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Patriots owner Robert Kraft charged in Florida prostitution sting



Inside C2

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Trump says inclined to extend China trade deadline, to meet Xi soon

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - U.S. President Donald Trump said on Friday there was "a very good chance" the United States would strike a deal with China to end their trade war and that he was inclined to extend his March 1 deadline to reach an agreement.

U.S. and Chinese negotiators had made progress and would continue this week's round of negotiations through the weekend, Trump told reporters in the White House as he met his top negotiators and their counterpart, Chinese Vice Premier Liu He.

"I think that we both feel there's a very good chance a deal will happen," Trump said.

Extending the deadline would mean Trump would put on hold a scheduled tariff increase to 25 percent from 10 percent on \$200 billion of Chinese imports into the United States.

That would prevent a further escalation in a trade war that has already disrupted commerce in goods worth hundreds of billions of dollars, slowed global economic growth and roiled markets.

Optimism the two sides would find a way to end the trade war lifted stocks on Friday, especially technology shares, while oil prices rose to their highest since mid-November, with Brent crude reaching a high of \$67.73 a barrel. Trump and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said the two sides had reached an agreement on currency. Trump declined to provide details, but U.S. officials have long expressed concerns that China's yuan is undervalued, giving China a trade advantage and partly offsetting U.S. tariffs.

The president said he would probably meet China's President Xi Jinping in March in Florida, and the biggest decisions on the terms of the trade deal could come when they meet.

Xi sent a letter to Trump which an aide to Liu read out at the briefing on Friday. Xi called on negotiators to work hard to strike a deal that benefits both.

Trump indicated a deal with China may extend beyond trade to encompass Chinese telecommunications companies Huawei Technologies and ZTE Corp.

The Justice Department has accused Huawei of conspiring to violate U.S. sanctions on Iran and of stealing robotic technology from T-Mobile US Inc. Chinese peer ZTE was last year prevented from buying essential components from U.S. firms after pleading guilty to similar charges, crippling its operations.



U.S. President Trump meets with China's Vice Premier Liu He at the White House in Washington



U.S. President Trump meets with China's Vice Premier Liu He at the White House in Washington

Trump's economy 'a little under' 3 percent growth goal: Fed

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - The Trump administration will fall "a little under" its target of 3 percent annual growth of gross domestic product for 2018, the Federal Reserve said Friday in a report that offers an economic scorecard of sorts for the first full year of President Donald Trump's term.

The verdict: Mixed, and possibly going in the wrong direction. By year's end, the impact of tax cuts and other policies was waning, trade was detracting from growth and the federal deficit was wider. On the upside, employment growth remained strong.

Though growth for the year was "solid," the Fed said, gross domestic product "rose a little bit under 3 percent for the year as a whole," shy of the pace White House officials have set as their touchstone for the success of the president's policies.

Earlier this month White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow said growth would prove to be 3 percent in 2018 and at least that much for 2019 - a forecast the Fed also does not share.

The Fed said 2018 would prove "a noticeable pickup" from recent years, but outlined an array of headwinds, including a drop in business and consumer spending at year's end, that could carry over into 2019.

The Fed's estimate of last year's growth fills a

void left by the recent government shutdown, which delayed publication of the first estimates for fourth-quarter and full-year 2018 growth by the Bureau of Economic Analysis.

That official GDP figure is now due next week. The Fed, however, in the meantime had to produce a full report to Congress under a law requiring the central bank's chairman to appear on Capitol Hill twice a year to update lawmakers.

That appearance is next week, and in an accompanying report, released in advance, the Fed used its own sophisticated models to provide a bottom line for 2018.

Trump took office in January 2017, and by the end of that year had put a full suite of economic policies into play, including a \$1.5 trillion tax cut, increased government spending, and an effort to reorder the global trading system in the United States' favor.

White House officials said that would unleash spending and investment, fix the U.S. trade deficit, and improve the government's balance sheet by yielding enough extra revenue to offset the tax cut.

And some that was true at first, according to the Fed, though the impetus seems to be weakening.

