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WEEKLY DIGEST  
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# DYER, JANZ DEBATE. THEY AGREE ON POTENTIAL CITY SALES TAX HIKE.

February 10, 2020 | David Taub

Those expecting black eyes and bloody knuckles after a Monday forum between Fresno's two leading mayoral candidates would've been disappointed. Former Fresno Police Chief Jerry Dyer and Fresno County Deputy District Attorney Andrew Janz shared their views at a luncheon hosted by the Fresno Rotary Club. Answering questions at

**"This is going to be a good compromise. It is not set in stone. I'm hoping Jerry and I can come to an agreement on this." — Andrew Janz on a potential sales tax hike for parks and public safety**

Cornerstone Conference Center about the economy and homelessness solutions, the candidates agreed more than they debated. The two candidates even

agreed about the value of a potential sales tax to raise revenues for parks and public safety. A majority of the 175 or so people in the audience, appeared to like what they heard from both. "They should be co-mayors," said one attendee afterward.

## Parks/Public Safety Tax

While Janz and Dyer disagreed on 2018's Measure P, the proposed sales tax that would have raised money for parks, both offered support for a potential successor tax measure. Janz supported Measure P; Dyer did not. Needing two-thirds voter support to pass, it received 52%. Janz said he supports a successor for the November 2020 ballot. It would be a third-quarters of a cent raise, with half going to parks, and half for public safety (to be equally divided between police and fire). The sales tax would have a 20-year sunset. It would raise an estimated \$75 million a year. The city's sales tax now is 7.975%. The sales tax rate in Clovis is identical. "This is going to be a good compromise. It is not set in stone. I'm hoping Jerry and I can come to an agreement on this," Janz said. Dyer explained

he opposed Measure P because it lacked balance in funding city services. Although Dyer said he does not generally support taxes, he is optimistic about this proposal. "I think we have a good foundation to start from. I hope we can get to where we need to go," Dyer said. In comparison, Measure P was a three-eighths of a cent sales tax, all for parks and related programs, with a 30-year sunset. It was estimated to raise \$38 million a year.

## Homelessness Plan

Moderator Al Smith, reading questions from Rotary members, said homelessness was a top concern. Both candidates said they heard the same things from residents. Dyer supports navigation centers and bridge housing, to be located near to where several existing homeless service providers are located. Last week, three councilmembers criticized Dyer's plan. They said it would warehouse the homeless in one particular part of town, mainly in south Fresno. Janz did not attack Dyer's plan. Rather, he said he supports plans that prevent homelessness in the first place. He said he fully supports the **D.R.I.V.E. Initiative**, a plan advocated by former Fresno Mayor Ashley Swearengin and endorsed by Gov. Gavin Newsom.

**"I think we have a good foundation to start from. I hope we can get to where we need to go." — Jerry Dyer on a potential sales tax hike for parks and public safety**

## Supporting Businesses of All Sizes

Both Dyer and Janz cited the difficulty businesses have dealing with the city's planning department. Both said they want to help small businesses. Janz said the city should offer tax incentives to small businesses, just as it does for large corporations such as Amazon, Ulta, and Gap. He said the warehouse jobs available with those groups may go away because...

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# CALIFORNIA BULLET TRAIN COST RISES BY AN-OTHER \$1 BILLION

February 12, 2020 | AP News

SACRAMENTO — The California High-Speed Rail Authority on Wednesday bumped its overall cost estimate for completing the rail line between San Francisco and Los Angeles to \$80.3 billion, blaming inflationary increases and better cost projections for a \$1.3 billion boost that still is smaller than in previous years.

After years of embarrassing cost overruns and delays, managers of California’s ambitious bullet-train project insisted that they are on pace to meet a preliminary 2022 federal deadline for laying track along the first segment in the Central Valley. But that will use up virtually all the money the project has available. The authority’s latest business plan comes amid pressure from state lawmakers, some of whom want to peel off more of the money to help commuters in the state’s popu-

lation centers. The 168-page report attempts to counter those critics by emphasizing the \$3 billion already going to so-called “bookend” projects in the Los Angeles and San Francisco Bay areas. It also tries to make the case that building first in the Central Valley remains more efficient than the alternatives. “We continue to make investments in all three regions of the state,” said Brian Kelly, the project’s chief executive, adding that “California is further along than I think a lot of people think.”

