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OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton
The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

Midwest Masonry & concrete Pumping

Greg Heilman, owner

405 E 1st Ave., Groton

Greg: 253/929-9137

Mike: 605/492-7041

midwestmasonry1@yahoo.com



Groton Area Schedule of Events

Thursday, November 29, 2018

TBD: Basketball: Girls 7th/8th Game vs. Langford @ Langford High School

Friday, November 30, 2018

State Oral Interp at Watertown High School

Saturday, December 1, 2018

State Oral Interp at Watertown High School

10:00am: Basketball: Girls 7th/8th Jamboree vs. Langford, Northwestern, Waubay-Summit, Webster MS @ Groton Area High School Arena

10:00am: Wrestling: Boys Varsity Tournament TBA vs. Clark/Willow Lake @ Clark Junior-Senior High School

Sunday, December 2, 2018

(2:00pm- 6:00pm: Open Gym, GHS Arena

Grades JK-8 2pm - 4pm; Grades 6-12 4pm - 6pm)

Monday, December 3, 2018

7:00 pm: City Council Meeting at the Groton Community Center

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News Briefs

2018 Region Honor Band: Clarinet: Kylie Kassube (1st chair), Percussion: Emily Thompson (1st chair), Bass Clarinet: Rease Jandel (1st chair), French Horn: Ashley Garduno, Alto Sax: Stella Meier, Bari Sax: Samantha Pappas, and Tuba: Braden Freeman.

Tessa Erdmann was selected as the 2019 Hugh O Brian Youth Leadership representative from Groton. Emily Thompson was named as the school winner for the 2018 Wendy's High School Heisman.

Update on Hunter Schaller

No update on Hunter as of this morning. The Hunter Schaller gofundme page has generated over \$8,000 so far. If you would like to donate, [click here](#) to go to the page.



**Thursday,
Nov. 29
5:30 p.m.
to 6:30 p.m.**

Groton Care & Rehab
1106 N 2nd St, Groton

Free Will Donation

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THINKING ABOUT HEALTH

The Government Tries Yet Again to Regulate Tobacco Products

By Trudy Lieberman, Rural Health News Service

The Food and Drug Administration just announced it would once again try to regulate tobacco products.

This time the target of the agency's regulatory hand is what it believes is the growing menace of flavored e-cigarettes and other tobacco products used by young people who've turned to vaping and smoking. The FDA said about 3.6 million kids under age 18 now admit they use e-cigarettes.

That's an alarming number and is worrisome because FDA commissioner Dr. Scott Gottlieb has noted that almost all current smokers started when they were kids. At their core, the FDA's proposals are aimed at keeping kids from smoking today so they don't become smokers tomorrow.

The FDA has taken two actions to curtail young customers' appetites for the market's new tobacco products. It did not issue an outright ban on e-cigarettes that had been widely expected and that some anti-tobacco advocates hoped for. Instead, the agency said stores could continue to sell e-cigarettes but only from closed-off areas that would not be accessible to teenagers. Whether this will keep teens from getting their hands on the e-cigarettes is anyone's guess.

Can a store, for instance, comply with the new rule if it simply hides its e-cigarettes under the counter, out of sight of the teens wanting to buy them? The answer is not clear. FDA Commissioner Gottlieb says such a strategy would not be sufficient. He told the New York Times, "What we are envisioning is a separate room or a walled-off area. It needs to be a separate structure. A curtain won't cut it."

The FDA also proposed a ban on menthol cigarettes and flavored cigars, two traditional products that, according to the Times, disproportionately harm African Americans. Black leaders have accused the industry of targeting African Americans with their marketing campaigns.

Olive Grove's 3rd Annual Christmas Tour of Homes & Holiday Party

Saturday,
Dec. 1, 2018

**Tour of Homes
4-7 p.m.**

Gary & Linda Thurston
Alan Strom and Shelly Lerew
Ron and Dawn Breedlove
Olde Bank 'n Café
J. Simon Photography

Coffee, Apple Cider and
goodies at the clubhouse

**Holiday Party
4 p.m. to Close**

A variety of snacks served
Silent Basket Items - Bidding
closes at 8:30 p.m.
Live Auction begins at 8:30 p.m.

\$15 Tickets Available at
Lori's Pharmacy, Groton
Groton Ford
Hair & Company, Aberdeen

Come on out for a fun evening!
Support your local golf course!

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While these are laudable goals from a public health standpoint, it's a long tough fight to make them a reality if past efforts to curb smoking are any guide.

Industry lawyers quickly weighed in on both proposals, challenging the FDA's authority to impose restrictions on where e-cigarettes could be sold and to ban menthol cigarettes and flavored cigars. A lawyer representing the National Association of Convenience Stores, a trade group, told the Times the agency can't discriminate against one specific type of retail outlet, "and that's what they're trying to do here."

Murray Garnick, the general counsel for Altria Group, which sells vaping products, said there would be a lengthy debate over the proposed prohibition on menthol cigarettes. "We continue to believe that a total ban on menthol cigarettes or flavored cigars would be an extreme measure not supported by the science and evidence," he told the Times.

With menthol cigarettes accounting for about one-third of cigarette sales in the U.S., you can be sure the debate will be drawn-out and full of misrepresentations if the past public debates on tobacco regulation are any guide.

It's instructive to look back a couple of decades at another well-publicized effort to curb smoking. The FDA commissioner at the time, Dr. David Kessler, said that taking on the tobacco industry was the most challenging part of his job.

In the 1990s, Kessler and a team of FDA investigators worked with informants who revealed that tobacco companies had purposely manipulated the nicotine levels in their cigarettes.

Kessler said at the time, "We asked the question of whether nicotine is a drug. So it's a question of intent: What did the tobacco companies know? No one had ever gone to ask that question."

Kessler and the FDA had a few victories: the big settlement state attorneys general won that has funded many public health projects in the states and eliminating Joe Camel from billboards. But they did not win the ultimate battle. The Supreme Court, by one vote, ruled that the FDA could not regulate tobacco as a drug.

Kessler said years later: "I underestimated the power of this industry. They have their tentacles in government, in media, and the scientific and medical communities. They had a former FDA commissioner on retainer. They got the Congress to hold hearings to investigate us."

It's unlikely the power of the tobacco industry has diminished since Kessler left office in 1997. And therein lies a cautionary tale for current FDA regulators who are tiptoeing ever so carefully through the regulatory mine field surrounding big tobacco.

How do you think tobacco should be regulated? Write to Trudy at trudy.lieberman@gmail.com.

TRY A *New* **HUNGRY UP Deal**

\$4 Hungry-ish Deal
Single
w/Cheese



\$5 Hungry Deal
Double
w/Cheese



\$6 Hangry Deal
Triple
w/Cheese



Includes Fries & Mini Blizzard® TREAT

Royal Blizzard® Treat at an additional charge



Valid only at:
DQ Grill & Chill Restaurant
11 E Hwy 12
Groton, SD 57445-2175

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Today in Weather History

November 29, 1896: The mercury plunged to 51 degrees below zero at Havre Montana. It marked the culmination of a two week long cold wave. A stagnate high-pressure area similar to those over Siberia during the winter was the cause. During the month of November temperatures across Montana and the Dakotas averaged 15 to 25 degrees below normal. Aberdeen's low temperature on this day was 25 degrees below zero. The average temperature for the month was 9.7 degrees, or 19.6 degrees below normal.

November 29, 1996: Widespread freezing rain laid down a thick layer of ice across a large part of north-east South Dakota and west central Minnesota on the 29th and 30th, making driving on area highways and Interstate 29 treacherous. Later on the 29th, the freezing rain changed over to snow. Snowfall amounts ranged from 2 to 4 inches across the area. Numerous accidents occurred throughout the weekend with mainly minor injuries. Many cars and trucks also went into ditches. The South Dakota Highway Patrol reported in, one three hour period that along I-29, from the Clear Lake exit to the Codington County line 40 to 45 vehicles were in the ditch. Many activities and sporting events were also postponed or cancelled.

November 29, 2002: High winds of 30 to 50 mph, gusting to near 70 mph, occurred much of the afternoon across central and north central South Dakota. A tractor-trailer, carrying a load of livestock, was overturned on Highway 12 about three miles east of Mobridge. The tractor was totaled, four cattle were killed, and the driver suffered minor injuries. High winds of 30 to 50 mph, with gusts to near 60 mph, also occurred across Roberts and Grant counties in the late afternoon hours.

November 29, 1991: A tornado struck southeast Springfield, Missouri, causing F4 damage. Shortly after touchdown, the tornado reached F3 intensity, approximately 3 miles north of the town of Nixa. While crossing Highway 65, the tornado picked up a truck and dropped it onto a frontage road, killing one passenger and injuring ten others. The tornado intensified to F4 strength as it moved through the Woodbridge and Natural Bridge Estates subdivisions where 15 homes were destroyed. Altogether, two people were killed and 64 others were injured.

1896 - The mercury plunged to 51 degrees below zero at Havre, MT. It marked the culmination of a two week long cold wave caused by a stagnate high pressure area similar to those over Siberia during the winter. During the month of November temperatures across Montana and the Dakotas averaged 15 to 25 degrees below normal. (David Ludlum)

1969 - Dense fog along the Jersey Turnpike resulted in a chain reaction of vehicle collisions during the morning rush hour. A propane truck jackknifed and was struck by a trailer truck, and other vehicles piled into the fiery mass. (David Ludlum)

1975 - Red River was buried under 34 inches of snow in 24 hours, establishing a record for the state of New Mexico. (The Weather Channel)

1985 - The temperature at Bismarck, ND, plunged to 30 degrees below zero to establish their record low for the month of November. The high that day was 4 degrees below zero. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Snow blanketed the Upper Mississippi Valley, with heavy snow reported near Lake Superior. Up to ten inches of snow was reported in Douglas County and Bayfield County of Wisconsin. Brule WI received nine inches of snow. Heavy rain soaked the Middle Atlantic Coast States, while gale force winds lashed the coastline. Flooding was reported in Maryland and Virginia. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Nine inches of snow at Alta UT brought their total for the month to 164 inches, surpassing their previous November record of 144 inches. Snowbird UT, also in the Little Cottonwood Valley, surpassed their November record of 118 inches of snow. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Strong Santa Ana winds diminished over southern California, but record cold was reported in some of the California valleys, with readings of 27 degrees at Redding and 31 degrees at Bakersfield. Gale force winds, gusting to 44 mph at Milwaukee WI, produced snow squalls in the Great Lakes Region. Sault Ste Marie MI finished the month of November with a record 46.8 inches of snow. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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Today



Patchy Fog
then Partly
Sunny

High: 34 °F

Tonight



Mostly Cloudy

Low: 20 °F

Friday



Partly Sunny

High: 35 °F

Friday
Night



Chance
Snow/Sleet

Low: 25 °F

Saturday



Chance Snow

High: 30 °F

❄️

Heavy Snow Potential

Friday PM – Saturday PM

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD
Updated: 11/29/2018 3:46 AM CT

*Evidence continues to build for a major winter storm developing late this week and weekend

Crippling System	Generally a foot or more of snow
Significant System	Generally 6-12" of snow
Disruptive System	Generally 3-6" of snow
Inconvenient System	Generally 0.5-3" of snow
Minor/No Accumulation	

Western - Central - Southeast South Dakota:
Now Is The Time To Prepare For This Significant Snowstorm!

Published on: 11/29/2018 at 3:51AM

Evidence continues to build that a significant winter storm will develop across the region Friday and persist through most of Saturday. The track of the system could still shift, however the focus area for the worst conditions remains mainly across the southern half of South Dakota. Heavy snow will be the main impact from this system - now is the time to prepare!

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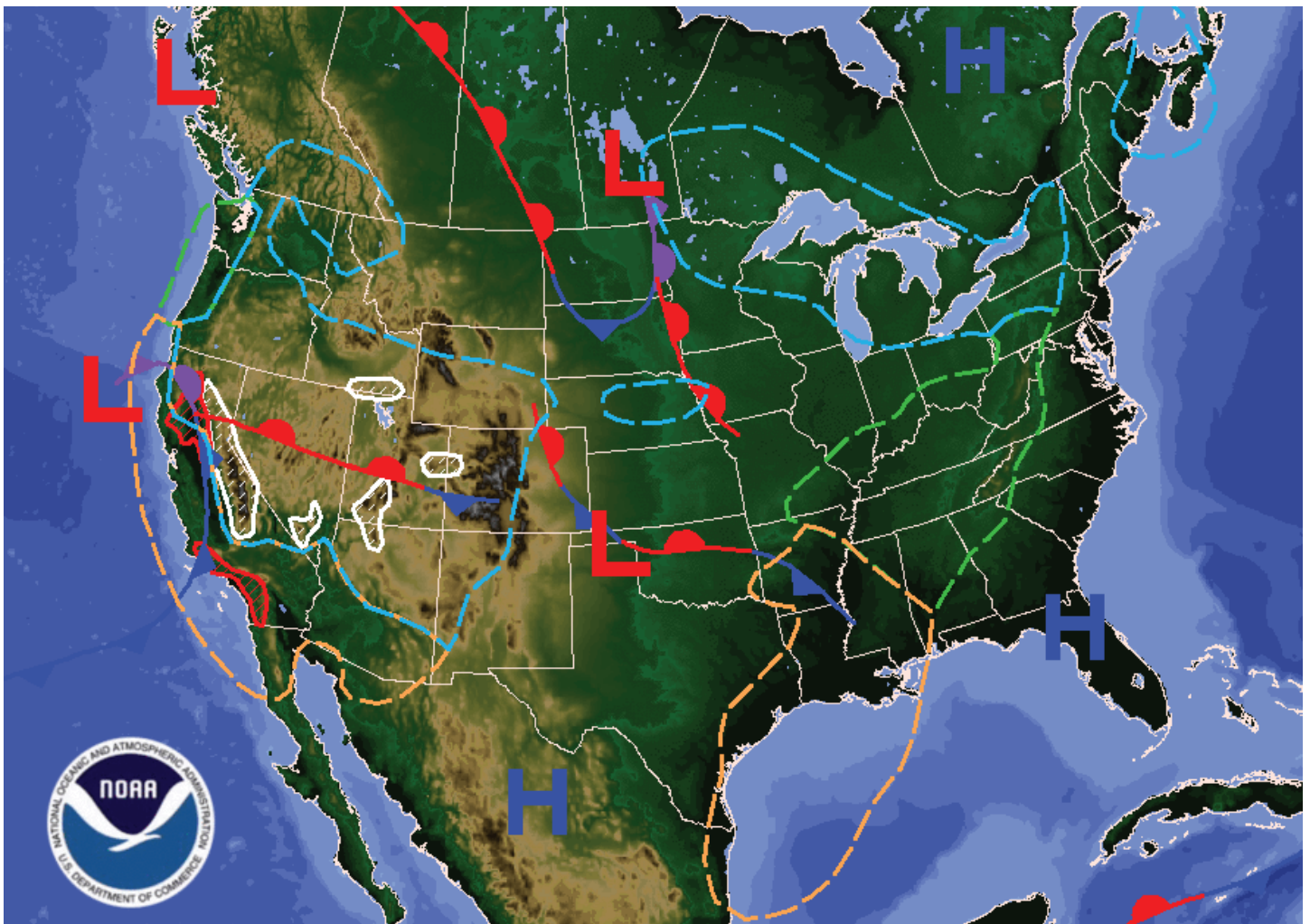
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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 30 °F at 6:21 PM
Low Outside Temp: 25 °F at 12:54 AM
High Gust: 22 mph at 9:49 PM
Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 57° in 2017
Record Low: -26° in 1964
Average High: 32°F
Average Low: 12°F
Average Precip in Nov.: 0.69
Precip to date in Nov.: 0.76
Average Precip to date: 21.16
Precip Year to Date: 15.81
Sunset Tonight: 4:53 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:52 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Thu, Nov 29, 2018, issued 4:51 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Mcreynolds with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

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

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IN VAIN OR IN VICTORY?

Years ago, a letter was found in the pocket of a young soldier. He wrote it knowing that he would be in a fierce battle and his chances of survival were slim.

Dear Mom, he wrote. Do you know why I feel sad right now? Its not about dying that worries me. We both know that when my number is up, its up. There is nothing that we can do about that. I wouldnt put it so crudely if we didnt know the truth and if we could not be honest with one another. And, so I say humbly and without hypocrisy, Gods will be done!"

"As I said, Mom, its not the dying that bothers me. I will be calm right up until the end as you will be after you hear the news of my death. But what does worry, bother and matter most to me is this: Will I have died in vain?

Paul, in writing to the Corinthians addressed dying in vain when he wrote: We urge you not to receive Gods grace in vain. Could it be possible, he wondered, that they could ignore Christs death? Did they doubt the message of Paul? Could they look at the cross and not see that the death of Jesus fulfilled the requirements of God?

He, Paul said, will have died in vain if you do not accept His grace. In other words, if we do not accept the death of Jesus as the door to eternal life, there is no life in Christ.

But what of those who have accepted Gods grace in Christ? The Psalmist expressed it in heart-touching words: The Lord delights in those who fear Him, who put their hope in His unfailing love. Can we ask for more?

Prayer: Father, we love You and thank You for the hope that we have in You. We would live in vain without You. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 147:11 The Lord delights in those who fear Him, who put their hope in His unfailing love.

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2018 Groton SD Community Events

- Groton Lion's Club Bingo- Wednesday Nights 6:30pm at the Groton Legion (Year Round)
- Nov./Dec./Jan./Feb./Mar. Groton Lion's Club Wheel of Meat- Saturday Nights 7pm at the Groton Legion (Fall/Winter Months)
- 1/27/2019 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm
- 4/13/2019 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 5/4/2019 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday in May)
- 5/27/2019 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Program at the Cemetery, Lunch to follow at the American Legion (Memorial Day)
- Transit Fundraiser (Middle Thursday in June)
- SDSU Golf at Olive Grove
- 6/15/2019 Triathlon (Saturday before Father's Day)
- 7/4/2019 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)
- 7/14/2019 Summer Fest
- 9/7/2019 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 10/12/2019 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 10/11/2019 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/31/2018 Trunk or Treat (Halloween)
- 11/10/2018 Groton American Legion Post #39 Turkey Shoot (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
- 12/01/2018 Olive Grove Golf Course 2018 Holiday Party
- Best Ball Golf Tourney
- SDSU Golf Tourney
- Sunflower Golf Tourney
- Santa Claus Day
- Fireman's Stag
- Tour of Homes
- Crazy Dayz/Open Houses
- School Events

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News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Wednesday:

Dakota Cash
07-16-17-19-25
(seven, sixteen, seventeen, nineteen, twenty-five)
Estimated jackpot: \$20,000

Lotto America
02-07-10-12-22, Star Ball: 2, ASB: 2
(two, seven, ten, twelve, twenty-two; Star Ball: two; ASB: two)
Estimated jackpot: \$11.92 million

Mega Millions
Estimated jackpot: \$190 million

Powerball
04-19-59-68-69, Powerball: 21, Power Play: 2
(four, nineteen, fifty-nine, sixty-eight, sixty-nine; Powerball: twenty-one; Power Play: two)
Estimated jackpot: \$171 million

Daum, Arians double-double as S. Dakota St. tops UMKC 75-47

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — Mike Daum scored 26 points and pulled down 18 rebounds, Alex Arians added 11 points and 10 boards for his first career double-double and South Dakota State led wire-to-wire defeating UMKC 75-47 Wednesday night.

