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Hong Kong airport grinds to halt; China likens protests to terrorism



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New Trump rule would target legal immigrants who get public assistance

(Reuters) - U.S. President Donald Trump's administration unveiled a sweeping rule on Monday that would limit legal immigration by denying visas and permanent residency to hundreds of thousands of people for being too poor.

The long-anticipated rule, pushed by Trump's leading aide on immigration Stephen Miller, takes effect Oct. 15 and would reject applicants for temporary or permanent visas for failing to meet income standards or for receiving public assistance such as welfare, food stamps, public housing or Medicaid.

Immediately after the rule was announced, the National Immigration Law Center (NILC) said it would file a lawsuit to stop it from taking effect. The group's executive director said the rule was racially motivated.

The overhaul is part of Trump's efforts to curb both legal and illegal immigration, an issue he has made a cornerstone of his presidency.

The 837-page rule could be the most drastic of all the Trump administration's policies targeting the legal immigration system, experts have said. Advocates for immigrants have criticized the plan as an effort to cut legal immigration without going through Congress to change U.S. law.

The new rule is derived from the Immigration Act of 1882, which allows the U.S. government to deny a visa to anyone likely to become a "public charge."

Most immigrants are ineligible for the major aid programs until they qualify for green cards, which grant legal permanent residence status. However, the new rule announced in the Federal Register by the Department of Homeland Security expands the definition of a public charge and stands to disqualify more people.

DEFINING 'PUBLIC CHARGE'

Ken Cuccinelli, the acting director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) said at a White House media briefing announcing the rule that "the law has required foreign nationals to rely on their own capabilities and the resources of their families, sponsors and private organizations in their communities to succeed" "However," Cuccinelli said, "Congress has never defined the term 'public charge' in the law and that term hadn't been clearly defined by regulation. That is what changes today with this rule."

The new rule defines public charge as an immigrant who receives one or more designated public benefits for more than 12 months, within any 36-month period, according to a fact sheet from USCIS. The benefits would count in the aggregate, such that a receipt of two benefits in one month would count as two months, for example, the fact sheet said. The definition of public benefits is cash aide including Supplemental Security Income, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), most forms of Medicaid, and a variety of public housing programs, the fact sheet said.

The regulation also excludes benefits for individuals in the U.S. armed forces, as well as their spouses and children. Cuccinelli said it would have no impact on humanitarian-based immigration programs for refugees and people seeking asylum.



The rule requires career admission officers to assess at a minimum each applicant's age, health, family status, assets, resources and financial status, and their education and skills, among other factors, Cuccinelli said at the briefing.

"The principle driving it is an old American value and that's self-sufficiency," Cuccinelli said in a Fox News interview published on Monday before the White House briefing.

"It will also have the long-term benefit of protecting taxpayers by ensuring people who are immigrating to this country don't become public burdens, that they can stand on their own two feet, as immigrants in years past have done," he told Fox.

Before the rule was published, the Migration Policy Institute, a research organization, estimated more than half of all family-based green card applicants could be denied under the new system. Some 800,000 green cards were granted in 2016. 'HUDDLED MASSES'

Critics have decried the effort to limit legal immigration for lower income people affront to the nation's ideals highlighted by the inscription on the Statue of Liberty that reads "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free."

Miller, asked in 2017 about whether the administration's policies toward immigration countered that American inscription, said the words were not original to the monument.

Cuccinelli was also asked about the inscription at the White House on Monday and said: "I do not

think, by any means, we are ready to take anything off the Statue of Liberty."

Immigrant advocates have expressed concern the rule could negatively affect public health by dissuading immigrants from using health or food aid to which they or their children are entitled and would have a "chilling effect" on immigrants seeking help for their U.S. citizen children.

In early 2018, Trump rejected a bipartisan effort in Congress to reform the nation's immigration system that became embroiled in controversy over accusations by a Democratic senator that the Republican president profanely disparaged African and Caribbean nations in regard to their immigrants. Trump has denied using that language and said he wanted immigrants to come the United States from all nations.

