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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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Senior Menu: Sweet and sour pork, steamed rice, carrot and broccoli medley, honey fruit salad, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Breakfast pizza, fruit, milk and juice.

School Lunch: Chicken strips, fries, romaine salad, fruit.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Sarah Circle at 5 p.m., Confirmation kickoff meeting with students and parents at 7 p.m.

United Methodist: Coffee fellowship, 9 a.m.

Lions Bar Bingo: 6:30 p.m. at the Groton Legion.

Groton Dance: Registration, 4 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at the Groton Community Center. (Pre-school through 8th grade)

Groton Christian & Missionary Alliance: 7 p.m.: Program for children up to sixth grade, youth group for 7th-12th grade, adult Bible Study.

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

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Senior Menu: Chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes and gravy, corn, chocolate cake, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: French toast, sausage links, fruit, milk and juice.

School Lunch: BBQ, tater tots, carrots and dip, fruit.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Nigeria Circle, 2 p.m.

JH Football: at Sisseton, 7th grade at 4 p.m.; 8th grade at 5 p.m.

Volleyball: hosts Britton-Hecla, 7th grade at 4 p.m.; 8th grade to follow; JV at 6 p.m. followed by varsity match.

Welcome Back Picnic: 5 p.m. at GHS Gym.

Groton Chiropractic Clinic

Carol McFarland-Kutter, D.C.
1205 N 1st St., Groton 397-8204

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"I may NOT BE
DIFFERENT, BUT
I'M DEFINITELY
NOT THE SAME."

-WILLIAM J. DYBUS



Chicken Soup
for the Soul

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**Soup, Pie,
& Sandwich
\$2.00 per item**

St. John's Lutheran Church
Groton, SD
Thursday, September 14th

11:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.
Craft Items - Baked Goodies -
Garden Produce

Soups available:
Chili, Wild Rice,
Potato, Ham & Bean

**For take-out orders, please call
397-2386 at 10:30 a.m. or after.**

Netters beat Webster Area

Groton Area made it a clean sweep in volleyball action held Tuesday evening in Webster.

Groton won the C match, 25-5 and 25-15, the junior varsity match, 25-18 and 25-12, and the varsity match, 25-16, 25-12 and 25-14.

Groton Area was 64 of 72 in serving with 13 ace serves. Gia Gengerke was 17 of 19 with five ace serves and Miranda Hanson was 16 of 19 with five ace serves.

In sets, Groton Area was 56 of 58 with 31 assists. Miranda Hanson was 51 of 53 with 30 assists and Payton Maine was three of three with one assist.

Groton Area was 76 of 89 in hits with 33 kills. Gia Gengerke was 17 of 20 with 13 kills and Jennie Doeden was 20 of 23 with eight kills.

Groton Area had 44 digs with Payton Maine having 13 and Eliza Wanner nine. Gengerke had one solo block.

Groton Area, now 3-1 on the season, will host Britton-Hecla on Thursday.

Britton Cross-Country Meet

Trevor Sumption placed second in the Britton-Hecla cross country meet held Tuesday. The Frederick Area runner ran the 5,000m course in 18:24.16. Groton's Isaac Smith placed sixth with a time of 19:53.3 and Micah Poor was 11th with a time of 20:38.6.

In the girl's varsity division, Emily Thompson placed fifth with a time of 21:56.5 and Hannah Lewandowski was sixth with a time of 23:26.2 on the 5,000m course.

In the boy's junior varsity 4,000m race, Cody Blanchard, Langford, won the race with a time of 10:41.6. 2, Isaac Sumption, Frederick Area, 10:48.7; 7, Jesse Keough, Langford Area, 12:06.9; 10, Noah Poor, Groton Area, 12:49.6; 11, Jesse Geranen, Frederick Area, 12:50.5; 15, Spencer Jacobs, Groton Area, 13:56.9; 17, Braven Hanse, Langford Area, 14:11.53.

Girls' junior varsity 3,000m race: 6, Alyssa Keough, Langford Area, 14:23.5; 8, Avery West, Langford Area, 15:19.3; 9, AnneMarie Smith, Groton Area, 15:23.2; 11, Rylee Rosenau, Groton Area, 15:47; 15, Laney Widener, Langford Area, 18:03; 16, Jenifer Fjelstad, Groton Area, 19:47.1.

Help Wanted

Full- or part-time for the following positions: Healthcare workers for Nurse's-RN or LPN, and Nursing Assistants, Dietary Cook and assistant, and Housekeeper. (12 hour shifts/rotating weekends for nurses and C.N.A.s)

Contact Jessica Lindskov or Nellie Peterson at 605-397-2365 or apply in person.

EOE/AA/M/F/V/D-Drug Free Workplace



**1106 N. 2nd Street, Groton
605-397-2365**

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SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

Tyler Bowling

Public Affairs Specialist

2200 N Maple Ave Suite 301 Rapid City, SD 57701

Email: tyler.bowling@ssa.gov

Website: www.socialsecurity.gov

Question: Recently, I was told I shouldn't be carrying my Social Security card around. Is that true?

Answer: We encourage you to keep your Social Security card at home in a safe place. Do not carry it with you unless you are taking it to a job interview or to someone who requires it. Identity theft is one of the fastest growing crimes in America, and the best way to avoid becoming a victim is to safeguard your card and number. To learn more, visit our Social Security number and card page at www.socialsecurity.gov/ssnumber.

Question: How do I report a lost Social Security card?

Answer: You don't have to report a lost Social Security card. In fact, reporting a lost or stolen card to Social Security won't prevent misuse of your Social Security number. You should let us know if someone is using your number to work (call 1-800-772-1213; TTY 1-800-325-0778).

If you think someone is using your number, there are several other actions you should take:

- Contact the Federal Trade Commission online at www.ftc.gov/bcdp/edu/microsites/idtheft or call 1-877-ID-THEFT (1-877-438-4338);
- File an online complaint with the Internet Crime Complaint Center at www.ic3.gov;
- Contact the IRS Identity Protection Specialized Unit by calling 1-800-908-4490, Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 8 p.m.; and
- Monitor your credit report.

Question: I've read there is a five-month waiting period before my Social Security disability payments start. Are there any exceptions to this waiting period? Can I receive SSI during this waiting period?

Answer: While there are no exceptions to the five-month waiting period, you may be able to receive SSI payments if you have met Social Security's strict definition of disability and meet the income and resource requirements of the SSI program. For more information regarding the income and resource requirements of the SSI program, please visit www.socialsecurity.gov/disabilityssi/ssi.html.



All auto owners!

Save \$2-\$4 /tank

& grow your local economy
by choosing low carbon

Super Premium E30's

94 octane, more power,
same mileage, fewer
carbon deposits, lower
maintenance costs,

slashed benzene & related
genotoxic, carcinogenic
tailpipe emissions;

*see sdfu.org's E30 tab for
info, E30 prices\locations.

***Farmers Union's**

PSA: Courtesy Merle

**Anderson (Merle is 94
year old founder of Ace
and legendary ethanol
supporter... "because it is
the right thing to do")**

How to Avoid being Long in the Tooth

The adage "don't look a gift horse in the mouth" means to not find fault with something you have been gifted. It refers to the fact that a horse's age can be determined by looking at their teeth. If the gum has receded and the horse is "long in the tooth", then it is an old horse. Like an old horse, my teeth and I have been around for a while, and I always get a bit nervous when I drive up to the dentist's office, concerned about what problems they might find.

There are several things that can cause dental troubles. A common, frequently overlooked cause is dry-mouth. Experts in the field of geriatric dentistry say that saliva is an important and complex fluid that is taken for granted



By Richard P. Holm M.D.

when it comes to dental health. Without spit, teeth fall out in short order, the gastro-intestinal tract becomes troubled, and the overall quality of life diminishes significantly. Certain autoimmune conditions can reduce saliva, but a more common cause of dry-mouth are medications. Dry-mouth is a common and unassuming side effect of many prescriptions. Pills that can cause dry mouth include those used to treat bladder and bowel-spasms, nasal congestion, depression, anxiety, psychosis, acne, epilepsy, pain, high blood pressure, diarrhea, asthma, and nausea.

Although dry mouth is a challenge for many, it is fortunately not my problem. My dental hygienist said, after a thorough look, "Good news: your gums look pretty darn good for a 68-year-old. I see no problems." After reviewing the X-rays, she said, "You must be regularly cleaning the areas between your teeth. Whatever you're doing, keep it up."

It is important to care for your teeth throughout your life so that your gums stay healthy and teeth stay strong. Aside from brushing twice-a-day, and a visit to the dentist twice a year, my efforts include removing food particles at

the end of the day with a water-jet-washing device, similar yet more effective than flossing. It surprises me, every night, how many pieces of meat, corn, or broccoli can be stuck up in-between my teeth. Also, over the last ten years, I've been using those special disposable tooth-pick flossing tools that come in a bag which I place in a spot I notice and can reach into every day.

With daily jet-washing, picking and flossing, and avoiding medicine-induced dry mouth, I have been rewarded with good dental health. I still have my own chompers, and I'm not quite so "long in the tooth" as could be expected. Hopefully this advice can help you be as equally blessed.

Conde's Dobberpuhl nominated for Spirit of Dakota

Eleven outstanding women have been nominated by their communities to be honored at the Spirit of Dakota's 31st Anniversary Celebration and Award Banquet in Huron. They are Betty Belkham, Flandreau; Vivian Dobberpuhl, Conde; Genie M Ellis, Black Hawk; Rita Fraune, Hot Springs; Esther Eckmann Gilchrist, Hitchcock; Bernice Guy, Sisseton; Ashley Kingdon-Reese, Huron; Avis Little Eagle, McLaughlin; Ruth Neuberger, Canistota; Susan Fejfar Shrader, Tabor; Jean Wilkinson, DeSmet.

South Dakota's premier woman's award will be presented Saturday October 7th at the Huron Event Center.

The winner will be chosen by a state-wide commission of First Lady Linda Daugaard, Pierre; Tona Rozum, Chair, Mitchell; Glenna Foberg, Aberdeen; Julie Garreau, Eagle Butte; Jean Hunhoff, Yankton; Suzette Kirby, Sioux Falls; Marsha Sumpter, Kadoka; Ginger Thomson, Brookings; Judy Trzynka, Watertown; and Bev Wright, Turton.

The award is given to a woman who has demonstrated vision, courage and strength of character in the development of her family, community and/or state.

All eleven women will be given distinguished recognition throughout the many activities planned including Tea in the Afternoon in the country home of Rodney & Beckie Freeman, an art show open to the public in the lobby of the Huron Event Center from 4 to 7 pm, a 5:30 social, and 6:30 banquet.

The winner receives an individually created framed bronze oval with the pioneer woman sculpted by Dale Lamphere and modeled after his nine foot sculpture that stands outside the Crossroads Hotel.

Tickets for the banquet may be purchased at the Huron Chamber Office: 605-352-0000 or 1-800-487-6673.

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Gas Prices Continue to Increase Across the Country

Remnants of Harvey Expected to Drive Gas Prices through the month
Prospect of Hurricane Irma May Impact Prices As Well

Sept. 5, 2017 - Hurricane Harvey may no longer be raining down on the Gulf Coast, but the storm's impact continues to drive up gas prices across the country. At \$2.65, the national gas price average is 27 cents more expensive on the week. Motorists in 26 states are paying 25 to 44 cents more for a gallon of unleaded compared to seven days ago. Overall, gas prices are pennies away from topping the highest price (\$2.67, August 15-18, 2015) Americans have paid for a gallon of gas in more than two years.

South Dakota's gas prices have spiked 15 cents in one week to \$2.52. This is 23 cents higher than one year ago.

As Texas dries out from Harvey, all eyes are on Hurricane Irma, now a Category 5 hurricane, which currently is expected to hit the Leeward Islands of the Caribbean Tuesday night into Wednesday. A Hurricane Watch is in effect for the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico. According to the National Hurricane Center, there is an increasing chance that the Florida Peninsula and the Florida Keys may see some impact this coming weekend. However, Irma's changing storm track could bring an altered forecast in the coming days.

The Department of Energy (DOE) is reporting that eight Gulf Coast refineries are in the process of restarting, which accounts for about 10 percent of Gulf Coast refining capabilities. At its peak, Harvey shuttered 27 percent of U.S. processing capacity. No refineries have returned to normal rates, but at least four are operating at reduced rates. Meanwhile, pipelines forced to take pre-cautionary shut downs caused by Harvey either have resumed operations or are in the process of coming back online. This includes the Colonial Pipeline, which currently has only suspended the Texas operations, while the remainder of the system continues to operate with available supply.

With more than 50 inches of rain, Harvey set a record for the greatest amount of single-storm rainfall for the continental U.S.

"Consumers will continue to feel pain at the pump stemming from Harvey with gas prices potentially increasing an additional five to ten cents in the week ahead," said Marilyn Buskohl, AAA South Dakota spokesperson. "The good news is consumers will see relief from the gas price spike towards the end of this month."

Losses in U.S. supply capability have catapulted retail prices to their highest levels since August 2015, but remain well below initial weeks of September 2011 through 2014, according to OPIS. The last two years have seen inordinately cheap gasoline as the driving season ended (Labor Day weekend) and AAA expects this to be the case come October.

Today, 74 percent of U.S. gas stations are selling gas for \$2.75 or less while only seven percent are selling above \$3/gallon.

Quick Stats

The nation's largest weekly increases are Delaware (+44 cents), Georgia (+41 cents), Maryland (+41 cents), New Jersey (+40 cents), Tennessee (+39 cents), South Carolina (+39 cents), North Carolina (+38 cents), Connecticut (+37 cents), New Hampshire (+37 cents) and Massachusetts (+36 cents).

The nation's top ten least expensive markets are Arizona (\$2.36), Oklahoma (2.38), Louisiana (\$2.38), Arkansas (\$2.40), Missouri (\$2.45), Mississippi (\$2.45), Kansas (\$2.49), New Mexico (\$2.49), Alabama (\$2.49) and Minnesota (\$2.50)

Central States

Prices across these regions have seen significant movement over the past week. States in the region with the largest weekly increases include: Missouri (+29 cents), Kansas (+25 cents), Ohio (+24 cents), Illinois (+18 cents), Wisconsin (+17 cents), Michigan (+16 cents) and Indiana (+16 cents). A majority of the price increase is due to the gasoline supply distribution disruption out of the Gulf Coast. As pipelines begin to reopen and gasoline deliveries to the Midwest get back on track, motorists will start to see some relief with lower gas prices during the month. The EIA's latest report shows Midwest gasoline inventories remain

Build Dakota Scholarship Recipients Announced for 2017-18 School Year

PIERRE, S.D. – The Build Dakota Scholarship Board has selected 285 students as recipients of the Build Dakota Scholarship for the 2017-18 school year.

The scholarships cover tuition and fees, books, equipment and other related program expenses for eligible programs within eight high-need industry areas at South Dakota's four technical institutes. Recipients were selected from a total of 1,028 applications.

Dillon Freeman, Groton, received a scholarship for Mitchell Tech and will be majoring in Information Systems Technology. Brody Sombke, Conde, received a scholarship for Mitchell Tech and will be majoring in Telecommunications.

"The Build Dakota Scholarship is one way we are addressing our state's workforce needs," Gov. Dennis Daugaard said. "These students will help us fill employment gaps, and they'll be able to graduate and enter high-need fields debt free."

The Build Dakota Scholarship program was announced in late 2014. The scholarship is funded by a \$25 million donation from T. Denny Sanford and \$25 million in future funds committed by Gov. Dennis Daugaard.

Build Dakota aims to support students entering high-need workforce programs at South Dakota's technical institutes to fill the state's technical career fields with skilled professionals. The \$50 million will provide approximately 300 full scholarships annually in each of the first five years of the scholarship program. From 2020 on, an endowment will continue to award approximately 50 scholarships per year.

In-state and out-of-state students are eligible to apply. Scholarship applicants must be accepted into their program of interest. Recipients of the scholarship must enroll full-time and complete their educational program on schedule. Scholarship recipients must commit to stay in South Dakota to work in their field of study for three years following graduation.

Applications for the 2018-19 school year open in January 2018. Find more information at <http://www.builddakotascholarships.com>.

History Comes to Life at Beaver Creek Nature Area

BRANDON, S.D. - Beaver Creek Nature Area near Brandon will host the 39th Annual Homesteader Day Harvest Festival on Sunday, Sept. 10, from 1 – 4 p.m. CDT to showcase what life on the prairie was like for the early Dakota Territory settlers.

The event attracts thousands of visitors of all ages each year who want a taste of homestead life and pioneer living history.

"At the Homestead Day Harvest Festival, we give people a chance to experience first-hand the sights, sounds and smells of days gone by," said District Park Supervisor Travis Theilen.

Visitors can watch teams of horses go about the tasks of plowing, cultivating, seeding and harvesting the old-fashioned way. Visitors can also take part in homestead crafts like candle and rope making, Dutch oven cooking and butter making. Other demonstrations will include Civil War soldiers, yarn spinning and weaving, chair caning, cowboy demonstrations, blacksmithing, pioneer games and a working sluice.

The historic 1870s Samuelson homestead cabin will be open for viewing where there will be a display of farming tools and cabin furnishings. All the while, the air will be filled with the sounds of the South Dakota Old Time Fiddlers, who have been a part of the event for its entire 39-year run.

Admission to the Homesteader Day Harvest Festival is free. The event is made possible by the support of Siouland Heritage Museums, Mary Chilton DAR Foundation, South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks and many dedicated volunteers.

Beaver Creek Nature Area is located southeast of Brandon, one-half mile west of the intersection of 484th Avenue and 264th Street.

For more information, contact Palisades State Park at 605.594.3824. For more information on South Dakota State Parks, visit gfp.sd.gov.

-GFP-

National Wild Turkey Federation Honors GFP Conservation Officer

PIERRE, S.D. - The South Dakota Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF) has named Conservation Officer John Murphy as its 2017 Wildlife Officer of the Year.