Four players reached double-digit scoring for South Dakota State with Skyler Flatten adding 11 points and Tevin King 10. The Jackrabbits (6-2) pushed their home win streak to a national-best 24 straight.

South Dakota State raced out to an 8-0 lead, was up 45-30 at the half and pushed the lead to 19, 51-32, in the first three minutes after the break. Even a seven-minute span without a field goal didn't threaten the lead. Daum drove for a layup with 11 minutes remaining, sending the Jackrabbits on a 17-2 run over the next four minutes to lead by 30.

South Dakota State shot 49 percent, 28 for 57, and dominated the boards, 46-29, outscoring the Kangaroos 42-18 in the paint.

Xavier Bishop led UMKC (1-7) with 11 points and four assists.

South Dakota women beat No. 23 Iowa State 64-59

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — Ciara Duffy made five 3-pointers and scored 17 points, Allison Arens added three 3-pointers and 11 points and South Dakota beat No. 23 Iowa State 64-59 on Wednesday night.

The Cyclones rallied from an 18-point fourth-quarter deficit to pull within three points with 1:19 remaining, but Madison McKeever's free throws with 14 seconds left sealed it for South Dakota.

Hannah Sjerven had 10 points and 10 rebounds for South Dakota (6-1), which hosted Iowa State for the first time since 1984.

South Dakota knocked down six 3-pointers in the second quarter, outscoring Iowa State 22-9 for a 35-18 halftime advantage.

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Madison Wise made three 3-pointers and scored a season-high 19 points for Iowa State (5-1), which entered one of just 37 unbeaten teams in Division I. Bridget Carleton added 14 points on 5-of-19 shooting. Iowa State returns home to play Arkansas on Sunday in the SEC/Big 12 Challenge.

Wise scored 10 straight during ISU's 15-0 fourth-quarter run.

Authorities ID Yankton man killed in Brookings County crash

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — Authorities have identified a Yankton man who died in a weekend crash in Brookings County.

The Highway Patrol says the car driven by 24-year-old Bryce Keegan rolled in the ditch off a rural road south of the city of Brookings about 7:30 a.m. Sunday.

Keegan was pronounced dead at the scene. He was alone in the vehicle.

Judge allows preliminary work on Keystone XL oil pipeline

HELENA, Mont. (AP) — A Montana judge says a Canadian company may continue preliminary work on the proposed Keystone XL oil pipeline while his order blocking construction is in effect.

U.S. District Judge Brian Morris said Wednesday he will clarify his Nov. 8 injunction to allow TransCanada to conduct engineering and planning activities, confirm shipper contracts, meet with different groups and acquire equipment, permits and land rights.

On Nov. 8, Morris blocked TransCanada's permit to build the pipeline from Alberta's oil sands through a half-dozen U.S. states to the Gulf of Mexico.

The judge ordered a new environmental review after saying the Trump administration had not fully considered the effects of the pipeline.

TransCanada had argued it wants to keep that preliminary work on schedule that that it can be prepared to start pipeline construction as early as mid-February.

Snow and ice impact travel and schools in both Dakotas

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — Ice and snow caused problems for motorists and delayed schools in the Dakotas on Wednesday, and forecasters said a "significant" winter storm might follow in south central and southeast South Dakota this weekend.

The slick conditions prompted a 1 ½-hour shutdown of a long stretch of Interstate 94 in southwestern North Dakota.

In South Dakota, black ice on Interstate 29 in the Beresford area caused numerous vehicles to slide in the ditch. One semitrailer crash blocked the northbound lanes for about 1 ½ hours.

The National Weather Service issued winter weather advisories for a large portion of the states during the day.

The weather service said heavy snow and strong winds were possible in south central and southeast South Dakota Friday evening through Sunday morning.

Dakota Access company says it complied with state settlement

By BLAKE NICHOLSON, Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — A Texas-based developer said it complied with the terms of a 2017 agreement settling allegations it violated North Dakota rules during construction of the Dakota Access oil pipeline, but state regulators want more details.

Energy Transfer Partners in October filed documents detailing efforts by a contractor to plant 141,000 trees and shrubs over the past two years to replace those removed for the pipeline. Last spring, the company filed a nearly 80-page industry handbook it developed on how to properly handle pipeline route adjustments.

The tree-planting effort and how-to manual were required by a September 2017 agreement with North

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Dakota's Public Service Commission to settle allegations that ETP removed too many trees and that it improperly handled a pipeline route change after discovering Native American artifacts. The artifacts were not disturbed.

The company denied doing anything intentionally wrong and fought disciplinary action by the commission for months. ETP didn't admit to any liability under the eventual deal with the PSC, which dropped a \$15,000 penalty proposed earlier. The commission, under state law, had the authority to levy fines up to \$200,000.

A large number of the 141,000 trees and shrubs planted were lost to drought last year, but only about 69,000 plantings were necessary under the state's requirement that two be planted for every one lost, according to Montana-based KC Harvey Environmental, which did the work. More than 57,000 trees survived or grew naturally, for a rate of 83 percent, exceeding the required 75 percent rate, company Principal Engineer David Cameron said.

"It is expected that regeneration will continue over the next two years, increasing the overall total," Cameron's report said.

The agreement required the company to replant at a 3-to-1 ratio in the areas where it might have removed too many trees during construction, and it also called for an additional 20,000 trees. The ETP report does not touch on those requirements, and the PSC has asked the company to prove the work was done.

It also has asked ETP to verify that the handbook copy submitted in May is the final version, and that the company has conducted industry training programs required under the settlement.

"If staff questions whether they are in compliance or determines that they are not, then additional commission action would likely be in order," Commissioner Julie Fedorchak said Wednesday. "That can take several avenues from informal to formal depending on severity."

It could include the possibility of fines, according to commission attorney John Schuh. He added that most provisions of the settlement agreement require compliance by the end of this year.

ETP spokeswoman Lisa Dillinger declined to disclose how much the tree and handbook work cost the company.

"We are pleased to have worked through this issue with the Public Service Commission," Dillinger said.

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

SD Senate GOP leader keeps seat after recount in close race

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Senate Republican leader Blake Curd is holding onto his seat after surviving a recount Wednesday in his close race for re-election.

Minnehaha County Auditor Bob Litz said Curd's election night victory will stand following recounts in Minnehaha and Lincoln counties for the Sioux Falls Senate seat. Democratic candidate Kasey Olivier requested officials take another look after unofficial results showed her down by just 27 votes out of 9,717 cast for both candidates.

Olivier said the recount ended with a similar margin. Curd didn't immediately return a telephone message seeking comment from The Associated Press.

It was a close call for Curd, an orthopedic surgeon who won re-election in 2016 by nearly 1,800 votes. He has served in the chamber since 2013. Curd's victory clears him to seek another term as majority leader, a role Senate Republicans plan to fill next week.

House Republicans earlier this month elected Rep. Lee Qualm to another term as their majority leader.

After nearly unseating the Senate Republican leader, Olivier said she plans to run for political office again in 2020 — though she's not yet sure which one she'll choose. The first-time candidate said she focused on education and workforce development during her state Senate campaign.

Dusty Johnson names congressional leadership team

MITCHELL, S.D. (AP) — Incoming U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson has named his chief of staff and filled other leadership team roles ahead of taking office in January.

Johnson said Wednesday that his chief of staff will be Andrew Christianson, who served in that role for outgoing Rep. Kristi Noem. Johnson is replacing Noem as South Dakota's lone U.S. representative as she transitions into the governor's office.

Johnson also named Courtney Heitkamp as state director and communications adviser; Darren Hedlund as legislative director; Chelsea Schull as state operations manager; and Katie Murray as west river director.

Johnson says they bring a "wide variety of experience and knowledge to the table." He will be sworn into office Jan. 3.

Sanford opens new Sioux Falls clinic Monday

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Sanford Health is set to open its new \$21 million clinic in Sioux Falls.

Sanford says the clinic will bring pharmacy, acute care services and behavioral health care to the growing west side of the city. The 42,000-square-foot clinic has been under construction for a year and a half and will open Monday.

It includes a Lewis Drug store, 50 exam rooms and six procedure rooms. Staff includes integrated health therapists, genetic counselors and health coaches.

Trump says he wouldn't take Manafort pardon 'off the table'

By CHAD DAY, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A pardon for Paul Manafort is "not off the table," President Donald Trump said, drawing swift rebuke from critics who fear the president will use his executive power to protect friends and supporters caught up in the Russia probe.

The president's discussion of a possible pardon in an interview Wednesday with the New York Post came days after special counsel Robert Mueller said Manafort had breached his plea deal by repeatedly lying to investigators. The former Trump campaign chairman denies that he lied.

Trump's remarks are the latest sign of his disdain for the Russia investigation, which has dogged him for two years and ensnared members of his inner circle. In recent weeks, the president, armed with inside information provided to his lawyers by Manafort's legal team, has sharpened his attacks, seizing on what he claims are dirty tactics employed by the special counsel and accusing investigators of pressuring witnesses to lie.

In the interview with the Post, Trump likened the Russia probe to Sen. Joe McCarthy's pursuit of communists in the 1950s.

"We are in the McCarthy era. This is no better than McCarthy," Trump told the newspaper.

When asked about a pardon for Manafort, Trump told the newspaper: "It was never discussed, but I wouldn't take it off the table. Why would I take it off the table?"

Trump only has the power to pardon for federal charges. A pardon would not shield Manafort from prosecution for state charges, though he is not currently facing any.

On Wednesday, the top Democrat on the Senate intelligence committee said that if Trump pardons Manafort, it would be a "blatant and unacceptable abuse of power."

Sen. Mark Warner of Virginia said in a tweet that the president's pardon power is not a "personal tool" that Trump can use to protect "himself and his friends."

Meanwhile, Manafort's lawyers have been briefing Trump's attorneys in recent months on what their client has told investigators, an unusual arrangement for a government cooperator and one that raises the prospect that Manafort could be angling for a pardon.

Manafort spokesman Jason Maloni declined comment.

In the Post interview, Trump also praised two other supporters who are caught up in the Russia probe — conservative author and conspiracy theorist Jerome Corsi and longtime Trump associate Roger Stone.

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He said they were "very brave" for resisting Mueller's investigation.

Both men have been heavily critical of the investigation, and Corsi this week said he had rejected a plea offer from Mueller's team. Draft plea documents show Mueller accusing Corsi of lying to investigators — an allegation he denies — about emails he exchanged with Stone regarding WikiLeaks.

U.S. intelligence agencies have assessed that Russia was the source of hacked material from Democratic organizations that WikiLeaks released during the 2016 presidential campaign. That included thousands of stolen emails from the private account of Hillary Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta in the closing weeks of the campaign.

Mueller is investigating whether any Trump associates had advance knowledge of WikiLeaks' plans.

Mueller earlier this week said Manafort could face additional charges related to lies they say he told investigators in the nearly three months since he cut a plea deal.

Neither Manafort nor Mueller's team has said what Manafort is accused of lying about. But a federal judge set a hearing for Friday in which she will hear from both sides about next steps in the case. That hearing could yield new details about the status of the Russia probe.

Manafort faces up to five years in prison on the two charges in his plea agreement — conspiracy against the United States and conspiracy to obstruct justice. He faces a separate sentencing in Virginia set for February after he was convicted on eight felony counts during a trial last summer.

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China halts work by team on gene-edited babies

By **MARILYNN MARCHIONE**, AP Chief Medical Writer

HONG KONG (AP) — China's government ordered a halt Thursday to work by a medical team that claimed to have helped make the world's first gene-edited babies, as a group of leading scientists declared that it's still too soon to try to make permanent changes to DNA that can be inherited by future generations.

Chinese Vice Minister of Science and Technology Xu Nanping told state broadcaster CCTV that his ministry is strongly opposed to the efforts that reportedly produced twin girls born earlier this month. Xu called the team's actions illegal and unacceptable and said an investigation had been ordered, but made no mention of specific actions taken.

Researcher He Jiankui claims to have altered the DNA of the twins to try to make them resistant to infection with the AIDS virus. Mainstream scientists have condemned the experiment, and universities and government groups are investigating.

He's experiment "crossed the line of morality and ethics adhered to by the academic community and was shocking and unacceptable," Xu said.

A group of leading scientists gathered in Hong Kong this week for an international conference on gene editing, the ability to rewrite the code of life to try to correct or prevent diseases.

Although the science holds promise for helping people already born and studies testing that are underway, a statement issued Thursday by the 14-member conference leaders says it's irresponsible to try it on eggs, sperm or embryos except in lab research because not enough is known yet about its risks or safety.

The conference was rocked by the Chinese researcher's claim to have helped make the world's first gene-edited babies. Conference leaders called for an independent investigation of the claim by He, who spoke to the group Wednesday as international criticism of his claim mounted.

There is no independent confirmation of what He says he did. He was scheduled to speak again at the conference on Thursday, but he left Hong Kong and through a spokesman sent a statement saying "I will remain in China, my home country, and cooperate fully with all inquiries about my work. My raw data will be made available for third party review."

Several prominent scientists said the case showed a failure of the field to police itself and the need for stricter principles or regulations.

"It's not unreasonable to expect the scientific community" to follow guidelines, said David Baltimore, a

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Nobel laureate from California Institute of Technology who led the panel.

There already are some rules that should have prevented what He says he did, said Alta Charo, a University of Wisconsin lawyer and bioethicist and a conference organizer.

"I think the failure was his, not the scientific community," Charo said.

Gene editing for reproductive purposes might be considered in the future "but only when there is compelling medical need," with clear understanding of risks and benefits, and certain other conditions, said Dr. Victor Dzau, president of the U.S. National Academy of Medicine, one of the conference sponsors.

"Not following these guidelines would be an irresponsible act," he added.

Other sponsors of the three-day conference are the Academy of Sciences of Hong Kong, the Royal Society of the United Kingdom and the U.S. National Academy of Sciences and U.S. National Academy Sciences.

Marilynn Marchione can be followed at <http://twitter.com/MMarchioneAP>

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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. WHAT SCIENTISTS ARE SAYING ABOUT GENE-EDITED BABIES

Experts at a Hong Kong conference declare that it's still too soon to try making permanent changes to DNA that can be inherited by future generations.

2. WHERE CARS SPY ON YOU

Electric vehicles sold in China are giving real-time data to the government, providing a powerful surveillance tool without drivers' knowledge, AP learns.

3. MIGRANTS, TRADE, CRIME, THE BORDER WALL

With a new president taking power in Mexico, the challenges to the modern U.S. relationship with its southern neighbor are stark and divisive.

4. HOMEBODY TRUMP KEEPING TRIP SHORT

The U.S. president will spend just two nights on the ground at the G-20 summit in Argentina, making the most of a scaled-back international schedule.

5. SUICIDES, OVERDOSES LEAD SURGE IN US DEATHS

The suicide death rate last year was the highest it's been in at least 50 years, pushing down life expectancy, U.S. health officials say.

6. 'I WOULDN'T TAKE IT OFF THE TABLE'

Trump is drawing rebuke from critics who fear the president will use his executive power to protect friends and supporters caught up in the Russia probe.

7. HOW MORMONS VOTED IN MIDTERMS

About two-thirds of them nationwide favored Republicans, but approval for Trump lags, an AP survey finds.

8. OPIOID CASE HAS NEW COMPLICATION

A federal judicial panel is considering whether babies born in opioid withdrawal should have their lawsuits separated from hundreds of other cases against the drug industry.

9. SPRUCING UP THE BIG APPLE

A massive Norway spruce is lit up in a tradition that ushers in Christmastime in New York City.

10. BASKETBALL MORE THAN JUST A GAME

An upcoming course offering at NYU will explore the sport's role in politics, the arts and more.

If your Tesla knows where you are, China may too

By ERIKA KINETZ, Associated Press

SHANGHAI (AP) — When Shan Junhua bought his white Tesla Model X, he knew it was a fast, beautiful car. What he didn't know is that Tesla constantly sends information about the precise location of his car to the Chinese government.

Tesla is not alone. China has called upon all electric vehicle manufacturers in China to make the same kind of reports — potentially adding to the rich kit of surveillance tools available to the Chinese government as President Xi Jinping steps up the use of technology to track Chinese citizens.

"I didn't know this," said Shan. "Tesla could have it, but why do they transmit it to the government? Because this is about privacy."

More than 200 manufacturers, including Tesla, Volkswagen, BMW, Daimler, Ford, General Motors, Nissan, Mitsubishi and U.S.-listed electric vehicle start-up NIO, transmit position information and dozens of other data points to government-backed monitoring centers, The Associated Press has found. Generally, it happens without car owners' knowledge.

The automakers say they are merely complying with local laws, which apply only to alternative energy vehicles. Chinese officials say the data is used for analytics to improve public safety, facilitate industrial development and infrastructure planning, and to prevent fraud in subsidy programs.

But other countries that are major markets for electronic vehicles — the United States, Japan, across Europe — do not collect this kind of real-time data.

And critics say the information collected in China is beyond what is needed to meet the country's stated goals. It could be used not only to undermine foreign carmakers' competitive position, but also for surveillance — particularly in China, where there are few protections on personal privacy. Under the leadership of Xi Jinping, China has unleashed a war on dissent, marshalling big data and artificial intelligence to create a more perfect kind of policing, capable of predicting and eliminating perceived threats to the stability of the ruling Communist Party.

There is also concern about the precedent these rules set for sharing data from next-generation connected cars, which may soon transmit even more personal information.

"You're learning a lot about people's day-to-day activities and that becomes part of what I call ubiquitous surveillance, where pretty much everything that you do is being recorded and saved and potentially can be used in order to affect your life and your freedom," said Michael Chertoff, who served as Secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security under President George W. Bush and recently wrote a book called "Exploding Data."

