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LAWRENCE HO SAID MELCO'S EXPANSION PLANS FOR STUDIO CITY, WHICH INCLUDE A CINEPLEX AND A WATER PARK, MIGHT NOW BE DELAYED

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BILLIONAIRE PACKER'S CASINO IN SPOTLIGHT AS TRIAD CLAIMS PROBED

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WILFRED WONG HAS BEEN RE-APPOINTED SANDS CHINA PRESIDENT AND WILL OVERSEE \$15 BILLION IN LOCAL INVESTMENT PLANNED BY 2022

P4

AP PHOTO



Indonesia A flash flood hit hundreds of students and teachers who were hiking along a river on Indonesia's main island of Java, killing at least eight of the students, officials said. Two others were reported missing.

AP PHOTO



Japan Emperor Naruhito, marking his 60th birthday, offered his sympathy to those affected by the new virus, as concerns over infections forced the traditional gathering of tens of thousands of well-wishers outside the royal palace to be canceled. This birthday is a special one for Naruhito, his first since becoming emperor. Sixty is considered a landmark age in the Japanese zodiac calendar.

AP PHOTO



Iran The health ministry raised the death toll from the new coronavirus to eight yesterday, amid concerns that clusters there as well as in Italy and South Korea could signal a serious new stage in its global spread. There were now 43 confirmed cases of the illness in Iran, health ministry spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour told state TV.

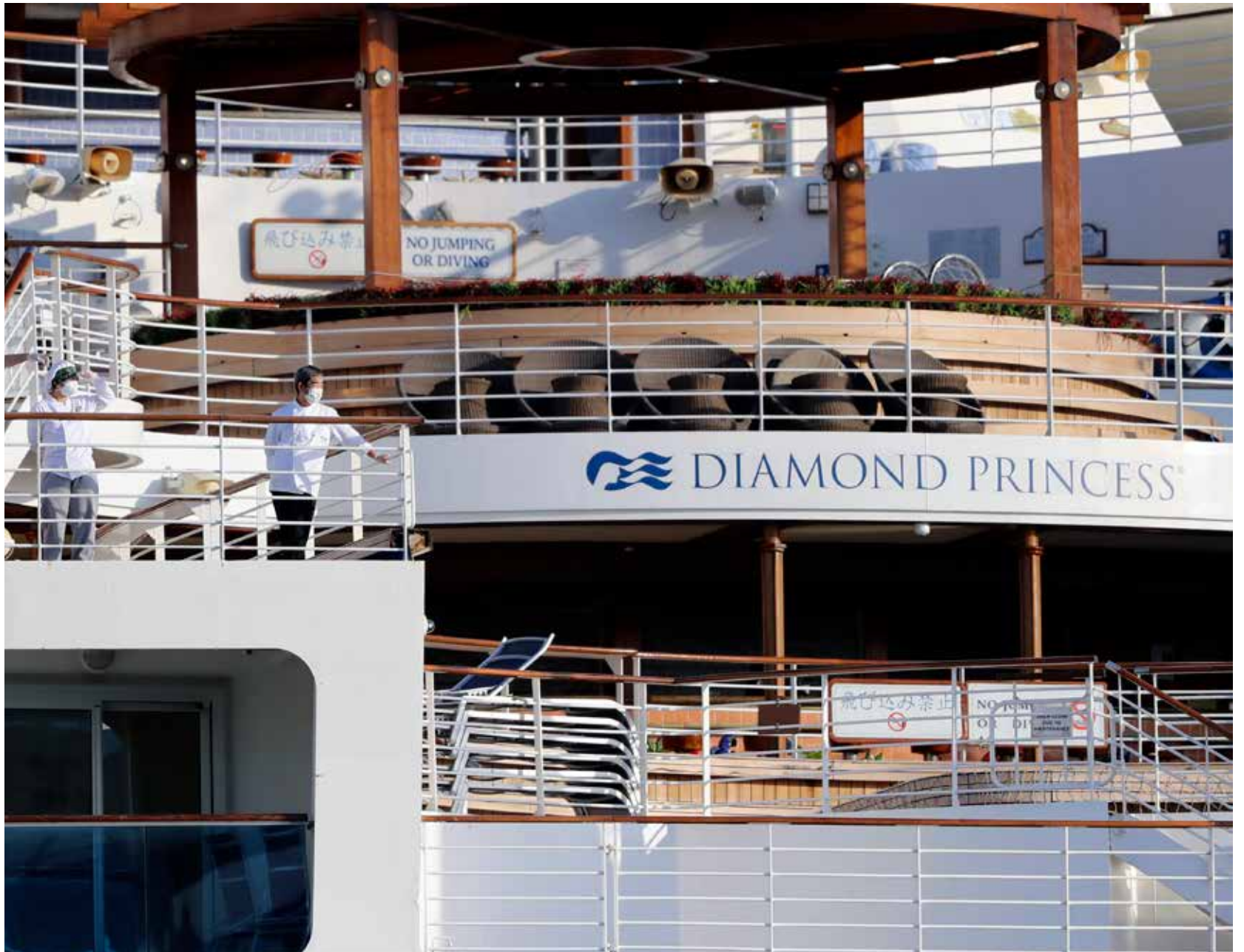
Turkey Nine people were killed in Turkey in a magnitude 5.7 earthquake that struck western Iran yesterday, Turkish Health Minister Fahrettin Koca said. The quake centered west of the Iranian city of Khoy and affected villages in the Turkish province of Van.

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THREE MACAU RESIDENTS FLOWN HOME TO FACE QUARANTINE

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AP PHOTO



AP PHOTO



MACAU LABELS SOUTH KOREA 'HIGH-RISK' AS CASES SPIKE

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RENATO MARQUES



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY: CLOSED UNTIL AT LEAST MARCH

P2

GOV'T LABELS SOUTH KOREA AS HIGH-RISK AREA, BORDER CONTROL MEASURES ENFORCED

RENATO MARQUES

THE government has decided to consider South Korea a high-risk contagion area for the Covid-19 coronavirus, prompting the enforcement of new immigration measures on those who have visited the country in the past 14 days.

The Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center informed that the new measures would be enforced starting today.

The coordinator of the New Coronavirus Contingency Coordination Center, Leong Iek Hou, explained that the decision was based on recent significant growth in the number of confirmed cases in South Korea which suggests that an uncontrolled outbreak of disease is occurring.

Leong also explained that the measures now in force include passing a medical check-up for all those who have been in South Korea in the last 14 days. This measure applies to Korean visitors, Macau residents or anyone arriving through the Macau borders who has recently been to South Korea.

"We are considering South Korea as an area of high prevalence [of the disease]. From February 20, we started to enforce measures on all those people that want to enter Macau after having passed through China. [These people] must pass through a medical observation before entering Macau. From [today],

AP PHOTO



we are considering South Korea in the same way," Leong said.

"Those that have been in Korea in the previous 14 days before arriving at the borders of Macau will have to pass through a medical examination at the medical checkpoints located at the Workers Stadium or Pac On," added Leong, referring to the Macao Federation of Trade Unions Workers Stadium and the Taipa Maritime Ferry Terminal respectively. "Only after the examination and tests are concluded can they enter Macau."

Questioned on the topic by the media, Leong said that the medical examinations and tests

performed at Macau medical checkpoints would take about six to eight hours, a length of time that is considered reasonable and similar to other parts of the world.

The officials at the press conference failed to present concrete data on the number of people that had entered Macau from South Korea in the last few days, as well as the number of Macau residents currently in South Korea.

Although all flights between Macau and South Korea have been canceled, a Public Security Police Force (PSP) representative said that 43 Koreans entered Macau "in the past few days."

The PSP representative added that these visitors might have arrived not via the Macau International Airport, but via Hong Kong.

Furthermore, the PSP spokesperson said that flights between

Macau and cities in South Korea have all been canceled until March 1.

Leong also said, in response to media questions, that for the time being, no similar actions have been taken against the neighboring regions of Hong Kong and Japan.

According to the coordinator of the Center, "the government is evaluating the condition, the outbreak figures, as well as the measures taken by the local governments in response to the disease."

"[For Japan and Hong Kong] the situation is not yet of an alarming outbreak, and we know that the governments [...] have been taking strict measures to prevent the contagion by examining and testing people of close contact," said Leong.

The official noted that should the situation change, the local government can apply stricter border control measures against residents or travelers to any country or region in the world.

CERTIFICATES NEEDED FOR AUSTRALIA

DURING yesterday's press conference of the Novel Coronavirus Response and Coordination Center, a representative of the Higher Education Bureau (DSES) informed residents, especially those studying at Australian universities, to bring a certificate issued by the Public

Security Police Force (PSP) which certifies that they have been in Macau for the past 14 days prior to arriving in Australia. The document is being requested by Australian authorities and will save local students some hassle when arriving in Australia, a DSES representative said.

