

WORLD
world**Hong Kong student who fell during protest clashes dies**

Hong Kong

A Hong Kong student who fell from a car park while police and protesters were clashing last weekend has died, hospital officials said Friday, in a development likely to further escalate tensions after months of violent rallies in the city.

Alex Chow, a 22-year-old computer science undergraduate, was certified dead at 8.09am on Friday, Queen Elizabeth Hospital said.

Chow was taken to hospital in an unconscious state in the early hours of Monday morning following late-night clashes between police and protesters.

He was found lying unconscious in a pool of blood inside a car park that police had fired tear gas into after protesters hurled objects from the building.

The precise chain of events leading to Chow's fall are un-



The student's death is likely to further escalate tensions after months of violent rallies in the city

clear and disputed, but he has been embraced by the five-month-old protest movement and his death could trigger renewed clashes as the city braces for another weekend of rallies.

Chow was a student at Hong Kong University of Science and Technology. The college was holding its graduation ceremony Friday morning, and university head Wei Shyy paused the proceedings to announce Chow's death and observe a moment of silence.

Philippines VP calls for revamped drug war to end 'senseless killings'

Reuters | Manila

The opposition leader put in charge of Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte's war on drugs said yesterday it was time to reassess a campaign that was fraught with senseless killings and had failed to curtail a staggering rise in addition.

Speaking at her first meeting in charge of a task force on narcotics, Vice President Leni Robredo said the strategy should be as much about public health as it was crime and justice, and police operations, known as "Oplan Tokhang", must be conducted lawfully and based on evidence.

Robredo is a political rival of the popular Duterte and has long been a critic of his flagship campaign, arguing that thou-

sands of urban poor have been killed, with no sign of progress towards dismantling major drugs networks.

"There are many senseless killings that have accompanied Oplan Tokhang, it has reached a certain level of notoriety, that Tokhang is a war against the poor," she said.

"It is incumbent upon us to change that thinking. It is probably time that we think about shifting to something that is effective and that no one is killed senselessly."

She added: "I am all for an evidence-based strategy and approach."

Human rights experts at home and abroad are incensed by thousands of deaths in what police say were sting operations that resulted in shootings.

Activists dispute those ac-



Philippines Vice President Maria Leonor Robredo

counts and accuse police of executing suspects based on weak intelligence. Police reject that.

Robredo was given the "drugs tsar" post by Duterte after remarks she made about abusive police and the campaign's ineffectiveness, made during an Oct. 23 interview with Reuters, and in subsequent media appearances.

Her supporters are sceptical about the appointment by a president who has repeatedly snubbed and publicly ridiculed her.

Duterte's office says he genuinely wants Robredo to succeed.

On Friday, she said drug addiction was a real problem, noting Duterte's own frustrations about what he says are up to 8 million drug-dependent Filipinos. Duterte has not disclosed the source of his numbers.

Robredo said she interpreted Duterte's offer as a sign of his openness to new ideas.

"I want to look at it as a signal that the president is open to listen to fresh perspectives about the entire campaign," she said.

"I also want to look at it as agreement that it is time to objectively assess what we have been doing."

Huge trove of mammoth skeletons found in Mexico

Archaeologists say they have made the largest-ever discovery of mammoth remains - a trove of 800 bones from at least 14 of the extinct giants found in central Mexico.

Sharif seeks permission to travel abroad

Islamabad

The family of former Pakistani prime minister Nawaz Sharif are trying to get a travel ban against him lifted so that he can go abroad for medical treatment, one of his close aides said yesterday.

Sharif, Pakistan's longest-serving premier, was ousted from his third term in office in 2017 and later imprisoned on corruption charges.

But his health has deteriorated in prison. Last month, he suffered a minor heart attack, his party said, adding that he is suffering from an autoimmune blood disorder.

Sharif also suffers from high blood pressure and his kidney



Nawaz Sharif

functions are deteriorating, according to aides.

His doctor has claimed via Twitter that Sharif is "fighting for his life".

Sharif has been bailed for health reasons and remains at a hospital in the eastern city of Lahore, but a ban remains in place forbidding him from

travelling abroad.

"The family of the former prime minister on Thursday formally approached the interior ministry asking the government to allow Sharif to travel abroad for medical treatment," a Sharif aide told AFP on condition of anonymity.

Interior ministry officials did not immediately respond to requests for comment. A senior government official told AFP the issue was being referred to the Cabinet.

The government is widely expected to grant the request, and a source in Sharif's party, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), told AFP it is likely he will fly to London next week.

Old McDonald's: Aussie mates show off burger bought in 1995

Sydney

A McDonald's burger bought in 1995 and kept in an Australian shed for years has never decomposed, according to two men who now refer to the quarter-century Quarter Pounder as their "mate".

Casey Dean, 39, and Eduards Nits, 38, claim they ordered the Quarter Pounder with cheese from a McDonald's outlet in Adelaide as teenagers -- and have hung onto it ever since.

"Being teenagers we ordered a truckload of food, and it was just way too much," Dean said. "It started a chain of events where we were joking 'imagine if we kept this forever', and here we are."

Though the burger has shrunk a little from its original size, its shape remains intact, there are no signs of mould, and it doesn't smell.

"Even the sesame seeds are still on there, just a few have been knocked off," Dean said. The men say their relation-



Casey Dean inspects a McDonald's burger he bought in 1995 with friend Eduards Nits and kept in an Australian shed for years

ship with the Quarter Pounder will span 25 years by November 2020, a milestone even many marriages fail to reach.

"We have been talking about taking him back to his birthplace, just go see the staff there and see if he recognises anyone,"

Dean said.

Dubbing it the "Senior Burger" and referring to it repeatedly as their "mate", the men have

created social media profiles for the burger and even wrote a song about it.

They believe it is the oldest known McDonald's burger in the world, outranking a prominent decade-old cheeseburger displayed in a glass case in Iceland and live-streamed online to thousands of viewers.

Storage for the ancient Aussie burger has been rather less considered, though it has mostly been kept under lock and key in a box made of timber and cardboard.

That box spent about a decade jumbled up with clothing inside a shed in Adelaide, where temperatures regularly top 30 degrees Celsius in summer.

When they eventually went to check on it, Dean said even rats had turned their noses up at the morsel.

"The rats had actually eaten through the plastic bag, heaps of clothes, got into the box and they'd left the burger," he said. "Our mate was safe."

Dean said he understood why some might be sceptical about their claim, but argues the old-school packaging -- waxy paper and a cardboard ring -- accurately date the burger to the mid-1990s.

He is steadfast that the pair would never part with it despite fielding offers from around the world when it first came to public attention in 2015.

A McDonald's spokeswoman did not dispute the assertion, saying the question of why some of its burgers did not decay came up "from time to time" but there was a "simple explanation".

"The reason why our burgers sometimes don't go mouldy when left out at room temperature, in a dry environment, is that once the food is cooked there isn't enough moisture to support bacterial growth to break it down," she said.

"Instead, it simply dries out." She advised the best way to enjoy the firm's food was "when it's hot and tasty".