

15 THE WORLD



MEANWHILE

GRETA THUNBERG NOMINATED FOR NOBEL

Two lawmakers in Sweden have nominated Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg for the 2020 Nobel Peace Prize. Jens Holm and Hakan Svenning, both members of the Left Party, said Thunberg "has worked hard to make politicians open their eyes to the climate crisis" and "action for reducing our emissions and complying with the Paris Agreement is therefore also an act of making peace."

TOP OF THE WORLD



SRI LANKA

Non national anthem in Tamil for I-Day celebrations

Colombo: For the first time since 2016, there will be no Tamil national anthem at the 72nd Independence Day celebrations in Sri Lanka and it will only be rendered in Sinhalese, the government announced on Monday. The then Sri Lankan government in 2015 started including the Tamil national anthem as a means of achieving reconciliation with the Tamil minority community. This will be the first time since 2016 that there will be no Tamil national anthem at the Independence Day celebrations in the country. The national anthem will be sung only in Sinhala, officials of the Ministry of Home Affairs, said.

USA

1 dead, 5 injured in shooting on bus in California

Lebec: A gunman killed one passenger and wounded five others before dawn Monday on a Greyhound bus travelling from Los Angeles to the San Francisco Bay Area and the bus driver somehow managed to get the gunman off the bus, the California Highway Patrol said. The suspect was taken into custody without incident and the motive was not immediately known, police said. A 911 caller reported the shooting, saying a person on board the bus with a gun had shot several passengers. But the driver was somehow able to coerce the suspect to leave the bus, police said.

IRAN

EU top diplomat holds talks in Tehran aimed at de-escalation

Tehran: Top EU diplomat Josep Borrell on Monday held talks in the Iranian capital on a mission aimed at lowering tensions over the Islamic republic's nuclear programme. Borrell's trip, his first to Iran since taking office, follows a spike in tensions between arch foes Washington and Tehran following the January 3 assassination in Baghdad of a top Iranian general in a US drone strike. The two-day visit opened with a meeting with Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.

HONG KONG

HK's economy shrinks for first time in a decade

Hong Kong: Hong Kong confirmed Monday it plunged into recession in 2019, suffering its first annual contraction in a decade as the city buckled under the twin pressures of the US-China trade war and months of furious pro-democracy protests. Last year was the worst for Hong Kong's growth since 2009, when the financial hub was hit hard by the global financial crash. The crisis was initially sparked by the trade war between Beijing and Washington, hitting the export-heavy economy. But the hard times were made worse by months of protests seeking greater democracy.

CORONAVIRUS

At Ground Zero of outbreak, Wuhan gasping for supplies and support

Residents say nearly impossible to get treatment for, or even diagnose, illness

AMY QIN

WUHAN, FEBRUARY 3

WEAK WITH fever, An Jianhua waited in line for seven hours outside the hospital in the cold, hoping to get tested for the new coronavirus, which doctors suspected she had contracted.

An, 67, needed an official diagnosis from a hospital to qualify for treatment, but the one she and her son raced to last week had no space, even to test her. The next hospital they were referred to in Wuhan, China, the city of 11 million people at the center of the outbreak, was full, too, they said. They finally got an intravenous drip for An's fever, but that was all.

Since then, An has quarantined herself at home. She and her son eat separately, wear masks at home and are constantly disinfecting their apartment. An's health is declining rapidly, and even keeping water down is a struggle.

"I can't let my mom die at home," said her son, He Jun. "Every day I want to cry, but when I cry there are no tears. There is no hope."



People wait for medical attention at a hospital in Wuhan. NYT

As countries race to deal with an outbreak that has begun spreading around the world, inciting panic and disrupting the global economy, the residents of Wuhan are waging a daily battle to survive an illness that has sickened more than 4,100 people and killed 224 in their city alone.

Last month, the government put Wuhan in a virtual lockdown, sealing off the city and banning most public transportation and private cars from its streets in a desperate effort to contain the outbreak. Now, many residents have said it is

nearly impossible to get the health care they need to treat — or even diagnose — the coronavirus.