Legislative Assembly to remain closed at least until month's end

RENATO MARQUES

THE Legislative Assembly (AL) will continue its suspension of all activities except for some administrative duties from the Assembly's Support Services.

According to the latest public notice published on Friday, only the services which resumed on February 17 will continue operating from today until February 28.

As in the previous communication, resident reception services by lawmakers will continue to

be suspended until further notice. Residents are instead encouraged to share their opinions by telephone, email or fax.

As the Times reported last week, the AL has currently suspended its plenary and committees' meetings until further notice in response to the outbreak of the novel coronavirus known as Covid-19.

Legislative work at the AL has been suspended for approximately a month now, including the programmed break for the Lunar New Year celebrations.

According to the AL's

calendar, under normal circumstances, activities should have resumed on January 30, with a meeting of the Follow-up Committee of Public Administration Affairs.

A raft of upcoming financial measures designed to stimulate the economy in the aftermath of the coronavirus outbreak will first need approval at the AL. However, the many bills currently being discussed by the three Standing Committees, as well as other work that has been delayed by the suspension, threaten to delay approval

and subsequent implementation of the financial measures.

By law, all measures involving tax exemptions and financial aid to people and enterprises first needs to be discussed and approved by the AL.

This process is normally lengthy due to the bureaucratic steps involved. However, in special cases, the government can request the analysis of certain bills as a matter of urgency. It is not yet known if this topic will be considered as a matter of urgency once the AL reopens.

RENATO MARQUES



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A MACAU TIMES PUBLICATIONS LTD PUBLICATION

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For subscription and general issues:

general@macaudailytimes.com | Printed at Welfare Printing Ltd

Three residents return from cruise ship to face second quarantine in Macau

ANTHONY LAM

THREE of the five Macau passengers onboard the Diamond Princess cruise ship, which is stranded in Yokohama, have returned to Macau and are now under monitored quarantine at a Health Bureau facility in Coloane.

Two of them were repatriated on the second charter flight arranged by the Hong Kong government, which arrived in Hong Kong on Saturday morning. This was made possible through an agreement made between the Special Administrative Regions, enabling Macau residents on the ship to be evacuated as well.

The two evacuated on the Hong Kong charter flight were taken straight from the airport in Hong Kong back to Macau via the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge. Medical staff conducted checks on them and found no respiratory symptoms. The third Macau resident took a commercial flight to Hong Kong before returning to Macau.

The remaining two Macau residents onboard the cruise ship were also repatriated, the Macao Government Tourism Office confirmed. It was believed they are residents of both Hong Kong and Macau, and have decided to stay in Hong Kong, sources indicated earlier.

So far, the Hong Kong govern-

AP PHOTO



ment has chartered three flights to evacuate passengers from Hong Kong, with the third arriving yesterday morning.

The plane arrived at around 6 a.m. on Sunday with five passengers from Hong Kong onboard, an official from the Hong Kong government's Security Bureau said yesterday.

According to the latest figures, over 100 Hong Kong residents on the ship are still in Japan, including 68 who tested positive for Covid-19, 32 close contacts and dozens of non-close contacts.

Those who tested positive are being treated at a hospital in Ja-

pan. Close contacts will be brought back later if they test negative and are fit to travel by plane, said the Hong Kong Secretary for Food and Health, Sophia Chan.

A total of 208 Hong Kong residents who were on the ship have returned on chartered flights or other flights. All of them have been sent to a quarantine center in the New Territories for 14 days.

Among them was a nine-year-old child who developed mild fever on Friday was sent to hospital and tested negative for the virus. A 68-year-old man was sent to hospital on Saturday after developing a fever, according to Chan.

Before the evacuation operation by the Hong Kong government, there were 364 Hong Kong residents on board the quarantined ship altogether.

The Diamond Princess, initially carrying around 2,600 passengers and 1,100 crew members from more than 50 countries and regions, has been quarantined in Yokohama Port south of Tokyo since February 5 after a Covid-19 outbreak occurred on the ship.

A passenger who got off the Diamond Princess after completing the cruise ship's quarantine this past week tested positive for the new virus Saturday, becoming

the first known case of infection among those released at the end of the ship's containment period, Japanese officials said.

Despite strong doubts raised from inside and outside the country, Japanese health ministry officials have insisted that any passengers who completed the 14-day quarantine, tested negative for the virus and showed no symptoms had nearly zero risk of becoming a virus patient.

Some experts and former passengers have criticized the quarantine, saying anti-infection measures were inadequate. The U.S., Australia and other governments that evacuated their citizens from the ship are requiring them an additional two-week quarantine.

Japan's health minister, Katsunobu Kato, said on Saturday that 23 passengers had been released from the Diamond Princess at the end of the quarantine without being tested for the virus due to procedural mistakes, another sign of sloppiness in the quarantine of the ship.

He said the 23 were tested before the quarantine began Feb. 5, but were allowed to leave the ship on Wednesday and Thursday without being tested again. Three of them have since tested negative, and most of the others have agreed to be tested, he said.

Kato said officials have tracked all 23 passengers down and asked them to self-quarantine at home for 14 days.

No schedule to reopen schools, says education regulator

DESPITE working on guidelines for schools to reopen, the Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ) said it is still monitoring the Covid-19 situation and has no schedule for the resumption of schools as yet.

The Higher Education Bureau (DSES) has also made a similar announcement regarding tertiary education in the SAR.

Both bureaus reiterated that an announcement would be publicized at least one week before school actually restarts.

Some higher education institutions in the city have turned to the Internet for a temporary solution. University educators, including lawmaker and professor Agnes Lam, as well as commen-

tator and professor Camões Tam, have posted pictures of themselves conducting online video-teaching on social media.

On the other hand, the DSEJ is in contact with local schools with regards to the compilation of the guidelines, which will include health and hygiene measures, instructions on the resumption and operations of schools, creation of teaching plans, student assessments, as well as extra-curricular activities.

The DSEJ pointed out that the guidelines are subject to change, depending on the development of Covid-19 and when schools reopen. The education regulator declined to give specific details on the guidelines.

Some teachers, parents

and students have started becoming anxious as they are worried that students may fall behind in their education.

However, both the education regulator and Teresa Vong, associate professor of education at the University of Macau, dismissed the worries.

"Suspension of school, of course, has some effects on formal school learning because we are supposed to have students having all-rounded learning activities at school. However, I personally don't think this – hopefully – short suspension will have much effect on the academic performance of the students," Vong said, in addition to the DSEJ saying that a month or so of suspension will not have a big impact on a 15-year education. **AL**

GOV'T ISSUES WARNINGS FOR DANGEROUS VIRAL PRANKS

A new and dangerous prank which involves tripping a person with a long scarf has gone viral on social media, following a similar prank known as the "Tripping Jump Challenge."

The Judiciary Police (PJ) and Education and Youth Affairs Bureau (DSEJ) have both issued warnings about the two pranks. The warnings, which come less than two weeks apart, stress the dangers of the tripping pranks and note that the injuries sustained from them can be life-threatening.

A statement from the DSEJ pointed out that videos depicting the prank have beco-

me popular, with some playing the prank on people around them. The prank is conducted using a long piece of cloth, frequently a scarf, which is thrown over the victim's head until it falls down around their ankles. The prankster then pulls the piece of cloth to trip the victim.

Like the "Tripping Jump Challenge," where the victim jumps in between two people who, while the victim is in mid-air, trip the victim with their legs, the new prank also causes victims fall to the ground.

According to various reports, the old prank has caused some serious, irrevocable injuries around the world.

Some of victims hit their heads or backs when they land on the ground. The impact is hard enough to cause bone fractures.

In response to such acts, the education regulator has reminded teachers and parents to stay alert and prevent youth from playing these pranks. The dangers of the prank should be explained to young people.

As for punishment, the PJ pointed out that there are laws governing such acts. The law-enforcement authority explained that the pranksters may be liable to the stipulations regarding physical assault in the Penal Code. **AL**



MELCO EXPECTS SLOWDOWN IN LOCAL EXPANSION PROJECT

LYNZY VALLES

MELCO Resorts & Entertainment is expecting a slowdown for phase two of Studio City's construction due to Covid-19, citing the low number of construction workers arriving from mainland China.

Phase two of the expansion – which has around \$1.35 billion to \$1.4 billion (about 11 billion

patacas) budgeted – will increase Studio City's hotel room capacity by approximately 60%.