Chertoff said global automakers should be asking themselves tough questions. "If what you're doing is giving a government of a more authoritarian country the tools to have massive surveillance, I think then companies have to ask themselves, 'Is this really something we want to do in terms of our corporate values, even if it means otherwise forgoing that market?'"

A BIGGER BROTHER?

The Shanghai Electric Vehicle Public Data Collecting, Monitoring and Research Center sits in a grey tower in suburban Jiading district. One floor up from the cafeteria, a wall-sized screen glows with dots, each representing a single vehicle coursing along Shanghai's roads to create a massive real-time map that could reveal where people live, shop, work, and worship.

Click a dot at random, and up pops a window with a number that identifies each individual vehicle, along with its make and model, mileage and battery charge.

All told, the screen exhibits data from over 222,000 vehicles in Shanghai, the vast majority of them passenger cars.

"We can provide a lot of data from consumers to the government to help them improve policy and planning," said Ding Xiaohua, deputy director of the center, a non-profit that is tightly aligned with and funded by the government.

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According to national specifications published in 2016, electric vehicles in China transmit data from the car's sensors back to the manufacturer. From there, automakers send at least 61 data points, including location and details about battery and engine function to local centers like the one Ding oversees in Shanghai.

Data also flows to a national monitoring center for new energy vehicles run by the Beijing Institute of Technology, which pulls information from more than 1.1 million vehicles across the country, according to the National Big Data Alliance of New Energy Vehicles. The national monitoring center declined to respond to questions.

Those numbers are about to get much bigger. Though electric vehicle sales accounted for just 2.6 percent of the total last year, policymakers have said they'd like new energy vehicles to account for 20 percent of total sales by 2025. Starting next year, all automakers in China must meet production minimums for new energy vehicles, part of Beijing's aggressive effort to reduce dependence on foreign energy sources and place itself at the forefront of a growing global industry.

The Chinese government has shown its interest in tracking vehicles.

"The government wants to know what people are up to at all times and react in the quickest way possible," said Maya Wang, a senior China researcher for Human Rights Watch. "There is zero protection against state surveillance."

"Tracking vehicles is one of the main focuses of their mass surveillance," she added.

Last year, authorities in Xinjiang, a restive region in western China that has become a laboratory for China's surveillance state, ordered residents to install GPS devices so their vehicles could be tracked, according to official media. This summer the Ministry of Public Security, a police agency, began to roll out a system to track vehicles using windshield radio frequency chips that can identify cars as they pass roadside reading devices.

Ding insisted that the electric vehicle monitoring program is not designed to facilitate state surveillance, though he said data could be shared with government public security organs, if a formal request is made. The center said it has not shared information with police, prosecutors or courts, but has used the data to assist a government investigation of a vehicle fire.

There is a privacy firewall built into the system. The monitoring center has each car's unique vehicle identification number, but to link that number with the personal details of the car owner, it must go through the automaker — a step it has taken in the past. Chinese law enforcement can also independently link the vehicle identification number with the car owner's personal information.

"To speak bluntly, the government doesn't need to surveil through a platform like ours," Ding said. He said he believed the security forces "must have their own ways to monitor suspects," as other governments do.

DATA ON WHEELS

Many vehicles in the U.S., Europe and Japan transmit position information back to automakers, who feed it to car-tracking apps, maps that pinpoint nearby amenities and emergency services providers. But the data stops there. Government or law enforcement agencies would generally only be able to access personal vehicle data in the context of a specific criminal investigation and in the U.S. would typically need a court order, lawyers said.

Automakers initially resisted sharing information with the Shanghai monitoring center; then the government made transmitting data a prerequisite for getting incentives.

"The automakers consider the data a precious resource," said a government consultant who helped evaluate the policy and spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive issues. "They gave you dozens of reasons why they can't give you the data. They give you dozens of excuses. Then we offer the incentives. Then they want to give us the data because it's part of their profit."

There was concern that data pulled from electric vehicles might reveal proprietary information about, for example, how hybrids switch between gas and battery power, and eventually set automakers up for commercial competition with a Chinese government entity. As cars become more connected, carmakers are looking to tap new revenue streams built on data — a market McKinsey estimated could be worth \$750 billion by 2030.

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Ding said a Tesla executive came to Shanghai and grilled him about the rules. "The first question is who are you, the second question is why you collect this data, and the third question is how to protect the privacy of the users," Ding said.

Tesla declined to comment.

Ding said confidentiality agreements bar the data center from sharing proprietary information.

Still, he is open about his commercial ambition. He'd like to wean the center from government funding and make money from the data, without infringing on anyone's privacy or intellectual property. "We have done some explorations," he said. "But there is still a distance from truly monetizing it."

CHINA'S EDGE

The Chinese government's ability to grab data as it flows from cars gives its academics and policymakers an edge over competing nations. China tends to view technology development as a key competitive resource. Though global automakers have received billions in incentives and subsidies from U.S., European and Japanese governments, they are contributing data to the Chinese government that ultimately serves Beijing's strategic interests.

In 2011, the U.S. Department of Energy's Idaho National Laboratory began a nationwide study of how electric vehicle owners drive and charge their cars. Participants gave explicit written consent to allow the government laboratory to collect their data, and even then it wasn't delivered in real time, said John Smart, who leads the center's advanced vehicles group. Instead, the team got historical data on a weekly basis. Cars were assigned random numbers for the study, so owners remained anonymous.

Nothing of its kind has been done since in the U.S., Smart said.

"The cost is very high to collect data," he explained. "The government hasn't felt the need to provide that money and the manufacturers making their own investments are choosing to keep the findings to themselves for proprietary reasons."

When it was published, in 2015, the Idaho National Laboratory's study was the largest ever done. All told, bundled with some additional data, the study helped Idaho researchers analyze 21,600 electric vehicles over 158 million driving miles (254 million kilometers).

In the same amount of time it took Idaho researchers to publish their study, the Shanghai Electric Vehicle Public Data Collecting, Monitoring and Research Center began gathering real-time information from more than 222,000 vehicles and amassed over 4.7 billion miles (7.6 billion kilometers) of driving history.

"As a researcher, I think that data set could be used to answer hundreds of questions," Smart said. "I have a notebook a half an inch thick full of questions."

Global automakers stressed that they share data to comply with Chinese regulations. Nearly all have announced plans to aggressively expand their electric vehicle offerings in China, the world's largest car market.

"There are real-time monitoring systems in China where we have to deliver car data to a government system," Volkswagen Group China chief executive Jochem Heizmann said in an interview. He acknowledged that he could not guarantee the data would not be used for government surveillance, but stressed that Volkswagen keeps personal data, like the driver's identity, secure within its own systems.

"It includes the location of the car, yes, but not who is sitting in it," he said, adding that cars won't reveal any more information than smart phones already do. "There is not a principle difference between sitting in a car and being in a shopping mall and having a smart phone with you."

Jose Munoz, the head of Nissan's China operations, said he was unaware of the monitoring system until the AP told him, but he stressed that the automaker operated according to the law. Asked by the AP about the potential for human rights abuses and commercial conflicts posed by the data sharing, Munoz smiled and shrugged.

"At Nissan, we are extremely committed to the Chinese market," he said. "We see it as the market that has the greatest opportunity to grow."

Ford, BMW and NIO declined to comment. Mitsubishi did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

General Motors and Daimler said they transmit data in compliance with industry regulations and get consent from car buyers on how their vehicle data is collected and used.

Tesla declined to answer specific questions and instead pointed to a privacy policy buyers sign at the time of purchase, which stipulates that vehicle data can be shared "with other third parties when required by law," though there was no specific mention of the government monitoring centers in the Chinese version of the policy.

Interviews with car owners suggest such disclosures aren't effective. Only one of nine electric vehicle owners was aware data from his car is fed to the government — and he said he only knew because he is an electric vehicle engineer.

"It's useless to be concerned about it," said Min Zeren, who owns a Tesla Model S. "If you're concerned about it, then there's no way to live in this country."

Associated Press researcher Chen Si contributed from Shanghai and Business Writer Yuri Kageyama contributed from Tokyo.

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Senators send rebuke to Saudis, Trump over Khashoggi killing

By MARY CLARE JALONICK and SUSANNAH GEORGE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Defying President Donald Trump, senators sent a strong signal that they want to punish Saudi Arabia for its role in the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi. By a bipartisan 63-37 vote, the Senate opted to move forward with legislation calling for an end to U.S. involvement in the Saudi-led war in Yemen.

The vote on Wednesday was a rebuke not only to Saudi Arabia but also to Trump's administration, which has made clear it does not want to torpedo the long-standing U.S. relationship with Riyadh over the killing.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis both came to Capitol Hill to urgently lobby against the resolution, which would call for an end to U.S. military assistance for the conflict that human rights advocates say is wreaking havoc on Yemen and subjecting civilians to indiscriminate bombing.

The vote showed a significant number of Republicans were willing to break with Trump to express their deep dissatisfaction with Saudi Arabia and with the U.S. response to Khashoggi's brutal killing in Turkey last month. U.S. intelligence officials have concluded that the Saudi crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman, must have at least known of the plot, but Trump has equivocated over who was to blame.

Khashoggi, who lived in the U.S. and wrote for The Washington Post, was publicly critical of the Saudi crown prince. He was killed in what U.S. officials have described as an elaborate plot at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, which he had visited for marriage paperwork.

Echoing Trump's public comments on the killing, Pompeo said after Wednesday's briefing with senators that there was "no direct reporting" connecting the crown prince to the murder, and Mattis said there was "no smoking gun" making the connection.

Pompeo argued that the war in Yemen would be "a hell of a lot worse" if the United States were not involved.

Wednesday's procedural vote sets up a floor debate on the resolution next week. It would be largely a symbolic move, however, as House Republican leaders have given no indication they would take up the war powers measure before the end of the year — the end of the current Congress.

Several senators said they were angry about the absence of CIA Director Gina Haspel from the pre-vote briefing.

New Jersey Sen. Bob Menendez, the top Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, speculated that Haspel didn't attend because she "would have said with a high degree of confidence that the crown prince of Saudi Arabia was involved in the murder of Jamal Khashoggi."

And Lindsey Graham, the South Carolina Republican who is often strongly allied with Trump, voted to move forward with the resolution and said he would insist on a briefing from Haspel. He even threatened

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to withhold his vote on key measures if that didn't happen and declared, "I'm not going to blow past this."

CIA press secretary Timothy Barrett said that no one kept Haspel away from the briefing. He said the CIA had already briefed the Senate intelligence committee and Senate leaders and "will continue to provide updates on this important matter to policymakers and Congress."

In another explanation, a White House official said Haspel decided not to participate in part because of frustration with lawmakers leaking classified intelligence from such settings. The official spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal matters.

The procedural vote received more Republican support than had been expected after the resolution, sponsored by Republican Sen. Mike Lee of Utah and Independent Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont, fell six votes short of passage earlier this year.

Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Bob Corker, R-Tenn., said in the past he had "laid in the railroad tracks to keep us from doing things that I believe are against our national interest as it relates to Saudi Arabia." But he said he believes the Senate should "figure out some way for us to send the appropriate message to Saudi Arabia that appropriately displays American values and American national interests."

He said the crown prince "owns this death. He owns it."

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., voted against moving ahead with the resolution but said a day earlier that "some kind of response" was needed from the United States for the Saudis' role in Khashoggi's death. On Tuesday, he said that "what obviously happened, as basically certified by the CIA, is completely abhorrent to everything the United States holds dear and stands for in the world."

Pompeo said U.S. involvement in the Yemen conflict is central to the Trump administration's broader goal of containing Iranian influence in the Middle East. His language was blunt in a Wall Street Journal article, writing that Khashoggi's murder "has heightened the Capitol Hill caterwauling and media pile-on. But degrading U.S.-Saudi ties would be a grave mistake for the national security of the U.S. and its allies."

Trump has said it may never be known who was responsible for the killing, and in public comments — and a long and unusual statement last week — he reinforced the United States' long-standing alliance with the Saudis. Trump has praised a pending arms deal with the kingdom that he says will provide the U.S. with jobs and lucrative payments, though some outside assessments say the economic benefits are exaggerated.

Associated Press writers Lisa Mascaró, Zeke Miller, Matthew Daly, Kevin Freking, Maria Danilova and Laurie Kellman in Washington contributed to this report.

Suicide, at 50-year peak, pushes down US life expectancy

By MIKE STOBBE, AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Suicides and drug overdoses pushed up U.S. deaths last year, and drove a continuing decline in how long Americans are expected to live.

Overall, there were more than 2.8 million U.S. deaths in 2017, or nearly 70,000 more than the previous year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Thursday. It was the most deaths in a single year since the government began counting more than a century ago.

The increase partly reflects the nation's growing and aging population. But it's deaths in younger age groups — particularly middle-aged people — that have had the largest impact on calculations of life expectancy, experts said.

"These sobering statistics are a wake-up call that we are losing too many Americans, too early and too often, to conditions that are preventable," Dr. Robert Redfield, the CDC's director, said in a statement.

The suicide death rate last year was the highest it's been in at least 50 years, according to U.S. government records. There were more than 47,000 suicides, up from a little under 45,000 the year before.

A GENERAL DECLINE

For decades, U.S. life expectancy was on the upswing, rising a few months nearly every year. Now it's trending the other way: It fell in 2015, stayed level in 2016, and declined again last year, the CDC said.

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The nation is in the longest period of a generally declining life expectancy since the late 1910s, when World War I and the worst flu pandemic in modern history combined to kill nearly 1 million Americans. Life expectancy in 1918 was 39.

Aside from that, "we've never really seen anything like this," said Robert Anderson, who oversees CDC death statistics.

In the nation's 10 leading causes of death, only the cancer death rate fell in 2017. Meanwhile, there were increases in seven others — suicide, stroke, diabetes, Alzheimer's, flu/pneumonia, chronic lower respiratory diseases and unintentional injuries.

An underlying factor is that the death rate for heart disease — the nation's No. 1 killer — has stopped falling. In years past, declines in heart disease deaths were enough to offset increases in some other kinds of death, but no longer, Anderson said.

(The CDC's numbers do sometimes change. This week, CDC officials said they had revised their life expectancy estimate for 2016 after some additional data came in.)

WHAT'S DRIVING IT?

CDC officials did not speculate about what's behind declining life expectancy, but Dr. William Dietz, a disease prevention expert at George Washington University, sees a sense of hopelessness.

Financial struggles, a widening income gap and divisive politics are all casting a pall over many Americans, he suggested. "I really do believe that people are increasingly hopeless, and that that leads to drug use, it leads potentially to suicide," he said.

Drug overdose deaths also continued to climb, surpassing 70,000 last year, in the midst of the deadliest drug overdose epidemic in U.S. history. The death rate rose 10 percent from the previous year, smaller than the 21 percent jump seen between 2016 and 2017.

That's not quite cause for celebration, said Dr. John Rowe, a professor of health policy and aging at Columbia University.

"Maybe it's starting to slow down, but it hasn't turned around yet," Rowe said. "I think it will take several years."

Accidental drug overdoses account for more than a third of the unintentional injury deaths, and intentional drug overdoses account for about a tenth of the suicides, said Dr. Holly Hedegaard, a CDC injury researcher.

OTHER FINDINGS

The CDC figures are based mainly on a review of 2017 death certificates. The life expectancy figure is based on current death trends and other factors.

The agency also said:

—A baby born last year in the U.S. is expected to live about 78 years and 7 months, on average. An American born in 2015 or 2016 was expected to live about a month longer, and one born in 2014 about two months longer than that.

—The suicide rate was 14 deaths per 100,000 people. That's the highest since at least 1975.

—The percentage of suicides due to drug overdose has been inching downward.

—Deaths from flu and pneumonia rose by about 6 percent. The 2017-2018 flu season was one of the worst in more than a decade, and some of the deaths from early in that season appeared in the new death dates.

—West Virginia was once again the state with the highest rate of drug overdose deaths. The CDC did not release state rates for suicides.

—Death rates for heroin, methadone and prescription opioid painkillers were flat. But deaths from the powerful painkiller fentanyl and its close opioid cousins continued to soar in 2017.

The CDC did not discuss 2017 gun deaths in the reports released Thursday. But earlier CDC reports noted increase rates of suicide by gun and by suffocation or hanging.

AP video journalist Federica Narancio contributed to this report from Washington, D.C.

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Asian stocks gain after Fed chief hits rate rises may slow

By **JOE McDONALD, AP Business Writer**

BEIJING (AP) — Asian stocks followed Wall Street higher on Thursday after U.S. Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell suggested the pace of interest rate increases might slow.

KEEPING SCORE: The Shanghai Composite Index rose 0.6 percent to 2,605.27 and Tokyo's Nikkei 225 advanced 0.9 percent to 22,378.46. Seoul's Kospi added 0.5 percent to 2,118.10 and Sydney's S&P-ASX 200 gained 0.4 percent to 5,746.10. Hong Kong's Hang Seng shed 0.1 percent to 26,652.68 while benchmarks in Taiwan, New Zealand and Southeast Asia advanced.

FED WATCH: In a speech in New York, Powell said rates are close to neutral, the level at which they neither hold back growth nor aid it. Powell appeared to suggest the Fed might pause its cycle of interest rate increases next year to assess the effects of its actions. That relieved investors who feel the 9-year-old bull market could come to an end if rates rise too fast. The Fed cut rates to zero in 2008 during the global financial crisis but has been raising them since the end of 2015 and is expected to announce another increase next month.

WALL STREET: U.S. stocks rocketed to their biggest gain in eight months following Powell's comments. The Dow Jones Industrial Average surged 617 points, 2.5 percent, to 25,366.43. The Standard & Poor's 500 index gained 2.3 percent to 2,743.79. The Nasdaq composite rose 2.9 percent to 7,291.59. Tiffany skidded 11.8 percent after it said foreign tourists, especially from China, didn't spend as much at its stores in its latest quarter.

CHINA-US TRADE: Three days before President Donald Trump is due to meet his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping, the chief American trade envoy criticized Beijing's import taxes on American-made cars. Beijing cut auto import duties this year to 15 percent but added a 25 percent penalty on those from the United States in response to Trump's imposition of similar charges on Chinese goods in dispute over technology policy. U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer said Chinese duties on American-made cars are "especially egregious," and said he would "examine all available tools" to equalize charges on auto imports.

ANALYST'S COMMENT: The mix of Powell's and Lighthizer's comments indicate "it's far too early to suggest that a Santa Clause rally is in the cards," said Stephen Innes of currency trader OANDA in a report. He said Lighthizer's statement reflected the Trump administration's "great ideological divide." Still, he said, "this dovish Fed lean is a fantastic cure-all for what ails stock markets sentiment."