The cost increase is mainly because the plan pushes back the completion of a high-speed rail link between Silicon Valley and the Central Valley by 18 months, to late 2031. The increase in the projected baseline cost is smaller than previous jumps, with Kelly calling it “virtually unchanged” and within the...

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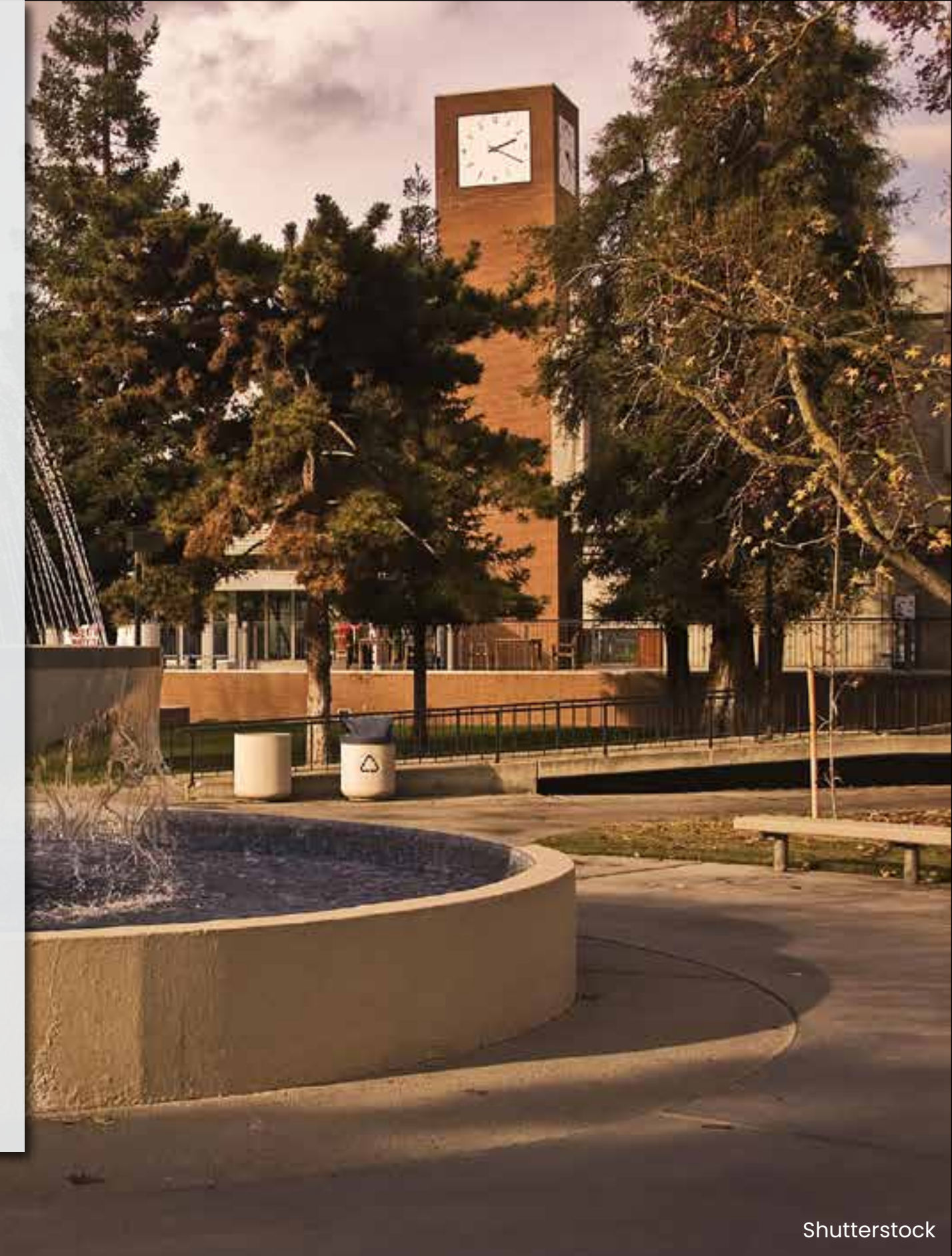
## FRESNO STATE RECEIVES \$1M GIFT FROM FORMER TREASURY SECRETARY

February 11, 2020 | Nancy Price

Fresno State President Joseph I. Castro may have saved the best until last in his speech at the State of the University breakfast Tuesday morning: He announced a \$1 million donation from former Treasury Secretary and Fresno State alum Paul O'Neill. But it wasn't the only surprise at the fifth annual breakfast attended by 750 community leaders and university stakeholders who sat at red linen-covered tables that crowded the floor of the Save Mart Center.