In addition to the gaming space expansion, phase two will also offer non-gaming attractions, including a cineplex, a water park, fine dining restaurants and meetings and exhibition spaces.

In the company's fourth quarter conference call with analysts, Lawrence Ho, chairman and

CEO of Melco Resorts & Entertainment, said that aside from the delay in construction and completing the expansion, delays are also expected in the approval of licenses required to operate.

"In terms of government approval, as you can expect during this unprecedented time, 100% of the Macau government's attention is on stopping the

spread and curing the virus. So you can expect approvals to slow down as well," said Ho.

The executive added that the company expects the city's recovery to take some time.

"Our view is that the situation is going to have a much longer ramp-up period to get the business back to where it was. [...] We anticipate Macau to be very, very quiet for quite a long time," he said.

During the conference call, it was also disclosed that the gaming operator's expenses were usually about \$3 million per day in Macau, with \$2 million at City of Dreams, Altira and Mocha, and \$1 million at Studio City.

However, through some cost-cutting efforts, the company has reduced expenses to a combined \$2.5 million per day.

Ho reported that the 2019 EBITDA was at an all-time high, despite macro headwinds and the events in Hong Kong last year believed to dampen casino prospects.

"We increased our Macau mass table revenues by approximately 17%. We also enjoyed modest growth in VIP revenue, despite the significant market wide VIP decline," Ho explained.

Gross gaming revenue in Macau fell about 3.4% last year to 292 billion patacas on the back of an exceptionally weak fourth quarter.

Outside of Macau, the CEO said that the company's project investments in the Philippines,

Cyprus and in the Mediterranean were also progressing well.

City of Dreams Manila's mass table game operations saw strong double-digit growth in the fourth quarter.

"In Cyprus, we continue to ramp up our temporary and satellite casinos with the luck-adjusted EBITDA from Cyprus more than tripling year-over-year to \$9 million. Construction of City of Dreams Mediterranean is progressing well, with the opening anticipated [for] around year-end 2021," said Ho.

"Our strong fourth quarter performance demonstrates the resilience of our EBITDA, with over 90% of our 2019 Macau EBITDA contributed by the non-VIP segment," he added.

Recently, amid the Covid-19 outbreak, the company scrapped an agreement to buy the second part of a planned 20% stake in Australia's Crown Resorts, after acquiring its first 10% interest last year.

Ho explained that given the severity of coronavirus and the impact on business, the company had re-evaluated its capital expenditures.

"Given that wasn't considered part of our core investment, core management assets, I think that's why that decision was made," he said. "I think our immediate focus right now is really the stability of our Macau business, the stability of our staff, and the safety of our staff and colleagues in Macau."

Sands China re-appoints Wilfred Wong as President

STAFF REPORTER

GAMING operator Sands China has announced the re-appointment of Wilfred Wong as the company's President. Grant Chum was appointed Chief Operating Officer COO, while Dylan James Williams was appointed the company's General Counsel and Secretary.

The appointments were made effective from Friday, Sands China noted in a filing to the Hong Kong stock exchange.

Wilfred Wong has served as the company's President and COO since 2015. Wong will be responsible for overall leadership while focusing on strategic objectives of the business in Macau and the Greater Bay Area. He has served in numerous high-profile roles in Hong Kong from property development and construction in the business sector to roles in the Hong Kong government.

He was awarded the Gold and Silver Bauhinia Stars by the Hong Kong



Government in 2015 and 2007 respectively.

Grant Chum has been with the group since 2013 joining as its Senior Vice President of Global Gaming Strategy and then Chief of Staff since 2015. As COO, Chum will be responsible for day to day operations of the business. Chum, 44, previously spent 14 years with UBS Investment Bank in Hong Kong and was named Asia's Stock Picker of the Year by the Financial Times in 2011.

He is a University of Oxford graduate.

Dylan James Williams, 44, has been with the group for over 14 years, Williams joined as its Debt Compliance Manager in 2006. Serving in various legal roles over the past decade, Williams was most recently Senior Vice President of Legal and Company Secretary since 2017. Before joining Sands China, Williams worked in telecoms, media and technology in the region.

MACAU PROFIT GREW 8.4% LAST YEAR

Sands China also disclosed its preliminary announcement of 2019 results, showing that its profit grew 8.4% last year to \$2.03 billion (about 16.3 billion patacas). Meanwhile, net revenue for the company increased by 1.7% to \$8.81 billion.

CEO of Las Vegas Sands, Sheldon Adelson, said that Sands China experienced growth across its operations in Macau and generated a market-leading adjusted property EBITDA of \$3.19 billion, an increase of 3.7% compared to last year.

With the aim of expanding the non-gaming segments of the company's business, Adelson reiterated that the company would increase its total investment to over \$15 billion over the next two years.

These investments include the addition of approximately 600 new suites at The Londoner Macao and The Grand Suites at Four Seasons Macao.

Adelson also remarked that the firm had naturally shifted its near-term priorities to focus directly on the health and safety of its team members and guests amid the Covid-19 outbreak.

"Despite the current impact from the Covid-19, we look to the future with confidence," said Adelson.

The operator has shut down three of its hotels, namely Four Seasons Hotel Macao, The St. Regis Macao and Conrad Macao Cotai Strip, which offer 1,459 rooms collectively, around 11% of Sands' total Macau capacity.

A NEW CONFERENCE CENTER IN VEGAS

Las Vegas Sands has inquired about buying a new conference center scheduled to open next month in Las Vegas, if its new owner decides to sell the venue, reported Bloomberg.

Located near the Strip, the 550,000-square-foot Caesars Forum developed by Caesars Entertainment Corp.

will target the lucrative business tourism segment of the Nevada economy. Eldorado Resorts is currently in the process of acquiring Caesars, which owns the soon-to-open conference center.

The interest comes after the CEO of Eldorado Resorts, Tom Reeg, signaled he was looking to slim down Caesars, potentially selling an interest in its online and sports gambling businesses.

"They've got an internet casino business that is a material business that I think really gets little to no value," Reeg said on a conference call with investors last year.

He's also discussed outsourcing the company's entertainment operations, including its theaters and showrooms, reported Bloomberg, citing people familiar with the matter. Among the properties potentially up for sale is the Colosseum concert venue at Caesars Palace and the new Caesars conference center.

A Las Vegas Sands spokesman declined to comment.

Billionaire Packer's casino in spotlight as triad claims probed

CROWN Resorts Ltd. billionaire James Packer has endured blow upon blow for more than three years: a bruising clash with Chinese authorities and at least two aborted deals with suitors.

Now the 52-year-old faces another potential ordeal. The first set of public hearings starts Monday to consider media reports that Crown used agents linked to drug gangs, human traffickers and money launderers to attract wealthy Chinese gamblers to its casinos.

Ultimately, the probe will assess if Crown should keep its license to run an AUD2.2 billion (\$1.5 billion) Sydney harborside gaming development that Packer has championed for almost a decade. His 37% stake in Crown, a company with a market value of AUD8 billion, is his single-biggest investment.

With that centerpiece resort due to open late this year, the probe is badly timed for Packer and Crown. The investigation will give a fresh airing to the damaging allegations last year that are still deterring big-spending gamers from playing at Crown's casinos in Melbourne and Perth - the very customers the firm will also need in Sydney.

At the same time, coronavirus-related travel restrictions in Australia on visitors from China are weighing on gambling flows. Even before the outbreak, turnover from high rollers at Crown in the six months to December fell 34%.

The investigation in Sydney will thrust Packer into the spotlight

BLOOMBERG



and likely subject him to forensic scrutiny. He's on a list of witnesses to be called along with Lawrence Ho, chief executive officer of Melco Resorts & Entertainment Ltd. Ho was sucked into the probe after the Macau casino operator last year bought a stake in Crown from Packer.

The hearings could make compelling theater. According to the reports last July by Nine Entertainment Co. newspapers, at least one Asian crime syndicate laundered money through Crown's casinos and the firm allegedly used junket operators with links to drug traffickers as it sought to lure high-roller gamblers.

"It's going to be a bit like a car

crash," said Roy Wheatley, the head of Global Consulting & Development, an Australian advisory business that specializes in gaming and hotels. "People won't be able to look away."

A spokesman for Packer's private investment company, Consolidated Press Holdings, had no immediate comment. Crown has called last year's media reports part of a "deceitful campaign" that sought to damage its reputation. Crown says it's cooperating fully with the inquiry and will work with regulators on any recommendations.

The probe was established last year by the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority, the watchdog that oversees gambling in

Sydney and the rest of New South Wales state. Monday marks the first of five sets of public hearings and Packer and Ho aren't due to be called until the second at the earliest. Retired Supreme Court Judge Patricia Bergin is overseeing proceedings.