Officer Murphy has served as a Wildlife Conservation Officer for over 16 years with South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP). John started his career in Sully County and is currently stationed in Hughes County. Murphy covers a large section of the Missouri River which includes both Lake Sharp and Lake Oahe.

Murphy conducts fishing, hunting and recreational boating checks. He has made numerous arrests for too many fish, no licenses, short fish, too many lines, insufficient number of life jackets and other required boating safety equipment. He is also instrumental in setting up and planning road checks in his region and works out of the airplane during special night work details. Murphy makes more arrests than any other conservation officer in the region.

Murphy helps set up and teach 3 to 4 Hunt Safe classes each year, helps set up and put on several youth fishing derby's in his area and has helped with a special paralyzed veterans prairie dog hunt in Lyman County the past two of years. WCO Murphy hosts a radio show in Pierre every week called "Murphy's Law" in which he talks about current GFP-related issues in the area.

Officer Murphy will be honored by the NWTF at its State Convention in January 2018. In addition, the State Chapter will forward his name to compete for a national award at the NWTF's national convention in February 2018.

"The State Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation is grateful to wildlife conservation officers across South Dakota who continue to do an outstanding job," said Mike McKernan, president of the State Chapter. "We have had and continue to have a great relationship with the Game, Fish and Parks Department. The NWTF has a high priority to conserve the wild turkey and connect our youth, physically challenged and men/women to outdoor activities and our hunting heritage. John Murphy is a credit to these goals. We are pleased to honor John and know he will do a great job in representing South Dakota at our National Convention next February."

This is the 17th year the award has been presented by the South Dakota State Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation.

-GFP-

Today in Weather History

September 6, 2000: Eight miles southwest of Miller, ninety mph winds destroyed three barns and a small garage along with severely damaging a creeper feeder and an enclosed trailer. Another building was moved from its foundation and damaged. An empty school bus was rolled several times before it came to rest atop a fence. Also, a window was broken out of the house.

1667: The "dreadful hurricane of 1667" is considered one of the most severe hurricanes ever to strike Virginia. On the first, this same storm was reported in the Lesser Antilles. The hurricane devastated St. Christopher as no other storm had done before. The "great storm" went on to strike the northern Outer Banks of North Carolina and southeastern Virginia. Approximately 10,000 houses were blown over. Area crops (including corn and tobacco) were beaten into the ground. Click [HERE](#) for more information from the Weather Prediction Center.

1776: Called the Pointe-à-Pitre hurricane, this storm is one of the deadliest Atlantic hurricanes on record. While the intensity and complete track are unknown, this storm struck Guadeloupe on this day, killing 6,000. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

1881: Forest fires in "The Thumb" of Michigan and Ontario resulted in "Yellow Day" over the New England states. Twenty villages and over a million acres burned in Michigan. The smoke from these fires caused the sky to appear yellow over several New England cities. Twilight appeared at noon on this day. Click [HERE](#) for more information from forgettennewengland.com

1929 - Iowa's earliest snow of record occurred as a few flakes were noted at 9 AM at Alton. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Thunderstorms produced more than seven inches of rain in Georgia. Four persons drowned, and two others suffered injury, as three couples attempted to cross Mills Stone Creek at Echols Mill in their automobile. Smoke from forest fires in California and Oregon spread across Utah into western Colorado. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Unseasonably cool weather prevailed across the north central and northeastern U.S. Thirty cities reported record low temperatures for the date, including Saint Joseph MO with a reading of 38 degrees. A low of 44 degrees at Indianapolis IN was their coolest reading of record for so early in the season. The mercury dipped to 31 degrees at Hibbing MN and Philips WI. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - An early afternoon thunderstorm produced wind gusts to 104 mph at Winterhaven, FL, flipping over four airplanes, and damaging five others. The high winds also damaged a hangar and three other buildings. A cold front produced strong winds and blowing dust in the Northern High Plains, with gusts to 54 mph reported at Buffalo SD. Powerful Hurricane Gabrielle and strong easterly winds combined to create waves up to ten feet high along the southern half of the Atlantic coast. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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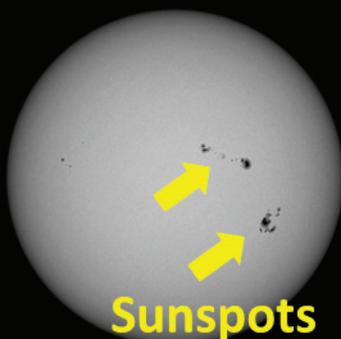
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| Today | Tonight | Thursday | Thursday Night | Friday | Friday Night | Saturday |
|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Sunny | Mostly Clear | Sunny | Clear | Sunny | Mostly Clear | Sunny |
| High: 70 °F | Low: 39 °F | High: 80 °F | Low: 49 °F | High: 77 °F | Low: 54 °F | High: 81 °F |

Not Much Going On Here

Highs: Upper 60s to Mid 70s
Lows Tonight: Upper 30s to Mid 40s

Solar Storms – Aurora Possible Tonight/Thursday



Sunspots

Viewing
Conditions
Limited By A
Full Moon



National Weather Service – Aberdeen, SD

weather.gov/Aberdeen



National Weather Service Aberdeen



@NWSAberdeen

Updated: 9/6/2017 4:17 AM Central

Published on: 09/06/2017 at 4:22AM

With Canadian high pressure in charge our weather is rather quite unremarkable. The sun is active however, and this may result in Aurora tonight - though we will have to compete with a very bright full moon.

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 66.2

Low Outside Temp: 44.1

High Gust: 25

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 103° in 1970

Record Low: 32° in 1956

Average High: 76°F

Average Low: 50°F

Average Precip in Sept: 0.45

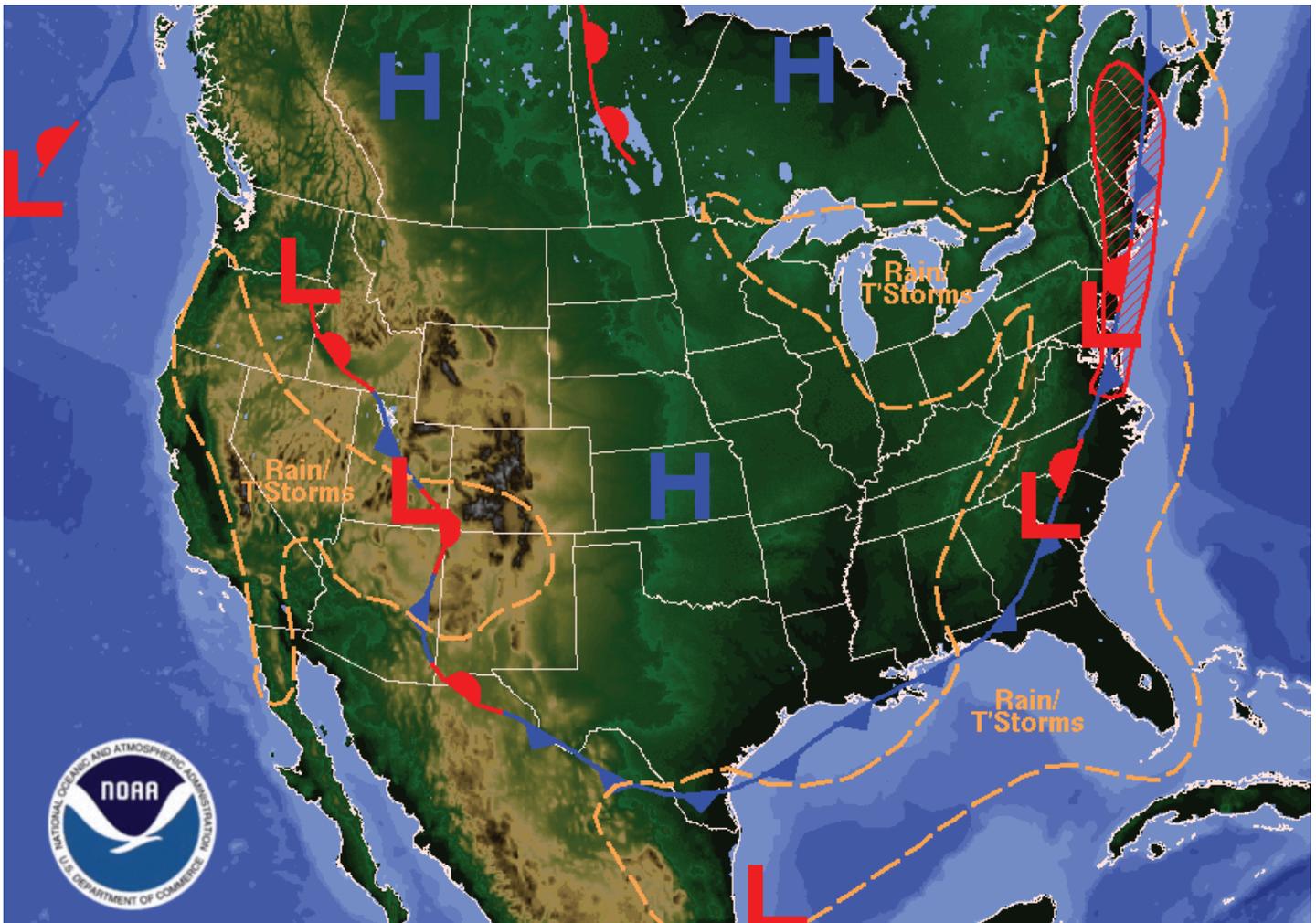
Precip to date in Sept: 0.11

Average Precip to date: 16.74

Precip Year to Date: 9.63

Sunset Tonight: 8:01 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:02 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Wed, Sep 06, 2017, issued 4:48 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)



WHO GOD BLESSES

What do we need to do to receive blessings from God?

Are they automatic? Do we have to be in the right place at the right time? Sit quietly and meditate? Think positive thoughts and pray for wealth without working? Is there something we can do?

We would all have to agree that God's blessings are not equally distributed nor given automatically as some would expect. In fact Psalm 41 begins with an insightful statement: "Blessed is the person who has compassion for the poor or weak and does something about it." God cares for the weak and the poor and the oppressed and is delighted when we do something on their behalf. In fact, David says that those who show God's compassion will be delivered when they are experiencing the difficulties of life. But there is more.

The first Psalm begins with a statement about the person who God will bless: "...the man who avoids contact with those who have evil intentions and instead finds pleasure in the teachings of the law of the Lord." As we "hide" God's Word – His law – in our hearts, it will give us light for our lives and directions to our destiny – eternal life with Him. And still more!

In Psalm 32 we read that "Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven and whose sins are covered." When we go to God in faith asking for forgiveness and salvation He will accept us, cleanse us and bless us.

So God's Word is clear: If we want His blessings then we must follow His instructions. First, when we accept God's salvation we will enjoy the blessing of forgiveness. Secondly, we will be blest if we avoid the influence of those who are evil and obey His law. Finally, we will be blest if we do His work in His world by caring for those in need of His love, mercy and grace.

Prayer: We all are in need of Your blessings, Father. May we follow Your Word and walk in Your ways and be blest. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 41:1 Blessed are those who have regard for the weak; the LORD delivers them in times of trouble.

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News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) _ These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Tuesday:

Mega Millions

11-17-59-70-72, Mega Ball: 1, Megaplier: 3

(eleven, seventeen, fifty-nine, seventy, seventy-two; Mega Ball: one; Megaplier: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$61 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$83 million

Tuesday's Scores

By The Associated Press

Volleyball

Aberdeen Roncalli def. Waubay/Summit, 25-20, 25-19, 25-18

Andes Central/Dakota Christian def. Parkston, 25-23, 25-21, 25-23

Arlington def. Waverly-South Shore, 25-10, 25-16, 25-22

Avon def. Tripp-Delmont/Armour, 25-17, 25-17, 25-14

Bennett County def. Gregory, 25-21, 25-16, 26-24

Beresford def. Canton, 25-16, 25-20, 28-26

Bridgewater-Emery def. Menno, 20-25, 25-10, 16-25, 25-23, 18-16

Canistota def. Viborg-Hurley, 25-20, 25-6, 25-21

Chamberlain def. Burke/Sanborn Central, 25-15, 25-12, 25-17

Chester def. Baltic, 25-23, 25-23, 25-12

Cheyenne-Eagle Butte def. McLaughlin, 25-20, 25-5, 25-20

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Tribe says gambling rule change would harm collections

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A Native American tribe seeking millions of dollars from a company that previously managed a tribal off-track betting business is set to ask South Dakota gambling regulators Wednesday not to make a state rule change that the tribe contends would hamstring its collection efforts.

The Commission on Gaming will weigh removing a requirement that certain electronic wagering businesses use a bank located in South Dakota. The Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe believes the change would help Bettor Racing Inc. owner J. Randy Gallo evade paying about \$5 million owed to the tribe, President Anthony Reider said.

Reider raised the issue in an August letter to Gov. Dennis Daugaard, saying that the rule change appears to only affect Bettor Racing, which accepts wagers primarily from gamblers outside South Dakota on dog and horse races. The move would assist the company in avoiding or delaying the tribe's ability to enforce a "hard fought" court judgment without fear of violating state rules, Reider wrote.

"If he's allowed to bounce from bank to bank, state to state, we'll be chasing him forever," Reider told The Associated Press.

The company has removed its assets from South Dakota and now operates using bank accounts in North Dakota and Florida, according to a July state court complaint filed by the tribe. Reider wrote in his letter to the governor that doing business from an out-of-state bank is a "clear violation" of state rules and alleged that no enforcement action has been taken against Bettor Racing.

Reider said representatives from the tribe will attend the commission meeting to advocate against the rule change. Gallo, of Florida, and an attorney for Bettor Racing haven't responded to requests for comment from The AP.

Bettor Racing managed an off-track betting business at the Santee Sioux's casino from 2004 until 2010, according to the letter. It said federal gambling regulators found that Bettor Racing during that time had received excessive management fees, among other violations, and levied a \$5 million civil fine. Reider said the tribe was also punished.

The Santee Sioux filed a lawsuit in tribal court alleging breach of contract and pursuing money it was

owed under its management contract with Bettor Racing. The letter says a tribal court this year entered a more than \$6 million combined judgment against Gallo and Bettor Racing.

The tribe has collected roughly \$1.6 million, though that has been appealed to the state Supreme Court.

The tribe pursued state disciplinary action that resulted in the Commission on Gaming imposing a \$1,500 fine on the company. Reider in the letter to Daugaard raised concerns that commission executive secretary Larry Eliason has given improper preferential treatment to Bettor Racing.

Eliason hasn't responded to messages requesting comment from The AP.

In August, Eliason told reporter Bob Mercer— who covers politics for newspapers across South Dakota— that he had the idea for the banking rule change when he wanted to send a birthday check to a nephew who still banks in South Dakota but now attends graduate school out of state. Eliason noted that his nephew gets paid by direct deposit, uses debit cards to purchase things and gets money from ATMs.

"I thought if this is the way a grad student conducts his daily transactions I should probably look at some of our rules," Eliason said.

South Dakota spring wheat, oat harvests nearing completion

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota's spring wheat and oat harvests are nearly complete after a mostly dry week.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture said Tuesday that temperatures last week were average to above average for much of South Dakota. Daytime highs reached the upper 80s and lower 90s for much of central and western South Dakota by the end of the week.

Spring wheat was 97 percent harvested, compared with 93 percent last year and for the five-year average. Oats were 95 percent harvested, behind 100 percent last year and an average of 99 percent.

South Dakota's barley crop is only 60 percent harvested, well behind 95 percent last year and an average of 91 percent.

Corn maturity remains behind last year's pace and the average as farmers prepare for harvest.

Man dies in car crash in southeastern South Dakota

CANTON, S.D. (AP) — A 45-year-old man is dead after a car crash in southeastern South Dakota.

Authorities say the man was driving a 2000 Chevrolet Impala LS north of Canton when he drove onto the shoulder Tuesday morning. The driver overcorrected, sending the car across both lanes and into the ditch where it rolled several times.

The man, who was driving alone, was not wearing a seat belt and was thrown from the car. He died at the scene.

The name of the victim was not immediately released. The South Dakota Highway Patrol is investigating.

Franken opposition raises doubts about Stras nomination

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) — Sen. Amy Klobuchar called on the White House Tuesday to submit new nominees for a federal court opening after fellow Democratic Sen. Al Franken announced he'd oppose President Donald Trump's choice, a state Supreme Court justice.

Trump nominated Minnesota Supreme Court Justice David Stras in May for the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, which covers Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa, Nebraska, Missouri and Arkansas. But Stras got a lukewarm reception from Klobuchar and Franken, who spent months reviewing the pending appointment amid outcry from conservatives that they were blocking his appointment.

Franken said Tuesday he'd oppose it, citing his worry that Stras' background and writings would make the court more conservative. His input is an important but arcane part of Senate procedure for judicial nominees: Senators typically get to sign off appointees from their home states before those candidates progress for confirmation.

"I have grown concerned that, if confirmed to the federal bench, Justice Stras would be a deeply con-

servative jurist in the mold of Supreme Court Justices Clarence Thomas and Antonin Scalia, justices who the nominee himself has identified as role models," Franken said in a statement.

Franken's opposition doesn't necessarily block the nomination. Several judicial nominees were eventually confirmed in 2004 despite moving ahead without the blessing of their home state senators.

But Klobuchar said that Stras should remain on state's highest court and the White House should put forward more nominees for the federal position. She released a statement minutes after the announcement by Franken that said she personally believed Stras should get a hearing but urged Senate Republican leadership to heed Franken's opposition.

Stras declined to comment through a Minnesota Supreme Court spokesman. A spokesman for Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Chuck Grassley did not immediately respond to a request for comment on whether Republicans would proceed with the nomination.

Fewer juvenile offenders behind bars in South Dakota

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The state of South Dakota is locking up fewer juvenile offenders than in previous years.

New data from the governor's office show that since juvenile justice reforms were implemented in 2015, the number of juveniles being incarcerated has dropped more than 50 percent.

"It appears to me that it's worked the way it's intended," said Fifth Circuit Judge Scott Myren. "We are improving public safety, holding offenders accountable and using the resources in our community to do it."

