- 27 Take crabs running around western lagoons (10)
- 28 Mark’s insect (4)
- 4 Wrongly cast for dramatic pieces (4)
- 5 Bill’s checks in the US (8)
- 6 Robs hard metals, I hear (6)
- 7 Angle seen between first floor and final arch (4)
- 13 Slides on sauce aboard ship (5)
- 15 Cree eves dance around couple of furlongs to show liveliness (10)
- 17 Main character in a carnival’s conclusion (8)
- 18 Lives at home and dresses (8)
- 20 Practical jokes of Pran Krishan Sikand, initially (6)
- 22 Donkey carries tailless bird to the other side (6)
- 24 Festival of orthodox Nairs and Menons in the beginning (4)
- 25 Margosa found in Argentine embassy (4)

SUDOKU



Solution to puzzle 12800

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

Solution to yesterday’s Sudoku

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

FAITH

Great devotion

In the city of Karuvur lived a devotee of Lord Siva, called Eripatha Nayanar, whose devotion was revealed to the world by Lord Siva, said R. Narayanan in a discourse. There also lived in Karuvur another devotee of the Lord whose name was Sivakamiyandar. One day, Sivakamiyandar was on his way to the temple with a basket of flowers to offer to the Lord. The King’s royal elephant was passing that way. The elephant snatched the basket from Sivakamiyandar’s hands and flung it down, thereby scattering the flowers. The king’s guards managed to bring the elephant under control, but Sivakamiyandar was heart-broken because he had no flowers to offer to the Lord.

Eripathar, who came that way, saw the weeping Sivakamiyandar, and asked him what the matter was. Sivakamiyandar tearfully narrated the sequence of events. Angered at what had happened, Eripathar struck down the elephant and the king’s guards. News reached the king that the royal elephant and his guards had been killed. The king wanted revenge and he rushed to the spot. When he found that it was a devotee of Lord Siva who had resorted to such a violent act as killing, he was shocked. Eripathar explained that his anger was because of the sorrow caused to a devotee of Lord Siva. The King then fell at the feet of Eripathar, and said, “Kill me too.”

Eripathar was moved by the king’s humility and piety, and was full of remorse. He picked up the king’s sword and was about to cut off his own head, but the king held on to Eripathar’s hands to prevent him from doing so. Eripathar, however, was bent on killing himself. Finally, Lord Siva’s voice was heard telling them that the whole thing was just His way of showing the world the extent of their devotion.



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