

Groton Daily Independent

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Official Notices

Brown County (updated 8-31)
Frederick Area School (updated 8-29)
Groton City (updated 8-29)
Groton Area School (updated 8-29)
Westport Town (updated 8-21-17)
Other Notices (updated 8-21)
Frederick Town (Updated 8-15)
Groton Area School (updated 8-7)
Claremont Town Official Notices Book

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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Homecoming Week

Elementary School Dress-up Day: Wild, wacky hair day

MS/HS Dress-up Day: "Hawaiian/Tacky Tourist Day"

Senior Menu: Ham and raisin sauce, sweet potatoes, California blend vegetables, crazy cake, dinner roll.

School Breakfast: Cinnamon roll, fruit, yogurt, milk and juice.

School Lunch: Pizza crunchers, corn, broccoli and dip, fruit.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 7 p.m.

Pre-School Screening: GHS Gym.

United Methodist: Coffee fellowship, 9 a.m.; Conde UMW, 10 a.m.; Ad Council, 7:15 p.m.

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

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

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Elementary Dress-Up Day:: Class Color day (K-Black; 1st- Orange; 2nd- Yellow; 3rd- Red; 4th-Blue; 5th Pink; Staff- Brown)

MS/HS Dress-up Day: Color Day (Seniors- Black, Juniors- White, Sophomores- Red, Freshman- Blue, 8th- Purple, 7th- Grey, 6th- Gold/Yellow)

Senior Menu: Philly steak sandwich, hot potato salad, lettuce salad, blushing pears.

School Breakfast: Cheese omelette, fruit, milk and juice.

School Lunch: Beef sticks, smiley potatoes, cauliflower with dip, fruit.

Pre-School Screening: GHS Gym.

Boys Golf: at Sisseton, 10 a.m.



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Chicken Soup
for the Soul

"It is better
to fail in
originality

than to
succeed
in

imitation."

-Herman Melville

Eggs, Sausage, and Running with a Friend

The other day, I was on a run with a scientist friend who recently had suffered a small heart attack. During our run, we talked about cardiac rehabilitation and safe running practices that could help his recovery. He was happy to be back running, and as I was recovering from cancer surgery, I was also happy to be back running. If not over-done, we know that those with or without heart disease benefit from regular exercise. I could feel the run was rebuilding my strength and savored the social time with my friend. When we finished, energized and happy, a short cool-down walk brought us to his home.



By Richard P. Holm M.D.



There, his wife prepared a light morning breakfast of two eggs, nicely spiced with salt and pepper, a small patty of pork sausage, sliced fried bell-peppers, pieces of fresh melon on the side, and coffee. It was delicious and just the right amount. Twenty years ago, having eggs and sausage for breakfast was thought to be a big no-no. Now, new science has discovered it is NOT the fat and protein in a diet that causes atherosclerosis, but rather the excessive calories. What is more treacherous than the type of food is actually the quantity. If this doesn't shake your world enough, we have also learned that processed carbohydrates are bad,

while a balanced diet of proteins, fats, and small amounts of non-processed carbohydrates are good. For example, large helpings of carbohydrates like potatoes, pasta, pancakes, bread, or donuts can be harmful. Smaller amounts of foods like eggs and sausage are safe. That morning, the calorie count for each of us was about 300 and we both felt great.

Every day there seems to be another study that advises the opposite of what we used to think: eat less salt, now salt to taste unless the heart is weak; don't eat butter, now butter is caloric but safe; don't exercise too much, now do it every day; don't drink alcohol, now a

daily glass of wine is good; don't eat fatty meals, now eat fewer calories and avoid processed carbohydrates. That being said, we have always known about the health benefits of friendship, and no one has refuted that.

In summary, researchers have made headway in understanding what is good for us. May we embrace the science that supports eating fewer calories, less processed carbohydrates, and more fruits and vegetables. If we can also find time for 30 minutes of daily exercise and some quality time with friends, then we have the perfect formula for good health.

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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")**



**Only two stu-
dents dressed up
for Toga Day at the
middle/high school
on Tuesday. So
the seventh grade
winner was Chase
Gackle. Not pic-
tured is the sixth
grade winner, Anna
Bisbee.** (Photo by Tina
Kosel)

Help Wanted

We are Hiring Nurses – RN or LPN,
Full or Part Time.

NEW WAGE PACKAGE!!!

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

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



GROTON
CARE & REHABILITATION CENTER

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

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Groton Coffee Cup League

Sept. 18 Team Standings: Kens 6 1/2, James Valley 4 1/2, Jungle Lanes 3, Ten Pins 2

High Games: Mary Jane Jark 180, Vickie Kramp 154, Arlowyn Spencer 150

High Series: Mary Jane Jark 419, Vicki Walter 416, Joyce Walter 400

Conde National League

Sept. 18 Team Standings: Mets 6, Cubs 5 1/2, Giants 5, Colts 4, Braves 2, Pirates 1 1/2

Men's High Games: Butch Farmen 234; Lance Frohling 203, 192; Ryan Bethke 180

Men's High Series: Butch Farmen 574, Lance Frohling 525, Ryan Bethke 502

Women's High Games: Joyce Walter 160, Mary Larson 159, Nancy Radke 149

Women's High Series: Joyce Walter 439, Mary Larson 428, Nancy Radke 408



Two queens chosen by Groton Senior Citizens. They are DeLoris Knoll and Elda Stange. (Photo by Tina Kosel)



Volunteers recognized
Tony Goldade, 10 years; DeLoris Knoll, 15 years and received a pin; and Don Fauwe, 5 years, were recognized by the RSVP of Aberdeen for their years of volunteering. (Photo by Tina Kosel)

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SOUTH DAKOTA REMAINS THE PHEASANT CAPITAL OF THE WORLD Department of Tourism reminds hunters of the positives

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Department of Tourism is reminding both resident and non-resident hunters that despite decreased brood counts in 2017, South Dakota is still home to some of the best pheasant hunting opportunities in the world.

“Harsh weather conditions over the past year have certainly taken their toll on this year’s pheasant crop,” said Jim Hagen, Secretary of the Department of Tourism. “However, let’s not forget that the average pheasant population in South Dakota for the past 20 years has been 7.4 million birds annually, despite varying brood counts. That population is significantly higher than any other state in the union, and has allowed hunters to harvest more than 1 million birds in each of the last three years, or 9.5 birds per hunter, per year.”

In 2016, South Dakota’s pheasant season attracted 142,887 hunters, of which 81,141 were non-resident.*

“Not only is pheasant hunting a tradition in this state, it’s an economic driver that provides jobs and income for many South Dakotans,” continued Hagen.

Data from the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish & Parks shows that pheasant hunting in South Dakota brought in \$287 million in direct visitor spending and generated nearly \$20 million in state tax revenue in 2016.**

The South Dakota Department of Tourism is comprised of Tourism and the South Dakota Arts Council. The Department is led by Secretary James D. Hagen.

2017 Groton Area Elementary

Preschool Developmental Screening for 3 year olds

September 20 and 21

Parents of children age 3 in the Groton Area School District are asked to contact Heidi Krueger at the Groton Area Elementary School during school hours at 397-2317 to either confirm their screening time or set up a time. Letters will be send out the week of September 10. If your child is already receiving services or enrolled at Groton Elementary School they will not need to be screened. If your child has already been screened but you have concerns please contact the elementary school. If you are new to the district and have a child under the age of 5, we also ask you to contact the elementary school.

The Developmental Screening will take place at the Groton Area High School Arena. Please park and use the east entrance to the arena.



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Granary Rural Cultural Center - Groton, S.D.

LIVING HISTORY FALL FESTIVAL



See The Past Come Alive!



Saturday, September 23, 2017

11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

FREE ADMISSION

COME DRESSED IN FRONTIER COSTUME—GET A PRIZE!

*Fun for All Ages! Reenactment, Demonstrations,
Hands On Activities, Spelling Bee at 2:30 p.m.,
Square Dance Lessons with Art Marmorstein
Pie Social from 1-4 p.m., Music & More!*



... As if you were there!

**PRESIDENT TEDDY
ROOSEVELT**

Played by Arch Ellwein of Flyin' Lion Productions



PERFORMANCES at 1 & 3 p.m.

Program made possible by: South Dakota Humanities Council
(An affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities)



Stop by for Lunch! Concessions by: **THE BRASS KETTLE**



THE GRANARY - Physical Address: 40161 128th St., Rural Groton
The Arts & Culture Campus of Dacotah Prairie Museum
Museum Website: www.dacotahpraiemuseum.com • Granary Website: granaryfinearts.org



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Today in Weather History

September 20, 1970: During the late afternoon, golfball hail fell in and around Redfield with a tornado reported just north of Doland. No damage was reported with the hail or the tornado.

September 20, 1972: About 430 pm, in southeast South Dakota, a tornado caused an estimated \$95,000 damage to property and 50,000 damage to crops in Utica and nearby rural areas. Buildings were damaged; trees and power lines were downed.

1845 - A tornado traveled 275 miles across Lake Ontario, New York and Lake Champlain. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1909: A large and deadly Category 3 hurricane made landfall near Grand Isle, Louisiana during the late evening hours. The states of Louisiana and Mississippi showed catastrophic damage resulting in 371 deaths and \$265 million in damage (2010 USD).

1926 - A hurricane which hit Miami, FL, on the 18th, pounded Pensacola with wind gusts to 152 mph. Winds raged in excess of 100 mph for four hours, and above 75 mph for 20 hours. (The Weather Channel)

1961: On September 10th, the Television Infrared Observation Satellite observed an area of thunderstorms west-southwest of the Cape Verde Islands, suggesting a possible tropical cyclone. This storm is the first large tropical cyclone to be discovered on satellite imagery and would eventually become Hurricane Esther. On September 20th, Hurricane Esther, a Category 4 storm off of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina began to slow down as it moved north-northeast well off the Jersey shore. The storm continued to weaken as it made a five-day loop south of Cape Cod, Massachusetts, then moved to Cape Cod and into Maine on the 26th.

1967 - Hurricane Beulah moved into South Texas, and torrential rains from the hurricane turned the rich agricultural areas of South Texas into a large lake. Hurricane Beulah also spawned a record 115 tornadoes. (David Ludlum)

1983 - The temperature at West Yellowstone MT plunged to six degrees below zero, while the temperature at San Francisco CA soared to 94 degrees. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Afternoon and evening thunderstorms produced severe weather in Oklahoma and west Texas. In Oklahoma, a thunderstorm at Seiling produced three inches of rain in one hour, golf ball size hail, and wind gusts to 60 mph which collapsed a tent at the state fair injuring nine persons. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Showers and thunderstorms produced locally heavy rains in central Wyoming, and snow in some of the higher elevations. Casper WY reported 1.75 inches of rain in 24 hours, and a thunderstorm north of the Wild Horse Reservoir produced 1.90 inches of rain in just forty minutes.








1989 - Hugo jilted Iris. Hurricane Hugo churned toward the South Atlantic Coast, gradually regaining strength along the way. Tropical Storm Iris got too close to Hugo, and began to weaken. A cold front brought strong and gusty winds to the Great Basin and the Southern Plateau Region, with wind gusts to 44 mph reported at Kingman AZ. (The National Weather Summary)

2002: A glacial avalanche buries the village of Karmadon in Russia, killing more than 100 people.




2005 - Hurricane Rita tracked through the Florida Straits and just south of the Florida Keys. Winds were sustained at tropical storm force at Key West, where peak winds gusted to 76 mph.

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Today	Tonight	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday
						
Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	60% Showers Likely	40% Chance Showers
High: 72 °F	Low: 51 °F	High: 82 °F	Low: 59 °F	High: 77 °F	Low: 50 °F	High: 61 °F

Drier Weather Returns

	Today 70s
	Thursday 80s
	Friday 65 to 85° warmest over E SD/ W MN



National Weather Service - Aberdeen, SD

Updated: 9/19/2017 11:57 PM Central



Published on: 09/20/2017 at 12:01AM

Storms continue to exit into Minnesota early this morning, with drier but cooler air working in from the west. Expect a mostly sunny day today, with highs in the 70s. Look for a warm up Thursday, with highs in the 80s.