Castro invited Guarantee Real Estate founder Joan Eaton onstage to represent her mother, retired pediatrician Virginia Eaton, who last week was presented the 2020 President's Medal of Distinction at the Terraces of San Joaquin Gardens for her support of education, leadership, and years of serving generations of Valley children. He noted that Virginia Eaton and her late husband, Lewis Eaton, have funded two scholarships at Fresno State, one for a business student and the other for a pre-med student. Castro thanked Joan Eaton, a lecturer at the...

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## FRESNO BEE PUBLISHER FILES FOR BANKRUPTCY PROTECTION

February 13, 2020 | AP News

The publisher of the Fresno Bee, Miami Herald, The Kansas City Star and dozens of other newspapers across the country has filed for bankruptcy protection. The newspaper industry has been devastated by changing technology that has sent the vast majority of people online in search of news. While McClatchy and others have pushed digital operations aggressively, advertising dollars have continued to flow toward internet giants like Facebook and Google.

McClatchy Co.'s 30 newsrooms, including The Charlotte Observer, The News & Observer in Raleigh, and The Star-Telegram in Fort Worth, will continue to operate as usual as the publisher reorganizes under Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection. The publisher's origins date to 1857 when it first began publishing a four-page paper in Sacramento, following the California Gold Rush. That paper became The Sacramento Bee. McClatchy has received \$50 million in financing from Encina Business Credit that will enable it to maintain current operations for the...

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# STATE

## GOV. GAVIN NEWSOM WANTS TO GRILL PG&E ABOUT FINANCING PLAN

February 12, 2020 | AP News

SAN FRANCISCO — Pacific Gas & Electric's plan to emerge from bankruptcy faced another threat from California Gov. Gavin Newsom during a Tuesday court hearing that set the stage for a potentially dramatic showdown later this month. Newsom's lawyers told U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Dennis Montali they want to grill PG&E about the company's plans to borrow billions of dollars and sell more stock to help pay the \$13.5 billion owed to more than 75,000 victims of catastrophic wildfires ignited by the utility's equipment and negligence. Montali reaffirmed the terms of the settlement earlier in the hearing, despite a passionate plea from one victim who wanted changes to be made. PG&E also is raising

**The judge asked lawyers for Newsom and PG&E to work out a timetable for the looming battle over the company's financing plan. The face-off could come in court hearings scheduled for Feb. 19 and Feb. 26 or in sworn depositions.**

money to pay another \$12 billion for insurers and government agencies that suffered losses during a series of deadly fires in 2017 and 2018.

The judge asked lawyers for Newsom and PG&E to work out a timetable

for the looming battle over the company's financing plan. The face-off could come in court hearings scheduled for Feb. 19 and Feb. 26 or in sworn depositions. Newsom holds unusual leverage over PG&E because it needs state approval to be covered by a \$20 billion wildfire insurance fund the state Legislature approved. Accessing the fund is part of PG&E's bankruptcy reorganization, forcing it to find a way to placate the governor by a June 30 deadline.

**Newsom Has Insisted PG&E Bring in New Leadership**  
The unexpected twist Tuesday marks the latest sign of ongoing tensions between PG&E and Newsom. The Democratic governor has threatened to engineer a government takeover attempt of the nation's largest utility unless it replaces its entire board of directors and

lessens its debt load when it exits bankruptcy. Newsom has insisted that PG&E bring in new leadership to lessen the chances it repeats the bad decisions that led to devastating wildfires and deliberate blackouts affecting 2 million people last fall. Newsom also wants to ensure PG&E has the financial flexibility to pay for an estimated \$40 billion to \$50 billion in badly needed improvements to its outdated electrical grid. PG&E has pledged to replace at least some of the 14 people currently on its board as part of its efforts to appease Newsom. But Tuesday's push to question PG&E about its financing plan shows the governor still has serious qualms of what the utility is trying to do. Montali on Tuesday also rejected a plea to overturn a \$13.5 settlement with wildfire victims approved two months ago.

