

380 detention centres in Xinjiang!

AFP, Sydney

China is running hundreds of detention centres in northwest Xinjiang across a network that is much bigger than previously thought, according to research presented Thursday by an Australian think tank.

The Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) said it had identified more than 380 "suspected detention facilities" in the region, where China is believed to have held more than one million Uighurs and other mostly Muslim Turkic-speaking residents.

The number of facilities is around 40 percent greater than previous estimates, the research said, and has been growing despite China's claims that many Uighurs have been released.

Beijing on Thursday again denied the existence of detention sites.



(From left, clockwise) Protesters march through the streets against a verdict that brought no murder or manslaughter charges against the three police officers involved in the fatal shooting of Breonna Taylor in New York City; protesters hold a sign while marching in downtown Louisville, Kentucky; and police arrest a protester in Louisville. Photos were taken on Wednesday.



PHOTO: AFP, REUTERS

NEWS IN BRIEF

Nobel prize cash raised to \$1.1 million

The cash envelope that accompanies each Nobel prize will be increased this year from nine to 10 million kronor (\$1.1 million), the Nobel Foundation said yesterday. This year's prizes in the fields of medicine, physics, chemistry, literature, peace and economics will be announced during the week of October 5. The prize sum was increased as the foundation's initiatives to improve its finances paid off.

UN, Britain to co-host climate summit on December 12

The United Nations and Britain said Wednesday they would co-host a global climate summit on December 12, the fifth anniversary of the landmark Paris Agreement. The announcement came days after Chinese President Xi Jinping told the UN that the world's largest greenhouse gas polluter would peak emissions in 2030 and attempt to go carbon neutral by 2060, a move hailed by environmentalists. According to the UN, the December 12 summit is intended to increase momentum ahead of the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 26) to be held in Glasgow in November 2021.

Saudi dissidents launch opposition party

A group of Saudi dissidents exiled in Britain, the US and elsewhere announced the launch of an opposition party on Wednesday, the first organised political resistance under King Salman's rule. Saudi Arabia is an absolute monarchy that does not tolerate any political opposition, but the formation of the National Assembly Party on the anniversary of the kingdom's founding comes amid a growing state crackdown on dissent and freedom of expression. The development is unlikely to seriously undermine the authority of the Arab world's most powerful ruling family. There was no immediate reaction from Saudi authorities.

California to ban sale of gasoline-powered cars by 2035

All passenger vehicles sold in California will be zero-emission by 2035 under a new rule aimed at fighting climate change and smog-fouled air. California wields considerable clout in the American auto industry as the country's wealthiest and most populated state. Transport emissions cause more than half of California's carbon pollution output, and parts of the state are vexed by some of the most toxic air in the country, according to the office of Governor Gavin Newsom.

EU condemns HK activist Joshua Wong's arrest

Prominent Hong Kong activist Joshua Wong was arrested yesterday for taking part in a protest at the height of the city's pro-democracy unrest last year, but he vowed to continue resisting China's crackdown on dissent. Wong was arrested for "unlawful assembly" over a 2019 demonstration against a government ban on face masks that was imposed before the coronavirus pandemic, his lawyer said. Later yesterday, the European Union criticised the move, saying it was "the latest in a troubling series of arrests of pro-democracy activists since the summer".

SOURCE: AFP, REUTERS

Do not make UNSC obsolete

Brazil, Germany, India, Japan renew call to reform it

AFP, United Nations

Brazil, Germany, India and Japan have renewed their bid for permanent seats in an expanded UN Security Council, a long-sought goal without clear prospects.

The foreign ministers of the four nations made the joint call as they consulted virtually at the UN General Assembly amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

"We commit to instill new life in the discussions on the reform of the Security Council," the four ministers said in a joint statement after their videoconference on Wednesday.

"The world of today is very different from what it was when the United Nations was created 75 years ago. There are more countries, more people, more challenges but also more solutions," they wrote.

"Only if we manage to reform the Security Council will we stop it from becoming obsolete."

The four nations launched a bid in 2005 to expand the permanent membership of the Security Council, whose setup reflects the victors of World War II.

Five nations -- Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States -- exercise vetoes on the world body's most powerful institution.

The chances of Security Council reform "are next to none," said Andrew Bacevich, professor emeritus of international relations and history at Boston University.

"And the reason is that the reform proposal, which in many respects makes great sense, calls upon the Permanent Five countries to lose their power," he said.

"I can't imagine why any of them would find that prospect agreeable."

NO MURDER CHARGES AGAINST COPS IN BREONNA TAYLOR CASE

Protests erupt in major US cities

State of emergency, overnight curfew imposed in Louisville after two cops shot; riot declared in Portland

AGENCIES

Outrage and heartbreak boiled over into protests in cities across the US on Wednesday after news broke that none of the three officers involved in Breonna Taylor's death were charged with her killing.

More than six months after Taylor was shot to death after Louisville police officers broke down the door to her apartment while executing a warrant, a grand jury decided to indict only one of the three officers involved on first-degree wanton endangerment charges. The charge applies to the risk put on Taylor's neighbors but does not aim to hold the officer responsible for her death.

