

Trump signals new effort to end 'Dreamers' program

President Donald Trump on Friday signaled he could try again to end the program that has protected so-called Dreamer immigrants who are in the United States illegally but entered as children, following a loss in the US Supreme Court. Trump wrote on Twitter, referring to the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy that "The Supreme Court asked us to resubmit on DACA, nothing was lost or won. They 'punted', much like in a football game (where hopefully they would stand for our great American Flag). We will be submitting enhanced papers shortly in order to properly fulfil the Supreme Court's ruling & request of yesterday." The 5-4 court ruling found that the administration had erred in the way that it decided to end the program in 2017. DACA was put in place by the previous administration of President Barack Obama and currently some 649,000 immigrants are enrolled.

North Korea prepares anti-South leaflets

North Korea is gearing up to send propaganda leaflets over its southern border, denouncing North Korean defectors and South Korea, its state media said yesterday, the latest retaliation for leaflets from the South as bilateral tensions rise. Enraged North Korean people across the country "are actively pushing forward with the preparations for launching a large-scale distribution of leaflets," which are piled as high as a mountain, said state news agency KCNA. "Every action should be met with proper reaction and only when one experiences it oneself, one can feel how offending it is," KCNA said. North Korea has blamed North Korean defectors for launching leaflets across the border and threatened military action. On Tuesday, Pyongyang blew up an inter-Korean liaison office to show its displeasure against the defectors and South Korea for not stopping them launching leaflets.

Rare 'ring of fire' solar eclipse to dim Africa, Asia



Skywatchers along a narrow band from west Africa to the Arabian Peninsula, India and southern China will witness the most dramatic "ring of fire" solar eclipse to shadow the Earth in years today. Annular eclipses occur when the Moon - passing between Earth and the Sun - is not quite close enough to our planet to completely obscure sunlight, leaving a thin ring of the solar disc visible. They occur every year or two, and can only be seen from a narrow pathway across the planet. Remarkably, the eclipse on Sunday arrives on the northern hemisphere's longest day of the year - the summer solstice - when Earth's north pole is tilted most directly towards the Sun. A solar eclipse always occurs about two weeks before or after a lunar eclipse, when the Moon moves into Earth's shadow. Lunar eclipses are visible from about half of Earth's surface.

SOURCE: REUTERS, AFP



WHAT IS HOME?

Syrian displaced children pose for photo at Atmeh camp, near the Turkish border, Syria, on Friday. On World Refugee Day, Reuters photographer Khalil Ashawi went to the Atmeh camp in Syria, where families have been sheltering since 2011 from a conflict that has made half of Syrians homeless, to ask children born in the camp a simple question: what is home? They all gave him different answers on their daily ordeals and they each have their unique story of the war. But they have no idea what a home is. "These kids don't know the meaning of a home, some don't know or have forgotten that a house has a wall and a door," Ashawi said. The United Nations' refugee agency is marking this year's World Refugee Day with the message that "every action counts", as it faces the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic and record numbers of people forced from their homes by war and extreme weather. Conflict, hunger and economic upheaval had displaced nearly 80 million people worldwide, half of them children, by the end of 2019 - nearly twice as many as a decade ago.

PHOTO: REUTERS



India downs Pak drone with weapons

THE STATESMAN/ANN

A drone carrying weapons in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district was shot down by the Indian Border Security Forces on Saturday.

It was yet another attempt by Pakistani forces to drop weapons and ammunition for terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir.

A US made M-4 rifle, two magazines, 60 rounds of ammunition and seven grenades have been found after shooting down the US made Hexa Copter Drone.

There were no immediate comment from Pakistan.

The incident comes as Indian authorities stepped up operations against militants in Kashmir valley. More than 100 alleged militants have been killed this year, officials said.

Indian-administered Kashmir has been in turmoil since last August when New Delhi revoked its semi-autonomous status.

Kashmir has been divided between India and Pakistan since the two became independent and angrily split in 1947. Both claim the whole region which has been the cause of two wars between the neighbours.

China unveils HK security law

City's freedoms in doubt as Beijing to set up 'national security agency'

REUTERS, Beijing/Hong Kong

Beijing unveiled details of its new national security law for Hong Kong yesterday, paving the way for the most profound change to the city's way of life since it returned to Chinese rule in 1997.