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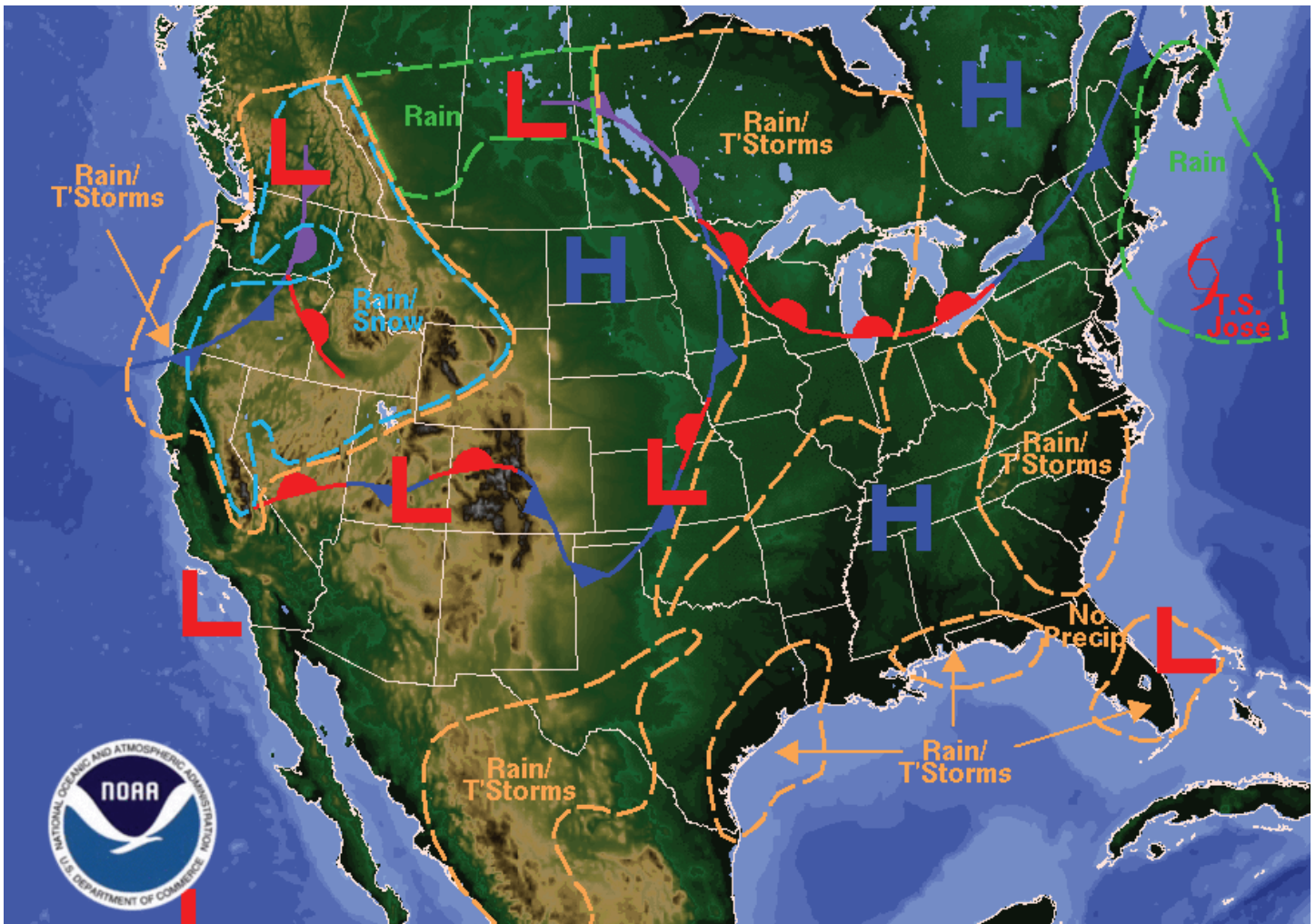
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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 80.7 at 6:12 PM
Low Outside Temp: 61.4 at 12:54 AM
High Gust: 35 at 7:57 PM
Precip: 0.60

Today's Info

Record High: 94° in 1937
Record Low: 20° in 1901
Average High: 70°F
Average Low: 44°F
Average Precip in Sept: 1.48
Precip to date in Sept: 0.84
Average Precip to date: 17.77
Precip Year to Date: 10.36
Sunset Tonight: 7:34 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:19 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Wed, Sep 20, 2017, issued 4:43 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)



CONFIDENCE THROUGH QUIETNESS

Noise is a major distraction. It interrupts our thoughts, disrupts our concentration and interferes with conversations. It prevents us from going to sleep and even awakens us when we do not want to be disturbed. It is often used in athletic contests and sporting events to destroy the focus of team members at critical times.

Wisely the Psalmist advises us to "Be still, and know that I am God." Another translation presents it differently and with more clarity: "I will be still in Your presence, O God, so I can learn to know You more intimately." For us to grow into the likeness of Christ we must become still in the presence of God.

The word still implies the need for the Christian to see, stop, think, relax, and learn the meaning of the great events that God is performing in our lives and in the lives of those around us. Our minds are usually occupied with the ordinary, day-to-day things of life that demand our constant attention. Then suddenly and with no warning we are overwhelmed with an event that consumes us and requires our complete attention – night and day until the threat passes. It is indeed difficult to be still in the midst of life's challenges. Life's noises bring deafness to God's voice.

However, when we do become still in His presence, He will bring calmness to our hearts and peace to our minds. And if we truly want to know Him, as He wants us to know Him, we will take time each day to do only one thing – experience Him as we experience any other person. We will come to know others if we spend time in their presence, believe that they care for us, open our hearts to them in trust, share with them our deepest concerns and know that they do us no harm. Be still to know.

What a Friend we can have in Jesus if we take the time!

Prayer: Help us, Father, to quiet our minds before You, open our hearts to You and share our lives with You as a dear Friend. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 46:10a He says, "Be still, and know that I am God."

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News from the Associated Press

Tuesday's Scores By The Associated Press

Volleyball

Aberdeen Central def. Brookings, 25-20, 25-12, 25-20
Aberdeen Roncalli def. Tiospa Zina Tribal, 25-9, 25-9, 25-12
Andes Central/Dakota Christian def. Tripp-Delmont/Armour, 25-8, 25-16, 25-16
Avon def. Colome, 25-18, 25-9, 25-17
Burke/South Central def. Platte-Geddes, 25-14, 25-17, 23-25, 25-11
Canistota def. Colman-Egan, 25-23, 25-17, 25-20
Clark/Willow Lake def. Castlewood, 25-16, 25-22, 25-21
Crow Creek def. Cheyenne-Eagle Butte, 28-26, 25-21, 19-25, 22-25, 15-12
Dakota Valley def. West Central, 25-16, 25-19, 25-20
Dell Rapids def. Garretson, 25-10, 25-14, 25-14
Deubrook def. Deuel, 25-10, 25-8, 25-5
Elk Point-Jefferson def. Beresford, 25-22, 25-18, 25-18
Elkton-Lake Benton def. Flandreau Indian, 25-5, 25-7, 25-12
Faulkton def. Highmore-Harrold, 25-21, 25-18, 25-15
Great Plains Lutheran def. Sisseton, 25-16, 25-17, 25-11
Gregory def. Todd County, 25-16, 25-20, 26-24
Hanson def. Bridgewater-Emery, 25-20, 25-12, 25-20
Harrisburg def. Mitchell, 20-25, 25-18, 23-25, 25-12, 15-11
Heart River, N.D. def. Harding County, 25-15, 25-19, 23-25, 22-25, 16-14
Hendricks, Minn. def. Lake Preston, 25-21, 19-25, 25-17, 25-20
Herreid/Selby Area def. McIntosh, 25-10, 25-15, 25-18
Hettinger/Scranton, N.D. def. Bison, 25-17, 25-8, 25-21
Hill City def. Douglas, 25-23, 25-22, 16-25, 25-16
Hitchcock-Tulare def. Iroquois, 25-11, 25-12, 25-6
Ipswich def. Potter County, 17-25, 25-23, 25-21, 25-21
Kimball/White Lake def. Corsica/Stickney, 20-25, 25-8, 22-25, 25-15, 15-7
Lennox def. Irene-Wakonda, 25-12, 25-14, 25-22
Madison def. Chamberlain, 25-15, 25-13, 25-16
McCook Central/Montrose def. Flandreau, 25-16, 25-15, 25-10
Menno def. Viborg-Hurley, 25-13, 25-19, 25-17
Miller def. Redfield/Doland, 25-10, 25-17, 25-19
Northwestern def. Leola/Frederick, 25-19, 25-11, 25-8
Parker def. Chester, 25-16, 25-14, 25-15
Rapid City Christian def. Jones County, 25-10, 25-18, 25-18
Rapid City Stevens def. Spearfish, 25-17, 25-12, 25-19
Sanborn Central/Woonsocket def. Wolsey-Wessington, 22-25, 25-21, 25-16, 22-25, 19-17
Sioux Falls Lincoln def. Watertown, 12-25, 26-24, 18-25, 25-17, 15-11
Sioux Falls O'Gorman def. Sioux Falls Washington, 25-17, 22-25, 25-22, 25-16
Sioux Valley def. Milbank, 25-15, 25-20, 25-18
St. Thomas More def. Red Cloud, 22-25, 30-28, 25-19, 25-16
Sully Buttes def. North Border, 25-21, 25-17, 25-19
Tea Area def. Vermillion, 25-22, 25-21, 26-24
Timber Lake def. McLaughlin, 25-11, 25-8, 25-19

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Tri-Valley def. Canton, 25-20, 25-15, 24-26, 25-18
Wagner def. Bon Homme, 25-11, 25-10, 25-18
Warner def. Groton Area, 25-14, 25-17, 25-11
Yankton def. Huron, 25-19, 19-25, 25-15, 27-25

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Mega Millions

09-28-31-50-61, Mega Ball: 10, Megaplier: 2

(nine, twenty-eight, thirty-one, fifty, sixty-one; Mega Ball: ten; Megaplier: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$94 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$40 million

SD lawmaker shares image depicting protesters hit by vehicle

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A Republican South Dakota legislator is under fire for a meme she shared on her Facebook page depicting protesters being hit by a vehicle.

Rep. Lynne DiSanto of Box Elder shared the image Sept. 7 under the caption "All Lives Splatter." The Argus Leader reports the image was posted less than a month after a driver rammed through counter-protesters at a white nationalist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, killing a woman.

DiSanto deleted the post Tuesday. She is the Republican majority whip in the state House. DiSanto did not respond to requests for comment.

South Dakota Forward and Indivisible Rapid City called on DiSanto to apologize. South Dakota Democratic Party Executive Director Sam Parkinson calls the image "offensive."

House Majority Leader Lee Qualm says the move was an error in judgment.

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

Woman accused of firing shot in patrol car pleads not guilty

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A Pine Ridge woman accused of firing a rifle after two federal police officers arrested her for allegedly stealing a vehicle has pleaded not guilty to several charges including intent to commit murder.

Authorities allege 54-year-old Connie Wilson slipped out of handcuffs in the back seat of a patrol car in Pine Ridge on Aug. 29, got ahold of a rifle, loaded it and fired a shot through the floor of the vehicle when officers approached. No one was hurt.

U.S. Attorney Randolph Seiler says Wilson recently pleaded not guilty and had her trial scheduled for Nov. 14. She could face up to life in prison if convicted.

Daugaard to appoint longtime judge to SD Supreme Court

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Gov. Dennis Daugaard announced Tuesday that he will appoint a longtime Elk Point judge as the 50th justice in the history of the South Dakota Supreme Court.

Daugaard picked Steven R. Jensen of Dakota Dunes to succeed Supreme Court Justice Lori Wilbur, who retired in June after six years on the court. Jensen is the Republican governor's third Supreme Court appointee, after Wilbur and Justice Janine M. Kern.

Daugaard called Jensen, who has served 14 years on the bench and has sat several times as a tempo-

rary justice with the Supreme Court, a leader in South Dakota's legal community and said he will be "an excellent justice."

As presiding judge of the southeastern South Dakota circuit covering 14 counties, Jensen has championed new approaches such as drug and DUI courts and sobriety programs for offenders on probation, Daugaard said. Jensen also been called on "many times to contribute on important state issues," such as reforming the juvenile justice system and implementing new technology in the court system, the governor said.

In a statement, Jensen said he was honored by the appointment.

"It is both a tremendous opportunity and responsibility. I look forward to further serving the people of South Dakota in this new role," Jensen said.

Jensen, 54, is a native of Wakonda. He received his law degree from the University of South Dakota in 1988. He and his wife, Sue, have three children.

After law school, Jensen clerked for South Dakota Supreme Court Justice Richard W. Sabers, then had a private practice in Dakota Dunes and Sioux City, Iowa.

Then-Gov. Mike Rounds appointed Jensen as a circuit judge in the 1st Judicial District in 2003. He was re-elected without opposition in 2006 and 2014, and was named the circuit's presiding judge in 2011.

Woman struck by vehicle in Spearfish dies of her injuries

SPEARFISH, S.D. (AP) — A 64-year-old woman who was struck by a vehicle while crossing a Spearfish street has died of her injuries.

The woman was hit by the car about 6:30 a.m. Friday. The Highway Patrol said Tuesday that she had died in a hospital. Her name wasn't immediately released.

No charges are pending against the 22-year-old woman who was driving the car.

Lakota leader, congressman honored in South Dakota

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The first Native American to represent South Dakota in Congress is being honored with a special day.

A proclamation by Gov. Dennis Daugaard has set aside Tuesday as Ben Reifel Day in South Dakota.

Reifel was a member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe who was born on this day in 1906. He served in World War II and worked for the Bureau of Indian Affairs for 20 years. He earned masters and doctorate degrees from Harvard University and served in the U.S. House for 10 years. He was also the first person of Lakota descent to serve in Congress.

Reifel was instrumental in locating the U.S. Geological Survey's Earth Resources Observation and Science Data Center in South Dakota and in generating support to keep Ellsworth Air Force Base.

Wyoming lawmakers consider options on collecting money owed

CASPER, Wyo. (AP) — Wyoming lawmakers are considering options on how to collect the \$70 million to \$84 million owed to the state.

The Casper Star-Tribune reports (<http://bit.ly/2fiJPzv>) that legislators at the Interim Joint Revenue Committee meeting last week discussed the possibility of hiring a private contractor to collect the debt.

The Canada-based CGI Group was considered as an option. The company recently began debt collection for South Dakota, and the company is paid from a percentage of the payments it collects.

The committee agreed to advance a bill that will allow Wyoming agencies to add a 20 percent surcharge to past-due payments that could fund a debt collection program if a private contractor is hired.

