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Monday, June 26

Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study at 6:30 a.m.

Senior Menu: Chicken rice casserole, green beans, spinach salad, chocolate pudding with bananas, whole wheat bread.

Groton School: School board meeting, 7 p.m.

U12: at Webster for 2 games, 6 p.m., at the new complex

U10: at Webster for 2 games, 6 p.m., at the new complex

U8 Blue: at Webster for 2 games, 6 p.m., at the old field

Softball: Hosts Ellendale, (U10 at 6 p.m., U12 at 7 p.m.)

Olive Grove: Kid's lessons, 9:30 a.m.-10:15 a.m. and 10:15 a.m. to 11 a.m.

27

Senior Menu: Breaded codfish, parsley buttered potatoes, creamy coleslaw, sherbet, whole wheat bread.

T-Ball: both teams Scrimmage in Groton, 6 p.m.

Legion: hosts Milbank for 2 games, 6 p.m.

Jr. Teener: at Sisseton for 2 games, 6 p.m.

U12: vs. Welke at Aberdeen, 6 p.m., for 2 games.

Olive Grove: Ladies Night, potluck, 6 p.m.; Noon Bridge.

28

Senior Menu: Meatloaf, baked potato with sour cream, creamed peas, fruited Jell-O with salad, whole wheat bread.

United Methodist: Wednesday Coffee Time, 9 a.m.; Kid Zone Camp, 7 p.m.

Outdoor Story Time: at the Little Free Library located south of the Methodist Church, 10:30 a.m.

Jr. Teener: hosts Webster for 2 games, 6 p.m.

Olive Grove: Men's League, 6 p.m.

Open: Recycling Trailer in Groton
The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave.

The cardboard/paper
recycling trailer at the school is **Open**

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“It's the possibility
of having a dream
come true
that makes life
interesting.”

-Paulo Coelho



Chicken Soup
for the *Soul*

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Weekly Vikings Roundup

By Jordan Wright

The Minnesota Vikings have many of their positions set (barring an injury, knock on wood). We all know Sam Bradford will be the quarterback when the season starts, we know Kyle Rudolph will be the team's starting tight end, we know Harrison Smith will be one of the starters at safety... and so on. However, just like every team around the league, the Vikings enter the 2017 season with some positional battles, many of which will be hard-fought and will last through the preseason. For the next few weeks, I'll be breaking down the biggest position battles entering training camp.

Since 2007, the Vikings have had the luxury of the best running back in the league on their roster, so it's never been a question as to who the starter would be. However, the team released Adrian Peterson this past season, ushering in a new era. The Vikings brought in Latavius Murray during free agency, then proceeded to draft Dalvin Cook with their first pick of the draft. Both Murray and Cook will be competing with Jerick McKinnon to earn snaps at RB this season.

In all likelihood, the Vikings will finally incorporate a running back by committee approach, electing to split the carries between the three players. Each player has their own strengths and weaknesses, so it will be imperative that the Vikings put each player in a position to succeed this season.

Latavius Murray should become the team's goal line back, as he is the biggest of the three (6'3", 225 pounds) and has a knack of finding the endzone. Murray scored 12 touchdowns last season, with most of them coming from short-yardage situations. Murray could also be used on some passing situations, since he is a decent pass catcher and was also one of the best pass-blocking running backs in the NFL last season according to Pro Football Focus.

Dalvin Cook was considered by most to be one of the best running backs in the 2017 NFL draft. He slipped to the second round because of some off the field issues, but the Vikings liked what they saw and decided to trade up and select him. Cook (5'10" 210 pounds) is a big play waiting to happen every time he touches the ball. He needs to work on his inside running and reducing his fumbles, but his explosiveness and ability to make defenders miss make him a special talent. I'm not sure he'll ever develop into a "bell cow" running back who carries the ball 25-30 times per game, but his talent will force the coaching staff to get him on the field as much as possible.

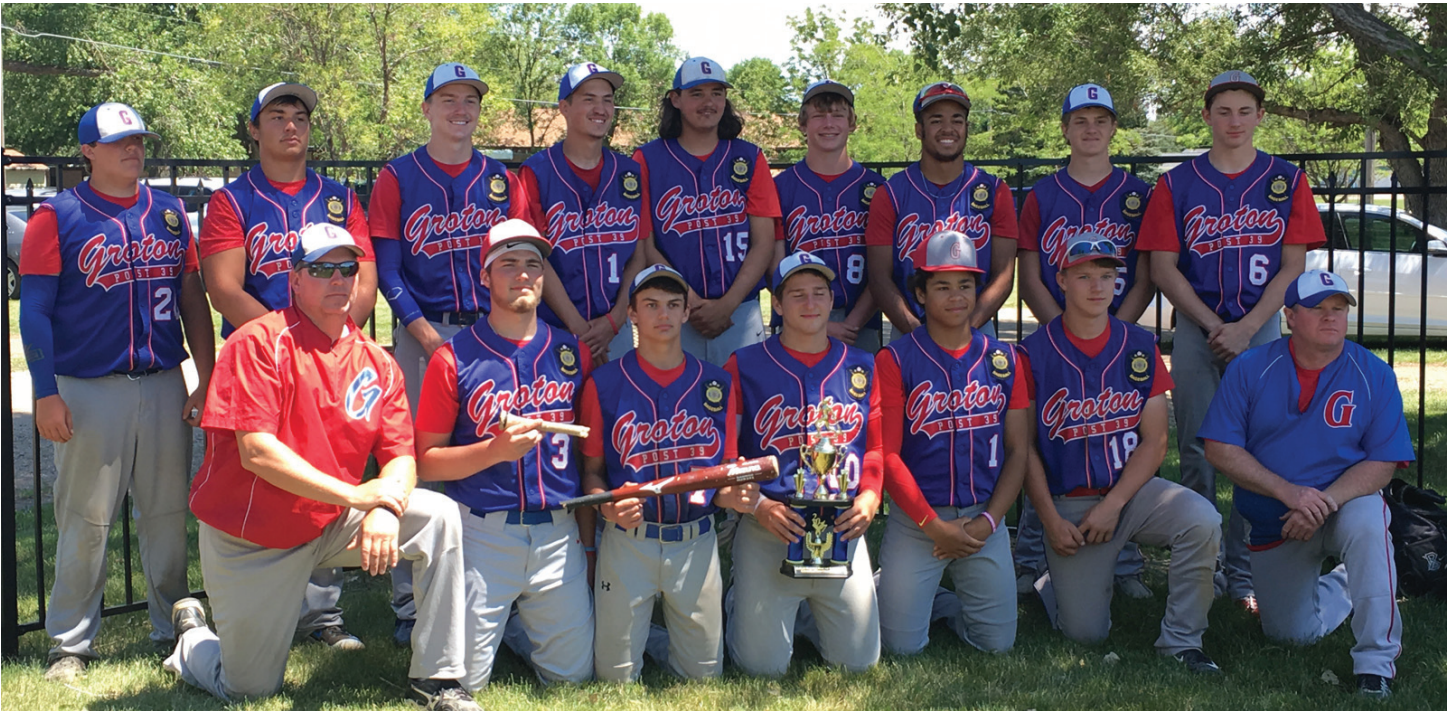
Jerick McKinnon is the wildcard of the bunch. McKinnon is the smallest of the group (5'9", 205 pounds), but is the quickest and best at catching the ball out of the backfield. Everyone wants to automatically count McKinnon out, but he has proven time and time again that he has what it takes to be a solid running back in the NFL. He will likely be used as a change-of-pace back, someone who can come in and be productive both on the ground and through the air.

I predict there won't be a clear-cut winner at running back this season. I think Murray will be listed as the week 1 starter, but the snaps will be pretty evenly distributed. For fantasy football purposes, none of the Vikings' running backs will be drafted high, but Murray will likely lead the team in fantasy points from the position since he'll be in the best position to plunge the ball in from the goal line. The Vikings will likely bring Cook along slowly, but by midseason he should overtake Murray as the starter. If I had to guess, I'd say Murray will get 40 percent of the team's carries this season, with Cook getting 35 percent and McKinnon getting 25 percent.

What do you think? Let me know by reaching out to me on Facebook ([facebook.com/SkolJWright](https://www.facebook.com/SkolJWright)) or on Twitter (@SkolJWright)!

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In back, left to right, are Wyatt Locke, Luke Thorson, Sean Schuring, Truitt Rogers, Aaron Severson, Austin Jones, Bennett Shabazz, Anthony Sippel and Garrett Schroeder; in front, left to right, are Coach Bary Keith, Peyton Johnson, Korbin Blackmun, Brandon Keith, Darien Shabazz, Caleb Furney, and head coach Travis Kurth. (Courtesy photo)

Groton Post #39 takes 5th at Redfield Tourney

Groton Post #39 defeated Claremont-Britton at the Redfield Tourney on Sunday with a 11-8 win. The win gave Groton the consolation championship trophy.

Bennett Shabazz had three singles, Aaron Severson added two singles, Brandon Keith and Luke Thorson each had a double and Sean Schuring, Wyatt Locke and Korbin Blackmun each had a single. Anthony Sippel was the pitcher with four strike-outs, six walks and 12 hits. Wyatt Locke was the catcher.

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Today in Weather History

June 26, 1998: Heavy rains of 2 to 5 inches fell across much of northern and eastern Brown, western and northern Day and all of Marshall County during the afternoon and evening hours. The additional heavy rain only exacerbated the flooding which had been occurring over much of this area for years. Kidder, in northern Marshall County, received up to 5 inches of rain on the 26th after receiving around 2 inches on the 25th. The heavy rain on the 26th flooded the whole town, filling nearly every basement. One resident had the basement walls cave in. Areas of Britton were also flooded with water in many basements. The heavy rains added to the already thousands of acres of crop and pastureland under water. One farmer in Day County, near Webster, had documented over one-half million dollars in damages to fences, buildings, land, and income from the prolonged flooding. On his farm, he had 15 buildings under water. This farmer said the highest he had measured the water from flooding was 9 feet, but for this year it had gone up to 21 feet. As a result of this and past heavy rains and also many years of above average precipitation, about 22 percent of the total farm and pastureland acres in the three counties were flooded or too wet to farm. Some rainfall amounts included 2.30 inches at Sand Lake NWR, 2.7 inches at Langford, 2.95 inches at Groton, 3.5 inches northwest of Bristol, and 5.10 inches 9N 9W of Britton.

June 26, 2008: During the evening hours, a compact upper-level low-pressure system tracking through the Northern Plains interacted with a very moist and unstable air mass over western and central South Dakota resulting in a widespread severe weather outbreak. Three confirmed tornadoes occurred briefly in western Dewey County. Little or no damage was reported, and all three tornadoes were rated EF0. In addition to the tornadoes, multiple reports of large hail were received over Corson and Dewey Counties, including some to the size of baseballs near the communities of McLaughlin and Isabel. The large hail broke out many home and vehicle windows and damaged many roofs in Dewey, Corson, and Sully Counties. Significant wind damage occurred over sections of Sully County. There were multiple reports of wind gusts more than 70 mph, with the most concentrated swath of damaging winds extending from near Sutton Bay, eastward to the city of Onida, then southeast to the community of Harrold. The storm survey began near Sutton Bay on Lake Oahe, where a wind gust of 92 mph was recorded. The most significant property damage was found further east near the community of Agar where multiple grain bins were either damaged or destroyed. Nine miles west of Agar, a barn was destroyed, and a large pine tree was snapped in half. Winds in this area were estimated to range from 80 to 100 mph. Near the intersection of Highways 1804 and 175th Street, several Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) electrical transmission towers were completely collapsed. The damage is consistent with wind speeds ranging from 130-140 mph. In the city of Onida, a bank roof was damaged, and the city was without power until the next day. Four miles north of Onida, a feed wagon was tossed nearly 40 feet. In Harrold, several railroad cars were tipped over. Also of great significance during the event was the peak wind speed of 124 mph recorded at the Onida airport. This wind speed is the strongest wind gust ever measured in the Aberdeen County Warning Area and the 4th highest wind speed ever reported in South Dakota.

1807: Lightning strikes a gunpowder factory in the small European country of Luxembourg, killing more than 300 people. The Luxembourg disaster may have been the most deadly lightning strike in history. Click [HERE](#) for more information from the History Channel.

1888 - Residents of New York suffered through a record heat wave. Daily average temperatures were above 80 degrees for fourteen straight days. The heat wave was a sharp contrast to the severe blizzard in March of that year, which buried the city under nearly two feet of snow. (David Ludlum)








1977 - The Human Lightning Conductor, park ranger Roy C. Sullivan, was struck by lightning for the seventh time. He was first hit in 1942, then again in 1970, 1972, 1973 and 1976. (The Weather Channel)


1983 - Record heat prevailed from Texas to Michigan. Alpena MI hit 98 degrees. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1986: Hurricane Bonnie made landfall on the upper Texas coast. A wind gust to 98 mph occurred at Sea Rim State Park. Ace, Texas recorded a total of 13 inches of rain.


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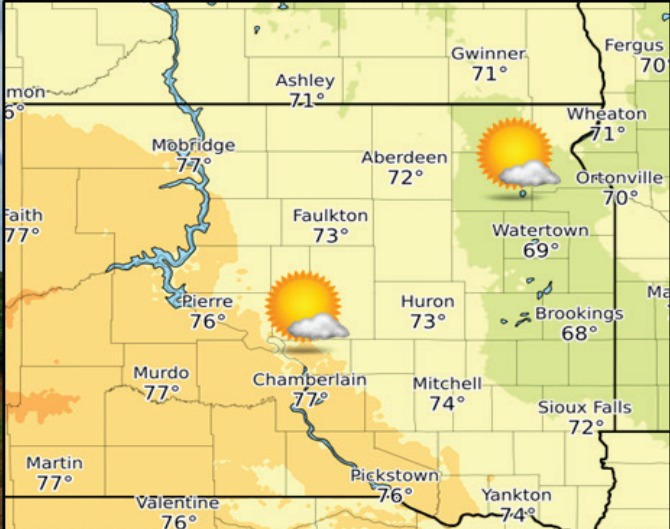
Today	Tonight	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday
						
Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny and Breezy	Chance T-storms and Breezy	Slight Chance T-storms	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny then Slight Chance T-storms
High: 72 °F	Low: 48 °F	High: 84 °F	Low: 64 °F	High: 82 °F	Low: 57 °F	High: 79 °F



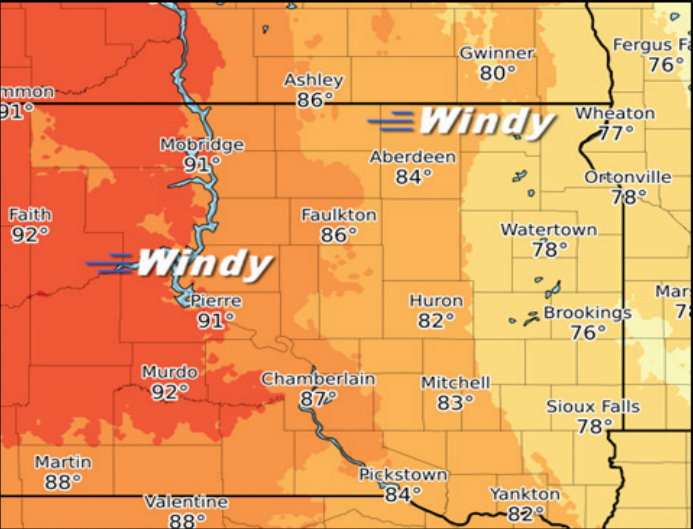
Pleasant Today, Warm and Windy On Tuesday




Today's Highs





Tuesday's Highs



Temperatures Still Below Normal Today



National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD

Updated: 6/26/2017 5:41 AM Central

Published on: 06/26/2017 at 5:45AM

High pressure will bring generally light winds and dry conditions to the region today, along with pleasant temperatures. Highs will range from the upper 60s east to the upper 70s west, although these readings are still a bit below normal. Warmer temperatures will move in on Tuesday, along with increasing southerly winds. Winds will become rather gusty by afternoon as temperatures rise into the 80s for most areas. Central South Dakota will peak around 90 degrees on Tuesday. Potential exists for strong to severe storms by Tuesday evening and overnight as a cold front moves through the region.

