

Virus cases double in South Korea

Samsung shuts down factory; nine of those who tested positive had gone to Israel on pilgrimage

REUTERS SEUL
South Korea said on Saturday that the number of new coronavirus (COVID-2019) cases in the country had doubled to 433, and officials suggested that the tally could rise significantly as more than 1,000 people who attended a church at the centre of the outbreak reported flu-like symptoms.
Korea's Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported 142 new cases at a morning briefing and another 87 in the afternoon. It also reported another death from the virus, bringing the total to three.



New frontier: Medical workers with a patient at a hospital in Chuncheon on Saturday. ■AFP

Samsung Electronics on Saturday said one of the virus cases had been confirmed at its mobile device factory complex in Gumi, causing a shutdown of the facility there until Monday morning. Gumi is close to Daegu. Samsung's factory in

Gumi accounts for a small portion of its total smartphone production, as it produces most of its products in Vietnam and India.
Also among the new cases were the first reported infections in Busan, South Korea's second-largest city, and on

the Island of Jeju, a popular tourist destination. The government designated both Daegu, which has a population of 2.5 million people, and Cheongdo county, home to around 43,000 people, as "special care zones" on Friday. Officials sent military

medical staff and other health workers, and extra resources, including hospital beds. More than half of the national cases are linked to a 61-year-old woman known as "Patient 31" who attended religious services at a branch of the Shincheonji Church of Jesus in Daegu, the Temple of the Tabernacle of the Testimony. The woman had no recent record of overseas travel, authorities said.
Among the new confirmed cases were nine of the 39 South Koreans who had gone on a pilgrimage to Israel earlier this month, North Gyeongsang Province Governor Lee Cheol-woo told a briefing on Saturday.
Israel's Health Ministry said in a statement it had been informed by South Korea that the nine tourists who had toured across Israel earlier in the month had since tested positive.

Iran shuts schools after virus kills 5

Cinemas also closed after country sees 28 confirmed cases

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE TEHRAN
Iran on Saturday ordered the closure of schools, universities and cultural centres after a COVID-19 outbreak that has killed five people in the Islamic republic – the most outside the Far East.

They were the first confirmed deaths from the disease in West Asia. "We have 10 new confirmed cases of COVID-19," Iran's Health Ministry spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour told state television on Saturday.
The latest cases take to 28 the total number of confirmed infections in Iran.
Based on official figures, nearly 18% of those infected with the SARS-CoV-2 in Iran have died, compared with little more than 3% in China. As a "preventive mea-

sure", authorities ordered the closure of schools, universities and other educational centres in Qom, a Shia holy city south of the capital.
The government also announced that "all art and cinema events in halls across the country have been cancelled until the end of the week" in order to stop infections.
The World Health Organization has expressed concern over the speed at which COVID-19 has spread in Iran, as well as it being exported from the country to other countries including Lebanon.

100 more disembark from Japan cruise ship

They will be quarantined near Tokyo

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE TOKYO
Around 100 more passengers were allowed to disembark from the COVID-19-stricken *Diamond Princess* cruise ship on Saturday as Japan's Health Minister apologised after 23 others were allowed to leave without being properly tested.
The news came as a Japanese woman who left the ship on Wednesday tested positive for the virus after returning home to Tochigi Prefecture, Kyodo news agency reported, citing the prefectural government. She is the first person to

have tested positive for the virus among the group of approximately 970 passengers who disembarked earlier this week, it said.
The 100 people who left on Saturday will be quarantined for two weeks near Tokyo, officials said. At a news conference on Saturday, Health Minister Katsunobu Kato apologised for 23 passengers having been allowed to leave the ship without undergoing all the required tests. With the latest disembarkation, a 14-day quarantine period is expected to start for more than 1,000 crew still on board.

'Campaign spreading false alarm on COVID-19'

U.S. blames Russia-linked accounts

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE WASHINGTON
Thousands of Russia-linked social media accounts have launched a coordinated effort to spread alarm about the coronavirus, disrupting global efforts to fight the epidemic, U.S. officials said.
The disinformation campaign promotes unfounded conspiracy theories that the U.S. is behind the COVID-19 outbreak. State Department officials tasked with combating Russian disinformation said that false personas are being used on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram to advance Russian talking points in multiple languages.
"By spreading disinformation about coronavirus, Russian malign actors are

once again choosing to threaten public safety by distracting from the global health response," said Philip Reeker, the acting Assistant Secretary of State for Europe and Eurasia.
'Economic war'
The claims circulating in recent weeks include allegations that the virus is a U.S. effort to "wage economic war on China," that it is a biological weapon manufactured by the CIA or part of a Western-led effort "to push anti-China messages."
U.S. individuals, including Bill Gates, who has spent billions on global health programmes, have also been falsely accused of involvement in the virus.