Most of the money owed to the state is from a combination of unpaid court fines and taxes.

Retired South Dakota state official pleads guilty in scam

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A retired fraud investigator for the South Dakota Department of Revenue has pleaded guilty to federal bank fraud and money laundering charges.

Steven Knigge, 71, was accused of fraudulently asking banks in several states to wire money to an account in South Dakota belonging to him, while he was working as a state official in the summer of 2015. Banks in Georgia, Arizona, Washington and Texas were targeted, authorities said.

Knigge also was accused of wiring illegally obtained money to an account in Nigeria, and of attempting to delete emails on his state computer after IRS and FBI agents informed him in September 2015 that he was under investigation.

Knigge reached a plea agreement with prosecutors and pleaded guilty Monday, the Rapid City Journal reported. Under the deal, charges of conspiracy, wire fraud, tampering, and additional charges of bank fraud and money laundering were dismissed.

Knigge faces up to 50 years in prison and a possible fine of up to \$1.5 million. He faced up to 90 years in prison before the plea agreement.

Prosecutors also are asking that he pay about \$31,000 in restitution. A sentencing date wasn't immediately scheduled.

Information from: Rapid City Journal, <http://www.rapidcityjournal.com>

Weekend water line break floods Aberdeen shopping center

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — Businesses in an Aberdeen shopping center are cleaning up after a weekend flood.

The American News reports that a water line break late Saturday flooded Super City Plaza. Several businesses have been forced to temporarily close or relocate, along with a child care center.

Management company official George Casanova says repairs could take up to two weeks.

Information from: Aberdeen American News, <http://www.aberdeennews.com>

Authorities search for inmate escaped from Sioux Falls jail

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Authorities are searching for an inmate who escaped from the Minnehaha County jail.

The sheriff's office says 36-year-old Kia Hansen was being held on multiple charges linked to video lottery machine thefts. Authorities didn't release details on how he escaped Friday.

The sheriff's office says Hansen isn't considered a danger to the public.

Nearly one-third of South Dakota winter wheat crop planted

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A week of warm, dry weather in South Dakota has benefited spring wheat planting in the state.

The weekly crop report from the federal Agriculture Department says nearly one-third of the winter wheat crop is now in the ground.

Drought is still impacting soil moisture. The report says nearly half of the topsoil moisture is rated short or very short, and nearly two-thirds of the subsoil moisture is in those categories.

In the ranching community, pasture and range conditions are rated 58 percent poor or very poor. Stock water supplies are 56 percent in those categories.

The latest U.S. Drought Monitor map shows nearly three-fourths of South Dakota in some stage of drought.

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2 teens plead not guilty in fatal Sioux Falls park shooting

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Two teens have pleaded not guilty in the fatal shooting of a teen at a Sioux Falls park.

Eighteen-year-old Dylan Holler is charged with first-degree murder in the Aug. 28 death of Riley Stonehouse. He's also charged with the attempted first-degree murder of Jayden Eastman.

The Argus Leader reports Holler and 16-year-old Jaden Carmel appeared in court Monday where they entered their pleas. Carmel is charged with aiding and abetting first-degree murder.

Police say the fatal shooting of the 17-year-old at Bakker Park followed a dispute over drugs.

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

Hurricane Maria hits Puerto Rico after slamming Dominica

By DANICA COTO, Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — One of the strongest hurricanes to ever hit Puerto Rico pummeled the island Wednesday as officials warned it would decimate the power company's crumbling infrastructure and force the government to rebuild dozens of communities.

Maria made landfall early Wednesday in the southeast coastal town of Yabucoa as a Category 4 storm with winds of 155 mph (250 kph) winds, and it was expected to punish the island with life-threatening winds for 12 to 24 hours, forecasters said.

Maria had previously been a Category 5 storm with 175 mph (281 kph) winds.

"This is going to be an extremely violent phenomenon," Gov. Ricardo Rossello said. "We have not experienced an event of this magnitude in our modern history."

Zinc roofs were already flying and windows were breaking as the storm approached before dawn, with nearly 900,000 people without power and one tree falling on an ambulance. Those who sought shelter at a coliseum in San Juan were moved to the building's second and third floors, reported radio station WKAQ 580 AM. The storm was moving across Puerto Rico on Wednesday morning at 10 mph (17 kph), with a gust of 113 mph (182 kph) reported in the capital of San Juan, according to the U.S. National Hurricane Center in Miami.

Maria ties for the eighth strongest storm in Atlantic history, when measured by wind speed. Coming in second is this year's Irma, which had 185 mph (300 kph) winds and killed 38 people in the Caribbean and another 36 in the U.S. earlier this month.

Puerto Rico had long been spared from a direct hit by hurricanes that tend to veer north or south of the island. The last Category 4 hurricane landfall in Puerto Rico occurred in 1932, and the strongest storm to ever hit the island was San Felipe in 1928 with winds of 160 mph.

As Maria approached, U.S. President Donald Trump offered his support via Twitter: "Puerto Rico being hit hard by new monster Hurricane. Be careful, our hearts are with you- will be there to help!"

More than 4,400 people were in shelters by late Tuesday, along with 105 pets, Rossello said.

The storm's center passed near or over St. Croix overnight Tuesday, prompting U.S. Virgin Islands Gov. Kenneth Mapp to insist that people remain alert. St. Croix was largely spared the widespread damage caused by Hurricane Irma on the chain's St. Thomas and St. John islands just two weeks ago. But this time, the island would experience five hours of hurricane force winds, Mapp said.

"For folks in their homes, I really recommend that you not be in any kind of sleepwear," he said during a brief news conference. "Make sure you have your shoes on. Make sure you have a jacket around. Something for your head in case your roof should breach. ... I don't really recommend you be sleeping from 11 o'clock to 4 (a.m.). ... Be aware of what's going on around you."

Maria killed one person in the French Caribbean island of Guadeloupe when a tree fell on them Tuesday, and two people aboard a boat were reported missing off La Desirade island, just east of Guadeloupe, officials said.

About 40 percent of the island — 80,000 homes — were without power and flooding was reported in

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several communities.

The storm also blew over the tiny eastern Caribbean island of Dominica late Monday, where Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit sent out a series of dramatic posts on his Facebook page, including that his own roof had blown away.

"The winds are merciless! We shall survive by the grace of God," Skerrit wrote before communications went down.

The storm knocked out communications for the entire island, leaving anyone outside Dominica struggling to determine the extent of damage, though it was clearly widespread. "The situation is really grave," Consul General Barbara Dailey said in a telephone interview from New York.

She said she lost contact with the island about 4 a.m. At that point, officials had learned that 70 percent of homes had lost their roofs, including her own.

Flooding was a big concern, given the island's steep mountains, cut through with rivers that rage even after a heavy rain. Dominica was still recovering from Tropical Storm Erika, which killed 30 people and destroyed more than 370 homes in August 2015.

Forecasters said the storm surge from Maria could raise water levels by 6 to 9 feet (1.8 to 2.7 meters) near the storm's center. The storm was predicted to bring 10 to 15 inches (25 to 38 centimeters) of rain across the islands, with more in isolated areas.

To the north, Hurricane Jose weakened to a tropical storm Tuesday night. Forecasters said dangerous surf and rip currents were likely to continue along the U.S. East Coast but said the storm was unlikely to make landfall. Big waves caused by Jose swept five people off a coastal jetty in Rhode Island and they were hospitalized after being rescued.

A tropical storm warning was posted for coastal areas in Rhode Island and Massachusetts, and tropical storm watches were up for parts of New York's Long Island and Connecticut.

Associated Press writers Ben Fox in Miami and Seth Borenstein in Washington contributed to this report.

10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press

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

1. MEXICO QUAKE DEATH TOLL RISES TO OVER 200

Rescuers and volunteers dig in the rubble of collapsed schools, homes and apartment buildings looking for survivors after the 7.1 magnitude temblor, the country's deadliest in 32 years.

2. EXPERTS SAY BELLICOSE RHETORIC RINGS HOLLOW

Without a diplomatic roadmap to try to compel Kim Jong Un to give up his nuclear weapons, Trump's threat to "totally destroy" North Korea likely won't change the isolated leader's behavior.

3. HURRICANE MARIA BARRELS TOWARD PUERTO RICO

Officials warn that the Category 4 storm would decimate the power company's crumbling infrastructure and force the government to rebuild dozens of communities.

4. US, IRAN TO HOLD HIGH-LEVEL TALKS

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and his Iranian counterpart will attend a EU-hosted meeting about the nuclear accord that Trump has called an "embarrassment."

5. WHAT HAS ISRAEL CONCERNED

With Assad seemingly poised to survive the Syrian civil war, Israeli leaders are nervous about the intentions of his backers in Tehran and Iran's growing influence across the region.

6. WHY IMMUNOTHERAPY IS NOT FOR EVERYONE

It can put some very advanced, thought-to-be-terminal cancers into remission, but for some unlucky folks, it can make their cancer much worse, AP learns.

7. WHERE ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS ARE GOING FOR HELP

Fearing deportation if they seek federal disaster aid after Hurricanes Harvey and Irma, they're turning

to places of worship and private charities.

8. FED MAY BEGIN TO SHRINK PORTFOLIO

The central bank may signal it's ready to begin paring its enormous \$4.5 trillion portfolio containing Treasuries and mortgage bonds.

9. WHO IS MAKING AN IMPRESSIVE COMEBACK

The California condor, thanks to intensive efforts to breed them in captivity and ban the use of lead bullets near their feeding grounds.

10. ROYAL HELPS SHATTER HOME RUN MARK

Kansas City's Alex Gordon breaks Major League Baseball's season home run record with 12 days to spare, hitting the 5,694th long ball of 2017.

Mexicans dig through collapsed buildings as quake kills 217

By **CHRISTOPHER SHERMAN and PETER ORSI, Associated Press**

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Police, firefighters and ordinary Mexicans dug frantically through the rubble of collapsed schools, homes and apartment buildings early Wednesday, looking for survivors of Mexico's deadliest earthquake in decades as the number of confirmed fatalities stood at 217.

Adding poignancy and a touch of the surreal, Tuesday's magnitude-7.1 quake struck on the 32nd anniversary of the 1985 earthquake that killed thousands. Just hours earlier, people around Mexico had held earthquake drills to mark the date.

One of the most desperate rescue efforts was at a primary and secondary school in southern Mexico City, where a wing of the three-story building collapsed into a massive pancake of concrete slabs. Journalists saw rescuers pull at least two small bodies from the rubble, covered in sheets.

Volunteer rescue worker Dr. Pedro Serrano managed to crawl into the crevices of the tottering pile of rubble that had been Escuela Enrique Rebsamen. He made it into a classroom, but found all of its occupants dead.

"We saw some chairs and wooden tables. The next thing we saw was a leg, and then we started to move rubble and we found a girl and two adults — a woman and a man," he said.

"We can hear small noises, but we don't know if they're coming from above or below, from the walls above (crumbling), or someone below calling for help."

A mix of neighborhood volunteers, police and firefighters used trained dogs and their bare hands to search through the school's rubble. The crowd of anxious parents outside the gates shared reports that two families had received WhatsApp messages from girls trapped inside, but that could not be confirmed.

Rescuers brought in wooden beams to shore up the fallen concrete slabs so they wouldn't collapse further and crush whatever airspaces remained.

The federal Education Department reported late Tuesday that 25 bodies had been recovered from the school's wreckage, all but four of them children. It was not clear whether those deaths were included in the overall death toll of 217 reported by the federal civil defense agency. Pena Nieto had earlier reported 22 bodies found and said 30 children and eight adults were reported missing.

In a video message released late Tuesday, Pena Nieto urged people to be calm and said authorities were moving to provide help as 40 percent of Mexico City and 60 percent of nearby Morelos state were without power. But, he said, "the priority at this moment is to keep rescuing people who are still trapped and to give medical attention to the injured people."

People across central Mexico already had rallied to help their neighbors as dozens of buildings tumbled into mounds of broken concrete. Mexico City Mayor Miguel Angel Mancera said buildings fell at 44 sites in the capital alone as high-rises across the city swayed and twisted and hundreds of thousands of panicked people ran into the streets.

Long lines of volunteers passed chunks of debris from hand to hand at a collapsed clothing factory where several people died. When a person was hauled out alive, they broke into shouts of "Yes, we can!"

Dust-covered and exhausted from digging, 30-year-old Carlos Mendoza said two people were pulled alive

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from the ruins of a collapsed apartment building in the Roma Sur neighborhood during a three-hour period. "When we saw this, we came to help," he said, gesturing at the destruction. "This is ugly, very ugly."

Blocks away, Alma Gonzalez was in her fourth-floor apartment when the quake collapsed the ground floor of her building, leaving her no way out. She was terrified until her neighbors mounted a ladder on their roof and helped her slide out a side window.

The official Twitter feed of civil defense agency head Luis Felipe Puente said 86 dead had been counted in Mexico City and 71 in Morelos state, which is just south of the capital. It said 43 were known dead in Puebla state, where the quake was centered. Twelve deaths were listed in the State of Mexico, which surrounds Mexico City on three sides, four in Guerrero state and one in Oaxaca.

At the site of a collapsed apartment building in Mexico City, rescuers worked atop a three-story pile of rubble, forming a human chain that passed pieces of rubble across four city blocks to a site where they were dumped.