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 65.6 F at 1:20 PM

Low Outside Temp: 44.1 F at 5:50 AM

High Gust: 17.0 Mph at 12:09 PM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 109° in 1933

Record Low: 40° in 1907

Average High: 81°F

Average Low: 57°F

Average Precip in June: 3.22

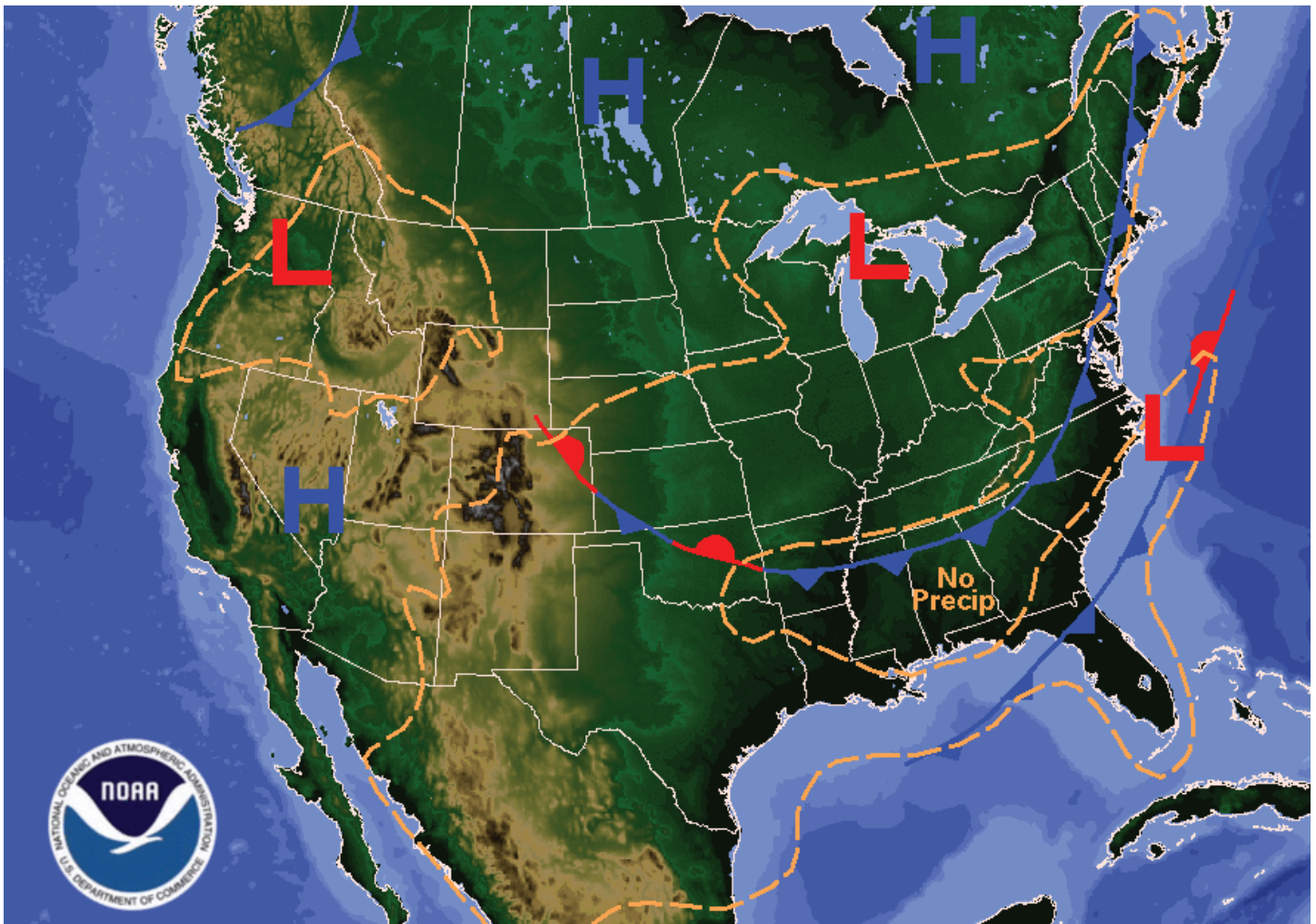
Precip to date in June: 2.52

Average Precip to date: 10.36

Precip Year to Date: 5.71

Sunset Tonight: 9:26 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:47 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Mon, Jun 26, 2017, issued 4:41 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McCreynolds with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

Rain
Rain and T'Storms
Rain and Snow
Snow

Flash Flooding Possible (hatched)
Severe T'Storms Possible (hatched)
Freezing Rain Possible (hatched)
Heavy Snow Possible (hatched)

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THE SIGNS OF A GRATEFUL HEART

An attitude of gratitude is always obvious. If we are grateful for what God has done for us and given to us, others will see our appreciation of it in everything we do. David gave us a fourfold formula to follow.

"I will thank You Lord, with all my heart." The thanksgiving he describes is total and consumes all of his being – his entire self. The word he used for heart would include his consciousness of God's presence, his memory of God's goodness and his awareness of God's grace. He worshiped God with excitement, enthusiasm and expectation.

"I will tell all of the marvelous things You have done." Marvelous comes from a word that means "extraordinary, not to be surpassed by anyone and always wonderful!" He is so overwhelmed by God's blessings on his life that he wants everyone to hear about it.

"I will be filled with joy!" Joy is the natural state of the one who trusts in the Lord. Knowing that "all things work together for our good" should cause His joy to radiate from our hearts into our heads and out through our hands. Everything we do should be done with a smile on our face and gladness in our eyes.

"I will sing praises to Your Name, O Most High." Notice that there is only one letter different between the word "sin" and "sing" – the letter "g" – that stands for God. When we give up sin for the Savior, God gives us a new song to sing. It is a song about the Savior who loves us, gave Himself for us, is present in us and cares for us.

Prayer: Lord, we rejoice in the goodness and grace of our salvation. May we always have a grateful heart. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 9:2 I will be glad and rejoice in you; I will sing the praises of your name, O Most High.

News from the Associated Press

Police: Man threatens children with gun in Sioux Falls

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A man is under arrest after police say he threatened his children with a gun in Sioux Falls.

Law officers responded late Saturday to a report of an intoxicated man who had allegedly threatened his children with a firearm in a northeast Sioux Falls neighborhood. Authorities believed the man was still inside the home with several children, so surrounding roads were shut down and a perimeter was established.

But authorities learned the man had left in a vehicle before officers arrived. He was eventually located and arrested in Minnehaha County without incident.

The children were all located. One had minor injuries and was treated at the scene.

The man is being held on suspicion of assault and possession of a firearm while intoxicated.

Car hits, injures 2 pedestrian in Sioux Falls

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Sioux Falls police say a car struck and injured two pedestrians in a late-night hit-and-run.

Police and paramedics were called late Saturday and found a man and a woman lying in the street. The man was conscious but had suffered a broken leg and internal injuries. The woman had multiple broken bones and was not conscious or breathing.

Officers began CPR on the woman. Both victims were taken to Avera McKennan Hospital, where medical personnel were able to revive and stabilize the woman.

Investigators were called to reconstruct the accident scene. Witnesses describe the vehicle as a four-door blue sedan. Two males were seen in the car at the time of the crash.

Dakota Access review to re-examine impact on tribe

By BLAKE NICHOLSON, Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — A federal judge's order for more environmental review of the already-operating Dakota Access oil pipeline has several potential outcomes, all of which could spark even more wrangling in a Washington, D.C., court room. The big question is whether the pipeline will be shut down while the case plays out — and if so, for how long.

Some questions and answers about the case:

WHAT IS THE PIPELINE AGAIN?

The \$3.8 billion pipeline built by Texas-based Energy Transfer Partners moves oil from western North Dakota to a distribution point in Illinois, where it can be shipped to the Gulf Coast and potentially lucrative markets abroad. It began operating June 1 and has the capacity to move half of North Dakota's daily oil production. American Indian tribes in the Dakotas fear environmental and cultural harm — which ETP disputes — and are trying to persuade a federal judge to shut down the line that they've been battling nearly a year.

WHY IS THE COURT CASE STILL UNRESOLVED?

U.S. District Judge James Boasberg on June 14 ruled that the Army Corps of Engineers "largely complied" with environmental law when permitting the pipeline. But he also said they didn't adequately consider how an oil spill under the Missouri River might affect the Standing Rock Sioux tribe's fishing and hunting rights, or whether it might disproportionately affect the tribal community — a concept known as environmental justice. That aims to ensure development projects aren't built in areas where minority populations might not have the resources to defend their rights.

In its analysis of the Missouri River crossing, the Corps studied the mostly white demographics in a half-mile (0.8-kilometer) radius, which the agency maintains is standard. But if the agency had gone another

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88 yards (80 meters) — about the length of a football field — the study would have included the Standing Rock Reservation. The tribe accuses the Corps of gerrymandering.

Boasberg has ordered the Corps to reconsider those areas of its environmental analysis.

HOW BIG A DEAL IS THIS, REALLY?

It depends on whom you ask.

The Standing Rock tribe and its supporters have hailed it as a major victory.

But ETP spokeswoman Lisa Dillinger said the company “believes the record supports the fact that the Corps properly evaluated both issues.” And Justice Department spokeswoman Nicole Navas Oxman said attorneys will “continue vigorously defending the government’s actions.”

The White House said the administration is confident the federal analysis of the pipeline’s environmental impact is legally sound.

WILL THE ADDITIONAL REVIEW AFFECT PIPELINE OPERATIONS?

It might.

To shut down the pipeline, Boasberg would have to invalidate the Corps’ permission for the project while the agency does its review. He appears hesitant to do that, saying it “would carry serious consequences that a court should not lightly impose.”

The judge isn’t rushing to a decision. His schedule has both sides submitting written arguments in July and August.

ETP has expressed confidence that he won’t stop the pipeline in the meantime.

HOW WILL THE ADDITIONAL REVIEW PLAY OUT?

The tribes maintain that the “lawful” way to resolve it is through a full environmental study, which the Corps had planned to do before President Donald Trump took office and pushed through completion. If the Corps simply revises its analysis, expect another round of litigation, Standing Rock attorney Jan Haselman said.

“In effect, it resets the clock to where we were last fall, when we were pushing for (a full study) and asking for consideration of route alternatives,” he said. “We’ll be doing that again.”

The tribes also are pushing for a review that includes public and tribal input.

Corps and Justice Department officials declined to comment on what they will do, but they said they expect to propose a timeframe for the review in mid-July. The Corps has said a full environmental study could take up to two years.

ETP expects a limited process, with the Corps reaffirming its conclusions. Spokeswoman Lisa Dillinger said “it is important to note that while Judge Boasberg asked the Corps to provide greater substantiation for its conclusions, the Court did not find the prior determinations to be erroneous.”

The company has a point, said Connie Rogers, a Denver attorney who specializes in federal permits, natural resources and Indian law. She compared the matter to a middle school math assignment in which students wouldn’t get full credit for correct answers unless they showed their work.

“This could just be an issue that the Corps didn’t explain itself,” Rogers said. “They could do a supplemental (analysis) in a month or, if they actually did not analyze those things, it might take longer.

“I think it’s going to come down to how confident is the Corps in its determination that there are no significant impacts,” she said.

Follow Blake Nicholson on Twitter at: <https://twitter.com/NicholsonBlake>

South Dakota courts cope with judicial vacancies

YANKTON, S.D. (AP) — One-third of the judgeships in South Dakota’s 14-county First Judicial Circuit are vacant, creating a challenge in coping with the caseload.

Circuit Judges Paul Eng and Tim Bjorkman retired earlier this month, creating the rare situation of two judgeship vacancies at the same time, the Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan (<http://bit.ly/2tW6zH6>) reported.

A state official says Gov. Dennis Daugaard hopes to fill the two vacancies next month.

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Daugaard chief of staff Tony Venhuizen said the applications for both judgeships have been forwarded to the Judicial Qualifications Commission.

"The Judicial Qualifications Commission is undertaking its background and reference checking, and has scheduled its interviews for mid-July," Venhuizen told the Press & Dakotan. "The JQC will submit a list of finalists to the governor once it completes those interviews."

Both Eng and Bjorkman have served lengthy periods on the bench.

First Circuit Court administrator Kim Allison said the simultaneous retirements are unique.

"I can say, in the 17 years I have been here, we have not had two circuit court judge vacancies at the same time," she said. "But, it does happen."

The First Circuit faces another challenge in meeting its current caseload as Circuit Judge Cheryle Gering presides over Beef Products Inc.'s defamation lawsuit against ABC News and national correspondent Jim Avila. The company is seeking \$1.9 billion in damages, which could triple to \$5.7 billion under the state's agricultural disparagement law.

The trial in Elk Point began earlier this month and is expected to run through the end of July.

Information from: Yankton Press and Dakotan, <http://www.yankton.net/>

2 LSU researchers get nearly \$1M to study honeybee stress

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — Two Louisiana State University researchers are getting nearly \$1 million for a two-year study of how mite treatment and stress affect honeybee health.

Kristen Healy and Daniel Swale are working with U.S. Department of Agriculture researchers in Baton Rouge and the nation's largest beekeeper, the LSU AgCenter said in a news release Thursday.

They'll be studying 400 hives of honeybees owned by Adeo Honey Farms of Bruce, South Dakota, including some that are moved to California for the fall almond harvest and then to Mississippi for the winter.

Healy said they will sample pollen, nectar and bees from hives during and at the end of the study.