**"We are taking every one of the letters very seriously." — Cecily Dumas, an attorney for wildfire victims who helped negotiate the settlement**

**Related Story: What Happens If California Takes Over PG&E?**

**Lawyers Must Try to Get Victims to Vote in Favor of PG&E's Plan**

Will Abrams, a Sonoma County resident who lost his home in a 2107 fire, argued the complex settlement is being forced upon confused and still-distressed victims as they try to rebuild their lives. He called for "more sunlight on the process, more sunlight on the information." Cecily Dumas, an attorney for wildfire victims who helped negotiate the settlement, assured the judge that a clear explanation on how the \$13.5 billion trust will be handled will be filed by a Feb. 21 deadline. The judge already has been passing along to the attorneys letters of protest from people who lost family members, homes and businesses in the wildfires. "We are taking every one of the letters very seriously..."

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# NEARLY 200 EVACUEES TO LEAVE CORONAVIRUS QUARANTINE IN US

February 11, 2020 | AP News

RIVERSIDE — Nearly 200 evacuees prepared Tuesday to end their two-week quarantine at a Southern California military base where they have been living since flying out of China during a deadly viral outbreak.

None of those who flew into March Air Reserve Base have tested positive for the novel coronavirus, health authorities said, although one evacuee at another base had been found to have the highly infectious virus and was in hospital isolation. The group, which includes children, arrived Jan. 29, taking a chartered flight from Wuhan. The locked-down city of 11 million is the epicenter of the virus that has claimed more

than 1,000 lives worldwide. The group — which set up classes and activities to make the most of their time — had a party Monday and planned to gather for a photo before heading out, said Matthew McCoy, one of the evacuees. Once they pass final screenings, most will be bused to catch flights at Ontario International Airport and Los Angeles International Airport, said Jose Arballo Jr., a spokesman for Riverside County’s public health agency.

Some will get individual rides and about two dozen people will stay overnight to catch flights Wednesday, he said. In the United States, there have only been 13 confirmed cases...

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AP File

# DEATH TOLL IN CAMP FIRE LIKELY INCLUDES 50 MORE PEOPLE

February 12, 2020 | AP News

PARADISE — Doctors and other experts say at least 50 more people, many of them elderly or ill, likely died as a result of the 2018 wildfire that devastated the town of Paradise, California, but were not counted in the official death toll, [an investigation by the Chico Enterprise-Record](#) found. Authorities have said the deadliest wildfire in California history killed 85 people. But the newspaper reported Tuesday that it had identified at least 50 more people whose deaths were linked to the fire but not attributed to it.

The additional people lived in homes, retirement communities and nursing facilities in the towns of Magalia, Paradise and Concow, according to addresses on wrongful death claims filed as part of a legal case against Pacific Gas & Electric. The utility’s equipment was blamed for starting the fire. Each claim was vetted by a medical expert and a lawyer, and claimants had to gather evidence showing the person would not have died if not for the fire. Some claims were turned...

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# KINGSBURG OPTIMISTIC THAT 1,000 JOB EMPLOYER WILL COME

February 11, 2020 | Randy Reed

Kingsburg’s top administrator is hoping [Tuesday’s decision in a federal lawsuit](#) will now allow a promised 1,000 employee call center to move forward in his community. “I feel better today than I did last week,” Kingsburg City Manager Alexander Henderson said. “Hopefully, we’re getting to some final resolution.” T-Mobile announced in April 2019 that it had chosen the Kingsburg area as the location for a “Customer Experience Center” that would create more than 1,000 new jobs. The company said those positions would pay salaries averaging at least 50% more than the average in Fresno County.

**Call Center Dependent on Merger Approval**

The opening of the call center is contingent on the successful merger of T-Mobile with rival carrier Sprint, the company’s announcement said. While the deal was previously approved by the Trump administration, a group of state attorneys general sued to block it. They argued that having one fewer phone company would cost Americans billions of dollars in higher...