ENERGY: Benchmark U.S. crude gained 38 cents to \$50.67 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It lost \$1.27 on Wednesday to close at \$50.29. Brent crude, used to price international oils, added 17 cents to \$59.26 in London. The contract lost \$1.31 the previous session to close at \$59.09.

CURRENCY: The dollar declined to 113.43 yen from Thursday's 113.67 yen. The euro gained to \$1.1377 from \$1.1368.

Opioid case has new complication: Babies born in withdrawal

By **GEOFF MULVIHILL, Associated Press**

The long-running federal court case seeking to hold drugmakers responsible for the nation's opioid crisis has a new complication: How does it deal with claims covering the thousands of babies born to addicts?

Attorneys representing the children and their guardians want their claims separated from the federal case in Cleveland that involves hundreds of local governments and other entities such as hospitals. They will argue that Thursday before a federal judicial panel in New York.

Babies, unlike governments or businesses, have been directly harmed by the actions of drugmakers and are entitled to their own payments, said Scott Bickford, a lead lawyer for the children and their guardians.

He said initial hospital stays for babies born to an opioid-addicted mother can cost \$200,000 to \$250,000 more than other infants born without complications.

"Then you have to address their developmental and learning problems," Bickford said. "A lot of them have organ problems. A lot of them have problems we don't even know about."

Drug manufacturers and distributors oppose creating a new structure for the lawsuits over the children. Separating the cases would "open the door to the inconsistency and inefficiency that coordinated proceedings are designed to avoid," the manufacturers said in a legal filing.

Other plaintiffs in the omnibus opioid litigation have not objected formally, but some are cool to the idea of separating the cases involving the children. One of the lead lawyers for the local governments, Paul Farrell Jr., said he is trying to get help for children born with opioid dependency and have prenatal care funded by the drug industry.

He said all the plaintiffs share a goal: holding drug manufacturers liable for the crisis. Unless that happens, he said, no one will get the payouts they're seeking.

"You've only got to shoot the pig once," he said.

The dispute offers a window into the complicated nature of the litigation in Cleveland, which is the main avenue to a potential nationwide settlement over the opioid crisis.

Opioids — including prescription painkillers, heroin and synthetic substances including fentanyl — killed nearly 48,000 Americans last year, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The cost of treatment, providing an overdose antidote, foster care, jail stays, ambulance runs and addressing a growing homeless crisis have added up for governments and taxpayers. Studies have found that opioid addiction also has depleted the workforce, harming the economy.

More than 1,400 plaintiffs have had their federal cases consolidated under a single judge. They include county and local governments, hospitals, unions, American Indian tribes and individuals. Hundreds of others have sued in state courts.

The federal judge, Cleveland-based Judge Dan Polster, has been pushing the parties to reach a settlement.

The sides have been negotiating regularly behind closed doors. The drug industry argues that it should not be held liable because its products are approved by the federal government and prescribed by doctors and because people who overdose often do so on illicit drugs.

Lawyers representing children and their guardians say there is precedent for their request to go it alone, after Polster granted the tribes a separate legal track for their claims. In August, the judge denied similar status for the cases brought on behalf of babies.

That decision prompted the lawyers to ask the Judicial Panel on Multidistrict Litigation to put their cases under another judge in West Virginia or Illinois. The federal panel in New York will decide whether to grant that request.

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Alumni pressure Dartmouth over handling of sex abuse claims

By MICHAEL CASEY, Associated Press

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — Dartmouth College alumni have heard the allegations of misconduct in one department where professors are accused of hosting drunken parties, groping and harassing their students and, in two cases, sexually assaulting them.

Now, a growing number of former students are demanding answers from the administration and questioning how such an atmosphere apparently flourished for at least 15 years at the Ivy League school in Hanover, New Hampshire.

Gathering in Facebook groups and other networks, alumni led by several women are pushing for withholding donations until they see changes at the school — or the ouster of President Philip Hanlon. Others want department chairs and other administrators responsible for handling the sexual misconduct allegations held accountable.

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In October 2017, Dartmouth launched an investigation into the three professors. It never released the findings. But Todd Heatherton retired this summer after being told he would be fired and denied tenure. Paul Whalen and William Kelley resigned soon thereafter.

The growing anger comes in the wake of a federal lawsuit filed this month by seven female graduate and undergraduate students who were in the Department of Psychological and Brain Science, where the professors worked. They accused the three of sexual misconduct and said the college ignored their complaints.

"There is a whole lot of alums, women in particular, out there who have had experiences that are similar enough to what these students have experienced and are horrified to know this is still going on," said Giavanna Munafo, a lecturer in the Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies program who has counseled two of the seven women who made abuse claims.

"It's like a wake-up call to them," she said. "Our college is still as bad as it was or worse."

Contact information for Whalen and Kelley has not been available, and it is unclear whether they have attorneys to speak for them. Heatherton apologized for acting inappropriately at conferences but said, through a lawyer, that he never socialized or had sexual relations with students.

Archana Ramanujam, who attended Dartmouth from 2010 to 2014 and worked with a woman who alleges abuse by one of the professors, said she is putting together a letter to the administration with dozens of alumni and current students demanding greater transparency and accountability in the way the school handles sexual abuse claims.

The letter may include threats of withholding donations, she said, if change doesn't happen.

"Getting survivors' stories out there and holding perpetrators responsible is the most important thing. This issue keeps being swept under the rug, and the lawsuit no longer allows that," Ramanujam said in an email.

Most upsetting for some alumni is how the women were treated by the administration when they complained about abuse.

Prior to the investigation in 2017, the lawsuit alleges that more than two dozen women reported the harassment and sexual assault to the college's Title IX office. Several who filed complaints said in the lawsuit that they were denied teaching opportunities in the department, reassigned to an unsuitable lab or given a failing grade on an honors thesis.

Some complained they were forced to work with the professors for several months, despite their claims of abuse.

"Dartmouth took the fact that the predators might sue the school and the fact that they might lose money and reputation into account," said Vassiki Chauhan, a plaintiff who is still at Dartmouth and alleges that she was raped by Whalen at his home.

"They didn't take into account the cost to the victims. They are still not taking that into account. In that respect, Dartmouth is failing," she said. "Dartmouth needs to be held accountable."

The AP does not typically identify people who say they are victims of sexual assault unless they grant permission, as Chauhan and five plaintiffs in this case have done.

In response to the lawsuit, Hanlon praised the women for coming forward but denied allegations that Dartmouth ignored their complaints.

Hanlon reiterated "that sexual misconduct and harassment have no place at Dartmouth." He also said that the college had done its own investigation and that all three professors "are no longer at Dartmouth and remain banned from our campus and from attending all Dartmouth-sponsored events."

The New Hampshire attorney general's office has also launched an investigation.

And along with the investigation of the professors, Dartmouth is expected to soon release a new policy on sexual misconduct.

The college has not released details on the policy but has said it would apply to both students and faculty and would be informed by the college's experience dealing with recent sexual assault allegations. Officials wouldn't say whether the investigation into the professors exposed violations of current policy.

One faculty organization is proposing several measures for the new policy, including training deans and

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department heads on handling sexual misconduct. It is also calling for compensation for victims and an investigation into how the abuses at the department were allowed to continue.

Pelosi, nominated for speaker, must now get the votes

By LISA MASCARO, AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Nancy Pelosi isn't speaker of the House just yet, but her path back to the gavel is now firmly in sight.

Pelosi was overwhelmingly nominated to become House speaker in an internal Democratic caucus vote Wednesday. The final tally, 203-32, puts her within range of the 218 threshold needed in January to be elected speaker when the new Congress convenes.

She's not quite there. Her actual support is at 200, adjusting for delegates who can't vote in the full House and one supporter who missed the caucus session.

But without a challenger and with several weeks to dole out — or withhold — favors, Pelosi is not too far from returning to the speaker's office.

"Are there dissenters? Yes," the California Democrat told reporters as the ballots were being counted. "But I expect to have a powerful vote going forward."

Pelosi entered the caucus election in an unusual position — running unopposed for the nomination despite the clamor by some Democrats for new leadership. They worry about their re-elections when Pelosi appears as a punchline at President Donald Trump's rallies and in countless Republican-fueled TV ads against them.

But Pelosi has been deftly picking off opponents — including nine who announced their support Wednesday as voting was underway — a trend she'll need to accelerate in the weeks ahead.

A deal was reached with the Problem Solvers Caucus, a bipartisan group whose nine Democratic members were withholding their support as they pushed for rules changes to allow a more open legislative process.

Another group, led by Rep. Seth Moulton of Massachusetts, Rep. Tim Ryan of Ohio and Rep. Kathleen Rice of New York, left the leader's office empty-handed. They asked Pelosi to publicly release her plans to transition out of leadership before the end of the next term in 2020. She declined, they said.

"There has to be some succession plan," Rice said.

As House Democrats met in private in the Capitol, they faced a simple "yes" or "no" choice on Pelosi for speaker.

Those trying to oust Pelosi say they always knew the internal caucus election would fall in her favor. She only needed a simple majority of Democrats, who have a 233-seat majority with several races still undecided, to win the nomination.

But in January she'll need closer to 218 votes, half the full 435-seat House, if all Republicans vote against her, as is likely — though she could win with fewer votes if some lawmakers are absent or vote present.

Opponents insist there will be more than enough votes to stop Pelosi at that time. Organizers say only with a floor fight in view will new leaders emerge. They say plenty of Democrats could step up to the job.

"The battle is the floor," said Rep. Linda Sanchez of California, among those who signed a letter calling for new leadership.

But the strength of Pelosi's candidacy was shown in the long line of those nominating her, starting with Rep. Joe Kennedy of Massachusetts, the grandson of Robert F. Kennedy, and no fewer than eight colleagues seconding the choice, including Rep. John Lewis of Georgia, the civil rights leader, and three newly elected lawmakers.

Rep. Adam Schiff of California, who is set to chair the Intelligence Committee when Democrats take control next year, choked up with emotion, according an aide in the room granted anonymity to discuss the private meeting.

"I ask you to support her for this," Schiff told his colleagues. "Everything we care about is now at risk. Families desperate to obtain health care for their families. Children desperate to be reunited with their families, auto workers being laid off. The gap between rich and poor exploding. The press characterized

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as the enemy of the people. The independence of our justice system being undermined.”

Pelosi’s ability to stand unopposed Wednesday showed the staying power of her brand of machine politics. She was the first female speaker, from 2007 to 2011, until Republicans took control, and hopes to return to a role few men have reclaimed — most recently, legendary Speaker Sam Rayburn a half-century ago.

She lost fewer votes than she did during a leadership challenge two years ago, and fewer than retiring Republican Speaker Paul Ryan faced in his internal caucus election for the job.

“The reality is there is no alternative,” said Rep. Brian Higgins, D-N.Y., who had signed on opposing her but reversed course.

In fact, Democrats voted to return their entire top leadership team, including Rep. Steny Hoyer of Maryland in the No. 2 spot as majority leader and Rep. Jim Clyburn of South Carolina in the No. 3 spot as whip. They were running unopposed.

Down-ballot was where the House Democrats pushed a new generation of leader to the forefront. They elected Rep. Hakeem Jeffries of New York as caucus chairman, elevating the charismatic 48-year-old from the Congressional Black Caucus. The No. 4 slot as assistant leader went to Ben Ray Lujan, 46, who helped lead Democrats back to the majority as campaign chairman.

Between now and January, those who oppose Pelosi will face internal pressure to reconsider their options. Colleagues will be asking if they really want a stalemate on the House floor as the first act of the new Democratic majority. And Pelosi will work the levers of power by doling out the many committee seat assignments, subcommittee chairmanships and other perks as incentives.

“She’s making a lot of headway,” said Rep. Joyce Beatty of Ohio, an ally. “Has she negotiated and given them some of the things that they want? Yes. But she’s only giving things to people who can deliver.”

Associated Press writers Laurie Kellman, Padmananda Rama, Luis Alonso Lugo, Kevin Freking and Matthew Daly in Washington contributed to this report.

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Gruden: ‘No guarantee’ Foster ever plays for Washington

By **STEPHEN WHYNO, AP Sports Writer**

ASHBURN, Va. (AP) — After deciding to give Reuben Foster an immediate second chance following his domestic violence arrest, the Washington Redskins say they’ll continue to investigate the 24-year-old’s legal problems and are making no assurances he’ll ever play for them given the obstacles he must clear to return.

Foster is currently on the NFL’s Commissioner Exempt list and cannot play in games or practice following his arrest Saturday night at the San Francisco 49ers’ team hotel in Tampa. He has been charged with one count of first-degree misdemeanor domestic violence.

Washington was the only team to put in a claim for Foster after the 49ers released him Monday, the league’s latest example of an organization looking past off-field issues for potential on-field production.

Coach Jay Gruden acknowledged Wednesday the Redskins must deal with the public criticism of adding Foster so soon after his arrest, But the coach isn’t sure the second-year linebacker will actually ever suit up for Washington.

“We accept, obviously, the questions, but we want to let the process play out and see what happens and get to the bottom of it,” Gruden said. “There’s no guarantee he’s ever going to play here, to be honest with you. He’s got a lot of work to do — personally, with the team, with the NFL, with himself — before he even thinks about playing football again.”

Foster was arrested on a domestic violence charge last spring. Though those charges were dropped, Foster served a two-game suspension to begin this season for his arrest on a gun charge and for misdemeanor marijuana possession.

San Francisco coach Kyle Shanahan, who was Washington’s offensive coordinator from 2010-2013, said

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he was a little surprised a team claimed Foster. Gruden said it was a "team decision" made with president Bruce Allen and senior vice president of player personnel Doug Williams.

"At the end of the day we decided to make the move, and we'll deal with the outcry, so to speak," Gruden said. "But for the most part, this is a young athlete, a young person who got himself into some trouble, and we want to find out exactly what happened."

Gruden said after practice Wednesday the organization did not speak to the woman involved in the incident. He did say the Redskins spoke "a little bit" to Tampa police and would continue to look into Foster's situation at the same time as the NFL holds its investigation.

Nick Saban, Foster's coach at Alabama, said he has not talked to the linebacker and doesn't know much about his situation.

"Anything that we can do to help Reuben or support Reuben in any way, I think he knows we're here for him," Saban said. "I love to see our guys make good choices and decisions and do the right things. Hopefully people can help Reuben do that in the future so he can have an outstanding career, but I have not talked to him."

Helen Jefferson Lenskyj, a University of Toronto professor emerita who has studied violence against women by athletes, said it's common for teams to suspend judgment on a player in situations such as this.

"In a very lucrative team professional sport like football, I'm not too surprised," she said. "And it happens so frequently there's sort of a pattern where we'll wait until the facts are all in, we'll give him the benefit of the doubt, we don't want to destroy his career, there's always two sides to the story — endless excuses."

Williams said in a statement the Redskins spoke to former Alabama teammates of Foster's before signing him. Washington has seven ex-Crimson Tide players who were teammates of Foster's at Alabama, but two of them said they were not asked about Foster by Allen, Williams or Gruden.

"I didn't talk to Bruce or anybody about it," safety Ha Ha Clinton-Dix said. "You've got to speak with the organization, the guys that are above me, on that decision. But as a human being, as a person that wants to provide for his family and make the right decisions, just got to learn from your mistakes."

Defensive lineman Jonathan Allen said he wasn't consulted by the front office, either, and added that he could only talk about Foster's character based on his personal interactions with him in college.

"I've never had a problem. I've never seen any problems out of him," Allen said. "He's a great person. But I don't know the whole details of the situation, so I can't really speak about that. But from my experiences, it's been good."

Rookie linebacker Shaun Dion Hamilton said he was happy for the addition of Foster, but declined comment on whether he was asked by team brass about his former Alabama teammate.

The Redskins are facing similar criticism to what the Dallas Cowboys received for signing linebacker Greg Hardy in 2015 after his domestic violence case. The Redskins also signed linebacker Junior Galette in 2016 after the New Orleans Saints released him following a domestic violence arrest, a charge that was later dismissed.

Gruden said the team could have waited and signed Foster later, but didn't want to chance another team signing him.

Foster's future with the team is unclear.

Boston University professor Emily Rothman, who has published more than three dozen studies on interpersonal violence, said she hopes that during the ongoing NFL investigation that the woman involved has a say in what happens next.

"Really the best person to go to is the survivor and the people supporting the survivor," Rothman said. "And that should be done consistently. Now, what the fallout is? In some cases, suspension might be the right thing. In other cases, it might not be because the situation really can vary."

The Redskins took on Foster, whose rookie contract runs through 2020, in the hopes that he can help them on the field at some point. There's no timeframe for him to be able to contribute, and Gruden knows the team gets "nothing" out of the move if Foster is found guilty.

"We understand that there's a lot of things that he's gone through, and there's some issues there," Gruden said. "We're going to let the NFL take their time and do the right thing with the investigation, as

are we. And we'll go from there."

AP Pro Football Writers Josh Dubow and Barry Wilner and freelancer Marq Burnett in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, contributed to this report.

More AP NFL: <https://apnews.com/tag/NFL> and https://twitter.com/AP_NFL

Rita Moreno joins Steven Spielberg's 'West Side Story' film

By The Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Rita Moreno's portrayal of Anita in the classic 1961 film "West Side Story" won her an Oscar. Now, she has a different part in a remake directed by Steven Spielberg.

The publicist for the 86-year-old Moreno confirmed Wednesday that she'll play Valentina, a reworked version of the character of Doc, the owner of a corner store where Tony works. Ansel Elgort has been cast as Tony.

The story follows two star-crossed lovers, Tony and Maria, who are each associated with rival New York street gangs. The Pulitzer-winning playwright Tony Kushner is adapting the script. Moreno will also serve as an executive producer.

Filming is set to begin next summer.

Trump's private plane clipped in parking mishap at LaGuardia

By MICHAEL R. SISAK, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — President Donald Trump's private jet, an instantly recognizable Boeing 757 used during his campaign, was caught up in a quintessential New York City traffic mishap at LaGuardia Airport on Wednesday: a fender bender while someone else was trying to park.

A corporate jet maneuvering into a parking spot clipped the wing of Trump's parked plane around 8:30 a.m., Trump's company, The Trump Organization, confirmed. The plane was parked and not in use, it said.

The corporate jet, a twin-engine Bombardier Global Express, had three crew members aboard. It had just completed an 18-minute flight from Islip, on Long Island, and was being guided by ground personnel along a ramp near the general aviation terminal.

No one was on Trump's plane.