"We can look at which colonies failed and which ones didn't and quantify which stress variables were more important to the relative health of the bees," Healy said.

LSU is getting \$935,000. It's among seven universities getting a total of \$6.8 million from the USDA to study pollinators.

Healy will see how bees treated with a mite control product compare to untreated bees.

Swale will study whether the moves make them spend more energy, reducing their fat storage — and if there's a way to boost those fats.

The researchers also are interested how a virus that causes deformed wings is spread.

The grant also includes an extension component so the researchers can determine the best methods to get bee health information to beekeepers and the public.

The USDA estimates honeybees pollinate \$15 billion worth of crops.

South Dakota county plans program to keep youth out of jail

MITCHELL, S.D. (AP) — A judge has approved a program that Davison County's lead prosecutor hopes will keep more juveniles out of the court system.

State's Attorney Jim Miskimins told The Daily Republic (<http://bit.ly/2rS6Het>) that he'll base the local program off a model in New Jersey that directs youth away from the justice system while still holding them accountable for their actions.

Judge Steven R. Jensen's approval is the first step in laying the groundwork for a larger Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative that has been discussed this year. Miskimins said his plan will create the foundation necessary for the program.

Miskimins said the program will work with multiple law enforcement agencies to offer services to stabilize family situations or place juveniles in programs to teach them how to handle difficult situations.

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"I guess, to just summarize it, I sort of envision it as being a throwback to the days of 'Officer Friendly,' where officers are not just citing kids into court, but they're working on solutions for the families, building relationships with children and their families," Miskimins said.

The five-person Davison County Commission was pleased to hear about the judge's approval for the program at its meeting Tuesday. Commissioner Denny Kiner suggested the relationship-building approach to juvenile law enforcement could be similar to the days when former Sheriff Lyle Swenson served as head of the county's law enforcement.

Commission Chair Brenda Bode commended Miskimins for making the first step toward the new program. "Well, you've made a big hurdle," Bode said. "You've gotten the blessing, that's the big part."

Pakistan raises death toll to 157 from fuel truck fire

By IRUM ASIM, Associated Press

MULTAN, Pakistan (AP) — Pakistan's prime minister cut short a trip abroad to rush to the side of victims of a massive fuel tanker fire as authorities on Monday raised the death toll from the blaze to 157.

The truck, carrying some 25,000 liters (6,600 gallons) of gasoline, was traveling from the southern port city of Karachi to Lahore, the Punjab provincial capital, when the driver lost control and crashed on a highway outside the town of Bahawalpur early on Sunday.

Alerted by an announcement over a mosque loudspeaker that an overturned tanker truck was leaking fuel, scores of villagers rushed to the scene to collect the spilled fuel when the blaze ignited. The wreck had exploded, engulfing people in flames as they screamed in terror.

Dr. Nahid Ahmed at the Nishter Hospital in the city of Multan, about 100 kilometers (60 miles) away from the site of the fire, said four of the victims that were brought from Bahawalpur had died overnight, bringing the death toll to 157. Ahmed said 50 more severely burned victims were being treated at his hospital.

Rescue official Mohammad Baqar at the Bahawalpur hospital said 20 more victims were transported on Monday by a military C-130 plane to Lahore for better medical care.

Prime minister Nawaz Sharif, who visited the Victoria Hospital in Bahawalpur on Monday, ordered that more of those most critically hurt be transferred to bigger hospitals in the area, Baqar said.

Sharif cut short his trip abroad and rushed back home, reaching Bahawalpur on Monday to visit the victims and console the affected families. Sharif also announced 2 million rupees — almost \$20,000 — as financial assistance for each family that had lost a family member in the highway inferno. Sharif also handed over checks of 1 million rupees (\$10,000) for each burned victim being treated at the hospital in Bahawalpur.

"This is not compensation, no compensation is possible for precious human life, but it is to help the affected families in distress," Sharif said, expressing his prayers for those killed and for a speedy recovery of the burned victims.

Many of the bodies were burned beyond recognition and will have to be identified through DNA testing, said Baqar.

"I have never seen anything like it in my life. Victims trapped in the fireball. They were screaming for help," said Abdul Malik, a police officer who was among the first to arrive on the scene of horror in Pakistan's Punjab province.

When the flames subsided, he said, "we saw bodies everywhere. So many were just skeletons. The people who were alive were in really bad shape."

Some of the most badly burned were immediately evacuated by army helicopters to Multan. The dead included men, women and children.

The disaster struck on the eve of the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Fitr that follows the holy month of Ramadan. While Saudi Arabia and most other Muslim countries started celebrating the holiday Sunday, Pakistanis are marking it on Monday.

The scope of Sunday's tragedy was a first in Pakistan but in cases of massive oil leaks in impoverished countries, many of the poorest and least educated often rush to the scene to collect the spilled fuel, unaware of the grave danger they face. In recent years, such incidents have been reported in Nigeria and Sudan.

Associated Press Writer Zarar Khan in Islamabad contributed to this report.

10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press

Your daily look at late-breaking news, upcoming events and the stories that will be talked about today:

1. WHERE GOP HEALTH CARE BILL MAY COME UP SHORT

Trump seems to have a realistic chance of repealing "Obamacare," but he's nowhere close to fulfilling his promises of affordable health care for all.

2. WHAT'S ON HIGH COURT DOCKET

The Supreme Court is poised to act on the Trump administration's travel ban and a separation of church and state dispute involving a Missouri church playground.

3. WHY TAKATA FILED FOR BANKRUPTCY PROTECTION

The Japanese air bag maker says it's the only way to ensure it could carry on supplying replacements for faulty air bag inflators linked to the deaths of at least 16 people.

4. 'HOMOSEXUAL DEMONS' CASE COMES TO LIGHT

AP finds that authorities delayed their investigation and told Matthew Fenner his only option was to pursue misdemeanor charges against North Carolina church members he says assaulted him in the sanctuary.

5. COAL ON RISE IN CHINA, INDIA AFTER MAJOR 2016 DROP

Whether the comeback proves fleeting has significant implications for long-term climate emission reduction targets.

6. DOZENS MISSING AFTER TOURIST BOAT SINKS IN COLOMBIA

Packed with about 160 passengers for the holiday weekend, the El Almirante ferry capsizes on a reservoir near Medellin, leaving at least six people dead, officials say.

7. 'PHARMA BRO' DEFIES ADVICE TO KEEP QUIET BEFORE FRAUD TRIAL

Martin Shkreli, best known for becoming a pariah after his drug company raised a medication 5,000 percent, continues preening and trolling on social media.

8. REPLICAS USED TO PINPOINT CALIFORNIA DAM REPAIRS

Engineers in Utah are doing tests on a 100-foot long model that is 1/50th the size of the Oroville Dam spillway that connects to the country's tallest dam.

9. WHO SHINED AT BET AWARDS

Remy Ma ends rival Nicki Minaj's seven-year winning streak, a show highlighted by '90s R&B and groups popular in that decade, as well as five wins for Beyonce.

10. WESTBROOK TO LEARN IF HISTORIC SEASON WAS MVP ONE

The Oklahoma City Thunder star became the first player since Oscar Robertson in 1961-62 to average a triple-double for a season and won his second scoring title.

Travel ban, church-state case await action by Supreme Court

By MARK SHERMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Before taking their long summer break, the Supreme Court justices are poised to act on the Trump administration's travel ban and a separation of church and state dispute involving a Missouri church playground.

But something could overshadow rulings in those high-profile cases: If Justice Anthony Kennedy were to use the court's last public session on Monday to announce his retirement.

Kennedy has given no public sign that he would step down this year and give President Donald Trump his second high court pick in the first months of his administration. Kennedy's departure would allow conservatives to take firm control of the court.

But Kennedy turns 81 next month and has been on the court for nearly 30 years. Several of his former law clerks have said they think he is contemplating stepping down in the next year or so. Kennedy did

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not address the retirement rumors when he and his clerks gathered over the weekend for a reunion, according to three clerks who were there. The decision to push up the reunion by a year helped spark talk he might be leaving the court.

The justices on Monday were expected to decide the case of Trinity Lutheran Church of Columbia, Missouri, which was excluded from a state grant program to pay for soft surfaces on playgrounds run by not-for-profit groups.

The case was being closely watched by advocates of school vouchers, who hope the court will make it easier to use state money to pay for private, religious schooling in states that now prohibit it.

Missouri has since changed its policy under Republican Gov. Eric Greitens so that churches may now apply for the money.

Also expected in the next few days, though there's no deadline by which the court must decide, was a ruling on whether to allow the administration to immediately enforce a 90-day ban on visitors from six mostly Muslim countries.

Justice Neil Gorsuch, Trump's first Supreme Court nominee, could play a pivotal role in both the travel ban and church playground cases.

In all, six cases that were argued between November and April remain undecided. Three of those, all involving immigrants or foreigners, were heard by an eight-justice court, before Gorsuch joined the bench in April.

If the eight justices are evenly divided, those cases could be argued a second time in the fall, with Gorsuch available to provide the tie-breaking vote.

China sentences 16 from Australia's Crown Resorts to prison

By LOUISE WATT and ANDY WONG, Associated Press

SHANGHAI (AP) — A Chinese court sentenced 16 Australian and Chinese employees of a casino company to nine to 10 months in prison on Monday after they pleaded guilty to gambling-related charges, the company and an Australian official said.

Nineteen defendants, including three Australians from the sales and marketing team of Australia's Crown Resorts Ltd., were convicted by the court in Shanghai. Three defendants, who had been released on bail last Nov. 11, were not fined or sentenced to prison, Crown Resorts said.

Casino gambling, the marketing of casinos and organizing overseas gambling trips involving 10 or more people are illegal in mainland China. The case against Crown Resorts' staff came as authorities crack down on gambling as part of a wide campaign against official corruption.

Eleven defendants were sentenced to nine months' imprisonment and five to 10 months, Crown Resorts said. Their time spent in detention since Oct. 14 will count toward their sentences.

The 16 were also fined a total of 8.62 million yuan (\$1.3 million), which Crown Resorts is paying ex gratia, the company said in a statement to the Australian Securities Exchange.

"The three Australians and the other defendants pleaded guilty," the Australian Consul General in Shanghai, Graeme Meehan, said outside the Baoshan District People's Court.

According to Crown Resorts, the 17 current and two former employees were convicted of offenses including organizing gambling parties or being engaged in gambling as one's main business, which carry a maximum sentence of three years in prison.

Jason O'Connor, head of Crown Resorts' international VIP programs, was sentenced to 10 months in prison, and Australian-Chinese dual nationals Jenny Pan and Jerry Xuan received sentences of nine months, Meehan said.

The company said the court fined O'Connor 2 million yuan (\$293,000), Pan 400,000 yuan (\$59,000) and Xuan 200,000 yuan (\$29,000). O'Connor, who is based in Melbourne, Australia, was also ordered deported.

"Crown remains respectful of the sovereign jurisdiction of the People's Republic of China and does not intend to comment further at this time," the company said.

Crown Resorts' vice president in China, Malaysian Alfreed Gomez, was also among the defendants. The

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Malaysian consulate in Shanghai didn't respond to a request for comment.

Following the arrests in October, Crown Resorts began withdrawing from its Chinese business to concentrate on the Australian market. Last month it said it raised \$987 million after it sold off the last of its stake in a decade-long joint-venture casino operator in Macau, a Chinese enclave where gambling is legal.

Casino operators across Asia have sought to lure Chinese high-rollers who have avoided Macau — the world's biggest gambling market — because of Chinese President Xi Jinping's ongoing corruption crackdown. At the same time, the government has been trying to stop the flow of Chinese money into foreign casinos.

In 2015, police arrested 13 South Korean casino managers and 34 Chinese agents for allegedly selling packages with free tours and free hotels. At least seven South Korean managers later received prison sentences of 13 or 14 months, according to court verdicts posted online. They were also ordered to pay fines up to 150,000 yuan (\$22,000).

The industry has been known to skirt China's ban on promoting gambling trips by touting destination packages rather than gambling, or by advertising Macau resorts as venues for events like boxing matches.

"So long as you don't mention gambling, or credit, you're fine, but that's a very thin line," said Sudhir Kale, CEO of GamePlan Consultants, who has previously done consulting work for Crown Resorts.

He said there are two ways for foreign casino operators to serve Chinese customers, who face restrictions on the amount of money they can take overseas. The first is through junkets, essentially by being middlemen who lend money and collect on debts. The second is by lending money directly to customers, a model which Crown Resorts appeared to be pursuing, said Kale, who is also a professor of marketing at Australia's Bond University.

"I think it was the lure of cutting out the middlemen that got them a bit into trouble," Kale said.

The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade said consular officials would continue to provide assistance to the Australians and their families until they are released.

Watt reported from Beijing. Associated Press business writer Kelvin Chan in Hong Kong and researcher Fu Ting in Shanghai contributed to this report.

Remy Ma beats Nicki Minaj at BET Awards; '90s R&B shines

By MESFIN FEKADU, AP Music Writer

Remy Ma has ended rival Nicki Minaj's seven-year winning streak at the 2017 BET Awards, a show highlighted by '90s R&B and groups popular in that decade, as well as five wins for Beyonce.

Ma, who was released from prison in 2014, won best female hip hop artist Sunday in Los Angeles, an award Minaj has won since 2010. Ma last won the prize in 2005, and was sentenced to prison three years later after she shot a former friend after accusing her of theft.

"I wanna thank God first and foremost," said Ma, who named two correctional facilities in her speech and thanked her mentor Fat Joe and husband-rapper Papoose. "You can make mistakes and come back."

In March, Ma released the hostile diss track "Shether," which earned praised from critics and rap fans. Minaj never officially responded to the song.

At the live show at the Microsoft Theater, '90s R&B favorites New Edition and Xscape were the most welcomed performers of the night.

New Edition, whose three-part biopic was a white-hot ratings success for BET earlier this year, earned the lifetime achievement award and received a lengthy tribute. It started with the child actors from the movie singing "Candy Girl," later followed by the older actors for some of the band's hits apart from the group, including Bell Biv DeVoe's "Poison" and Ralph Tresvant's "Sensitivity."

The real group then hit to stage to sing "Can You Stand the Rain" and "Mr. Telephone Man." The actors later joined New Edition for "If It Isn't Love."

Girl group Xscape, set to launch a new reality show on Bravo, reunited at the BET Awards and sang the popular hits "Just Kickin' It," "Understanding" and "Who Can I Run To?" The crowd was in awe, singing along and filming the performance with their phones.

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Bruno Mars, whose new album was heavily inspired by '90s R&B, also shined Sunday. He and Beyonce tied for video of the year — the top prize but not televised — with their hits "24K Magic" and "Sorry." Mars also won best male R&B/pop artist and kicked off the show with a fun and funky performance of the song, "Perm."

"To the fans, you know I love you. My first BET Award," he screamed.