The inquiry is the latest challenge in a tumultuous period for Crown and Packer. In October 2016, Chinese authorities rounded up Crown's staff on the mainland and the following year a court convicted 19 current and former employees of illegally promoting gambling.

Packer also split up with fiancée Mariah Carey and he quit Crown's board in March 2018 because of

mental health issues. Talks to sell Crown to Las Vegas-based Wynn Resorts Ltd. collapsed early last year.

The inquiry will also examine Melco's investment in Crown and any links Melco might have with its CEO's father, Stanley Ho. Dozens of entities and individuals that are deemed associates of the Macau casino kingpin have been barred by the New South Wales casino regulator from owning an interest in Crown, directly or indirectly.

A representative for Melco said the company is respectful of the regulatory process and will assist the inquiry where possible. The representative declined to say whether Lawrence Ho would testify at the inquiry, and declined to comment on any link to Stanley Ho.

Melco announced in May last year it would buy about 20% of Crown from Packer. By the time the regulator announced in August plans for an inquiry, Melco had already bought a 10% stake. Days later, Melco put the second half of its investment on hold and scrapped the additional purchase altogether this month. It also reversed a plan to seek representation on Crown's board. It's not clear how that might affect Bergin's inquiry. **MDT/BLOOMBERG**

FIVE HEARINGS

1. Vulnerability of casinos to money laundering
2. Packer's sale of Crown shares to Melco
3. Crown's suitability to hold a license in Sydney
4. Crown's potential new associates at Melco
5. Review of current regulation and legislation

PHILIPPINE TAX AGENCY CATCHES ERRANT ONLINE CASINO ON SECOND TRY

PHILIPPINE authorities trooped to an office building in the capital to shut an online casino for tax evasion, only to be surprised to find the company wasn't there.

"This is the difficulty because their offices are virtual," Internal Revenue Deputy Commissioner Arnel Guballa told reporters in Manila on Friday morning after a planned raid was called off.

Based on the address from the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp., the company was supposed to be based in Pasay City but couldn't be found. On Friday afternoon, the tax bureau in a statement said it was finally

able to close down Synchronization Anywhere For You Inc. but didn't provide details as to how they were able to track down the company.

The lack of coordination among government agencies is hampering tax collection, with the finance department last year ordering measures to step up oversight.

Offshore gaming operators have multiplied in the Philippines since President Rodrigo Duterte's government began awarding licenses in 2016, contributing an estimated 6.4 billion pesos of taxes last year.

Offering low betting minimums, the operators target Chinese gamblers that are

unable or unwilling to travel to Macau.

Macau does not allow the gaming sector to carry out any promotion of online gambling or place bets via telephone through local casinos. Last year, at least one major junket operator was accused by mainland media of working with online casinos in Southeast Asia.

The Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau said last year that any violation of the law by a junket operator - even if such a violation takes place outside of Macau - could have implications for the suitability of the junket to operate in the SAR. **DB/BLOOMBERG**

HILTON PLANS LAS VEGAS HOTEL IN RETURN TO THE STRIP

THE Las Vegas Hilton was a landmark of the gambling mecca for decades. Now, Hilton Worldwide Holdings Inc. is bringing the brand back to the Strip.

Hilton has agreed to operate three hotels as part of Genting Group's Resorts World Las Vegas, slated to open in the summer of 2021, according to a statement from the companies.

The deal calls for a 1,700-room hotel dubbed the Las Vegas Hilton, a 1,500-room Conrad and a smaller

property designed for high-rollers, helping Hilton cater to the growing ranks of loyalty program members who view the city as an important destination.

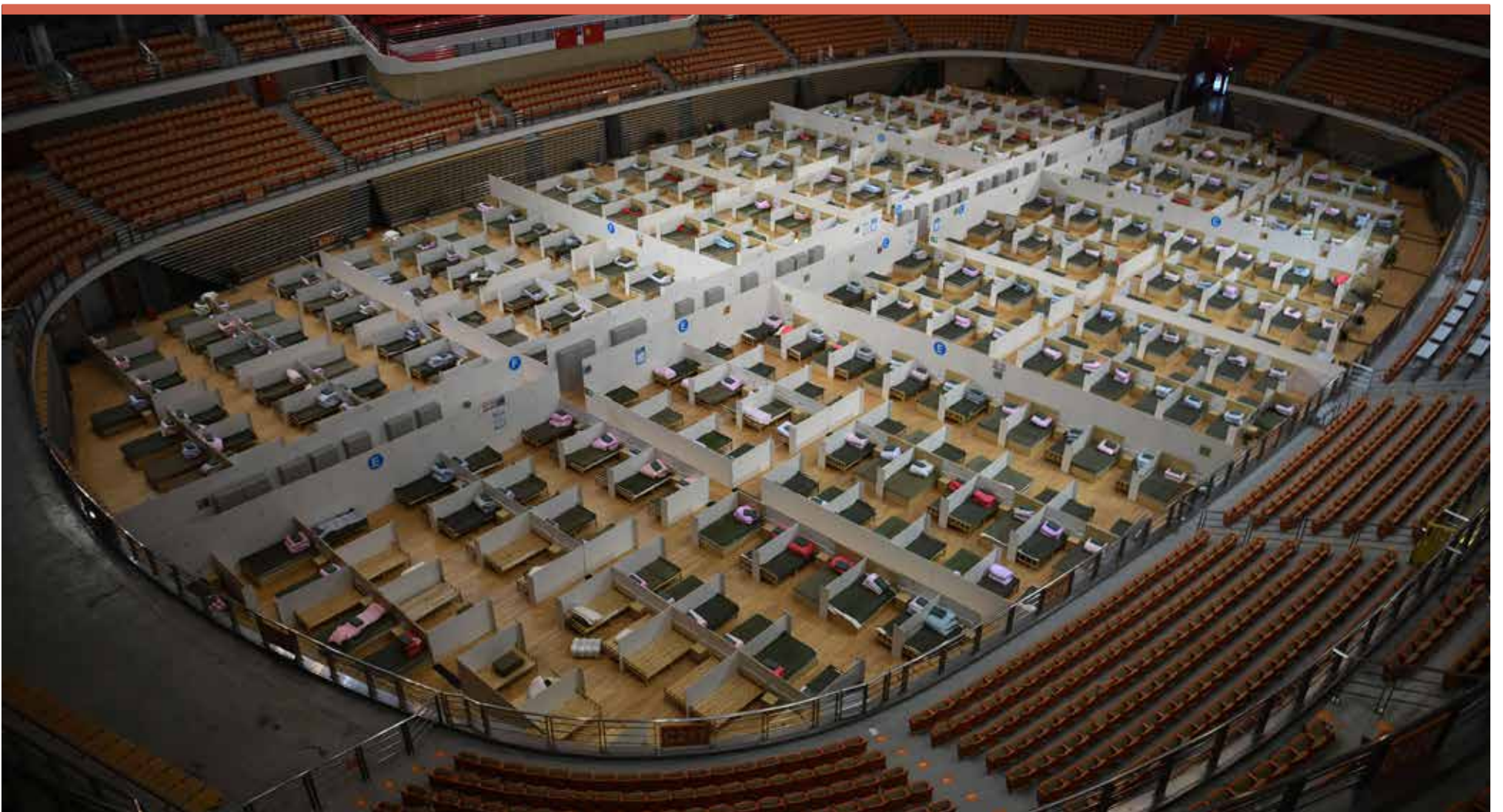
Hilton first entered the U.S. gaming industry in the early 1970s. More than two decades later, the company spun off its gambling unit to satisfy investors who thought it should be separate from the hospitality business. Lodging brands, meanwhile, ceded the Las Vegas Strip to

gaming companies, which used low-room rates to draw guests into their casinos.

"I think the view was always, people are choosing their hotel based on the casino they want to go to," said Michael Belisario, an analyst at Robert W. Baird & Co.

That perspective has shifted in recent years as the development of shopping centers, live entertainment venues and other non-gambling amenities has given Las Vegas broader tourism appeal. **DB/BLOOMBERG**

AP PHOTO



A temporary hospital with 1,100 beds converted from the Wuhan Sports Center in central China's Hubei Province

HEALTH OFFICIALS WORRY AS UNTRACEABLE VIRUS CLUSTERS EMERGE

ANIRUDDHA GHOSAL
& LAURAN NEERGAARD

IN South Korea, Singapore and Iran, clusters of infections are leading to a jump in cases of the new viral illness outside China. But it's not the numbers that are worrying experts: It's that increasingly they can't trace where the clusters started.