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# SANDERS EDGES BUTTIGIEG IN NH, GIVING DEMS 2 FRONT-RUNNERS

February 12, 2020 | AP News

MANCHESTER, N.H. — Bernie Sanders won New Hampshire’s presidential primary, edging moderate rival Pete Buttigieg and scoring the first clear victory in the Democratic Party’s chaotic 2020 nomination fight. In his Tuesday night win, the 78-year-old Sanders, a self-described democratic socialist, beat back a strong challenge from the 38-year-old former mayor of South Bend, Indiana. The dueling Democrats represent different generations, see divergent paths to the nomination and embrace conflicting visions of America’s future. As Sanders and Buttigieg celebrated, Amy Klobuchar scored an unexpected third-place finish that gives her a road out of New Hampshire as the primary season moves on to the string of state-by-state contests that lie ahead.

Elizabeth Warren and Joe Biden posted disappointing fourth- and fifth-place finishes respectively and were on track to finish with zero delegates from the state. The New Hampshire vote gives new clarity to a Democratic contest shaping up to be a battle between two men separated by four decades in age and clashing political ideologies. Sanders is a leading progressive voice,

**“We are gonna win because we have the agenda that speaks to the needs of working people across this country. This victory here is the beginning of the end for Donald Trump.” — Sen. Bernie Sanders**

having spent decades demanding substantial government intervention in health care and other sectors of the economy. Buttigieg has pressed for more incremental change, preferring to give Americans the option of retaining their private health insurance while appealing to Republicans and independents who may be dissatisfied with Trump. Their disparate temperaments were on display Tuesday as they spoke before cheering supporters. “We are gonna win because we have the agenda that speaks to the needs of working people across this country,” Sanders declared. “This victory here is the beginning

of the end for Donald Trump.” Buttigieg struck an optimistic tone: “Thanks to you, a campaign that some said shouldn’t be here at all has shown that we are here to stay.”

### Buttigieg Must Prove He Can Attract Support From Voters of Color

Both men have strength heading into the next phase of the campaign, yet they face very different political challenges. While Warren made clear she will remain in the race, Sanders, well-financed and with an ardent army of supporters, has cemented his status as the clear leader of the progressive wing of the party. Meanwhile, Buttigieg must prove he can attract support from voters of color who are critical to winning the nomination. And unlike Sanders, he still has multiple rivals in his own ideological wing of the party to contend with.

They include Klobuchar, whose standout debate performance led to a late surge in New Hampshire and a growing national following. While deeply wounded, Biden promises strength in upcoming South Carolina. And though former New York Mayor Mike Bloomberg was not on Tuesday’s ballot, he looms next month when the contest reaches states offering hundreds of delegates. After a chaotic beginning to primary voting last week in Iowa, Democrats hoped New Hampshire would help give shape to their urgent quest to pick someone to take on Trump in November. At least two candidates dropped out in the wake of weak finishes Tuesday night: moderate Colorado Sen. Michael Bennet and political newcomer Andrew Yang, who attracted a small but loyal following over the past year and was one of...

**Sanders and Buttigieg were on track to win the same number of New Hampshire delegates with most of the vote tallied, with Klobuchar a few behind. Warren, Biden and the rest of the field were shut out, failing to reach the 15% threshold needed for delegates.**

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## POODLE PERFECTION: SIBA WINS BEST IN SHOW AT WESTMINSTER

February 12, 2020 | AP News

NEW YORK — Primped and poised, Siba the standard poodle owned the ring. Even with the crowd at Madison Square Garden chanting for a popular golden retriever, the statuesque Siba strutted off with best in show at the Westminster Kennel Club on Tuesday night.

Adorned with black puffs and pompoms, the 3-year-old Siba was the absolute picture of what many see as the epitome of a show dog. Not everyone shared that view. As judge Bob Slay studied Siba in the best-of-seven final ring, a fan shouted out: “No way, Slay, no way!” Slay stuck by what he saw.