Throughout the day, rescuers pulled dust-covered people, some barely conscious, some seriously injured, from about three dozen collapsed buildings. At one site, shopping carts commandeered from a nearby supermarket were used to carry water to the rescue site and take rubble away.

As night fell, huge flood lights lit up the recovery sites, but workers and volunteers begged for headlamps.

Where a six-story office building collapsed in Mexico City, sisters Cristina and Victoria Lopez Torres formed part of a human chain passing bottled water.

"I think it's human nature that drives everyone to come and help others," Cristina Lopez said.

"We are young. We didn't live through '85. But we know that it's important to come out into the streets to help," said her sister Victoria.

Ricardo Ibarra, 48, did live through the 1985 quake and said there hadn't been anything like it since.

Wearing a bright orange vest and carrying a backpack with a sleeping bag strapped to it, he said he and his friends just wanted to help.

"People are very sensitive because today was the 32nd anniversary of a tragedy," he said.

Buildings also collapsed in Morelos state, including the town hall and local church in Jojutla near the quake's epicenter. A dozen people died in Jojutla.

The town's Instituto Morelos secondary school partly collapsed, but school director Adelina Anzures said the earthquake drill held in the morning came in handy.

"I told them that it was not a game, that we should be prepared," Anzures said of the drill. When the quake came, she said, children and teachers rapidly filed out and nobody was hurt.

The U.S. Geological Survey said the magnitude 7.1 quake hit at 1:14 p.m. (2:14 p.m. EDT) and was centered near the Puebla state town of Raboso, 76 miles (123 kilometers) southeast of Mexico City.

Much of Mexico City is built on former lakebed, and the soil can amplify the effects of earthquakes centered hundreds of miles away.

The quake appeared to be unrelated to the magnitude 8.1 temblor that hit Sept. 7 off Mexico's southern coast and also was felt strongly in the capital.

U.S. Geological Survey seismologist Paul Earle noted the epicenters of the two quakes were 400 miles (650 kilometers) apart and said most aftershocks are within (60 miles) 100 kilometers.

Trump's North Korea threat leaves Asia struggling to explain

By FOSTER KLUG, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Was it a bluff? A warning that Washington would shoot down North Korea's next missile test? A restatement of past policy? Or simply just what it seemed: a straightforward threat of annihilation from the president of the United States?

Officials and pundits across Asia struggled Wednesday to parse Donald Trump's vow Tuesday at the U.N. General Assembly to "totally destroy North Korea" if provoked.

In a region well used to Pyongyang's pursuit of nuclear weapons generating a seemingly never-ending cycle of threats and counter-threats, Trump's comments stood out.

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South Korea officially played them down, while some politicians worried that Trump's words signaled a loss of influence for Seoul. Tokyo focused on his mention of Japanese citizens abducted by the North. Analysts across Asia expressed surprise, worry, even wry amusement, in one case, that Trump's words seemed to mirror threats normally emanating from North Korean state media.

Amid the speculation, the focus of Trump's belligerence, North Korea, remained silent in the hours after the speech.

Officials from the office of South Korean President Moon Jae-in, a liberal who has advocated dialogue with the North while being forced into a hawkish position by the North's weapons tests, called Trump's words a signal of Washington's strong resolve to deal with the North, but also essentially a repetition of the basic stance that all options will be considered when confronting Pyongyang.

Trump has previously threatened the North with "fire and fury." Pyongyang responded to those past remarks with a string of weapons tests, including its sixth and most powerful nuclear detonation and two missiles that flew over U.S. ally Japan.

Park Soo-hyun, a Moon spokesman, said that Trump's comments "reaffirmed the need to put maximum sanctions and pressure against North Korea's nuclear and missile provocations" so that Pyongyang realizes that abandoning its nuclear weapons is the only way forward.

Marcus Noland, a North Korea specialist with the Peterson Institute for International Economics in Washington, said in an online post that Trump's threat will feed a long-standing North Korean narrative that claims that the United States poses an existential threat.

"With those words, President Trump handed the Kim regime the soundbite of the century. It will play on a continuous loop on North Korean national television," Noland wrote.

North Korea's regular weapons tests are an attempt to create an arsenal of nuclear missiles that can threaten U.S. troops throughout Asia and the U.S. mainland. Pyongyang tested its first two intercontinental ballistic missiles in July and claims that it can now accurately reach the U.S. homeland, though outside experts say the North may still need more tests before its weapons are fully viable. Each new test pushes the nation that much closer to that goal.

Some South Korean opposition politicians saw the comments as another sign that South Korea is losing its voice in international efforts to deal with the North's nuclear program.

Trump's U.N. speech came days after U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis created unease in South Korea by saying without elaboration that the United States has military options against North Korea that wouldn't involve the destruction of Seoul. The South Korean capital is within easy artillery range of the huge array of North Korean weapons dug in along a border only an hour's drive from greater Seoul's 25 million people.

Kim Su-min, a lawmaker in the People's Party, expressed worry that South Korean officials heard nothing from Washington before both Mattis' and Trump's remarks.

"The government should comprehensively review its diplomatic and national security system and do its absolute best so that our stance on critical issues related to the existence of our country and the lives of our people doesn't go ignored," Kim said.

Diplomacy meant to rid the North of its nukes has been moribund for years, and Pyongyang has made huge strides over the last several years in its quest for nuclear tipped missiles that can reach anywhere in the world. Trump has pushed Beijing, which is the North's only major ally, to do more to influence Pyongyang's behavior, so far to no avail.

A Chinese expert on North Korea was surprised by the vehemence of Trump's speech, saying "his rhetoric is full of military force."

Cheng Xiaohu of Renmin University said in an interview that he initially thought that "the U.S. had nearly declared war on North Korea." The speech signals that "if North Korea conducts another missile test, the U.S. is very likely to intercept."

Officials in Tokyo, meanwhile, welcomed a reference by Trump to North Korea's abduction of Japanese citizens in the 1970s and '80s.

"I think it means an understanding has gotten through" to the United States and other countries, Deputy

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasutoshi Nishimura said, according to Kyodo News service.

Trump said, "We know it kidnapped a sweet 13-year-old Japanese girl from a beach in her own country to enslave her as a language tutor for North Korea's spies."

The girl, Megumi Yokota, was one of at least 17 people that Japan says North Korea kidnapped.

Andrei Lankov, a North Korea expert at Kookmin University in South Korea, described Trump's threats as similar to the type of bluffing that North Korea has used for decades.

"It's a bit funny to see how the U.S. president behaves in exactly the same way, using exactly the same words his North Korean counterparts have been using for decades," Lankov said.

Rhetoric that isn't followed by action will eventually undermine the U.S. image internationally. "It makes American threats far less efficient," he said.

Lankov said he expects North Korea to respond to Trump's threats with "equally powerful ... equally comical" and "probably more ridiculous rhetoric."

Associated Press writers Hyung-jin Kim and Kim Tong-hyung in Seoul, South Korea, Ken Moritsugu in Tokyo and Tim Sullivan in Beijing contributed to this report.

Peltingrain, relocation add to woes in Rohingya Muslim camp

By MUNEEZA NAQVI, Associated Press

COX'S BAZAR, Bangladesh (AP) — Weary and uncertain, they carried whatever they could on their backs, trudging through monsoon rains and enduring relocations and extortion attempts as they struggle to find small patches of land that can be their own, at least for a moment.

Groups of Rohingya Muslims who fled Myanmar were on the move again Tuesday and Wednesday, forced by the rains to salvage what was left of their shanties and move toward drier ground in hopes of some relief — if the mudslides don't come next.

Several Rohingya camps in this Bangladesh coastal city are flooded from three days of unrelenting downpours. People in the camps were pelted with heavy rain while desperately packing their meager belongings into plastic sacks and trying to find fresh shelter.

The initial arrivals in the most recent exodus from violence in Myanmar simply settled on whatever patch of land they could find, building shelters of bamboo sticks and plastic sheets.

But as their numbers soared to more than 420,000 in a matter of weeks, the local government has started moving them to newly allocated refugee camp areas. Many refused to move, terrified of being without shelter at all. But the rains washed away many shanties or made them uninhabitable.

So they're moving again. Most of them are being sent to the new settlement of Balukhali in Cox's Bazar.

If the rain doesn't ease soon, the flimsy homes may become useless at best and dangerous at worst. The area is prone to mudslides during the seasonal monsoon that have already proven deadly this year.

For Abul Bashar, that concern will come later, if at all. For now, he needs to shelter his family of 12 from the rain.

They were made to pull up the shelters they had first built on an open field. Now they've moved to Balukhali.

But like all crises, the Rohingya exodus is an opportunity for exploitation and a camp mafia is taking advantage.

Bashar doesn't have the 2,000 taka (\$24) to pay them to set up a shelter in this camp.

The family slept in the tent of an acquaintance, but things are tight for everyone, and Bashar says he must find a shelter of his own soon.

He has plastic sheets and bamboo sticks. Just no money to buy a spot.

In the vast open ground where the new refugees had built their first shelters now lie piles of things they simply stuff into bags and carry to their new homes.

Not too far away, in the area where all the shelters were almost submerged, some refugees stood near bundles of their belongings unsure of what to do next.

"We made a shelter here and now it's washed away and I don't know what to do now," said Mohammad Isaq, 50.

"I haven't eaten properly in three days. I'm too weak to take all our belongings to another place."

Rescuers wriggle into collapsed school after Mexico quake

By MARK STEVENSON, Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — The three-story school structure had pancaked into a pile of concrete slabs. The bodies of 21 children and four adults had been pulled out. But still sounds came from the collapsed structure early Wednesday — nobody knew if they were survivors pounding for help, or simply the noises of shifting rubble.

After a wing of the Enrique Rebsamen primary and secondary school collapsed in Tuesday's magnitude-7.1 earthquake, rescuers dug at the pile of rubble and soldiers wedged in wooden beams to try to prevent it from crumbling further.

Then a group of them decided to head in.

Pedro Serrano, a 29-year-old doctor, was one of the ordinary Mexicans who had volunteered to join the rescue effort. He crawled into a crevice amid the tottering pile.

"We dug holes, then crawled in on our bellies," Serrano said.

With barely room to move, he wriggled deeper into the wrecked school.

"We managed to get into a collapsed classroom. We saw some chairs and wooden tables," Serrano said. "The next thing we saw was a leg, and then we started to move rubble and we found a girl and two adults — a woman and a man."

None of them was alive.

The rescuers left them there. There was no way to get them out.

Outside the school gates, rumors ran through the crowd of anxious parents that two families had received Whatsapp messages from girls trapped inside. Nobody could say for sure whether it was true.

Asked if there was hope, Serrano looked weary but said workers were still trying.

"We can hear small noises," he said. "We don't know if they're coming from above or below — from the walls above (crumbling), or from someone below calling for help."

The work continued through the night, as pickup trucks loaded with volunteer rescuers with shovels and pickaxes sped through the darkened streets of the capital.

Occasionally, searchers at the school would ask for silence so they could listen for signs of life.

The volunteers stopped passing wooden shoring beams and buckets of rubble and became quiet. Silently, they held their fists in the air in a gesture of hope, solidarity and resilience.

Alex Gordon hits MLB's record-setting 5,694th HR of season

By IAN HARRISON, Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — Kansas City's Alex Gordon broke Major League Baseball's season home run record with 12 days to spare, hitting the 5,694th long ball of 2017 on Tuesday night.

Gordon's home run off Toronto reliever Ryan Tepera broke a mark set in 2000 at the height of the Steroids Era. The drive, which drove in the last run in the Royals' 5-2 loss, was his eighth this season and the 159th of his 11-year big league career.

"A pretty cool thing to be a part of," Gordon said. "I didn't hit many this year, but I guess I made one count."

It was the 17th home run of the night in the major leagues and came just after Detroit's Alex Presley tied the record when he connected at home against Oakland's Daniel Gossett.

Gordon said he heard talk of the record on a clubhouse television after Toronto's Darwin Barney homered in the sixth.

"I was kind of aware that we were getting close to it," he said. "After I walked back to the dugout. I

kind of forgot about it.”

Holding the ball he hit over the right-field wall, Gordon said he didn't plan to keep the historic memento or anything else from the game.

“I'm going to give it to Cooperstown,” Gordon said . “I figured they'd probably have much more reason to have it than I do. I don't really want to remember too much about this season, so I'll probably just give it away and let them take care of it.”

There were 5,610 homers last year, an average of 2.31 per game, and this year's average of 2.53 entering Tuesday's action projects to 6,139. That would be up 47 percent from 4,186 in 2014.

“I don't know what to make of it,” Royals manager Ned Yost said. “Guys are bigger and guys are stronger. but so are the pitchers. There sure are a lot of home runs being hit.”

Blue Jays manager John Gibbons has noticed the surge in homers but doesn't have an explanation.

“It really looks like the ball is flying,” he said.

Power subsided after the start of drug testing with penalties in 2004. The home run average dropped in 2014 to its lowest level since 1992, then started rising during the second half of the 2015 season.

“My biggest take on it is that players are trying to hit more home runs,” San Francisco manager Bruce Bochy said. “Their philosophy overall, a lot of these position players, is to get the ball in the air and also pull the ball and get the ball in the air and hit it as far as you can. So you're increasing the launch angle, whatever you want to call this, stay away from the groundballs. And so they're sacrificing a little bit more contact to do a little bit more damage.”

When the previous record of 5,693 was set in 2000, Sammy Sosa led the major leagues with 50 home runs and Barry Bonds hit 49.

