

Stop interfering

China tells US as HK protesters plan more demonstrations

China also asked the United States to issue clarifications on media reports that US officials are in contact with leaders among the separatists, the office of the commissioner of China's foreign ministry in Hong Kong said on its website. More protests are planned in several districts across the city this weekend, starting today, with demonstrators also planning a three-day rally at the city's international airport. Police warned activists to protest peacefully and said they had detained three more people, raising the number arrested to nearly 600 since protests began in June, the youngest aged 13. The United States raised its travel warning for Hong Kong, urging increased caution by visitors to the Chinese territory in the face of what it described as civil unrest after months of sometimes violent street protests. "The protests and confrontations have spilled over into neighbourhoods other than those where the police have permitted marches or rallies," said the advisory, posted on the website of the US state department on Wednesday. "These demonstrations, which can take place with little or no notice, are likely to continue," it added. The advisory was raised to level two on a four-point scale. Australia also warned its travellers in an updated advisory.

Change now or endanger climate

UN report warns efforts to limit global warming could be wrecked without swift changes, presents a string of trade-offs in using land for climate change mitigation

Humanity faces increasingly painful trade-offs between food security and rising temperatures within decades unless it curbs emissions and stops unsustainable farming and deforestation, a landmark climate assessment said yesterday. The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warned that efforts to limit global warming while feeding a booming population could be wrecked without swift and sweeping changes to how we use the land we live off. Its report on land use and climate change highlighted the need to protect remaining tropical forests as a bulkhead against future warming. But it offered a sobering take on the hope reforestation and biofuel schemes alone can offset mankind's environmental damage. It cautioned that these mega-projects could endanger food security, underlining that reducing emissions will be central to averting disaster. "This is a perfect storm. Limited land, an expanding human population, and all wrapped in a suffocating blanket of climate emergency," said Dave Reay, Professor of Carbon Management at the University of Edinburgh.



Land is intimately linked to climate. With its forests, plants and soil it sucks up and stores around one third of all man-made emissions. Intensive exploitation of these resources also produces huge amounts of planet-warming CO2, methane and nitrous oxide, while agriculture guzzles up 70 percent of Earth's freshwater supply. As the global population balloons towards 10 billion by mid-century, how land is managed by governments, industry and farmers will play a key role in limiting or accelerating the worst excesses of climate change. "Land is where we live," IPCC co-chair Hoesung Lee said during the report's launch yesterday. "Land is under growing human pressure and land is part of the solution, but land cannot do it all." The IPCC is the world's leading authority on climate change. Last year it warned that limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius -- the optimal level aimed for in the Paris climate deal -- would be impossible without a drastic drawdown in greenhouse gas emissions. The land use report warned that any delay in reductions -- across industry, transport, agriculture and infrastructure -- would lead to increasingly negative impacts on land and reduce the prospect of sustainable development. It also presented a string of looming trade-offs in using land for climate change mitigation. Forests, an enormous carbon sink, can be regenerated to cool the planet. But with industrial farming covering a third of land today, there's limited space.

play a key role in limiting or accelerating the worst excesses of climate change. "Land is where we live," IPCC co-chair Hoesung Lee said during the report's launch yesterday. "Land is under growing human pressure and land is part of the solution, but land cannot do it all." The IPCC is the world's leading authority on climate change. Last year it warned that limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius -- the optimal level aimed for in the Paris climate deal -- would be impossible without a drastic drawdown in greenhouse gas emissions. The land use report warned that any delay in reductions -- across industry, transport, agriculture and infrastructure -- would lead to increasingly negative impacts on land and reduce the prospect of sustainable development. It also presented a string of looming trade-offs in using land for climate change mitigation. Forests, an enormous carbon sink, can be regenerated to cool the planet. But with industrial farming covering a third of land today, there's limited space.

UN report highlights the need to protect the remaining tropical forests
It offered a hope that reforestation and biofuel schemes alone can offset environmental damage



Palestinians look on as Israeli soldiers take part in a house-to-house search operation in the West Bank village of Beit Fajjar near Bethlehem yesterday, following a stabbing attack. An off-duty Israeli soldier was found dead with stab wounds near a Jewish settlement in the occupied West Bank yesterday in what Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called a "terrorist" attack, sparking a manhunt.

