

News story: Foreign Office statement on demonstrations in Belarus

We have closely followed events in Belarus leading up to, and during, the Freedom Day demonstrations. We are concerned over the actions of the law enforcement agencies in Minsk. A large number of citizens, activists and journalists appear to have been arbitrarily and indiscriminately detained.

There is no justification for the use of force or intimidation against those exercising their right to peaceful protest. We urge the Government of Belarus to respect and uphold the right to freedom of association, assembly and expression. We further call on the government of Belarus to release all those peaceful protesters still detained.

Text of PM's 'Mann ki Baat' programme on All India Radio on 26.03.2017

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Landslide buries five in Guizhou

At least five people were buried in a building hit by a landslide at Sunday dawn in southwest China's Guizhou Province, local government said.

The landslide occurred at the village of Baga in Panxian County at 1:20 a.m. More than 300 police, fire fighters and medical workers have been mobilized for a rescue operation.

The cause of the landslide is being investigated.

China court overturns iPhone sale ban

A Chinese court has ruled in favor of Apple Inc. in design patent disputes between it and a domestic phone-maker, overturning a ban on selling iPhone 6 and iPhone 6 Plus phones in China.

Last May, a Beijing patent regulator ordered Apple's Chinese subsidiary and a local retailer Zoomflight to stop selling the said phones after Shenzhen Baili Marketing services Co. (Shenzhen Baili) lodged a complaint to it, claiming that the patent for the design of its mobile phone 100c was being infringed upon by the iPhone sales.

Apple and Zoomflight took the Beijing Intellectual Property Office's banning order to court.

The Beijing Intellectual Property Court on Friday revoked the ban, saying Apple and Zoomflight did not violate Shenzhen Baili's design patent for 100c phones.

The court ruled that the regulator did not follow due procedures in ordering the ban while there is no sufficient proof to claim the designs constitute violation of intellectual property rights.

Representatives of Beijing Intellectual Property Office and Shenzhen Baili said they would take time to decide whether to appeal the ruling.

In another related ruling, the same court denied a request by Apple to demand stripping Shenzhen Baili of its design patent for 100c phones. Apple first filed the request to the Patent Reexamination Board of State Intellectual Property Office. The board rejected the request, but Apple lodged a lawsuit against the rejection to court.

The Beijing Intellectual Property Court on Friday ruled to maintain the board's decision. It remains not immediately clear if Apple will appeal.

Apple phones are popular among China's urban young people, but the sale faces stiff competition from domestic phone makers, which produce a wider range of affordable and quality smart phones.

Last year, three domestic brands – OPPO, Huawei and Vivo – outperformed Apple as China's top selling phone brands, according to a report by the International Data Corporation.

OPPO sold 78.4 million handsets in China last year, tailed by Huawei with 76.6 million units.

Andrew Gwynne statement on Douglas Carswell leaving UKIP

Commenting on Douglas Carswell's decision to leave UKIP,
Labour's Shadow Minister and Elections Chair, Andrew Gwynne MP, said:

"UKIP are tearing themselves apart. Their only MP has quit, their biggest donor has fled and their leader was utterly rejected by the voters of Stoke-on-Trent a few weeks ago. Under Paul Nuttall UKIP now has no MPs and no future.

"This episode exposes the truth of UKIP: they've got nothing to offer the voters and they're a divided party with extreme policies, such as privatising the NHS."