Expressing exasperation, doctors said there is a shortage of testing kits and other medical supplies, and it is not clear why more are not available. The ban on transportation means some residents have to walk for hours to get to hospitals — if they are well enough to make the journey. Layers of bureaucracy stand between residents and help. And the long lines outside hospitals for testing and treatment suggest that the out-

break is spreading far beyond the official count of cases.

Ambulances, too, are hard to come by, residents said. In recent days, some said, they have called 120, China's emergency number, only to be told that there were already hundreds of people in the queue.

Those who have made it to the hospital said they have been squeezed together for hours in waiting rooms, where infections are easily spread. But the shortages have meant that many are ultimately turned away and sent home to self-quarantine, potentially compounding the outbreak by exposing their families.

Hospital built in 10 days

Many doctors and residents are putting their hopes in the two new coronavirus hospitals that China has been racing to build in Wuhan in just a matter of days. One of them was built in just 10 days, has 1,000 beds and opened Monday. The government said 1,400 military medical workers will be deployed to work there, potentially helping with the shortage of health professionals on hand to combat the outbreak. NYT

China accuses US of whipping up panic

Death toll from coronavirus rises to 361, an increase of 57 from previous day

KEVIN YAO & WINNI ZHOU

BEIJING, SHANGHAI, FEB 3

CHINA ACCUSED the US on Monday of whipping up panic over a fast-spreading coronavirus with travel restrictions and evacuations as Chinese stocks plunged on the first day back from the extended Lunar New Year holiday.

The death toll in China from the newly identified virus, which emerged in Wuhan, capital of the

central province of Hubei, rose to 361 as of Sunday, up 57 from the previous day, the National Health Commission said.

The World Health Organization (WHO) last week declared the flu-like virus a global emergency and it has since spread to 23 other countries and regions, with the first death outside of China reported on Sunday, that of a 44-year-old Chinese man who died in the Philippines after travelling from Wuhan.

Wuhan and some other cities remain in virtual lockdown with travel severely restricted, and China is facing increasing international isolation.

China accused the United States of spreading fear by pulling its nationals out and restricting travel instead of offering significant aid. Relations between the two sides had just begun to recover after a long and bruising trade war.

Washington has "unceasingly

manufactured and spread panic", Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said, noting that the WHO advised against trade and travel curbs.

"It is precisely developed countries like the United States with strong epidemic prevention capabilities and facilities that have taken the lead in imposing excessive restrictions contrary to WHO recommendations," she added, saying countries should make reasonable judgements. REUTERS

Turkey, Syria regime in deadly flare-up

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BEIRUT, FEBRUARY 3

TURKISH AND Syrian troops traded deadly fire in Syria's northwest on Monday, further raising tension between Ankara and regime backer Moscow over the war-torn Idlib rebel enclave.

An airstrike also killed at least nine civilians in the same area, where the latest government offensive has caused one of the nine-year-old Syrian conflict's worst waves of displacement. The tit-for-tat shelling between Damascus and Ankara was the deadliest since Turkey deployed troops in Syria in 2016 and escalated tensions between the conflict's two top foreign brokers.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan offered rare criticism of Russia last week, accusing it of "not honouring" agreements to prevent a regime offensive on the northwestern region of Idlib.

The overnight exchange began with regime shelling on Turkish positions in Idlib, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. The attack killed four Turkish soldiers and wounded nine others despite previous co-



Dangerous escalation

THE KILLING of Turkish soldiers in Idlib as a result of Syrian regime shelling marks an escalation of tensions in an already tense region. Turkish soldiers are in the last rebel-held area of Syria as part of the 2018 de-escalation agreement between Ankara and Moscow. But the intensified push by the Syrian regime — with Russia's backing — to retake Idlib from rebels raised tensions between Syria, Russia and Turkey. With the tensions now escalating to direct military attacks, the residents of Idlib face the possibility of shelling and airstrikes from all sides.

ordination on where Ankara's forces would be in the region, Turkey's defence ministry said.