US-TURKISH BUFFER ZONE FOR NORTHERN SYRIA

Damascus rejects plan

Kurds give guarded welcome to the proposal

Damascus said yesterday it strongly rejects a proposed US-Turkish buffer zone for northern Syria, blaming the "aggressive" project on Syria's Kurds, who gave the proposal a guarded welcome. Turkish and US officials agreed on Wednesday to establish a joint operations centre to oversee the creation of a safe zone to manage tensions between Ankara and US-backed Kurdish forces in Syria. No details were provided on the size or nature of the safe zone, but the deal appeared to provide some breathing room after Turkey had threatened an imminent attack on the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG), which control a large swathe of northern Syria. "Syria categorically and clearly rejects the agreement between the American and Turkish occupiers on the establishment of a so-called safe zone" in northern Syria, a foreign ministry source told state news agency SANA. "Syria's Kurds who have accepted to become a tool in this aggressive US-Turkish project bear a historical responsibility," the source added, urging Kurdish groups to return to the fold. Turkey has already carried out two cross-border offensives into Syria in 2016 and

2018, the second of which saw it and allied Syrian rebels overrun the Kurdish enclave of Afrin in the northwest. The deployment of Turkish troops and their proxies in Afrin has drawn accusations of a Turkish military occupation. Damascus said the planned buffer zone further east serves "Turkey's expansionist ambitions," accusing both Ankara and Washington of violating its sovereignty. A senior Syrian Kurdish official gave the Turkish-US agreement a guarded welcome. "This deal may mark the start of a new approach but we still need more details," Aldar Khalil told AFP yesterday. "We will evaluate the agreement based on details and facts, not headlines." Turkey's foreign minister yesterday said the deal was "a very good start." Turkey's foreign minister yesterday said the deal was "a very good start." But Mevlut Cavusoglu said his country would not allow the agreement to turn into a "delaying manoeuvre." "The accord must be implemented," he said at a press conference in Ankara, without giving a specific timeline. Wednesday's deal describes the planned safe zone as a "peace corridor" that can "ensure that our Syrian brothers will be able to return to their country."

KYRGYZSTAN CRISIS

Ex-president detained in fresh raid

Kyrgyzstan's former president Almazbek Atambayev was detained in a major security operation yesterday, Kyrgyz media said, after clashes between his supporters and law enforcement left one dead and dozens injured. Atambayev was detained by security services at his residence in the village of Koi-Tash near the capital Bishkek, Kyrgyz media outlets 24.kg and Kloop.kg reported. "Security forces have taken former president Almazbek Atambayev (from his residence). Atambayev decided to surrender," 24.kg reported. An AFP correspondent on the scene saw security forces break up a crowd of hundreds of supporters using tear gas and smoke

Philippines 'open' to the use of dengue vaccine: Duterte

As hundreds die in a severe dengue outbreak in the Philippines, many of them children, President Rodrigo Duterte said yesterday he was open to lifting his government's blanket ban on the Dengvaxia vaccine. Manila prohibited the import, sale and distribution of the drug -- manufactured by French pharmaceutical firm Sanofi -- after parents blamed it for the deaths of several dozen children who were among more than 700,000 people immunised in a state-run trial programme. After the Dengvaxia scare caused Filipinos to shy away from vaccines, the country was hit with measles and dengue outbreaks that have so far killed nearly a thousand people this year. The government declared a dengue epidemic on Tuesday. While he was "in a quandary" regarding the use of Dengvaxia, Duterte said the perceived risk had to be weighed against the 662 deaths from out of the 146,000-plus dengue cases monitored by the government so far this year.