Trump used the jet throughout his 2016 run for the White House but hasn't done so since taking office, opting for Air Force One instead.

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which operates LaGuardia, said there were no injuries and no impact on airport operations.

The extent of damage to the planes wasn't immediately clear. According to the aviation tracking website FlightAware, the corporate jet flew Wednesday afternoon to Hartford, Connecticut, where Bombardier has a service center. Trump's plane is blocked from being tracked on the site.

Trump bought his jet, a retrofitted commercial airliner, from the late Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen in 2011 for \$100 million. It was previously used by a low-budget Mexican passenger carrier.

Trump flexed the jet as a symbol of wealth, power and convenience during his presidential campaign, using it to commute almost every night to New York, home to his Manhattan penthouse apartment.

The plane — painted black and red, with the Trump name in big, gold letters — features a bedroom, 24-karat gold-plated fixtures and leather seats, according to a Trump Organization video. During the campaign, it became known as Trump Force One and was a familiar backdrop for Trump's airport hangar rallies.

Lately, the plane has turned into something of a LaGuardia landmark, with fliers snapping photos from passing jets and posting them on social media.

Wednesday's incident wasn't the first involving a Trump campaign plane at LaGuardia.

A Boeing 737 charter plane carrying then-vice presidential candidate Mike Pence overran a runway while landing in the rain on Oct. 27, 2016, about two weeks before the election. No one was hurt.

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Clash with migrants spotlights force at the border

By COLLEEN LONG, Associated Press

EL PASO, Texas (AP) — U.S. Border Patrol agents near Tijuana, Mexico, faced a choice as they looked out over the chaos at a crowd of migrants that included rock-throwing men as well as barefoot children: Do they respond with force — and, if so, what kind?

The circumstances at the San Ysidro border crossing Sunday were exceptional, but the question facing the agents was not. It's a split-second choice more often made in the remote desert, far from cameras, where agents are likely working alone and encountering groups of people crossing illegally.

The agents' response — firing tear gas into the crowd — triggered widespread outrage and rekindled complaints that the Border Patrol, bolstered by President Donald Trump's tough talk, is too quick to use force, particularly when responding to people throwing rocks.

But use of force by Customs and Border Protection officers and agents is declining from a high during the 2013 budget year, government statistics show. There are high-profile exceptions, like the shooting death by agents of a 19-year-old Guatemalan woman who crossed the border near Laredo in May.

Still, experts say policies have improved following a major audit five years ago.

"There has been progress made — especially in getting officers better training and better equipment," said Josiah Heyman, a professor with University of Texas at El Paso and director of the Center for Inter-American and Border Studies. "When I first started studying this, most agents had a gun and a baton. They didn't have the choice to use anything else."

Firearms were used 45 times in budget year 2013 compared with 17 in 2017, according to data from Customs and Border Protection. For the first 11 months of the 2018 budget year, firearms were used 14 times. The data includes Border Patrol agents that patrol between the ports of entry, and officers who police border crossings.

Over those 11 months, there were 743 cases of agents and officers using less-lethal force, like batons, stun guns, tear gas and pepper spray. These included 29 cases in which tear gas was used and 43 incidents of pepper spray.

Though the final numbers are unavailable, those figures represent a drop from 2013, during the Obama administration, when there were 1,168 incidents of less-lethal force, including 27 instances of tear gas and 151 of pepper spray, according to the data. Less-lethal force has increased over the past two years but is still lower than 2013.

Complaints about excessive force prompted Customs and Border Protection to commission an investigation by the Police Executive Research Forum, a policing research and policy group. The 2013 audit highlighted problems that included foot-patrol agents without access to less-lethal options. It recommended law enforcement not be allowed to use deadly force when people throw rocks — a suggestion that was rejected.

Following those reviews, Customs and Border Protection revised policies and made major changes to training. Agents now undergo scenario-based drills at the academy and learn how to de-escalate tense situations. They get 64 hours of on-the-job training on use of force.

Some sectors, like El Paso, have a virtual reality simulator. The octagonal giant screens mounted on a platform mimic a desert encounter where agents must decide whether to fire their weapons. The scenario is designed to cause stress, and agents are forced to think quickly or face being shot, run over or hit with rocks. After the simulation, they discuss reactions with training officers and work on how to better respond in the future.

"The desert is a very difficult, dangerous unstructured environment," said Aaron Hull, Border Patrol chief for the El Paso Sector. "We're trying to keep our agents safe. We're trying to protect the safety of our communities, and all the people involved."

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Chuck Wexler, head of the police research forum, credited the agency with taking the recommendations seriously. "Also when they do have an incident, they have a better review process," he said.

Trump defended the use of tear gas on children — claiming it was "very safe," a "very minor form" of irritant. But Customs and Border Protection officials still plan to conduct a review to determine whether it was justified and what — if anything — could be done better, according to Commissioner Kevin McAleenan.

Agents are authorized to use deadly force when there is reasonable belief that there is an imminent danger of serious physical injury or death to the officer or another person.

They have discretion on how to deploy less-than-lethal force: It must be both "objectively reasonable and necessary in order to carry out law enforcement duties" — and used when other "empty hand" techniques are not sufficient to control disorderly or violent subjects.

Officials say they deploy the lowest form of force necessary to take control of a situation — but critics of the Sunday clash say gas never should've been used near small children.

The chaos began after a peaceful protest by some of the thousands of migrants marooned in Mexico. It was unusual in part because of the large number trying to cross illegally — officials said it was between 500 and 1,000. U.S. authorities shut down the nation's busiest border crossing for several hours.

San Diego Border Patrol Sector chief Rodney Scott said 42 people were arrested and some children inhaled the tear gas, but they were not intended targets.

But images of crying children in diapers and bare feet running from plumes of gas struck a nerve again — not unlike the images of weeping, frightened children who had been separated from their parents over the summer.

"Any border security and immigration policy that results in mothers and children being gassed is not only cruel and morally reprehensible, but also an abject failure," said Rep. Bennie Thompson of Mississippi, the top Democrat on the House Committee on Homeland Security. "The administration should be preparing itself to finally face real oversight of its failed border and immigration policies."

California winery and Oregon feud over pinot labeling rights

By **ANDREW SELSKY**, Associated Press

SALEM, Ore. (AP) — Pinot noir is one of the finickiest grapes, but with proper nurturing it produces an amazing wine. Officials in Oregon and at a U.S. government agency are similarly finicky, and are stomping on a California winery's claims that it makes an Oregon pinot.

Copper Cane, a Napa Valley, California, winery sells more pinot noir made from Oregon grapes than anyone else, and often at a lower price. That has some Oregon winemakers, who call the California version a less elevated product, seeing red.

Now, both the U.S. Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau and Oregon's liquor agency have ruled that Copper Cane's labels have been improperly referencing Oregon wine regions. The case recalls France's mostly successful efforts to have only sparkling wine produced in its Champagne region called by that name.

At stake is a multi-billion-dollar industry, and Oregon's reputation for producing a delicate pinot noir in its cool, rainy climate, according to state Rep. David Gomberg and winemaker Jim Bernau, who have been sharply critical of Copper Cane.

"Part of this is prestige and marketing," Gomberg said.

Grapes for Copper Cane's pinot noirs are grown in three Oregon wine regions and trucked in dry ice to California. Jim Blumling, Copper Cane's vice president of operations, acknowledged that the winery's top-selling Elouan Pinot Noir is more pronounced than the typical Oregon version because the grapes are picked later, with higher sugar content.

"It helps deliver a more concentrated juice in the fruit," Blumling said.

Bernau, founder of Willamette Valley Vineyards of Turner, Oregon, said Copper Cane's labels deceptively indicate its wines came from Oregon's officially designated wine regions, or AVAs.

"Copper Cane takes something valuable that isn't theirs and deeply discounts it," Bernau said. "They can't use Oregon AVAs if the wine is not made in the AVA."

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In their rulings this month, the federal and state regulatory bodies agreed there was a problem because Copper Cane's labels refer to Oregon's Willamette Valley, Rogue Valley and Umpqua Valley wine regions. If a wine label claims or implies it's from a particular AVA, 95 percent of the grapes must be from there, according to the Oregon Wine Board.

Furthermore, the Oregon Liquor Control Commission informed Copper Cane that only wines "finished" in Oregon can claim association with an Oregon wine region.

The federal TTB told Copper Cane that it has to ditch seven of its labels, agency spokesman Tom Hogue said.

The Oregon liquor commission found last week that Copper Cane has committed seven violations and is seeking to revoke its ability to sell in Oregon, said commission spokesman Matthew VanSickle. The violations focus on Copper Cane's improper use of AVA designations and "misleading statements on labeling."

One major grocery store chain in Oregon, Fred Meyer, already ordered staff to remove any Elouan Pinot Noir and Copper Cane's Willametter Journal wines that might be on shelves until further notice.

Gomberg wants the federal government to stop Copper Cane from selling Elouan wine in the other 49 states.

"Copper Cane claims they were simply engaged in 'fanciful' marketing," Gomberg said. "But the state of Oregon has determined that they crossed the line from fanciful to fraudulent."

Blumling and Copper Cane's owner, Joe Wagner, met with Oregon Liquor Control Commission Executive Director Steven Marks on Wednesday, though the informal encounter wasn't expected to resolve the issue, VanSickle said.

"It's not an official meeting. A lot of discussions are going to have to happen," VanSickle said. "This is a very big thing."

Copper Cane has the right to a hearing to dispute the charges and the proposed sanction.

The company has already submitted new labels to the TTB that don't mention Oregon winemaking regions and say only that the grapes come from prime Oregon vineyards, Blumling said. Those labels have been approved by the TTB, he said.

Copper Cane hopes the new labels also satisfy the Oregon liquor commission.

The previous labels had been in use for years until Gomberg and Bernau complained, the California winemakers said. They believe it was to edge out the competition. Last year, 120,000 cases of Elouan wine — over 1.4 million bottles — were sold nationwide, Blumling said.

"We're being blatantly attacked," Wagner said. "What's disappointing is it's for financial gain."

In a Nov. 19 statement, Gomberg said that Elouan Pinot Noir and The Willametter Journal "look and taste like they have an additive" called Mega Purple, often used in California to make wines darker and thicker. Blumling called that "slandorous" and denied any such additive has been used.

He said Elouan's growing national popularity, with sales up 50 percent in a year, will raise consumers' consciousness and boost overall demand for Oregon pinot noir.

"We're expecting that all boats rise with the tide," Blumling said.

Follow Andrew Selsky on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/andrewselsky>

Authorities ID body as kidnapped North Carolina teen girl

LUMBERTON, N.C. (AP) — A body found in North Carolina has been preliminarily identified as a 13-year-old girl kidnapped outside her home, investigators said Wednesday, ending a three-week search involving hundreds of investigators.

Lumberton Police Chief Michael McNeill told reporters at a news conference that state crime lab tests indicate the body found late Tuesday is Hania Aguilar. While a final determination will be made with dental records, investigators believe the body is hers.

"This is the outcome that we all feared," he said. "We did not want to hear this. We wanted to bring Hania back home and bring her back home alive to our community. It hurts."

He pledged to bring whoever is responsible to justice. Investigators said they don't currently have a suspect or person of interest.

The chief said Hania's body was found in a body of water in Robeson County about 10 miles (16 kilometers) south of the mobile home park where she was kidnapped on Nov. 5 after going outside to start a relative's SUV before school.

Authorities wouldn't elaborate on whether the body had been concealed, but said it was not visible from the road or obvious to people passing by. Investigators spent Wednesday combing the area in daylight after finding the body the previous night.

The cause of death hasn't been released, pending an autopsy. Investigators would not describe the condition of the body. An FBI official said he did not have any information as to whether Hania was killed where she was found or elsewhere.

Police say a man forced Hania into an SUV and drove off. The SUV was found several miles south of her mobile home park. The body was found a few miles farther away.

McNeill has previously said that a witness saw a man dressed in black with a yellow bandanna grab Hania in the Rosewood Mobile Home Park in Lumberton. Police say the eighth grader had taken her aunt's keys to start the vehicle to prepare to leave for the bus stop. They say the man forced her into the green Ford Expedition and drove off.

The FBI soon joined the search, offering reward money and transmitting her picture around the country. The SUV was found abandoned several days later, but signs of the girl or her remains eluded investigators for several weeks.

Drones, dogs and scores of searchers on foot spent the following weeks combing the county about 100 miles (161 km) south of Raleigh.

A \$30,000 reward remains in place for information related to the kidnapping, the FBI said.

Mahershala Ali on 'Green Book': 'It's a legitimate offering'

By JAKE COYLE, AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Mahershala Ali's life changed in more ways than one the week of the 2017 Oscars. Four days before he won best supporting actor for his performance in "Moonlight," his wife, Amatus-Sami Karim, gave birth to their first child.

"When I won, all I could think about was: I just want to get home," Ali says, grinning.

It wasn't just Ali's soulful, tender performance as a drug dealer in Barry Jenkins' "Moonlight" that illuminated Ali to audiences. It was his incredible poise through awards season, where he became the first Muslim actor to win an Oscar. At the Screen Actors Guild Awards, during the outcry over Donald Trump's ban on travel from several mostly Muslim countries, he eloquently spoke about "Moonlight" and acceptance: "We see what happens when you persecute people. They fold into themselves."

It was clear enough: Here was no flash-in-the-pan. Here was a journeyman actor of uncommon grace and dignity. And Ali's phone started ringing.

"It changed the trajectory of my career," Ali, 44, said in a recent interview over tea in midtown Manhattan. "It gives you permission in some way to not dream bigger but dream deeper. Like: What type of work do you really want to do?"

Ali still harbors larger aspirations, like playing boxer Jack Johnson, but this fall has provided some of the answer. Ali stars in Peter Farrelly's road-trip drama "Green Book" and headlines the upcoming third season of HBO's "True Detective." And "Green Book," now in theaters, has again catapulted Ali to the top of the supporting-actor contenders. Many believe he's in line for another Oscar.

But this time, the road has been rockier. "Green Book," brisk and modest, has won raves from some critics and many audiences as a feel-good story about the real-life friendship that developed when the refined concert pianist Don Shirley (Ali) hired a racist Bronx bouncer, Tony Lip (Viggo Mortensen), to drive him on a 1962 tour of the Deep South. But the film has been criticized by some as an outdated, sentimentalized kind of movie, one that trades on racial tropes, perpetuates the "white savior" cliché and isn't deserving

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of its namesake (a travel-survival guide for African-Americans in the Jim Crow South).

Ali grants "Green Book" is a portrait of race in America unlike one by Jenkins or Amma Asante or Ava DuVernay. But he believes the film's uplifting approach has value.

"It's approached in a way that's perhaps more palatable than some of those other projects. But I think it's a legitimate offering. Don Shirley is really complex considering it's 1962. He's the one in power in that car. He doesn't have to go on that trip. I think embodied in him is somebody that we haven't seen. That alone makes the story worthy of being told," says Ali. "Anytime, whether it's white writers or black writers, I can play a character with dimensionality, that's attractive to me."

"Green Book" was hailed as an irresistible crowd-pleaser and a major Oscar contender after its September premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival, where it won the festival's audience award. (And every film in the last decade to win that prize has ended up a best picture nominee.) But the \$23 million-film has struggled to take off at the box office, earning \$8.3 million in two weeks. Universal Pictures still has high hopes. Audiences gave it an A-plus CinemaScore and the National Board of Review on Tuesday named it the year's best film.

Still, along the way, Ali has heard the complaints about "Green Book." He disagrees.

"A couple of times I've seen 'white savior' comments and I don't think that's true. Or the 'reverse "Driving Miss Daisy"' thing, I don't agree with," he says. "If you were to call this film a 'reverse "Driving Miss Daisy,"' then you would have to reverse the history of slavery and colonialism. It would have to be all black presidents and all white slaves."

Yet the debates over "Green Book" have put Ali in a plainly awkward position, particularly when Mortensen used the n-word at a Q&A for the film while discussing the slur's prevalence in 1962. Mortensen quickly apologized, saying he had no right, in any context to use the word. Ali issued a statement, too, in support of Mortensen while firmly noting the word's wrongness.

"It was challenging, especially being the lone black presence in the film and feeling responsible to address that publicly," says Ali. "There's a difference between racist and lacking awareness. And I think he lacked awareness in that moment of the inappropriateness of the word, even within an intellectual context like that. There's a mini explosion that happens whenever a non-black person says that in a public setting."

"But I love him," Ali adds. "And we've talked about it more. He's a great dude and he's going to continue to be a great dude."

Ali first got to know Mortensen on the awards circuit two years ago, when Mortensen was nominated for "Captain Fantastic." The film rests on their relationship; that it works so well is a testament to their chemistry together. When cast, Mortensen's first question to Farrelly was who was going to play Shirley.

"When Pete said Mahershala Ali, I said, 'Well you can't do better than that,'" Mortensen said by phone. "He's very sensitive and extremely intelligent and thoughtful and has a real awareness of himself in any space. He's at ease with himself. My sense of him is that he's meticulous as an artist. There was a dynamic there based on each of us trying to help the other guy doing the best possible job that he could. It was beautiful."

Ali grants he shares Shirley's own fastidious nature ("I would say within reason," he says, smiling). Farrelly adds that Ali's precision had a hugely positive effect on "Green Book," especially in shaping the portrayal of Shirley. "I wanted to make sure Don Shirley was equally if not more empowered," Ali says. The actor suggested tweaks and changes to deepen the pianist's pain at, like Nina Simone, being denied a career in classical music.

"And he did a bunch of those. He was very hands on in a good way," Farrelly said by phone. "He and Viggo are a great balance. They're such perfectionists in their work."

Farrelly, best known for his broader comedies with his brother Bobby ("There's Something About Mary"), also defended his film.

"I'm getting some crap from people saying it's a rosy picture of race, but, you know, it's just a rosy picture of that relationship, not all race relationships," said Farrelly. "And it's the truth of what happened to these two men. And that is the thing that really drew me to the project. I'm a hopeful guy. I know we're in a dark period right now in race relations but I am hopeful."

Ali has his own kind of optimism for "Green Book" and its place in a larger conversation. "The disease of racism and bigotry and discrimination — there are a myriad of ways to tackle that," Ali says. "And you need all of them."

Follow AP Film Writer Jake Coyle on Twitter at: <http://twitter.com/jakecoyleAP>

Trump dismantling US climate efforts as warnings grow dire

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump has moved steadily to dismantle Obama administration efforts to rein in coal, oil and gas emissions, even as warnings grow — from his own administration and others — about the devastating impact of climate change on the U.S. economy as well as the Earth.

