

2 accused in ex-Nissan boss' escape denied release from jail

Two American men wanted by Japan on charges that they helped sneak former Nissan Motor Co. Chairman Carlos Ghosn out of the country in a box have again been denied release from a U.S. jail.

U.S. District Judge Indira Talwani on Friday rejected a bid to free Michael Taylor, a 59-year-old U.S. Army Special Forces veteran, and his 27-year-old son, Peter Taylor, on bail while they fight their extradition to Japan.

While the Taylors may well seek to remain in the United States to fight extradition through available legal channels, they have also shown a blatant disregard for such safeguards in the context of the Japanese legal system and have not established sufficiently that if they find their extradition fight difficult, they will not flaunt the rules of release on bail and flee the country," Talwani wrote.

An attorney for the Taylors declined to comment Saturday.

Their lawyers have said the men have no plans to flee and argue their health is at risk behind bars because of the coronavirus pandemic. The Taylors have been locked up in a Massachusetts jail since their arrest in May.

Authorities say the Taylors helped smuggle Ghosn out of the Japan on a private jet while he was on bail and awaiting trial on financial misconduct allegations.

With the former Nissan boss hidden in a large box, the flight went first to Turkey,

then to Lebanon, where Ghosn has citizenship but which has no extradition treaty with Japan.

Ghosn said he fled because he could not expect a fair trial, was subjected to unfair conditions in detention and was barred from meeting his wife under his bail conditions.

Ghosn has denied allegations that he underreported his future income and committed a breach of trust by diverting Nissan money for his personal gain.

The Taylors have not denied helping

Ghosn flee, but argue they can't be extradited. Among other things, they say that "bail jumping" is not a crime in Japan and, therefore, helping someone evade their bail conditions isn't a crime either.

In a court filing on Friday, federal prosecutors urged Magistrate Judge Donald Cabell to rule that the men can be legally extradited. The U.S. Secretary of State will make the final decision on whether they will be handed over to Japan. (AP)

Almost 600,000 laid off workers had filed for unemployment benefit

Nevada OK's bill to expand jobless benefits eligibility

Mexico's business owners 'struggling' in pandemic with little help from govt



Relatives say goodbye to a 63-year-old man who died from a heart attack, which his family said was unrelated to COVID-19, at Xilotepec Cemetery in Xochimilco, Mexico City on July 27, 2020. (AP)

CARSON CITY, Nevada, Aug 9, (AP): Nevada lawmakers passed a bill to expand eligibility for unemployment benefits to workers who decide returning to their jobs amid the coronavirus pandemic is too risky.

"What this intends to do is to allow people to not have to choose between their jobs and their lives," said Francisco Morales, who presented the bill on behalf of Gov. Steve Sisolak's office.

Throughout the Legislature's special session, both Republicans and Democrats have said fixing Nevada's problem-ridden unemployment insurance system is a top priority.

After years of growth, the pandemic propelled Nevada's economy into a tailspin. With businesses closed and visitor volume down in Las Vegas, unemployment shot up to a nation-topping 28.2% in April. The unemployment rate fell to 15% in June.

Balky technology, jammed phone lines and confusion over eligibility have hamstrung the Department of Employment, Training and Rehabilitation in its efforts to distribute benefits to unemployed Nevada residents. Unfulfilled claims and an interminable backlog have sparked outrage and left Nevada residents struggling to make ends meet without benefits they're entitled to.

The 19-page bill was made public moments before it was first heard in the state Senate late on Sunday night,

denying lawmakers time to review it before asking questions.

Most questions from Republican lawmakers revolved around fraud concerns, while Democrats focused primarily on how to expedite payouts on claims that have faced long delays.

As of July 25, almost 600,000 laid off workers had filed for unemployment in Nevada since the onset of the pandemic, however administrators admit that anywhere from hundreds to hundreds of thousands could be fraudulent. The state has paid a total of \$6.2 billion in unemployment insurance and the federal government's \$600 pandemic supplement. Administrators say the unemployment trust fund could be depleted as soon as September, forcing the state to borrow to continue to fulfill claims.

If signed into law, Senate Bill 3 will provide employment department administrators additional flexibility to create emergency regulations to help reduce the backlog and accelerate payouts.

It adapts rules that make people who deny offers to return to work without "good cause" ineligible for unemployment benefits. The bill redefines "good cause" to include COVID-19 and, by doing so, allows immunocompromised individuals, parents without day care or people who live with high-risk family members to remain eligible for unemployment if they don't return to work.

Teladoc Health to spend \$18.5 billion on 'Livongo'

NEW YORK, Aug 9, (AP): One of the nation's biggest telemedicine providers will spend more than \$18 billion to stoke an approach to care that grew explosively during the pandemic and recently received an endorsement from President Donald Trump.

Teladoc Health Inc plans to dive deep into managing the health of patients with diabetes and high blood pressure with a cash-and-stock deal for Livongo Health that's expected to close later this year.

Telemedicine involves care delivered remotely, often with a live video connection through patient smartphones or tablets. Millions of patients were forced to try it for everything from routine care to checkups with specialists after COVID-19 shut down much of the economy earlier this year.