Miami's Giancarlo Stanton leads the major leagues with 55 home runs this year, followed by New York Yankees rookie Aaron Judge with 44.

Yost said he doesn't believe more players are swinging for the fences than in years past.

“You're always looking to elevate,” Yost said. “You're not going to make a whole lot of money hitting the ball on the ground in this league because the defenders are so quick and athletic. You've got to get the ball in the air, I think, if you're going to be successful.”

AP Baseball Writer Janie McCauley contributed to this report.

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

Trump's trashing of Iran deal poses problems for NK strategy

By MATTHEW PENNINGTON, Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — President Donald Trump's threat before the world to obliterate North Korea left no doubt about his determination to stop the communist country's nuclear weapons buildup. His disparagement of the Iran nuclear deal in the same speech offered Pyongyang little hope of a negotiated solution.

In his maiden address at the U.N. General Assembly on Tuesday, Trump spelled out in blunt and personal terms the reasons why Kim Jong Un and his government should be treated as pariahs. It was a surprisingly brutal indictment, even by the standards of a president who has spoken about unleashing “fire and fury” on Kim's country if it didn't end its nuclear provocations.

Trump said not only has the North Korean government starved its citizens and killed opponents, it was now threatening the world with “unthinkable loss of life.”

“It is time for North Korea to realize that the denuclearization is its only acceptable future,” Trump said.

He offered no path toward making that future a reality.

Despite Trump's rhetoric, his administration insists it is seeking a diplomatic resolution. Any military intervention designed to eliminate the North's nuclear and missile arsenal would almost surely entail dire risks for U.S. allies in the region, particularly South Korea, lying in range of the North's vast stockpiles of weaponry.

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Asked about Trump's address, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis reiterated his preference Tuesday.

"We will hopefully get this resolved through diplomatic means," Mattis told reporters in Washington.

But other than using economic pressure to try to compel Pyongyang to give away its nuclear weapons — a strategy that has failed for the past decade — Trump's administration has yet to lay out a strategy for a possible negotiated settlement. In recent weeks, the administration's lack of direction has been all too apparent, as Trump and other top officials have vacillated between bellicose talk of possible military action and, at one point, even praise for Kim for a brief lull in missile tests.

"In the absence of such a policy roadmap, the president's words won't change North Korea's behavior," said Frank Jannuzi, an East Asia expert and president of the Washington-based Mansfield Foundation. "Nor will they bolster Chinese, Russian or allied confidence in the U.S. approach."

Fears of a military confrontation are increasing. North Korea conducted a series of provocative launches in recent months, including a pair of intercontinental missiles believed capable of striking the continental United States and another pair that soared over Japanese territory. It also exploded its most powerful nuclear bomb to date. Prodded by Washington, the U.N. has responded with the toughest economic sanctions on North Korea yet.

Still, the impasse is no closer to being resolved. Russia and China, which backed the new sanctions, want the U.S. to seek dialogue with the North. American officials say the time isn't right for any formal diplomatic process.

Instead, Trump has escalated the name calling. On Tuesday, he derisively referred to Kim as a "Rocket Man" on a "suicide mission."

Trump also made a direct comparison between the "reckless regimes" in Pyongyang and Tehran, which rolled back its nuclear program only two years ago.

The comparison could reinforce Kim's view that he needs nuclear-armed, intercontinental ballistic missiles to deter the U.S. from attacking him, according to Mark Fitzpatrick at the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

"Denouncing a deal that all other parties are upholding will certainly not make the North Koreans any more disposed toward striking a deal with the United States over their nuclear program," he said.

Trump called the Iran deal one-sided and "an embarrassment to the United States." His comments heightened anticipation that Trump might declare Iran in violation of the seven-nation agreement, and even destroy it entirely, despite a U.N. report this month showing Iran was living up to its end of the bargain.

The Obama administration, which forged the Iran deal, never lost an opportunity to point out how it showed Washington was willing to reach a deal with an adversary prepared to negotiate in good faith. It often made that argument explicitly when talking about North Korea.

Pyongyang may be completely uninterested.

The North has virtually closed the door to a diplomatic resolution, said Evans Revere, a former senior State Department official who participated in unofficial talks with North Korean officials in Switzerland this month. "Defiance and confrontation, not dialogue, seem to be at the center of Pyongyang's thinking these days," he said. "That's a dangerous place to be."

Nevertheless, U.S. allies don't want Trump to close off the possibility of a peaceful end to the crisis.

"There is no other solution," Chancellor Angela Merkel, who recently suggested Iran-style negotiations with North Korea, told an election rally in Germany on Tuesday.

Speaking shortly before Trump at the U.N., the world body's secretary-general urged diplomacy.

"Fiery talk can lead to fatal misunderstandings," Antonio Guterres said. "This is a time for statesmanship. We must not sleepwalk our way into war."

Associated Press writer David Rising in Berlin and Robert Burns in Washington contributed to this report.

226 killed as 7.1 magnitude quake fells buildings in Mexico

By MARK STEVENSON, CHRISTOPHER SHERMAN and PETER ORSI, Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — A powerful earthquake shook central Mexico on Tuesday, collapsing buildings in plumes of dust and killing at least 226 people. Thousands fled into the streets in panic, and many stayed to help rescue those trapped.

Dozens of buildings tumbled into mounds of rubble or were severely damaged in densely populated parts of Mexico City and nearby states. Mayor Miguel Angel Mancera said buildings fell at 44 places in the capital alone as high-rises across the city swayed sickeningly.

Hours after the magnitude 7.1 quake, rescue workers were still clawing through the wreckage of a primary school that partly collapsed in the city's south looking for any children who might be trapped. Some relatives said they had received Whatsapp message from two girls inside.

The federal Education Department reported late Tuesday night that 25 bodies had been recovered from the school's wreckage, all but four of them children. It was not clear whether the deaths were included in the overall death toll of 226 reported by the federal civil defense agency.

President Enrique Pena Nieto visited the school earlier in the night. At the time, he said 22 bodies had been found, and added in comments broadcast online by Financiero TV that 30 children and eight adults were reported missing. Rescuers were continuing their search and pausing to listen for voices from the rubble.

Later, Pena Nieto issued a video message urging calm and saying the initial focus of authorities is on finding people trapped in fallen buildings.

"The priority at this moment is to keep rescuing people who are still trapped and to give medical attention to the injured people," he said.

The quake is the deadliest in Mexico since a 1985 quake on the same date killed thousands. It came less than two weeks after another powerful quake caused 90 deaths in the country's south.

Luis Felipe Puente, head of the national Civil Defense agency, reported early Wednesday that the confirmed death toll had increased to 226.

His tweet said 117 dead had been counted in Mexico City and 55 in Morelos state, which is just south of the capital. It said 39 were known dead in Puebla state, where the quake was centered. Twelve deaths were listed in the State of Mexico, which surrounds Mexico City on three sides, and three in Guerrero state.

The federal government declared a state of disaster in Mexico City, freeing up emergency funds. President Enrique Pena Nieto said he had ordered all hospitals to open their doors to the injured.

Mancera, the Mexico City mayor, said 50 to 60 people were rescued alive by citizens and emergency workers in the capital. Authorities said at least 70 people in the capital had been hospitalized for injuries.

The federal interior minister, Miguel Angel Osorio Chong, said authorities had reports of people possibly still being trapped in collapsed buildings. He said search efforts were slow because of the fragility of rubble.

"It has to be done very carefully," he said. And "time is against us."

At one site, reporters saw onlookers cheer as a woman was pulled from the rubble. Rescuers immediately called for silence so they could listen for others who might be trapped.

Mariana Morales, a 26-year-old nutritionist, was one of many who spontaneously participated in rescue efforts.

She wore a paper face mask and her hands were still dusty from having joined a rescue brigade to clear rubble from a building that fell in a cloud of dust before her eyes, about 15 minutes after the quake.

Morales said she was in a taxi when the quake struck, and she got out and sat on a sidewalk to try to recover from the scare. Then, just a few yards away, the three-story building fell.

A dust-covered Carlos Mendoza, 30, said that he and other volunteers had been able to pull two people alive from the ruins of a collapsed apartment building after three hours of effort.

"We saw this and came to help," he said. "It's ugly, very ugly."

Alma Gonzalez was in her fourth floor apartment in the Roma neighborhood when the quake pancaked the ground floor of her building, leaving her no way out — until neighbors set up a ladder on their roof

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and helped her slide out a side window.

Gala Dluzhynska was taking a class with 11 other women on the second floor of a building on trendy Alvaro Obregon street when the quake struck and window and ceiling panels fell as the building began to tear apart.

She said she fell in the stairs and people began to walk over her, before someone finally pulled her up. "There were no stairs anymore. There were rocks," she said.

They reached the bottom only to find it barred. A security guard finally came and unlocked it.

The quake sent people throughout the city fleeing from homes and offices, and many people remained in the streets for hours, fearful of returning to the structures.

Alarms blared and traffic stopped around the Angel of Independence monument on the iconic Reforma Avenue.

Electricity and cellphone service was interrupted in many areas and traffic was snarled as signal lights went dark.

The U.S. Geological Survey said the magnitude 7.1 quake hit at 1:14 p.m. (2:15 p.m. EDT) and was centered near the Puebla state town of Raboso, about 76 miles (123 kilometers) southeast of Mexico City.

Puebla Gov. Tony Gali tweeted there were damaged buildings in the city of Cholula, including collapsed church steeples.

In Jojutla, a town in neighboring Morelos state, the town hall, a church and other buildings tumbled down, and 12 people were reported killed.

The Instituto Morelos secondary school partly collapsed in Jojutla, but school director Adelina Anzures said the earthquake drill that the school held in the morning was a boon when the real thing hit just two hours later.

"I told them that it was not a game, that we should be prepared," Anzures said of the drill. When the shaking began, children and teachers filed out rapidly and no one was hurt, she said. "It fell and everything inside was damaged."

Earlier in the day, workplaces across Mexico City held earthquake readiness drills on the anniversary of the 1985 quake, a magnitude 8.0 shake that killed thousands of people and devastated large parts of the capital.

In that tragedy, too, ordinary citizens played a crucial role in rescue efforts that overwhelmed officials.

Market stall vendor Edith Lopez, 25, said she was in a taxi a few blocks away when the quake struck Tuesday. She said she saw glass bursting out of the windows of some buildings. She was anxiously trying to locate her children, whom she had left in the care of her disabled mother.

Local media broadcast video of whitecap waves churning the city's normally placid canals of Xochimilco as boats bobbed up and down.

Mexico City's international airport suspended operations and was checking facilities for damage.

Much of Mexico City is built on former lakebed, and the soil can amplify the effects of earthquakes centered hundreds of miles away.

The new quake appeared to be unrelated to the magnitude 8.1 temblor that hit Sept. 7 off Mexico's southern coast and also was felt strongly in the capital.

U.S. Geological Survey seismologist Paul Earle noted the epicenters of the two quakes were 400 miles (650 kilometers) apart and said most aftershocks are within (60 miles) 100 kilometers.

There have been 19 earthquakes of magnitude 6.5 or larger within 150 miles (250 kilometers) of Tuesday's quake over the past century, Earle said.

Earth usually has about 15 to 20 earthquakes this size or larger each year, Earle said.

Initial calculations showed that more than 30 million people would have felt moderate shaking from Tuesday's quake.

AP Interview: Lavrov hints US-Russia 'Tit-for-tat' could end

JOHN DANISZEWSKI, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov told The Associated Press in an interview Tuesday that he heard positive news in President Donald Trump's United Nations address: "that the U.S. would not impose its way of life on others."

"I think it's a very welcome statement, which we haven't heard from an American leader for a very long time," said Lavrov, who sat down with the AP and Russia's Tass news agency directly after meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson.

Lavrov blamed the Obama administration for the collapse in relations between Moscow and Washington. The U.S. enacted a series of steps against the Russian and Russian diplomats in December, including new sanctions and expelling 35 Russian diplomats, to punish Russia for meddling in the U.S. elections, a charge Russia has denied. Moscow responded by limiting the size of the U.S. diplomatic staff in Russia.

In his speech to the General Assembly, Trump said "We do not seek to impose our way of life on anyone, but rather to let it shine as an example for everyone to watch." He also said, "Strong, sovereign nations let diverse countries with different values, different cultures, not just coexist, but work side by side on the basis of mutual respect."

Lavrov pointed to those statements while acknowledging relations are at "a very difficult and a very low point, which is the legacy of the Obama administration." But he said that what Trump had said during the election campaign, and what he continues to say now, is that he wants to have good relations with Moscow.

"What I feel, talking to Rex Tillerson, is that this is the position of the administration, that they are not happy with the current state of relations, and we are not happy at all," he said.

Lavrov said it would be "quite useful" for Trump and Putin to meet again in November during an Asian-Pacific summit scheduled in Danang, Vietnam, to review the progress in their bilateral relations. Talks are going on now among lower-ranking officials, he said, including the two countries' militaries and their security agencies. "The dialogue has been going on, it's not easy," Lavrov said.

At their first face-to-face meetings, Putin and Trump met several times in Hamburg, Germany, in July during the G-20 summit.

Lavrov also seemed to hint that the "tit-for-tat" series of ousters of diplomats from the two countries' embassies was over for now.

"We waited very long with our tit in response to Obama's tit," Lavrov said. "Being serious people and responsible people, and I feel Rex Tillerson is one of them, I hope that we can draw conclusions from where we are now and understand where we want to be."