World Health Organization officials said China's crackdown on parts of the country bought time for the rest of the world to prepare for the new virus. But as hot spots emerge around the globe, trouble finding each source — the first patient who sparks every new cluster — might signal the disease has begun spreading too widely for tried-and-true public health steps to stamp it out.

"A number of spot fires, occurring around the world is a sign that things are ticking along, and what we are going to have here is probably a pandemic," said Ian Mackay, who studies viruses at Australia's University of Queensland.

That worst-case isn't here yet, the WHO insists. It isn't convinced that countries outside China need more draconian measures, but it pointed to spikes in cases in Iran and South Korea to warn that time may be running out to contain the virus.

"What we see is a very different phase of this outbreak depending where you look," said WHO's Dr. Sylvie Briand. "We see different patterns of transmission in different places."

The World Health Organization defines a "global pandemic" as a disease spreading on two continents, though some public health experts would call an outbreak a pandemic if the spread is over a wide area or across many international borders.

The newest red flag: Iran has reported 28 cases, including five deaths, in just days. The cluster began in the city of Qom, a popular religious destination, but it's not clear how. Worse, infected travelers from Iran already have been discovered in Lebanon and Canada.

In South Korea, most of the hundreds of new cases detected since Wednesday are linked to a church in the city of Daegu and a nearby hospital. But health authorities have not yet found the "index case," the person among the church's 9,000 followers who set off the chain of infections.

There also have been several cases in the capital, Seoul, where the infection routes have not yet been traced. In Europe, Italy saw cases of the new virus more than quadruple in a day as it grapples with infections in a

northern region that apparently have spread through a hospital and a cafe.

A cluster of cases isn't inherently worrying — in fact, it's expected as an infection that's easy to spread is carried around the world by travelers. The first line of defense: Isolate the sick to treat them and prevent further spread, and quarantine people who came in contact with them until the incubation period is over.

But as the virus becomes more widespread, trying to trace every contact would be futile, Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong acknowledged earlier this month.

"If we still hospitalize and isolate every suspect case, our hospitals will be overwhelmed," he said. So far, the city-state has identified five clusters of transmission, including two churches. But there remain eight locally transmitted cases with no links to earlier cases, or to China.

Viruses vary in how they infect. The new coronavirus — unlike its cousins SARS, or severe acute respiratory syndrome, and MERS, or Middle East respiratory syndrome — spreads as easily as a common cold.

And it's almost certainly being spread by people who show such mild symptoms that

no one can tell, said Dr. Amesh Adalja of the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security.

"If that's the case, all of these containment methods are not going to work," Adalja said. "It's likely mixed in the cold and flu season all over the place, in multiple countries" and gone unnoticed until someone gets severely ill.

These milder symptoms are good news "in terms of not as many people dying," said Mackay, of Australia. "But it's really bad news if you are trying to stop a pandemic," he added.

When Hong Kong reported its first death from the virus earlier this month, it also confirmed three locally transmitted cases with no known link to any previous cases or any travel history to China. Chuang Shuk-kwan of the Center for Health Protection warned then that "there could be invisible chains of infection happening within communities."

Officials in both South Korea and Japan have signaled in the past week that the spread is entering a new phase in their countries.

On Friday, South Korean Prime Minister Chung Se-kyun said the government would have to shift its focus from quarantine and border control to slowing the spread of the virus. Schools

and churches were closed and some mass gatherings banned.

Takaji Wakita, head of Japan's National Institute of Infectious Diseases, earlier urged people to work at home or in shifts to avoid being in a crowd, and refrain from holding non-essential and non-urgent meetings.

But Adalja cautioned that far-reaching measures like China instituted in the outbreak's epicenter of Wuhan — where citizens have been ordered to stay in their homes for weeks — can backfire. While it remains to be seen if the new virus is waning, that kind of lockdown makes it hard for people to get other critically important care, like fast treatment for a heart attack.

There's no way to predict if the recent clusters will burn out or trigger widespread transmission.

For now, health officials should try and contain the infection for as long as possible while preparing for a change in strategy by preparing hospitals, readying protective equipment and bolstering laboratory capacity, said Gagandeep Kang, a microbiologist who leads India's Translational Health Science and Technology Institute.

"Although the window of opportunity is narrowing to contain the outbreak, we still have a chance to contain it," said WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. "But while doing that, we have to prepare at the same time for any eventualities, because this outbreak could go any direction — it could even be messy." **AP**

ADVERTORIAL

SANDS CHINA NEWS

Sands China First to Donate 500,000 Facemasks to Help Macao SAR Protect Public Against Coronavirus

In light of the current global shortage of facemasks in response to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) epidemic, Sands China Ltd. is donating 500,000 medical facemasks to the Macao SAR government, as part of the company's pledge to support Macao's efforts to combat the fast-spreading virus. Macao Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture Ao Ieong U accepted the first batch of 300,000 facemasks on behalf of the Macao SAR government Feb. 11 at The Parisian Macao.

"As a company rooted in Macao, Sands China considers it as part of our corporate social responsibility to continually look out for the wellbeing of the Macao community and to assist in periods of need," said Dr. Wilfred Wong, president of Sands China Ltd. "Our thoughts are with the entire local community during this time of caution, and our company is pleased to be able to respond to the urgent need for facemasks in Macao as we cooperate with the Macao government in its virus prevention efforts. We are confident that, with vigilance and collective action, Macao will navigate through this crisis successfully."

Alongside frequent and proper handwashing, doctors and medical agencies around the world have stressed the importance of wearing facemasks as a vital and easy-to-implement measure to diminish the spread of COVID-19 and to protect oneself and others against infection.

As Macao's largest integrated resort operator and as a subsidiary of Las Vegas Sands Corp., Sands China is able to take advantage of its global procurement network to assist Macao in obtaining facemasks during this high-demand period when stocks are in limited supply.

Sands China's efforts to help combat the spread of the novel coronavirus are part of Sands Cares, the global corporate citizenship program of parent company Las Vegas Sands Corp.



Former Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak

Disbanded Thai party says gov't colluded in 1MDB scandal

THAILAND'S disbanded opposition Future Forward Party attacked the government yesterday for allegedly colluding with Malaysia's former prime minister to cover up the 1MDB financial scandal, for which former Malaysian leader Najib Razak is now standing trial.

The accusation comes a day ahead of today's launch of a no-confidence debate in the Thai parliament against Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha and five other Cabinet members.

The Future Forward Party, which won the third highest number of seats in last March's general election, was dissolved Friday by Thailand's Constitutional Court for violating election laws by accepting a large loan from its leader, auto-parts billionaire Thanathorn Juangroengruangkit. Eleven party executives were kicked out of parliament immediately and banned from political office for 10 years, but the party's remaining 65 lawmakers can keep their seats if they join another party within 60 days.

Party spokeswoman Pannika Wanich said at a news conference that because she was one of the lawmakers who lost their seats, she was presenting the case the party had prepared about the 1MDB scandal outside of parliament.

Government spokeswoman Narumon Pinyosinwat said the government was not involved in the case. "What Pannika said is groundless and vaguely connected," she said.

The alleged mastermind behind the 1MDB scandal is fugitive Malaysian financier Low

Taek Jho, better known as Jho Low, who is believed to be hiding out in China.

Pannika's assertions are generally known and break no new ground. However, all have previously been treated as sideshows to the case, and this is the first major effort to spotlight any involvement by Thailand.

She said that Jho Low had freely visited Thailand five times in 2016-2018 even though an Interpol "Red Notice" requested by Singapore seeking his arrest had been issued. China has also been widely reported to have allowed him entry during this period, when Najib was still in power. His party lost a May 2018 general election.

"The Red Notice of Jho Low, it was shocking that Thailand ignored Interpol's Red Notice. And the only two countries who did, who do that continuously, are China and Thailand," said Pannika. "And who are we? China is China but we are Thai. So this is unacceptable. We need a more responsible government."

The events she referred to all seem to have taken place before the current government under Prayuth took office last year. However, Prayuth also served as prime minister in the military government that held power before that, after staging a 2014 coup ousting an elected government.

Prayuth will be the main target of the opposition, which is expected to attack his leadership in facing economic troubles, as well as a serious air pollution problem and the health threat from the new virus that first emerged in China. MDT/AP

AP PHOTO



Sanders takes national lead with Nevada caucuses win

BERNIE Sanders scored a commanding victory in Nevada's presidential caucuses, cementing his status as the Democrats' national front-runner but escalating tensions over whether he's too liberal to defeat President Donald Trump.

As Sanders celebrated Saturday night, Joe Biden was in second place with votes still being counted. Pete Buttigieg and Elizabeth Warren trailed further behind. They were all seeking any possible momentum heading into next-up South Carolina and then Super Tuesday on March 3.

