

# China toll hits 41; virus detected in Australia, EU

The number of confirmed infection cases in China stands at 1,287; President Xi Jinping says country faces a ‘grave situation’

**REUTERS**  
BEIJING  
The death toll from China’s coronavirus outbreak jumped to 41 as the Lunar New Year got off to a gloomy start on Saturday.

Australia on Saturday confirmed its first four cases, Malaysia confirmed three and France reported Europe’s first cases on Friday, as health authorities around the world scrambled to prevent a pandemic.

The U.S. is arranging a charter flight on Sunday to bring its citizens and diplomats back from Wuhan, the central Chinese city that is the epicentre of the outbreak, the *Wall Street Journal* reported.

**Xi holds meeting**  
China’s President Xi Jinping, saying the country is facing a grave situation, held a politburo meeting on measures to fight the outbreak, state television reported on Saturday. The death toll in China has risen to 41, authorities reported on Saturday, from



On high alert: Medical staff arriving with a patient at the Wuhan Red Cross Hospital in Wuhan, China, on Saturday. •AFP

26 a day earlier. More than 1,300 people have been infected globally, most of them in China, with the virus traced to a seafood market in Wuhan that was illegally selling wildlife.

Hu Yinghai, deputy director-general of the Civil Affairs Department in Hubei province, where Wuhan is located, appealed for masks and protective suits. “We are

steadily pushing forward the disease control and prevention... But right now we are facing an extremely severe public health crisis,” he told a news briefing.

Vehicles carrying emergency supplies and medical staff for Wuhan would be exempted from tolls and given traffic priority, China’s Transportation Ministry said on Saturday.

Wuhan said it would ban non-essential vehicles from its downtown starting Sunday, further paralyzing a city of 11 million that has been on virtual lockdown since Thursday, with nearly all flights cancelled and checkpoints blocking the main roads leading out of town.

Authorities have since imposed transport restrictions on nearly all of Hubei province,

which has a population of 59 million.

The newly-identified coronavirus has created alarm because there are still many unknowns surrounding it, such as how dangerous it is and how easily it spreads between people. It can cause pneumonia, which has been deadly in some cases.

**Protective suits**  
In Beijing on Saturday, workers in white protective suits checked temperatures of passengers entering the subway at the central railway station, while some train services in eastern China’s Yangtze River Delta region were suspended, the local railway operator said.

The number of confirmed cases in China stands at 1,287. The virus has also been detected in Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Nepal, and the United States. There are fears the transmission could accelerate as hundreds of millions of Chinese travel during the Lunar New Year holiday, although many have cancelled their plans.

# ‘Democrats trying to overturn 2016 results’

White House begins defending Trump

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE**  
WASHINGTON

White House lawyers began presenting their defence of Donald Trump at his historic Senate impeachment trial on Saturday, saying the President had done nothing wrong in his dealings with Ukraine and accusing Democrats of seeking to overturn the results of the 2016 election.

White House counsel Pat Cipollone took the floor for opening arguments at a rare weekend session of the 100-member Senate, which will decide whether the 45th U.S. President should be removed from office.

**‘He did nothing wrong’**  
Democratic prosecutors from the House of Representatives, which impeached Mr. Trump on December 18, had not made their case that the President was guilty of abuse of power and obstruction of Congress, Mr. Cipollone said at only the third impeachment trial in U.S. history. “We don’t believe that they have come anywhere close to meeting their burden for what they’re asking you to do,” he told a hushed Senate chamber. “In fact, we believe when you hear the facts... you will find that the President did absolutely nothing wrong.”

House prosecutors spent the previous three days laying out a detailed case that Mr. Trump withheld military aid to Ukraine to pressure his Ukrainian counterpart to open an investigation into political rival Joe Biden.

Mr. Cipollone said Democrats were asking the Senate to “overturn the results of the last election” and remove Mr. Trump from the

**They are here to perpetrate the most massive interference in an election in American history**

**PAT CIPOLLONE**  
White House lawyer

ballot in the upcoming November vote. “They’re asking you to do something that no Senate has ever done,” the White House counsel said.

“They’re asking you to tear up all of the ballots across this country,” he said. “Take that decision away from the American people. “They are here to perpetrate the most massive interference in an election in American history and we can’t allow that to happen.”

Shortly before the defence began its presentation, Mr. Trump fired off a tweet with insulting nicknames for leading Democrats and told his supporters to tune in to the live television broadcast.

The Republican President also tweeted remarks from supporters lauding his achievements since taking office in January 2017.

Mr. Trump’s lawyers will have 24 hours spread over three days to present their defence of the President to the Senate, where Republicans hold a 53 to 47 seat majority. A two-thirds majority, or 67 Senators, is required to remove a President from office and Democrats do not appear to have made any inroads in Mr. Trump’s wall of Republican support. “I don’t believe anything they’ve said so far is impeachable,” Senator Rick Scott told reporters after Democrats wrapped up their case on Friday night.