New American citizens wave American flags after taking the Oath of Allegiance during a naturalization ceremony in Newark, New Jersey, U.S., March 1, 2017. REUTERS/Mike Segar Cuccinelli said no particular group should feel targeted by the measure.

The State Department already changed its foreign affairs manual in January 2018 to give diplomats wider discretion in deciding visa denials on public-charge grounds. In the 2018 fiscal year, which ended last September, the number of visas denied on those grounds quadrupled compared to the previous year.



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Hong Kong airport grinds to halt; China likens protests to terrorism

HONG KONG (Reuters) - Hong Kong's airport halted flights on Monday, blaming demonstrators for the disruption, while China said the anti-government protests that have swept the city over the past two months had begun to show "sprouts of terrorism".

The airport authority said it was working with airlines to resume flights from 6 a.m. on Tuesday, but the developments raised the stakes sharply after a weekend of skirmishes during which both activists and police toughened their stances.

The precise trigger for the airport's closure was not clear, since protesters occupying the arrivals hall for four days have been peaceful. Most of them had left shortly after midnight, but around 50 remained, discussing their next move.

"This is about our freedom," a 24-year-old protester wearing a mask, who gave his name only as Yu, told Reuters during the evening. "Why should we leave?"

U.S. urges all sides to refrain from violence in Hong Kong: official

Canada's Trudeau extremely concerned about Hong Kong, urges China to be careful

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Some Hong Kong legal experts say official descriptions of some protesters' actions as terrorism could lead to the use of extensive anti-terror laws and powers against them.

China's People's Armed Police also assembled in the neighboring city of Shenzhen for exercises, the state-backed Global Times newspaper said.

The Communist Party's official People's Daily newspaper said on the Twitter-like Weibo that the force can handle incidents including riots or terrorist attacks.

Hong Kongers responded by taking to the streets again.

Crowds picketed a police station, singing hymns. Hundreds of people returned to a subway station, where police had hit activists with

batons, to protest against heavy-handed tactics.

The increasingly violent demonstrations have plunged the Chinese-ruled territory into its most serious crisis in decades, presenting Chinese leader Xi Jinping with one of his biggest challenges since he came to power in 2012.

"Hong Kong has come to a critical juncture," said Hong Kong and Macau Affairs office spokesman Yang Guang in Beijing.

"Protesters have been frequently using extremely dangerous tools to attack the police in recent days, constituting serious crimes with sprouts of terrorism emerging."

The protests began in opposition to a bill allowing extraditions to the mainland for trial in Communist-controlled courts, but have widened to highlight other grievances, winning broad support.

Demonstrators say they are fighting the erosion of the "one country, two systems" arrangement enshrining some autonomy for Hong Kong when Hong Kong is the world's busiest air cargo port and the 8th busiest by passenger traffic, handling 73 million passengers a year. The airport has been filled with anti-government protesters for four days.

The mostly young black-clad protesters have chanted slogans such as "No rioters, only tyranny!" and "Liberate Hong Kong!" while approaching travelers with flyers describing their demands and explaining the unrest.

U.S. Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell said they were "bravely standing up to the Chinese Communist Party," and that a violent crackdown would be completely unacceptable.

The activists at the airport have been polite and passengers mostly unperturbed. "I was expecting something, given all the news," one arrival, Gurinda Singh, told Reuters. "I'm just pleased my plane arrived and the protests here seem peaceful."

Some activists moved to the departure area and caused disruptions, police told a news conference as the cancellations were announced.



Anti-extradition bill protesters rally at the departure hall of Hong Kong airport in Hong Kong, China August 12, 2019. REUTERS/Thomas Peter

Earlier in the day, police declined to say if they would move to clear the demonstrators. There was no visible police presence in either the departure or arrivals area.

"Airport operations at Hong Kong International Airport have been seriously disrupted as a result of the public assembly at the airport today," the city's airport authority said in a statement, without elaborating.

About 190 flights were affected, Chinese aviation data firm VariFlight said, though planes already en route to Hong Kong were allowed to land.

Malaysia Airlines said it would be cancelling its flights between Malaysia and Hong Kong

until Tuesday afternoon.