Teladoc said late last month that its total visits tripled in the recently completed second quarter to 2.8 million, and revenue grew 85%. The company also said it expects gains to spill over into 2021, when it projects revenue growth of between 30% and 40%.

Telemedicine has been around for years, and a growing number of employers have offered it to their workers as a way to save money and improve their access to care.

The practice was relatively slow to catch on with many patients before COVID-19. But now there's growing momentum to keep at least some of

telemedicine's gains after the pandemic finally fades.

The Trump administration announced on Monday that it was taking steps to give telehealth a broader role for patients who live in rural communities and are covered by the federal government's Medicare program for those age 65 and older.

There's also bipartisan support in Congress for a broader expansion of telemedicine coverage to make it a more regular option for people living in cities and suburbs.

Health care researchers also say they expect the practice to play a greater role in health care once the pandemic finally fades. That's partly because people have become more used to it, and they may be more wary now of sitting in waiting rooms filled with other sick patients.

But before that happens, health insurers need to figure out whether they should make some pandemic-driven coverage expansions of telemedicine permanent and how much they should pay for the practice.

Doctors also see a greater role for telemedicine in monitoring people with chronic conditions like high blood pressure or diabetes. That could involve remotely checking blood pressure or blood sugar levels to detect abnormal changes.

In those cases, a nurse might call a patient when a change is detected to see if that person needs help.

'The recession means unemployment, means desperation'

MEXICO CITY, Aug 9, (AP): Mexican business owners are trying to cling to life - often unsuccessfully - in an economic recession profoundly deepened by the COVID-19 pandemic and with almost no assistance from the government.

Business owners report extending credit to clients while laying off workers, cutting their hours or reducing their salaries.

The National Small Business Alliance said Tuesday that more than 150,000 mostly small businesses have been forced to close amid the pandemic. Last week, the government's statistical agency said that 92% of businesses of all sizes reported they hadn't received any government support in April and May due to the pandemic, according to its most recent survey.

According to the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Mexican government increased spending to confront

the pandemic's economic effects by just 1.1% of its gross domestic product, among the lowest in the entire region. Meanwhile, the administration has stuck to its austerity goals, which have included lowering the salaries of many government workers.

"The economic recession through which the country is passing is of a greater dimension than what the government is doing now," said Cuauhtémoc Rivera, president of the small business alliance, which counts some 95,000 members.

Rivera's alliance represents the neighborhood shops - corner stores, tortilla makers, butchers - who are closest to the consumers, many running family businesses out of their own homes. They're seeing their clients struggle, increasingly buying essentials on credit and appearing emotionally exhausted, he said.

Their most recent survey, presented Tuesday, showed that 79% of business owners said their clients didn't have enough money to cover the basic food basket, he said.

"The recession means unemployment, means desperation," Rivera said. "The people don't have the energy to restart the engine."

But Mexico's cheerleader-in-chief,

President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, assures that the worst is over. "I believe we've already hit bottom," López Obrador said Friday. "I would tell you that the worst was at the end of April." In April, Mexico lost 555,000 jobs in the formal economy, about half of the formal jobs lost so far.

However, López Obrador notes often that more than half of workers toil in the informal economy, where estimates are that many times that number have lost their employment.

The president has maintained throughout that significant financial support to businesses would only result in corruption. Instead, he has offered \$1,000 in low-interest credits to small businesses, as well as credits to some workers in the informal sector.

The government response has been panned by businesses big and small as insufficient.

López Obrador instead has pushed to reopen the economy quickly even as COVID-19 infections and deaths continue to rise. The government has reported nearly 400,000 confirmed infections and more than 44,000 deaths, both considered significant undercounts due to a lack of widespread testing.

Papamía restaurant, a 10-table breakfast and lunch spot offering affordable set menu options, is usually busy with office workers. But with most of those offices still closed it is only making about 30% of the sales it made before the pandemic, said owner Minerva de la Garza González.

It remained open throughout the pandemic, though for months it was only allowed to fill takeout orders. So far, de la Garza has been able to stay open on the savings she had accumulated, but said Monday she had burned through that now.

She reduced her employees' pay - they knew they wouldn't find work elsewhere - and her landlord has so far let her slide on the rent, but she feels the weight of the accumulating debt.

If sales don't pick up by the middle of August, she said, she's not sure she'll be able to hang on. She said the government is doing well in a difficult situation, but she hasn't sought what little government help is available.

"Not because I don't need it or want it, but I feel like there are other people who more urgently (need it) than me," she said.

exchange rates - Aug 09

Table of exchange rates for various currencies including US dollar, Sterling pound, Euro, Japanese yen, Swiss franc, Canadian dollar, Swedish krona, Saudi riyal, UAE dirham, Bahraini dinar, Omani riyal, Danish krone, Indian rupee, Pakistani rupee, Sri Lankan rupee, Bangladesh taka, Philippine peso, Australian dollar, Hong Kong dollar, Singapore dollar, Jordanian dinar, Egyptian pound, Cyprus pound, Yemeni riyal, Thai baht, South African rand, Korean won, Syrian pound, Iranian Riyal, Lebanese pound, Malaysian ringgit, Indonesian rupiah, and New Zealand dollar. It also includes a section for travellers cheques and local gold prices.