Ukraine says recordings show Iran knew jetliner hit by a missile

ASSOCIATED PRESS

KYIV, FEBRUARY 3

A LEAKED recording of an exchange between an Iranian air-traffic controller and an Iranian pilot purports to show that authorities immediately knew a missile had downed a Ukrainian jetliner after takeoff from Tehran, killing all 176 on board, despite days of denials by the country.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskiy acknowl-



edged the recording's authenticity in a report aired by a Ukrainian TV channel on Sunday night.

A transcript of the recording, published by Ukrainian 1+1 TV channel, contains a conversation in Farsi between an air-traffic

controller and a pilot reportedly flying a Fokker 100 jet for Iran's Aseman Airlines from Iran's southern city of Shiraz to Tehran.

"A series of lights like... yes, it is missile, is there something?" the pilot calls out to the controller.

Iranian officials should have immediately had access to the recordings and Zelenskiy said "the recording, indeed, shows that the Iranian side knew from the start that our plane was shot down by a missile, they were aware of this at the moment of the shooting."

Indians among ISIL-K foreign fighters who surrendered last year: UN report

YOSHITA SINGH

UNITED NATIONS, FEBRUARY 3

INDIAN NATIONALS were among the over 1,400 fighters of a black-listed faction of the Islamic State terror group who surrendered to Afghan authorities last year, according to a UN report.

The UN Security Council's 1267 Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee in May last year black-

listed Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan (ISIL-K), which is also known as ISIL's South Asia Branch, ISIL Khorasan, Islamic State's Khorasan Province and South Asian Chapter of ISIL.

The 25th report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities said Afghan security forces and Taliban fighters were able to inflict "severe

damage" on the ISIL-K, displacing it from large areas of the Nangarhar province.

"More than 1,400 people surrendered to the Afghan authorities, including dependants of ISIL-K fighters. Most males were Afghan nationals, but there were also foreign nationals from Azerbaijan, Canada, France, India, Maldives, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan," the January 2020 report said. PTI

UK to announce new rules for militants after street stabbing

Islamic State claims responsibility

DANICA KIRKA

LONDON, FEBRUARY 3

THE BRITISH government plans to announce new rules for the imprisonment of convicted terrorists after an Islamic militant who was recently released from prison stabbed two people in south London, the second such attack in less than three months.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said the government would release its plans Monday. Following Sunday's attack and a Nov. 29 attack in which two people were killed in central London, the government said it would effectively stop the early release of convicted extremists, double terror sentences and overhaul the conditions under which they are released back into the community.

"This is a liberal country, it is a tolerant country," Johnson said. "But I think the idea of automatic early release for people who obviously continue to pose a threat to the public has come to the end of its useful life."

A man police identified as 20-year-old Sudesh Amman strapped on a fake bomb and stabbed two people on a busy London street Sunday before being shot to death by police.

Deputy Assistant

ATTACKER IDENTIFIED

SUDESH AMMAN,

the man shot dead by police in London after



going on a stabbing spree, was a 20-year-old Briton with family links to Sri Lanka. He was convicted in 2018 under terror-related charges and was released from jail 10 months ago.

WHEN OFFICERS

examined his computers and phone, they found material about making explosives and carrying out terrorist attacks, court documents show.

Commissioner Lucy D'Orsi said Amman had been convicted of publishing graphic terrorist videos online and had stockpiled instructions on bomb making and knife attacks.

The intelligence think tank SITE reported that the Islamic State group claimed that the south London attack was perpetrated by one of its "fighters".

Dems kick off Iowa caucuses amid worry over beating Trump

ASSOCIATED PRESS

DES MOINES, FEBRUARY 3

A DEMOCRATIC campaign that has cost more than \$1 billion, dashed the ambitions of veteran politicians, forced conversations about race, gender and identity and prompted fierce debate over health care and taxes crests Monday in the Iowa caucuses.

By day's end, tens of thousands of Democrats will have participated in the famed Iowa caucuses, the premiere of more than 50 contests that will unfold over the next five months. The caucuses will render the first verdict on who among dozens of candidates is best positioned to take on President Donald Trump, whom Democratic voters are desperate to beat this fall.