# Hong Kong declares outbreak ‘an emergency’

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE**  
HONG KONG

Hong Kong on Saturday declared a new coronavirus outbreak as an “emergency” – the city’s highest warning tier – as authorities ramped up measures to reduce the risk of further infections. The announcement came as city leader Carrie Lam faced criticism in some quarters over her administration’s response.

Of the five people who tested positive for the virus in Hong Kong, four arrived

via a newly built high-speed train terminal which connects with the mainland. That led to calls from some medical experts and politicians to limit, or even halt, arrivals from China. Ms. Lam held emergency meetings with health officials on Saturday.

All mainland arrivals to Hong Kong will now need to sign health declaration forms, she said, while public events including a new year gala and next month’s marathon, would be called off.

# Trapped Wuhan residents stock up

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE**  
WUHAN

Police at a roadblock on the outskirts of Wuhan turned away cars trying to leave the virus-stricken city on Saturday, as other anxious residents trapped inside spent the Lunar New Year stocking up on masks and medical supplies.

Authorities have prevented anyone from leaving Wuhan, the city of 11 million people at the heart of the viral outbreak which has so far infected nearly 1,300 people and killed 41 others.

AFP saw a steady trickle of

cars approaching the roadblocks around 20 km east of the city centre on Saturday morning, only for police in fluorescent jackets wearing masks to tell them to turn around. The barricade, at one of the tolls for highways exiting the city, was blocked with red and yellow plastic barriers and cones.

“Nobody can leave,” a policeman told AFP.

AFP journalists only saw two vehicles allowed to pass the roadblock, including a white van which an officer said was “buying medicines” and would later return to the



A shopper at a supermarket in Wuhan on Saturday. •AP

city. While there are restrictions on anyone leaving Wuhan, a few people were al-

lowed to enter the city through the barricade: Desperately needed medical workers whose holidays were cut short to help overwhelmed hospital.

An empty bus was allowed to pass the roadblock into Wuhan after showing documentation to the police at the roadblock.

Meanwhile, in a taxi, a rap song playing on the radio echoed the patriotic fervour, telling people not to be afraid of the virus.

“Wuhan people are strong enough to fight and defeat it,” the rapper chanted.

# Cleaner jailed for stealing King’s watches

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE**  
RABAT

A Moroccan court has sentenced a cleaner to 15 years in prison for the theft of dozens of luxury watches belonging to King Mohammed VI, her lawyer said. The 46-year-old woman worked in a royal household and the judgment was handed down at a court in the Moroccan capital, Rabat. She was accused of having stolen 36 luxury watches.

The woman initially had watches melted down and sold on to gold merchants, before starting to sell timepieces intact. Another 14 people were sentenced to at least four years in prison after being found guilty of involvement in the affair.

# 22 killed in Turkey earthquake

The quake’s epicentre was in the lakeside town of Sivrice

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE**  
ELAZIG

Rescue workers raced against time on Saturday to find survivors under the rubble after a powerful earthquake claimed 22 lives and left more than 1,000 injured in eastern Turkey.

The magnitude 6.8 quake struck on Friday evening, with its epicentre in the small lakeside town of Sivrice in Elazig province, and was felt in neighbouring countries.

Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu said 39 people have been rescued alive from collapsed buildings in Elâzığ province, with a further 22 people estimated to be trapped under the rubble. He said the death toll had risen to 22.

Sivrice – a town with a



Rescuers working on collapsed buildings on Saturday after an earthquake in Elazig, Turkey. •REUTERS

population of about 4,000 – is situated south of Elazig city on the shores of Hazar lake, one of the most popular tourist spots in the region and the source of the Tigris river.

The Interior Minister said

18 people were killed in Elazig while four died in Malatya. The tremor was felt in several parts of eastern Turkey near the Iraqi and Syrian borders as well as in Iran, Lebanon and Syria, local media reported.

# 19 wounded as Iraq forces clear protest camps

This comes a day after Sadr withdrew his backing from the anti-govt. campaign

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE**  
BAGHDAD

Iraqi security forces cleared anti-government protesters from streets and squares in Baghdad and the south on Saturday, stoking fears among demonstrators that their long-running reform campaign may be suppressed.

It came a day after populist cleric Moqtada Sadr announced that he would no longer back the youth-dominated movement, after he held his own mass rally that saw thousands pack the capital’s streets to demand U.S. troops leave Iraq.

By Saturday morning, security forces were using tear gas and live rounds to clear protest camps across the capital, leaving at least 19 protesters wounded, medics



Smoke rising from tear gas fired by Iraqi forces during clashes with anti-government protesters in Baghdad on Saturday. •AP

said. The city’s military command announced it had retaken control of Ahrar Bridge, a flashpoint for clashes between security forces and demonstrators for months.