The state committed more than 200 juveniles to the Department of Corrections in fiscal 2015, the Argus Leader reported. In fiscal 2017, that number dropped to less than 100.

Officials said it's not that fewer children are committing crimes in South Dakota, but rather the threshold has been raised for types of crimes that could put them behind bars.

"I suspect the same crimes are probably occurring, but there are criminal offenses that no longer allow juveniles to be sent to the DOC because they have been determined, and I think appropriately, that they're not the type of offenses that warrant having these kids removed from the community," Myren said.

Five years ago, the state had one of the highest juvenile incarceration rates in the country. That statistic led to the launch of the Juvenile Justice Reinvestment Initiative through which Gov. Dennis Daugaard created a work group in 2014 to study the issue and propose solutions to reduce the number of children behind bars without compromising public safety.

Rep. Julie Bartling, D-Gregory, said that although the reforms have made progress, there's still room for improvement. She said she'd like to see more reform in rural South Dakota that relate to including families when working with children.

"We need to focus on how we can help youth that gets in trouble find resources closer to home," Bartling said. "So they can stay in their homes, or with a family member, and not be committed to the Department of Corrections, and receive necessary treatment."

Information from: Argus Leader, <http://www.argusleader.com>

Twins nominate Mauer for Clemente Award

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — The Minnesota Twins have named Joe Mauer as the team's nominee for the Roberto Clemente Award.

The Clemente award is given for community involvement and philanthropy.

The Twins cited charitable work by Mauer that includes fundraising and personal donations for Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare. They also noted his work to support Friends of St. Paul Baseball, which has raised more than \$30,000 for St. Paul youth ballparks, and to get Twins game tickets into the hands of children and families who might not otherwise be able to afford them.

A panel that includes Commissioner Rob Manfred will choose the Clemente winner after the season ends. Fans will also get a chance to vote online in early October.

Clemente died in a plane crash in 1972 while working to deliver supplies to earthquake victims in Nicaragua.

Gun recovered in connection with fatal park shooting

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Sioux Falls police say they've recovered the gun investigators believe was used in the fatal shooting of a teen last month.

Police spokesman Sam Clemens says officers found the handgun Sunday after getting a citizen tip. It was found about two blocks from Bakker Park where a 17-year-old boy was fatally shot in the chest Aug. 28.

Eighteen-year-old Dylan Holler is being held without bail on charges of first-degree murder, robbery and aggravated assault in what police say was a dispute over a drug deal.

Driver in fatal wrong-way crash agrees to plead guilty

FAIRMONT, Minn. (AP) — A South Dakota man has agreed to plead guilty to driving drunk the wrong way on a Minnesota interstate and causing a crash that killed a young woman.

In a deal with prosecutors, 48-year-old Mark Wendland, of Baltic, has agreed enter a guilty plea to vehicular homicide and serve a little more than two years in prison followed by supervised release.

The Star Tribune reports prosecutors say Wendland was more than twice the legal limit of intoxication when he drove the wrong way on Interstate 90 near Fairmont and caused a four-vehicle pileup March 7. Twenty-one-year-old Hannah Stoesz was a passenger in another vehicle and was killed.

Sentencing is scheduled Oct. 9.

Information from: Star Tribune, <http://www.startribune.com>

Weekend crash in Lake County kills 70-year-old woman

MADISON, S.D. (AP) — A two-vehicle crash over the weekend in Lake County killed a 70-year-old woman.

The Highway Patrol says the woman was driving a sport utility vehicle that was rear-ended at an intersection on state Highway 34 about 7 miles east of Madison.

The woman was declared dead at the scene shortly before 2 p.m. Saturday. The driver of the SUV that struck her vehicle suffered minor injuries.

The women's names weren't immediately released.

Authorities ID Nebraska man killed in South Dakota crash

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Authorities have identified a 65-year-old Nebraska man who died when the motorcycle he was driving collided with a deer in South Dakota.

The Highway Patrol says Joel Penny, of Decatur, Nebraska, died at the scene Thursday in Sully County. The crash happened about 3:40 a.m. on state Highway 1804, about 24 miles northeast of Pierre.

Penny was alone on the motorcycle.

Hurricane Irma slams Caribbean islands as Category 5 storm

By ANIKA KENTISH, Associated Press

ST. JOHN'S, Antigua (AP) — Hurricane Irma roared into the Caribbean with record-setting force early Wednesday, shaking people in their homes on the islands of Antigua and Barbuda on a path toward Puerto Rico and possibly Florida by the weekend.

Irma, which was the strongest Atlantic hurricane ever recorded north of the Caribbean and east of the Gulf of Mexico, passed almost directly over the island of Barbuda, according to the U.S. National Hurricane Center in Miami.

Authorities in the small islands of the eastern Caribbean were still evaluating the situation at first light though there were widespread reports of flooding and downed trees. Antiguan police were waiting until

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the winds dropped before sending helicopters to check on damage reports of damage in Barbuda. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

"We are glad so far for the good news that we have had so far," Donald McPhail, executive director of the Eastern Caribbean Civil Aviation Authority, said early Wednesday as he heard from employees around the region after hunkering down for the night at home in Antigua.

As the eye of Hurricane Irma passed over Barbuda around 1:47 a.m., phone lines went down under heavy rain and howling winds that sent debris flying as people huddled in their homes or government shelters.

In Barbuda, the storm ripped the roof off the island's police station, forcing officers to seek refuge in the fire station and at the community center that served as an official shelter. The Category 5 storm also knocked out communication between islands. Midcie Francis of the National Office of Disaster Services confirmed there was damage to several homes, but said it was too early to assess the extent of damage.

The storm had maximum sustained winds of 185 mph (295 kph), according to the Hurricane Center. It said winds would likely fluctuate slightly, but the storm would remain at Category 4 or 5 strength for the next day or two. The most dangerous winds, usually nearest to the eye, were forecast to pass near the northern Virgin Islands and near or just north of Puerto Rico on Wednesday.

President Donald Trump declared emergencies in Florida, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, and authorities in the Bahamas said they would evacuate six southern islands.

Warm water is fuel for hurricanes and Irma was moving over water that was 1.8 degrees (1 degree Celsius) warmer than normal. The 79 degree (26 Celsius) water that hurricanes need went about 250 feet (80 meters) deep, said Jeff Masters, meteorology director of the private forecasting service Weather Underground.

Four other storms have had winds as strong in the overall Atlantic region, but they were in the Caribbean Sea or the Gulf of Mexico, which usually have warmer waters. Hurricane Allen hit 190 mph in 1980, while 2005's Wilma, 1988's Gilbert and a 1935 great Florida Keys storm all had 185 mph winds.

The northern Leeward Islands were expected to see normal tide levels rise by as much as 11 feet (3.3 meters), while the Turks and Caicos Islands and southeastern Bahamas could see surge of 20 feet (6 meters) and higher waves later in the week, forecasters said.

Bahamas Prime Minister Hubert Minnis said his government was evacuating six islands in the south because authorities would not be able to help anyone caught in the "potentially catastrophic" wind, flooding and storm surge. People there would be flown to Nassau in what he called the largest storm evacuation in the country's history.

"The price you may pay for not evacuating is your life or serious physical harm," Minnis said.

The U.S. National Weather Service said Puerto Rico had not seen a hurricane of Irma's magnitude since Hurricane San Felipe in 1928, which killed a total of 2,748 people in Guadeloupe, Puerto Rico and Florida.

"The dangerousness of this event is like nothing we've ever seen," Puerto Rico Gov. Ricardo Rossello said. "A lot of infrastructure won't be able to withstand this kind of force."

The eye of the storm was expected to rip westward on a path taking it a little north of Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Cuba.

The northern parts of the Dominican Republic and Haiti could see 10 inches (25 centimeters) of rain, with as much as 20 inches (50 centimeters) in the southeast Bahamas and Turks and Caicos.

The storm seemed almost certain to hit the United States by early next week.

"You'd be hard pressed to find any model that doesn't have some impact on Florida," said University of Miami senior hurricane researcher Brian McNoldy.

In Florida, people stocked up on drinking water and other supplies.

Florida Gov. Rick Scott activated 100 members of the Florida National Guard to be deployed across the state, and 7,000 National Guard members were to report for duty Friday when the storm could be approaching the area. On Monday, Scott declared a state of emergency in all of Florida's 67 counties.

Officials in the Florida Keys geared up to get tourists and residents out of Irma's path, and the mayor of Miami-Dade County said people should be prepared to evacuate Miami Beach and most coastal areas.

Mayor Carlos Gimenez said the voluntary evacuations could begin as soon as Wednesday evening. He activated the emergency operation center and urged residents to have three days' worth of food and water.

The Hurricane Center in Miami said hurricane-force winds extended 50 miles (85 kilometers) from Irma's center and tropical storm-force winds extended 175 miles (280 kilometers).

Also Wednesday morning, a new tropical storm formed in the Gulf of Mexico off Mexico's coast. Tropical Storm Katia had maximum sustained winds of 40 mph (65 kph) with some strengthening forecast over the next two days. But the hurricane center said Katia was expected to stay offshore through Friday morning.

And another tropical storm farther east in the Atlantic was expected to become a hurricane by Wednesday night. Tropical Storm Jose's maximum sustained winds had increased to near 60 mph (95 kph). The storm was centered about 1,255 miles (2,020 kilometers) east of the Lesser Antilles and was moving west near 13 mph (20 kph).

Associated Press writers contributing to this report included Danica Coto in Puerto Rico; Seth Borenstein in Washington; Michael Weissenstein in Havana, Cuba; Ben Fox in Miami contributed to this report.

Putin urges North Korea talks, says sanctions not working

By KIM TONG-HYUNG, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — While condemning North Korea over its latest nuclear test, the leaders of Russia and South Korea seemed far apart on the issue of stepping up sanctions against the country after a meeting Wednesday in the Russian port city of Vladivostok.

Speaking after the meeting with South Korean President Moon Jae-in, Russian President Vladimir Putin called for talks with North Korea, saying sanctions are not a solution to the country's nuclear and missile development.

Moon had urged Moscow to support stronger sanctions against North Korea, which conducted its sixth nuclear test on Sunday in what it claimed was a detonation of a thermonuclear weapon built for missiles capable of reaching the U.S. mainland.

"We should not give in to emotions and push Pyongyang into a corner," Putin said in a news conference after the meeting, held on the sidelines of a conference on economic development of Russia's Far East. "As never before everyone should show restraint and refrain from steps leading to escalation and tensions."

Moon said the leaders agreed that reducing regional tension and "quickly solving" the security challenges posed by North Korea's nuclear and missile program were critical. Ahead of his meeting with Putin, Moon said the situation could get out of hand if North Korea's missile and nuclear tests aren't stopped.

Moon urged Russia to back stronger sanctions including the cutting off oil supplies, but Putin expressed concern that such moves would hurt regular North Koreans, said Yoon Young-chan, Moon's chief press secretary.

"Myself and President Putin share a view that North Korea has gone the wrong way with its nuclear and missile program and that easing tension on the Korean Peninsula is an urgent issue," Moon said during the news conference. He complimented Putin and the Russian government over what he said were a variety of efforts to find diplomatic solutions to the North Korean problem.

In a telephone conversation with Putin on Monday before his trip to Russia, Moon also called for a ban on overseas North Korean workers, who are seen as a key foreign currency source for the North. Putin told Moon that the North Korean problem should be solved diplomatically, according to Seoul's presidential office.

Moon, a liberal who took office in May, had initially showed a preference for a diplomatic approach on North Korea, but his government has since taken a harder stance as the North continued its torrid pace in weapons tests. In an interview with the Russian news agency TASS on Tuesday, Moon said he believes now is not the time for talks and that it is important for the international community to strengthen pressure against North Korea.

Seoul's Defense Ministry on Wednesday said the U.S. military will begin adding more launchers to a

contentious high-tech U.S. missile defense system in South Korea on Thursday to better cope with North Korean threats. The deployment of the Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense system has angered not only North Korea, but also China and Russia, which see the system's powerful radars as a security threat.

A THAAD battery normally consists of six launchers that can fire up to 48 interceptor missiles, but only two launchers have been operational so far at the site in rural Seongju.

Putin, speaking in China on Tuesday, condemned North Korea's nuclear test as provocative, but said Russia views sanctions as "useless and ineffective."

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who will meet Putin in Vladivostok on Thursday, said before his departure from Japan that "we must make North Korea understand there is no bright future for the country if it pursues the current path."

Moon and Abe are also expected to meet in Vladivostok on Thursday.

Associated Press writers Nataliya Vasilyeva in Moscow and Ken Moritsugu in Tokyo contributed to this report.

Even intrepid Keys residents ready to evacuate ahead of Irma

By **ADRIANA GOMEZ and TERRY SPENCER, Associated Press**

KEY LARGO, Fla. (AP) — Residents of the Florida Keys are known for riding out hurricanes, but with Irma's potentially catastrophic wind and rain set to crash through the low-lying island chain this weekend, not many seem willing to risk it this time.

Throughout Florida, officials and residents are making preparations, but forecasts indicate the Keys could take the country's first blow from the Category 5 storm, which was packing 185 mph (295 kph) winds early Wednesday as it crossed Barbuda. From Key Largo south to Key West, residents and officials said Irma is a storm that needs to be fled.

Keys officials expected to announce a mandatory evacuation Wednesday for visitors, with residents being told to leave the next day. Florida Gov. Rick Scott, who plans to fly to the Keys on Wednesday, said a hospital in the island chain would have its patients evacuated by air.

"This is not one to fool around with," said Cammy Clark, spokeswoman for Monroe County, which contains the Keys.

In a Wednesday morning tweet, President Donald Trump said his administration is closely watching Irma and his "team, which has done, and is doing, such a good job in Texas, is already in Florida." He added: "No rest for the weary!"

Janet Roberts, 51, was getting ready Tuesday to leave her mobile home community on Key Largo for her daughter's house 30 miles away in Florida City, which is the first city north of the Keys on the mainland.

"She lives in a complex and has hurricane shutters. At least we stand half the chance," she said.

She remembered how much damage Hurricane Andrew caused when its eye passed just north of Florida City in August 1992.

"We didn't hit the eye, and I had nothing left," Roberts said. "This has Andrew beat. This is really bad — really, really, really bad."

Throughout South Florida, officials readied evacuation orders and people raided store shelves, buying up water and other hurricane supplies. Long lines formed at gas stations and people pulled shutters out of storage and put up plywood to protect their homes and businesses.

Parker Eastin filled up his gas tank at a busy fuel station. He and his girlfriend said they decided to plan well in advance after seeing what Hurricane Harvey did to Texas.

"We ordered water off Amazon because the stores were out and also ordered food," said Eastin, a 43-year-old lawyer who has lived in Florida for 12 years. "Seeing the devastation in Texas is a sad reminder that you have to take the events very seriously."

The last major storm to hit Florida was 2005's Wilma, its eye cutting through the state's southern third as it packed winds of 120 mph (193 kph). Five people died.

Scott declared a state of emergency in all 67 counties to give local governments "ample time, resources and flexibility" to prepare for the storm. President Trump also approved a federal emergency declaration for the state ahead of the storm, according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Scott warned that although officials don't know the storm's exact path, winds are likely to be "extreme and life-threatening" and impacts could be felt inland, away from the coast. He said Floridians need to follow any evacuation orders.

"This storm has the potential to devastate this state, and you have to take this seriously," Scott said Tuesday from the state's emergency operations center in Tallahassee, the state capital. "Remember: We can rebuild your home; we cannot rebuild your life."

Under a mandatory evacuation order, no one is forced by police or other government agencies to leave, but people who stay should not expect to be rescued if they are in danger, officials said.

The threat of the storm has put much of the state on edge. School districts along the east coast and in South Florida canceled classes for later this week, as did universities and colleges in Miami-Dade. The governor also shut down all state offices starting Friday and urged state workers to volunteer at shelters that are expected to open.

But Scott conceded that Irma's uncertain path was making it difficult for officials to tell Floridians exactly where they should go. Some models have it slashing up the east coast, while other models have it cutting northward through the middle of the peninsula.

Spencer reported from Fort Lauderdale, Florida. Associated Press writers Kelli Kennedy in Fort Lauderdale and Gary Fineout in Tallahassee contributed to this report.

After Trump halt of program, young immigrants vow to fight

By **ASTRID GALVAN, Associated Press**

PHOENIX (AP) — Immigrants are vowing to fight to stay in the U.S. and advocates are launching campaigns including fundraisers and registration drives after the Trump administration announced it would dismantle a program that protected hundreds of thousands of young people from deportation.

Immigrants who were brought to the country illegally as children or whose families overstayed visas said they are veterans of setbacks in the political arena. They added that they are also accustomed to being persistent, and they pledge to do the same in this situation.

The Trump administration announced Tuesday it was ending the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program that former President Barack Obama started in 2012. Those already enrolled in DACA remain covered until their permits expire. If their permits expire before March 5, 2018, they are eligible to renew them for another two years as long as they apply by Oct. 5. But the program isn't accepting new applications.

Opponents of the program said they are pleased the Trump administration's decision. They called DACA an unconstitutional abuse of executive power.

Attorney General Jeff Sessions, who made Tuesday's announcement, said DACA was an overreach that could not be defended by the Justice Department. The Trump administration and other DACA opponents argue that it is up to Congress to decide how to deal with such immigrants.

Immigrants and activists have already launched efforts to fight the decision.

A group that supports the program in Arizona is using a community summit this weekend to hold a session on DACA and reapplying. Another is holding an information session on Wednesday on the program.

Maxima Guerrero, a leadership development coordinator for the Phoenix-based advocacy group Aliento, said her organization is considering creating a fundraising campaign to help DACA recipients renew before the October deadline.

"A lot of it right now is just kind of like first, taking the time to reflect on what the decision means, and what is happening. Making sure that people who are able to renew will have the support to do so," Guer-

tero said.

Guerrero, who is also enrolled in the program, said advocates will also focus on providing emotional support during what many consider an emotionally taxing time.