Trump has dismissed his administration's warnings about the impact of climate change, including a forecast released Friday that it could lead to economic losses of hundreds of billions of dollars a year by the end of the century.

"As to whether or not it's man-made and whether or not the effects that you're talking about are there, I don't see it," he said in an interview Tuesday with The Washington Post.

Trump's position has been that efforts to combat the emissions that cause climate change have hurt the U.S. economy.

Announcing the U.S. withdrawal from the Paris global climate accord in June 2017, he said, "The Paris Climate Accord is simply the latest example of Washington entering into an agreement that disadvantages the United States to the exclusive benefit of other countries, leaving American workers — who I love — and taxpayers to absorb the cost in terms of lost jobs, lower wages, shuttered factories, and vastly diminished economic production."

An email obtained by The Associated Press under the Freedom of Information Act shows the administration withdrew from the Paris agreement with no clear climate policy in place.

"All, the purpose of this meeting is to explore whether, post Paris, we need to develop, or simply piece together from what already exists, a policy proposal that can be characterized as the "Trump climate policy," Michael Catanzaro, a former oil and gas lobbyist then serving as Trump's energy and environment consultant, wrote to White House and Environmental Protection Agency officials days after the president's announcement.

The EPA did not respond to requests for details on the meeting, or on any subsequent Trump climate policy.

In an email Wednesday, the State Department noted that the United States is still taking part in global climate talks, despite pulling out of the Paris accord.

That includes a State Department delegation to U.N. climate talks starting next week in Poland, in follow-up to the Paris talks.

"The United States continues to participate in ongoing international climate negotiations_including those related to guidance for implementing the Paris Agreement_to ensure a level playing field that benefits the United States, its workers, and its taxpayers," the department said in a statement.

The initial shock of the abrupt U.S. retreat from the Paris accord galvanized international support for climate efforts, said Nigel Purvis, who worked on climate issues in the Clinton and George W. Bush administrations.

It "brought other nations even closer together and they're even more committed," Purvis said. In the longer term, though, the Trump administration's retreat on climate change may hurt, showing governments and companies they can flout global concerns about coal, oil and gas emissions and not be held accountable, he said.

At home, the Trump administration has initiated a rollback of a complex Obama-era effort to power the nation's electrical grid with more renewable energy and less climate-altering coal.

"We are putting our great coal miners back to work!" Trump told a cheering crowd in West Virginia this

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summer, touting that rollback. Many economists challenge his claim, arguing that cheaper natural gas and other market forces will mean the continued downward slump of the U.S. coal industry.

The Obama plan had aimed at cutting U.S. emissions of climate-changing carbon dioxide about one-third by 2030.

Separately, the country's auto industry already is adjusting to the Trump administration's announcement in August that it would ease Obama-era mileage standards.

Auto experts say the Trump administration's relaxing of mileage standards will deepen American drivers' devotion to heavier, fuel-gulping sports utility vehicles over more fuel efficient cars.

In October, almost 65 percent of new vehicles sold in the U.S. were trucks or SUVs.

Reporters asked General Motors CEO Mary Barra this week if the Trump administration's relaxation of the fuel economy standards played into the automaker's announcement that it may close up to five North American car plants. "We intend on meeting the standards whatever they are," Barra responded.

California and more than a dozen other states have sued to try to stop the relaxation of mileage standards.

In September, the Trump administration proposed relaxing 2016 rules that would have required companies to do more to detect and plug methane leaks at oil and gas installations.

Methane is the primary component of natural gas, and one of the most potent pollutants when it comes to trapping heat in the atmosphere.

Associated Press writers Matthew Lee and Michael Biesecker in Washington and Tom Krisher in Detroit contributed to this report.

Senate defies Trump, showing anger with Saudis for Khashoggi

By MARY CLARE JALONICK and SUSANNAH GEORGE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Defying President Donald Trump, senators sent a strong signal Wednesday that they want to punish Saudi Arabia for its role in the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi. By a bipartisan 63-37 vote, the Senate opted to move forward with legislation calling for an end to U.S. involvement in the Saudi-led war in Yemen.

The vote was a rebuke not only to Saudi Arabia but also to Trump's administration, which has made clear it does not want to torpedo the long-standing U.S. relationship with Riyadh over the killing.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Secretary of Defense James Mattis both came to Capitol Hill to urgently lobby against the resolution, which would call for an end to U.S. military assistance for the conflict that human rights advocates say is wreaking havoc on Yemen and subjecting civilians to indiscriminate bombing.

The vote showed a significant number of Republicans were willing to break with Trump to express their deep dissatisfaction with Saudi Arabia and with the U.S. response to Khashoggi's brutal killing in Turkey last month. U.S. intelligence officials have concluded that the Saudi crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman, must have at least known of the plot, but Trump has equivocated over who was to blame.

Khashoggi, who lived in the U.S. and wrote for The Washington Post, was publicly critical of the Saudi crown prince. He was killed in what U.S. officials have described as an elaborate plot at the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, which he had visited for marriage paperwork.

Echoing Trump's public comments on the killing, Pompeo said after Wednesday's briefing with senators that there was "no direct reporting" connecting the crown prince to the murder, and Mattis said there was "no smoking gun" making the connection.

Pompeo argued that the war in Yemen would be "a hell of a lot worse" if the United States were not involved.

Wednesday's procedural vote sets up a floor debate on the resolution next week. It would be largely a symbolic move, however, as House Republican leaders have given no indication they would take up the war powers measure before the end of the year — the end of the current Congress.

Several senators said they were angry about the absence of CIA Director Gina Haspel from the pre-vote

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briefing.

New Jersey Sen. Bob Menendez, the top Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, speculated that Haspel didn't attend because she "would have said with a high degree of confidence that the crown prince of Saudi Arabia was involved in the murder of Jamal Khashoggi."

And Lindsey Graham, the South Carolina Republican who is often strongly allied with Trump, voted to move forward with the resolution and said he would insist on a briefing from Haspel. He even threatened to withhold his vote on key measures if that didn't happen and declared, "I'm not going to blow past this."

CIA press secretary Timothy Barrett said that no one kept Haspel away from the briefing. He said the CIA had already briefed the Senate intelligence committee and Senate leaders and "will continue to provide updates on this important matter to policymakers and Congress."

In another explanation, a White House official said Haspel decided not to participate in part because of frustration with lawmakers leaking classified intelligence from such settings. The official spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal matters.

The procedural vote received more Republican support than had been expected after the resolution, sponsored by Republican Sen. Mike Lee of Utah and Independent Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont, fell six votes short of passage earlier this year.

Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Bob Corker, R-Tenn., said in the past he had "laid in the railroad tracks to keep us from doing things that I believe are against our national interest as it relates to Saudi Arabia." But he said he believes the Senate should "figure out some way for us to send the appropriate message to Saudi Arabia that appropriately displays American values and American national interests."

He said the crown prince "owns this death. He owns it."

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., voted against moving ahead with the resolution but said a day earlier that "some kind of response" was needed from the United States for the Saudis' role in Khashoggi's death. On Tuesday, he said that "what obviously happened, as basically certified by the CIA, is completely abhorrent to everything the United States holds dear and stands for in the world."

Pompeo said U.S. involvement in the Yemen conflict is central to the Trump administration's broader goal of containing Iranian influence in the Middle East. His language was blunt in a Wall Street Journal article, writing that Khashoggi's murder "has heightened the Capitol Hill caterwauling and media pile-on. But degrading U.S.-Saudi ties would be a grave mistake for the national security of the U.S. and its allies."

Trump has said it may never be known who was responsible for the killing, and in public comments — and a long and unusual statement last week — he reinforced the United States' long-standing alliance with the Saudis. Trump has praised a pending arms deal with the kingdom that he says will provide the U.S. with jobs and lucrative payments, though some outside assessments say the economic benefits are exaggerated.

Associated Press writers Lisa Mascaró, Zeke Miller, Matthew Daly, Kevin Freking, Maria Danilova and Laurie Kellman in Washington contributed to this report.

Enclave on edge as mystery persists in mansion fire, deaths

By MARYCLAIRE DALE, Associated Press

COLTS NECK, N.J. (AP) — When a landscaper alerted Boris Volshteyn to smoke pouring out of a nearby mansion, the plastic surgeon hurried home and found his friend and neighbor lying face down out front. His first thought was to try CPR, but it was no use.

Keith Caneiro, a 50-year-old technology executive, had been shot in the head.

Hopes that Caneiro's wife and two young children weren't inside as the inferno raged from early afternoon the Tuesday before Thanksgiving until at least midnight were dashed when they failed to turn up elsewhere. Friends who had gathered outside called the children's school and Jennifer Caneiro's cellphone.

"When the kids were not in school, and Jennifer was not answering, it all became a grim picture," Volshteyn told The Associated Press on Tuesday. "To the very last minute, all the neighbors were hoping that

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the kids were spared.”

As they puzzled over the bizarre crime in pastoral Colts Neck, a wealthy enclave for horse breeders, hedge fund managers and celebrities near the northern New Jersey coast, Caneiro’s business partner and brother, Paul, was charged with setting his own family home on fire earlier the same day.

But no one has been charged yet in the Colts Neck slayings, Paul Caneiro was seen elsewhere during the fire there, and authorities have not said how the other family members died.

“We have a lot of jittery people that have questions that we don’t have answers to,” said Mayor J.P. Bartolomeo, who nonetheless said that he believes the crime was an isolated one and that the community is safe.

Paul Caneiro, 51, who remains in custody, had a detention hearing moved from Wednesday to Friday so his lawyer can review new evidence from prosecutors. His wife and young adult daughters may testify, to say he saved them from the 5 a.m. fire by awakening them, lawyer Robert A. Honecker Jr. said.

“His family is supportive of him and wants to see him come home,” said Honecker, a former prosecutor in Monmouth County. “He’s been living in that house for over 20 years. He’s got two businesses that need to be run. And he’s got no prior record.”

Police say Paul Caneiro used gasoline to fuel the fire at his two-story Colonial in Ocean Township, about 10 miles from his brother’s jarringly modern, all-white \$1.5 million home in Colts Neck, which sits next to a small organic farm with sheep dotting the pasture.

Paul Caneiro was seen outside his own burning home with his family throughout that morning, visibly upset. Honecker said he went from there to the police station for an interview around noon and was there when he learned his brother’s family had been killed.

“He’s never been charged with anything in Colts Neck,” Honecker said. “He is obviously still devastated by the news of his brother and his family’s deaths.”

Paul and Keith Caneiro were the principals in two businesses, a computer systems company called Square One and a pest control business, both housed above a trendy cafe in Asbury Park. Workers in the area frequently saw Paul Caneiro there. Keith Caneiro often worked from home, Volshteyn said.

Keith Caneiro, the middle of three brothers, appeared to be the picture of a self-made man. He took classes at Brooklyn College after high school and worked for free at a computer store to learn the ropes, according to a 2001 article on Square One in the Asbury Park Press, in which Carneiro identified himself as Keith Martin.

The company, then known as Jay-Martin Consulting after the brothers’ middle names, had 26 employees at the time and installed computer systems for Citibank and interactive kiosks at the Statute of Liberty. Paul was his brother’s first hire.

The company, and the brothers, moved from Brooklyn to the quieter New Jersey suburbs as the brothers married and had children. Obituaries describe Keith’s children as 11-year-old Jesse, who liked World War I and II history, video games and sports, and 8-year-old Sophia, who loved ice skating, ninja classes and making cookies with her nanny. Funeral services for the family are planned Sunday.

In recent years, Keith Caneiro had earned a bachelor’s from Columbia University’s general studies program and, just this year, a master’s degree from its School of Professional Studies.

Jennifer Caneiro, 45, was active at her children’s school. She also enjoyed exercising, going to the beach and trips to a family home in Greece, her obituary said. She and Keith also took frequent trips to Atlantic City, Volshteyn said.

Family members, including a third brother, have declined to speak to The Associated Press this month. Prosecutors said at an early news conference that the Colts Neck slayings were “targeted.” They plan a news conference Thursday on the mansion fire.

Celebrities with ties to Colts Neck include Bruce Springsteen, who owns an estate there; former “Daily Show” host Jon Stewart and his wife, who operate an animal sanctuary; and Queen Latifah, who sold her mansion in 2015.

Christine Conroy, a longtime local who was out with her sister Tuesday at nearby Stonehenge Stables, said some of the new homes in town sit empty because “people mysteriously go bust.”

"There's a bit of a culture clash," she said, between old and new residents.

Volshteyn described his neighbors as largely private people. Although they were friendly, and their daughters played together, he never knew Keith had a brother.

The Caneiro home now sits boarded up, with a chain-link fence around it and police tape on the ground.

"It's a little bit hard to come home and drive past the house. It's a reminder of what happened," Volshteyn said. "And for a lot of the kids, too, it's hard to understand."

O'Rourke vs. Castro: 2 Texans eye White House runs

By WILL WEISSERT and PAUL J. WEBER, Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Beto O'Rourke and Julian Castro were barely old enough for elementary school the last time a Democrat from ruby red Texas ran for the White House.

But after a midterm campaign that saw Democrats make inroads throughout the Sun Belt, both Texans are signaling they could make a play for the presidency. It's a reversal for a state where Democrats often seek big-money donors, not White House hopefuls. And it could fuel a rivalry between two of the party's brightest Texas stars.

For now, after decades of disappointment, Texas Democrats are excited about the potential of sending two of their own to the national political stage.

"This is a sea change," said Garry Mauro, who was Texas director for Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign. "We have two candidates with star quality."

The two men have taken different approaches to the White House buzz.

Castro, a secretary of Housing and Urban Development under former President Barack Obama, has taken a methodical approach. He's paid visits to the early voting states of Iowa and New Hampshire and campaigned around the country for top Democrats ahead of the midterms. His new book, "An Unlikely Journey," details his rise as the son of a Latina activist single mother to political heights, including being the keynote speaker at the 2012 Democratic National Convention.

Arthur Schechter, a prominent Houston Democratic fundraiser, said he first spoke to Castro about a 2020 bid weeks ago and that he and his brother are "both very ambitious and there's nothing wrong with that."

Castro has spent years studying to improve his Spanish skills and could be a strong contender for Hispanic voters, telling The Associated Press in a recent interview, "Part of my vision for the future of the party is to take the 78 electoral votes of Arizona, Texas and Florida," all of which Trump carried in 2016 and have booming Hispanic populations.

O'Rourke, meanwhile, rocketed into the 2020 conversation almost overnight after coming within three percentage points of defeating Republican Sen. Ted Cruz. He's done little to build the groundwork for a presidential run and hasn't contacted many top Texas donors. But his national profile is strong after raising more than \$60 million for his Senate campaign — much of it from small donations — and coming close to unseating Cruz. He's increasingly discussed as someone who could attract the same type of attention — and financial resources — as better established Democrats such as former Vice President Joe Biden and Sens. Cory Booker of New Jersey, Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts and Kamala Harris of California.

"He's in the top tier for sure. We saw Beto yard signs in Iowa. We have bumper stickers," said Sean Bagniewski, chairman of Iowa's Polk County Democratic Party, which recently invited O'Rourke and other top Democrats to visit the state. "He's the only candidate that has that kind of enthusiasm at this point."

O'Rourke said Monday that he prefers to finish his congressional term Jan. 3 before deciding what's next. But that's a far cry from repeatedly saying during the Senate campaign that he had no White House aspirations whatsoever.

So far, there aren't signs of animosity between the Texans.

Castro campaigned with O'Rourke during his Senate run. He and his twin brother, Joaquin, a congressman from San Antonio, attended O'Rourke's Election Night rally.

But O'Rourke has already eclipsed Castro's national profile and, if he runs, may easily overshadow him. Castro insists he won't be deterred by O'Rourke or other potential competitors, saying "I'm going to run

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regardless of what anyone else does.”

Intrastate clashes aside, a potential O'Rourke run could be especially challenging to Castro. Though the congressman is not Hispanic, he speaks fluent Spanish and champions his hometown of El Paso, on the Texas-Mexico border. Mustafa Tameez, a Houston strategist connected to top Democratic donors, said O'Rourke may trail Castro and other potential 2020 hopefuls in early preparations, but can catch up quickly.

“He created almost a million people that contributed to him,” Tameez said. “He can send out one email and raise more money than most established, seasoned veteran politicians and their bundlers.”

Both Castro brothers also sat out the 2018 cycle rather than try for a statewide office. At the time, avoiding what looked like a sure loss seemed bound to bolster a possible 2020 presidential bid. But jumping into a seemingly unwinnable race paid off for O'Rourke, laying bare the perils of being overly cautious rather than seeking out momentum in unlikely places.

The last Texas Democrat to run for president was Lloyd Bentsen in 1978. Republican George W. Bush went from the governor's mansion in Austin to the White House in 2000 and fellow Texans Rick Perry, Ron Paul and Cruz have all made presidential bids since.

Some see O'Rourke's strength this year as proof that Democratic hopes in Texas aren't totally lost and, one day, the party could seriously vie for the state's 36 electoral votes and choke off any viable Electoral College path to the presidency for Republicans.

“Since 1968, the dream deferred for the Democratic Party has been to win back Texas,” Bagniewski said. “We're getting closer and closer every time. Beto showed us it could really happen in our lifetime.”

Officials: Inmates ran \$560K online dating extortion scheme

By MEG KINNARD, Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — Five inmates in the Carolinas extorted more than half a million dollars from military personnel throughout the country, using illegal cellphones to pose as women on dating sites, authorities said Wednesday.

Standing in front of a state prison in Columbia, South Carolina, U.S. Attorney Sherri Lydon told reporters that five inmates had been indicted on federal charges including extortion and wire fraud. Ten others throughout the Carolinas have been charged with helping inmates collect extortion payments via services including Western Union or PayPal.

According to court documents, inmates used contraband phones to join dating websites, contacting and exchanging nude images with service members across the country.

Once the targets had been reeled in, Drew Goodridge of the Naval Criminal Investigative Service said, inmates then posed as an authority figure, like a father or police officer, claiming the girl with whom the victim had been communicating was underage and demanding money to keep the exchanges private.

Fearful they'd be accused of disseminating child pornography, possibly losing their military careers, more than 442 service members handed over more than \$560,000 total, authorities said.

Lydon said the victims come from all branches and ranks of the military. According to Goodridge, more than 250 other cases were being investigated for potential extortion as part of “Operation Surprise Party,” which his agency began in January 2017.

“This operation will continue until we break the back of these criminal networks,” he said.