U.K. to revert to pre-EU blue passport

REUTERS WASHINGTON/LAS VEGAS
Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders warned Russia on Friday to stay out of White House elections after U.S. officials told him Moscow was trying to aid his campaign.
"The intelligence community is telling us they are interfering in this campaign, right now, in 2020. And what I say to Mr. Putin, if elected President, trust me you are not going to be interfering in American elections," Mr. Sanders told reporters in Bakersfield, California.
A frontrunner
Mr. Sanders, 78 is considered the frontrunner for the Democratic nomination and was favoured to win the Nevada caucuses on Satur-

Stay out of U.S. elections, Sanders warns Russia

He was briefed by intelligence officials of possible Russian efforts to interfere in polls

REUTERS WASHINGTON/LAS VEGAS
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day. *The Washington Post* on Friday, citing people familiar with the matter, said U.S. officials had told Mr. Sanders about the Russian effort and had also informed Republican President Donald Trump and U.S. lawmakers. It was not clear what form the Russian assistance took, the paper said.
A congressional source confirmed that intelligence officials had told lawmakers Russia appears to be engaging in disinformation and propaganda campaigns to boost the 2020 campaigns of both Mr. Sanders and Mr. Trump. The source, however, cautioned that the findings are very tentative.
Mr. Sanders said he was briefed about a month ago. His campaign noted that the briefing was classified. "We



Battle for Nevada: Presidential hopeful Bernie Sanders speaking during a rally in Las Vegas, Nevada, on Friday. ■AFP

do" – and I've seen some of their tweets and stuff – is they try to divide us up," he said. "They are trying to cause chaos. They're trying to cause hatred in America."
Russia denies claims
The Kremlin on Friday denied Russia was interfering

in the U.S. presidential campaign to boost Mr. Trump's re-election chances.
"These are more paranoid announcements which, to our regret, will multiply as we get closer to the (U.S.) election," said Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov. "They have nothing to do with the truth."
Jessica Brandt of the Alliance for Securing Democracy, an organisation that monitors foreign interference in U.S. politics, said Russian state media and official social media accounts were working to help Mr. Sanders by amplifying conspiracy theories that his Democratic rivals, the Democratic National Committee and the "corporate media" have been "rigging the system" against him.

L'Arche charity founder sexually abused women

Vanier had a 'spiritual hold' on them

ASSOCIATED PRESS PARIS
A report reveals that L'Arche founder Jean Vanier, a respected Canadian religious figure whose charity work helped improve conditions for the disabled in multiple countries, sexually abused at least six women. Vanier died last year at age 90.
According to the report seen by the AP on Saturday, the women's descriptions provide evidence enough to show that Vanier engaged in "manipulative sexual relationships" over a period from 1970 to 2005.
During the inquiry, commissioned by L'Arche last year and carried out by the independent, U.K.-based GCPs Consulting group, six adult, non-disabled women said Vanier had engaged in sexual relations with them as they were seeking spiritual direction. According to the report, the women, who have no links to each other,

reported similar facts and Vanier's sexual misconduct was often associated with alleged "spiritual and mystical justifications."
'Deep wounds'
A statement released by L'Arche France on Saturday stressed that some women still have "deep wounds." Vanier's actions show "he had a psychological and spiritual hold on these women," the statement said, adding that nothing suggests that disabled people may have been involved.
Vanier founded the Catholic-inspired charity L'Arche in 1964 as an alternative living environment where those with developmental disabilities could be full-fledged participants in the community instead of patients. The charity now has facilities in 38 countries that are home to thousands of people both with and without disabilities.

ELSEWHERE



Pope moves Salvadoran priest closer to sainthood
VATICAN CITY
A priest, who was murdered in 1977 and who in death became an icon for human rights in rural Latin America, was moved a step closer to sainthood by Pope Francis on Saturday. The Vatican said the Pope had approved a decree recognising that Rutilio Grande and two lay Salvadorans were killed "in hatred of the faith". ■ AFP

Ryanair head accused of Islamophobia over remark
LONDON
Muslim men should be profiled at airports as terrorists will "generally be of a Muslim persuasion", Ryanair CEO Michael O'Leary said in an interview published on Saturday, sparking accusations of racism. A spokesman from the Muslim council of Britain accused him of "Islamophobia". ■ AFP

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

Conservatives take lead after Iran election sees low turnout

This is a blow to President Rouhani's moderate faction

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE TEHRAN
Conservatives took an early lead on Saturday as the first results of Iran's parliamentary election came in, boosted by a predicted low turnout following the disqualification of nearly half the candidates.
Friday's election followed months of steeply escalating tensions between Iran and the U.S. Voters had been widely expected to shun the polls, disillusioned by unfulfilled promises and struggling to cope in a country whose economy has buckled under harsh U.S. sanctions.
Mass disqualification
About half of the 16,000-odd candidates were disqualified. Among them were many reformist and moderate candidates – including dozens of sitting MPs – leaving conservatives with virtually



A woman casting her vote in Tehran on Friday. ■REUTERS

no competition. By midday (0830 GMT) on Saturday, votes had been counted in 71 constituencies out of 208, according to National Elections Committee figures reported by semi-official news agency ISNA.
Tehran is the biggest catch in the election with 30 seats. The conservative and ultra-conservative alliance appeared to have a comfortable edge in the capital in early results, the committee's spokesman Esmail Mousavi said on state televi-

sion. Most votes went to the first three names on the alliance's list, he said.
Final results for both the capital and other provinces would be announced by early Sunday at the latest, he added. If the results are confirmed, it will mean President Hassan Rouhani's slender majority of reformists and moderates elected with fanfare four years ago is nearly purged.
An unofficial tally published by Fars news agency said 183 of Parliament's 290 seats had already been decided, with conservative candidates winning 135 of them. Reformists were a distant second at 20, it said, adding independents had won 28 seats.
Turnout was estimated at around 40% nationwide and 30% in Tehran at the scheduled close of polls on Friday, according to Fars.