He said that both Russia and the United States have to address the situation as it is, which he said was created by "the spiral of unfriendly steps started by the Obama administration," but still work like "responsible people" to address their bilateral ties as well as serious international issues.

Lavrov did not criticize Trump's threat to "totally destroy" North Korea if the U.S. is forced to defend itself from Pyongyang. He said Trump has spoken in the same vein many times. "We don't doubt that the United States has capacity to do something very destructive."

Trump and his campaign's relations with Russia have been under scrutiny from the beginning of his presidency, with federal and congressional investigators looking for any evidence of collusion between the campaign and Russian operatives, who allegedly hacked into Democratic Party emails last year and may have used fake identities to feed propaganda to U.S. voters over social media.

The Senate intelligence committee is one of several congressional panels investigating Russian interference, and special counsel Robert Mueller and his team are conducting their own criminal investigation.

UN chief to open signing for 1st nuclear ban treaty

By EDITH M. LEDERER, Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres will open the signing ceremony for the first treaty to ban nuclear weapons and the Security Council hold a high-level meeting on its far-flung peacekeeping operations as world leaders tackle a wide range of crises and challenges on the second day of their annual gathering.

More than 120 countries approved the treaty in early July over strong opposition from nuclear-armed countries and their allies, who boycotted negotiations. The U.N. treaty office said 51 countries are expected to sign during Wednesday's opening day.

Guterres is also expected to brief the Security Council meeting on reforming U.N. peacekeeping — a key item on the Trump administration's agenda, which will be represented by Vice President Mike Pence.

Ethiopia's U.N. Mission, which holds the council presidency, said nine presidents, three vice presidents, six prime ministers, three deputy prime ministers and more than 30 foreign ministers are scheduled to attend the day-long session where 71 countries have signed up to speak.

In the General Assembly, leaders from several dozen countries will address the 193-member world body including the presidents of Iran and Ukraine, the prime ministers of Japan and the United Kingdom, and the Palestinian leader.

North Korea's race to develop nuclear weapons that could hit the United States dominated Tuesday's opening ministerial session of the assembly.

President Donald Trump threatened to "totally destroy" the Asian nation if the U.S. is forced to defend itself or its allies against aggression. Guterres warned that the threat of a nuclear attack is at its highest level since the end of the Cold War and "fiery talk can lead to fatal misunderstandings."

The treaty bans all countries that eventually ratify it "never under any circumstances to develop, test, produce, manufacture, otherwise acquire, possess or stockpile nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices."

French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian told reporters Monday that France refused to take part in negotiations on the treaty because it can only weaken the nuclear nonproliferation treaty, considered the cornerstone of preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. He called the nuclear ban treaty "wishful thinking" that is "close to irresponsible."

But Beatrice Fihn, executive director of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, said countries signing the treaty will be taking a stand against nuclear weapons, "the only weapons of mass destruction not yet prohibited despite their immense destructive power and threat to humanity." She said that with Trump threatening to use nuclear weapons, the need for the treaty is even greater.

In the Security Council, members are expected to vote on a resolution that would recognize "the primacy of politics" including mediation, monitoring cease-fires and assisting the implementation of peace accords in the U.N.'s approach to resolving conflicts. The draft resolution also underscores the need to enhance the overall effectiveness of peacekeeping operations and "the critical importance of improving accountability, transparency, efficiency and effectiveness."

AP Interview: NATO chief welcomes Trump's new approach

By EDITH M. LEDERER, Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — NATO's secretary-general welcomed President Donald Trump's new strategy for the 16-year Afghan war and said the U.S. leader's insistence that NATO members increase their defense spending is achieving positive results.

Jens Stoltenberg said in a wide-ranging interview with The Associated Press on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly's annual meeting of world leaders that Trump has been very clear "that the United States remains committed to NATO, but not only in words but also in deeds."

He strongly welcomed the U.S. decision to increase its military presence in Europe for the first time since the end of the Cold War — along with its European allies.

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Stoltenberg said he agrees with Trump that all NATO members need to increase defense spending so there is "fair burden sharing."

"After many years of decline, we have now seen for the first time since the end of the Cold War a real increase in defense spending across Europe and Canada," he said, adding that the number of countries meeting the target of spending at least 2 percent of their GDP on defense is increasing.

There are currently five members — the U.S., Britain, Estonia, Greece and Poland — that meet the requirement and Stoltenberg said he expects Romania to reach the target this year and Lithuania and Latvia to most likely reach it next year.

On other issues, Stoltenberg said Turkey is looking into the possibility of buying air defense systems from France and Italy in addition to the one it recently purchased from Russia.

The NATO chief also said he is going to Japan and South Korea next month to discuss North Korea's escalating nuclear and ballistic missile program.

"We are condemning the development of nuclear weapons and long-range missiles," he said. "We are engaging with our partners in the region, Japan and South Korea ... and, of course, we are clearly supporting all efforts to make sure that North Korea stop developing these weapons."

Trump last month unveiled his new Afghan strategy saying American troops would "fight to win" by attacking enemies, "crushing" al-Qaida, and preventing terrorist attacks against Americans.

Stoltenberg welcomed Trump's announcement of increased troop levels and his decision that U.S. forces would remain in Afghanistan based on conditions on the ground — "not based on specific timetables."

The Pentagon is preparing to deploy several thousand more Americans to Afghanistan, in order to expand the training and advising of Afghan forces and beef up counterterror operations against the Taliban and al-Qaida-linked groups in the country. Officials have said the U.S. will send as many as 3,900 more troops to the war — which would bring the number of publicly recognized U.S. troops there to about 15,000.

Stoltenberg said NATO has also decided to increase the number of troops for its training mission in Afghanistan by "a few thousand."

He said several European allies and partner nations have announced that they will provide more troops and "we're now in the process of making the final decisions."

"This is about making sure that Afghanistan doesn't once again become a safe haven for international terrorists, and the best way of doing that is to enable the Afghans to have defense security forces which are strong enough to do that," Stoltenberg said. "I don't think this is an easy task, but I strongly believe that the best way forward is to train them instead of NATO sending big numbers of combat troops fighting in Afghanistan."

On another NATO issue, some NATO allies have expressed concern that Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has purchased a Russian-made S-400 missile defense system, which is not compatible with systems in the alliance.

Stoltenberg said every country decides what kind of weapons systems to buy and "what is important for NATO is that we are as inter-operable as possible and that we can work together."

The NATO chief said he met Erdogan Monday night and the Turkish president told him he started talks with France and Italy about buying their Samp/T air defense system as well.

"So we'll see the outcome of those talks, but hopefully they can lead to something," he said.

Stoltenberg stressed that Erdogan "is very committed to NATO and not only in words but also in deeds."

"Turkey is a key nation when it comes to our security" because of its strategic location on the 29-nation alliance's eastern flank, but also because it borders Iraq and Syria where terrorists operate, he said. "And Turkey is one of the lead nations in our efforts to make sure that Afghanistan doesn't become a safe haven for international terrorists once again."

In stark UN speech, Trump threatens to “destroy” North Korea

By JONATHAN LEMIRE and DARLENE SUPERVILLE, Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — President Donald Trump vowed Tuesday to “totally destroy North Korea” if the U.S. is forced to defend itself or its allies against the renegade nation’s nuclear weapons program, making his case in a combative debut speech to the U.N. that laid out a stark, good-vs-evil view of a globe riven by chaos and turmoil.

Trump’s broadsides against “rogue regimes,” North Korea chief among them, drew murmurs from the assembled world leaders and served as a searing salute to his nationalism during diplomatic prime time. He said it was “far past time” for the world to confront Kim Jong Un, declaring that the North Korean leader’s pursuit of nuclear weapons poses a threat to “the entire world with an unthinkable loss of human life.”

“Rocket man is on a suicide mission for himself and his regime,” Trump said, mocking the North Korean leader even as he sketched out potentially cataclysmic consequences. The president himself decided to work the nickname into his speech just hours before he took the dais, according to aides.

Trump spoke of his own nation’s “patience,” but said that if “forced to defend itself or its allies, we will have no choice but to totally destroy North Korea.”

Trump’s overheated language was rare for a U.S. president at the rostrum of the United Nations, but the speech was textbook Trump, dividing the globe into friends and foes and taking unflinching aim at America’s enemies. North Korea’s ambassador and another top diplomat left the General Assembly chamber before he spoke to boycott his speech, leaving behind two empty chairs.

The president urged nations to work together to stop Iran’s nuclear program and defeat “loser terrorists” who wage violence around the globe. He denounced “radical Islamic terrorism,” an inflammatory label he had shied away from in recent months after trumpeting it on the campaign trail. He called Syrian President Bashar Assad’s government a “criminal regime.” He said violence-plagued regions of the world “are going to hell.” He made little mention of Russia.

For all of that, he said there was still hope the United Nations could solve “many of these vicious and complex problems.”

But he focused more on the problems than the hopes.

His lashing of North Korea was a vigorous restatement of what’s been said by U.S. leaders before, but delivered with new intensity in the august setting of the General Assembly. After a litany of accusations — the starvation of millions, the abduction of a Japanese girl and more — he questioned the legitimacy of the communist government by referring to it as a “band of criminals.”

Trump, who has previously warned of “fire and fury” if Pyongyang does not back down, claimed that “no one has shown more contempt for other nations and for the well-being of their own people than the depraved regime in North Korea.” And he scolded that it was “an outrage” to enable and trade with North Korea, seeming to point a finger at China, although he did not mention it by name.

Despite the speech’s bombast, it signaled little in the way of policy change. Trump stopped short of demanding regime change, which North Korea regards as the ultimate American intention and treats as a reason for its development of nuclear weapons. That may offer some reassurance to China and Russia, which have urged the U.S. to tone down its rhetoric and restart dialogue with North Korea.

Trump, who frequently belittled the U.N. as a candidate, urged the world leaders to embrace their own “national sovereignty to do more to ensure the prosperity and security of their own countries.

“I will always put America first. Just like you, the leaders of your countries, should and always put your countries first,” he said. “We can no longer be taken advantage of or enter into a one-sided deal in which the United States gets nothing in return.”

Trump’s blistering speech came just minutes after U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres put “nuclear peril” as the gravest threat facing the world and warned that “fiery talk can lead to fatal misunderstandings.”

On Iran, Trump called the government a rogue state whose chief export is “violence, bloodshed and chaos.” He accused Tehran of squandering Iran’s wealth by supporting Syria’s Assad, Lebanon’s Hezbollah militia and Yemen’s Houthi rebel group.

Trump called the U.N.-backed Iran nuclear deal “an embarrassment” to the United States and suggested

it was one of the worst international pacts ever struck. And he hinted that his administration, which has accused Tehran of aiding terrorism in the Middle East, could soon declare Iran out of compliance with the deal, which could unravel it.

"I don't think you've heard the end of it," Trump said. "Believe me."

The administration must decide in mid-October whether it will certify that Iran is still in compliance with the agreement.

He also decried the "disastrous rule" of Venezuela's Nicolas Maduro and urged the U.N. to step in

The speech drew varying reactions from leaders on the two sides of Trump's black-and-white ledger. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, a Trump ally, wrote on Twitter, "In over 30 years in my experience with the UN, I never heard a bolder or more courageous speech." Javad Zarif, the foreign minister of Iran, wrote that "Trump's ignorant hate speech belongs in medieval times-not the 21st Century UN-unworthy of a reply."

On Twitter late Tuesday, Trump claimed he met with "leaders of many nations who agree with much (or all) of what I stated in my speech!"

Domestically, reaction largely broke down along party lines: Democratic Sen. Dianne Feinstein of California said Trump used the U.N. "as a stage to threaten war." Onetime Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney tweeted that Trump "gave a strong and needed challenge" to the U.N.

Outside of an oblique reference to a threat to Ukraine's sovereignty, Trump made no mention of Russia or its president, Vladimir Putin. He chastised the U.N. for what he said was a bloated budget and bureaucracy but did not reiterate previous threats to cut Washington's commitment to the world body. Instead, pledged the United States would be "partners in your work" to make the organization a more effective force for world peace.

Lemire reported from New York. Associated Press writers Matthew Pennington, Matthew Lee and Edith Lederer contributed to this report.

Follow Lemire on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/@JonLemire> and Superville at <http://twitter.com/@dsu-pervilleap>

St. Louis faith leaders urge peace, justice amid turmoil

By JIM SALTER and SUMMER BALLENTINE, Associated Press

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Leaders of several faiths on Tuesday called for peace and justice amid the turmoil that followed the acquittal of a white former St. Louis police officer in the 2011 death of a black man.

Several hundred people gathered on a hot, unshaded public plaza for an interfaith service followed by a march to City Hall. The service came after four days of protests that followed a judge's decision Friday to acquit Jason Stockley of first-degree murder in the fatal shooting of 24-year-old Anthony Lamar Smith. Speakers at the service included Roman Catholic Archbishop Robert Carlson, black church pastors, and Jewish and Muslim leaders.

"Let us remember that we are not a divided humanity, but a human family," Carlson said. "Let us show love instead of hatred."

Several who spoke acknowledged the pain the ruling caused African-Americans in the community.

"Justice, fair treatment ought to be the right of all God's children," said the Rev. Linden Bowie of the Missionary Baptist State Convention.

More than 150 people have been arrested in the protests since Friday. No organized demonstrations were planned for Tuesday, protest leaders said.

St. Louis Mayor Lyda Krewson on Tuesday said she's planning to meet with protesters.