Inmates aren't allowed to have cellphones behind bars, although thousands are smuggled inside each year. Corrections Director Bryan Stirling has long called illegally obtained cellphones the No. 1 security threat inside his institutions, as they allow inmates the unmonitored ability to communicate and potentially continue their criminal endeavors.

Officials have said a deadly riot earlier this year at Lee Correctional Institution was in part a turf war over contraband including cellphones.

“We do not lock up criminals only to have them go to prison and continue their criminal conduct,” Lydon said. “It is the unfettered use of contraband cellphones that allows inmates to continue harming the citizens of South Carolina.”

Meg Kinnard can be reached on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/MegKinnardAP>.

Trump can rail against Powell, but he can't fire him

By MARTIN CRUTSINGER, AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Jerome Powell, the man President Donald Trump chose last year to lead the Federal Reserve, may at times think he's living through a prolonged episode of the "The Apprentice," the reality TV show in which Trump was famous for declaring, "You're fired!"

Except he's not.

Trump in recent weeks has repeatedly attacked the Fed — and Powell personally — for the central bank's interest rate increases, which the president has blamed for stock market turmoil and signs of economic weakness. Critics have expressed worry that the president's attacks threaten the Fed's ability to operate free of political pressure.

Trump has even been asked whether he would try to oust Powell. He said he wouldn't.

But could he?

No Fed chairman has ever been removed by a president. The law creating the Fed says its officials and those of other independent agencies can be "removed for cause" by a president. While that issue has never arisen in regard to a Fed official, the courts ruled decades ago that "for cause" meant more than a policy disagreement with the president.

Trump has been attacking Powell since last summer as the central bank was raising rates, and the criticism escalated last month as the stock market took a nosedive. In his latest comments Tuesday, Trump blamed the Fed not only for the stock market's declines but also for General Motors' announcement this week of jobs cuts and plant closings.

"I'm doing deals, and I'm not being accommodated by the Fed," he said in an interview with the Washington Post. "They're making a mistake because I have a gut, and my gut tells me more sometimes than anybody else's brain can ever tell me."

The president last year selected Powell, at the time a Fed board member, to lead the central bank after a highly public selection process in which he chose not to offer a second term to Chair Janet Yellen.

And now?

"So far, I'm not even a little bit happy with my selection of Jay," Trump told the Post. "Not even a little bit."

In the Post interview, Trump said, "I'm not blaming anybody, but I'm just telling you, I think that the Fed is way off-base with what they're doing."

Trump's blunt public criticism of the Fed is without precedent. His predecessors in the White House took care not to directly or publicly attack the central bank's rate policy. For one thing, such criticism could backfire. Investors might, for example, question whether the Fed would feel free to keep raising rates, if it felt it necessary to control inflation.

In a speech Wednesday to the Economic Club of New York, Powell made no mention of Trump's criticism, and he wasn't asked about it during a question period with economists afterward. In the past when reporters have raised the issue of the president's complaints, Powell has said they would have no effect on the Fed's rate policy. He has noted that the Fed has a dual mandate: To maximize employment and keep prices stable.

"I am pleased to say," Powell said Wednesday, "that our economy is now close to both of those objectives."

From its beginning, the Fed was designed to insulate it from political pressures. A full term on the seven-member Fed board lasts 14 years — a lengthy period that was seen as liberating Fed officials from any fear that their rate decisions might cost them their jobs.

Though no Fed chairman has ever been fired by a president, some were denied a second four-year term. President Jimmy Carter, for example, in 1979 removed G. William Miller as chairman by offering him the job of Treasury secretary. That gave Carter an opening to make Paul Volcker the Fed chairman, someone the Carter administration regarded as better equipped to combat high inflation.

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And while no president has ever been anywhere as openly critical of the Fed as Trump, some have occasionally tried to exert pressure behind the scenes. President Lyndon Johnson once invited Chairman William McChesney Martin to his Texas ranch to try to persuade him not to raise rates. It didn't work.

The last president to voice criticism in public was George H.W. Bush. Bush blamed, in part, Alan Greenspan's slowness in cutting rates for Bush's failed run for a second term in 1992. But Bush's complaint about the Fed occurred years after he had left office.

While campaigning for president in 2016, Trump had been critical of the Yellen Fed, contending that under her, the central bank was keeping rates abnormally low to try to help Democrats. Until last summer, though, he had withheld criticism of the Powell Fed's rate hikes.

But with the market's slump, his attacks have escalated. Trump has charged that the Fed is "going wild" and "going loco" and that the rate hikes are threatening to ruin the economic gains generated by his policies, including last year's tax cuts.

The president's criticism has been so steady that it has even spawned reports that he is upset with Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin for having advocated Powell for the top Fed job.

But in discussing his choice of Powell last year, Trump said Tuesday: "Look, I took recommendations. I'm not blaming anybody."

Ivanka Trump says 'Lock her up!' doesn't apply in her case

WASHINGTON (AP) — Ivanka Trump defended her use of a private email account as she was moving into an adviser's position in her father's administration, saying that it cannot be compared to the flap over former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's private email server and that "Lock her up!" doesn't apply to her.

"All of my emails are stored and preserved. There were no deletions," President Donald Trump's elder daughter and adviser told ABC News in an interview broadcast Wednesday.

The Washington Post reported this month that Ivanka Trump sent hundreds of emails about government business from a personal email account last year to White House aides, Cabinet members and her assistant, many in violation of public records rules.

"There is no restriction of using personal email," she said. "In fact, we're instructed that if we receive an email to our personal account that could relate to government work, you simply just forward it to your government account so it can be archived."

Clinton used a personal email account linked to a private server at her home in Chappaqua, a New York City suburb, during her time as the top U.S. diplomat under President Barack Obama. The FBI found classified information in some of the emails that were sent or received through her private server.

Donald Trump harshly criticized Clinton, his 2016 Democratic presidential rival, for her use of the private email server. Trump dubbed her "Crooked Hillary" and repeatedly said, including to her face, that she belonged in jail. At his campaign rallies, chants of "Lock her up!" rang out.

Ivanka Trump was asked by ABC News, "So the idea of 'Lock her up!' doesn't apply to you?"

"No," she replied.

Referencing her father's denunciations of Clinton's private email server, she said, "There's no equivalency to what my father's spoken about."

Clinton deleted thousands of emails that she and her lawyers decided were personal or unrelated to her work as secretary of state before she turned over thousands of other emails to federal investigators. She said she had been unaware of rules against using private email to conduct the public's business and said she never knowingly emailed classified information.

Republicans and Democrats on Capitol Hill plan to scrutinize Ivanka Trump's personal email use. The Republican chairmen of Senate and House oversight committees — as well as a top House Democrat who will be wielding a gavel when his party takes power in January — have called on the White House to provide more information about the email account and the nature of her messages.

That would renew Republican-led congressional probes that had languished since last year when reports by Politico revealed that Ivanka Trump's husband, Jared Kushner, and other White House officials had been

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using private email for government purposes in possible violation of the Presidential Records Act and other federal record-keeping laws.

On other issues, Ivanka Trump said she is not worried about legal exposure for herself, her father or anyone else in her family regarding special counsel Robert Mueller's probe into Russian interference in the 2016 elections.

"I know the facts as they relate to me and my family, and so I have nothing to be concerned about," she said.

Not just jobs riding on fate of GM plant after Trump promise

By **ANGIE WANG, TOM KRISHER and JOHN SEEWER, Associated Press**

LORDSTOWN, Ohio (AP) — General Motors is moving to shut down as many as five North American factories in a major restructuring, but there are more than jobs riding on the fate of at least one of them: Ohio's Lordstown assembly plant.

Ohio and much of the rest of the industrial Midwest were vital to President Donald Trump's campaign in 2016 and probably will be again in 2020. Trump ran on a promise to bring back factory jobs, and blue-collar voters in this otherwise Democratic stronghold in northeastern Ohio embraced him.

Trump blasted GM's announcement this week that it will shed up to 14,000 workers in North America. He threatened to cut off federal subsidies to the automaker and singled out the Ohio plant as one he wants to stay open.

"The U.S. saved General Motors, and this is the THANKS we get!" the president tweeted on Tuesday, referring to the government bailout of the automaker a decade ago.

Democrats and Republicans in Congress and union leaders are also pressuring the company to keep the plant running, in what's now a high-stakes decision for all involved, not just for the workers and the battered Rust Belt community nervously watching.

GM said Monday that Lordstown will stop making the Chevy Cruze by March, at a cost of 1,400 union jobs on top of the 2,700 lost there since Trump took office.

The plant is a focal point in the potential closings because of the president's pledge at a rally last year in nearby Youngstown, where he talked about going past big factories whose jobs "have left Ohio."

"They're all coming back. They're all coming back," Trump assured supporters. "Don't move. Don't sell your house."

It was the kind of promise that endeared Trump to blue-collar workers in places like Youngstown and Lordstown, Democratic and labor bastions where Trump surprisingly won half the vote.

But it's also one that could haunt him with people who crossed party lines two years ago, said David Cohen, a political science professor at the University of Akron.

"You can't place all of the blame on Donald Trump, but he individually raised the stakes because he promised workers he was the only one who could save the manufacturing base," Cohen said. "And he can't win the presidency without carrying the industrial Midwest."

GM's attempt to close the factories still has to be negotiated with the United Auto Workers union, which has promised to fight back. The other factories that could go are assembly plants in Detroit and Oshawa, Ontario, and transmission plants in Warren, Michigan, and near Baltimore.

The UAW would especially like to save Lordstown because it employs the most workers.

Only one shift is still working at the plant after GM dropped two since the beginning of 2017. Some workers transferred to a plant in Tennessee, while others took buyouts or retired, but there are still nearly 700 in the area on layoff.

"There's a beacon of hope," said UAW Local 1112 President Dave Green. "We don't want a handout here. We just want work."

Keeping open a factory slated to close is not without precedent at GM, and Lordstown has been near death before and managed to survive. GM stopped making the Chevrolet Cobalt compact there in 2009 but negotiated with the union to bring in the Cruze.

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"I think Lordstown's been on the bubble for quite some time," said Arthur Wheaton, a labor expert who teaches at Cornell University's Worker Institute.

But this time it feels more ominous for even longtime workers who have been through shutdown threats and job cuts, because now the entire industry is changing.

GM, like other automakers, is moving away from slow-selling cars and focusing on trucks and SUVs while also sinking money into new technology for self-driving and electric vehicles.

State and local governments are likely to offer tax breaks and other incentives to try to get GM to change its mind about the closings, said Kristen Dziczek, of the Center for Automotive Research, an industry think tank in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

"It's the state and locals that are going to be able to put icing on the cake," she said, pointing to big incentives extended to Foxconn in Wisconsin and Amazon in Virginia and New York.

All of this has left workers unsure what the future holds in Ohio's Mahoning Valley, once a proud steel-producing area where the GM plant is one of the few remaining industrial giants.

"It's like we're in a limbo now," said Bobbi Marsh, a 41-year-old single mother. "I've lived in this community my whole life. I bought the home my father and grandfather built. I don't want to move."

Krisner reported from Detroit, Seewer from Toledo, Ohio.

Families of Lebanon's war missing choose to forgive past

By SARAH EL DEEB, Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Families of people who went missing during Lebanon's civil war called on the government Wednesday to expedite the formation of a commission to look into the fate of relatives and urged those who know what happened to come forward nearly three decades after the conflict ended.

The families say they are not seeking punishment but want to find out what happened to their loved ones, find closure and bury remains that can still be unearthed.

Parliament earlier this month passed a law calling for the commission and affirming the right of relatives to know for families of an estimated 17,000 people missing in the 1975-1990 war. The law was a milestone -- an official recognition of the problem after years of campaigning by the families.

Some argued the law and the commission would ignite old hatreds and possibly revenge. But family members have sought to encourage people with information to come forward, stressing that they have chosen to trade forgiveness for the right to know.

"This law didn't come to create new conflicts but to end old ones," said Wadad Halwani, founder of the families of the missing committee whose husband was kidnapped in 1982.

"Our forgiveness is not personal. It is a humane message. We are trading accountability for the crimes of the past for a leap ... toward the future."

Halwani said the law aims to regulate the flow of information, guaranteeing "the right environment" for those who choose to come forward "so we can turn the page of the past together ... and close this file and end our sorrows."

The shadow of the civil war hovers over much of Lebanon's present and future, with no reconciliation and a sectarian-based political system that tries to preserve a negotiated balance between the sects that fought in the war.

The system often stalls when politicians disagree, including when it failed to elect a president or a parliament for years. Currently, politicians are unable to form a new government six months after a new parliament was elected. The stalemate is likely to further delay the naming of the commission.

Lawmakers bickered over the law for years, right up until the last minute of voting on Nov. 12.

Some introduced a clause that called for punishing those responsible for kidnappings, apparently seeking to upend a consensus vote.

The families said they didn't seek the clause.

"Any threat of punishment now can complicate finding the truth," said Nizar Saghie, a rights lawyer

from Legal Agenda who helped the families' campaign.

Saghieh said the clause was unnecessary since the crime of forced disappearance is punishable by Lebanese law and doesn't fall under the amnesty. But forced disappearance is a difficult crime to prove because people fear providing information or have passed away.

So families have chosen to seek information, not punishment.

Amnesty is only granted in the cases of enforced disappearance if the fate of the missing is determined, Saghieh said.

Some saw this as incentive for those who know what happened to speak.

"This law doesn't allow for the amnesty if the fate of the missing is not determined. This for me is a victory," said Mariam Saidi, whose son has been missing since 1982.

But for Siham Abdul-Karim, a 55-year old whose son and father went missing in the war, the law serves as a reminder of an old wound that will never go away.

"Would that bring my father back? No. Whoever saw where he was killed or buried, would they give him back to me? I don't think," she said, raising black and white framed pictures of her father, missing for 42 years, and brother, missing for more than 30 years.

"The missing for me is gone and will not be coming back," she said.

Putin derides Ukraine's martial law as political trick

By YURAS KARMANAU and NATALIYA VASILYEVA, Associated Press

KIEV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukraine's president donned combat fatigues to implement martial law in much of the country on Wednesday, a move Russia denounced as a cynical political trick as both sides ratcheted up tensions after a weekend standoff in the Black Sea.

Each side blamed the other for the bellicose turn of events, with Ukraine saying Russia is preparing for a full-scale invasion and Moscow calling it a political stunt by an unpopular president facing tough elections.

In Sunday's confrontation, three Ukrainian naval vessels were heading from the Black Sea into the Sea of Azov when they were blocked by the Russian coast guard near the Kerch Strait between Russia's mainland and the Crimean Peninsula it annexed from Ukraine. After many tense hours of maneuvering, the Russians opened fire and seized the Ukrainian vessels and crew.

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko responded by ordering martial law in much of the country, a move that went into effect with parliamentary approval.

Poroshenko toured a military training center Wednesday in the Chernihiv region bordering Russia, one of the areas where martial law was imposed. Speaking to reporters as smoke billowed from a nearby shooting range, the camouflage-clad president pledged "not to allow the enemy to attack Ukraine" and announced a hike in salaries for servicemen.

Poroshenko initially sought to impose martial law for two months, a move that would have meant presidential elections scheduled for March would have to be scrapped due to election rules. Facing criticism in parliament, he halved the martial law time frame to a month, which would allow the election to go ahead as planned.

In Moscow, Russian President Vladimir Putin bluntly accused his Ukrainian counterpart of provoking the naval incident in order to shore up his sagging popularity and sideline competitors ahead of the March election.

"The Black Sea incident certainly was a provocation organized by the sitting government, including the incumbent president ahead of the presidential vote in March," Putin said, alleging that Poroshenko wanted to "exacerbate the situation and create obstacles for his rivals."

Ukraine has insisted that its vessels were operating in line with international maritime rules, while Russia claimed they had failed to get permission to pass through a Russia-controlled area. A 2003 treaty between the two countries designated the Kerch Strait and the Sea of Azov as shared territorial waters, but Russia claimed the strait in its entirety after annexing Crimea in 2014 and has sought to assert greater control over the passage.

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On Wednesday, Ukraine released what it said was the exact location where its ships were fired on by Russia, saying they were in international waters west of the Kerch Strait. Putin, meanwhile, insisted the Ukrainian vessels were in Russia's territorial waters and refused to communicate with the Russian coast guard or accept a Russian pilot to guide them through the narrow strait.

"What were the border guards supposed to do?" the Russian leader said Wednesday. "They fulfilled their duty to protect the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation. If they had done something differently, they should have been put on trial for that."

Kurt Volker, the U.S. special envoy on Ukraine, told reporters in Berlin that Washington sees no reason to doubt the information from Kiev that its vessels were operating in line with international maritime rules. "There's no conceivable justification that we can think of for the use of force in this scenario," he said.

Ukraine, which insists its seamen are prisoners of war, has asked the International Red Cross to arrange a visit to see them. It said six of the sailors were wounded by Russian fire, while Russia said three Ukrainian crewmen were slightly injured.

A court in Crimea's regional capital, Simferopol, has ordered all 24 Ukrainian crewmen to be held in custody for two months on charges of violating the Russian border pending trial. They face up to six years in prison if convicted.

The incident marked the first overt collision between Russian and Ukrainian militaries since the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union. It has fueled fears of a wider conflict and has drawn strong criticism of Russia by the U.S. and its allies.

U.S. President Donald Trump, in an interview with The Washington Post on Tuesday, said he might cancel a sit-down with Putin during the G20 summit in Argentina over the Russian action. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters on Wednesday that the meeting is on and that Russia has not received "any other information from our U.S. counterparts."

Amid the tensions, the Russian military announced Wednesday that it would beef up its forces in Crimea with another batch of the long-range S-400 air defense missile systems to Crimea.

The showdown came amid the long-simmering conflict between the two countries, in which Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula in 2014 and supported separatists in Ukraine's east with clandestine dispatches of troops and weapons. That fighting has killed at least 10,000 people since 2014 but eased somewhat with a 2015 truce.

Vasilyeva reported from Moscow. Associated Press writers Vladimir Isachenkov in Moscow and David Rising in Berlin contributed to this report.

US airstrike reportedly kills dozens of Afghan civilians

By RAHIM FAIEZ and ROBERT BURNS, Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — Taliban insurgents staged a coordinated attack targeting a security firm in the Afghan capital on Wednesday, killing at least 10 people and wounding 19 others, as the U.S. said an airstrike hours earlier in Helmand province that reportedly killed civilians was conducted by American aircraft.

Wednesday's attack in eastern Kabul took place when a suicide bomber detonated his explosives and other insurgents started a gun battle with security forces in the area, Interior Ministry spokesman Najib Danish said.