Demonstrators threw up barricades across Hong Kong at the weekend, as police fired tear gas into crowded underground train stations as well as rubber bullets and pepper pellets at close range.

In response, protesters have sought to channel a Bruce Lee maxim: "Be water," employing a flash-mob strategy to frustrate authorities and stretch their resources.

Still, scores of protesters were arrested, sometimes after being beaten with batons and bloodied by police.

One young female medic was hospitalized after being hit by a pellet round in the right eye.



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Editor's Choice



Democratic 2020 U.S. presidential candidate and U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders and his wife Jane tour the Iowa State Fair in Des Moines, Iowa, U.S., August 11, 2019. REUTERS/Eric Thayer TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY



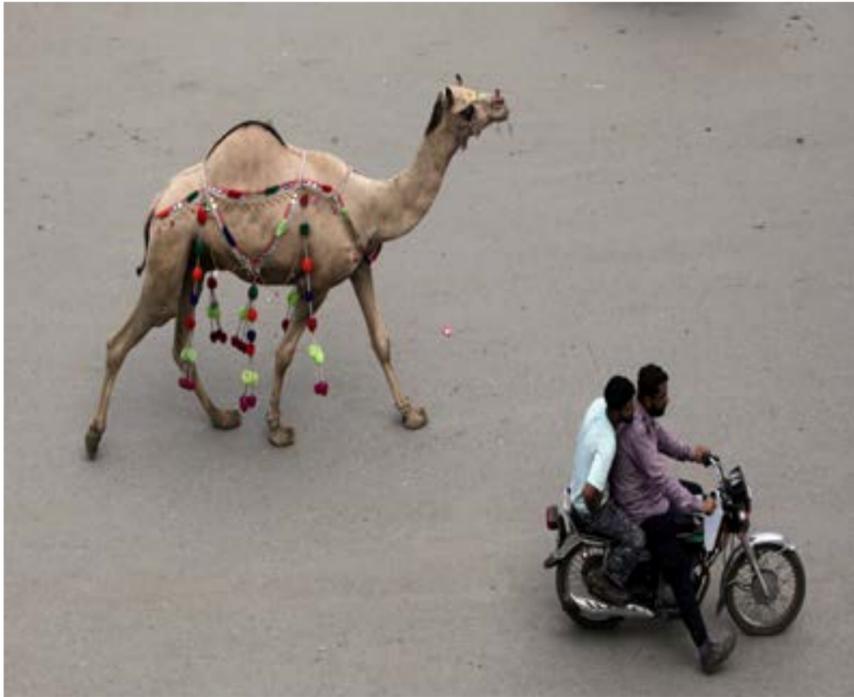
An aerial view of Kaaba at the Grand mosque in the holy city of Mecca, Saudi Arabia August 12, 2019. REUTERS/Umit Bektas TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY



A Muslim girl offers an Eid al-Adha prayer at a mosque in Chennai, India August 12, 2019. REUTERS/P. Ravikumar TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY



People clean a flooded street after typhoon Lekima hit Linhai city of Taizhou, Zhejiang province, China August 11, 2019. Picture taken August 11, 2019. REUTERS/Stringer ATTENTION EDITORS - THIS IMAGE WAS PROVIDED BY A THIRD PARTY. CHINA OUT. TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY



Men ride on motorcycle as they lead a recently purchased sacrificial camel ahead of Eid al-Adha celebrations in Lahore



Indigenous women occupy the headquarters of the indigenous health department, during an indigenous women forum to demand respect for their rights and to protest against Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro and the policies of the federal government



People walk in the rainstorm as typhoon Lekima approaches in Shanghai



Demonstrators protest in front of La Fortaleza calling for the resignation of Wanda Vazquez, former Secretary of Justice and now Governor of Puerto Rico in San Juan

Companies Need To Define Safety Guidelines For Self-Driving Cars



Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

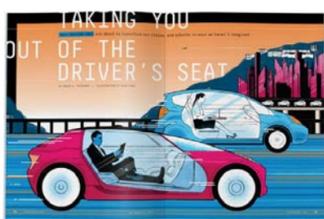
A long list of companies are pushing to define safety metrics and validation methods in hopes of setting — and potentially cashing in on — an industry-wide standard for AVs.