Kendrick Lamar surprised the audience when he performed with Future and won best male hip hop artist. He gave a shout-out to fellow nominee Chance the Rapper, who earned the humanitarian award at the age of 24. Chance also won best new artist and best collaboration.

In a taped message, Michelle Obama honored Chance, who has raised \$2 million dollars for Chicago public schools. The former First Lady said she and Barack Obama knew Chance "since he was a baby rapper."

"Chance is showing our young people that they matter," she said. "Because of you, countless young people will grow up believing in themselves."

Beyonce, who reportedly had her twins earlier this month though she hasn't commented on the topic, was the top nominee with seven. When it was announced that she won the viewer's choice award, Chloe x Halle — the young duo signed to Beyonce — recited a speech given to them from the pop star. Queen Bey was the big winner with five, also taking home album of the year for "Lemonade," best female R&B/pop artist and video director of the year for "Sorry."

Solange, Beyonce's younger sister, also had a big night: She won the Centric award and called Sunday "the best birthday ever" (she turned 31 on Saturday).

"My arm pits are sweating so much right now," said Solange, who thanked BET for showing her "queens" like Aaliyah, Missy Elliott, Erykah Badu and others during her teenage years.

Solange held a moment of silence later on, and the show also honored some of the minorities who died at the hands of police officers, including Trayvon Martin, Philando Castile, Eric Garner and others.

Other winners included gospel rapper Lecrae and Migos, who took home best group. The hip-hop trio also won over the audience with its performances of the hits "Bad and Boujee," "T-Shirt" and "Congratulations," with Post Malone. Chance the Rapper, and his mom, danced during the long set; as did Queen Latifah, Cardi B., "Stranger Things" actor Caleb McLaughlin and "black-ish" actress Yara Shahidi, who won the YoungStars award.

Though most of the performances were upbeat, others charmed with slower songs: Tamar Braxton and Maxwell gave vocally impressive performances, and Mary J. Blige sang songs from "Strength of a Woman," her recent album that includes emotional tunes about her divorce.

"Mary J. got that break up body. Whoa," screamed Jamie Foxx, who presented an award after Blige's performance.

Leslie Jones of "Saturday Night Live" hosted the four-hour show. El DeBarge and Kamasi Washington performed "Careless Whisper" in honor George Michael, who died last year on Christmas Day, while Janelle Monae collaborator Roman GianArthur excitedly sang "Johnny B. Goode" in tribute to Chuck Berry, who died in March.

New York rapper Prodigy, who died last week, was remembered in words by his Mobb Deep partner Havoc and Lil Kim, who appeared on the remix of the memorable Mobb Deep hit, "Quiet Storm."

Former BET executive Stephen Hill, who the network said was stepping down in March, was praised throughout the night with kind words from Mars and Bobby Brown.

Online:

<http://www.bet.com/shows/bet-awards/>

Coal on the rise in China, US, India after major 2016 drop

By **MATTHEW BROWN** and **KATY DAIGLE**, Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — The world's biggest coal users — China, the United States and India — have boosted coal mining in 2017, in an abrupt departure from last year's record global decline for the heavily polluting fuel and a setback to efforts to rein in climate change emissions.

Mining data reviewed by The Associated Press show that production through May is up by at least 121 million tons, or 6 percent, for the three countries compared to the same period last year. The change is most dramatic in the U.S., where coal mining rose 19 percent in the first five months of the year, according to U.S. Department of Energy data.

Coal's fortunes had appeared to hit a new low less than two weeks ago, when British energy company BP reported that tonnage mined worldwide fell 6.5 percent in 2016, the largest drop on record. China and the U.S. accounted for almost all the decline, while India showed a slight increase.

The reasons for this year's turnaround include policy shifts in China, changes in U.S. energy markets and India's continued push to provide electricity to more of its poor, industry experts said. President Donald Trump's role as coal's booster-in-chief in the U.S. has played at most a minor role, they said.

The fuel's popularity waned over the past several years as renewable power and natural gas made gains and China moved to curb dangerous levels of urban smog from burning coal.

Whether coal's comeback proves lasting has significant implications for long-term emission reduction targets, and for environmentalists' hopes that China and India could emerge as leaders in battling climate change.

While the U.S. reversal is expected to prove temporary, analysts agree that India's use of coal will continue to grow. They're divided on the forecast for China over the next decade.

Industry representatives say the mining resurgence underscores coal's continued importance in power generation, though analysts caution its long-term growth prospects remain bleak.

The U.S., China and India combined produce about two-thirds of the coal mined worldwide, and the latter two nations also import coal to meet demand. India's production expanded even during coal's global downturn.

"If you look at those three countries, everyone else is irrelevant in the scheme of things," said Tim Buckley, energy finance director for the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis.

Burning coal for power, manufacturing and heat is a primary source of the carbon dioxide emissions that scientists say is driving climate change. Reducing such emissions was a critical piece of the 2015 Paris climate accord that Trump announced this month he wants to exit.

Almost every other nation continues to support the deal, including China and India. China, India and the U.S. produce almost half of global greenhouse gas emissions.

Coal accounts for almost half of greenhouse emissions from burning fossil fuels, according to the Global Carbon Project. China is by far the world's largest coal user, consuming half the global supply.

China has committed to capping its greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, and some have suggested it might accomplish that up to a decade earlier. Xizhou Zhou, a senior energy analyst with IHS Markit based in Beijing, said the recent uptick in coal production that the AP identified raises doubts about such optimism, but he added that China is still expected to meet its 2030 deadline.

"Coal consumption will continue to increase, mainly driven by Asian countries," Zhou said. "We're seeing a recovery starting this year and an increase until the mid-2020s before you see coal plateau globally."

China's production rose more than 4 percent through May, according to government figures, compared to a drop of more than 8 percent for the same period a year earlier.

Hundreds of mines shut down in China last year and the government forced others to cut back hours in a bid to reduce an oversupply of coal and boost prices. The government has since relaxed that policy and production is rebounding.

Also, as China continues to recover from a 2015 economic slowdown, it's seeing increased manufacturing and new investments in roads, bridges and other projects. That creates more demand for electricity,

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most of which continues to come from coal even after huge Chinese investments in wind and solar power.

Despite the announced cancellation or suspension of 100 coal plants, others remain under construction, meaning consumption of coal for power will continue to rise, Zhou said. Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam and Pakistan also are building new plants.

In India, where 70 percent of electricity comes from coal, production has long been increasing in defiance of global trends. The country has long argued it has both a right and an obligation to expand power generation as it extends electricity access to hundreds of millions of people who still have none. India also is seeking to reduce its reliance on imported coal by mining more of its own reserves.

An AP review of reports from the Coal Ministry of India found that mining among state-owned companies, which comprise the overwhelming majority of the nation's production, grew 4 percent in the first five months of this year.

In the U.S., the bulk of the increase occurred in major coal-producing states including Wyoming, Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

Prices for natural gas, a competing fuel in power generation, edged up in early 2017, helping coal, said Andy Roberts of the consulting firm Wood Mackenzie. That's expected to be a temporary boost given the nation's huge natural gas supplies. A cold winter in parts of the U.S. also benefited coal by increasing power demand.

World Coal Association Chief Executive Officer Benjamin Sporton acknowledged that it's been "a difficult few years for coal" but argued that the market remains strong, particularly in China and India.

"All the signs point to (a) positive upward trend," Sporton told the AP.

Still, coal's dominant role in providing electricity has been eroding. China now has more renewable energy than any other nation. Its Communist Party leaders have vowed to invest \$360 billion in the sector through 2020.

India's government has said it needs no more coal-powered power plants and last month canceled 13.7 gigawatts in proposed plants, enough to power more than 10 million homes if the plants ran at full capacity. It has promoted renewables with a raft of incentives and declared that power from some solar installations should be used first when demand goes up.

Analysts said India is struggling to adjust to what appears to be a "new normal" — with its growth in electricity capacity outstripping the rise in demand. Manufacturing has not grown as quickly as hoped, and though transmission is steadily expanding to reach more households, 260 million Indians are still off-grid.

As a result, the country's power plants are running at below 60 percent of capacity on average — down from 2009, when India was using 75 percent of its capacity.

"The private sector is not undertaking any new investment in thermal energy" such as coal plants, said Ashok Khurana, director general of the Association of Power Producers in India. "There's no sense in it."

Trump's advocacy for reviving the coal-mining industry stands as an exception among the three nations' leaders. Yet the U.S. also is where coal's rebound could be briefest.

Cheap natural gas, a growing appetite for renewable energy and stricter pollution rules spurred utilities to shut down or announce retirements for several hundred U.S. coal plants. U.S. utilities that invested heavily in alternatives are considered unlikely to revert to coal, Roberts said, meaning market forces and not Trump's politics will play the biggest role in determining the industry's future.

Buckley, the energy finance specialist, said he expects the mining increases of 2017 to emerge as an anomaly and global declines will soon resume. But he noted that many existing coal plants will continue operating for years to come.

"We're not talking about the end of coal tomorrow or the end of coal next decade. We're talking about a 40-year transition," he said.

Daigle reported from New Delhi.

Follow Matthew Brown on Twitter at twitter.com/matthewbrownap, and Katy Daigle at www.twitter.com/katydaigle

Westbrook set to learn if his historic season was an MVP one

By CLIFF BRUNT, AP Sports Writer

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — A year ago, uncertainty surrounded Russell Westbrook.

Kevin Durant stunned the league by leaving Oklahoma City for rival Golden State in free agency. The four-time scoring champion and former MVP had been the central piece in making the Thunder one of the league's elite teams since the franchise's move to Oklahoma City in 2008.

Westbrook had played his entire NBA career alongside Durant, so questions about how Westbrook would respond immediately cropped up.

He defiantly answered them with memorable performances.

Westbrook became the first player since Oscar Robertson in 1961-62 to average a triple-double for a season and won his second scoring title. He broke Robertson's single-season record with 42 triple-doubles and led the Thunder to the playoffs. Now, he will join Houston's James Harden and San Antonio's Kawhi Leonard as finalists for the league's MVP award. The winner will be announced Monday at the inaugural NBA Awards show.

Westbrook gained satisfaction from the team's success, which largely was fueled by his personal dominance.

"With everything happening last summer, people counted us out," he said the day after Oklahoma City's season ended. "They weren't sure how many games we were going to win or how far we were going to go or whatever, but I think the group of guys, we never let that sink in our building. We stuck together, and that's the thing I'm most proud about."

Westbrook wasn't just stat stuffing, either. The Thunder went 33-9 when he had a triple-double and 14-26 when he didn't. He seemingly gained energy as the season progressed and was statistically better after the All-Star break than before. As for those late-game situations, he led the league with 10 points per game in the fourth quarter and was one of the most dynamic closers in the league.

Westbrook topped Robertson's single-season, triple-double record on April 9 in Denver. His 36-foot game-winning dagger put the final touch on a 50-point, 16-rebound, 10-assist performance that eliminated the Nuggets from playoff contention.

Robertson himself showed up to the Thunder's regular-season finale and endorsed Westbrook for the MVP award.

"What he has done has been historic in nature," Robertson told the crowd that night. "He's played with passion and pride and ability. It's just outstanding what he has done and the way he did it."

Durant might be the least surprised player in the league. Westbrook was dominant while Durant was out with a foot injury during the 2014-15 season and claimed his first scoring title, but it wasn't clear if he could do it all — score, dominate the boards, consistently feed his teammates and come through in big moments — for an entire season.

Turns out, he could.

In the second game of the season, he had 51 points, 13 rebounds and 10 assists in a victory over Phoenix, the first 50-point triple-double since Kareem Abdul-Jabbar did it in 1975. On March 27, he had 13 points in a 3-minute barrage to rally the Thunder past Dallas. Two days later in Orlando, he scored 57 points and posted the most points ever in a triple-double. He hit a deep 3-pointer to force overtime, and eventually helped the Thunder win. In one of his most memorable games, he scored 47 points in a loss to Durant's Warriors.

Harden and Leonard also had MVP-caliber seasons:

JAMES HARDEN, HOUSTON

As stunning as Westbrook's triple-double binge was this season, Harden's was impressive, too.

He posted 22 triple-doubles and helped the Rockets finish with the league's third-best record. Harden, known primarily as a scorer throughout his career, shifted from shooting guard to point guard and was nearly unstoppable in coach Mike D'Antoni's fast-paced offense.

Harden led the league with 11.2 assists per game and finished second with 29.1 points per contest. In perhaps his best performance, he had 53 points, 16 rebounds and 17 assists against the New York Knicks on New Year's Eve.

KAWHI LEONARD, SAN ANTONIO

Leonard is the two-time reigning Defensive Player of the Year, and he's up for the honor again.

Yet, it was the 6-foot-7 forward's offensive improvement that put him in the mix for the MVP award. He averaged 25.5 points this season after averaging 21.2 the previous year.

Leonard helped the Spurs finish with the league's second-best record. He seemed to play as the stage got bigger.

He opened the season with a career-high 35 points in a blowout win over the Warriors. Leonard upped that career high with 41 points in a win over Cleveland on Jan. 21, and he dropped 39 points in a victory over Houston on March 6.

Follow Cliff Brunt on Twitter: www.twitter.com/CliffBruntAP .

Over 150 dead as overturned fuel truck explodes in Pakistan

By IRAM ASIM, Associated Press

BAHAWALPUR, Pakistan (AP) — Alerted by an announcement over a mosque's loudspeaker that an overturned tanker truck had sprung a leak, scores of villagers raced to the scene with fuel containers Sunday to gather the oil. Then the wreck exploded, engulfing people in flames as they screamed in terror.

At least 153 men, women and children were killed, with dozens more in critical condition, hospital and rescue officials said.

"I have never seen anything like it in my life. Victims trapped in the fireball. They were screaming for help," said Abdul Malik, a police officer who was among the first to arrive on the scene of horror in Pakistan's Punjab province.

When the flames subsided, he said, "we saw bodies everywhere. So many were just skeletons. The people who were alive were in really bad shape."

About 30 motorcycles that villagers had used to rush to the site of the highway accident lay charred nearby along with cars, witnesses said. Local news channels showed black smoke billowing skyward and army helicopters taking away the injured.

As victims cried out for help, residents wandered through the area, looking for loved ones.

Zulkha Bibi searched for her two sons.

"Someone should tell me about my beloved sons. Where are they? Are they alive or are they no longer in this world? Please tell me," she pleaded.

Many of the dead were burned beyond recognition, said Dr. Mohammad Baqar, a senior rescue official in the area. They will have to be identified through DNA.

The disaster came on the eve of the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Fitr, which marks the end of the fasting month of Ramadan. While Saudi Arabia and most other Muslim countries celebrated the holiday Sunday, Pakistanis will mark it on Monday.

The fuel truck was traveling from the southern port city of Karachi to Lahore, the Punjab provincial capital, when the driver lost control and crashed on a highway outside Bahawalpur.

