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Subject: WEEKLY ROUNDUP

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The United States Department of Justice

WEEKLY ROUNDUP

[Attorney General Barr: Prioritize investigations of fraudsters exploiting coronavirus pandemic](#)

David Shortell

CNN

Excerpt:

Attorney General William Barr directed federal prosecutors on Monday to prioritize investigations of fraudsters and hackers exploiting the coronavirus pandemic.

In a memo sent to US attorneys nationwide, Barr cited reports of fake cures for the virus being sold online and email scams from people posing as public health officials as crimes that "cannot be tolerated."

"The pandemic is dangerous enough without wrongdoers seeking to profit from public panic and this sort of conduct cannot be tolerated," Barr wrote. "It is essential that the Department of Justice remain vigilant in detecting, investigating, and prosecuting wrongdoing related to the crisis."

<https://edition.cnn.com/2020/03/16/politics/barr-investigate-fraudsters/index.html>

Related Coverage:

[Reuters](#), [Washington Examiner](#)

[Amid the coronavirus pandemic, scammers are looking to cash in.](#)

[VIDEO]

Pete Williams

NBC News

To watch, click [here](#) or [here](#).

[Barr: FBI probing if foreign gov't behind HHS cyber incident](#)

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AP

Excerpt:

Attorney General William Barr vowed in an interview with The Associated Press on Tuesday that there would be swift and severe action if a foreign government is behind disinformation campaigns aimed at spreading fear in the U.S. amid the coronavirus pandemic or a denial of service attack on the networks of the Department of Health and Human Services.

"Our primary role right now is to investigate," Barr said. "The FBI is very active, trying to determine who is responsible for these things."

U.S. national security officials said Monday there had been a “cyber incident” involving the computer networks of the Health and Human Services Department, but the networks were operating normally. They didn’t detail the scope of the incident, but HHS Secretary Alex Azar later said the networks were not penetrated and that the department has taken strong defensive action.

<https://apnews.com/25dfa8052209e1970db7f5a58913657b>

Related Coverage:

[ABC, Washington Examiner](#)

[Barr creating task force on prison misconduct](#)



AP

Excerpt:

The Justice Department is creating a special task force to address criminal misconduct by federal Bureau of Prison officers at several correctional facilities after a loaded gun was found at the same jail where wealthy financier Jeffrey Epstein killed himself, Attorney General William Barr told The Associated Press. In an interview with the AP, Barr said he was planning to establish the task force that would “have a very aggressive review of potential misconduct by correction officers in certain institutions around the country.”

<https://apnews.com/ec3e62cc13269650022399ca7cde4213>

[Businessman Convicted of Tax Fraud in Scheme With Polygamist Sect Member](#)

Byron Tau

WSJ

Excerpt:

A Los Angeles businessman was convicted on Monday of a billion-dollar tax fraud scheme, after a lengthy trial featuring testimony about international money laundering and a Utah polygamist sect.

Lev Aslan Dermen, who owned a fuel company that ran truck stops and gas stations, was found guilty by a federal jury in Salt Lake City on several counts of conspiracy and money laundering. He faces up to 20 years in prison on the most serious charge, though defendants in such cases are rarely given the maximum sentence.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/businessman-convicted-of-tax-fraud-in-scheme-with-polygamist-sect-member-11584408726>

Related Coverage:

[LAT](#), [Law360](#)

'The dream was empty': Green energy scams target celebrities, seniors and do-gooders

Marjie Lundstrom

FairWarning

Excerpt:

Deborah Murray was the new economic development director of Caldwell County, North Carolina, when Robert Leslie Stencil came calling in early 2012.

The county, in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, was hurting: Unemployment was mired in the double digits. Some 10,000 jobs had evaporated in the previous decade, and 6 million square feet of buildings sat vacant — most of them furniture factories, closed by the mass migration of manufacturing jobs overseas, she said.

“We were at our most vulnerable time as a community back then,” Murray said.

Then along came Stencil, a Charlotte man peddling hope with a 21st century pitch to open an auto manufacturing plant for electric cars and plans to convert regular vehicles to run on compressed natural gas. Murray said Stencil, the founder of Niyato Industries, told her he needed a building for his enterprise that could create 200 to 300 “highly skilled” jobs.

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/hype-hope-promise-how-green-energy-scams-trick-investors-rake-n1157701>

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