The much-anticipated legislation, which has provoked deep concerns in Washington and Europe, includes a national security office for Hong Kong to collect intelligence and handle crimes against national security, the official Xinhua news agency reported.

It said Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam could also appoint specific judges to hear national security cases, a move likely to unnervingly some investors, diplomats and business leaders in the global financial hub.

National security activities would protect human rights and freedom of speech and assembly, it added, without providing details.

China says the draft law is aimed at

tackling separatist activity, subversion, terrorism and collusion with foreign forces, but critics fear it will crush wide-ranging freedoms that are seen as key to Hong Kong's status as a global financial centre.



The details of the law were unveiled following a three-day meeting of the top decision-making body of China's parliament.

The exact time frame for enacting the law was unclear, although political analysts expect it will take effect ahead of key Legislative Council elections in Hong Kong on Sept 6.

China's move to impose the law

directly on Hong Kong, bypassing the city's legislature, comes after a year of sometimes violent anti-government and anti-Beijing protests that mainland and local authorities blame "foreign forces" for fomenting.

When Britain handed over Hong Kong to China in 1997, China promised to allow the city a high degree of autonomy for 50 years under what is known as the "one country two systems" formula of governance.

On Friday, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Washington would in future treat Hong Kong as a Chinese city, rather than a semi-autonomous one, and the United States was working its way through a decision-making process over who would be held accountable over curbs to Hong Kong's freedoms.

Underscoring global concerns over the move, the European Parliament on Friday voted in favour of taking China to the International Court of Justice in The Hague if Beijing imposes the security law on Hong Kong.

We won't back unilateral Iran sanctions snapback

Europe tells US as it tries to save nuke deal

REUTERS, Paris

Britain, France and Germany said they would not back US efforts to unilaterally trigger the reimposition of United Nations sanctions on Iran, but said they wanted talks with Tehran over its ongoing violations of a 2015 nuclear accord.

Under Iran's 2015 deal with world powers to accept limits to its nuclear programme in return for the lifting of sanctions, a UN weapons embargo is due to expire in October. The United States, which exited the deal in 2018, says it wants to extend the embargo.

If the UN Security Council does not extend the embargo, Washington has threatened to trigger a so-called snapback of all UN sanctions on Iran, using a process outlined in the nuclear deal.

Such a move would be likely to kill the nuclear accord. "We firmly believe that any unilateral attempt to trigger UN sanctions snapback would have serious adverse consequences in the UN Security Council," the foreign ministers of the three European countries (E3) said in a statement.

"We would not support such a decision, which would be incompatible with our current efforts to preserve the JCPOA (Iran nuclear deal)," they said after discussing Iran in Berlin.

European diplomats are working on a compromise, but it is unclear whether they will be able to satisfy the United States as well as Russia and China, which like the E3 remain in the deal.

'I have not resigned'

US prosecutor who probed Giuliani refuses to quit

REUTERS, Washington

A top US federal prosecutor whose office has been investigating President Donald Trump's personal lawyer, Rudolph Giuliani, on Friday refused to step down after the administration abruptly said it was replacing him.

The dramatic standoff marks the latest in series of unusual actions by Attorney General William Barr that critics say are meant to benefit Trump politically and undermine the independence of the Justice Department. It also comes as Trump seeks to purge officials perceived as not fully supporting him.

Barr, in a surprise late-night announcement, said the US Attorney in Manhattan, Geoffrey Berman, was stepping down.

Berman, who leads a powerful office known for prosecuting high-profile terrorism cases, Wall Street financial crimes and government corruption, said he first learned of the move from Barr's press release and would not go quietly.

"I have not resigned, and have no intention of resigning my position," Berman said in a statement. "I will step down when a presidentially appointed nominee is confirmed by the Senate. Until



then, our investigations will move forward without delay or interruption."

Since being appointed in January 2018, Berman has not shied from taking on figures in Trump's orbit. His office oversaw the prosecution of Michael Cohen, Trump's former personal lawyer, indicted two Giuliani associates and launched a probe into Giuliani in connection with his efforts to dig up dirt on Trump's political adversaries in Ukraine. Prosecutors have not accused Giuliani of wrongdoing.