The assault came hours after provincial officials said at least 30 civilians were killed along with 16 Taliban fighters during the overnight battle between Afghan government forces and insurgents in southern Helmand province.

A local official, Attahullah Afghan, said most of the civilian casualties — which included men, women and children — came when an airstrike struck a house in the central Helmand River valley, a Taliban heartland. U.S. officials said it happened in Helmand's Garmsir district.

A U.S. military spokesman in Kabul said the airstrike was carried out by American aircraft called in to back Afghan "special security forces" after they came under heavy Taliban fire.

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Maj. Bariki Mallya, the spokesman, said in an email exchange that the airstrike was conducted in self-defense after Taliban fighters armed with rocket-propelled grenades and heavy machine guns retreated into a compound and continued firing on Afghan government forces and their American advisers.

"In self-defense, the ground force called an airstrike," Mallya said. "After the strike, there were secondary explosions, we assess from explosives inside the compound. At the time of the strike, the ground force was unaware of any civilians in or around the compound; they only knew that the Taliban were using the building as a fighting position."

Mallya declined to say what the U.S. knew about civilian casualties or whether the incident was under U.S. investigation. In a prepared statement, he said the U.S. investigates every "credible allegation of error and reviews every mission to learn, adapt and improve."

A statement from the governor's office in Helmand confirmed that 16 Taliban insurgents were killed and said that an investigation was underway to determine the number of civilian casualties.

It said the militants had stockpiled ammunition in the area of the operation, which could have caused civilian casualties. There was also a car packed with explosives that ignited during the strike, the statement added.

Abdul Wadod Popul, a lawmaker from Helmand, also confirmed the civilian casualties. "The area is under Taliban's control and is very difficult to get a precise number of casualties," he said in Kabul.

The resurgent Taliban, who in recent years have taken over nearly half of Afghanistan, claimed the attack Wednesday in Kabul.

Kabul police spokesman Basir Mujahid said the target of the attack was a security company called G4S. He had no details on the company, but the website of a multinational security company named G4S has London contact information.

The attacks were the latest in a series of brutal and near-daily Taliban assaults on military and police forces and government and other installations throughout the country.

The Taliban view the U.S.-backed government in Kabul as a dysfunctional Western puppet and have refused repeated offers to negotiate with it. They carry out near-daily attacks on Afghan security forces.

U.S. and NATO troops formally concluded their combat mission in Afghanistan in 2014, but still provide close support to Afghan forces and carry out counterterrorism operations. Some 15,000 American forces are currently serving in Afghanistan.

The fighting came as Afghan President Ashraf Ghani was in Geneva, attending a two-day U.N.-backed conference that ends Wednesday and that is focused on development, security and peace efforts in the war-battered country.

Burns reported from Washington. Associated Press writer Amir Shah in Kabul contributed to this report.

EU executive wants bloc to go climate neutral by 2050

By FRANK JORDANS, Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — The European Union's executive branch proposed Wednesday that the bloc should cut its emissions of greenhouse gases to net zero by 2050, a measure that scientists say needs to be adopted worldwide in order to avoid catastrophic global warming.

The European Commission is the first major economy to set its sights on achieving climate neutrality in the next three decades. The plan, which was announced days before a global climate summit being held in Poland, is far more ambitious than the national targets set so far by many of the EU's 28 member nations and is likely to meet with resistance.

The EU's climate chief, Miguel Arias Canete, cited a recent scientific report that warned of deadly consequences for many species on Earth from rising temperatures.

"This has been a real wake-up call," Arias Canete told reporters in Brussels. "And today we are responding to this call."

Experts say ending the use of fossil fuels — a process known as decarbonization — is one of the most

important measures needed to achieve the 2015 Paris climate accord's goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) by the end of the century.

Net zero emissions mean that any greenhouse gases emitted need to be soaked up by forest growth or new technologies that can remove carbon from the atmosphere.

Arias Canete said the tools to achieve this target already exist.

"We are not inventing the wheel," he said.

Still, he noted that considerable investment will be needed to shift Europe's economy away from fossil fuels and this needs to be done in a socially acceptable way.

Bas Eickhout of the Greens/EFA group in the European parliament said the European Commission's proposal, which isn't binding, sends "a positive message" that saving the planet and economic growth can go hand-in-hand. But he noted that the EU executive had shied away from setting any new emissions targets by 2030.

"That's of course where the political debates, where the political pain will be," Eickhout told The Associated Press.

Germany, Europe's biggest economy, is expected to miss its goals for 2020 and Chancellor Angela Merkel has objected to raising the nation's emissions reduction target for 2030 from 40 percent. Some European lawmakers have called for 55-percent cuts by then.

Germany's development minister, Gerd Mueller, sought Wednesday to shift the attention onto his country's efforts to help poor nations achieve their climate goals, noting that their potential future emissions could far outstrip reductions achieved in Europe.

Berlin is doubling its funding for the Green Climate Fund to 1.5 billion euros (\$1.7 billion) to boost environment-friendly measures in developing countries.

Follow Frank Jordans on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/wirereporter>

Read more stories on climate issues by The Associated Press at <https://www.apnews.com/Climate>

High court likely to say states can't levy excessive fines

By MARK SHERMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court left little doubt Wednesday that it would rule that the Constitution's ban on excessive fines applies to the states, an outcome that could help an Indiana man recover the \$40,000 Land Rover police seized when they arrested him for selling about \$400 worth of heroin.

A decision in favor of 37-year-old Tyson Timbs, of Marion, Indiana, also could buttress efforts to limit the confiscation by local law enforcement of property belonging to someone suspected of a crime. Police and prosecutors often keep the proceeds.

Timbs was on hand at the high court for arguments that were largely a one-sided affair in which the main question appeared to be how broadly the state would lose.

The court has formally held that most of the Bill of Rights applies to states as well as the federal government, but it has not done so on the Eighth Amendment's excessive-fines ban.

Justice Neil Gorsuch was incredulous that Indiana Solicitor General Thomas Fisher was urging the justices to rule that states should not be held to the same standard.

"Here we are in 2018 still litigating incorporation of the Bill of Rights. Really? Come on, general," Gorsuch said to Fisher, using the term for holding that constitutional provisions apply to the states.

Justice Stephen Breyer said under Fisher's reading police could take the car of a driver caught going 5 mph (8 kph) above the speed limit.

"Anyone who speeds has to forfeit the Bugatti, Mercedes or special Ferrari, or even jalopy," Breyer said. Fisher agreed.

It was unclear whether the justices also would rule to give Timbs his Land Rover back or allow Indiana courts to decide that issue. Some justices seemed willing to take that additional step.

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"If we look at these forfeitures that are occurring today ... many of them are grossly disproportionate to the crimes being charged," Justice Sonia Sotomayor said.

But Chief Justice John Roberts said the question of whether what happened to Timbs was excessive might be a closer call. Timbs drove his car to the place where he twice sold small amounts of heroin to undercover officers, and he carried the drugs in the car, Roberts said. Police have long been allowed to seize property in such situations.

"You will lose assets you used in the crime," Roberts said. "You can see how that makes a lot of sense."

Lawyer Wesley Hottot, representing Timbs, told the justices that in rural areas people drive places. He said the use of the Land Rover was incidental to the sale of the drugs.

The case has drawn interest from liberal groups concerned about police abuses and conservative organizations opposed to excessive regulation.

Timbs said his own view of the case has changed over time.

"At first it was about getting my truck back because I was mad, and I wanted my stuff back. Now it's a lot different," he said. "I was curious to see how often they did this to people. They do it a lot around here, and apparently it's done all over the country."

Timbs' criminal sentence included no prison time, a year of house arrest and five years on probation.

In earlier cases applying parts of the Bill of Rights to the states, the court used the due process clause of the 14th Amendment, passed after the Civil War to ensure the rights of newly freed slaves.

The court also has relied on that clause — "no state shall deprive any person of life, liberty or property without due process of law" — in cases that established a woman's right to an abortion and knocked down state laws against interracial marriage and gay sex.

The story of how Timbs ended up in the Supreme Court began with steel-toed boots he bought for work in a truck factory. The boots hurt his feet, but he couldn't immediately afford the insoles he was told to buy. A doctor wrote a prescription for hydrocodone. Before long, Timbs was hooked on heroin.

He tried several times to get clean but said he wasn't ready. A more than \$70,000 life insurance payout he received after his father's death seemed a blessing, but it wasn't, he said.

"A drug addict shouldn't have a whole lot of money," said Timbs, who used some of the money to buy the Land Rover.

Timbs hasn't driven the car since his arrest in 2013. He lives with his aunt, and she allows him to use her 2012 Dodge Avenger, for which he said he is especially appreciative.

"But it's definitely not a Land Rover," Timbs said.

A decision in *Tyson Timbs and a 2012 Land Rover LR2 v. Indiana*, 17-1091, is expected by June.

World faces 'impossible' task at post-Paris climate talks

By **FRANK JORDANS** and **MONIKA SCISLOWSKA**, Associated Press

KATOWICE, Poland (AP) — Three years after sealing a landmark global climate deal in Paris, world leaders are gathering again to agree on the fine print.

The euphoria of 2015 has given way to sober realization that getting an agreement among almost 200 countries, each with their own political and economic demands, will be challenging — as evidenced by President Donald Trump's decision to pull the United States out of the Paris accord, citing his "America First" mantra.

"Looking from the outside perspective, it's an impossible task," Poland's deputy environment minister, Michal Kurtyka, said of the talks he will preside over in Katowice from Dec. 2-14.

Top of the agenda will be finalizing the so-called Paris rulebook, which determines how countries have to count their greenhouse gas emissions, transparently report them to the rest of the world and reveal what they are doing to reduce them.

Seasoned negotiators are calling the meeting, which is expected to draw 25,000 participants, "Paris 2.0" because of the high stakes at play in Katowice.

Forest fires from California to Greece, droughts in Germany and Australia, tropical cyclones Mangkhut

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in the Pacific and Michael in the Atlantic — scientists say this year's extreme weather offers a glimpse of disasters to come if global warming continues unabated.

A recent report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warned that time is running out if the world wants to achieve the most ambitious target in the Paris agreement — keeping global warming at 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit). The planet has already warmed by about 1 degree C since pre-industrial times and it's on course for another 2-3 degrees of warming by the end of the century unless drastic action is taken.

The conference will have "quite significant consequences for humanity and for the way in which we take care of our planet," Kurtyka told the Associated Press ahead of the talks.

Experts agree that the Paris goals can only be met by cutting emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases to net zero by 2050.

But the Paris agreement let countries set their own emissions targets. Some are on track, others aren't. Overall, the world is heading the wrong way.

Last week, the World Meteorological Organization said globally averaged concentrations of carbon dioxide reached a new record in 2017, while the level of other heat-trapping gases such as methane and nitrous oxide also rose.

This year is expected to see another 2 percent increase in human-made emissions, as construction of coal-fired power plants in Asia and Africa continue while carbon-absorbing forests are felled faster than they can regrow.

"Everyone recognized that the national plans, when you add everything up, will take us way beyond 3, potentially 4 degrees Celsius warming," said Johan Rockstrom, the incoming director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research.

"We know that we're moving in the wrong direction," Rockstrom told the AP. "We need to bend the global carbon emissions no later than 2020 — in two years' time — to stand a chance to stay under 2 degrees Celsius."

Convincing countries to set new, tougher targets for emissions reduction by 2020 is a key challenge in Katowice.

Doing so will entail a transformation of all sectors of their economies, including a complete end to burning fossil fuel.

Poor nations want rich countries to pledge the biggest cuts, on the grounds that they're responsible for most of the carbon emissions in the atmosphere. Rich countries say they're willing to lead the way, but only if poor nations play their part as well.

"Obviously not all countries are at the same stage of development," said Lidia Wojtal, an associate with Berlin-based consultancy Climatekos and a former Polish climate negotiator. "So we need to also take that into account and differentiate between the responsibilities. And that's a huge task."

Among those likely to be pressing hardest for ambitious measures will be small island nations, which are already facing serious challenges from climate change.

The U.S., meanwhile, is far from being the driving force it was during the Paris talks under President Barack Obama. Brazil and Australia, previously staunch backers of the accord, appear to be following in Trump's footsteps.

Some observers fear nationalist thinking on climate could scupper all hope of meaningful progress in Katowice. Others are more optimistic.

"We will soon see a large enough minority of significant economies moving decisively in the right direction," said Rockstrom. "That can have spillover effects which can be positive."

Poland could end up playing a crucial role in bringing opposing sides together. The country has already presided over three previous rounds of climate talks, and its heavy reliance on carbon-intensive coal for energy is forcing Warsaw to mull some tough measures in the years ahead.

The 24th Conference of the Parties, or COP24 as it's known, is being held on the site of a Katowice mine that was closed in 1999 after 176 years of coal production. Five out of the city's seven collieries have been

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closed since the 1990s, as Poland phased out communist-era subsidies and moved to a market economy. Yet elsewhere in the city, 1,500 miners still extract thousands of tons of coal daily. Poland also still depends on coal for some 80 percent of its energy needs.

Poland intends to send a signal that the miners' futures, and those of millions of others whose jobs are at risk from decarbonization, are not being forgotten. During the first week of talks, leaders are expected to sign a Polish-backed declaration calling for a 'just transition' that will "create quality jobs in regions affected by transition to a low-carbon economy."

Then negotiators will get down to the gritty task of trimming a 300-page draft into a workable and meaningful agreement that governments can sign off on at the end of the second week.

"(I) hope that parties will be able to reach a compromise and that we will be able to say that Katowice contributed positively to this global effort," Kurtyka said.

Jordans reported from Berlin.

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Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Thursday, Nov. 29, the 333rd day of 2018. There are 32 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 29, 1890, the first Army-Navy football game was played at West Point, New York; Navy defeated Army, 24-0.

On this date:

In 1864, a Colorado militia killed at least 150 peaceful Cheyenne Indians in the Sand Creek Massacre.

In 1910, British explorer Robert F. Scott's ship Terra Nova set sail from New Zealand, carrying Scott's expedition on its ultimately futile — as well as fatal — race to reach the South Pole first.

In 1929, Navy Lt. Cmdr. Richard E. Byrd, pilot Bernt Balchen, radio operator Harold June and photographer Ashley McKinney made the first airplane flight over the South Pole.

In 1947, the U.N. General Assembly passed a resolution calling for the partitioning of Palestine between Arabs and Jews; 33 members, including the United States, voted in favor of the resolution, 13 voted against while 10 abstained. (The plan, rejected by the Arabs, was never implemented.)

In 1961, Enos the chimp was launched from Cape Canaveral aboard the Mercury-Atlas 5 spacecraft, which orbited earth twice before returning.

In 1963, President Johnson named a commission headed by Earl Warren to investigate the assassination of President Kennedy.

In 1972, the coin-operated video arcade game Pong, created by Atari, made its debut at Andy Capp's Tavern in Sunnyvale, California.

In 1981, actress Natalie Wood drowned in a boating accident off Santa Catalina Island, California, at age 43.

In 1986, actor Cary Grant died in Davenport, Iowa, at age 82.

In 1987, a Korean Air 707 jetliner en route from Abu Dhabi to Bangkok was destroyed by a bomb planted by North Korean agents with the loss of all 115 people aboard.

In 1991, 17 people were killed in a 164-vehicle pileup during a dust storm on Interstate 5 near Coalinga, California. Actor Ralph Bellamy died in Santa Monica, California, at age 87.

In 2001, George Harrison, the "quiet Beatle," died in Los Angeles following a battle with cancer; he was 58.

Ten years ago: Indian commandos killed the last remaining gunmen holed up at a luxury Mumbai hotel,

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ending a 60-hour rampage through India's financial capital by suspected Pakistani-based militants that killed 166 people. Architect Joern Utzon, who designed the iconic Sydney Opera House in Sydney, Australia, died at age 90.

Five years ago: A police helicopter crashed onto a pub in Glasgow, Scotland, killing 10 people. A single-engine plane crashed in remote southwest Alaska, killing four people and injuring six.

One year ago: North Korea launched its most powerful weapon yet, claiming a new type of intercontinental ballistic missile that some observers believed could put the entire U.S. East Coast within range. "Today" host Matt Lauer was fired for what NBC called "inappropriate sexual behavior" with a colleague; a published report accused him of crude and habitual misconduct with women around the office. Garrison Keillor, who'd entertained public radio listeners for 40 years on "A Prairie Home Companion," was fired by Minnesota Public Radio following allegations of inappropriate workplace behavior. President Donald Trump retweeted inflammatory videos from a fringe British political group purporting to show violence committed by Muslims. The House approved a measure requiring annual anti-harassment training for lawmakers and aides. The price of bitcoin surged through \$10,000, adding to its ten-fold jump in value during 2017.

Today's Birthdays: Hall of Fame sportscaster Vin Scully is 91. Former French President Jacques Chirac is 86. Blues singer-musician John Mayall is 85. Actress Diane Ladd is 83. Songwriter Mark James is 78. Composer-musician Chuck Mangione is 78. Country singer Jody Miller is 77. Pop singer-musician Felix Cavaliere (The Rascals) is 76. Former Olympic skier Suzy Chaffee is 72. Actor Jeff Fahey is 66. Movie director Joel Coen is 64. Actor-comedian-celebrity judge Howie Mandel is 63. Former Homeland Security Director Janet Napolitano is 61. Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel is 59. Actress Cathy Moriarty is 58. Actress Kim Delaney is 57. Actor Tom Sizemore is 57. Actor Andrew McCarthy is 56. Actor Don Cheadle is 54. Actor-producer Neill Barry is 53. Musician Wallis Buchanan is 53. Pop singer Jonathan Knight (New Kids on the Block) is 50. Rock musician Martin Carr (Boo Radleys) is 50. Actress Jennifer Elise Cox is 49. Actor Larry Joe Campbell is 48. Rock musician Frank Delgado (Deftones) is 48. Actress Paola Turbay is 48. Contemporary Christian singer Crowder is 47. Actress Gena Lee Nolin is 47. Actor Brian Baumgartner is 46. Actor Julian Ovenden is 43. Actor Chadwick Boseman is 42. Actress Anna (AH'-nuh) Faris is 42. Gospel singer James Fortune is 41. Actress Lauren German is 40. Rapper The Game is 39. Actress Janina Gavankar is 38. Rock musician Ringo Garza is 37. Actor-comedian John Milhiser is 37. Actor Lucas Black is 36. Actor Diego Boneta is 28. Actress Lovie Simone (TV: "Greenleaf") is 20.

Thought for Today: "Toleration is good for all, or it is good for none." — Edmund Burke, British statesman (1729-1797).