The big picture: Current safety standards govern only the design of motor vehicles — the cars' technical specifications and validation methods to certify they perform as designed. But convincing the public and regulators that self-driving cars are safe will require an entirely different set of standards.

•The Department of Transportation has offered guidance to developers, but left it to companies to submit their own voluntary safety self-assessments.

What's happening: The industry has already started work on ISO 21448 (safety of the intended functionality or "SOTIF"), which aims to ensure that even when all the systems in a self-driving vehicle are functioning properly and something unexpected happens, a crash is avoided.

•But it won't go far enough to ensure an AV is safe when the driver is no longer responsible, experts say.



Various organizations aim to fill the gap with their own suggested AV standards or testing criteria, each hoping the industry will follow their lead. A flurry of announcements hit this week:

•11 companies, led by BMW, Intel and others, published a 157-page report, "Safety First for Automated Driving," which lays out 12 "guiding principles" for the development, testing and validation of safe automated passenger vehicles.

•Intel rival Nvidia, meanwhile, announced in a blog post that it is leading a group of European auto suppliers on AV assessment methods.

•Underwriters Labs is developing a standard for safety, UL4600, detailed in a new blog post by a technical contributor, Phil Koozman, co-founder of Edge Case

Research.

•They follow January's announcement from Foretellix, an Israeli startup that has raised \$16 million by figuring out how to automate AV safety testing by crunching safety-related metrics from hundreds of millions of potential driving scenarios.

Be smart: Each of the groups has a vested interest in trying to promote their own technology or safety approach as the preferred industry standard.



Chinese technology giant Baidu's chief operating officer says self-driving cars could be turned into "weapons." Qi Lu said automakers and technology companies developing self-driving cars should be extremely cautious about security for the vehicles. "It has nothing to do with any particular government — it has to do with the very nature of autonomy," he told the Financial Times. "You have an object that is capable of moving by itself. By definition, it is a weapon." Lu, formerly of Microsoft, is helping the company develop its Apollo self-driving car software, an open source autonomous driving platform. He said it will be difficult to deploy autonomous cars en masse until automakers, technology companies, regulators and politicians sit down to agree on how to ensure safety. — FT

•Jack Weast, Intel's vice president of AV standards, tells Axios the collective expertise of all 11 companies is represented in his group's report, positioning it not as a proposed standard but "an excellent

starting point" for discussion in the industry.

"There are those out there who believe safety should be proprietary — 'Just trust me.' It's a black box.... There are plenty of ways for us to differentiate, but when it comes to safety, it has to be transparent, open and discussed for all to understand."

— Jack Weast, Intel (Courtesy axios.com)

Related

As more cars update themselves, the convenience could bring risks



The next two years will see a dramatic increase in the number of vehicles capable of over-the-air software updates.

The big picture: OTA software updates are a convenient delivery method for rolling out new features and protecting increasingly sophisticated vehicles from safety and cyber threats — if the right security and logistics measures are in place.

Currently, routine vehicle software updates or changes can require a recall, which elevates the perceived severity of commonplace software maintenance and involves a time-consuming, costly installation by a certified dealer technician.

The impact:

•The average recall completion rate for passenger vehicles is 75%.

•With software-related recalls growing at about 30% a year, OTA software updates could make it easier for car owners to get their cars updated.

What's needed: For automakers and car owners to successfully embrace OTA software updates, there will need to be encrypted software keys and other tools

to implement effective safety and security measures. Functionally, some updates may need to be installed exclusively while the vehicle is not being operated. Different updates will still likely require varying levels of driver and dealer intervention to complete.

•For instance, cybersecurity updates should be automatic, whereas ADAS-related updates should require driver approval and training on any new features.

•It could be possible to make any updates that impact vehicle operation active only after the driver views a training video, reads through a tutorial, or receives training from the dealer.



•Unsuccessful or incompatible installs should automatically roll back to the prior version, ensuring continuity and safety.