By early Saturday afternoon, there were hit-and-

run clashes in central Baghdad.

Mr. Sadr, a militiaman-turned-politician, is notorious for switching political positions with dizzying speed. He backed the protests when they erupted in

October and called on the government to resign – even though he controls Parliament’s largest bloc and other top posts. But last week, he called for a separate rally to demand 5,200 U.S. troops leave Iraq, after a U.S. strike on Baghdad killed top Iraqi and Iranian commanders earlier this month.

Thousands streamed into Baghdad for Friday’s rally and while Mr. Sadr did not attend, he hailed the turnout and said he would no longer be involved in the anti-government campaign.

The about-face prompted reports of protest camps being dismantled across the country. In Hilla, Diwaniyah, Kut, Amarah and the Shia shrine city of Najaf, tents were stripped down to their metal frames on Saturday.

## SUDOKU

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		3		6		2	1
9	2					6	7
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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to yesterday’s Sudoku

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

**ERNESTO LONDOÑO**  
**LETICIA CASADO**  
RIO DE JANEIRO

Reading through the hacked cellphone messages of Brazilian prosecutors and judges, Glenn Greenwald knew he had a blockbuster story.

Mr. Greenwald, an American journalist, figured he was well-equipped to weather the blowback. After all, he played a central role in exposing the secret intelligence programmes leaked by Edward Snowden, the national security contractor, five years ago.

“I assumed it was going to be very similar to the Snowden story,” Mr. Greenwald said. “I’m going to know how to do this.” He greatly underestimated.

**Phone messages**  
The cellphone messages sent shock waves through Brazil when the news organisation Mr. Greenwald co-founded, The Intercept, wrote about them last year,



Glenn Greenwald, left, with his partner, David Miranda, and their children in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. •NYT

raising doubts about the fairness of the vast corruption investigation that upended the country and ultimately helped pave the way for the election of Brazil’s far-right President, Jair Bolsonaro.

This month, Brazilian prosecutors charged Mr. Greenwald with cybercrimes for his role in unearthing the messages, accusing him not just of publicising the information, but of taking part in a “criminal organisation” that hacked into the cell-

phones of several prosecutors and other public officials. The criminal case against Mr. Greenwald, 52, quickly set off alarms over press freedoms in Latin America’s largest nation during the Bolsonaro era.

Mr. Bolsonaro’s office declined to say whether the President or his aides were consulted about the decision to charge Mr. Greenwald. But politicians, lawyers and human rights groups call the case a worrisome develop-

ment. “Prohibiting the duty to inform is a cultural setback,” Supreme Court Justice Marco Aurelio Mello said in an interview. “I can’t conceive of a journalist being punished by the judiciary.”

**Facilitating crime**

Prosecutors say Mr. Greenwald played a “clear role in facilitating the commission of a crime” by encouraging the hackers to delete archives to cover their tracks. They also accused him of communicating with the hackers while they were actively monitoring private chats on Telegram, a messaging app. Despite the charges against him, Mr. Greenwald seems to relish finding himself at the centre of a bitter political debate once more.

Soon after Mr. Greenwald and his colleagues at The Intercept began publishing articles about the hacked phone messages in June, Mr. Bolsonaro made his displeasure clear by suggesting that

Mr. Greenwald could wind up in jail.

The articles tarnished the image of Mr. Bolsonaro’s most popular Cabinet member, Justice Minister Sergio Moro. Leaked messages showed that Mr. Moro, a former federal judge, provided strategic guidance to prosecutors as they tried former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva for corruption and money laundering.

“I think I trigger a lot of their primal rage,” Mr. Greenwald said, referring to Brazilians who support the President. “They view me as someone who deserves to be punished.”

Soon after the first articles based on the cellphone messages were published, Mr. Greenwald and his husband David Miranda began receiving death threats, including some that mentioned their eight and ten-year-old sons. Mr. Greenwald said he considered Mr. Bolsonaro a dire threat to democracy. NY TIMES

## ELSEWHERE



**Johnson, Trump discuss telecom security**

**LONDON**  
Prime Minister Boris Johnson discussed telecoms security with U.S. President Donald Trump as he prepares to announce if Britain will use Huawei in its 5G networks. In a phone call on Friday, they “discussed... cooperation to ensure the security of telecommunications networks”, a Downing Street spokeswoman said. AFP

**Iran condemns ‘inhuman’ treatment of its nationals**

**TEHRAN**  
Iran condemned on Saturday what it called the “illegal and inhuman” treatment of its nationals by U.S. border security officers, after reports said that a student was deported despite having a valid visa. “Such measures... are against international human rights laws,” Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi said. AFP