"It's kind of tough because when something like this happens, it's like, what am I working for? I think a lot of it so far that has worked is just making sure we're providing the space and the opportunity to have those spaces to talk about how they're feeling to be able to reflect and to acknowledge and push the message that DACA does not define who we are as individuals and who we are as people overall," she said.

Supporters of the program demonstrated in New York City, where police handcuffed and removed over a dozen immigration activists who briefly blocked Trump Tower, and in other cities, including Salt Lake City, Denver, Los Angeles, Phoenix and Portland, Oregon. At some demonstrations, counter-protesters showed their support for Trump's decision.

John Willis, an Ontario, California resident and handyman demonstrated in Los Angeles and carried a sign that read, "American lives matter."

"I'm here to support our president and our Attorney General Jeff Sessions to rescind this unlawful tyrannical executive order that our previous president thrust upon us," Willis said. "I'm not a hater, I don't wish these kids to be sent back to Mexico or anything like that but I don't believe we should have two sets of laws. We have one set of laws, we should follow them."

Karen Marin, of New York, said that while she was disappointed that DACA is ending, she has survived without it before and can again now. Marin, 26, was brought to the United States from Mexico as a baby. She's used her deferred action status to get a job that helps pay for college, where she is studying biotechnology.

She says the end of DACA doesn't mean the end of her dreams.

"It's just temporary status. It's not anything that is a permanent fix, and that's what we need, is something permanent. Something to help us continue moving forward as citizens of the United States because that's what we are," Marin said.

Zaida Mendez, a 19-year-old community college student who juggles jobs at a grocery store and a shoe store in the Omaha area, said she plans to work with advocacy groups to try to pressure the state's all-Republican congressional delegation to protect immigrant youths.

Mendez's parents brought her to the U.S. from Mexico when she was 1, and she didn't realize she was in the country illegally for years. She was among about 200 people who protested Trump's decision outside the Nebraska Capitol in Lincoln on Tuesday.

"I'm mad and I'm sad, but I'm not going to let that get to me," she said through tears.

Diana Platas, a DACA recipient in Texas whose family lost their home in Hurricane Harvey, said the end of the program wasn't going to stop her.

"We're gonna continue to fight and we're gonna continue to push forward because we're not cowards. We know that we are doing and contributing the best that we can to this economy to this country because we call this our home. This is our home," Platas said.

Associated Press writers Grant Schulte in Lincoln, Nebraska; Amanda Myers in Los Angeles and John Mone in Houston contributed to this report.

Survey: White Christians are now a minority of US population

By RACHEL ZOLL, AP Religion Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The share of Americans who identify as white and Christian has dropped below 50 percent, a transformation fueled by immigration and by growing numbers of people who reject organized religion altogether, according to a new survey released Wednesday.

Christians overall remain a large majority in the U.S., at nearly 70 percent of Americans. However, white Christians, once predominant in the country's religious life, now comprise only 43 percent of the population, according to the Public Religion Research Institute, or PRRI, a polling organization based in Washington.

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Four decades ago, about eight in 10 Americans were white Christians.

The change has occurred across the spectrum of Christian traditions in the U.S., including sharp drops in membership in predominantly white mainline Protestant denominations such as Presbyterians and Lutherans; an increasing Latino presence in the Roman Catholic Church as some non-Hispanic white Catholics leave; and shrinking ranks of white evangelicals, who until recently had been viewed as immune to decline.

The trends identified in the survey are fueling anxiety about the place of Christians in society, especially among evangelicals, alarmed by support for gay marriage and by the increasing share of Americans — about one-quarter — who don't identify with a faith group. President Donald Trump, who repeatedly promised to protect the religious liberty of Christians, drew 80 percent of votes by white evangelicals, a constituency that remains among his strongest supporters.

About 17 percent of Americans now identify as white evangelical, compared to 23 percent a decade ago, according to the survey. Membership in the conservative Southern Baptist Convention, the largest U.S. Protestant group, dropped to 15.2 million last year, its lowest number since 1990, according to an analysis by Chuck Kelley, president of the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

"So often, white evangelicals have been pointing in judgment to white mainline groups, saying when you have liberal theology you decline," said Robert Jones, chief executive of PRRI. "I think this data really does challenge that interpretation of linking theological conservatism and growth."

The PRRI survey of more than 100,000 people was conducted from January 2016 to January of this year and has a margin of error of plus or minus 0.4 percentage points. Previous surveys had found that the Protestant majority that shaped the nation's history had dropped below 50 percent sometime around 2008. The PRRI poll released Wednesday included a more in-depth focus on race and religion. Jones said growth among Latino Christians, and stability in the numbers of African-American Christians, had partly obscured the decline among white Christians.

The survey also found that more than a third of all Republicans say they are white evangelicals, and nearly three-quarter identify as white Christians. By comparison, white Christians have become a minority in the Democratic Party, shrinking from 47 percent a decade ago, to 29 percent now. Forty percent of Democrats say they have no religious affiliation.

Among American Catholics, 55 percent now identify as white, compared to 87 percent 25 years ago, amid the growing presence of Latino Catholics, according to the report. Over the last decade, the share of white Catholics in the U.S. population dropped from 16 percent to 11 percent. Over the same period, white mainline Protestants declined from 18 percent to 13 percent of all Americans.

Pope heads to Colombia seeking to heal conflict's wounds

By NICOLE WINFIELD and JUAN ZAMORANO, Associated Press

BOGOTA, Colombia (AP) — Pope Francis headed to Colombia on Wednesday to try to help heal the wounds of Latin America's longest-running armed conflict, bolstered by a new cease-fire with a holdout rebel group but fully aware of the fragility of the country's peace process.

During a deeply symbolic five-day visit starting Wednesday, Francis is expected to press Colombian leaders to address the social and economic disparities that fueled five decades of armed rebellion, while encouraging ordinary Colombians to balance their need for justice with forgiveness.

In a video message on the eve of his departure, Francis urged all Colombians to take a "first step" and reach out to one another for the sake of peace and the future.

"Peace is what Colombia has been looking for and working for for such a long time," he said. "A stable and lasting peace, so that we can see one another and treat one another as brothers, not as enemies."

A year after the Colombian government signed the peace accord with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, the nation remains bitterly divided over the terms of the deal even as guerrillas have laid down their arms and begun returning to civilian life. Even the Catholic Church hierarchy, which was instrumental in facilitating the peace talks and is now spearheading the process of reconciliation, was divided over what many Colombians saw as the overly generous terms offered to rebels behind atrocities.

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Former President Alvaro Uribe, a fierce opponent of the peace deal, wrote a letter to the pope Tuesday expressing concern that the deal with the rebels had fueled a rise in drug trafficking and created economic uncertainties with the potential to destroy Colombia's social fabric.

"Your Holiness, we all want peace, but we have to build it with laws and the determination to guard against and punish violence that spreads hopelessness and distances us from God's word," Uribe wrote in the letter, which was leaked to local media.

The plane flying Pope Francis to Colombia left Rome Wednesday morning and had to change its flight path to avoid Category 5 Hurricane Irma.

In Bogota, city workers were busy scrubbing downtown monuments, erecting the stage for a giant outdoor Mass and putting the final touches on a security perimeter surrounding the Nunciature where the pope will sleep every night. While many Colombians hail the pope's humility as a model to emulate, they have questioned the hefty cost of the visit.

"It's great what's happening, the pope is a modest person," Aristobulo Fonseca said as he hung two images of Catholic saints from the rearview mirror of his taxi. "What's not good is how they're making a carnival of this visit and spending so much money."

The highlight of Francis' trip comes Friday, with a meeting and prayer of reconciliation between victims of the conflict and former guerrillas in Villavicencio, a city south of Bogota surrounded by territory long held by the FARC.

The event will be packed with symbolism.

Francis will beatify two Colombian priests killed during decades of guerrilla warfare, declaring them martyrs who were killed out of hatred for the Catholic faith.

And the meeting will be framed by one of the most poignant symbols of the conflict: the mutilated Christ statue that was rescued from a church in the western town of Bojaya after a FARC mortar attack in 2012. Some 300 people were sheltering in the church when it was hit during a three-way firefight between FARC rebels, right-wing militias and the army. At least 79 people died and 100 were injured.

In total, the conflict left more than 250,000 people dead, 60,000 missing and millions more displaced.

Ahead of Francis' arrival, the government of President Juan Manuel Santos and the last remaining major rebel group, the National Liberation Army, or ELN, signed a bilateral cease-fire agreement, a significant step toward negotiating a permanent peace deal.

The Vatican No. 2, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, said the key message of the trip is "the capacity to forgive: to forgive, and receive forgiveness."

Francis is the third pope to visit Colombia, following Pope Paul VI in 1968 and St. John Paul II in 1986. Both used their visits to show solidarity with victims of violence, discrimination and poverty and to urge government authorities to fix the structural and societal problems that have made Colombia one of the most unequal countries in Latin America.

Monsignor Octavio Ruiz Arenas, the first archbishop of Villavicencio and now a Vatican official, said a key point that Francis will press is for Colombia to avoid repeating the mistakes of peace processes in Central America, where demobilized guerrilla fighters did not re-integrate into society and instead joined criminal gangs. Colombia's well-entrenched drug traffickers will be a strong draw for rebels who haven't known anything other than jungle warfare for decades, he said.

"When Paul VI went, he spoke about all these problems, but unfortunately all they talk about now are his pretty speeches," Ruiz said. "The same thing happened with John Paul II."

"But if the authorities aren't able to say, 'The pope is right; we have to change' — if there's no goodwill on the part of everyone — the words will just remain like a nice memory," he said.

Associated Press writer Nicole Winfield reported this story from Rome and AP writer Juan Zamorano reported in Bogota.

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. EYE OF IRMA PASSES OVER NORTHEAST CARIBBEAN

The most powerful Atlantic Ocean hurricane in recorded history churns along a path pointing to Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Cuba before possibly heading for Florida over the weekend.

2. EVEN INTREPID KEYS RESIDENTS READY TO EVACUATE AHEAD OF IRMA

With the Category 5 storm's potentially catastrophic wind and rain set to crash through Florida's low-lying island chain this weekend, not many seem willing to risk it this time.

3. AP ANALYSIS: TRUMP WAFFLES ON IMMIGRATION

The president passes off responsibility for the fate of 800,000 young immigrants brought to the U.S. illegally as children to a Congress that has shown little ability to tackle politically fraught issues.

4. HOUSTON'S BUSINESSES INCHING BACK TO WORK AS WATERS RECEDE

The city's airports and shipping lanes reopened to limited traffic last week. More workers have followed after a long Labor Day weekend of cleanup and regrouping.

5. WHAT RUSSIAN LEADER IS SAYING ABOUT NORTH KOREA

After meeting with South Korea's president, Putin says he views sanctions on Seoul's volatile neighbor as "useless and ineffective."

6. WHERE POPE FRANCIS IS HEADING

The Argentine pontiff heads to Colombia to try to help heal the wounds of Latin America's longest-running conflict.

7. A HARROWING TALE OF A ROHINGYA MUSLIM FAMILY TORN APART

Kefayet Ullah, a refugee already safely in Bangladesh, returned to Myanmar to retrieve the bodies of his slain brother and sister-in-law so he could bury them in peace.

8. OREGON BLAZE SPARKS ERUPTION COMPARISONS

Residents say the raining fire ash from growing wildfires remind them of what they had to do in 1980 during the volcanic eruption of Mount St. Helens.

9. 'THERE SHE IS ...'

Contestants from all 50 states and the District of Columbia will start facing off in Atlantic City, hoping to become the next Miss America.

10. RED SOX WIN OWN VERSION OF BOSTON MARATHON

Boston beats Toronto 3-2 in the 19th inning on an RBI single by Hanley Ramirez, the second-longest game in the 105-year history of Fenway Park.

AP EXPLAINS: What is a hydrogen bomb

TOKYO (AP) — North Korea says it successfully detonated a hydrogen bomb in its latest nuclear test Sunday. Outside experts haven't been able to verify that claim, but say it's plausible. If true, it would represent a major step forward in North Korea's effort to develop a nuclear weapon capable of reaching the United States.

MORE POWERFUL THAN AN A-BOMB

A hydrogen bomb can be far more powerful than the atomic bombs the U.S. dropped on Japan in World War II. The U.S. conducted the first successful tests of hydrogen bombs in the 1950s. Their yields of 10,000 kilotons and more were several hundred times larger than the bombs that leveled Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Experts believe the yield of North Korea's latest test was at least 140 kilotons, which would make it some seven to eight times as powerful as Hiroshima (15 kilotons) and Nagasaki (about 20).

USES THE POWER OF THE SUN

Atomic bombs rely on fission, or the splitting of the nucleus of an atom, just as nuclear power plants do. The hydrogen bomb uses both fission and fusion — the fusing together of atomic nuclei — to produce more

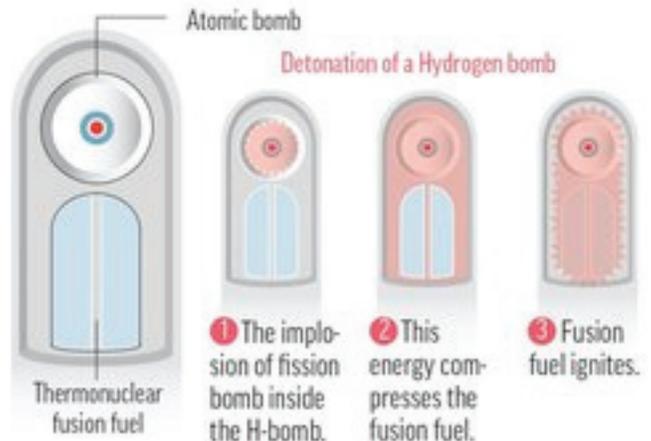
explosive energy. It's the same process that keeps the sun and other stars burning. H-bombs are also known as thermonuclear bombs, because of the extremely high temperature needed to induce fusion. A typical hydrogen bomb is two-stage: First, an atomic fission bomb detonates, and that in turn starts the fusion of a hydrogen isotope in a second section.

SMALL ENOUGH TO FIT ON A MISSILE

The atomic bombs that hit Japan were huge and had to be dropped from planes flying overhead. With its higher power, a hydrogen bomb can be made small enough to fit on the head of an intercontinental missile. The hydrogen bomb is the standard for the five nations with the greatest nuclear weapons capability: Russia, the U.S., France, China and the U.K. Other nations may either have it or be working on it, despite a worldwide effort to contain such proliferation.

How a thermonuclear H-bomb works

An H-bomb uses an atomic fission bomb to initiate the detonation of the far more destructive store of fusion fuel.



IOC can't escape Rio; top organizer Nuzman held in dawn raid

By **STEPHEN WADE** and **PETER PRENGAMAN**, Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — The International Olympic Committee just can't get away from the Rio de Janeiro Olympics.

The IOC is ready to put a rubber-stamp approval this month on bids from Paris and Los Angeles for the 2024 and 2028 Olympics, respectively, yet Olympic officials are once again answering questions about corruption in the bidding process, this time from 2009, when Rio surprisingly got more votes than Madrid, Chicago and Tokyo.

The 2016 Rio Games were already marred by trails of corruption, and billions of public money spent and several useless white-elephant venues spread around the city. Things got worse Tuesday when police raided the home of Brazilian Olympic Committee President Carlos Nuzman, questioning him over his role in what French and Brazilian authorities say was a vote-buying scheme to land the Olympics.

Police took suitcases, documents and a computer, and they displayed detention warrants to question Nuzman.

"The Olympic Games were used as a big trampoline for acts of corruption," federal prosecutor Fabiana Schneider told reporters.

The IOC will meet next week in Lima, Peru, and is expected to award two Summer Olympics at once. The bid process was changed in part to reduce the opportunity for fraud. The IOC won't have to worry about another Summer Games bid until 2025, when it would award the 2032 Games.

"Although the IOC has tightened rules and looked to rid itself of the mavericks and the crooks in its midst, it is hardly a surprise that a top-level organizer of the Rio 2016 Games is suspected of buying votes," Alan Tomlinson, an Olympic historian at the University of Brighton, told The Associated Press.

Tomlinson said world-wide sports federations "remain an uncontrollable behemoth in global sports governance."

Investigators said Nuzman — an IOC member at the time, head of the organizing committee, and now an honorary member — was a central player in buying votes for Rio's Olympic bid.

Nuzman's lawyer, Sergio Mazzillo, said his client would cooperate but "did not commit any irregularity." French and Brazilian authorities said Nuzman brought together businessman Arthur Cesar de Menezes

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Soares Filho, and Lamine Diack, the former head of track and field's governing body who at the time was an IOC voting member. Soares Filho's company, Matlock Capital Group, allegedly paid Diack \$2 million into a Caribbean account held by his son, Papa Massata Diack.

Authorities said Lamine Diack, an influential African member from Senegal, was instrumental in organizing the African bloc of votes.

In a statement, the IOC said it was cooperating with French and Brazilian authorities. It said Papa Massata Diack was never an IOC member, and said his father lost his honorary IOC membership in 2015.

"It remains in the highest interest of the IOC to protect the integrity of the candidature process and to address and sanction any infringements," the IOC said.

The 75-year-old Nuzman was an IOC member for 12 years and one of the most prominent figures in bringing the games to Rio. The vote was held in 2009 in Copenhagen, Denmark, with Rio defeating Madrid 66-32.

Chicago, the early favorite, was eliminated in the first round of voting, despite personal lobbying from the United States by President Barack Obama.

"This is quite damaging" to the IOC, said Andrew Zimbalist, an economist who recently edited a book on fallout from the Rio Olympics. "The IOC tried to say goodbye to Rio in August 2016, but the issues arising from the \$20 billion plus extravaganza won't go away."

Soon after the Rio Games, IOC President Thomas Bach awarded Nuzman the "Olympic Order," given to those who have made extraordinary contributions to the Olympics.

Bach lauded Rio and Nuzman at the closing ceremony a year ago.

"These Olympic Games are leaving a unique legacy for generations to come," Bach said. "History will talk about a Rio de Janeiro before, and a much better Rio de Janeiro after the Olympic Games."

