VOA NEWS

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This is VOA news. I'm Marissa Melton.

The first nominating contest on the 2020 U.S. presidential election is Monday. AP correspondent Ben Thomas has more.

"Now is the time to end the complaining, now is the time for action."

On the eve of the Iowa caucuses, Democratic presidential candidates like Bernie Sanders and Joe Biden have been hustling across the state.

"I do have a nickname I wanna give him: former president ...."

Trying to fire up supporters and make one last appeal to people still struggling to make a final decision.

"Every single time my party has won the White House in the last 50 years," Pete Buttigieg, "we have done it with a candidate who is new ...."

Amy Klobuchar, "We have people that want to come with us. And we need a candidate that's gonna bring them with us instead of shutting them out. And we'd better come together to meet that goal. We are going to beat Donald Trump."

I'm Ben Thomas.

Protesters marched in Baghdad and southern cities in Iraq on Sunday against the appointment of the country's new prime minister, Mohammed Tawfiq Allawi. Emer McCarthy has more.

Protesters in Iraq have taken to the streets to denounce the appointment of the country's new prime minister, Mohammed Tawfiq Allawi, and that's even after he appealed to downtrodden Iraqis for their support and pledged to hold internationally monitored elections and form a government within one month.

But for many protesters, he is just another stooge of the political elite.

Iraqi President Barham Salih appointed Allawi as prime minister on Saturday after squabbling parties failed to name a candidate in the two months since Adel Abdul Mahdi was ousted by mass protests.

Reuters' Emer McCarthy reporting.

Palestinian President [Mahmoud] Mahmoud Abbas has threatened to cut security ties with both U.S. and Israel in a speech at an Arab League meeting.

VOA news.

A man in the Philippines has died from the coronavirus. It's the first time a death has been reported outside mainland China since the outbreak began in December. AP's Sarah Bassett has more.

The Philippines has reported the first death from a new virus outside of China. A 44-year-old Chinese man from Wuhan was admitted to hospital last month after experiencing flu-like symptoms.

Philippines' Health Secretary Francisco Duque III says the patient developed severe pneumonia.

"...the patient was stable and showed signs of improvement; however, the condition of the patient deteriorated within the last 24 hours, resulting in his demise."

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte approved a temporary ban on all travelers except Filipinos from China and its autonomous regions.

The U.S., Japan, Singapore and Australia have imposed similar restrictions despite criticism from China and an assessment from the World Health Organization that they were unnecessarily hurting trade and travel.

I'm Sarah Bassett.

More than 300 people have died from the coronavirus, with more than 14,000 confirmed cases in at least 27 countries.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo is urging Kazakhstan to join Washington in pressing Beijing over its treatment of Muslim minorities. It's a sensitive matter for the Central Asian nation which has close ties to China.

The United Nations and human rights groups estimate that between 1 and 2 million, mostly ethnic Uighur, have been subjected to intense surveillance, arbitrary detentions and forced indoctrination as part of what Beijing calls an anti-terrorism campaign.

Pompeo was meeting top officials in the former Soviet republic to express U.S. support for Kazakhstan, an energy-rich nation [with] which Washington sees as a counterweight to Russia in Central Asia.

The Korean-American family drama "Minari" has won two top honors at the Sundance film festival. AP correspondent Julie Walker.

"Minari" had arguably been the biggest critical sensation at Sundance, earning raves for the immigrant drama set in 1980s Arkansas; Brad Pitt as an executive producer, Lee Isaac Chung the filmmaker.

"This has been just an amazing journey for us. And I just wanna, first thing, I'm so honored to be in the company of all you filmmakers."

The top documentary prize went to Jesse Moss and Amanda McBaine's "Boys State," a portrait of the annual mock-government competition held in Texas. The film reportedly fetched a record acquisition price for a doc at Sundance, with A24 and Apple picking it up for $12 million.

I'm Julie Walker.

Today is February 2. That means Groundhog Day in the United States. Punxsutawney Phil is the American Groundhog who is famous for predicting the end of winter. Today, he did not see a shadow. That means an early spring.

Marissa Melton, VOA news.