A loudspeaker atop a mosque alerted villagers to the leaking fuel, and many rushed to the scene with fuel containers, said Rana Mohammad Salim, deputy commissioner of Bahawalpur.

Highway police moved quickly to redirect traffic but couldn't stop the scores of villagers, spokesman Imran Shah told a local TV channel.

When the fire erupted, the same mosque loudspeaker called on the remaining villagers to help put it out.

Mohammed Salim said he ran toward the smoke with buckets of water and sand, but the heat was too

intense for him to reach the victims.

"I could hear people screaming, but I couldn't get to them," he said.

Dr. Javed Iqbal at Bahawalpur's Victoria Hospital said most of the patients suffered burns to upward of 80 percent of their bodies. Many were evacuated by plane or helicopter to hospitals in the Punjab cities of Lahore and Multan.

'Pharma Bro' defies advice to keep quiet before fraud trial

By TOM HAYS, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — "Pharma Bro" just won't keep his mouth shut.

Even with his federal securities fraud trial set to begin Monday, Martin Shkreli has blatantly defied his attorneys' advice to lay low. The former pharmaceutical CEO, who became a pariah after raising the cost of a life-saving drug 5,000 percent, has been preening for cameras and trolling on social media, potentially complicating his defense.

"I'm excited," Shkreli said of the trial in a brief phone call last week to The Associated Press. "I can't wait."

Since his high-profile arrest in late 2015 when he was led into court in a gray hoodie, Shkreli has been free on bail and free to speak his mind. He went on Twitter to label members of Congress "imbeciles" for demanding to know why his company, Turing Pharmaceuticals, raised the price of Daraprim, a drug used to treat toxoplasmosis and HIV, from \$13.50 to \$750 per pill.

He took to YouTube for a series of lessons on chemistry and stock market analysis. His Twitter posts mocking a freelance journalist turned so creepy — one showed a fake photo of him canoodling with her — that his account was shut down. And on Facebook, he mused about the possibility of being "unjustly imprisoned."

The 34-year-old Shkreli "travels to the beat of a very unique drummer," exasperated-sounding defense attorney Benjamin Brafman said at a pretrial hearing this month.

Legal experts say there are obvious reasons lawyers want clients facing serious criminal charges to keep quiet.

"It's twofold: You don't want to antagonize the judge and you don't want to get the attention of the jury in a way that hurts your case," said veteran New York City defense attorney Gerald Lefcourt.

Columbia law professor John Coffee compared the situation to President Donald Trump's unruly tweeting habits. "A lawyer can caution him," he said. "But just like Trump, he doesn't have to listen."

Though Shkreli's notoriety came from Daraprim, the federal securities fraud case is unrelated. Prosecutors say that after Shkreli lost millions of dollars through bad trades through his side business hedge fund, he looted a second pharmaceutical company for \$11 million to pay them back. The defense has argued that he had good intentions.

"Everybody got paid back in this case," his lawyer said. "Whatever else he did wrong, he ultimately made them whole."

The defense has floated the possibility that it would put Shkreli on the witness stand to try to highlight how he grew up in a working-class Albanian family in Brooklyn, taught himself chemistry, interned at a financial firm founded by CNBC's Jim Cramer and struck out on his own to become a rising star in biotechnology startups. He wanted to develop new life-saving drugs after seeing "several classmates and other children he knew struck down by debilitating disease," court papers say.

Prosecutors call it a ploy to portray the boyish-looking Shkreli as "a Horatio Alger-like figure who, through hard work and intelligence, is in a position to do great things if only the jury would ignore the evidence and base its verdict on sympathy." The real Shkreli was a con man often undone by his own mouth, they say.

The government has cited claims by one of Shkreli's former employees that Shkreli harassed his family in a dispute over shares of stock.

"I hope to see you and your four children homeless and will do whatever I can to assure this," Shkreli wrote the employee's wife, according to court filings.

Prosecutors also used his boasts about some of his purchases of eccentric collectibles to undermine ef-

forts to reduce his bail from \$5 million to \$2 million. If he needed to raise cash to pay legal fees and back taxes, they argued, why not sell the one-of-a-kind Wu-Tang Clan album that he brought for \$2 million or his Nazi-era Enigma code-breaking machine?

Also cited were his offers to pay a \$100,000 bounty for finding the killer of a Democratic National Committee staffer and \$40,000 in tuition for a Princeton student who solved a math problem he posed during a guest lecture at the school earlier this year.

Shkreli "is not the demon he's been made out to be," the student, Yuan Wang, told the AP.

Still, he added, "I haven't received the money yet."

Takata files for bankruptcy, overwhelmed by air bag recalls

By TOM KRISHER and MARCY GORDON, Associated Press

Japanese air bag maker Takata Corp. filed for bankruptcy protection in Tokyo and the U.S. on Monday, saying it was the only way to ensure it could carry on supplying replacements for faulty air bag inflators linked to the deaths of at least 16 people.

Most of Takata's assets will be bought by rival Key Safety Systems, a Chinese-owned company based in suburban Detroit, for about \$1.6 billion (175 billion yen).

The company's executives sought to reassure their customers, suppliers and shareholders in a news conference on Monday. With the company rapidly losing value while Takata struggled to reorganize its finances, filing for bankruptcy protection was the only option, Takata's president, Shigehisa Takada, told reporters.

"As a maker of safety parts for the automobile industry, our failure to maintain a stable supply would have a major impact across the industry," Takada said in Tokyo.

Takata's inflators can explode with too much force when they fill up an air bag, spewing out shrapnel. Apart from the fatalities, they're responsible for at least 180 injuries, and are grappling with the largest automotive recall in U.S. history. So far 100 million inflators have been recalled worldwide including 69 million in the U.S., affecting 42 million vehicles.

More than 70 percent of the airbags recalled in Japan have been replaced, and 36 percent in the U.S., said Hiroshi Shimizu, a Takata vice president. He said progress of the recalls in other countries was unknown.

Under the agreement with Key, remnants of Takata's operations will continue to make inflators to be used as replacement parts in the recalls, which are being handled by 19 affected automakers.

Takata will use part of the sale proceeds to reimburse the automakers, but experts say the companies still must fund a significant portion of the recalls themselves.

"It's likely every automaker involved in this recall will have to subsidize the process because the value of Takata's assets isn't enough to cover the costs of this recall," said Karl Brauer, executive publisher of Kelley Blue Book and Autotrader.

Takata and the automakers were slow to address the problem with the inflators despite reports of deaths and injuries. Eventually they were forced to recall tens of millions of vehicles. The scope of the recall means some car owners face lengthy waits for replacement parts, meanwhile driving cars with air bags that could malfunction in a crash.

The defect in the inflators stems from use of the explosive chemical ammonium nitrate in the inflators to deploy air bags in a crash. The chemical can deteriorate when exposed to hot and humid air and burn too fast, blowing apart a metal canister.

At least \$1 billion from the sale to Key is expected to be used to satisfy Takata's settlement of criminal charges in the U.S. for concealing problems with the inflators. Of that amount, \$850 million goes to automakers to help cover their costs from the recalls. Takata already has paid \$125 million into a fund for victims and a \$25 million fine to the U.S. Justice Department.

Attorneys for those injured by the inflators worry that \$125 million won't be enough to fairly compensate victims, many of whom have serious facial injuries from metal shrapnel. One 26-year-old plaintiff will never be able to smile due to nerve damage, his attorney says.

The lead attorney for people suing the automakers said in a statement following the announcement that he doesn't expect the bankruptcy to affect the pending claims against the companies. Settlement agreements with Toyota, Subaru, BMW and Mazda already have won preliminary court approval, Peter Prieto noted.

That settlement will speed the removal of faulty inflators from 15.8 million vehicles and compensate consumers for economic losses, he said. Claims are continuing against Honda, Ford, Nissan and Takata.

Fallout from the bankruptcy filing came swiftly from the Tokyo Stock Exchange, which said it was stripping the company founded in 1933 from trading as of Tuesday.

Key makes inflators, seat belts and crash sensors for the auto industry and is owned by China's Ningbo Joyson Electronic Corp. Its global headquarters and U.S. technical center is in Sterling Heights, Michigan.

Key said it won't cut any Takata jobs or close any of Takata's facilities.

The Takata corporate name may not live on after the bankruptcy. The company says on its website that its products have kept people safe, and it apologizes for problems caused by the faulty inflators. "We hope the day will come when the word 'Takata' becomes synonymous with 'safety,'" the website says.

Associated Press writers Mari Yamaguchi and Elaine Kurtenbach in Tokyo contributed to this report.

Joe Arpaio on trial over immigration actions echoing Trump's

By JACQUES BILLEAUD, Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — The immigration rhetoric and crackdowns pushed by President Donald Trump have a familiar ring in Arizona, where former Sheriff Joe Arpaio once used similar tactics to become a national figure.

Now, Arpaio is going on trial on a criminal charge stemming from those immigration enforcement actions.

The eight-day trial that begins Monday in federal court in Phoenix will determine whether the 85-year-old retired lawman is guilty of misdemeanor contempt of court for disobeying a judge's order to stop traffic patrols that targeted immigrants. The judge later found his officers racially profiling Latinos.

Arpaio's legal troubles played a major role in voters turning him out of office in November after a campaign in which he appeared alongside Trump at several rallies in Arizona.

The former six-term sheriff of metro Phoenix has acknowledged defying the judge's 2011 order in a racial profiling lawsuit by prolonging the patrols for months. But he insists it was not intentional. To win a conviction, prosecutors must prove he violated the order on purpose.

If convicted, Arpaio could face up to six months in jail, though lawyers who have followed his case doubt that a man of his age would be put behind bars.

For nine of his 24 years in office, Arpaio did the sort of local immigration enforcement that Trump has advocated. To build his highly touted deportation force, Trump is reviving a long-standing program that deputizes local officers to enforce federal immigration law.

Unlike other local police leaders who left immigration enforcement to U.S. authorities, Arpaio made hundreds of arrests in traffic patrols that sought out immigrants and business raids in which his officers targeted immigrants who used fraudulent IDs to get jobs.

His immigration powers were eventually stripped away by the courts and federal government, culminating with the 2013 ruling that Arpaio's officers profiled Latinos.

Arpaio's defense centers around what his attorneys said were weaknesses in the court order that failed to acknowledge times when deputies would detain immigrants and later hand them over to federal authorities.

Jack Wilenchik, an Arpaio attorney, said the former sheriff is charged with a crime for cooperating with U.S. immigration officials, which the Trump administration now encourages.

"This is really just a fight about immigration law and what it means," Wilenchik said. "And Arpaio is trying to do what a good cop does, which is to enforce the law."

His critics hope the case will bring a long-awaited comeuppance for the lawman who led crackdowns that divided immigrant families and escaped accountability.

The judge concluded that Arpaio ignored the order because he believed his immigration enforcement efforts would help his 2012 campaign. The TV interviews, news releases and tough talk about America's border woes that Arpaio used over the years to boost his popularity are now being used against him in court.

The sheriff's office issued a news release a week after the judge told it to stop the patrols saying it would continue to enforce immigration laws. Arpaio also gave a March 2012 TV interview in which he said his office was still detaining immigrants who were in the country illegally.

The retired lawman lost a request to prohibit prosecutors from mentioning comments he made about immigration during his last three campaigns.

It's not known whether Arpaio will testify in his defense.

Follow Jacques Billeaud at twitter.com/jacquesbilleaud. His work can be found at <https://www.apnews.com/search/jacques%20billeaud>.

Dozens missing after tourist boat sinks in Colombia

By **LUIS BENAVIDES** and **CHRISTINE ARMARIO**, Associated Press

GUATAPE, Colombia (AP) — A tourist boat packed with about 160 passengers for the holiday weekend capsized Sunday on a reservoir near the Colombian city of Medellin, leaving at least six people dead and 31 missing, officials said.

Rescuers including firefighters and air force pilots in helicopters searched for survivors at the Guatape reservoir where El Almirante ferry sank. A flotilla of recreational boats and jet skis rushed to the scene, pulling people from the boat as it went down and avoiding an even deadlier tragedy.

Dramatic videos circulating on social media show the turquoise and yellow trimmed party boat rocking back and forth as people crawled down from a fourth-floor roof as it sank in a matter of minutes. Survivors described hearing a loud explosion near the men's bathroom that knocked out power a few minutes after the boat began its cruise around the giant lake. As water flooded on board, pressure built and people were sucked under by the sinking ship.

"Those on the first and second floors sank immediately," survivor Lorena Salazar told local media. "All we could do was scream and call for help....it was completely chaotic."

Margarita Moncada, the head of the disaster response agency in Antioquia state, said that according to a preliminary report 99 people were rescued and another 40 managed to find a way to shore on their own. Speaking to reporters from the reservoir, she said nine people had been killed and around 28 were missing.

But later Sunday President Juan Manuel Santos arrived to Guatape and said 122 people were either rescued or found their way to shore. Six had died and another 31 were missing, he said. The discrepancies in the number of fatalities could not be immediately reconciled.

It's unclear what caused the boat to sink.

Some people who witnessed the tragedy from the nearby shore said the boat appeared to be overloaded but Santos said it was sailing well below capacity. None of the passengers were wearing a life vest. Complicating the search, there wasn't even a passenger list.

"Nobody really knows what happened," said Santos, adding that naval officials were brought in to carry out an investigation.

Carlos Espinosa, an independent journalist from Guatape, said about a month ago townspeople awoke to find the El Almirante filled with water and sinking at its dock, suggesting that perhaps the vessel wasn't ready to return to the water.

"What makes you angry is there are no controls by the government," he said.

As night fell, the usually festive town was silent as people began to register the magnitude of the loss. Among those huddled under the rain near the port looking for information about loved ones was Alberto Villegas, who was separated from a cousin and uncle in the mad rush to abandon the sinking ship.

"All we ask is that they don't give up the search," said Villegas.

Authorities were at a loss to say exactly how many people were on the boat and asked passengers or

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their loved ones to report to a rescue center hastily set up along the shore. They also made a call for scuba divers to assist with the search.

The reservoir surrounding the soaring rocky outcrop of El Penol is a popular weekend destination a little more than an hour from Medellin. It was especially busy Sunday as Colombians celebrated a long holiday weekend.

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Armario reported from Bogota, Colombia and AP Writer Joshua Goodman contributed to this report from Caracas, Venezuela.

Gay pride parades sound a note of resistance _ and face some

By **OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ, Associated Press**

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Tens of thousands of people waving rainbow flags lined streets for gay pride parades Sunday in coast-to-coast events that took both celebratory and political tones, the latter a reaction to what some see as new threats to gay rights in the Trump era.

In San Francisco, revelers wearing rainbow tutus and boas held signs that read "No Ban, No Wall, Welcome Sisters and Brothers" while they danced to electronic music at a rally outside City Hall.