In France, a 2-year-old investigation into corruption in sports first came to light with the arrest in November 2015 of Diack. The French have been looking into allegations that Diack, his son, and others were involved in blackmailing athletes and covering up failed drug tests.

The French Financial Prosecutors' Office, which has been leading the inquiries, said Tuesday its investigations have "uncovered the existence of a system of large-scale corruption organized around Papa Massata Diack." It also said its evidence indicates votes by members of the IOC and the ruling track body were "negotiated against payment to obtain city hosting rights for the biggest global sports competitions."

There has been a steady stream of accusations surrounding the awarding of building projects since the games ended a year ago.

Former Rio de Janeiro Mayor Eduardo Paes is being investigated for allegedly accepting at least 15 million reais (\$5 million) in payments to facilitate construction projects tied to the games.

Paes, who has denied wrongdoing, is one of dozens of top politicians implicated in a sweeping judicial corruption investigation in which construction giant Odebrecht illegally paid billions to help win contracts.

Associated Press reporter John Leicester in Paris and AP photographer Silvia Izquierdo in Rio de Janeiro contributed to this report.

Follow Peter Prengaman: www.twitter.com/peterprengaman

Follow Stephen Wade: www.twitter.com/StephenWadeAP

Boat with Rohingya refugees capsizes, killing 5 as more flee

By MUNEEZA NAQVI and JULHAS ALAM, Associated Press

KUTUPALONG, Bangladesh (AP) — A trawler carrying Rohingya Muslims fleeing violence in Myanmar capsized, drowning at least five people, as the country's leader Aung San Suu Kyi blamed a misinformation campaign for fueling a crisis that the U.N. says has now pushed more than 125,000 refugees into Bangladesh.

Residents of Shah Porir Dwip fishing village recovered five bodies from the Bay of Bengal on Wednesday,

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hours after the boat capsized around midnight, said police official Yakub Ali.

It was not immediately clear where the boat began its journey, or if the passengers had been among some 450 detained by Bangladeshi border guards and ordered Tuesday to return to Myanmar.

While some border guards were letting refugees across the borders, others were sending them back.

Faced with a mounting crisis and a lack of space and basic supplies, Bangladesh said it will set up a new camp to accommodate Rohingya refugees who have arrived from Myanmar since Aug. 25, many walking for days and crossing jungles and rivers to reach safety.

Shah Kamal of the Ministry of Disaster Management did not say when the new camp would be ready. He said Wednesday it would be established in Tyingkhali, south of Cox's Bazar district and near the established camp in Balukhali where more than 50,000 Rohingya have been sheltering since October.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has asked officials to prepare a database with fingerprints for the new arrivals.

The number of Rohingya fleeing western Rakhine state has reached more than 125,000, 80 percent of whom are women and children, said UNICEF Executive Director Anthony Lake.

"Many more children in need of support and protection remain in the areas of northern Rakhine state that have been wracked by violence," he said in a statement, adding that the U.N. refugee agency had no access to Rakhine trouble spots.

"We are unable to reach the 28,000 children to whom we were previously providing psychosocial care or the more than 4,000 children who were treated for malnutrition in Buthidaung and Maungdaw" in Rakhine, he said. "Our clean water and sanitation work has been suspended, as have school repairs that were under way."

The violence and civilian suffering have prompted international condemnation and resonated particularly in many Muslim countries.

Suu Kyi complained to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in a phone call Tuesday that Turkey's deputy prime minister was a victim of fake news when he posted photos purportedly showing dead Rohingya that were not related to the crisis. The photos on Mehmet Simsek's Twitter account had been taken down.

According to her office, Suu Kyi said that such misinformation helps promote the interests of "terrorists," a reference to Rohingya insurgents whose deadly attacks on Myanmar security posts Aug. 25 triggered the latest military crackdown and streams of refugees.

The military has said nearly 400 people, most of them insurgents, have died in clashes. Security forces responded to the attacks with days of "clearance operations" the government says were aimed at rooting out insurgents it accuses of setting fire to Rohingya villages.

Many displaced Rohingya, however, said it was Myanmar soldiers who set their homes aflame and fired indiscriminately around their villages in Rakhine state. Rohingya Muslims have long faced discrimination in the majority-Buddhist Southeast Asian country.

Turkey said that Myanmar agreed to allow its aid officials to enter Rakhine state with a ton of food and goods for Rohingya.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said it was crucial that Myanmar's government immediately give Rohingya either nationality or legal status so they can lead normal lives and freely move, find jobs, and get an education.

Guterres cited the longstanding history of "discrimination, hopelessness and extreme poverty" against Rohingya and warned about possible ethnic cleansing.

Alam reported from Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Trump orders end to program protecting immigrant 'dreamers'

By JILL COLVIN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump has begun dismantling Barack Obama's program protecting hundreds of thousands of young immigrants who were brought into the country illegally as children.

He declared on Tuesday that he loves the "dreamers" who could face deportation but insisted it's up to Congress, not him, to address their plight.

Trump didn't specify what he wanted done, essentially sending a six-month time bomb to his fellow Republicans in Congress who have no consensus on how to defuse it.

On Twitter Tuesday night, he wrote: "Congress now has 6 months to legalize DACA (something the Obama Administration was unable to do). If they can't, I will revisit this issue!"

The president tried to have it both ways with his compromise plan: fulfilling his campaign promise to eliminate the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, or DACA, while at the same time showing compassion for those who would lose deportation protection and the ability to work legally in the U.S. New applications will be rejected and the program will be formally rescinded, but the administration will continue to renew existing two-year work permits for the next six months, giving Congress time to act.

"I have a love for these people and hopefully now Congress will be able to help them and do it properly," Trump told reporters.

Yet at the same time, the White House distributed talking points to members of Congress that included a dark warning: "The Department of Homeland Security urges DACA recipients to use the time remaining on their work authorizations to prepare for and arrange their departure from the United States."

Although Trump's announcement had been anticipated in recent days, it still left young people covered by the DACA program reeling.

"You just feel like you are empty," said a sobbing Paola Martinez, 23, who came to the U.S. from Colombia and recently graduated with a civil engineering degree from Florida International University.

Their predicament now shifts to Congress, which has repeatedly tried — and failed — to pass immigration legislation.

White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said the president would look to Congress to pass a "responsible immigration reform package" with money to control the border with Mexico and better protect American workers' jobs — along with protecting "dreamers."

Sen. John Cornyn of Texas, the No. 2 Senate Republican, said if Trump truly wants a comprehensive immigration reform package, including a solution for the 11 million immigrants in the country illegally, he's certain to be disappointed. Congress tried that and failed in 2013, and GOP leaders immediately ruled it out Tuesday.

"Guaranteed failure," Cornyn said.

If the goal is a more incremental package that combines a solution for the "dreamers" with steps such as visa reforms and enhanced border security, "there may be a deal to be had," Cornyn said.

Sanders' offered a blunt warning to lawmakers skeptical they can come up with a plan: "If they can't, then they should get out of the way and let somebody else take their job that can actually get something done."

The DACA program was created by former President Barack Obama by executive order in 2012, when it became clear Congress would not act to address the young immigrants' plight in legislation that was dubbed the "Dream Act." Trump ran his campaign as an immigration-hard liner, labeling DACA as illegal "amnesty" and pledging to repeal it immediately.

But he shifted his approach after the election, expressing sympathy for the "dreamers," many of whom were brought to the U.S. by their parents when they were very young and have no memories of the countries where they were born.

Trump's aides painted his move to gradually phase out the program as the best of bad options: State officials had threatened a lawsuit if he did not act by Tuesday to repeal the program, which has given nearly 800,000 young immigrants a reprieve from deportation and the ability to work legally in the U.S. in the form of two-year, renewable work permits.

"In effect, I am not going to just cut DACA off, but rather provide a window of opportunity for Congress

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to finally act," Trump said. He said he was not in favor of punishing children for the actions of their parents, but he added, "Young Americans have dreams, too."

Lawmakers were trickling back to the Capitol Tuesday from a summer recess and already are confronting a daunting to-do list including a relief package for Hurricane Harvey victims and a pressing need to raise the federal borrowing limit. Some GOP lawmakers and aides are discussing the possibility of a bipartisan immigration package, including a solution for the dreamers, money for border security and enforcement, and perhaps other items like changes to some visa programs.

A stand-alone bill addressing just the "dreamers" seems unlikely to pass the House, given the firm stance of many conservatives. And it's unclear whether Trump would sign it anyway.

House Speaker Paul Ryan said he hoped the "House and Senate, with the president's leadership, will be able to find consensus on a permanent legislative solution that includes ensuring that those who have done nothing wrong can still contribute as a valued part of this great country."

Under the phase-out plan announced by Attorney General Jeff Sessions, the Department of Homeland Security was halting acceptance of new applications under DACA as of Tuesday. People with permits set to expire between now and March 5, 2018, will be able to re-apply as long as their applications are submitted by Oct. 5. Existing permits will remain in effect, and applications already in the pipeline will be processed.

That means the earliest that dreamers would begin to lose protections under the program would be next March.

Trump's action nonetheless drew swift criticism from immigration advocates, Democratic lawmakers and business and religious leaders who had urged Trump to spare the program.

Obama slammed the decision as "wrong," "self-defeating" and "cruel."

House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi called it "a deeply shameful act of political cowardice and a despicable assault on innocent young people in communities across America."

Some Republicans objected, too.

Sen. John McCain of Arizona said Trump was taking "the wrong approach," and he added: "The federal government has a responsibility to defend and secure our borders, but we must do so in a way that upholds all that is decent and exceptional about our nation."

One bill addressing the issue that has received significant attention, introduced by Sens. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., and Dick Durbin, D-Ill., would allow young immigrants who grew up in the U.S. to earn lawful permanent residence and eventually American citizenship if they complete a list of requirements.

Trump's announcement came the same day as a deadline set by Republican state officials who said they would challenge DACA in court unless the administration rescinded it. Administration officials argued the program was on flimsy legal footing — and said that allowing the lawsuit to proceed would have thrown it into far more chaos than phasing it out.

After Trump's announcement, attorneys general in New York and California said they were prepared to seek legal action against his decision.

Associated Press writers Sadie Gurman, Ken Thomas, Erica Werner and Richard Lardner in Washington, Adriana Gomez Licon in Miami and Astrid Galvan in New York contributed to this report.

AP FACT CHECK: What the Trump administration said about DACA

By ELLIOT SPAGAT and CHRIS RUGABER, Associated Press

The White House took a firm stance on Tuesday in outlining why an immigration program created by President Barack Obama needs to be eliminated.

President Donald Trump and Attorney General Jeff Sessions described the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program as an unconstitutional action that contributed to a surge in immigration and gang violence in recent years. They also said it hurt the economy by taking jobs away from Americans.

Here is a look at the claims made by the administration and the facts:

TRUMP: "The temporary implementation of DACA by the Obama administration, after Congress repeat-

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edly rejected this amnesty-first approach, also helped spur a humanitarian crisis — the massive surge of unaccompanied minors from Central America including, in some cases, young people who would become members of violent gangs throughout our country, such as MS-13.”

THE FACTS: Some DACA critics contend that the program signaled to Central American children that they would get similar treatment if they came to the U.S., but there is scant evidence to support the claim.

The Government Accountability Office found that the main reasons for the surge of unaccompanied children from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras in 2014 were crime and lack of economic opportunity at home. Other reasons included education concerns, desire to rejoin family and aggressive recruiting by smugglers.

The 2015 GAO report said perceptions of U.S. immigration policy played a part, specifically because some believed that prospects for a broad overhaul of U.S. immigration laws would include a path to citizenship for those already in the country. The 25-page report made no mention of DACA.

At a lengthy congressional hearing in June on unaccompanied children who belong to the El Salvador-based MS-13 gang, senior administration officials made no mention DACA. Carla Provost, the acting Border Patrol chief, said 160 unaccompanied children who were arrested crossing the border since 2012 were suspected of having gang affiliations, including with the MS-13. But none of the officials offered any estimate of how many are currently in the U.S. and whether they became members after coming to the country.

SESSIONS: DACA “denied jobs to hundreds of thousands of Americans by allowing those same jobs to go to illegal aliens.”

WHITE HOUSE SPOKESWOMAN SARAH HUCKABEE SANDERS: “There are over 4 million unemployed Americans in the same age group as those that are DACA recipients; that over 950,000 of those are African-Americans in the same age group; over 870,000 unemployed Hispanics in the same age group. Those are large groups of people that are unemployed that could possibly have those jobs.”

THE FACTS: Few economists or business leaders subscribe to the administration’s view. The unemployment rate is near a 16-year low, and U.S. companies are seeking to fill 6.2 million jobs, the most on records dating from 2001. Many companies are practically begging for more workers. Some analysts argue that automation in factories and warehouses is picking up in part because of a shortage of available employees.

For the economy to grow, it needs both more workers and to make those workers more efficient through investments in machinery and technology. The U.S. population is aging, more people are retiring, and that has restrained the economy’s growth in the 9-year recovery from the Great Recession. Immigrants help offset that trend.

Immigrants are also more likely than native-born Americans to start companies, which leads to greater job creation.

The unemployment rate for African Americans fell in June to nearly the lowest level on records dating back to 1976. It has since moved higher, but it is low by historical standards. Even in a healthy economy, some Americans will be unemployed as they switch jobs or start looking for work after completing their educations.

TRUMP: “Officials from 10 States are suing over the program, requiring my Administration to make a decision regarding (DACA’s) legality. The Attorney General of the United States, the Attorneys General of many states, and virtually all other top legal experts have advised that the program is unlawful and unconstitutional and cannot be successfully defended in court.”

THE FACTS: It’s a stretch to say that “virtually all other top legal experts” believe DACA is unconstitutional. It is a highly contested issue.

More than 100 law school professors and university lecturers wrote Trump in August to insist it’s legal. “In our view, there is no question that DACA 2012 is a lawful exercise of prosecutorial discretion. Our conclusions are based on years of experience in the field and a close study of the U.S. Constitution, administrative law, immigration statutes, federal regulations and case law,” they wrote.

Ten state attorneys general threatened to challenge DACA in June. One of them, Tennessee’s Herbert

H. Slatery III, shifted course on Friday, urging Congress to act and saying there was "a human element ... that is not lost on me and should not be ignored."

House to vote on \$7.9B Harvey relief bill

By ANDREW TAYLOR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — With federal disaster reserves running out, the House is swiftly moving to pass President Donald Trump's request for a \$7.9 billion first installment of relief for victims of Harvey.

GOP leaders also hope to use the urgent Harvey aid bill to solve a far more vexing issue: Increasing the U.S. debt limit to permit the government to borrow freely again to cover its bills.

Wednesday morning's vote comes as the government's response to Harvey is draining existing disaster reserves, with Federal Emergency Management Agency's disaster accounts hovering at \$1 billion or less. FEMA is warning lawmakers that disaster funds run out on Friday, even as a much more powerful hurricane, Irma, is bearing down on the eastern U.S.

This week's measure is to handle the immediate emergency needs and replenish reserves in advance of Irma. Far more money will be needed once more complete estimates are in this fall, and Harvey could end up exceeding the \$110 billion government cost of Hurricane Katrina.

The Harvey aid bill is the first major item on a packed fall agenda and, GOP leaders such as Speaker Paul Ryan hope, would allow lawmakers to quickly take on the more challenging job of increasing the government's \$19.9 trillion borrowing cap. That plan was gaining momentum Tuesday, with even some top House conservatives sounding resigned to the idea.

"I think it's a terrible idea," said House Freedom Caucus Chairman Mark Meadows, R-N.C., who conceded that conservatives were getting outmaneuvered.

"I think at this point there are bigger issues that we have to focus on," Meadows said.

House action on Wednesday would set up a Senate debate that, as of Tuesday, would follow an uncertain path. A spokesman for top Senate Democrat Chuck Schumer said the New Yorker is seeking assurances that minority party Democrats will be treated fairly as Congress advances through its lengthy to-do list, which includes extending a popular children's health program, federal flood insurance, and, perhaps, a small-bore budget outline that would ease tight budget "caps" on both the Pentagon and domestic agencies.

Schumer was a key force in winning aid of more than \$50 billion to help New York and New Jersey recover from Superstorm Sandy five years ago. And he supported former President Barack Obama's successful efforts in recent years to block Republicans from using debt limit increases as blackmail to win other GOP priorities.

So Schumer is keeping his options open despite initially acting cool to the idea of pairing the debt limit with flood funding.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., said that increased Harvey costs show the importance of acting swiftly to increase the government's debt cap to make sure there's enough borrowed cash to pay out the surge in disaster aid.

"In the case of the debt limit, we need to act quickly given the new uncertainty from the large costs of storm recovery," McConnell said.

Analysts at the Bipartisan Policy Center, a Washington think tank, say Harvey aid wouldn't cause a cash crunch for weeks.

Democrats recognize that their votes are needed to help GOP leaders pass any debt limit increase but they also aren't threatening to withhold those votes.

"We're dealing with all these things at this point in time anyway," said House Democratic Caucus Chairman Joe Crowley of New York. "Democrats have said we're for a clean debt ceiling and we're also for making sure the people from Texas, Louisiana, and elsewhere who've been severely damaged by these storms — with one more on the way as well — that their needs need to be addressed as well."

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Trump's traveled from fiery to conflicted on dreamers

By JONATHAN LEMIRE and JILL COLVIN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The calls began in the hours before Donald Trump took the oath of office.

The president-elect was attending a morning prayer service and many in the party were celebrating a long-awaited return to power. But incoming chief of staff Reince Priebus was in a van, parked outside St. John's Episcopal Church, fielding phone calls from anxious Republicans all asking the same question:

What was the new president going to do about DACA?

The Inauguration Day worries about Trump's campaign promise to "immediately terminate" the program that protects some young immigrants from deportation would soon turn into a quiet lobbying push from powerful Trump advisers, public pressure from business groups, a deadline from Republican state officials and a tug-of-war within the West Wing. After months of wrestling with a decision, Trump on Tuesday declared he would slowly unwind the program — while he hoped Congress would do "something."