From Louisville to Los Angeles, Atlanta and New York, masses of people congregated to protest the decision. Police in Portland declared protests outside the justice center there a riot. And in Seattle, 13 people were arrested after a night of fires and protesters throwing glass bottles and fireworks at police, authorities said.

The biggest demonstration was in Taylor's hometown of Louisville, Kentucky, where two police officers were hospitalized after being shot late Wednesday.

"Both officers are currently undergoing treatment," interim police chief Robert Schroeder told reporters.

"One is alert and stable. The other officer

is currently undergoing surgery and stable," he said, adding that one person had been arrested.

President Donald Trump, who is campaigning for reelection on a "law-and-order" platform, tweeted that he was "praying for the two police officers that were shot tonight in Louisville, Kentucky. The Federal



Government stands behind you and is ready to help."

Thousands of demonstrators had flooded the streets of Louisville in the afternoon.

"Say her name -- Breonna Taylor," they chanted. "No lives matter till black lives matter."

Police in riot gear made several arrests, and used flashbang grenades to clear hundreds of protesters from a park, where a memorial to Taylor was placed.

A state of emergency and an overnight curfew were declared for the city of 600,000, with much of downtown closed to traffic, and several shops boarded up in anticipation of violence.

Seething protests have rocked America's cities for months, with the movement's anger fed by a stream of deaths of black people at the hands of overwhelmingly white police, and exacerbated by badly fractured national politics and inflammatory rhetoric by Trump.

Taylor, an emergency room technician, died when three plainclothes policemen turned up at her door in the middle of the night to execute a search warrant.

Taylor's boyfriend, who was in bed with her, grabbed a gun and exchanged fire with the officers. He later said he thought they were criminals.

The officers, who had not activated their body cameras as required, shot Taylor multiple times. A police sergeant was wounded.

In the wake of the grand jury's decision, Kentucky Attorney General Daniel Cameron said the two officers who had fired the shots that killed Taylor had done so in self-defense, and would therefore not be charged.

"This is a tragedy," Cameron said. "I know that not everyone will be satisfied. Every person has an idea of what they think justice is."



A child in a Supergirl costume pays respects as Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg lies in repose under the Portico at the top of the front steps of the US Supreme Court building, in Washington, US, on Wednesday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

A violinist's lonely mission

REUTERS, Moscow

The young violinist holding a sign reading "Strike for Climate" on a Moscow square didn't have long to wait for the police to arrive. His one-man protest lasted just 30 minutes before he was detained this summer for the second Friday in a row.

The city's Covid-19 lockdown is now over but protests remain illegal, presenting a new challenge for Arshak Makichyan's mission to build a movement from scratch to pressure the government of the world's fourth-largest greenhouse gas emitter.

Inspired by Greta Thunberg in late 2018, he stages political protests every week.

But unlike the Swedish teenager, who has galvanised a global movement of young environmentalists, Russia's tough protest laws and people's general apathy towards activism has made the 26-year-old's campaign a lonely one.

Makichyan has often been the only activist to turn out. Last year, he was jailed for six days for leading a three-person protest which city officials did not authorise. Once a passer-by threatened to stab him for holding up his sign.

"Fear rises up every time something

happens, but I have to do something with that because in any case you understand that our future is under threat," he said. "I know we can have an impact on the situation so of course I'm not going to give up."

"The climate crisis is under way in Russia... There are constantly ecological disasters in various regions. The government is doing nothing."

Temperatures hit record highs in the Arctic this summer and contributed to huge wildfires in Siberia. A Russian mining company blamed a major fuel spill in May on melting permafrost it said had eroded its fuel tank's foundations.

President Vladimir Putin has said Russia is warming at 2.5 times the world average and that it would be a disaster if the permafrost melts in its northern cities. But he has also said it is unclear what is driving climate change.

Just over a third of Russians see climate change as the world's most serious looming problem, but only 7% see it as a major problem for Russia itself, according to polling data published by the Moscow-based Levada Centre last December.

EU MIGRANT PLAN

Eastern Europe says no to plan

AFP, Brussels

A group of eastern European countries yesterday rejected the EU's new plan for handling migrants because it was not tough enough, dealing a blow to efforts to solve one of Europe's thorniest problems.

The leaders of Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic -- who all have a tough anti-immigration stance -- held talks with top EU officials as the bloc tries to reform asylum rules five years after the continent was engulfed by a migrant crisis.

The European Commission, the bloc's executive, published new plans on Wednesday for tougher border controls and streamlined procedures for expelling rejected asylum seekers.

But Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban said the measures did not go far enough, insisting refugees must be screened in camps outside Europe.

"There is no breakthrough," Orban told reporters after talks in Brussels with his Czech and Polish counterparts and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

"They would like to manage migration and not to stop the migrants," Orban said. "The Hungarian position is: 'Stop the migrants.' That's two different things."

Under the plan, EU countries that do not want to take in more migrants could instead take charge of sending those, whose asylum requests are rejected, back to their homelands.

The EU's plans also disappointed those on the other side of the debate, migrant rights activists condemning them as caving to xenophobia and populism.

Julphar Bangladesh

Medical Information Officer

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Candidates are requested to submit at the venue an own hand-written application along with complete resume, a recent passport size photograph and photocopy of national ID card.

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