Frank Reyes said he and his husband decided to march for the first time in many years because they felt a need to stand up for their rights. The couple joined the "resistance contingent," which led the parade and included representatives from several activist organizations.

"We have to be as visible as possible," said Reyes, wearing a silver body suit and gray and purple headpiece decorated with rhinestones.

"Things are changing quickly and we have to take a stand and be noticed," Reyes' husband, Paul Brady, added. "We want to let everybody know that we love each other, that we pay taxes and that we're Americans, too."

Activists have been galled by the Trump administration's rollback of federal guidance advising school districts to let transgender students use the bathrooms and locker rooms of their choice. The Republican president also broke from Democratic predecessor Barack Obama's practice of issuing a proclamation in honor of Pride Month.

At the jam-packed New York City parade, a few attendees wore "Make America Gay Again" hats, while one group walking silently in the parade wore "Black Lives Matter" shirts as they held up signs with a fist and with a rainbow background, a symbol for gay pride. Still others protested potential cuts to health care benefits, declaring that "Healthcare is an LGBT issue."

"I think this year is even more politically charged, even though it was always a venue where people used it to express their political perspectives," said Joannah Jones, 59, from New York with her wife Carol Phillips.

She said the parade being televised for the first time gives people a wider audience. "Not only to educate people in general on the diversity of LGBTQ community but also to see how strongly we feel about what's going on in office."

In Chicago, 23-year-old Sarah Hecker was attending her first pride parade, another event that attracted wall-to-wall crowds. "I felt like this would be a way to not necessarily rebel, but just my way to show solidarity for marginalized people in trying times," said Hecker, a marketing consultant who lives in suburban Chicago.

Elected officials also made a stand, among them New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, who said his state would continue to lead on equality. Cuomo, a Democrat, on Sunday formally appointed Paul G. Feinman to the New York Court of Appeals, the state's highest court. Feinman is the first openly gay judge to hold the position.

But the pride celebrations also faced some resistance from within the LGBT community itself. Some activists feel the events center on gay white men and are unconcerned with issues including economic inequality and policing.

The divide disrupted some other pride events this month. The No Justice No Pride group blocked the Washington parade's route, and four protesters were arrested at the parade in Columbus, Ohio.

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In Minneapolis, organizers of Sunday's Twin Cities Pride Parade initially asked the police department to limit its participation, with the chairwoman saying the sight of uniformed officers could foster "angst and tension and the feeling of unrest" after a suburban officer's acquittal this month in the deadly shooting of Philando Castile, a black man, during a traffic stop.

The city's openly gay police chief called the decision divisive and hurtful to LGBT officers. On Friday, organizers apologized and said the officers were welcome to march.

But anti-police protesters disrupted the parade with chants of: "No justice, no peace, no pride in police" and carried signs reading "Justice for Philando" and "Black Lives Matter."

Meanwhile, pride march organizers have taken steps to address the criticisms about diversity.

Protesters for "Black Lives Matter" also delayed the start of the Seattle parade, parade-goers said.

"The pride celebration is a platform for that dialogue to happen," San Francisco Pride board president Michelle Meow said this week. The large "resistance contingent" leading San Francisco's parade includes groups that represent women, immigrants, African-Americans and others along with LGBT people.

New York parade-goers Zhane Smith-Garris, 20, Olivia Rengifo, 19 and Sierra Dias, 20, all black women from New Jersey, said they did not feel there was inequality in the movement.

"Pride is for gay people in general," Dias said.

There were scattered counter protests and a few disruptions, including a small group in New York urging parade-goers to "repent for their sins." But most attending were unified in celebration and in standing up against a presidential administration they find unsupportive.

"This year, especially, it's a bit of a different atmosphere," said Grace Cook, a 17-year-old from suburban Chicago who noted the more political tone in this year's parade, including at least one anti-Trump float.

Associated Press writers Rebecca Gibian and Colleen Long in New York and Martha Irvine, an AP national writer in Chicago, contributed to this report.

Trump: Not 'that far off' from passing health overhaul

By HOPE YEN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Making a final push, President Donald Trump said he doesn't think congressional Republicans are "that far off" on a health overhaul to replace "the dead carcass of Obamacare." Expressing frustration, he complained about "the level of hostility" in government and wondered why both parties can't work together on the Senate bill as GOP critics expressed doubt over a successful vote this week.

It was the latest signs of high-stakes maneuvering over a key campaign promise, and the president signaled a willingness to deal.

"We have a very good plan," Trump said in an interview broadcast Sunday. Referring to Republican senators opposed to the bill, he added: "They want to get some points, I think they'll get some points."

Trump's comments come amid the public opposition of five Republican senators so far to the Senate GOP plan that would scuttle much of former President Barack Obama's health law.

Unless those holdouts can be swayed, their numbers are more than enough to torpedo the measure developed in private by Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., and deliver a bitter defeat for the president. That's because unanimous opposition is expected from Democrats in a chamber in which Republicans hold a narrow 52-48 majority.

Trump bemoaned the lack of bipartisanship in Washington, having belittled prominent Democrats himself.

"It would be so great if the Democrats and Republicans could get together, wrap their arms around it and come up with something that everybody's happy with," the president said. "And I'm open arms; but, I don't see that happening. They fight each other. The level of hostility."

Trump has denigrated Democrats on numerous occasions, including a jab at Democratic Sen. Elizabeth Warren in the same interview: "She's a hopeless case. I call her Pocahontas and that's an insult to Pocahontas."

Warren, a leading liberal and defender of the Affordable Care Act, has opposed efforts to pass a bill to

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replace the law. The Democrat reiterated her opposition in a statement to The Associated Press on Sunday, saying the health care bill being pushed by Senate Republicans is a "monstrosity."

In a tweet last week after Georgia's special House election, Trump also criticized House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi and Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer. "I certainly hope the Democrats do not force Nancy P out. That would be very bad for the Republican Party — and please let Cryin' Chuck stay!" he wrote.

In the broadcast interview, Trump did not indicate what types of changes to the Senate bill may be in store, but affirmed that he had described a House-passed bill as "mean."

"I want to see a bill with heart," he said, confirming a switch from his laudatory statements about the House bill at a Rose Garden ceremony with House GOP leaders last month. "Healthcare's a very complicated subject from the standpoint that you move it this way, and this group doesn't like it."

"And honestly, nobody can be totally happy," Trump said.

McConnell has said he's willing to make changes to win support, and in the week ahead, plenty of back-room bargaining is expected. He is seeking to push a final package through the Senate before the July 4 recess.

At least two GOP senators said Sunday that goal may prove too ambitious.

"I would like to delay," said Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Wis., one of the five senators opposing the bill. "These bills aren't going to fix the problem. They're not addressing the root cause," he said, referring to rising health care costs. "They're doing the same old Washington thing, throwing more money at the problem."

Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, said seven to eight other senators including herself were troubled by provisions that she believes could cut Medicaid even more than the House version.

Collins, who also opposes proposed cuts to Planned Parenthood, said she would await an analysis Monday from the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office before taking a final position on the bill. But she said it will be "extremely difficult" for the White House to be able to find a narrow path to attract both conservatives and moderates.

"It's hard for me to see the bill passing this week," Collins said.

Addressing reporters Sunday, the Senate's No. 2 Republican said passing a health care bill won't get any easier if Republican leaders delay a Senate vote on the GOP health care plan. Sen. John Cornyn of Texas said there is "a sense of urgency" to push forward but acknowledged the outcome is "going to be close."

He told reporters at a private gathering hosted by the libertarian Koch brothers in Colorado that Trump will be "important" in securing the final votes.

"We're trying to hold him back a little bit," Cornyn said with a smile.

The Senate bill resembles legislation the House approved last month. A Congressional Budget Office analysis of the House measure predicts an additional 23 million people over the next decade would have no health care coverage, and recent polling shows only around 1 in 4 Americans views the House bill favorably.

The legislation would phase out extra federal money that more than 30 states receive for expanding Medicaid to additional low-income earners. It would also slap annual spending caps on the overall Medicaid program, which since its inception in 1965 has provided states with unlimited money to cover eligible costs.

Conservative Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., said he is opposing the Senate bill because it "is not anywhere close to repeal" of the Affordable Care Act. He says the bill offers too many tax credits that help poorer people to buy insurance.

"If we get to impasse, if we go to a bill that is more repeal and less big government programs, yes, I'll consider partial repeal," he said. "I'm not voting for something that looks just like Obamacare."

Trump said he thinks Republicans in the Senate are doing the best they can to push through the bill.

"I don't think they're that far off. Famous last words, right? But I think they're going to get there," Trump said of Republican Senate leaders. "We don't have too much of a choice, because the alternative is the dead carcass of Obamacare."

Schumer said Democrats have been clear they will cooperate with Republicans if they agree to drop a repeal of the Affordable Care Act and instead work to improve it. Still, Schumer acknowledged it was too

close to call as to whether Republicans could muster enough support on their own to pass the bill.

He said they had "at best, a 50-50 chance."

Trump was interviewed by "Fox & Friends," while Collins, Schumer and Paul appeared on ABC's "This Week." Johnson spoke on NBC's "Meet the Press."

Associated Press writer Steve Peoples contributed to this report from Colorado Springs, Colo.

Man catches teen falling from park ride: 'It's OK to let go'

By COLLEEN LONG, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Matthew Howard Sr. was just leaving a New York amusement park Saturday evening with his family when he heard someone screaming for help.

He looked up to see a young girl dangling about 25 feet (about 8 meters) off the ground from a slow-moving gondola ride as the sun was setting. Her little brother sat next to her in the green two-person pod, crying hysterically, saying he couldn't hold on.

Howard, 47, and his 21-year-old daughter, Leeann Winchell, ran over and positioned themselves under the girl as the ride stopped and security came running. A crowd of onlookers gathered, many filming, others calling for help.

"I said: 'It's 'OK! It's OK to let go, I'll catch you, honey,'" said Howard.

The girl lost her grip and fell down where Howard and Winchell, arms outstretched, waited with a few other good Samaritans. The two took the brunt of the girl's fall, tumbling to the ground themselves after the catch. She was lifted up and carried to a golf cart where emergency workers arrived to help her, witnesses said.

Howard, a contractor from Schenectady, was treated and released for a minor back injury after the rescue.

"I couldn't let that little girl die," Howard told The Associated Press on Sunday. "No one wants to put himself underneath a body like that, but I couldn't stand by and watch."

The 14-year-old girl from Greenwood, Delaware, was taken to Albany Medical Center in stable condition with no serious injuries, the Warren County Sheriff's Office said.

Winchell, who is applying to be a nurse, said they visited the girl Sunday at the hospital and she was in good spirits. Her little brother was shaken up but uninjured otherwise, she said. They didn't know how she'd fallen out of the ride.

"I'm just glad we could be there to help," Winchell said. "We were in the right place at the right time."

The accident happened on the Sky Ride at Six Flags Great Escape Amusement Park, about 55 miles (89 kilometers) north of Albany, New York. The ride was stopped by an operator after getting word of a rider in distress — it had been higher up at one point.

Loren Lent, from Glenville, said Sunday that his 10-year-old daughter and wife had also been on the ride and watched from high above as the girl fell.

"My daughter was just traumatized," he said. "She was crying for about a half-hour after."

Lent said he thought it took too long for park employees to stop the ride and render aid. He said the ride has no seatbelt; just a bar across to hold patrons inside.

"I'll never let my family on that ride again," he said.

Officials inspected the ride and said it was in proper working order. The park said in a statement that the safety of guests is a top priority.

"There does not appear to be any malfunction of the ride, but we have closed the attraction until a thorough review can be completed," a park official said.

On Sunday, park officials said the ride had been cleared for operation, but would remain closed.

"We are reviewing our internal procedures to ensure the safety and security of our guests and team members," park officials said.

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UK: All samples from high-rise towers fail fire safety tests

By SYLVIA HUI, Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The list of high-rise apartment towers in Britain that have failed fire safety tests grew to 60, officials said Sunday, revealing the mounting challenge the government faces in the aftermath of London's Grenfell Tower fire tragedy.

All of the buildings for which external cladding samples were so far submitted failed combustibility tests, Communities Secretary Sajid Javid said. As of late Sunday, that includes 60 towers from 25 different areas of the country— double the figure given a day earlier.

The number of buildings at risk is likely to grow as owners and local officials provide more samples for safety tests.

The national testing was ordered after an inferno engulfed Grenfell Tower in west London on June 14. The tower's cladding — panels widely used to insulate buildings and improve their appearance — was believed to have rapidly spread that blaze, which killed at least 79 people.

In north London, officials trying to avoid another fire disaster sought to complete the evacuation of hundreds of apartments in four towers deemed unsafe. They faced resistance as some 200 residents refused to budge.

Camden Council ordered residents from some 600 apartments at Chalcots Estate to evacuate late Friday as a precaution after fire inspectors found problems with the blocks' fire doors and gas pipes.

The council said residents must leave immediately because of those issues and because the towers were encased in similar cladding to the material used at Grenfell Tower.

Hundreds were put up in hotels and other temporary accommodation. The evacuees now face up to four weeks in limbo as workers try to upgrade the buildings' fire safety features. Council leader Georgia Gould said those still staying in their homes must leave for the renovations to begin.

Sayed Meah, 34, who lives with his mother and wife, said he would not move until the company that helps care for his mother agrees to provide service at a new location.

He said he and other residents are determined to remain in their apartments until a legal notice is obtained or they are "dragged out by their fingernails."

Refurbishment of the Chalcots towers was overseen by Rydon, the same company involved in the recent renovation of the now-devastated Grenfell Tower.

A public inquiry is due to determine how the unsafe cladding was allowed to be fitted onto Grenfell and other buildings in the first place.

London Mayor Sadiq Khan backed the Camden Council's decision to evacuate the apartment blocks.

"I think they've done the right thing. Look, you've got to err on the side of caution. You can't play Russian roulette with people's safety," Khan told Sky News.

Activists kept from gathering en masse for Istanbul Pride

By ZEYNEP BILGINSOY, Associated Press

ISTANBUL (AP) — Turkish police stopped activists for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex rights from gathering in large numbers for an LGBT pride event in Istanbul on Sunday, but smaller groups made impromptu press statements defying a ban imposed by the governor.

Organizers of the 2017 Istanbul LGBTI+ Pride had vowed to march in central Taksim Square, using a Turkish hashtag for "we march," despite the ban on gay pride observances ordered by the Istanbul governor's office for the third year in a row.

Police established checkpoints in the area, preventing groups from entering Istiklal Avenue and turning back individuals who were deemed to be associated with the planned march. Small groups assembled on side streets were chased away by officers.

At least a hundred protesters gathered in a nearby neighborhood, beating drums and chanting slogans such as, "Don't be quiet, shout out, gays exist!" and "Love, love, freedom, State, stay away!" They carried a banner that read, "Get used to, we are here."