Trump's compromise was a public recognition of the political perils involved in scraping the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, which had been instituted by outgoing President Barack Obama and protects nearly 800,000 young immigrants brought to the U.S. illegally as children. While the tough talk of abolishing an "amnesty" program may have fired up parts of the GOP base, the reality of potentially deporting young people proved deeply uncomfortable for a new president who has repeatedly insisted he wanted to show "heart."

That political pain was part of what led lawmakers to dial Priebus on January 20. They wanted to know if Trump would address the program in his inaugural address. Some asked for Trump to re-evaluate, or at least delay, his decision, according to two people familiar with the contents of the calls.

Priebus didn't make a firm commitment that day. But Trump would ultimately bow to the request.

The president's second thoughts on DACA were surprising.

Since his inflammatory campaign kickoff speech at Trump Tower in June 2015, Trump had repeatedly vowed to eliminate the "illegal" program. It became a favorite talking point at his rallies, at times paired with his pledge to build an impenetrable border wall. And last August, he laid out his full immigration plan with a fiery speech in Phoenix in which he denounced DACA again.

Trump's promise was backed firmly by chief strategist Steve Bannon and powerful policy guru Stephen Miller. And it was cheered by some conservatives and hard right news outlets such as Breitbart News.

After the election, Miller, Bannon and Attorney General Jeff Sessions pushed the president to move on DACA soon after taking office.

But Trump seemed to be drifting in the other direction. He started telling associates he was unsure how to proceed. He talked of wanting to put off a decision. He spoke publicly about being torn and seemed uncomfortable with the idea of being viewed as unsympathetic.

In an interview with ABC that aired five days after he took office, Trump said DACA recipients "shouldn't be very worried." During his first full-fledged solo White House news conference, he acknowledged the decision was "very difficult."

"I love these kids, I love kids, I have kids and grandkids and I find it very, very hard doing what the law says exactly to do and, you know, the law is rough," he said. "It's rough — very, very rough."

But even as Trump publicly agonized, the promise to terminate the program was not forgotten: It remained scribbled on a white board in Bannon's office, on a list of the campaign promises-turned-policy goals.

A deadline would soon force the issue.

In June, Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton and Republican attorneys general from nine other states threatened to sue the federal government if it did not rescind DACA by September 5.

The lawsuit was always likely to be the turning point. In choosing Sessions as his attorney general, Trump put one of Washington's strongest critics of illegal immigration at the helm of the Justice Department. It was highly unlikely that Sessions would ever defend the program's constitutionality in court.

As the deadline approached, Sessions made that clear to Trump. In recent weeks, he told the president

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he did not believe the Justice Department could successfully argue the program was constitutional, a view also championed by his former Senate aide, Miller, according to two people familiar with their conversations with the president. Like others interviewed for this story, those people demanded anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss private conversations.

There was pressure on the other side. Jared Kushner, Trump's senior adviser and son-in-law, as well as economic adviser Gary Cohn lobbied Trump to keep DACA intact, although Cohn's influence in the White House had waned after he criticized the president's response to racial violence in Charlottesville, Virginia. Business leaders, including longtime Trump ally Rupert Murdoch, warned Trump that rescinding the program would hurt the nation's economy and international reputation. At one point, White House officials discussed asking the state officials to push back their deadline — but Paxton said publicly he would not budge.

On Friday, before returning to Texas to inspect the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey, Trump declared "We love the Dreamers" and teased his decision, saying he'd make his announcement by Tuesday.

In recent weeks, senior aides began crafting a plan that would take some of the pressure off and minimize backlash from Trump's conservative base. Aides proposed putting the onus for the future of the program on Congress. Chief of Staff John Kelly, who replaced Priebus in July and had long urged lawmakers to come up with a legislative fix, helped put together the announcement: The White House would slowly end the program over six months and urge Congress to replace it with "something." Trump did not say what that something was that he wanted done.

"The President wrestled with this decision all through the weekend," White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said Tuesday.

But even as the White House moved to shift responsibility to Capitol Hill, Trump did not discuss the matter with House Speaker Paul Ryan, who reiterated his support for the so-called "dreamers" in an interview last week. Though the two men discussed DACA in the past, Trump did not reach out to Ryan to discuss his decision and the speaker did not try to talk to the president about it, according to two people familiar with their conversations.

And it was Sessions, not Trump, who made the formal announcement, declaring DACA "an unconstitutional exercise of authority" that must be revoked. Trump only appeared in public once Tuesday to discuss his hopes for a rewrite of the tax code.

"I have a love for these people and hopefully now Congress will be able to help them and do it properly," he said when asked about the DACA decision.

And if Congress doesn't act, he wrote later on Twitter, "I will revisit this issue!"

Lemire reported from New York. Associated Press writers Julie Pace, Sadie Gurman and Erica Werner contributed reporting.

Follow Lemire on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/@JonLemire> and Colvin at <http://twitter.com/@colvinj>

Report: Red Sox used Apple Watch to steal Yankees' signs

By KYLE HIGHTOWER, AP Sports Writer

BOSTON (AP) — Looking for any edge in an age-old rivalry, the Boston Red Sox got called out in a high-tech sign-stealing scheme they ran on the New York Yankees.

The first-place Red Sox admitted to Major League Baseball that they used an Apple Watch to relay signals from opposing catchers to Boston players, The New York Times reported Tuesday. Sign stealing has long been a part of the game, but employing electronic gadgets to do it is against the rules.

MLB is looking into allegations levied by the Yankees after a series between the teams last month in Boston. The Times said the Red Sox told MLB investigators that Boston manager John Farrell, general Dave Dombrowski and other team executives were not aware of the operation, which had been going on

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for weeks.

Commissioner Rob Manfred, who was at Fenway Park on Tuesday night as part of a previously planned visit, said he wanted to get the matter resolved quickly. He didn't comment about possible penalties.

"The only thing that I can tell you about repercussions is that to the extent that there was a violation on either side — and I'm not saying that there was — to the extent that there was a violation on either side, we are 100 percent comfortable that it is not an ongoing issue — that if it happened, it is no longer happening," he said.

This isn't the first time a successful Boston-area sports franchise has been accused of cheating in recent years.

New England Patriots star Tom Brady was suspended four games by NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell after the "Deflategate" investigation concluded the quarterback conspired to use illegally underinflated footballs in the 2015 AFC championship game. The Pats also were docked a first-round draft pick.

Years earlier, the five-time Super Bowl champions were caught videotaping signals being sent in by Jets coaches during a 2007 game — the Patriots lost a first-round pick in the 2008 draft and coach Bill Belichick was fined \$500,000 in "Spygate."

The Red Sox hold a narrow lead over the Yankees in the AL East race with a month left in the regular season. The teams don't play again this season.

Farrell said he knew the rule.

"Electronic devices are not to be used in the dugout," he said Tuesday before Boston hosted the Toronto Blue Jays. "But beyond that, the only thing I can say it's a league matter at this point."

Dombrowski said it was the first time a team he'd worked for had been formally accused of stealing signs.

"I've been in the game for 40 years. I've known of it for 40 years, sign stealing itself," Dombrowski said. "I've known of people that I talk to that played back in the '50's that talked to me about sign stealing, so I do think sign stealing has been taking place for a long time. I will acknowledge that."

The Times, according to unidentified sources, said the MLB probe started after Yankees general manager Brian Cashman filed a complaint with the commissioner's office that included video. The newspaper said the video showed a member of Boston's training staff looking at his Apple Watch in the dugout and relaying a message to players.

"I think there was something that was suspected of going on," Yankees outfielder Brett Gardner said before Tuesday night's game in Baltimore.

The Times said the Red Sox filed a complaint Tuesday against the Yankees, alleging the club used a camera from its YES television network to steal opponents' signs.

"No chance," Yankees manager Joe Girardi said.

Said Manfred: "I do believe that this is a charged situation from a competitive perspective, when you have the kind of rivalry that the Yankees and the Red Sox have. I guess it's not shocking you could have charges and counter-charges like this."

The Times said the Red Sox told MLB investigators that club personnel watched monitors and then electronically sent pitch signals to team trainers in the dugout, who relayed the information to players.

The newspaper said video showed Boston assistant athletic trainer Jon Jochim checking his Apple Watch and relaying the info to Red Sox players Brock Holt and second baseman Dustin Pedroia. The newspaper said one clip showed Pedroia passing along the intelligence to Boston outfielder Chris Young, who formerly played for the Yankees.

The Red Sox won two of three from the Yankees during the series Aug. 18-20. The Times reported that in the first game, after Boston first put a runner on second, Rafael Devers hit a home run. The Red Sox went 5 for 8 in that game when they had a runner at second and won 9-6.

Sign stealing to help hitters know what pitch is coming has long been a part of baseball lore. Often times it happens when a runner at second base peers in to see the catcher's sign and then subtly flashes a signal — maybe a hand movement, or the positioning of his feet — to the batter to let him know whether the next pitch will be a fastball, curveball or something else.

The most famous example of sign stealing was a secret for almost a half-century. It took that long before it was positively revealed the New York Giants used a spyglass-and-buzzer system to relay pitch signals to their hitters during their famed 1951 chase of the Brooklyn Dodgers, which culminated with Bobby Thomson's bottom-of-the-ninth, winning homer in the decisive Game 3 of their NL playoff.

Players are allowed to try to figure out the opponents' signals on their own. Computers, cameras and electronics are not permitted.

To combat signs being stolen, teams often change their signals when an opposing runner reaches second base. Signs can change from batter to batter and even pitch to pitch — the Yankees are a team that frequently has its catcher go out to the mound to discuss with pitchers what to throw.

Electronics and video have become more a part of baseball and all sports in recent years. The increased usage has also put leagues on alert over how to control improprieties in many areas.

In July 2016, a federal judge sentenced the former scouting director of the St. Louis Cardinals to nearly four years in prison for hacking the Houston Astros' player-personnel database and email system.

"Electronics is the world we live in today," Girardi said. "It's changed the world we live in and it will continue to change as we move on. Again, there has to be something the catcher, the pitcher and the middle infielders can do to combat all this. Football's gone to headset. They've talked about how they don't know how feasible that is in the game of baseball, but I think we have to try something."

More AP baseball: <https://apnews.com/tag/MLBbaseball>

AP Sports Writer David Ginsburg in Baltimore contributed to this report.

Two Houstons emerge from Harvey aftermath: one wet, one dry

By **BRIAN MELLEY, Associated Press**

HOUSTON (AP) — In a quest to help Harvey victims, Kelli Shofstall and her son set out on a 165-mile drive from Austin to Houston that led them through neighborhood after neighborhood where the streets were dry and no one seemed to need assistance.

It took more than a day of driving around, following outdated flood maps, before they found a water-filled road where they could ferry tenants to and from a marooned apartment complex using an inflatable yellow raft.

"My son and I joked that we sucked at relief efforts," Shofstall said. Christian Carr, 17, waded in his jeans into knee-deep water pulling the raft to see if anyone else wanted to float out of the Heights Park Row apartments.

More than a week after Harvey swamped the greater Houston area, the metropolis is divided into two cities: one still covered with water and flood debris, the other largely unblemished by the storm.

Some subdivisions remain submerged, and many streets are piled high with ruined belongings. More than 10 percent of the county's dwellings were flooded, and several prominent theater and concert halls were damaged, though major sports stadiums escaped unharmed.

In unscathed areas, the only reminder of high water may be a layer of silt on the streets, damp curbs or the mildew-like whiff of disaster.

On a leafy street corner in the city's Montrose section, a group of children set up a Labor Day lemonade stand in a neighborhood that generally has nothing worse than standing water for a week after heavy rain. Even after Harvey, homes were not damaged and streets drained quickly.

"We're lucky. We didn't lose power," said Sara Beck, whose 5-year-old son, Waylon, shouted "lemonade" at passing cars. Hushing her voice self-consciously, she added, "or even internet."

"They call it survivor's guilt," said Emily Covey. Her 5-year-old daughter, Elena, tucked the \$1 she collected for each cup in a shoebox that she declared contained "hundreds of monies," a figure that added up to \$161 at the end of the day, her mother said.

"Why did we not get it and all these people around us did?" asked Covey, who has several friends who

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still cannot get back into their water-logged homes to begin the cleanup.

The children planned to give the proceeds to a charity for flood victims. Their hand-drawn sign with a smiley-faced lemon included the hashtag "Houstonstrong."

Wearing hip waders and a construction dust mask, Gaston Kirby pulled a raft through waist-deep waters Monday to retrieve belongings from his home near the Addicks and Barker reservoirs, where officials were still releasing water that could inundate neighbors for well over a week.

Elsewhere, life went on as usual across much of the city. Coffee shops, restaurants and stores that had been closed for days began to reopen. Couples sipped wine as they shopped at Whole Foods in Montrose. A steady stream of joggers and cyclists passed through a park along the swollen Buffalo Bayou.

Some high-priced homes near the Buffalo Bayou are submerged in floodwaters that are still up to first-floor windows.

Janet Amirseif stood near her flooded street Sunday and said it would be a long time before her life returned to anything resembling normal.

"People in downtown? Nothing. Here, it's just mayhem," she said. "It's over? No, it's just started."

Homeowners, their friends, volunteers and contractors near Brays Bayou have been hauling soggy furniture to the curb for days and tearing out floors and busting walls so water-logged homes can dry out in preparation for repairs. Lawns are piled high with possessions — some accumulated over a lifetime, others purchased after a previous, less damaging flood.

Mattresses dominate the heaps, along with sofas, dressers, drywall and insulation. A closer look reveals old record albums, board games and hardcover copies of books such as "Isaac's Storm," about the 1900 hurricane in nearby Galveston that left more than 6,000 dead and ranks as the deadliest natural disaster in U.S. history. At least three pianos were among the curbside cast-offs along a section of Tartan Lane.

James Kennedy had purchased a glossy black standup piano to replace one ruined in the Memorial Day flood of 2015. Now the \$10,000 replacement was also out of tune and out of time.

On most Labor Days, Kennedy's three kids would be swimming at the community pool. He would be smoking brisket in the backyard, and Chablis and rose would be chilling in the cooler.

Instead, he was with his 13-year-old son, James Max, trying to salvage tools and anything else he could save while waiting for an insurance adjuster to arrive. Rock 'n' roll from the 1980s and '90s blared from a speaker in the garage.

Kennedy, who towed his wife and kids to safety on an inflatable mattress, had been working 14-hour days at the house since the flood hit. He bemoaned the loss of keepsakes like baby photos that can't be replaced or Grateful Dead albums, cassettes and ticket stubs from 103 concerts.

Looking over the pile of construction debris, water-stained photos and Rollerblades in his front yard, he found his son's tarnished sterling silver birth mug and pulled it from the trash.

"This has been a very character-defining thing," Kennedy said. "Some people have put their whole life on hold. Others took selfies, standing in water up to their ankles, and complained about having to redo their flower beds."

A few blocks away, kids tossed a baseball in a front-yard untouched by flooding and another man trimmed his bushes. Kennedy said it would be a long time before life on his street looks like that. He's already rented another house for eight months and thinks it will take that long to settle insurance claims and get a contractor to do the work.

His return will be short-lived, he said. He plans to move to higher ground.

Associated Press Writer Haven Daley contributed to this story.

Congress to speed up Harvey aid, tackle debt limit

By ERICA WERNER, AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Lawmakers returned to Washington Tuesday facing a daunting to-do list and three months left in the year to show that Republicans can actually get things done. President Donald Trump immediately added a huge complication by rescinding immigration protections for younger immigrants and ordering Congress to come up with a fix.

The immigration issue has defeated Congress' best efforts in the past and proven enormously divisive for the GOP. But for now there's not even room for it on the front burner as lawmakers, just back from a five-week summer recess, face a series of more immediate tasks.

First up: Speeding relief aid to Texas and Louisiana in the wake of the Harvey storm. A first \$7.9 billion installment was set for House passage on Wednesday, with leaders hoping for a big bipartisan vote to demonstrate Congress' support for Harvey's victims.

That will be the easy part.

GOP leaders are also wrestling with how to raise the government's \$19.9 trillion debt limit, something that must happen by month's end, at the latest, to avoid a first-ever default on U.S. payments. The administration and GOP leaders were making plans to add the debt limit increase to the Harvey relief bill in the Senate and send it back to the House, a plan that quickly provoked conservative ire and a familiar intramural GOP dispute.

"We're \$20 trillion in debt, our brand, the Republican brand, is fiscal responsibility, so we got to show it," said Rep. Dave Brat, R-Va., a member of the House Freedom Caucus that has been arguing for spending cuts to be included with any debt ceiling increase.

Despite the conservative outrage, leaders were pressing forward with the plan as a way to sweeten the perennially unpopular debt limit vote. As usual they planned to rely on Democratic votes to get it over the finish line without conservative support, though Democrats were withholding judgment.

And, Congress must also approve new spending by Sept. 30 to stave off a government shutdown. The plan for dispensing with that issue was a short-term extension of existing spending levels, which would kick the funding fight into December. At that point lawmakers could add more money for Texas and Louisiana and fight it out over Trump's call for money for a wall along on the U.S.-Mexico border.

"We have three critically important things before us right now that we need to do quickly," Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., said as he opened the Senate session. "Pass disaster relief. Prevent a default so that those emergency resources can actually get to Americans who need them. And keep the government funded."

There is no time to waste. Federal disaster funds run out on Friday, the Federal Emergency Management Agency is warning lawmakers. FEMA has just \$1 billion remaining in its disaster accounts.

In addition to the tasks Congress must do, McConnell also made a pitch for the big issue GOP lawmakers want to do in the remainder of the year: overhaul the U.S. tax code to lower rates for businesses and individuals. After failing to make good on promises to repeal and replace Barack Obama's health care law, Republicans feel a real sense of urgency to accomplish a tax rewrite so that they can have something to show to voters ahead of midterm elections next year where the House majority is at stake.