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Patriots owner Robert Kraft charged in Florida prostitution sting

(Reuters) - Robert Kraft, owner of the Super Bowl-winning New England Patriots, was charged in Florida with soliciting prostitution after he was captured on video engaging in sex acts with a worker at a massage parlor, police said on Friday.

Kraft, 77, a billionaire businessman who built the Patriots into the National Football League's most dominant franchise, was swept up in a police sting targeting sex-trafficking in day spas and massage parlors in several Florida counties. The operation has led to hundreds being charged.

Kraft, who lives in Massachusetts but owns property in Palm Beach, Florida, is accused of visiting Orchids of Asia Day Spa in Jupiter, Florida, on two separate occasions to solicit sex. The two charges he faces are misdemeanors. Authorities have video evidence depicting the acts in question after installing hidden cameras inside the spa, police officials said, adding that Kraft had been dropped off by a driver.

A spokesman for Kraft and the Patriots, Aaron Salkin, said in a statement, "We categorically deny that Mr. Kraft engaged in any illegal activity. Because it is a judicial matter, we will not be commenting further."

Kraft could face discipline under the league's personal conduct policy, which applies to team owners and prohibits "conduct detrimental to the integrity" of the NFL. In 2004, Indianapolis Colts owner Jim Irsay was suspended six games and fined \$500,000 after he pleaded guilty to driving while on drugs.

In a statement, NFL spokesman Brian McCarthy said, "The NFL is aware of the ongoing law enforcement matter and will continue to monitor developments."

Kraft, who made his fortune buying out and building up his father-in-law's product-packaging business, is worth \$6.6 billion, according to Forbes magazine.

Since Kraft bought the Patriots 25 years ago for \$172 million, the team has become the most successful franchise in the NFL, appearing in 10 Super Bowls and winning six titles, including Super Bowl LIII on Feb. 3. The franchise is now worth an estimated \$3.7 billion, according to Forbes.

Kraft's wife of many decades, Myra Hiatt Kraft, died in 2011 of ovarian cancer. He has not remarried.

Kraft is a close friend and supporter of U.S. President Donald Trump, who said told reporters in the Oval Office that he was "very sad" to hear about the charges.

"I was very surprised to see it," the president said. "He's proclaimed his innocence totally. And - but I'm very surprised to see it."

No one answered the phone at the Orchids of Asia Day Spa on Friday. The spa's website advertises body treatments, facials and massages, such as the "Tokyo Ultimate 4 Hand." Standard services generally cost \$59 for a half hour and \$79 for an hour, police said.

The owner of Goodfella's Pizza across the street, Joseph Bompertito, 33, said he frequently saw young women who worked at the spa walking through the shopping plaza where it is located.

"They looked miserable, malnourished, very skinny, very pale with a depressed look on their face," he said.

He also recalled seeing Kraft getting into a chauffeured car at the plaza about two weeks ago, saying he waved to Kraft and the Patriots owner waved back out of the car window. N.C. election board orders new U.S. House vote

Kraft, widely considered one of the NFL's most powerful and influential owners, has become a hero to may



FILE PHOTO: New England Patriots quarterback Tom Brady (12) celebrates with New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft after the Los Angeles Rams in Super Bowl LIII at Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta

Bostonians. Early this month hundreds of thousands of people lined the city's streets to see the owner and his team celebrate their sixth Super Bowl win.

Some top Massachusetts officials on Friday voiced deep concern over the charges.

Governor Charles Baker "finds these alle-

gations deeply disturbing and condemns all acts of sexual exploitation," Anisha Chakrabarti, a spokeswoman for the governor, said in an email.



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Editor's Choice



People march to protest against President Abdelaziz Bouteflika's plan to seek a fifth term in Algiers, Algeria, February 22, 2019. REUTERS/Ramzi Boudina