Berman's abrupt attempted dismissal came as the Justice Department asks a federal court to block publication of a book by former National Security Adviser John Bolton, whose claims include an allegation Trump tried to interfere with a probe overseen by Berman's office.

Society at 'tipping point'

Says Greta over anti-racism protests

AFP, London

Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg yesterday said the Black Lives Matter protests showed society had reached a "tipping point" at which injustices are finally addressed.

"It feels like we have passed some kind of social tipping point where people are starting to realise that we cannot keep looking away from these things," the 17-year-old said in an interview with the BBC.

"We cannot keep sweeping these things under the carpet, these injustices."

Thunberg's interview aired as global capitals braced for another weekend of anti-racism protests in the wake of the death of a white policeman at the hands of a white policeman of the unarmed African American George Floyd.

British protesters have toppled the statue of a 17th century slave trader and the Church of England and the Bank of England have expressed remorse for profiting from the sale of Africans to the Americas.

Thunberg said "people are starting to find their voice, to sort of understand that they can actually have an impact."

She also described being stunned by the depth of US poverty she discovered while travelling with her father in an electric car they borrowed from the former California governor and actor Arnold Schwarzenegger.

"It was very shocking to hear people talk about that they can't afford to put food on the table," she said.

More protests were scheduled for yesterday in London and the Scottish capital Edinburgh.



Protesters attempt to topple a statue of Confederate General Albert Pike during an event to mark Juneteenth, which commemorates the end of slavery in Texas, two years after the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation freed slaves elsewhere in the United States, amid nationwide protests against racial inequality, in Washington, DC, on Friday.

'Civil rights isn't over'

Americans mark Juneteenth coast to coast; UN sets up probe into racism

REUTERS, Atlanta

Thousands marched through US cities on Friday in Juneteenth observances marking the abolition of slavery more than a century and a half ago, an occasion freighted with special resonance this year amid America's reckoning with its legacy of racism.

Capping nearly four weeks of protests and national soul-searching aroused by the death of a Black man, George Floyd, under the knee of a white police officer, demonstrators took to the streets from Atlanta to Oakland, California, blending the Juneteenth holiday with calls for racial justice.

While the gatherings were largely festive in mood, in keeping with Juneteenth traditions, they were also animated by demands for reforms to end brutality and discrimination in US law enforcement.

Late on Friday a statue of Confederate general Albert Pike was torn down by demonstrators in the capital and set on fire, in an act labeled

a "disgrace" by US President Trump.

Juneteenth, a portmanteau of June and 19th, commemorates the US abolition of slavery under President Abraham Lincoln's 1863 Emancipation Proclamation, belatedly announced by a Union army in Galveston, Texas, on June 19, 1865, after the Civil War ended.

Texas made it a holiday in 1980, and 45 more states and the District of Columbia have since followed suit.

Emotions were running high in Atlanta, where Rayshard Brooks, an African American, was fatally shot in the back by a white policeman in the parking lot of a restaurant June 12, reigniting outrage still simmering from Floyd's death on May 25 in Minneapolis. The Atlanta policeman was dismissed from the department and charged with murder, although his arrest came more quickly than that of the officer ultimately charged with murder in the Floyd case.

Marcher Antonio Jeremiah Parks, 27, of Atlanta said the civil rights

movement had not yet fulfilled its promises.

"Civil rights isn't over," said Parks, who is Black and works at a homeless shelter. "We still feel the pain of slavery. It's not healed, and won't be until we're treated the same."

Earlier, the UN Human Rights Council on Friday condemned discriminatory and violent policing after the death of Floyd last month and ordered a report on "systemic racism" against people of African descent.

The 47-member-state forum unanimously adopted a resolution brought by African countries. The mandate also asks UN Rights chief Michelle Bachelet to examine government responses to peaceful protests, including alleged use of excessive force, and deliver findings in a year's time. The text was watered down during closed-door negotiations from an initial draft explicitly calling for a UN commission of inquiry on racism in the United States and elsewhere.



Indian activists along with Tibetans living in exile shout anti-Chinese slogans during an anti-China demonstration in Siliguri, India yesterday. India and China yesterday each traded accusations that the other had violated their shared de facto border, an area that this week became the site of the deadliest clash in half a century between the two nuclear-armed giants.

PHOTO: AFP