Hundreds attended a rally Monday night outside the jail in downtown St. Louis. Demonstrators chanted "free our people" to show solidarity for those jailed. On Sunday night, 123 people were arrested after a

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smaller group of protesters that remained on the streets after the more organized demonstrations wrapped up broke business windows downtown, smashed concrete pots and threw things at officers.

Police officers chanted "Whose streets? Our streets!" after making arrests. At a news conference Tuesday, Krewson said it wasn't acceptable for them to chant the refrain — one protesters commonly use. She said police are under a lot of stress but "that's not an excuse."

The mayor also said it was "inflammatory" for interim police Chief Lawrence O'Toole to say that "police owned" Sunday night.

The unrest was reminiscent of three years ago, when sometimes-violent protests lasted for months after a white officer in the St. Louis suburb of Ferguson, Missouri, fatally shot Michael Brown, a black and unarmed 18-year-old. Officer Darren Wilson was not charged but eventually resigned, and the shooting became a catalyst for the national Black Lives Matter movement.

The shooting of Smith by Stockley came after a chase on Dec. 20, 2011. Stockley, 36, testified he felt endangered because he saw Smith holding a silver revolver when Smith backed his car toward the officers before speeding away, prompting the chase.

Prosecutors said Stockley planted a gun in Smith's car after the shooting. The officer's DNA was on the weapon but Smith's wasn't. Dashcam video from Stockley's cruiser recorded him saying he was "going to kill this (expletive)." Less than a minute later, he shot Smith five times.

Stockley's lawyer dismissed the comment as "human emotions" during a dangerous pursuit.

Stockley left the police department and moved to Houston three years ago.

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White man arrested in slayings of 2 black men in Louisiana

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN, Associated Press

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — A 23-year-old white man was arrested Tuesday and accused of cold-bloodedly killing two black men and shooting up a black family's home in a string of attacks last week that police say may have been racially motivated.

A law enforcement official said authorities found a handwritten copy of an Adolf Hitler speech at Kenneth James Gleason's home, and investigators said surveillance footage and DNA on a shell casing link him to the crimes.

Authorities said he would be charged with first-degree murder in the shooting deaths of a homeless man and a dishwasher who was walking to work. In each case, the killer opened fire from his car, then walked up to the victim as he lay on the ground and fired again repeatedly, police said.

"I feel confident that this killer would have killed again," interim Police Chief Jonny Dunnam said.

Gleason's attorney, J. Christopher Alexander, said his client "vehemently denies guilt, and we look forward to complete vindication."

Authorities found the Hitler speech during a search over the weekend, according to the law enforcement official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the investigation was still going on.

Asked whether police suspect the shootings were motivated by race, Sgt. L'Jean McKneely said: "We're not completely closed off to that. We're looking at all possibilities at this time, so we're not going to just pinpoint that."

District Attorney Hillar Moore said he may seek the death penalty.

"It appears to be cold, calculated, planned (against) people who were unarmed and defenseless," he said.

Authorities also said that just after midnight on Sept. 10, Gleason fired into the home of a black family who lived three houses down from Gleason and his parents.

Resident Tonya Stephens said her two adult sons were home at the time and she was away at her nurse's job. Three bullets pierced the front door and struck furniture, but no one was hurt.

Stephens said her family had seen Gleason sleeping in his car or speeding down the street, but she

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never had any dealings with him and "I never paid him any mind."

In the other shootings, neither victim had any connection to Gleason, investigators said.

The first killing occurred Sept. 12, when 59-year-old Bruce Cofield, who was homeless, was gunned down. The second took place last Thursday night, when 49-year-old Donald Smart was shot on his way to his job at a cafe popular with Louisiana State University students.

Authorities said ballistics tests determined that the same gun was used in all three shootings. Also, they said DNA found on one of the shell casings matched genetic material on a swab they took from Gleason.

Investigators have not found the 9 mm gun but said Gleason bought such a weapon last November, according to the district attorney. Gleason also ordered a silencer in July, but it had not arrived yet — "thankfully," the prosecutor said.

One of the big breaks in the case came when a security company noticed a white man in a red car removing his license plate and perhaps putting a gun in the trunk while parked at the company's office.

The company reported the suspicious activity to police and followed up with them after the second shooting, giving authorities surveillance video and photographs. Investigators found Gleason's red car on Saturday.

Louisiana's capital city is in the grips of a surge in bloodshed. The number of homicides in East Baton Rouge Parish has already surpassed last year's total of 62, The Advocate newspaper reported this month.

"Baton Rouge has been through a lot of turmoil in the last year," the police chief said. If not for Gleason's arrest, "he could have potentially created a tear in the fabric that holds this community together."

Racial tensions escalated in the city in the summer of 2016 when a black man was shot to death by a white police officer outside a convenience store. About two weeks later, a black gunman targeted police in an ambush, killing three officers and wounding three others before he was shot to death.

The city of approximately 229,000 is about 55 percent black and 40 percent white.

Gleason did not appear to have any active social media profiles. A Louisiana State University spokesman said Gleason attended the school from the fall of 2012 to fall of 2013. He had transferred to LSU from Baton Rouge Community College.

Gleason was arrested in Phoenix in December on charges of shoplifting wine and razors. Police said he was homeless at the time. The case was dismissed after he completed a diversion program.

During the search of Gleason's home, authorities also found 9 grams of marijuana and vials of human growth hormone, according to police.

Associated Press Writer Bob Christie in Phoenix contributed to this report.

This story has corrected the time frame for when Gleason was enrolled at LSU and that a single Baton Rouge white police officer shot and killed a black man outside a convenience store last summer.

One last last chance: GOP strains for Obamacare repeal votes

By ERICA WERNER, AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Time growing short, President Donald Trump and Republican Senate leaders dove into a frantic hunt for votes Tuesday in a last-ditch effort to repeal and replace "Obamacare." The pressure was intense, the outcome uncertain in a Capitol newly engulfed in drama over health care.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, whose failure to pass an Obamacare repeal bill in July opened a bitter public rift with Trump, pressed hard for the newly revived effort, which had been left for dead as recently as a week or two ago. But in a sign he remained short of votes, McConnell refused to commit to bringing the legislation to the floor.

As in July, much of the focus was on Arizona Sen. John McCain. Would he step back in line with fellow Republicans now that there was a bill co-written by Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, his best friend in the Senate? McCain wasn't saying. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, another crucial vote, wasn't disclosing her views either.

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Republicans must act by Sept. 30 in the Senate, or face the prospect of a Democratic filibuster. That blocking action is currently staved off by budget rules that will expire at the end of the fiscal year. The new legislation, by Graham and Sen. Bill Cassidy of Louisiana, would undo the central pillars of former President Barack Obama's health care law, and replace them with block grants to the states so they could make their own health care coverage rules.

"Governors and state legislators of both parties would have both the opportunity and the responsibility to help make quality and affordable health care available to their citizens in a way that works for their own particular states," McConnell said on the Senate floor. "It's an intriguing idea and one that has a great deal of support."

Democrats are unanimously opposed, arguing that the legislation would result in millions of Americans losing their health insurance, decrease access to affordable care and damage the Medicaid health program for the poor.

So McConnell must win the votes of 50 of the 52 Senate Republicans. That would amount to victory in the 100-member Senate, because GOP Vice President Mike Pence would then break a tie.

Pence appeared at the Capitol Tuesday and declared the Trump administration was "all-in" on the effort. The president himself was closely in touch with Graham and others.

If the bill does pass, Speaker Paul Ryan has committed to pushing it through the House as-is, and straight to the president's desk, according to Graham. After seven years of promises to get rid of "Obamacare," Republicans would have finally succeeded. It would be a promise kept to the GOP base, yet one with uncertain and potentially devastating political consequences for the Republican Party given that millions of people would be likely to lose their health coverage and others might have skimpier care.

The bill would let states set their own coverage requirements, allow insurers to boost prices on people with serious medical conditions, end Obama's mandates that most Americans buy insurance and that companies offer coverage to workers, and cut and reshape Medicaid.

The bill's full impacts are difficult to predict since the Congressional Budget Office has not had time to assess it. But senators plan to move forward without a complete CBO "score," heightening outrage from Democrats.

By Tuesday evening the legislation remained at least one or two votes short.

The situation is nearly identical to where Republicans found themselves back in July when McConnell made one last attempt to pass a stripped-down repeal bill. It failed in a tense late-night session, with McCain, newly diagnosed with brain cancer, casting the decisive "no" vote.

McCain finds himself once again at the center of the drama this time around. But now there's a twist: His best friend in the Senate, Graham, is an author of the bill.

McCain has been more more than willing to buck his party's leadership over the years, and to defy Trump. Undercutting Graham might be a different issue, and McCain brusquely refused to tip his hand Tuesday.

"I don't have anything to say," McCain said repeatedly and snapped at a reporter who pressed for more. "I have nothing to say, do you hear me?"

Graham made clear he was arguing the case forcefully to his longtime friend, with whom he's partnered on any number of policy initiatives over the years and rarely parted ways. A hearing on the legislation was scheduled for next week after McCain had complained there weren't any.

"I'm not speaking for Sen McCain. I know he likes federalism, I know he wants bipartisanship, but I just don't personally see a bipartisan proposal that's got a snowball's chance in hell of doing anything other than propping up Obamacare," Graham said. "It's either this or a march toward Bernie-care," a reference to Sen. Bernie Sanders' Medicare-for-all bill.

GOP Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky has announced his opposition to the legislation, saying it doesn't go far enough in repealing "Obamacare," while moderate GOP Sen. Susan Collins of Maine, who opposed earlier repeal bills, also sounded like a "no" Tuesday. She said the Graham-Cassidy bill could be worse than earlier versions because of potential harm to people with pre-existing conditions.

In addition to McCain, the focus was on moderate Murkowski, who was the third "no" vote on the earlier

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bill along with Collins and McCain.

Murkowski kept a low profile Tuesday but in what could be a significant factor for her, Alaska's independent governor, Bill Walker, joined a bipartisan letter with other governors in opposition to the bill, asking senators to instead focus on bipartisan approaches. A pair of potent interest groups, the American Medical Association and AARP, also declared their opposition.

But the prospect for any kind of bipartisanship appeared to die out altogether as GOP Sen. Lamar Alexander announced he had not found consensus in his attempt for a limited fix for existing health marketplaces; his Democratic partner Sen. Patty Murray accused GOP leadership of freezing their effort.

Associated Press writers Alan Fram, Kevin Freking, Andrew Taylor and Richard Lardner in Washington and Julie Carr Smyth in Columbus, Ohio contributed to this report.

Global differences abound as leaders address UN

By EDITH M. LEDERER and JENNIFER PELTZ, Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — This year's U.N. gathering of world leaders put an immediate spotlight Tuesday on deep differences on tackling crises from North Korea to global warming: France's president urged world leaders to work together, while America's emphasized nations' own sovereignty.

And U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres warned that the threat of a nuclear attack is at its highest level since the end of the Cold War and cautioned about the dangers of fiery rhetoric.

All three men made their debut appearances at the U.N. General Assembly, where presidents, prime ministers and monarchs are gathered for six days of discussion of matters ranging from nuclear peril to climate change to refugees. But on day one, the spotlight was on U.S. President Donald Trump and France's Emmanuel Macron.

Macron, a centrist who embraced internationalism during his campaign, vowed to press ahead with the Paris accord to combat global warming, although the U.S. has said it's withdrawing from the agreement. In his speech and a subsequent news conference, Macron said he respects Trump's decision but thinks it's a mistake and will continue trying to persuade the American to reconsider.

Macron also said France won't "close any door to dialogue" with North Korea and said it would be "a grave error" to unwind the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran, which faces strong criticism from Trump. Macron also called for investing in education and health and proposed appointing a U.N. representative for press freedom.

Seven decades after the end of World War II and the creation of the United Nations, international bodies are confronting doubts that they are merely venues for "a game for diplomats sitting around a table" and come up short on addressing such major threats as climate change.

But "today, more than ever before, we need multilateralism" to work on global warming, war, terrorism and other issues, Macron said.

"We can only address those challenges through multilateralism," he said, "not through survival of the fittest."

Trump, a couple of hours earlier, portrayed "a coalition of strong and independent nations that embrace their sovereignty to promote security, prosperity, and peace," but keep their own citizens' interests foremost.

"I will always put America first," and his counterparts "should always put your countries first," Trump said. "America first" was one of his slogans from a campaign in which he often belittled the U.N.; he now says it has "tremendous potential."

He told leaders that the United States seeks harmony and friendship, not strife, but he warned that America "can no longer be taken advantage of."

In his speech, Trump had harsh words for North Korea — he threatened to "totally destroy" the Asian nation if the U.S. is forced to defend itself or its allies against aggression — and for the Iran pact, which Trump called "an embarrassment" to the U.S. He hinted that his administration could soon declare Iran out of compliance with the deal, which could unravel it.

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North Korea's mission said its ambassador and a senior diplomat left the chamber to boycott Trump's speech, but left a note-taker to listen.

Iran's semi-official ISNA news agency said Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif called Trump's remarks "impudent and ignorant."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu heaped praise on Trump's comments and told the General Assembly that the Iran deal should be scuttled or changed to put more pressure on Tehran.

Israel sees Iran as its most dangerous adversary because of its nuclear program, development of long-range missiles and support for militant groups in the region. Netanyahu warned that Israel would fiercely defend itself, but he made a point of telling everyday Iranians that Israel doesn't see them as enemies — he even broke into Farsi, one of Iran's main languages, to say: "You are our friends."