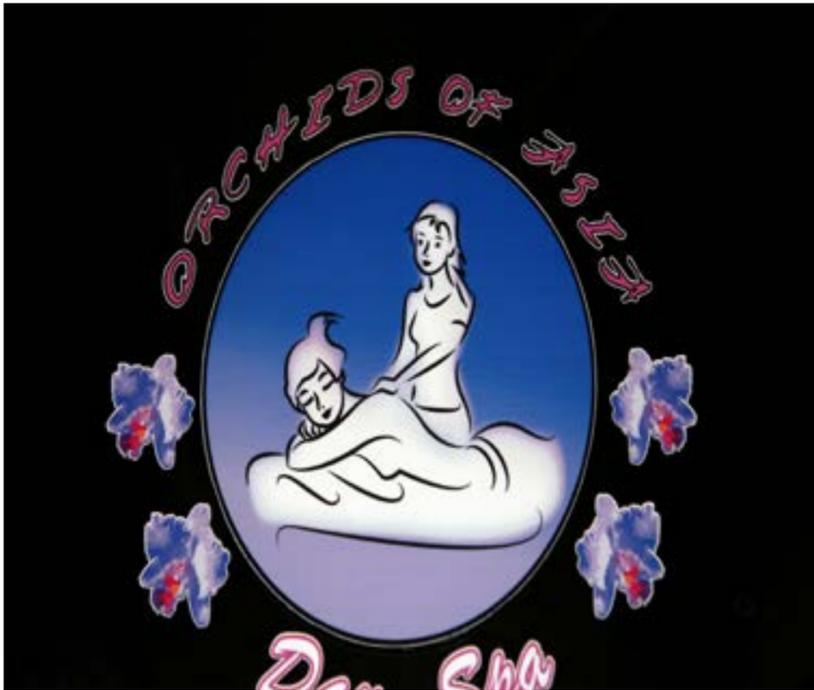
Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir delivers a speech at the Presidential Palace in Khartoum



Kristin Scott Thomas, President of the Cesar Awards, attends the 44th Ceremony, in Paris, France February 22, 2019. REUTERS/Gonzalo Fuentes



A protestor confronts police, who used tear gas to disperse crowds as people marched to protest against President Abdelaziz Bouteflika's plan to seek a fifth term, in Algiers



A logo is shown on the front window of the Orchids of Asia Day Spa in Jupiter, Florida, U.S. February 22, 2019. REUTERS/Joe Skipper



A man is carried away as police use tear gas to disperse crowds as people march to protest against President Abdelaziz Bouteflika's plan to seek a fifth term in Algiers



Feb 22, 2019; Peoria, AZ, USA; San Diego Padres manager Andy Green (14) looks on during live batting practice at the Peoria Sports Complex. Mandatory Credit: Jayne Kamin-Oncea-USA TODAY Sports



Kad Merad attends the 44th Cesar Awards Ceremony, in Paris, France February 22, 2019. REUTERS/Gonzalo Fuentes

The Alief International Academy opened this fall at the Elsik Ninth Grade Center as a school within a school.

The enrollment goal of 75 - 100 students was set for 9th graders entering in the fall who were interested in getting a global education.



The International Academy continues to recruit new students every day. We look for students who are interested in learning about what the Asia Society has termed GLOBAL COMPETENCE

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*recognize different perspectives
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Alief International Academy - A School Within A School In Alief ISD

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



a chance for students to earn college hours through both Dual Credit classes and eventually AP classes in 11th & 12th grade. Language options for a student's four-year language requirement will include Mandarin or Spanish.

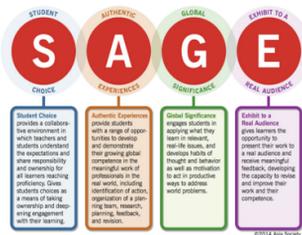


Alief International Academy 2018 signing day.

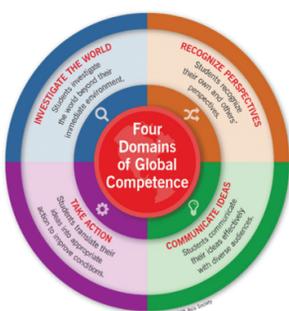
MISSION STATEMENT The Alief International Academy will develop multilingual, globally compe-

tent college and career ready students who are empowered to think critically while engaging in global issues so they can thrive in a competitive global society.

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o Engage globally
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Alief International Academy team. More than ever before, individual actions reach around the globe.

ic shifts, global poverty, population growth, human rights, and political conflict can seem intractable and overwhelming, yet they absolutely require thoughtful action.