Nevada's caucuses were the first chance for White House hopefuls to demonstrate appeal to a diverse group of voters in a state far more representative of the country as a whole than Iowa and New Hampshire. Sanders, a 78-year Vermont senator and self-described democratic socialist, won by rallying his fiercely loyal base and tapping into support from Nevada's large Latino community.

In a show of confidence, Sanders left Nevada for Texas, which offers one of the biggest delegate troves in just 10 days on Super Tuesday.

"We are bringing our people together," he declared. "In Nevada we have just brought together a multigenerational, multi-racial coalition which is not only going to win in Nevada, it's going to sweep this country."

Saturday's win built on Sanders' victory earlier this month in the New Hampshire primary. He essentially tied for first place in the Iowa caucuses with Buttigieg, the former mayor of South Bend, Indiana, who has sought to position himself as an ideological counter to Sanders' unabashedly progressive politics.

But for all the energy and attention devoted to the first three states, they award only a tiny fraction of the delegates needed to capture the nomination. After South Carolina, the contest becomes national in scope, putting a premium on candidates who have the resources to compete in states as large as California and Texas.

While Sanders' victory in Nevada encouraged his supporters, it only deepened concern among establishment-minded Democratic leaders who fear he is too extreme to defeat Trump. Sanders for decades has been calling for transfor-

mative policies to address inequities in politics and the economy, none bigger than his signature "Medicare for All" health care plan that would replace the private insurance system with a government-run universal program.

Trump gloated on social media, continuing his weeks-long push to sow discord between Sanders and his Democratic rivals.

"Looks like Crazy Bernie is doing well in the Great State of Nevada. Biden & the rest look weak," Trump tweeted. "Congratulations Bernie, & don't let them take it away from you!"

Buttigieg congratulated Sanders, too, but then launched an aggressive verbal assault on the senator as too divisive.

"Before we rush to nominate Senator Sanders in our one shot to take on this president, let's take a sober look at what is at stake for our party, for our values and for those with so much to lose," he said. "Senator Sanders believes in an inflexible, ideological revolution that leaves out most Democrats, not to mention most Americans."

For Biden, a second place finish in Nevada could be the lifeline he needed to convince skeptics he still has a path to the no-

mination as the primary moves to more diverse states. He took aim at Sanders and billionaire Mike Bloomberg, who wasn't on the Nevada ballot, but has emerged as a threat to Biden in contests that begin next month.

"I ain't a socialist. I'm not a plutocrat. I'm a Democrat," Biden declared.

Warren, who desperately needed a spark to revive her stalled bid, ignored Sanders and instead took a shot at Bloomberg's height as she thanked Nevada "for keeping me in the fight."

Rallying supporters in Seattle, she said she wanted to talk about "a big threat — not a tall one, but a big one: Michael Bloomberg."

Bloomberg, the former New York mayor who dominated the political conversation this week after a poor debate-stage debut, wasn't on the ballot. He's betting everything on a series of delegate-rich states that begin voting next month.

Also still in the fight: Billionaire Tom Steyer, who spent more than \$12 million on Nevada television and Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar, who hoped to prove her strong New Hampshire finish was no fluke. **MDT/AP**

this day in history



1950: LABOUR WINS SLIM MAJORITY

The Labour Party has won the general election, with Clement Attlee returning as Prime Minister.

But the result leaves the country in a state of uncertainty as it is the closest for 100 years.

Votes are still being counted after an extremely tense night but so far the government has an overall majority of just 13.

The state of play at the moment is that Labour has won 314 seats, the Conservatives 294 and the Liberals just seven.

The Liberals lost a record 314 election deposits.

With such a slender majority it will be difficult for Mr Attlee's government to continue with its programme of nationalisation of major industries like iron and steel - bitterly opposed by the Opposition.

Speaking from Conservative headquarters Winston Churchill, under whose war-time cabinet Mr Attlee had served as deputy prime minister, said: "Parliament will be in a very unstable condition whatever Parliament results from this election."

Many commentators believe there will have to be another election held within 12 months.

In the meantime it is expected that Ernest Bevin will remain as Foreign Secretary and Sir Stafford Cripps as Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Mr Attlee has been in power since July 1945 when Labour won its first ever overall majority. In that time he has seen through major social and economic changes.

Last year he devalued the pound in order to reduce the price of exports and increase the cost of imports to reduce the balance of payments.

He has begun the introduction of the Welfare State with the National Insurance Act providing for the more vulnerable in British society.

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

The final result was 315 seats for Labour, 298 for the Conservatives and nine for the Liberal Party.

Another election was held the following year and saw Clement Attlee defeated by Winston Churchill.

Churchill did not reverse Labour's programme of nationalising major industries in an effort to strengthen the post-war economy, but privatised iron and steel in 1953.

The Welfare State was accepted by both parties and expanded under Churchill.

In 1960s and 1970s power shifted back and forth from Labour to Conservative until 1979 when Margaret Thatcher began her 12-year reign.

By then, many industries and utilities were state-owned but she and her successor, John Major, began the policy of privatisation.

Disillusion with the Conservatives and a desire for change brought a massive majority for Tony Blair's Labour Party in 1997.

YOUR STARS



ARIES

Mar. 21-Apr. 19

You could be feeling highly insensitive to the problems of other people right now, which is quite a switch for you. This isn't a comfortable feeling, but don't beat yourself up about it!



TAURUS

Apr. 20-May. 20

It's a day when you'll be seeking greater depth when everybody else is just content to skim along the surface of things. No one is right and no one is wrong in their respective desires.



GEMINI

May. 21-Jun. 21

Fast action is required today. There's a problem that needs to be fixed, and it needs to be fixed as soon as possible, before it gets too big to attack. Be sure to have whatever tools you need.



CANCER

Jun. 22-Jul. 22

You could use a good, long day of self-nurturing! Why don't you cancel that appointment that isn't all that important, skip out on that meeting you really don't want to go to.



LEO

Jul. 23-Aug. 22

You're going to have a really fun day, especially if you're working on something with lots of details and complex elements. Right now is a great time for you to put all your plans and preparations into motion.



VIRGO

Aug. 23-Sep. 22

Take a risk. Try your hand at something you've never done before. It doesn't have to be as adventurous as skydiving or rock climbing. It can be as simple as baking a cake for the first time.



LIBRA

Sep. 23-Oct. 22

It's not always the best idea to be direct in your communication. Take today, for example. You might get a lot further by being more subtle. The people you're dealing with are touchy folks.



SCORPIO

Oct. 23-Nov. 21

As careful as you may be right now, you don't have to hesitate when it comes to taking risks. Luck is on your side, and things are definitely looking up! The bad vibes are long gone.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov. 22-Dec. 21

You're pretty smart, and you know it, but you want to get even smarter when it comes to one specific thing. Find an expert you admire and pick their brain about whatever it is that's captivating you right now.



CAPRICORN

Dec. 22-Jan. 19

Add more structure to your life and you could see some amazing results. Any problem you've been struggling with will fade away once you get yourself more disciplined and better focused.



AQUARIUS

Jan. 20-Feb. 18

It's time to let your hospitable nature shine a bit more brightly. Sometimes you get so caught up in your day-to-day life that you forget to take the time to welcome new energy and new people into your life.



PISCES

Feb. 19-Mar. 20

You should always think before speaking, but today you shouldn't think for too long! There is a fine line between mulling things over and putting things off. It's time to pounce on a hot opportunity today.