What to watch: GM is launching a new OTA platform in 2020, FCA will offer OTA in all new vehicles by 2022, and Jaguar plans to expand its OTA rollout after successful tests with management cars. (Courtesy axios.com)

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Emboldened Pro-Democracy Movements Are Testing China's Xi Jinping And Russia's Vladimir Putin
Beijing And Moscow Facing Pro-Democracy Protests



Riot police in Hong Kong. (Photo/Getty Images)

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

The big picture: Beijing and Moscow have repeatedly horrified the world, but never one another, with their treatment of dissidents and protesters.

The latest from Hong Kong, where protests that began over a controversial extradition bill have expanded in scope and raged for 3 months:

•Police fired tear gas and rubber bullets at protesters as tens of thousands of people marched through the streets of central Hong Kong on Sunday.

•A key protest location was the Yuen Long neighborhood — where thugs with suspected links to organized crime attacked protesters, journalists and commuters last weekend.

•A defense spokesman hinted last week that the Chinese military might be called upon to restore order. That could be a death blow to the “one country, two systems” framework that governs relations with mainland China.



Protesters react to teargas as they confront riot police officers in Hong Kong on Sunday, July 21, 2019. Protesters in Hong Kong pressed on Sunday past the designated end point for a march in which tens of thousands repeated demands for direct elections in the Chinese territory and an independent investigation into police tactics used in previous demonstrations. (Photo/AP)
•But in a highly anticipated assessment today, officials from China's Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office suggested it's up to Hong Kong's pro-Beijing leaders

(whom it praised, along with police) to end the “chaos” on the streets.

•The latest from Moscow, where opposition leader Alexei Navalny says he fears an “allergic reaction” suffered in jail may have been the result of poisoning:

•Navalny was sentenced to 30 days in jail for organizing protests last week over the expulsion of opposition candidates from local elections.

•In a blog post written today from his cell after he was brought back from the hospital, Navalny says he “woke up with a hot and prickly face, ears and neck.” He insists, “I have never had an allergy.”

•Navalny's personal doctor, who was unable to examine him up close, claims “this is the damaging effect of unidentified chemicals.”



Protests in Moscow.

A second round of protests in Moscow was violently dispersed on Saturday. “Officers clad in riot gear used batons against demonstrators,” some of whom had been chanting slogans such as “Russia without Putin,” Radio Free Europe reports. There were at least 80 injuries and 1,373 arrests.

•“No one expected the City Duma vote to turn into such a headache for the Kremlin. The legislature has few significant political powers, and elections to the 45-seat body are traditionally low-key,” Marc Bennetts reports for Politico Europe.

•“But political analysts say that the Kremlin is determined not to allow genuine opposition candidates to gain a foothold on the electoral ladder because it

believes this would trigger the beginning of the end for Putin's carefully managed political system.”

Worth noting: One of the many fronts on which Navalny has irritated the Kremlin is his criticism of its embrace of China, a relationship in which Russia is increasingly the junior partner.

•“What Mr Putin is doing today will almost certainly make the next leader of Russia hostage to his China policy,” he's quoted as saying in the Economist.

Related

Are Putin and Xi Going Too Soft on the Protests?

The Russian and Chinese regimes are doing something new: Not escalating in the face of protest.



tively liberal Hong Kong, the regime that crushed



Tiananmen Square protests, 1989. the Tiananmen Square protests didn't step back in the face of popular indignation.

This time it's different — the (much more numerous) protesters have forced pro-Beijing Chief Executive Carrie Lam to shelve a bill that would allow extradition from Hong Kong to the mainland, which would have dealt a major blow to the special economic region's judicial independence. And Lam has promised no arrests, too.

Meanwhile in Russia, personal interventions by President Vladimir Putin — after numerically weak but noisy protests — led to the release of investigative journalist Ivan Golunov, who had been arrested on what seemed like trumped-up drug charges, and to the cancellation of a plan to replace a public park with a cathedral in Yekaterinburg. On Monday, the 20-day sentence of opposition activist Leonid Volkov, who had been convicted twice for the same “offense” of calling on people to attend an unsanctioned rally, was unexpectedly and unusually commuted to eight days, and Volkov walked free. (Courtesy themoscowtimes.com)



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