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Advertisement for smoking cessation with a man's face and Chinese text: 想改變肺功能擔心戒煙不... 戒煙與否不用煩 來電馬上解疑難 1.800 838.8917

Advertisement for Ocean Palace restaurant with Chinese text: 珍寶 珍寶海鮮城 天天茶市 正宗粵菜 港式點心 二樓大型豪華宴會廳 大型舞台,可容納百餘席

**Trump Declares The New York Times
'Enemy Of The People'**



Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

President Trump on Wednesday labeled The New York Times “a true enemy of the people” one day after an extensive report detailing the ways in which he has sought to influence the investigations into his presidency and allies.

“The New York Times reporting is false,” Trump tweeted. “They are a true ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE!” The president did not refute any specific reporting from the Times.

The newspaper reported Tuesday that Trump asked then-acting Attorney General Matthew Whitaker late last year to put U.S. Attorney Geoffrey Berman in charge of the investigation in New York’s Southern District into Trump’s former lawyer Michael Cohen.

Berman, an ally of Trump who donated to his 2016 campaign, had been recused from the investigation, and Whitaker did not act on Trump’s request.

Donald J. Trump
@realDonaldTrump

The New York Times reporting is false. They are a true ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE!

37.4K
7:49 AM - Feb 20, 2019

Twitter Ads info and privacy
24.4K people are talking about this

Trump dismissed the report when asked about it Tuesday afternoon.

“I don’t know who gave you that,” Trump said, calling the report “fake news.”

A Justice Department spokeswoman said in a statement that the White House has not asked Whitaker to interfere in investigations, pointing to his congressional testimony from earlier this month indicating as much. The Times did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the president’s tweet.

Donald J. Trump
@realDonaldTrump

The Press has never been more dishonest than it is today. Stories are

written that have absolutely no basis in fact. The writers don’t even call asking for verification. They are totally out of control. Sadly, I kept many of them in business. In six years, they all go BUST!

59.5K
6:20 AM - Feb 20, 2019

Twitter Ads info and privacy
26.9K people are talking about this

Trump has a well-documented track record of attacking the press, and the Times in particular. He has called negative coverage of him and his administration “fake news” and referred to reporters and news outlets as the “enemy of the people.”

Earlier Wednesday morning, the president claimed that writers “don’t even call asking for verification.”

The New York Times report on Trump’s request to put Berman in charge of the Cohen investigation noted that the White House did not respond when given an opportunity to provide comment before publication.

The president has applied both terms to his hometown newspaper, but has at times praised the publication. “What’s more important than The New York Times? OK, nothing. Nothing,” Trump said during an Oval Office interview late last month with Times reporters Maggie Haberman and Peter Baker.

During that same sit-down, New York Times publisher A.G. Sulzberger raised concerns about the president’s use of anti-press rhetoric, including the term “enemy of the people.”

Sulzberger cautioned Trump that his comments had given license to global leaders to crack down on the media.



Trump acknowledged Sulzberger’s comments and responded by complaining at length about the coverage his administration has received.

“What you do is a very important thing,” Trump said. “And I will tell you, I would love if I was just covered fairly.”

The president’s latest criticism of the Times was part of a series of invectives

directed at the press Wednesday morning.

In another tweet, he claimed that writers “don’t even call asking for verification.”

The New York Times report on Trump’s request to put Berman in charge of the Cohen investigation noted that the White House did not respond when given an opportunity to provide comment before publication.

Haberman, who co-authored the report, added in her own tweet that the White House chose not to comment before the report was published.



The president on Wednesday morning also cheered a lawsuit against another of his favorite targets for criticism, The Washington Post.

Nick Sandmann, a Catholic high school student from Covington, Ky., who was at the center of a viral encounter with a Native American elder earlier this year, is suing the company for \$250 million over its reporting on the interaction.

The lawsuit alleges that the Post published “a series of false and defamatory print and online articles” and alleged that it did so “because he was the white, Catholic student wearing a red ‘Make America Great Again’ souvenir cap.” (Courtesy thehill.com)

“Go get them Nick,” Trump tweeted. “Fake News!” (Courtesy the hill.com and msn.com)



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