“She’s beautiful and has that something,” handler Chrystal Murray-Clas said. Bourbon the whippet finished second. Daniel the golden retriever was clearly the crowd favorite — a golden has never won at Westminster — and fans chanted his name as Slay deliberated. Bono the Havanese, Wilma the boxer, Conrad the Shetland sheepdog, and Vinny the wire fox terrier also made the final grouping.

Poodles come in three sizes and this was the 10th time one of them has become America’s top dog, the first since 2002. A standard last won in 1991. Siba put on an entertaining...

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AP File

## TEACHER UNIONS: CHILDREN TERRIFIED BY ACTIVE SHOOTER DRILLS

February 13, 2020 | AP News

HARTFORD, Conn. — The nation’s two largest teachers unions want schools to revise or eliminate active shooter drills, asserting Tuesday that they can harm students’ mental health and that there are better ways to prepare for the possibility of a school shooting.

The American Federation of Teachers and National Education Association joined with the advocacy group Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund in calling for an end to unannounced drills or drills that simulate gun violence.

“Everywhere I travel, I hear from parents and educators about active shooter drills terrifying students, leaving them unable to concentrate in the classroom and unable to sleep at night,” said Lily Eskelsen Garcia, president of the National Education Association. “So traumatizing students as we work to keep students safe from gun violence is not the answer...

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## GIRLS SUE TO BLOCK PARTICIPATION OF TRANSGENDER ATHLETES

February 13, 2020 | AP News

HARTFORD, Conn. — The families of three female high school runners filed a federal lawsuit Wednesday seeking to block transgender athletes in Connecticut from participating in girls sports. Selina Soule, a senior at Glastonbury High School, Chelsea Mitchell, a senior at Canton High School and Alanna Smith, a sophomore at Danbury High School are represented by the conservative nonprofit organization Alliance Defending Freedom. They argue that allowing athletes with male anatomy to compete has deprived them of track titles and scholarship opportunities.

“Mentally and physically, we know the outcome before the race even starts,” said Smith, who is the daughter of former Major League pitcher Lee Smith. “That biological unfairness doesn’t go away because of what someone believes about gender identity. All girls deserve the chance to compete on a level playing field.” The lawsuit was filed against the...

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# WORLD

## CHINA REPORTS SPIKE IN VIRUS CASES WITH NEW WAY OF COUNTING

February 13, 2020 | AP News

BEIJING — China on Thursday reported a sharp spike in deaths and infections from a new virus after the hardest-hit province of Hubei applied a new classification system that broadens the scope of diagnoses for the outbreak, which has spread to more than 20 countries. Japan reported its first death, a woman in her 80s who

**“Clearly in Wuhan, the health system is under extreme pressure and so the first priority has to be the patient.” — Mark Woolhouse, a professor of infectious disease epidemiology at the University of Edinburgh**

had been hospitalized since early February. She is the third confirmed fatality outside of mainland China, after deaths in the Philippines and Hong Kong. The new diagnostic approach came on the same day that Hubei and its stricken capital, Wuhan, replaced their top officials in an apparent response to public criticism of how authorities have handled the epidemic. The death toll in China reached 1,367, up 254 from the previous day. The number of confirmed cases jumped 15,152 to 59,804. The unusually large increases were due to the change in Hubei’s approach.

The total now includes more than 13,000 cases of “clinical diagnosis” in Hubei, which appears to include those based on a doctors’ analysis combined with lung imaging, as opposed to waiting for laboratory test results. In breaking down the large number of new cases in China, National Health Commission spokesman Mi Feng said Hubei had adopted a revised diagnosis and treatment plan aimed at accelerating the identification and treatment of patients.

### China Appointed New High-Level Officials in Hubei and Wuhan

That adds a “clinical diagnosis case” classification to identify suspected cases who appear to have pneumonia so that patients can be accepted as soon as possible and treated as confirmed cases, Mi said, adding that

should “reduce severe illness and mortality.” One expert said the changed case definition in Hubei likely speaks to the crush of patients the health system is experiencing and the backlog of untested samples. “Clearly in Wuhan, the health system is under extreme pressure and so the first priority has to be the patient,” said Mark Woolhouse, a professor of infectious disease epidemiology at the University of Edinburgh. He said it wasn’t unprecedented for case definitions to rely on doctors’ diagnoses rather than wait for laboratory confirmation, and that these kinds of changes usually happen when there are simply too many patients to process in a fast-moving outbreak.