The Born Loser by Chip Sansom



SUDOKU

EASY

6			2	4	
8	2		5	1	
4		1	6		8 5
9	7		5	3	
3		8	1		4
	4	9		5	8
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	9		2	8	7
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EASY+

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MEDIUM

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HARD

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		3	1		
9					4
		5		6	
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		7			1

WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	0	10	drizzle
Harbin	-13	-2	cloudy
Tianjin	3	11	overcast
Urumqi	-4	2	clear
Xi'an	5	17	cloudy
Lhasa	-3	11	overcast
Chengdu	11	17	clear
Chongqing	11	16	overcast
Kunming	8	21	clear
Nanjing	9	23	cloudy
Shanghai	11	21	cloudy
Wuhan	11	25	cloudy
Hangzhou	10	23	cloudy
Taipei	18	23	cloudy
Guangzhou	16	25	cloudy
Hong Kong	18	22	cloudy

WORLD

Moscow	-2	4	drizzle
Frankfurt	2	13	drizzle
Paris	11	15	drizzle
London	6	12	drizzle
New York	0	8	clear

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS: 1- "Quiet; 5- Garrulous; 10- Jazz singer Laine; 14- This, in Tijuana; 15- Designer Simpson; 16- Trompe l'___; 17- Among; 18- Model; 19- "Peter Pan" dog; 20- Forgives; 22- Darken; 24- Idiot; 25- May ___ excused?; 26- Holdup; 30- Aged; 34- Hide in the shadows; 35- Dishonest; 37- Boris Godunov, for one; 38- Nabokov novel; 39- Jockey Turcotte; 40- Sprechen ___ Deutsch?; 41- Short letter; 43- Continue a subscription; 45- Campbell of "Scream"; 46- Lattice; 48- Copies; 50- Failure; 51- Goal, intention; 52- Dakar's land; 56- Occasionally; 60- Fleshy fruit; 61- Long hard seat; 63- Middy; 64- Seed cover; 65- France's longest river; 66- Feminine ending; 67- Member of the Conservative Party; 68- Computer key; 69- Smooth sailing;

DOWN: 1- Jalopy; 2- West Point initials; 3- Be up and about; 4- Fish; 5- Profitable; 6- Contributes; 7- Fuzzy buzzer; 8- Spill the beans; 9- Shouting; 10- Vanity; 11- Escaping fluid; 12- Mozart's "___ kleine Nachtmusik"; 13- Pearl Buck heroine; 21- Durable wood; 23- 1970 Jackson 5 hit; 26- Viewpoint; 27- English royal house; 28- Fuming; 29- Funeral fires; 30- New wing; 31- Antique auto; 32- Born yesterday, so to speak; 33- Forest makeup; 36- Charged particle; 42- On in years; 43- Capable of being ridden; 44- The state of the atmosphere; 45- Candidate; 47- Pull laboriously; 49- Mus. slow-up; 52- Squabble; 53- Architect Saarinen; 54- Neet rival; 55- Boxer Spinks; 56- 43,560 square feet; 57- ___ Lisa; 58- Seemingly forever; 59- Dagger of yore; 62- It may be picked;



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Fire department 28 572 222	Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
PJ (Open line) 993	Telephone - Report 1000
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PSP 28 573 333	Macau Daily Times 28 716 081
Customs 28 559 944	
S. J. Hospital 28 313 731	
Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333	
Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) 28326 300	
IAM 28 387 333	
Tourism 28 333 000	
Airport 59 888 88	



FOR SALE

Large 3/4 Bedroom Apartment, Coloane
HK\$12,980,000 2,530 ft² 3 bed 2 bath 2 car

FOR RENT

Renovated Luxury Unit, Central Macau
\$20,000/mth 2 bed 2 bath

FOR SALE

[Taipa] 2 connected unit 4 bed 2 bath
1,404 ft² \$8,380,000 (ref: 19096006)

[Macau] Lakeview Tower 3 bed 2 bath
1,344 ft² \$11,000,000 (ref: 19126001)

[Taipa] Nova City 3 bed 2 bath
1,515 ft² \$11,750,000 (ref: 19106001)

[Macau] One Central 2 bed 2 bath
1,349 ft² \$14,839,000 (ref: 19096004)

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[Taipa] Nam Long 2 bed 1 bath
645 ft² \$11,800/mth (ref: 19111001)

[Coloane] Hellene Garden 1 bed 3 bath 3 car
1,663 ft² \$14,000/mth (ref: n/a)

[Taipa] Nova Grand 2 bed 1 bath
935 ft² \$17,800/mth (ref: 19091005)

[Cotai] One Grantai 3 bed 3 bath
2,122 ft² \$23,000/mth (ref: 19030001RT)

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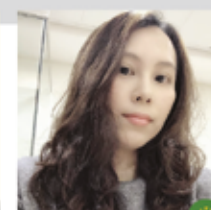
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Kitty Lou

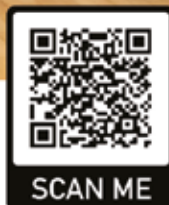
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Property of the Week



Nova City 3 bedroom, ready to move in

HK\$11,750,000 1,515 ft² 3 2



SCAN ME

Fresh on the market is this spacious 3 bedroom apartment in the heart of Taipa, Macau. Ideal for the family, this location has several kindergartens and schools within 5 minutes walk and best of all, Taipa Central Park is right at your doorstep with kids playground, basketball courts, swimming pool and public library.

Entering this family home is a generous dining and living space. The living room has city views and overlooks the park below. The modern kitchen has a large window for ample natural light and ventilation and adjoins a store room/maid room.

Nearby facilities include a bus stop at the building entrance, popular restaurants and bars nearby and Park n Shop and San Mui supermarkets within easy walking distance.

Property Hotlist



Man Fai apartment, Taipa

\$7,800,000

1,390 ft²

3 2



SCAN ME



Hoi Wan, Taipa

\$5,100,000

900 ft²

2 1



SCAN ME



Taipa Village one bed apartment

\$10,900/mth

740 ft²

1 1



SCAN ME



Taipa new studio apartment

\$9,500/mth

470 ft²

1



SCAN ME

More Listings

For Sale

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|--|
| [Macau] Commercial Space in Barra | n/a ft ² | \$42,000,000 (ref: 20016002) |
| [Macau] Seaview Garden | 3 2 | 1,420 ft ² \$11,800,000 (ref: 20016004) |
| [Macau] Waterfront Duet- New studio | 1 | 469 ft ² \$5,100,000 (ref: 20016001) |
| [Taipa] Nam Long | 1 1 | 785 ft ² \$4,780,000 (ref: 20016009) |
| [Taipa] Taipa Village- with balcony | 2 1 | 787 ft ² \$4,950,000 (ref: 19096008) |

For Rent

- | | | |
|----------------------------|-----|---|
| [Taipa] Buckingham | 2 2 | 1,439 ft ² \$20,900/mth (ref: n/a) |
| [Macau] Central Macau unit | 2 2 | n/a ft ² \$20,000/mth (ref: 20011001) |
| [Macau] Vai Fung Triplex | 2 2 | n/a ft ² \$15,800/mth (ref: 19121001) |
| [Taipa] Nam Long | 2 1 | 645 ft ² \$11,800/mth (ref: 1911 1001) |
| [Taipa] Nova Grand | 2 1 | 935 ft ² \$17,800/mth (ref: 19091004) |

Recent Movements

Sold Pearl on the Lough, 4 beds, Taipa

Sold Lakeview Macau, 3 beds

Rented Taipa new studio, 1 bath



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England's women to open Euro 2021 at Old Trafford

ROB HARRIS

THE 2021 Women's European Championship will open at Old Trafford featuring host England, UEFA announced on Sunday with 500 days to go until the tournament.

If there is a sell-out of around 75,000 on July 7, 2021 at Manchester United's stadium, the attendance would eclipse the previous Women's Euros high of 41,301 for the 2013 final in Sweden.

It would also surpass the 57,900 in Lyon's stadium last year to see the United States lift the Women's World Cup.

"We want Old Trafford to be a massive advantage for our players to go out there with 75,000 England supporters," England manager Phil Neville said. "Our program over the next 12 months is to expose our players to big occasions so when they come to Old Trafford, it's just like a walk in the park."



It's another bit of expectation to handle the pressure."

The Aug. 1 final will be at the 90,000-capacity Wembley, the tournament's only game at English football's national stadium in north London.

There was a crowd of 77,768 there for England's loss to Germany in a friendly in November. The use of Wembley for the Euro 2021 final means a new venue is being sought for the cur-

tain-raiser to the English men's season: The Community Shield between the winners of the Premier League and FA Cup.

"This is what women's football deserves," said Nadine Kessler, UEFA's head of women's football. "To play in such stadia is what you strive for — as a player, coach, referee and a fan. I am so happy for everyone who will have the opportunity to experience this."

Women's Super League games in England are typically played at smaller stadiums. Only one of the six midweek fixtures attracted a crowd above 1,000, with 1,928 seeing Chelsea beat Birmingham.

At Euro 2021, after opening in Manchester, England will play its other group-stage games on the south coast at Brighton and Southampton, which can both fit around 30,000 fans. The Lionesses reached the semifinals at Euro 2017 and the previous two World Cups.

The Euro 2021 semifinals will be staged at Stadium MK in Milton Keynes and Sheffield United's Bramall Lane which both have capacities of around 30,000.

The stadiums for the quarterfinals are Brighton, Brentford in west London, Rotherham in northern England, and at the Leigh Sports Village home of Manchester United's women's team, which has yet to play at Old Trafford. AP



LAMPARD MASTERMINDS ANOTHER WIN OVER EX-COACH MOURINHO

CHELSEA manager Frank Lampard made all the right calls to mastermind another win over his old coach Jose Mourinho and strike a significant blow in the bunched race for Champions League qualification.