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Police used tear gas to disperse the crowds and activists said plastic bullets were also used. Riot-control vehicles and buses were dispatched to the area. Turkey's official Anadolu news agency said "an estimated 20 people" were detained after protesters did not heed warnings to disperse because the march did not have a permit.

Among those detained was Associated Press journalist Bram Janssen, who was covering the events. Footage from the scene showed officers grabbing him by the arms and escorting him to a van. He was released later Sunday.

Pride organizers said 41 people were detained, including 25 activists. Several activists were released late Sunday and lawyers expected others to be released after making statements to the police.

In banning the event, the governor's office on Saturday cited safety and public order. It also said a valid parade application had not been filed for Sunday's event, a claim rejected by organizers.

The governor's ban referred to "serious reactions by different segments of society" as several nationalist and religious groups called for the march's cancellation.

Pride organizers said in a statement Sunday that the threats themselves should be dealt with rather than limiting demonstrations. "Our security will be provided by recognizing us in the constitution, by securing justice, by equality and freedom," the statement said.

The private Dogan news agency reported the detention of seven people who were protesting Pride.

LGBT activists have lobbied for years to have sexual orientation and gender identity covered by Turkish laws protecting civil rights and prohibiting hate speech but the clauses have not been included in updated legislation. Homosexuality has been legal in Turkey since the republic's founding more than nine decades ago.

The Turkish government says there is no discrimination against LGBT individuals and that current laws already protect each citizen. It also insists that perpetrators of hate crimes are prosecuted.

Turkish authorities allowed pride marches to take place for more than a decade since the first one was held in 2003. Up to 100,000 people attended Istanbul Pride in 2014.

But in 2015, police dispersed crowds using tear gas and water cannons after a last-minute ban. In 2016, amid a spate of deadly attacks blamed on the Islamic State group or on outlawed Kurdish militants, the event was banned again but participants still tried to gather.

Pride organizers think the celebrations have been banned since 2014 because they coincided with the holy month of Ramadan and a rise in conservatism.

Sunday's scheduled march was on the first day of the Eid al-Fitr holiday, marking the end of a month of fasting.

Forest fire in Spain threatens renowned national park

By JOSEPH WILSON, Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain (AP) — A forest fire in southern Spain forced the evacuation of at least 1,000 people and threatened a national park famous for its biodiversity and endangered species, authorities said Sunday.

The fire started on Saturday night on Spain's southern coast, then advanced east to reach the Donana Nature Reserve, one of the country's most important wildlife sanctuaries and a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1994.

"The fire has entered in the limits of the reserve, and that is where we are focusing our efforts," Jose Gregorio Fiscal Lopez from the regional Andalusian authority in charge of the environment told Spanish national television.

The reserve protects over 107,000 hectares (264,403 acres) considered of extreme ecological value for their mix of ecosystems, including wetlands, dunes and woods. It is a key stop for migratory birds home to a variety of animals, including about a fifth of the 400 remaining Iberian lynxes.

Ecologists who work in the park are concerned that the fire could wipe out some of the area's prized species and terrain.

"We are worried because the impact could be huge," Carlos Molina, an ornithologist who works inside

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the reserve, told The Associated Press by phone from his home nearby.

"Donana is probably one of the most important areas for birds in all of Europe, and we just happen to be in a nesting season for several species," Molina said.

While Molina said the reserve's endangered Iberian imperial eagle should not be in danger, the area in immediate threat from the fire is territory for the extremely endangered lynx.

Juan Sanchez, director of the Andalusia's forest fire prevention unit, said the fight was "in its critical phase" due to strong winds whipping up the flames.

"Right now the fire is developing how we expected. The wind is shifting, gaining strength, which is normal as we get to the afternoon," Sanchez said. "We are managing it, but a change in the direction of the wind could alter the situation."

Susana Diaz, the regional president of Andalusia, said no people have died in the blaze and "there's no risk to the population" after about 1,000 were evacuated from campsites and houses near the town of Moguer, where the fire started on Saturday night.

Diaz said fighting the fire was proving difficult due to hot, dry weather, with temperatures reaching 39 degrees Celsius (102 degrees Fahrenheit), and shifting winds. Over 550 firefighters, soldiers and police officers supported by 21 air units were combating the blaze Sunday.

"It's still very early, but we are not ruling out the human factor" as a possible cause of the fire, said Diaz.

Spain's interior minister, Juan Ignacio Zoido, said from a control post near the fire that since "we are taking special measures, even though the wind is pushing the fire toward (the reserve) to keep the damage to a minimum."

The fire comes a week after wildfires killed 64 people in neighboring Portugal, which like Spain is suffering from a lack of rain and high temperatures.

Low turnout expected in Albanian election key to EU bid

By **LLAZAR SEMINI, Associated Press**

TIRANA, Albania (AP) — Albanians voted in what was expected to be low numbers Sunday in a general election that was aimed at giving the country's two biggest political parties a chance to look past their bitter differences and work toward eventually joining the European Union.

The voting ended at 8 p.m. (1800 GMT) after the Central Election Commission decided to extend voting by one hour due to low turnout that was attributed to religious festivities and hot temperatures that reached 39 degrees (102 Fahrenheit.)

The decision caused chaos in some places as more people waited in line to cast ballots.

When the polls closed, the preliminary turnout from the 19 percent of stations reporting participation figures was 43.9 percent, compared to 53.5 percent four years ago. Preliminary election results are not expected until Monday.

Holding a free and fair election is key to launching EU membership talks for the nation of 2.9 million, which is already a NATO member. After earning EU candidate status in 2014, Tirana has struggled to pass important reforms vital for its bid to advance to EU — namely deeply reforming its corrupted justice system.

Eighteen political parties are running for 140 seats in parliament in Sunday's vote. The main contenders are Prime Minister Edi Rama's Socialist Party and the opposition Democratic Party led by Lulzim Basha.

An agreement reached in May ended the three-month parliamentary boycott by the Democrats, who claimed that voting was open to manipulation. The election date was delayed a week and Rama's Socialists promised greater oversight on election transparency.

All main parties campaigned on a reform agenda, pledging faster economic growth, pay hikes and lower unemployment, which stands at about 14 percent.

Some 6,000 police officers were on duty for election security, while more 300 international observers came to monitor the vote.

"We expect a better Albania and leaders to work to do what they have pledged at the campaign," Zenel Caka, 47, said at a polling station in Tirana.

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Luan Rama of the Socialist Party for Motivation, the third main political party, said one member was injured following a quarrel and a shooting incident outside a polling station in Shengjin, 60 kilometers (37 miles) northwest of the capital, Tirana.

Police investigating the incident said they found a cartridge but no injured person was taken to the hospital. They said it did not disrupt the voting.

The Interior Ministry also reported hundreds of attempts to buy votes, a crime that may result in a jail term.

Central Election Commission said partial turnout at a quarter of polling stations by 10 a.m. was 12.6 percent, almost the same as in the previous election.

Albanians also celebrated Eid al-Fitr on Sunday, the end of the fasting month of Ramadan. In the early morning, thousands of Muslim believers said prayers at the recently-renovated Skanderbeg Square in Tirana.

All top leaders cast their ballots, congratulating Muslims on the holiday and urging citizens to vote.

"Today, Albania needs God more than ever," Rama said.

The western city of Kavaja was also holding a mayoral election.

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Erin Andrews, ex-NHL player Jarret Stoll marry in Montana

NEW YORK (AP) — Sportscaster Erin Andrews and former NHL player Jarret Stoll have tied the knot.

Publicists for Andrews confirm that the 39-year-old Fox Sports sideline reporter and "Dancing with the Stars" co-host married Stoll on Saturday, his 35th birthday.

People magazine first reported the nuptials. According to the magazine, the wedding was held at sunset in Montana in front of a small group of family and friends. Andrews wore a gown designed by Carolina Herrera.

The couple, who started dating in 2012, got engaged in December at Disneyland.

The wedding follows a rocky year for Andrews.

In September 2016, she was diagnosed with cervical cancer, months after winning a stalking lawsuit. She settled with two hotel companies that were found partially to blame for the stalker, who got a hotel room next to hers and posted nude video of her on the internet.

Stoll played in the NHL for 13 years, for Edmonton, Los Angeles, Minnesota and the New York Rangers.

Scores missing in massive China landslide; 10 bodies found

By HAN GUAN NG and DIDI TANG, Associated Press

MAO COUNTY, China (AP) — Rescuers recovered 10 bodies and were still searching for 93 missing people on Sunday, a day after a massive landslide buried a picturesque mountain village in southwestern China.

More than 2,500 rescuers with detection devices and dogs were looking for signs of life amid the rubble of huge boulders that rained down on Xinmo village in Sichuan province early Saturday.

As of Sunday night, only three people — a couple and their month-old baby — had been rescued from the disaster site.

Sitting on the eastern margin of the Tibetan Plateau in Aba prefecture's Mao County, Xinmo has in recent years become a tourism destination for its picturesque scenery of homes in lush meadows tucked between steep and rugged mountains. But after the landslide, the village was reduced to a vast area of rubble.

As heavy machines removed debris and men scoured the rubble for survivors on Sunday, relatives from nearby villages sobbed as they awaited news of their loved ones.

"It was as if strong winds were blowing by, or a big truck rumbled by," Tang Hua, a 38-year-old woman from a nearby village, told The Associated Press. "The houses were shaking, as if there were an earthquake. We rushed out and saw massive smoke. With a thundering sound, the smoke suddenly lifted. We realized it was a landslide."

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"As we ran for safety, we looked this way and saw the village flattened," she said.

Tang has relatives in Xinmo, but she said little could be done at this point. "The whole village is done for," she said.

The landslide carried an estimated 18 million cubic meters (636 million cubic feet) of earth and rock — equivalent to more than 7,200 Olympic-sized swimming pools — when it slid down from steep mountains. Some of it fell from as high as 1.6 kilometers (1 mile).

It buried 1.6 kilometers (1 mile) of road and blocked a 2-kilometer (1.2-mile) section of a river as it completely wiped away the village, which was once home to 46 families comprising more than 100 people.

The Sichuan provincial government said Sunday that 10 bodies had been found, lowering an earlier figure of 15 that had been reported by state media. It also lowered the number of missing to 93, saying 15 people on an initial list of the missing were accounted for.

There were 142 tourists in the village around the time the landslide hit, and all were alive, said Xu Zhiwen, executive deputy governor of Aba prefecture.

Three members of a family from the village were rescued five hours after the landslide struck on Saturday. Qiao Dashuai, 26, told state broadcaster China Central Television that he and his wife awoke to cries from their 1-month-old son at around 5:30 a.m.

"Just after we changed the baby's diaper, we heard a big bang outside and the light went out," Qiao said. "We felt that something bad was happening and immediately rushed to the door, but the door was blocked by mud and rocks."

Qiao said his family was swept away by water as part of a mountain collapsed. He said they struggled against the water until they met medical workers who took them to a hospital. His parents and other relatives were among the missing.

A government-run news outlet said that Qiao and his wife were in stable condition on Sunday and that their infant was sent to an intensive care unit with pneumonia induced by mud inhalation.

Experts on state media said the landslide was likely triggered by rain. The mountainous region has been prone to geological disasters. In May 2008, a magnitude 7.9 earthquake killed nearly 90,000 people in Wenchuan County, 40 kilometers (25 miles) from Mao County.

Scientist He Siming told the state-run Beijing News that the 2008 quake could have done structural damage to the mountains flanking Xinmo. He said the rain could have been the external cause of the landslide.

In 2014, a landslide in the same county killed 11 people when it struck a section of a highway.

Tang reported from Beijing.

Norwegians collect money to fix penis-shaped rock formation

HELSINKI (AP) — Activists are collecting money to repair a penis-shaped rock formation in southern Norway after the popular tourist attraction was found badly damaged.

Joggers discovered Saturday that the Trollpikken rock formation had cracked and noted drilling holes in the rock — something that experts say strongly suggests the rock was deliberately vandalized.

By Sunday, over 500 people had donated nearly 90,000 Norwegian kroner (\$10,600) to fix the formation located south of the southern coastal city of Stavanger.

Activist Kjetil Bentsen told public broadcaster NRK that he was convinced the Trollpikken "will be rebuilt" with donated money.

Police are looking for tips to find the person or persons who did it. They could face a one-year prison sentence for a serious environmental crime.

Southern Utah wildfire grows, crews make slight gains

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — A southern Utah wildfire has grown more, reaching 62.7 square miles (162.4 square kilometers) by Saturday night.

The fire near the town of Brian Head is 8 percent contained and has destroyed at least 13 homes, fire officials said. About 1,000 firefighters and support personnel are battling the blaze, which started June 17 by someone using a torch to burn weeds.

More than 1,500 people have been evacuated from several hundred homes and cabins, fire information officer Erin Darboven said Saturday night. Evacuation orders were given in nearby alpine communities that are generally known for second homes as a weekend getaway for Las Vegas residents.

High winds and hot weather continue to intensify the fire but conditions are expected to improve Sunday before winds return Monday.

Officials said firefighters are trying to fully extinguish hot spots in the southwest corner in order to allow Brian Head residents to return.

Concert in Utah park honors man killed in London attack

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST, Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — The life of a Utah man who ran a recording studio at his home before he was killed in a high-profile London attack that also injured his wife was celebrated Saturday with the local music he loved.

Among the attendees was Keith Malda, a police officer in London who was one of the first responders to the scene at London's Westminster Bridge. He saw Melissa Cochran bloody and silent on the bridge on March 22 and helped treat her before ambulances arrived.

The two stayed in touch, and Malda said he traveled to Utah after being inspired by her focus on love over hate after the attack. "I had to come," he said.

Melissa Cochran said Malda stayed with her and told her everything was going to be OK. "I owe my life to him," she said.

Melissa Cochran, 46, said she was looking at her camera and didn't see the sport utility vehicle coming before it plowed into a crowd of pedestrians. She and her husband had been grabbing each other's hands just before the attack, kissing and saying how much fun they were having with each other.

Kurt Cochran was thrown from London's Westminster Bridge when he and his wife were struck by a sport utility vehicle that plowed into a group of pedestrians. The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for the attack that killed four people and injured scores more.

Cochran says she's sometimes angry at the attacker who killed her husband, but she doesn't hate him. "I can't hate anyone. Kurt wouldn't want me to, and I just don't have it in my heart to do that," she said.

The concert was held in lieu of a traditional funeral for Kurt W. Cochran, 54, his brother-in-law Clint Payne said. It was an easy decision on how to honor the man who also helped with music festivals and high school productions, he said. "He's done so much for the music scene," Payne said.

Cochran's wife, Melissa, suffered a broken leg in the March 22 attack and arrived at the concert using crutches. She also suffered a broken rib and cuts and bruises.

Members of Cochran's family, including his son, are among the musicians who played at the show in a park in Bountiful, north of Salt Lake City, Payne said. The acts had worked with the Cochrans at their basement recording studio.