Guterres, meanwhile, put "nuclear peril" as the leading global threat and added that "fiery talk can lead to fatal misunderstandings."

His message was implicitly directed at North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, but also at the U.S. and Trump. The two have traded tough rhetoric amid Pyongyang's continuing nuclear and missile tests.

Guterres said a solution to North Korea's activities must be political. "This is a time for statesmanship," he stressed.

Beyond the nuclear threat, Guterres painted a grim picture of a troubled world facing grave challenges as people see rising insecurity, inequality, conflict and climate change in a world of polarized politics and fragmented societies.

"We are a world in pieces. We need to be a world at peace," he said, later tweeting that "only together, as truly United Nations, can we build a peaceful world."

By long tradition, Brazil's leader is first to address the 193-member General Assembly — a custom carried on this year by President Michel Temer, who was charged last week with obstruction of justice and leading a criminal organization. Temer denies wrongdoing.

He said that at "this time in history, marked by so much uncertainty and instability, we need more diplomacy, not less — and "we need the U.N. more than before."

But Temer said it needs reform, particularly expanding the powerful Security Council to align it with the reality of the 21st century. Brazil is part of a group with Germany, India and Japan seeking permanent seats on the council.

Not far behind North Korea on the list of issues needing urgent international attention is the plight of Myanmar's Rohingya Muslims, victims of what Guterres calls a campaign of "ethnic cleansing" that has driven nearly 400,000 to flee into Bangladesh in the past three weeks. He called for the authorities in Myanmar to end military operations, allow unhindered humanitarian access and address the Rohingya's grievances.

In Myanmar's capital of Naypyitaw, leader Aung San Suu Kyi defended the government earlier in the day and said her country does not fear international scrutiny. She invited diplomats to see some areas for themselves.

Guterres told leaders in his address that "I take note" of Suu Kyi's speech.

The world leaders gathered as Hurricane Maria pounded the small Caribbean nation of Dominica with 160 mph winds. On Monday, Guterres and top government officials from several countries devastated by another Category 5 storm, Hurricane Irma, addressed a hastily called U.N. meeting and appealed for help to rebuild following that storm's destruction.

Review: Apple Watch goes solo, but don't dump your phone yet

By ANICK JESDANUN, AP Technology Writer

SANTA CLARA, Calif. (AP) — A chief gripe with Apple Watch is that it requires you to keep an iPhone with you for most tasks. The inclusion of GPS last year helped on runs and bike rides, but you're still missing calls and messages without the phone nearby.

A new model with its own cellular-network connection is Apple's next step toward an untethered world. Now you can make and receive calls and messages on the watch while leaving your phone at home.

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But the watch still needs regular contact with an iPhone, and for most tasks, the phone needs to be on and connected, even if it's nowhere nearby. So you can't get away with ditching the iPhone altogether. (Android users have their own wristwear options, including Samsung Gear and Android Wear watches, some of which can already manage their own network connections.)

The new Apple Watch Series 3, distinguished by a red crown, comes out Friday starting at about \$400. You can forgo cellular, and the red crown, for \$70 less. Or get a first-generation model, without GPS, for about \$250.

WHERE IT HELPS

You might not want to bring your phone on a short jog; the watch can still keep you in touch. Or you can leave the phone home while walking the dog or performing a quick errand.

You need a data add-on from the same wireless provider as your phone. It typically costs \$5 or \$10 a month and uses the phone's data allotment.

While the watch technically has its own phone number, the major carriers have worked out number syncing. Calls to your phone will go to the watch, and calls from the watch will appear on caller ID with your regular number. Same goes for texts and iMessage chats.

Calls use the watch's speaker and microphone, or wireless earphones. Colleagues say call quality was fine. It came in handy for sneaking in runs during conference calls (though if you're my boss, just kidding! Now, about that raise ...).

Phone calls and iMessage chats work on the watch even if your phone is off, as do turn-by-turn maps and queries to the Siri voice assistant. For texts, the phone needs to be on — somewhere. With the phone on, you can perform a variety of other tasks, including checking weather apps, Yelp recommendations and notifications that go to the phone.

Coming soon: the ability to stream Apple Music, even with the phone off. Unfortunately, this doesn't apply to rival music services or Apple's podcast app.

LIMITATIONS

Because the watch screen is small, many apps offer only a sliver of information and refer you back to the phone to view more. That was little more than an annoyance when the phone was in the same room. If you've left the phone behind, though, you'll be left hanging.

You can also run into trouble while roaming, particularly internationally. For one thing, engineers weren't able to squeeze in support for cellular frequencies around the world. And outside the U.S., only a handful of carriers are supporting the cellular watch. In any case, don't forget to switch to airplane mode on flights.

Cellular data also drains the battery quicker. Apple's promised 18 hours of battery life includes about four hours of such use. An hour of phone calls over LTE will drain the battery completely.

I got dropped from two conference calls because the battery was low to begin with. Plan ahead. A spare watch charger at your desk helps for those days you're dumb enough to leave your phone on the kitchen counter.

EMBRACING THE TETHER

It can be handy to untether the watch at times, but it's not always necessary. Even when tied to the phone, Series 3 offers improvement such as tracking elevation, so you get credit for climbing stairs or jogging up a hill. And you can now hear Siri responses on the watch speaker, something enabled by the new version's faster processor.

SOFTWARE UPDATE

For owners of past models, a software update out this week, watchOS 4, will bring easier access to music playback controls when exercising — just swipe left. There are more prompts when reaching or nearing daily goals, and options for multiple sports in a single workout.

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A new heart rate app now shows heart rate at rest and averages when walking or recovering from exercise. These can help you gauge your overall fitness.

And if your heart rate is high without any signs of exercise, you'll get an alert. You enable this when you first open the heart rate app. It can signal health problems, though Apple is stopping short of telling you to see a doctor or visit the emergency room, as the watch isn't marketed — or certified — as a medical device.

Asian stocks flat as investors await Fed meeting results

By **YOUKYUNG LEE, AP Business Writer**

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Asian stock markets were little changed on Wednesday as investors took to the sidelines ahead of the Federal Reserve's announcement of the result of its meeting.

KEEPING SCORE: Japan's Nikkei 225 was flat at 20,298.80 and South Korea's Kospi edged down 0.1 percent to 2,413.63. Hong Kong's Hang Seng index added 0.3 percent to 28,117.50. China's Shanghai Composite Index added 0.1 percent to 3,359.74. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 fell 0.2 percent to 5,701.10. Stocks in Southeast Asia were mixed.

FED WATCH: At the end of its two-day meeting on Wednesday, the Federal Reserve is widely expected to announce that it will begin to reduce its enormous bond portfolio, which reached \$4.5 trillion. The move will gradually increase long-term borrowing rates. While shrinking the Fed's balance sheet is much expected, when and how the Fed will manipulate its target for short-term interest rates is less clear. After leaving its benchmark rate at a record low for seven years after the 2008 crisis, the Fed has modestly raised the rate four times since December 2015 to a still-low range of 1 percent to 1.25 percent.

ANALYST'S TAKE: "The Fed's view will likely play the key role in driving price action. Investors are likely to look past the Fed's interest rate decision and even the plan to shrink the Fed's balance sheet, focusing primarily upon the Fed's forward guidance," said Jingyi Pan, a market strategist at IG in Singapore. "This could come in multiple forms such as the Fed's economic projections, statement and also Fed chair Yellen's testimony."

WALL STREET: U.S. stock markets finished with a slight gain on Tuesday. The Standard & Poor's 500 index rose 0.1 percent to 2,506.65. The Dow Jones industrial average gained 0.2 percent to 22,370.80. The Nasdaq composite added 0.1 percent to 6,461.32. The Russell 2000 index of smaller-company stocks declined 0.1 percent, to 1,440.40.

OIL: Benchmark U.S. crude added 35 cents to \$50.25 per barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract fell 45 cents to settle at \$49.90 a barrel on Tuesday. Brent crude, used to price international oils, gained 24 cents to \$55.38 per barrel in London.

CURRENCIES: The dollar fell to 111.54 yen from 111.58 yen. The euro strengthened to \$1.2009 from \$1.1996.

Today in History

By **The Associated Press**

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Sept. 20, the 263rd day of 2017. There are 102 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On September 20, 1967, the Cunard liner RMS Queen Elizabeth 2 was christened by Britain's Queen Elizabeth II in Clydebank, Scotland.

On this date:

In 1519, Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan and his crew set out from Spain on five ships to find a western passage to the Spice Islands. (Magellan was killed enroute, but one of his ships eventually circled the world.)

In 1870, Italian troops took control of the Papal States, leading to the unification of Italy.

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In 1884, the National Equal Rights Party was formed during a convention of suffragists in San Francisco; the convention nominated Belva Ann Bennett Lockwood for president.

In 1911, the British liner RMS Olympic collided with the Royal Navy cruiser HMS Hawke off the Isle of Wight; although seriously damaged, the Olympic was able to return to Southampton under its own power.

In 1947, former New York City Mayor Fiorello H. La Guardia died at age 64.

In 1957, Finnish composer Jean Sibelius, 91, died. The police drama "M Squad," starring Lee Marvin, premiered on NBC-TV.

In 1958, Martin Luther King Jr. was seriously wounded during a book signing at a New York City department store when he was stabbed in the chest by Izola Curry. (Curry was later found mentally incompetent; she died at a Queens, New York, nursing home in 2015 at age 98.)

In 1962, James Meredith, a black student, was blocked from enrolling at the University of Mississippi by Democratic Gov. Ross R. Barnett. (Meredith was later admitted.)

In 1973, in their so-called "battle of the sexes," tennis star Billie Jean King defeated Bobby Riggs in straight sets, 6-4, 6-3, 6-3, at the Houston Astrodome. Singer-songwriter Jim Croce, 30, died in a plane crash near Natchitoches, Louisiana.

In 1984, a suicide car bomber attacked the U.S. Embassy annex in north Beirut, killing at least 14 people, including two Americans and 12 Lebanese. The family sitcoms "The Cosby Show" and "Who's the Boss?" premiered on NBC and ABC, respectively.

In 1999, Lawrence Russell Brewer became the second white supremacist to be convicted in the dragging death of James Byrd Jr. in Jasper, Texas. (Brewer was executed on September 21, 2011.) Raisa Gorbachev, wife of the last Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, died at a German hospital after a battle with leukemia; she was 67.

In 2000, Independent Counsel Robert Ray announced the end of the Whitewater investigation, saying there was insufficient evidence to warrant charges against President Bill Clinton and first lady Hillary Clinton. Former Soviet cosmonaut Gherman Titov died at age 65.

Ten years ago: President George W. Bush declined to criticize Blackwater USA, a security company in Iraq accused in a shooting that resulted in civilian deaths, saying investigators needed to determine whether the guards violated rules governing their operations. Thousands of chanting demonstrators filled the streets of Jena (JEE'-nuh), Louisiana, in support of six black teenagers, five of whom were initially charged with attempted murder in the beating of a white classmate (the charges were later reduced). Floyd Landis lost his doping case when two of three arbitrators upheld the results of a test that showed the 2006 Tour de France champion had used synthetic testosterone to fuel his spectacular comeback victory. (Landis forfeited his Tour title and was subject to a two-year ban, retroactive to January 30, 2007.)

Five years ago: On a day when thousands of angry Pakistanis tried to make their way to the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad, the embassy aired an ad on Pakistani TV showing President Barack Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton denouncing an anti-Islamic video produced in the United States. Space shuttle Endeavour, riding atop a Boeing 747, landed at Edwards Air Force Base in California en route to its eventual retirement home, the California Science Center in Los Angeles.

One year ago: In their final speeches at the annual gathering of world leaders, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon railed against leaders who kept "feeding the war machine" in Syria, while U.S. President Barack Obama said there was no military solution to the five-year conflict. A black police officer fatally shot Keith Lamont Scott, a black man, at a Charlotte, North Carolina, apartment complex, prompting days of civil unrest (Charlotte-Mecklenburg police later said that the shooting was justified). Movie director and screenwriter Curtis Hanson ("L.A. Confidential") died in Los Angeles at age 71.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Sophia Loren is 83. Pro Football Hall of Famer Jim Taylor is 82. Rock musician Chuck Panozzo is 69. Actor Tony Denison is 68. Hockey Hall of Famer Guy LaFleur is 66. Actress Debbi Morgan is 66. Jazz musician Peter White is 63. Actress Betsy Brantley is 62. Actor Gary Cole is 61. TV news correspondent Deborah Roberts is 57. Country-rock musician Joseph Shreve (Flynnville Train) is 56. Rock musician Randy Bradbury (Pennywise) is 53. Actress Kristen Johnston is 50. Rock singers Gunnar and

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Matthew Nelson are 50. Rock musician Ben Shepherd is 49. Actress Euka Okuma is 45. Actress-model Moon Bloodgood is 42. Actor Jon Bernthal is 41. Singer The Dream is 40. Actor Charlie Weber is 39. Rock musician Rick Woolstenhulme (WOOL'-sten-hyoolm) (Lifehouse) is 38. Actress Crystle Stewart is 36. Rapper Yung Joc is 35. Actor Aldis Hodge is 31. Actor Malachi (MAL'-ah-ky) Kirby is 28.

Thought for Today: "History must stay open, it is all humanity." — William Carlos Williams, American author and poet (1883-1963).