Top GOP House and Senate leaders met with Trump and key administration officials on the issue Tuesday afternoon at the White House.

"If we're going to keep momentum going and allow the economy to truly take off as it should, it is vital that we reduce crushing tax burden on our companies and on our workers," Trump said as McConnell, House Speaker Paul Ryan and others gathered with him for the meeting.

"This is more than just tax reform. This is tax cutting," said Trump "We're going to cut taxes, we're going to reduce taxes, for people, for individuals, for middle income families. We're going to reduce taxes for companies."

Despite feuding with Trump over the summer as the president attacked him for the Senate's failure on health care, McConnell earlier praised Trump as "very engaged on this issue."

The White House meeting on taxes drew sniping from Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., who complained about the GOP's plans to try to write a tax bill on a partisan basis and leave Democrats out.

And then there's the consequential decision announced Tuesday by Attorney General Jeff Sessions to phase out former President Barack Obama's program that protected some 800,000 immigrants brought illegally to the country as kids. The phase-out will happen in six months' time, a period meant to give Congress a chance to come up with a solution.

White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders made clear the administration is not looking for a fix just for the young immigrants, known as Dreamers to advocates, but also for other aspects of the immigration system including visa programs and Trump's border wall.

"Really big fixes and big reform," Sanders said.

"That's their job," she said of Congress. "And if they can't do it, then they need to get out of the way and let somebody else who can take on a heavy lift and get things accomplished."

Lawmakers were already calling for presidential guidance on the issue, although leaders and aides said that, given the six-month time frame, they did not expect to turn to it immediately.

"It is important that the White House clearly outline what kind of legislation the president is willing to sign," said Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla.

Associated Press writer Andrew Taylor contributed to this report.

'Build the wall' takes back seat to rebuilding after Harvey

By NOMAAN MERCHANT and WILL WEISSERT, Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — The U.S. government carefully designed a path of least resistance to building a border wall in Texas, picking a wildlife refuge and other places it already owns or controls to quickly begin construction. All it needed was Congress to approve the money.

Then came Harvey.

President Donald Trump's administration must now grapple with a storm that devastated the Texas Gulf Coast, with some areas still underwater and tens of thousands of people forced from their homes. Rebuilding will require billions of dollars to start — and may come at the expense of what is perhaps Trump's best-known policy priority.

The White House wanted \$1.6 billion for 74 miles (120 kilometers) of initial wall, including 60 miles (95 kilometers) in Texas' Rio Grande Valley.

While a fraction of what the overall Harvey recovery effort will cost, funding for the wall already faced strong opposition from Senate Democrats. Three days before the storm made landfall, Trump threatened a government shutdown unless Congress provides funding. That threat now appears to be off the table, as is any potential maneuver to tie the wall to providing disaster relief.

"If Trump is saying, 'Listen, you're only going to get your disaster funding if I get my wall,' that is a total political loser," said Matt Mackowiak, a Texas-based Republican consultant. "That's just not tenable."

Another potential way to get the wall started would be tying initial funding to the program shielding young immigrants from deportation, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, which the Trump administration announced Tuesday it would seek to phase out.

The White House and Republican congressional leadership are discussing a larger package of legislation to address DACA, money for the border wall and other elements. Democrats have ruled out any trade off of DACA legislation with the border wall, though, casting doubt on such an approach.

Before the storm hit, the U.S. government had spent months quietly preparing to begin new construction in Texas. The first construction site would be the Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge, a verdant forest with butterflies and rare bird species next to the Rio Grande — that wasn't affected by Harvey.

Those preparations are still underway. At Santa Ana, crews were seen as recently as Friday drilling holes for testing the soil on the river levee built to withhold high waters from the Rio Grande. The head of the National Butterfly Center, also next to the border, recently caught workers chopping trees and mowing

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vegetation on her property without her permission. And contractors have been spotted at a courthouse in a neighboring county examining land ownership records.

The government wants to build on the 3 miles (5 kilometers) of river levee cutting through the northern edge of the refuge, separating the visitor center from the rest of the park. A gate in the wall would open and close for visitors. Vegetation in front of the wall would be cleared for an access road and open land to give agents better visibility.

Under current plans, another 25 miles (40 kilometers) would go on other parts of the levee, where government agencies are believed to control land rights and have previously built sections of fencing. The remaining construction would go through river towns further west, taking a route the government examined the last time it built a border barrier, under the 2006 Secure Fence Act.

Scott Nicol, co-chair of the Sierra Club's Borderlands campaign and a longtime opponent of the plan, said that the storm "should stop them from trying to build a wall."

"If we had an administration that was acting responsibly, that was acting in the best interest of the United States, they would say, 'We have a much more important thing to do right now,'" Nicol said.

Law enforcement officials in the Rio Grande Valley say the wall is part of their strategy to slow the entry of drugs and illegal immigration. And they want to avoid the issues that stymied the U.S. government after the Secure Fence Act. That resulted in hundreds of lawsuits and years of delays in Texas, and yielded just 100 miles (160 kilometers) of fencing in the state.

That's why they want to start in Santa Ana.

"That is government property already," Manuel Padilla, the Border Patrol's Rio Grande Valley sector chief, told The Associated Press last month. "So we don't have to deal with the landowner because that's a process and it takes time."

The Valley is the nation's busiest place for illegal border crossings. Agents routinely catch human and drug smugglers along the state's 800-mile (1,290-kilometer) border with Mexico, most of which is not fenced.

"Smugglers exploit the refuge because it has limited access to law enforcement," Padilla said.

Opponents say Padilla is overstating the threat in the refuge. The Border Patrol says its agents have intercepted just eight human smuggling cases in Santa Ana since October. By comparison, during that same period, agents intercepted more than 2,000 human smuggling cases in the Rio Grande Valley overall.

Environmentalists say cutting through Santa Ana's forests would irreparably damage the area and endanger animals in the event of floods. Several endangered wildcats and 400-plus species of birds live at the refuge.

Still, the Department of Homeland Security can waive environmental and other reviews to expedite construction, as it's already done in San Diego, where the remaining 14 miles (22 kilometers) of border wall is currently planned. Even if Congress doesn't approve funding, the department might still be able to build in the refuge by reallocating money already in its budget.

It's a plan that would be hard for opponents of a wall to stop. But after Harvey, the state faces a rebuilding effort that will draw not just on government money, but the efforts of construction companies and natural resources that might have otherwise gone to a wall.

So far, Texas Republicans won't rule out a wall but say it shouldn't jeopardize Harvey recovery funding.

Sen. John Cornyn has filed a \$15 billion border security bill that would build some new portions of border wall, though he opposes fencing off the entire, nearly 2,000-mile (3,220-kilometer) U.S.-Mexico border. He said the message from the White House so far has been to offer immediate storm aid without political strings.

"Asked if he was concerned the border wall fight could tie up federal disaster spending, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott said simply, "No."

Associated Press writer Donna Cassata contributed to this report from Washington.

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Cousin who saw Emmett Till being kidnapped dies at age 74

By CARYN ROUSSEAU and EMILY WAGSTER PETTUS, Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Simeon Wright, who was with his cousin Emmett Till when the Chicago boy was kidnapped in 1955 after whistling at a white woman in Mississippi, has died. He was 74.

Till, who was 14, spent the summer of 1955 visiting relatives in Mississippi and was kidnapped, tortured and killed after whistling at a white woman working at a store in the rural hamlet of Money. His death galvanized the civil rights movement when his mother, Mamie Till Mobley, insisted on an open-casket funeral in Chicago to show the world her son's mutilated body.

Wright's cousin, Airickca Gordon-Taylor, said Tuesday that Wright died of cancer Monday at his Chicago-area home. Wright described Till as a "fun-loving guy," and said he witnessed his cousin whistle at Carolyn Bryant as a group of boys left Bryant's Grocery & Meat Market after buying snacks on Aug. 24, 1955.

"It scared us half to death," Wright recalled at the University of Mississippi in October 2010. "Some said, 'Why'd he do it?' I said, I think he just wanted us to laugh. He wasn't trying to be fresh. He just wanted to let the boys in Mississippi know, 'Hey, I'm from Chicago. I can do this. I'm not afraid.' He had no idea what was going to happen."

Wright, who was 12, was sharing a bed with Till on Aug. 28, 1955, when he saw J.W. Milam and Roy Bryant come into his family's home with pistols and kidnap Till. Roy Bryant was married to Carolyn Bryant, and Milam was his half brother. An all-white Mississippi jury acquitted the two men in Till's death, but they later confessed in a magazine interview.

Wright said the verdict was unjust.

"So if you ever get on a jury, if the evidence is there, regardless of what color the person is, do the right thing," Wright said in 2010. "If they had done the right thing back in 1955, we would've forgotten about Emmett right now. But the verdict enraged everybody."

Wright's wife, Annie Wright, told the Chicago Tribune her husband lived quietly in suburban Chicago for much of his life, but in the 2000s he became more vocal about Till. Wright published a book, "Simeon's Story: An Eyewitness Account of the Kidnapping of Emmett Till," including a chapter on the night Till was abducted.

"He really wanted people to know what happened that night," Annie Wright said. "There were so many versions. When I first met him, he never talked about it. But then he wanted people to know the injustices and indignities."

At the University of Mississippi in 2010, Wright recalled that his own mother cried and pleaded with the men not to take Till.

"I just can't describe it," Wright said. "It's a night I'll never forget. Yet, I'm not bitter."

Wright said he found comfort in his Christian faith and realized when he was in his 20s that "hatred would kill you or get you killed."

This version of the story corrects in first paragraph that Wright was with Till when Till was kidnapped, but not when he was killed.

Emily Wagster Pettus reported from Mississippi.
killed.

Brazil, France allege Rio Olympics vote-buying scheme

By PETER PRENGAMAN and STEPHEN WADE, Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — Brazilian and French authorities said Tuesday they uncovered an international corruption scheme aimed at buying votes in awarding the 2016 Olympics. It is the latest allegation to sully the legacy of the Rio Games, the first Olympics in South America.

The disclosures came as police in Rio de Janeiro raided the home of Brazilian Olympic Committee President Carlos Nuzman. They emerged with suitcases, documents and a computer. Police said detention warrants had been issued for Nuzman and an associate, businessman Arthur Cesar de Menezes Soares Filho, who authorities believe to be in Miami.

Nuzman left his house accompanied by his lawyer and later appeared at a police station for questioning. He left a few hours later without commenting. Lawyer Sergio Mazzillo said his client would cooperate but "did not commit any irregularity."

"Unfortunately, this has created a media spectacle," Mazzillo said.

In total, 11 detention warrants were issued for people in both Brazil and France in what police dubbed "Operation Unfair Play."

At a news conference, investigators said Nuzman, an honorary member of the International Olympic Committee, was a central player in buying votes for Rio's Olympic bid in 2009.

Nuzman brought together Soares Filho and Lamine Diack, the former head of track and field's governing body who at the time was an IOC voting member, according to authorities. Soares Filho's company, Matlock Capital Group, allegedly paid Diack \$2 million into an account of Diack's son, Papa Massata Diack. Authorities said they had "substantial" documentation of payments made through Caribbean accounts.

Several construction and concession companies stood to gain by bringing the games to Rio, prosecutor Fabiana Schneider said. She said the "criminal organization" of Sergio Cabral, the former governor of Rio de Janeiro who has been jailed on a different corruption conviction, drove the scheme.

"The Olympic Games were used as a big trampoline for acts of corruption," Schneider said.

The IOC said it had "learned about these circumstances from the media and is making every effort to get the full information."

The 75-year-old Nuzman was an IOC member for 12 years and one of the most prominent figures in bringing the games to Rio. He is part of the 2020 Tokyo Games coordination commission, which advises organizers in running the event.

Soon after the Rio Games, IOC President Thomas Bach awarded Nuzman the "Olympic Order," given to those who have made extraordinary contributions to the Olympics.

Chicago, Madrid, Tokyo and Rio were candidates for the 2016 Olympics. The vote was held in 2009 in Copenhagen, Denmark, with Rio defeating Madrid 66-32. Chicago, seen as having the best bid and most ready-to-go facilities, was eliminated in the first round of voting.

Authorities said they could only confirm the buying of Diack's vote, but even that could have had wide influence because delegations tend to vote in blocs. Diack is from Senegal.

"This is quite damaging" to the IOC, said Andrew Zimbalist, an economist who recently wrote a book on fallout from the Rio Olympics. "The IOC tried to say goodbye to Rio in August 2016, but the issues arising from the \$20 billion plus extravaganza won't go away."

In France, a 2-year-old investigation into corruption in sports first came to light with the arrest in November 2015 of Diack. The French have been looking into allegations that Diack, son Papa Massata Diack and others were involved in blackmailing athletes and covering-up failed drug tests.

The French Financial Prosecutors' Office, which has been leading the inquiries, said Tuesday its investigations have "uncovered the existence of a system of large-scale corruption organized around Papa Massata Diack." It also said its evidence indicates votes by members of the IOC and the ruling track body were "negotiated against payment to obtain city hosting rights for the biggest global sports competitions."

Since the Rio Games ended a year ago there has been a steady stream of accusations surrounding the awarding of building projects.

Former Rio de Janeiro Mayor Eduardo Paes is being investigated for allegedly accepting at least 15 million reais (\$5 million) in payments to facilitate construction projects tied to the games.

Paes, who has denied wrongdoing, is one of dozens of top politicians implicated in a sweeping judicial corruption investigation in which construction giant Odebrecht illegally paid billions to help win contracts.

When Rio was awarded the Olympics, it was widely celebrated as a sign that Brazil, Latin America's largest nation, had finally arrived on the world stage. During the closing ceremony, Bach said that promise had been realized.

"These Olympic Games are leaving a unique legacy for generations to come," he said at the famed Maracana Stadium. "History will talk about a Rio de Janeiro before and a much better Rio de Janeiro after the Olympic Games."

Associated Press reporter John Leicester in Paris and AP photographer Silvia Izquierdo in Rio de Janeiro contributed to this report.

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Follow Stephen Wade: www.twitter.com/StephenWadeAP

Syrian forces break long Islamic State siege of eastern city

By ZEINA KARAM and SARAH EL DEEB, Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Backed by Russian and Iranian firepower, President Bashar Assad's forces reached besieged troops Tuesday at a garrison in Syria's eastern city of Deir el-Zour, breaking a nearly three-year blockade by Islamic State militants and marking a significant advance against the extremists.

Re-entering Deir el-Zour would bring the Syrian forces and their allied Iranian-backed militias a step closer to controlling the oil-rich eastern province and its capital bordering Iraq. Such a move would also boost Tehran's growing influence in the area.

Assad congratulated his troops on breaking the siege as a "resounding victory" against extremism and vowed to forge ahead until "the last inch" of Syrian territory is liberated. Russian President Vladimir Putin, whose military had fired cruise missiles at IS targets near the city, called it a "strategically important victory over terrorists."

Assad critics called it an alarming development.

"It opens the whole province for Iran and its agents there," said Mozahem al-Salloum, an opposition activist from the city who has been in exile since 2013.

Iranian- and Lebanese-backed militias form the core of the pro-Assad forces advancing on Deir el-Zour, he noted.

Iran has been seeking to secure a land corridor from its territory, through Iraq, to the Mediterranean to give it unhindered access to its allies in Damascus and Beirut. Control of Deir el-Zour is a major boost for that plan.

By nightfall, activists said the IS militants had counterattacked with four suicide assaults near where the Syrian troops had linked up.

The advance by the Syrian troops was celebrated as a possible relief for the tens of thousands of civilians trapped in the four government-controlled neighborhoods that have been surrounded by the extremists since 2015. The Syrian government estimates about 70,000 people have survived on erratic air drops of food and supplies during the siege, which was a major embarrassment to Assad.

Activists noted, however, that the new access road could not yet be used for delivering humanitarian assistance because it was still under attack from IS.

Deir el-Zour, Syria's largest eastern city, has been divided into government- and IS-controlled parts since 2015. The province is held by the extremists and it is where they are expected to fight their last battles. They have lost all other major cities, including the Iraqi cities of Mosul and Tal Afar. U.S.-backed Syrian troops are bearing down on Raqqa, the group's self-proclaimed capital that is northwest of Deir el-Zour.

It could take weeks, if not months, for Assad's forces to retake Deir el-Zour from the militant group, which controls about 60 percent of its neighborhoods.

Government troops have been advancing on the Euphrates River Valley city for weeks, carrying out a multipronged offensive from the northwest, west and southwest. They took control of a strategic mountain to the northwest of the city last week, giving them superior firepower into the area.

This enabled Tuesday's advance, when pro-government forces reached a military base of the 137th Brigade on the outskirts that has been surrounded for months.

Rami Abdurrahman, the head of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, said about two dozen soldiers first advanced toward the base to open and secure the road filled with land mines. They were followed by two dozen others who were able to link up with soldiers inside the base.

Salloum, who operates the activist-run Hammurabi Justice News network, said government and allied troops remain engaged with IS militants on the southern flank, where the militants have carried a counteroffensive near the town of al-Shola.

The Russian Defense Ministry said one of its frigates in the Mediterranean unleashed cruise missiles early Tuesday toward IS targets near the city. They fired at a fortified area around al-Shola, where most of the militants are believed to be from Russia and former Soviet republics.

The Defense Ministry said drone footage showed that the missiles destroyed a communications center, command centers, ammunition depots and a repair shop for armored vehicles, as well as killing an unspecified number of fighters. But the militants still control al-Shola, Abdurrahman said.

The Syrian army command said reaching Deir el-Zour marks "a strategic turn in the war against terrorism," and that the city will be used "to expand military operations in the region."

The militants "did not give up easily and used lots of suicide car bombs yesterday, but could not resist much," said opposition activist Omar Abu Laila, who lives in Europe but is from Deir el-Zour and is in contact with people there.

A former opposition fighter who used to live in the city welcomed the lifting of the siege but expressed concern over the fate of civilians in IS-controlled areas. He spoke on condition of anonymity because of fears for the safety of his family, which still lives in the IS-controlled neighborhoods.