“I’m not surprised that this has happened given the way the outbreak has been going in China,” Woolhouse said. “You have to be pragmatic and take the concerns of the patient first and treat them as if they already have the disease, even in the absence of lab confirmation.” China also appointed new high-level officials in Hubei and Wuhan. Former Shanghai Mayor Ying Yong succeeded Jiang Chao-liang as the ruling Communist Party chief in the beleaguered province, the Xinhua state news agency reported, while Wang Zhonglin took over from Ma Guoqiang as the party secretary in Wuhan.

**“It doesn’t have too much of an impact on our life, except that we’re not allowed to go out.” — Xu Min, a resident of Shiyang’s Zhangwan district**

### Many Countries Have Implemented Travel Restrictions on Recent Visitors to China

The appointments follow the sacking earlier this week of two leaders of the provincial health commission. State media also reported that a slew of others were expelled from the party for transgressions related to the epidemic. The public has widely criticized local officials for failing to respond quickly and decisively to the new virus. Authorities initially assured people that there...

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## DELUGE IN AUSTRALIA DRENCHES FIRES AND EASES 3-YEAR DROUGHT

Joel Carrett, AAP Image via AP

February 10, 2020 | AP News

WELLINGTON, New Zealand — Drought, wildfires and now flooding have given Australia's weather an almost Biblical feel this year. The good news is that a recent deluge in eastern parts of the country has drenched deadly fires and helped ease a crippling drought.

But experts say it will take some time yet to know to what extent the rainfall has replenished dried-up rivers and quenched parched soil in some inland areas most affected by the 3-year drought. Quentin Grafton, an economics professor and water expert at Australian National University in Canberra, said the rain had broken the drought in some

towns but had not fallen evenly across all the affected areas. "At this stage, it's very good news, and certainly much more than people could have wished for or expected," he said of the rainfall. "There are some very happy people." Grafton said drought had badly affected an area of more than 1.5 million square kilometers, which is larger than the country of Ethiopia.

He said monitoring on major rivers over the coming days should provide a clearer picture of how much the rain has helped. Fire authorities had a reason to celebrate, with many wildfires being extinguished or significantly dampened...

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AP Photo

## SYRIA: US TROOPS OPEN FIRE ON LOCALS IN NORTHEAST, KILLING 1

February 12, 2020 | AP News

DAMASCUS — A Syrian was killed and another was wounded in a rare clash Wednesday between American troops and a group of government supporters who tried to block a U.S. convoy driving through a village in northeastern Syria, state media and activists reported. The state-run media said the killed man was a civilian. He was among residents of a village east of the town of Qamishli who had gathered at an army checkpoint.

Russian, Syrian and others gather next to an American military convoy stuck in the village of Khirbet Ammueckpoint, pelting the U.S. convoy with stones and taking down a U.S. flag from one of the vehicles. At that point, American troops fired with live ammunition and smoke bombs at the residents, the reports said. A U.S. military spokesman said coalition forces conducting a patrol near Qamishli encountered a checkpoint occupied by pro-Syrian government forces. After coalition troops issued a series of warnings in an attempt...

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## IRAN REMEMBERS 1979 ISLAMIC REVOLUTION AMID HIGH US TENSION

February 11, 2020 | AP News

TEHRAN, Iran — Hundreds of thousands across Iran marked the anniversary of its 1979 Islamic Revolution on Tuesday amid some of the highest tensions ever between Tehran and the U.S. in the past four decades. While Iranian President Hassan Rouhani gave a speech in Tehran's iconic Azadi Square denouncing the U.S., he also focused on encouraging the country to vote in upcoming parliamentary elections, even after officials disqualified thousands from running, including 90 current lawmakers.





Iran views high turnout as a vote of confidence in the country's Shiite theocracy, something it wants to show as public anger still simmers over the country accidentally shooting down a Ukrainian jetliner in January that killed all 176 people on board. Tehran for days denied its forces shot down the passenger plane before admitting to it in the face of mounting Western pressure. The shoot down also marred funeral...

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