

WORLD
world

Lam warns, 'Chinese military could step in'

AP | Hong Kong

Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam warned yesterday that the Chinese military could step in if an uprising for democratic reforms that has rocked the city for months "becomes so bad" but said the government still hopes to resolve the crisis itself.

Lam urged foreign critics to accept that the four months of protests marked by escalating violence were no longer "a peaceful movement for democracy."

She said seeking Chinese intervention was provided for under Hong Kong's constitution but that she cannot reveal under what circumstances she would do so.

"I still strongly feel that we should find the solutions ourselves. That is also the position of the central government, that Hong Kong should tackle the problem on her own, but if the situation becomes so bad, then no options could be ruled out if we want Hong Kong to at least have another chance," she said at a news conference.

The protests started in June over a now-shelved extradition



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CARRIE LAM
HONG KONG LEADER



Riot police officers fire rubber bullets toward anti-government protesters during a demonstration in the Tseung Kwan O residential area in Kowloon, Hong Kong



People walk past a vandalised store in Causeway Bay district in Hong Kong

bill that would have allowed some criminal suspects to be sent to mainland China for trial but have since morphed into a larger anti-government movement. Protesters say the bill is an example of Beijing's increasing influence over the former British colony, which was promised a high level of autonomy when it returned to Chinese rule in 1997.

The unrest has pummeled tourism and hurt businesses in the global financial hub, further bruising the city's economy as it

grapples with the effects of the U.S.-China trade war.

U.S. President Donald Trump on Monday urged Chinese President Xi Jinping to ensure a "humane solution" in Hong Kong. He warned that any "bad" outcome could hurt trade talks ahead of negotiations in Washington on Thursday.

Hardening her government's stance on the protests last week, Lam invoked a colonial-era emergency law to criminalize the wearing of masks at rallies

but it fueled more anger, with daily violence over the long holiday weekend. Police officers last week fired gunshots while under attack from protesters, wounding two teenagers who were the first victims of police gunfire since the protests started.

Enforcement of the mask ban began Saturday, and Lam said it was too early to call it a failure.

Police regional chief Kwok Yam-yung said 241 people were detained in widespread "atrocities" over the last four days that

saw ferocious attacks on officers and those with opposing views.

He said that included 77 who violated the mask ban and that 14 of them were charged Tuesday, bringing the total number of prosecutions to 16. The mask ban is punishable by up to a year in jail and a fine, which is light in comparison to those accused of rioting, which carries a penalty of up to 10 years.

Since June, 2,363 people have been arrested, with more than 200 charged with rioting.

China publishes white paper on China and world in new era

Xinhua | Beijing

China's State Council Information Office on Friday issued a white paper, titled "China and the World in the New Era."

Besides a preface and a conclusion, the white paper consists of four sections: "China Has Found a Development Path Suited to Its Actual Conditions," "China's Development Is an Opportunity for the World," "A Prosperous and Beautiful World Is the Common Aspiration of All Peoples," and "China Contributes to a Better World."

"China has entered a new era of development. China now has an impact on the world that is ever more comprehensive, profound and long-lasting, and the world is paying ever greater attention to China," it said.

The year 2019 marks the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC).

Over the past 70 years, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC), the PRC has witnessed profound changes and achieved a miracle of development unprecedented in human history, the white paper noted.

"In just a few decades, China has completed a course that took developed countries several hundred years," it said.

China has now become the world's second largest economy, taken care of the material needs of its nearly 1.4 billion people, and achieved moderate

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CHINA'S STATE COUNCIL INFORMATION OFFICE

all-round prosperity.

"This has brought tremendous change to China. It also represents remarkable progress for human society, and above all, a significant contribution on China's part to world peace and development," it said.

The white paper noted that China remains the world's largest developing country, with a large population and foundations that need to be further strengthened.

"Some of the fundamentals in China remain unchanged, and therefore China is still facing a raft of severe challenges. The Chinese people still have work to do," the paper read.

Doomed Kiribati ferry crew drunk, victims died horribly

● The report details a string of failures

● The deaths of 84 passengers and 11 crew was the worst maritime disaster ever in Kiribati

● Report found widespread use of alcohol

Wellington

Crew members of an overloaded Kiribati ferry which sank in the Pacific claiming 95 lives were drunk, leaving passengers to die slow deaths from starvation and hypothermia, a damning report has found.

The report gives the first official account of the loss of the ferry MV Butiraoui, which sank in January last year after setting off from Nonouti island bound for the capital Tarawa.

It details a string of failures that led to the sinking and also gives a glimpse of the horrors endured by victims, who were missing in the vast ocean for eight days before the alarm was raised.

"Most, if not all, victims died from hunger, dehydration and hypothermia," it found.

"One died while giving birth in (these) most unhealthy and extreme conditions," it said.

The deaths of 84 passengers and 11 crew was the worst maritime disaster ever in Kiribati, a collection of 33 atolls and reefs scattered over an area the



There were only seven survivors from the loss of the ferry MV Butiraoui in January 2018, who were found in a small aluminium boat after 10 days adrift

size of the continental United States.

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The Kiribati government has previously provided few details about the circumstances of disaster, or even the number of fatalities, and initially refused to distribute the report widely.

Ferries are a transport lifeline for its 110,000 population but the report found the Butiraoui, a 174 metre (57 foot) catamaran, should never have set out on its fateful voyage.

One of its life-rafts was "non-functioning", its distress

beacon was missing or broken, it was not licenced to carry passengers and it had run aground twice before the voyage, damaging the vessel's structural integrity.

In addition, the ferry set off in rough seas without the crew notifying maritime authorities of its departure.

The report found widespread use of alcohol by the master and crew during working hours, "giving every drunken crew (member) the feeling of grandeur and power to make decisions alone".

"It was obvious the master of the MV Butiraoui was reckless and inconsiderate of the ship, crew and passengers," it said. The ship's master did not survive.

The report found the catamaran began to fall apart 30 minutes into the journey and had split and sank after two hours.

It said there was no leadership from the crew, who had limited survival training.

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REPORT

Macron vows 'unrelenting fight' against terror



Macron spoke at a ceremony at the police headquarters where the attack took place

Paris

French President Emmanuel Macron vowed an "unrelenting fight" against extremists yesterday as he paid tribute to the four Paris police staff stabbed to death last week by a radicalised colleague.

Mickaël Harpon, a 45-year-old computer expert in the police intelligence-gathering department, used a kitchen knife and an oyster shucker to kill three male and one female colleague in a 30-minute rampage that ended when an officer shot him in the head.

The attack in the police's inner sanctum caused shock in France, where the government is being pressed to answer how Harpon's radicalisation went unnoticed, despite him having high-level security clearance.

"We will wage an unrelenting fight in the face of terrorism," Macron vowed at a ceremony at the police headquarters near Notre-Dame cathedral where the attack took place.

Thursday's attack brought to 255 the number of people killed in attacks blamed on, or claimed by radicals since 2015.