The offensive was led by Gen. Suheil al-Hassan, who is known as "the Tiger." He has been behind other recent victories, including the capture of eastern parts of the northern city of Aleppo in December, the government's biggest victory since the Syrian conflict began in 2011.

Associated Press writers Bassem Mroue in Beirut, Nataliya Vasilyeva in Moscow and Albert Aji in Damascus, Syria, contributed.

Drivers whose cars were flooded by Harvey can't find rentals

By JAY REEVES, Associated Press

BEAUMONT, Texas (AP) — His three vehicles flooded by Hurricane Harvey, Jason Bell checked at one car-rental office only to find about 2,500 people ahead of him on the waiting list. When he tried a more out-of-the-way location, the reservations still numbered about 300.

Many other storm victims have the same problem. Tens of thousands of personal vehicles were inundated by floodwaters or smashed by wind-tossed objects, creating a huge demand for rentals that has put the cars in painfully short supply in the Houston area and across eastern Texas.

Rental companies say they are bringing in more vehicles from areas including the Southeast, but the logistics problems left by Harvey could get worse as Hurricane Irma threatens Florida.

Cesar Garcia of Port Arthur, Texas, doesn't know when he will be driving again.

"I tried renting a car and none of those places said there was availability from here to Houston," Garcia, 28, said Monday. "I was told 'good luck.' Nothing."

Auto industry experts estimate as many as 1 million vehicles were damaged by Harvey, with most being total losses. State Farm, one of the largest U.S. auto insurers, said it has already received nearly 20,000

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claims from the Houston area alone.

The scope of the problem is evident in a field that has become a massive parking lot for storm-damaged vehicles at Royal Purple Raceway, a dragstrip located on 500 acres in Baytown, about 35 miles east of Houston.

Tow trucks pulling or carrying flooded cars enter the parking area every few minutes, dropping them off so insurance adjusters can assess the damage. Water lines are evident on many of the vehicles, which workers say are mostly from the area east of Houston.

Dealership advertisements are visible on some of the cars, but many appear to be private vehicles. The owners may now be among those in lines at car rental counters.

Enterprise Holdings — which includes the Enterprise, National and Alamo car rental brands — said it has already moved more than 4,000 vehicles to southeast Texas and plans to bring in at least 17,000 more in coming weeks.

The Avis Budget Group, which operates Avis and Budget car rentals plus Budget Truck, said it also was moving additional vehicles into the affected areas and was waiving late fees, one-way rental fees and rental extension fees in the Houston area.

The car rental crunch extends outside the hurricane zone. Company websites show it can be hard to make reservations in cities that were not directly affected by Harvey, including Dallas, where many people headed to the Houston area landed before Houston airports reopened.

Until he can get a car, Bell is hitching rides from son Jason Bell Jr., who drove him to an Enterprise office in Beaumont.

The elder Bell said he lives on a high spot in his neighborhood, so friends left their cars on his property as a safeguard against rising waters. Then the entire area flooded for the first time, he said, and now his own house looks like a resting place for wet Fords, Chevys and other vehicles.

"There are probably 15 flooded cars in my yard right now," he said.

Associated Press Writer John Mone in Port Arthur contributed to this report.

Lego looks wobbly after building itself high

By JAN M. OLSEN, Associated Press

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP) — For Lego, it's time to break down the blocks and start again.

After building up sales aggressively since a near bankruptcy in 2004 through new ventures like films and new toy lines, the company seems to have hit a peak. Its sales are now falling for the first time in 13 years and it says it needs to simplify its operations.

That means cutting 1,400 jobs, or eight percent of its global workforce.

The privately held Danish firm said Tuesday that it "now prepares to reset the company," with a new CEO due to take over in October.

"We will build a smaller and less complex organization than we have today, which will simplify our business model in order to reach more children," said Chairman Joergen Vig Knudstorp.

Revenue dropped 5 percent in the first six months of the year, to 14.9 billion kroner (\$2.4 billion), mainly as a result of weaker demand in key markets like the U.S. and Europe, where sales had risen strongly for years. Profits slipped 3 percent to 3.4 billion kroner (\$544 million).

Classic toy lines, such as "Lego City," did well, as did products associated with "The Lego Batman Movie."

But revenue in other lines did not do as well, with investments in some new products not yielding the desired benefits.

Analysts said that while the revenue drop was disappointing, it had to come at some point after years of growth.

"You hit a peak," said Jim Silver, the CEO and editor in chief of toy review site TTPM. "Nothing keeps going up like that."

Silver said the company grew rapidly as it launched new products, such as its Lego Friends line aimed

at girls. "The Lego Movie," which was released three years ago, helped, too.

Looking ahead, Silver said Lego has some bright spots: Its "Star Wars" sets are selling well. And a September movie based on its "Ninjago" line could have kids asking for Legos.

But the traditional toy industry is as a whole coming off a strong few years driven by innovation and a boom in interest in collectibles.

Vig Knudstorp said the long-term aim is to get sales growing again in Europe and the United States and noted opportunities "in growing markets such as China," where sales were up by double digits so far this year.

The company, he said, needs to simplify its business model to reduce costs. Especially since 2012, the group has been adding new businesses as it embarked on ventures like films.

"We have added complexity into the organization which now in turn makes it harder for us to grow further," Vig Knudstorp said.

He said that while Lego will try to engage kids and parents through online products, such as digital social platforms and coding sets, the physical plastic toy blocks remain the focus.

"The brick is the heart of our business," Vig Knudstorp said.

He told Denmark's TV2 station that staff cuts would mainly affect administration and sales, not production. Last month, the maker of the famous colored building blocks appointed Niels B. Christiansen, who headed thermostat-maker Danfoss for nine years, as its chief executive to replace interim CEO Bali Padda. Christiansen will start Oct. 1.

Lego, which currently has 18,200 employees, does not release quarterly figures.

Joe Pisani in New York contributed to this report.

UNHCR: 123,000 Rohingya refugees have fled Myanmar

By MUNEZA NAQVI, Associated Press

KUTUPALONG, Bangladesh (AP) — A massive influx of Rohingya refugees fleeing recent violence in Myanmar has pushed aid services in Bangladesh to the brink, with established camps already beyond capacity, aid workers said Tuesday.

The U.N. refugee agency said a total of 123,000 refugees have fled western Myanmar since Aug. 25.

"The numbers are very worrying. They are going up very quickly," said UNHCR spokeswoman Vivian Tan.

The agency was pleading for assistance, saying it needed more land so it could set up new camps to accommodate refugees who were arriving hungry, traumatized and in need of medical assistance.

"Most have walked for days from their villages — hiding in jungles, crossing mountains and rivers with what they could salvage from their homes," the agency said in a statement.

"An unknown number could still be stranded at the border," it said.

Indeed, a Rohingya Muslim whom The Associated Press reached by phone said she and thousands of fellow villagers driven from their homes by the violence in Myanmar are now stuck along the coast, hoping to flee to nearby Bangladesh by boat.

The 18-year-old provided AP with cellphone photographs she took Tuesday along the beach in southern Maungdaw township in Rakhine state. Several of the photos show hundreds of people sitting on the ground, with small sacks or plastic bags holding their meager belongings. Only some had tarps or umbrellas to protect themselves from the sun.

The teenager, who spoke on condition of anonymity out of concern for her safety, said her family's house was burned Aug. 25, right after Rohingya insurgents attacked Myanmar border guard police outposts.

The military has said nearly 400 people, most of them insurgents, have died in clashes. Security forces responded to the attacks with days of "clearance operations" the government says were aimed at rooting out insurgents it accuses of setting fire to Rohingya villages.

Many displaced Rohingya, however, said it was Myanmar soldiers who set their homes aflame and fired indiscriminately around their villages in Rakhine state. Rohingya Muslims have long faced discrimination

in the majority-Buddhist Southeast Asian country.

The teenager said that since the attacks, Rohingya from Myin Hlut and surrounding villages fled as the army burned houses. Initially they fled into nearby forests, she said, but they moved to the beach in hopes of making it clear to the army that they are not insurgents.

She said she and other villagers reached the beach four days ago and lack adequate food and drinking water. She said villagers have been drinking salty water from the Bay of Bengal.

She said Myanmar soldiers come to the beach two or three times a day to check on the displaced villagers. The Rohingya are barred from returning to their villages, she said.

In Bangladesh, aid agencies said there was an urgent need for emergency shelters and medical aid as more refugees arrive.

The UNHCR's new refugee estimate of 123,000 Tuesday was the result of aid workers conducting new, more accurate counts that revised Monday's estimate up from 87,000, Tan said.

Roughly 1 million Rohingya were believed to have been in Myanmar previously, though estimates vary. Tens of thousands of new refugees have been taken in at established camps that have been housing Rohingya since the 1990s, but those camps have reached "breaking point," the U.N. refugee agency said. Thousands of others were now sheltering under emergency tents, in makeshift camps or out in the open wherever they found space.

In Myanmar, the stranded villager and her father told the AP that boats from Bangladesh have come near the shore every day to take villagers north to Bangladesh, and that the price is 150,000 kyats (\$110) per person.

The villager said she didn't know where the boats end up, but that she and her family will try to get onto one if there is a chance for them to flee.

One of the photos she took shows about a dozen small wooden boats in the background. Many boats along the shore are owned by Rohingya fishermen, but the government has banned them from using them for many months.

Follow Muneeza Naqvi on Twitter at twitter.com/mnaqvi10

Putin says Trump 'not my bride, and I'm not his groom'

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian President Vladimir Putin refrained from criticizing U.S. President Donald Trump at a news conference in China on Tuesday, but said a decision to shutter Russian diplomatic outposts in the U.S. was poorly handled.

Speaking at a news conference during a summit in China on Tuesday, Putin dismissed as "naive" a question about whether he was disappointed in Trump.

In comments carried by Russian news agencies, Putin said Trump is "not my bride, and I'm not his groom."

Asked how Russia would feel if Trump were impeached, Putin said it would be "absolutely wrong" for Russia to discuss domestic U.S. politics.

Russian officials cheered Trump when he was elected last year, and Putin praised him as someone who wanted to improve ties with Russia. However, further U.S. sanctions on Russia and the U.S. decision to close Russian diplomatic outposts have raised concerns that the two countries remain far apart.

The Trump administration last week ordered the closure of three Russian facilities in the U.S.: The San Francisco consulate and trade missions in New York and Washington. It was the latest in a series of escalating retaliatory measures between the former Cold War foes.

Putin said the U.S. had a right to close consulates but "it was done in such a rude way."

"It is hard to hold a dialogue with people who mix Austria with Australia," he continued, an apparent reference to a decade-old gaffe by George W. Bush, who during a 2007 visit to Sydney referred to Austrian troops when he meant Australian troops.

"The American nation, America is truly a great country and a great people if they can tolerate such a big number of people with such a low level of political culture," Putin said.

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Caution rules in markets amid Korea, hurricane worries

By The Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Global stock markets drifted lower Wednesday amid rising risk aversion linked to the ongoing tensions on the Korean Peninsula, while oil prices pushed ahead as Hurricane Irma hit the Caribbean.

KEEPING SCORE: In Europe, the FTSE 100 index of leading British shares was down 0.7 percent at 7,324, while France's CAC 40 fell 0.2 percent to 5,076. Germany's DAX was steady at 12,121. U.S. shares were poised for a flat opening, with Dow futures and the broader S&P 500 futures unchanged.

NORTH KOREA: Investors are yet to see signs that the geopolitical tensions between the United States and North Korea, which surged after the North's sixth nuclear test on Sunday, would ease any time soon. On Tuesday, President Donald Trump said in a tweet that he has given the go-ahead for Japan and South Korea to buy a "substantially increased amount" of sophisticated military equipment from the United States. South Korea is seeking more military might and considering bringing back the U.S. nuclear weapons.

ANALYST TAKE: "Global stock markets appear to be in a period of nervous uncertainty, as the threat of another North Korean test looms large over any investors wishing to invest in risky assets," said Joshua Mahony, market analyst at IG.

ASIA'S DAY: Earlier in Asia, most stock markets stuttered with Japan's Nikkei 225 down 0.1 percent at 19,357.97 and South Korea's Kospi 0.3 percent lower at 2,319.82. Hong Kong's Hang Seng index fell 0.5 percent to 27,613.76 and Shanghai Composite Index was flat at 3,385.39. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 fell 0.3 percent to 5,689.70.

HURRICANE: As well as developments surrounding North Korea, investors, particularly in the energy markets, are monitoring the most powerful Atlantic Ocean hurricane in recorded history. Irma made its first landfall in the islands of the northeast Caribbean early Wednesday, roaring along a path pointing to Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Cuba before possibly heading for Florida over the weekend.

OIL: Benchmark U.S. crude was up 25 cents, or 0.5 percent, at \$48.91 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange, while Brent crude, used to price international oils, gained 69 cents to \$54.07 per barrel in London.

CURRENCIES: The euro was up 0.1 percent at \$1.1925 while the dollar rose 0.1 percent to 108.87 yen.

Today in History

By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Sept. 6, the 249th day of 2017. There are 116 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On September 6, 1901, President William McKinley was shot and mortally wounded by anarchist Leon Czolgosz (CHAWL'-gawsh) at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, New York. (McKinley died eight days later; Czolgosz was executed on October 29.)

On this date:

In 1861, Union forces led by Gen. Ulysses S. Grant occupied Paducah, Kentucky, during the Civil War.

In 1916, the first self-serve grocery store, Piggly Wiggly, was opened in Memphis, Tennessee, by Clarence Saunders.

In 1925, the silent film horror classic "The Phantom of the Opera," starring Lon Chaney, had its world premiere at the Astor Theater in New York.

In 1939, the Union of South Africa declared war on Germany.

In 1943, 79 people were killed when a New York-bound Pennsylvania Railroad train derailed and crashed in Philadelphia.

In 1954, groundbreaking took place for the Shippingport Atomic Power Station in western Pennsylvania.

In 1966, birth control advocate Margaret Sanger died in Tucson, Arizona, at age 86, eight days before

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her birthday. South African Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd (fehr-FOORT') was stabbed to death by an apparently deranged page during a parliamentary session in Cape Town.

In 1970, Palestinian guerrillas seized control of three U.S.-bound jetliners. (Two were later blown up on the ground in Jordan, along with a London-bound plane hijacked on Sept. 9; the fourth plane was destroyed on the ground in Egypt. No hostages were harmed.)

In 1975, 18-year-old tennis star Martina Navratilova of Czechoslovakia, in New York for the U.S. Open, requested political asylum in the United States.

In 1985, all 31 people aboard a Midwest Express Airlines DC-9 were killed when the Atlanta-bound jetliner crashed just after takeoff from Milwaukee's Mitchell Field.

In 1997, a public funeral was held for Princess Diana at Westminster Abbey in London, six days after her death in a car crash in Paris.

In 2002, meeting outside Washington, D.C. for only the second time since 1800, Congress convened in New York to pay homage to the victims and heroes of September 11.

Ten years ago: President George W. Bush and Chinese President Hu Jintao (hoo jin-tow), in Sydney, Australia, for an Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit, called for greater international cooperation in tackling climate change without stifling economic growth. Death claimed opera superstar Luciano Pavarotti in Modena, Italy, at age 71 and author Madeleine L'Engle ("A Wrinkle in Time") in Litchfield, Connecticut, at age 88.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama conceded only halting progress toward solving the nation's economic woes, but vowed in a Democratic National Convention finale, "Our problems can be solved, our challenges can be met." Drew Peterson, the former Illinois police officer who gained notoriety after his much-younger wife, Stacy, vanished in 2007, was convicted of murdering a previous wife, Kathleen Savio. (Peterson was later sentenced to 38 years in prison.) Rihanna won video of the year at the MTV Awards for "We Found Love." One Direction won best pop video, best new artist and most share-worthy video for "What Makes You Beautiful."

One year ago: On the campaign trail, Democrat Hillary Clinton accused Republican Donald Trump of insulting America's veterans and pressing dangerous military plans, while Trump declared "our country is going to hell" because of policies he said Clinton would make even worse. Hospital officials in northern France announced the death the previous April of Isabelle Dinoire, a Frenchwoman who received the world's first partial face transplant; she was 49.

Today's Birthdays: Comedian JoAnne Worley is 82. Country singer David Allan Coe is 78. Rock singer-musician Roger Waters (Pink Floyd) is 74. Actress Swoosie Kurtz is 73. Comedian-actress Jane Curtin is 70. Rock musician Mick Mashbir is 69. Country singer-songwriter Buddy Miller is 65. Actor James Martin Kelly is 63. Country musician Joe Smyth (Sawyer Brown) is 60. Actor-comedian Jeff Foxworthy is 59. Actor-comedian Michael Winslow is 59. Rock musician Perry Bamonte is 57. Actor Steven Eckholdt is 56. Rock musician Scott Travis (Judas Priest) is 56. Pop musician Pal Waaktaar (a-ha) is 56. New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie is 55. Rock musician Kevin Miller is 55. ABC News correspondent Elizabeth Vargas is 55. Country singer Mark Chesnutt is 54. Actress Betsy Russell is 54. Actress Rosie Perez is 53. Rhythm and blues singer Macy Gray is 50. Singer CeCe Peniston is 48. Rhythm-and-blues singer Darryl Anthony (Az Yet) is 48. Actress Daniele Gaither is 47. Rock singer Dolores O'Riordan (The Cranberries) is 46. Actor Dylan Bruno is 45. Actor Idris Elba is 45. Actress Justina Machado is 45. Actress Anika Noni (ah-NEE'-kuh NOH'-nee) Rose is 45. Rock singer Nina Persson (The Cardigans) is 43. Actor Justin Whalin is 43. Actress Naomi Harris is 41. Rapper Noreaga is 40. Actress Natalia Cigliuti is 39. Rapper Foxy Brown is 39. Actor Howard Charles is 34. Actress Lauren Lapkus is 32. Rock singer Max George (The Wanted) is 29.

Thought for Today: "We live in a fantasy world, a world of illusion. The great task in life is to find reality." — Iris Murdoch, Anglo-Irish author and philosopher (1919-1999).