"Yes, I am open to the use of Dengvaxia again. So many people are dead. It's an epidemic. Now compare it vis-a-vis, with those who died (allegedly due to the vaccine)," Duterte told reporters. Dengue, or haemorrhagic fever, is the world's most common mosquito-borne virus and infects an estimated 390 million people in more than 120 countries each year -- killing more than 25,000 of them, according to the World Health Organization. It said Dengvaxia is now licensed for use in 20 other countries. The dengue-prone Philippines in 2016 became the first nation to use Dengvaxia in a mass immunisation programme. But controversy arose after Sanofi disclosed a year later that it could worsen symptoms for people not previously infected by the virus. The disclosure sparked a nationwide panic, with some parents alleging the vaccine killed their children, though a government-commissioned investigation found no conclusive proof that it did.



Missiles don't impact talks

Pompeo downplays North Korea's latest warning

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Wednesday downplayed North Korea's latest missile launches, saying they won't alter the prospects for negotiations on Pyongyang's nuclear weapons. One day after North Korea called a new round of short-range missiles a "warning" against joint US-South Korea military exercises, Pompeo told reporters that it didn't impact Washington's approach to the region. The latest launches were the fourth pair of projectiles fired in less than two weeks by the North. They came after the South Korea and US militaries began mainly computer-simulated joint exercises on Monday to test Seoul's ability to take operational control in wartime. Asked if the missile launches dampened the environment for negotiations on denuclearization, Pompeo replied "No." "President Trump's administration strategy with respect to North Korea hasn't changed," he said. "Our effort is to achieve the full, final denuclearization of North Korea. We are hopeful that in the coming weeks we will get back to negotiating table to achieve that." Pompeo noted that the recent launches by North Korea

did not involve the medium and long-range ballistic missiles that had raised alarms in 2017 and 2018, and that Pyongyang has stopped testing nuclear weapons since September 2017. "Those are both good things," he said. "Now the task is for us to deliver on what the two leaders agreed to back in June of last year in Singapore," he said, referring to meetings between President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, when the North made a vague pledge on denuclearization. Meanwhile, the US government has approved the sale of \$800 million worth of helicopters to South Korea, the Pentagon announced Wednesday, hours after President Donald Trump said Seoul had agreed to pay more for the US military presence in the country. The Pentagon's Defense Security Cooperation Agency said the State Department had approved the sale of 12 MH-60R Multi-Mission Seahawk Helicopters and extensive associated radar, communications and weaponry equipment. Pompeo also discussed maritime security, Iran and Yemen with Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in a phone call on Wednesday.

US approves \$800m in copters for S Korea
Pompeo talks maritime security, Iran with Saudi crown prince



US CRACKDOWN ON UNDOCUMENTED MIGRANTS

Raids sweep up hundreds

US officials said that some 680 undocumented migrants were detained in a major series of raids Wednesday at food processing plants in the southeastern United States, part of President Donald Trump's announced crackdown on illegal immigration. Most of those detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents were Hispanic migrants, officials said. TV footage showed lines of arrested migrants heading to buses parked outside the processing plants with their hands behind their backs under the watchful eyes of ICE agents. Those who were not detained, including some children, stood by waving at their friends and relatives. Several wiped away tears as they gave their farewells. "Special agents executed administrative and criminal search warrants resulting in the detention of approximately 680 illegal aliens," said Mike Hurst, US Attorney for the Southern District of Mississippi.

"They have to follow our laws, they have to abide by our rules, they have to come here legally or they shouldn't come here at all," Hurst said at a news conference. The US attorney did not spare the employers. "To those who use illegal aliens for competitive advantage or to make a quick buck, we have something to say to you: If we find that you have violated federal criminal law, we're coming after you," he said. Matthew Albence, the interim ICE head, said the raids were the result of a year-long investigation. He said that the children of detained parents will be sent to live with relatives or other families. Some of the migrants will be released with electronic ankle monitors as they await a court hearing. ICE agents raided plants in the towns of Morton, Carthage, Canton, Pelahatchie, Sebastopol and Bay Springs, all in the state of Mississippi, officials said.



Anti-Trump protesters hold signs outside the makeshift memorial to the victims of the Walmart shooting that left a total of 22 people dead, in El Paso, Texas, on Wednesday. President Donald Trump consoled victims of a mass shooting in Ohio on Wednesday but protesters and opponents denounced what they say is his extremist rhetoric on race and immigration.