Olivier Giroud and Marcos Alonso - handed rare starts by Lampard - scored the goals in a 2-1 victory over Tottenham to allow Chelsea to pull four points clear in fourth place after the team's poor recent run.

It was Tottenham manager Mourinho's second loss to former club Chelsea this season. Counting matches in charge of Manchester United from 2016-18, he has lost on five of his six returns to Stamford Bridge in the past four seasons. MDT/AP



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◆ 仁德醫療中心 ◆



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ENT : Dr. Cheng Zheng Ang

Cardiology : Dr. Wong Kwok Yiu Chris, Dr. Jin Chun, Dr. Leong Man Kin

Gastroentero-Hepatology : Dr. Zhan De Juan

General Medicine : Dr. Ng Kam Hong, Dr. Lam Weng Chio

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OPINION

World Views

Karl W. Smith, Bloomberg

THE TRUMP EFFECT ON THE ECONOMY IS UNDENIABLE

Economists typically argue that the president has little effect on the economy. But it's hard to think of a recent president for whom that is less true than Donald Trump. From the record-breaking expansion to the mini-recessions in manufacturing and housing, the U.S. economy is undeniably Trump's.

For the last three years, Democrats have argued that Trump inherited a great economy from Barack Obama and has done very little to alter its course. Job growth under Trump, they often point out, has been roughly equal to (or slightly less than) job growth during most of Obama's tenure.

The fundamental problem with this comparison is that Obama led the country out of a recession — precisely when job growth should be strongest. By contrast, Trump entered office near what many observers considered full employment, at which point job growth is usually seen as limited to population growth.

Late in an expansion, as the U.S. was when Trump took office, economies are also far more vulnerable to recession. Indeed many economists, myself included, have been warning about the possibility of one for a few years.

That's not because expansions die of old age; theoretically at least, there is no reason why an economy ever has to go into a recession. But the longer an expansion, the more likely it is that politicians will prioritize reducing deficits or preventing inflation over sustaining growth. (This was the case with both the White House and the Federal Reserve during the Obama administration.)

Trump, however, has pursued an aggressively expansionist economic policy, starting with 2017's Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. That law had two effects: It provided a long-term incentive for businesses to increase investment, and it provided a short-term boost to the economy by putting more money in consumers' pockets.

At the time there was fear that the second effect would be offset by large budget cuts. Yet Trump ignored concerns about the deficit and agreed to both more military and domestic spending.

It's difficult to overstate how unorthodox this approach was. Obama spent much of his presidency fighting with Republicans over which tax increase they would accept in exchange for budget cuts. That's precisely what conventional wisdom would have expected Trump to do. Instead, he has presided over the largest peacetime expansion of the budget deficit in three-quarters of a century.

At the same time, Trump has undercut the expansion with two equally unconventional policies. First, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act capped the deductions for home mortgage interest and for state and local taxes. These deductions have long been the bane of economists, but were considered sacrosanct because of their potential impact on housing. While the direst predictions of a blue-state apocalypse were wrong, residential investment was notably soft in the high-income coastal cities most affected by the cap.

Second, Trump has reversed the U.S.'s longstanding policy in favor of free trade. The resulting trade war has led to weakness in the export and manufacturing sectors, particularly in the Midwest.

It remains to be seen whether Trump's expansionary policies will have a greater effect than his contractionary ones. The president has been lucky so far, and the most recent data seems encouraging. But wherever the economy ends up, it's clear that Trump's policies will have been a driving force.

POPE CAUTIONS AGAINST 'UNFAIR' MIDDLE EAST PEACE PLANS

Pope Francis has cautioned against "unfair" solutions aimed at ending the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians.

In a speech yesterday during a visit to the Italian southern port city of Bari to reflect on peace in countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea, Francis lamented the many areas of war and conflict, including in the Middle East and Northern Africa.

Francis spoke of "the still unresolved conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, with the danger of not fair solutions, and, thus, presaging new crises."

The pope didn't cite any specific proposals.

A new U.S. peace plan would let Israel annex all of its settlements

along with the strategic Jordan Valley. It would give the Palestinians limited autonomy in several chunks of territory with a capital on the outskirts of Jerusalem, but only if they meet stringent conditions.

In the same speech, Francis took a swipe at populist politics. "It scares me when I hear some speeches by some leaders of the new forms of populism," he said. He also lamented that waves of refugees fleeing conflicts, climate change consequences and other adversity are "depicted as an invasion."

Among the prelates gathered for his speech in Bari's Pontifical Basilica of St. Nicholas were churchmen from the Balkans, Jerusalem and Algeria.

AP PHOTO



MARCHERS SUPPORT ASSANGE AHEAD OF EXTRADITION HEARING

JILL LAWLESS, LONDON

HUNDREDS of supporters of Julian Assange marched through London on Saturday to pressure the U.K. government into refusing to extradite the WikiLeaks founder to the United States to face spying charges.

Famous backers, including Pink Floyd's Roger Waters, Pretenders singer Chrissie Hynde and fashion designer Vivienne Westwood joined the crowd protesting the U.S. espionage charges against the founder of the secret-spilling website. An extradition hearing for Assange is due to begin in a London court today.

WikiLeaks spokesman Kristinn Hrafnsson told a rally outside Parliament that the prosecution of Assange represented "a dark force against [those] who want justice, transparency and truth."

U.S. prosecutors have charged the 48-year-old Australian computer expert with espionage over WikiLeaks' publication of hundreds of thousands of confidential government documents. If found guilty, he could be sentenced to up to 175 years in prison.

American authorities say Assange conspired with U.S. Army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning to hack into a Pentagon computer and

release secret diplomatic cables and military files on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Assange argues he acted as a journalist and is therefore entitled to First Amendment protection. He also maintains the documents exposed wrongdoing and protected many people.

Civil liberties groups and journalism organizations, including Amnesty International and Reporters Without Borders, have urged the U.S. to drop the charges, saying they set a chilling precedent for freedom of the press.

More than 40 jurists from the U.K., the U.S., France and other countries published a letter Saturday asking the British government to reject the extradition request. They accused the U.S. of "extra-territorial overreach" in seeking to prosecute an Australian who was based in the U.K.

Assange is currently incarcerated in London's high-security Belmarsh Prison, having previously spent seven years inside the Embassy of Ecuador.

He holed up in the South American country's U.K. diplomatic mission in 2012 to avoid being sent to Sweden to face questioning over rape and sexual assault allegations. That case has since been dropped.

Assange was evicted from the embassy in April 2019 and arrested by British police for jumping bail seven years earlier.

Assange's legal team argues that the case against him is politically motivated. His lawyers said they would present evidence they claim shows that Assange was offered a pardon if he agreed to say Russia was not involved in leaking Democratic National Committee emails during the 2016 U.S. presidential election campaign.

Emails embarrassing for the Democrats and Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign were hacked before being published by WikiLeaks in 2016.

Assange's lawyers say the offer was made in August 2017 by then-Republican Congressman Dana Rohrabacher, who claimed to be acting on behalf of President Donald Trump.

The White House called the claim "a complete fabrication and a total lie."

Rohrabacher said in a statement that he told Assange "that if he could provide me information and evidence about who actually gave him the DNC emails, I would then call on President Trump to pardon him. At no time did I offer a deal made by the President, nor did I say I was representing the President." **AP**

THE BUZZ

India The sun-baked city of Ahmedabad was jostling with activity yesterday as workers cleaned roads, planted flowers and hoisted hundreds of billboards featuring President Donald Trump, a day ahead of his maiden two-day visit to India after Prime Minister Narendra Modi promised him a boisterous public reception.

AP PHOTO



Serbia has received a sophisticated anti-aircraft system from Russia, despite possible U.S. sanctions against the Balkan state, which is formally seeking European Union membership. Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic told the pro-government TV Prva yesterday that the Pantsir S1 air-defense system was purchased after suggestions from Russian President Vladimir Putin.

AP PHOTO



Russia Bus drivers in Moscow kept their WhatsApp group chat buzzing with questions this week about what to do if they spotted passengers who might be from China riding with them in the Russian capital. "Some Asian-looking (people) have just got on. Probably Chinese. Should I call (the police)?" one driver messaged his peers.

Germany Berlin is freezing the rents of 1.5 million apartments for the next five years starting this Sunday in a controversial move to control the exploding costs that have forced many to move outside Germany's capital city.

AP PHOTO



Italy Scrambling to contain rapidly soaring number of new coronavirus infections in northern Italy, authorities yesterday stepped up measures to ban public gatherings, including stopping Venice's famed carnival events, which has drawn tens of thousands of revelers to a region that is now in the heart of the outbreak.