

CHINA

Hong Kong Shuts Down After Night of Violence

Subway remains closed, along with many storefronts and shopping malls, day after government invoked emergency measure



A protester in Hong Kong on Saturday. PHOTO: VINCENT THIAN/ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Updated Oct. 5, 2019 6:42 am ET

HONG KONG—Citywide disruptions stretched into a second day as Hong Kong’s subway network remained closed, along with many storefronts, banks and shopping malls, a day after the government invoked emergency measures to ban masks, prompting a wave of violence overnight.

People formed long lines early Saturday at some of the supermarkets that were open, while the city’s labor department urged employers to make accommodations for late workers as transport was snarled in parts of the city.

The disruptions followed a night of street violence after the city’s leader, Carrie Lam, invoked a British-era emergency law for the first time in 52 years, using it to allow the city to ban face coverings at public gatherings. Mrs. Lam said the measure was necessary to deter the violent protests that have gripped Hong Kong for four months.

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Photos of activists prepared to face off against tear gas and police scrutiny



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began gathering outside a department store in the central neighborhood of Causeway Bay for a rally to protest the new regulation banning masks, which went into force at midnight. Face masks have been a common sight at demonstrations, with many protesters wearing them to protect against tear gas and avoid identification.

Many protesters tried to skirt the ban by finding new ways to obscure their faces. A demonstrator named Maggie wore a handkerchief over her face secured by sun glasses. “I’m wearing this because I’m allowed to,” she said. The ban forbids any facial covering at a public gathering.

“The definition of what a mask is is not clear,” said Mr. Wong, a demonstrator in his 30s who was

In a speech released on video Saturday afternoon, Mrs. Lam condemned the violence. “Hong Kong spent a very dark night last night because of the extreme behavior of the rioters that has left Hong Kong semi-paralyzed today,” she said, adding that the threat to public safety supports the government’s decision to ban masks.

The city’s subway operator, MTR Corp. , shut down the system on Friday and gave no indication of when most service might resume, though express trains to the airport returned in the afternoon. The Hong Kong Monetary Authority said banks have suspended services at branches across the city because of vandalism and traffic disruptions.

In the early afternoon, protesters dressed in black

HONG KONG'S MASK BAN

The measure prohibits anyone from wearing a mask at unlawful or public gatherings. Here's what that means.

- Any material—including paint—that covers a person's face is prohibited.
- Exemptions can be granted for religious, medical and professional reasons.
- Police are authorized to stop and search anyone wearing a mask in a public area and require the person to remove it.
- People who wear masks at unlawful assemblies of three or more people, public gatherings of more than 50 and public marches of more than 30 face up to 12 months in jail and a fine of more than \$3,000
- People in a public area who don't remove masks at the request of police face up to six months in jail and a fine of around \$1,300.

with friends and wearing a black visor.

Irwan Wijaya, an Indonesian tourist visiting Hong Kong with his wife, children and in-laws said they saw flames as they watched Friday's clashes from their Causeway Bay hotel. Mr. Wijaya said they were terrified to learn that demonstrators had set fires inside a nearby subway station and had decided to stick close to their hotel ever since.

Their hotel, a Holiday Inn Express, advised guests to stay inside. Tourism to the city has plunged in recent months.

The continued shutdown of the city's subway network is a particularly disruptive move. Hong Kong is known for its well used, highly efficient subway lines that run across the main island and out to far-flung suburbs, terminating at the city's border with mainland China.

The start of a sitting for the SAT, the U.S. college entrance exam, was delayed by roughly three hours on Saturday because of snarled transportation links. Thousands of students from Hong Kong and mainland China take the test each year in a cavernous exposition center near the airport.

The emergency law, invoked Friday, gives the government sweeping powers that include imposing curfews, media censorship and the seizure of control of ports and transport, though the mask ban was the only measure put into force.

The demonstrations following the ban's announcement led to clashes, including one in which a police officer shot a 14-year-old boy, police said. The boy was then arrested on accusations of

rioting and assaulting police, they said. They said the officer, who wasn't wearing a uniform, was attacked by protesters and fired in self-defense.

Mrs. Lam, the city's chief executive, said in her speech that a group of people had thrown Molotov cocktails at the officer.

A government spokeswoman said the boy's medical condition has improved.

The citywide unrest, now in its 18th weekend, was sparked by an extradition bill, which Mrs. Lam said she would withdraw last month, that would have allowed people to be sent for trial in mainland China's opaque justice system. The movement has since widened to include four other demands, chief among them the establishment of a judge-led commission to investigate allegations of excessive use of force by the police.

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