The West Bountiful couple was on the last day of a European trip celebrating their 25th wedding anniversary when the attack happened. The two were visiting Melissa Cochran's parents, who were serving a church mission in London.

She and her husband were described as inseparable. They ran a recording studio in their basement, and Kurt Cochran helped young bands get started by charging them only a small fee to use it.

The London attack came exactly one year after four Mormon missionaries — three from Utah — were

seriously injured in a bombing of Brussels airport.

15 bodies found after landslide buries scores in China

By HAN GUAN NG, Associated Press

MAO COUNTY, China (AP) — Crews searching through the night in the rubble left by a landslide that buried a mountain village under tons of soil and rocks in southwestern China found 15 bodies, but more than 100 more people remained missing.

About 3,000 rescuers were using detection devices and dogs to look for signs of life in an area that once held 62 homes and a hotel, the official Xinhua News Agency reported.

"We won't give up as long as there is a slim of chance," the agency quoted an unidentified searcher as saying.

The provincial government of Sichuan on Sunday released the names of the 118 missing people. It's unclear if the 15 bodies have been identified.

Relatives were sobbing as they awaited news of their loved ones. A woman in a nearby village told The Associated Press that she had no information on her relatives in Xinmo, the mountain village that was buried. She said she had only heard that body parts were found.

Xu Zhiwen, executive deputy governor of the Tibetan and Qiang Autonomous Prefecture of Aba, the region where the landslide struck early Saturday, said that all 142 tourists who were visiting a site in Xinmo have been found alive.

Three members of one family were located five hours after the landslide. Qiao Dashuai, 26, said he and his wife awoke to cries from their 1-month-old son around 5:30 a.m.

"Just after we changed the diaper for the baby, we heard a big bang outside and the light went out," said Qiao. "We felt that something bad was happening and immediately rushed to the door, but the door was blocked by mud and rocks."

Qiao told state broadcaster CCTV his family was swept away by water as part of a mountain collapsed. He said they struggled against the flood of water until they met medical workers who took them to a hospital. His parents and other relatives were among the missing.

"It's the biggest landslide to hit this area since the Wenchuan earthquake," Wang Yongbo, an official leading one of the rescue efforts, told CCTV. Wang was referring to China's deadliest earthquake this century, a magnitude 7.9 temblor that struck Sichuan province in May 2008, killing nearly 90,000 people.

Mao County, or Maoxian, sits on the eastern margin of the Tibetan plateau and is home to about 110,000 people. Most residents are of the Qiang ethnic minority.

The landslide buried 1.6 kilometers (1 mile) of road and blocked a 2-kilometer (1.2-mile) section of a river. The provincial government said on its website that an estimated 8 million cubic meters (282 million cubic feet) of earth and rock — equivalent to more than 3,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools — slid down the mountain.

Experts told CCTV that the landslide was likely triggered by rain. Search may be made easier Sunday as the weather service forecast a sunny day.

Koch chief says health care bill insufficiently conservative

By STEVE PEOPLES, Associated Press

COLORADO SPRING, Colo. (AP) — Chief lieutenants in the Koch brothers' political network lashed out at the Senate Republican health care bill on Saturday as not conservative enough, becoming a powerful outside critic as GOP leaders try to rally support for their plan among rank-and-file Republicans.

Tim Phillips, who leads Americans For Prosperity, the Koch network's political arm, called the Senate's plans for Medicaid "a slight nip and tuck" of President Barack Obama's health care law, a modest change he described as "immoral."

"This Senate bill needs to get better," Phillips said. "It has to get better."

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Some Republican senators have raised concern about cuts to Medicaid, which provides health care coverage to millions of poor and middle-income Americans. Several more conservative senators have voiced opposition because they feel it does not go far enough in dismantling what they call "Obamacare."

The comments came on the first day of a three-day private donor retreat at a luxury resort in the Rocky Mountains. Invitations were extended only to donors who promise to give at least \$100,000 each year to the various groups backed by the Koch brothers' Freedom Partners — a network of education, policy and political entities that aim to promote small government.

"When I look at where we are at the size and effectiveness of this network, I'm blown away," billionaire industrialist Charles Koch told hundreds of donors during an outdoor evening reception. His brother, David Koch, looked on from the crowd along with Sens. Mike Lee of Utah and Jeff Flake of Arizona.

"We've got to keep doing it at an accelerated pace," Charles Koch said.

No outside group has been more aggressive over the yearslong push to repeal Obama's health care law than the Kochs', who vowed on Saturday to spend another 10 years fighting to change the health care system if necessary. The Koch network has often displayed a willingness to take on Republicans — including President Donald Trump — when their policies aren't deemed conservative enough.

Network spokesman James Davis said the organization would continue to push for changes to the Senate health care bill over the coming week.

"At the end of the day, this bill is not going to fix health care," Davis declared.

The network's wishes are backed by a massive political budget that will be used to take on Republican lawmakers, if necessary, Phillips said.

He described the organization's budget for policy and politics heading into the 2018 midterm elections as between \$300 million and \$400 million. "We believe we're headed to the high end of that range," he said.

On Friday, Nevada Republican Dean Heller became the fifth GOP senator to declare his opposition to the Senate health care proposal. Echoing the other four, Heller said he opposes the measure "in this form" but does not rule out backing a version that is changed to his liking.

Heller, facing a competitive re-election battle next year, said he was opposing the legislation because of the cuts it would make in Medicaid.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., has said he's willing to alter the measure to attract support, and promised plenty of back-room bargaining as he tries pushing a final package through his chamber next week.

Republican leaders have scant margin for error. Facing unanimous Democratic opposition, McConnell can afford to lose just two of the 52 GOP senators and still prevail.

At least two of the current opponents, Lee and Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, were among 18 elected officials scheduled to attend the Koch retreat. Two more undecideds were also on the guest list: Flake and Nebraska Sen. Ben Sasse.

President Donald Trump continued to push for replacing Obama's health care law, tweeting Saturday: "I cannot imagine that these very fine Republican Senators would allow the American people to suffer a broken ObamaCare any longer!"

The Senate measure resembles legislation the House approved last month that the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office said would mean 23 million additional uninsured people within a decade and that recent polling shows is viewed favorably by only around 1 in 4 Americans.

Charles Koch and his chief lieutenants met privately with Vice President Mike Pence for nearly an hour Friday. Pence, a longtime Koch ally, was in Colorado Springs to address a gathering of religious conservatives.

Phillips said it was "a cordial discussion" about policy, but that neither side asked the other for anything specific.

Also Saturday, retired football star Deion Sanders announced plans to partner with the Kochs to help fight poverty in Dallas.

The unlikely partnership aims to raise \$21 million over the next three years to fund anti-poverty programs in the city where Sanders once played football. The outspoken athlete also defended Koch, who is often demonized by Democrats, as someone simply "trying to make the world a better place."

"I'm happy where I am and who I'm with because we share a lot of the same values and goals," Sanders said when asked if he'd be willing to partner with organizations on the left.

CIA chief: Intel leaks on the rise, cites leaker 'worship'

By DEB RIECHMANN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — CIA Director Mike Pompeo says he thinks disclosure of America's secret intelligence is on the rise, fueled partly by the "worship" of leakers like Edward Snowden.

"In some ways, I do think it's accelerated," Pompeo told MSNBC in an interview that aired Saturday. "I think there is a phenomenon, the worship of Edward Snowden, and those who steal American secrets for the purpose of self-aggrandizement or money or for whatever their motivation may be, does seem to be on the increase."

Pompeo said the United States needs to redouble its efforts to stem leaks of classified information.

"It's tough. You now have not only nation states trying to steal our stuff, but non-state, hostile intelligence services, well-funded -- folks like WikiLeaks, out there trying to steal American secrets for the sole purpose of undermining the United States and democracy," Pompeo said.

Besides Snowden, who leaked documents revealing extensive U.S. government surveillance, WikiLeaks recently released nearly 8,000 documents that it says reveal secrets about the CIA's cyberespionage tools for breaking into computers. WikiLeaks previously published 250,000 State Department cables and embarrassed the U.S. military with hundreds of thousands of logs from Iraq and Afghanistan.

There are several other recent cases, including Chelsea Manning, the Army private formerly known as Bradley Manning. She was convicted in a 2013 court-martial of leaking more than 700,000 secret military and State Department documents to WikiLeaks while working as an intelligence analyst in Iraq. Manning said she leaked the documents to raise awareness about the war's impact on innocent civilians.

Last year, former NSA contractor Harold Thomas Martin III, 51, of Glen Burnie, Maryland, was accused of removing highly classified information, storing it in an unlocked shed and in his car and home. Court documents say investigators seized, conservatively, 50 terabytes of information, or enough to fill roughly 200 laptop computers.

Pompeo said the Trump administration is focused on stopping leaks of any kind from any agency and pursuing perpetrators. "I think we'll have some successes both on the deterrence side — that is stopping them from happening — as well as on punishing those who we catch who have done it," Pompeo said.

On other issues, Pompeo said:

— North Korea poses a "very real danger" to U.S. national security. "I hardly ever escape a day at the White House without the president asking me about North Korea and how it is that the United States is responding to that threat. It's very much at the top of his mind." He said the North Koreans are "ever-closer to having the capacity to hold America at risk with a nuclear weapon."

—Pompeo said U.S. national security also is threatened by Iran, which he described as the world's largest state sponsor of terror.

"Today, we find it with enormous influence, influence that far outstrips where it was six or seven years ago," said Pompeo, a former Republican congressman from Kansas. "Whether it's the influence they have over the government in Baghdad, whether it's the increasing strength of Hezbollah and Lebanon, their work alongside the Houthis in Iran, the Iraqi Shias that are fighting along now the border in Syria -- certainly the Shia forces that are engaged in Syria. Iran is everywhere throughout the Middle East."

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Today in History By The Associated Press.

Today in History

Today is Monday, June 26, the 177th day of 2017. There are 188 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On June 26, 1917, the first troops of the American Expeditionary Force deployed to France during World War I landed in St. Nazaire.

On this date:

In 1483, Richard III began his reign as King of England (he was crowned the following month at Westminster Abbey).

In 1870, the first section of Atlantic City, New Jersey's Boardwalk was opened to the public.

In 1925, Charles Chaplin's classic comedy "The Gold Rush" premiered at Grauman's Egyptian Theatre in Hollywood.

In 1936, President Franklin D. Roosevelt was nominated for a second term of office by delegates to the Democratic national convention in Philadelphia.

In 1945, the charter of the United Nations was signed by 50 countries in San Francisco.

In 1950, President Harry S. Truman authorized the U.S. Air Force and Navy to enter the Korean War.

In 1959, President Dwight D. Eisenhower joined Britain's Queen Elizabeth II in ceremonies officially opening the St. Lawrence Seaway. Swedish boxer Ingemar Johansson knocked out Floyd Patterson in the third round of their match at New York's Yankee Stadium to win the heavyweight title.

In 1963, President John F. Kennedy visited West Berlin, where he delivered his famous speech expressing solidarity with the city's residents, declaring: "Ich bin ein Berliner" (I am a Berliner).

In 1967, French actress Françoise Dorléac (frahn-SWAHZ' DOHR'-lee-ahk), the 25-year-old sister of Catherine Deneuve, was killed in a car crash in Nice (nees).

In 1977, 42 people were killed when a fire sent toxic smoke pouring through the Maury County Jail in Columbia, Tennessee. Elvis Presley performed his last concert at Market Square Arena in Indianapolis.

In 1987, Supreme Court Justice Lewis F. Powell Jr. announced his retirement, leaving a vacancy that was filled by Anthony M. Kennedy.

In 1997, the first Harry Potter novel, "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone" by J.K. Rowling (ROHL'-ing), was published in the United Kingdom (it was later released in the United States under the title "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone").

Ten years ago: Conservative commentator Ann Coulter, appearing on MSNBC's "Hardball," got into a verbal fracas with Elizabeth Edwards, who called into the program to ask Coulter to stop making personal attacks on her husband, Democratic presidential candidate John Edwards. Paris Hilton left the Los Angeles County jail after a three-week stay for a probation violation. Fashion designer Liz Claiborne died in New York at age 78.

Five years ago: Sen. Orrin Hatch won the GOP primary in Utah, handily turning back a challenge from tea party-backed Dan Liljenquist (lihl-IHN'-kwihst). In Oklahoma, five-term Rep. John Sullivan fell to a tea party-supported candidate, Jim Bridenstine, who went on to win election to Congress. Twelve-time All-Star Joe Sakic (SAK'-ihk) was elected to the Hockey Hall of Fame in his first year of eligibility, joining Mats Sundin, Pavel Bure and Adam Oates as the newest class of inductees. Essayist, author and filmmaker Nora Ephron, 71, died in New York. Actress Doris Singleton, 92, died in Los Angeles.

One year ago: Fourteen people suffered stab wounds, cuts and bruises when fighting erupted outside the California state Capitol in Sacramento between more than 300 counter-protesters and about 30 members of the Traditionalist Worker Party, a white nationalist group. Fireworks exploded as a huge Chinese-owned container ship made the inaugural passage through the newly expanded Panama Canal.

Today's Birthdays: Jazz musician-film composer Dave Grusin is 83. Actor Josef Sommer is 83. Singer Billy Davis Jr. is 79. Rock singer Georgie Fame is 74. Actor Clive Francis is 71. Rhythm-and-blues singer Brenda Holloway is 71. Actor Michael Paul Chan is 67. Actor Robert Davi is 66. Singer-musician Mick Jones is 62.

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Actor Gedde Watanabe (GEH'-dee wah-tah-NAH'-bee) is 62. Rock singer Chris Isaak is 61. Rock singer Patty Smyth is 60. Singer Terri Nunn (Berlin) is 58. U.S. Bicycling Hall of Famer Greg LeMond is 56. Rock singer Harriet Wheeler (The Sundays) is 54. Country musician Eddie Perez (The Mavericks) is 49. Rock musician Colin Greenwood (Radiohead) is 48. Writer-director Paul Thomas Anderson is 47. Actor Sean Hayes is 47. Actor Matt Letscher is 47. Actor Chris O'Donnell is 47. Actor Nick Offerman is 47. Actress Rebecca Budig is 44. Retired MLB All-Star Derek Jeter is 43. Contemporary Christian musician Jeff Frankenstein (Newsboys) is 43. Country singer Gretchen Wilson is 43. Rock musician Nathan Followill (Kings of Leon) is 38. Pop-rock singer-musician Ryan Tedder (OneRepublic) is 38. Actor-musician Jason Schwartzman is 37. Actress Aubrey Plaza is 33. Actress-singer Jennette McCurdy is 25. Actress-singer Ariana Grande is 24.

Thought for Today: "I am continually fascinated at the difficulty intelligent people have in distinguishing what is controversial from what is merely offensive." — Nora Ephron (1941-2012).