It is a moment thick with promise for a Democratic Party that has seized major gains since Trump won the White House in 2016. But instead of optimism, a cloud of uncertainty and deepening intraparty resentment hangs over Monday's election, which, after a multi-year buildup, will finally begin to reveal who and what Democrats stand for in this tumultuous era.

"If anybody tells you they know who's going to win, either they've got a whisper from God or they're loony, because nobody knows," said Deirdre DeJear, the first black woman to win a statewide primary in Iowa.

Polls suggest that Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders may have a narrow lead, but any of the top four candidates — Sanders, former Vice President Joe Biden, Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren and former South Bend, Indiana, Mayor Pete Buttigieg — could score victory in Iowa's unpredictable caucus system.

Final phase of impeachment trial begins

LISA MASCARO & ERIC TUCKER

WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 3

CLOSING ARGUMENTS in US President Donald Trump's impeachment trial are unfolding Monday as much for history as any effort to sway votes, one final chance to influence public opinion and set the record ahead of his expected acquittal in the Republican-led Senate.

Senators acknowledge the House Democratic managers have essentially proven their case, that Trump abused power and obstructed Congress, by leveraging US military aid to push Ukraine to investigate political rival Joe Biden to thwart the 2020 election.

But key Republicans have decided the President's actions toward Ukraine do not rise to the level of impeachable offences that warrant the dramatic upheaval of conviction and removal from office. His acquittal in Wednesday's vote is all but assured.

All that's left, as the Senate opened for four hours of final arguments is for Americans to decide what they think as the third presidential impeachment trial in the nation's history begins to close. Democrats argue "right matters", while Trump's GOP allies contend it is time to end the partisan proceeding.

House managers opened with a plea from Jason Crow, a Democrat, who told the chamber: "We cannot and should not leave our common sense at the door." AP

KOREAN FILM PARASITE WAS THE NIGHT'S OTHER BIG WINNER

WWI drama 1917 dominates BAFTAs, wins seven awards

ALEX MARSHALL

LONDON, FEBRUARY 3

1917, SAM Mendes' visually extravagant World War I drama that takes viewers into the chaos of the trenches, was the big winner at the EE British Academy Film Awards on Sunday, taking seven awards including best film.

Mendes was also named best director at the event, better known as the BAFTAs, Britain's equivalent of the Oscars. The haul adds to the movie's

wins for best drama and best director at the Golden Globes and will increase hype around the movie in the run-up to the Oscars.

"In the midst of all this hoopla, it's sometimes easy to forget the actual experience of shooting a movie," Mendes said, accepting his best director award. "I had a kind of director's paradise in this film that I think I'll never, ever have again."

The sweep for 1917 came despite the film receiving mixed reviews in Britain. Kevin Maher, writing in *The Times of London*,



The cast and crew of 1917 at the BAFTAs in London. Reuters

called it "two hours of amphetamine-rush cinema" and "instantly, an Oscar-night front-runner."

Bong Joon Ho's *Parasite* — a thriller about a poor family who insinuate themselves into the lives of a pampered household, and the first Korean film to be nominated for the best picture Oscar — was the night's other big winner, taking the awards for best film not in the English language and best original screenplay.

Bong, accepting the screenplay prize, said he used to write in coffee shops. "I never imag-

ined I'd be standing here at the Royal Albert Hall," he added, clearly overjoyed.

Joker, the movie based on the comic book character, had been tipped to win big at the awards, after it secured 11 nominations in January, the most for any film. In the end, it won only three, with Joaquin Phoenix as best actor for the title role being the biggest.

The run-up to the BAFTAs was dominated by complaints about the lack of diversity among the nominees. No person of colour was nominated in the best acting

categories, and no woman was shortlisted for best director.

Such complaints have also hit this year's Golden Globes and Academy Awards, but in the case of the BAFTAs, even Amanda Berry, chief executive of the body that organises the awards, said she was "very disappointed" by the situation. The body had "hoped we'd see at least one female director," she told the BBC in January.

The British Academy of Film and Television Arts quickly announced a full and thorough review of its voting procedures. NYT