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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.



www.harrmotors.com

605-225-3078 ~ 1-800-658-3463

Groton Area Schedule of Events

Monday, December 10, 2018

4:30pm: Wrestling: Boys JH Tournament vs. Webster Area High School @ Webster High School

6:00pm: Basketball: Girls 7th/8th Game vs. Warner @ Warner High School (7th Grade 6pm 8th Grade 7pm)

7:00pm: School Board Meeting at Groton Area High School

Friday, December 14, 2018

Debate at Brookings High School (Brookings Bell)

5:15pm: Basketball: Boys C Game vs. Redfield-Doland @ Redfield Jr-Sr High School followed by JV and varsity games.

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ALL FOR HUNT



HUNTING FOR A BIGGER REASON

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.



Philippians 4:13



This is a Fundraiser for Hunter Schaller and his family organized by Peyton Johnson and family. Designed by Peyton Johnson.

Orders are due by December 19th and will be ready the week of January 7th.

[Click here to place an order](#)



#allforHunt Fundraiser
- Keychains \$10

All proceeds to go to the family. You can order at the Groton High School office, Professional Management Services, Lori's Pharmacy or BK Custom T's

Fund set up at First State Bank

An account has been set up at First State Bank in Groton for Hunter Schaller. Anyone wanting to donate can make checks to "Hunter Schaller Benefit" and mail or drop off at the First State Bank in Groton. Hunter was involved in a motor vehicle accident on November 21st and is in ICU in Sioux Falls. Schaller is a junior at GHS and is the son of Steve Schaller and Julie Schaller.

A GoFundMe page has been established for the Schaller family, started by Peyton Johnson. Thus far, in nine days, \$11,880 has been raised of the \$15,000 goal. To donate, [click here](#).

HUNTER SCHALLER BENEFIT

ALL-U-CAN-EAT CHISLIC & SHRIMP



Friday, December 14

starting @5:30pm - Ferney Bar

Includes steak chislic & multiple types of shrimp for just \$30 per person

100% of proceeds to benefit the Schaller Family!

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Groton Area varsity teams beat Leola-Frederick

Groton Area girls' basketball team jumped out to a 20-0 lead en route to a 58-31 win over Leola-Frederick Saturday afternoon in Frederick. It was the opening game of the season for the Tigers while the Titans are now 0-2 after losing as well to Langford Area on Friday.

Payton Maine led the Tigers with five three-pointers as she finished with 25 points to lead all scorers. Eliza Wanner added 14 points followed by Miranda Hanson and Gracie Traphagen with six each, Jennie Doeden had five and Kaycie Hawkins added two points.

The Titans were led by Avery Wolff with nine points followed by Anna Lapka with eight, Madellyne Nordine and Meza Myer each had five points, Maria Jenkins had two and Brooklyn Podoll and Marissa Sumption each added a free throw.

Doeden had 12 of the team's 39 rebounds, Wanner, Maine and Traphagen each had two of the team's seven steals, Doeden had four of the team's 13 assists and the team had 13 turnovers.

Groton Area led at the quarterstops at 26-5, 35-18 and 47-25.

The Lady Tigers also won the junior varsity game, 44-2. Scoring for Groton Area: Trista Keith 12, Allyssa Locke 11, Kenzie McInerney 7, Gracie Traphagen 6, Maddy Bjerke 2, Caitlynn Barse 2, Brooke Gengerke 2 and Hannah Gustafson 2. Maria Jenkins had 2 points for the Titans.

The boys team won its game, 71-48. Brodyn DeHoet scored all 10 of Groton's first quarter points. The Tigers jumped out to a 10-5 lead before going scoreless for nearly eight minutes as Leola-Frederick scored 14 straight points to take a 19-10 lead at the end of the first quarter. Groton Area had a rally of its own with 11 straight points to help propel them to a 33-25 lead at half time. The Tigers led, 48-38, at the end of three quarters of play.

DeHoet for Groton Area and Haydn Podoll for the Titans each had a double-double on the night. DeHoet had 27 points and 12 rebounds while Podoll had 12 points and 10 rebounds. Others scoring for Groton Area were Jonathan Doeden with 13, Cade Guthmiller 12, Treyton Diegel eight, Austin Jones six and Kaden Kurtz had five points. The Titans were led by Tanner Geffre with 18 points while Isaac Sumption had eight, Trevor Sumption had five, Zach Mueller three and Josh Hoffman had two points. Guthmiller made four three-pointers while DeHoet had three and Diegel two. Podoll made two three-pointers and Trevor Sumption made one for the Titans.

Groton Area made 80 percent of its free throws, making 24 of 30 while the Titans made 50 percent, making 17 of 34.

Groton Area had the edge on rebounds, 35-33, had more assists, 10-5, and more turnovers, 13-11. The Titans had more steals, 7-6.

Leola-Frederick won the junior varsity game, 37-27. Scoring for Groton Area: Cade Guthmiller 9, Chandler Larson 8, Jackson Cogley 3, Cyruss DeHoet 3, Jayden Zak 2, Pierce Kettering 1 and Jace Kroll 1. For Leola-Frederick: Jake Kenser 15, Zach Mueller 9, Spencer Hoffman 4, Ethan Morlock 4, Mason Hinz 2, Vincent Petrich 2, Mason Waltman 1.

Help Wanted

Looking for full-time and part-time labor in Hecla area. Pressure washing livestock trailers and hog barns. Also working in hog barns as needed, training is provided. Must be able to lift at least 50 lbs. Would require some evenings. Must have good work ethic and references. Full-time benefits of health insurance and 401K, part-time has 401K. Contact Cole at 994-2201.

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What's going on in state government this week

Gov. Dennis Daugaard's Public Commitments; Public Meetings:

Tuesday, December 11, to Thursday, December 13, The Big Island, Hawaii – Gov. Dennis Daugaard will participate and attend the Western Governors' Winter Meeting at the Fairmont Orchid Hotel, Hawaii.

Saturday, December 8, 10 a.m. CST – Fort Sisseton Historic State Park is hosting a Frontier Christmas. Celebrate the season with Christmas crafts, roasted chestnuts, homemade bread, sleigh rides and caroling. Find more information online, or call 605-448-5474.

Monday, December 10, 9 a.m. CST, Pierre – The Nonpoint Source Task Force will meet in the Floyd L. Matthew Environmental Education and Training Center in the Joe Foss Building, 523 E. Capitol Ave. Agenda items are available on DENR's webpage at <https://denr.sd.gov/boards/schedule.aspx>. For more information, contact DENR, at 605-773-4254.

Monday, December 10, 10 a.m. CST, Pierre – The South Dakota Board of Nursing Facility Administrators will be holding a board meeting at the Red Rossa Conference Center, 808 W. Sioux Ave. For more information or to view the agenda please visit <https://boardsandcommissions.sd.gov/Meetings.aspx?BoardID=69>.

Tuesday, December 11, 9:30 a.m. CST, Pierre – The REDI (Revolving Economic Development and Initiative) Board meeting will be on Tuesday, December 11 at 9:30 a.m. CST at 711 E Wells Ave. Please contact Cassie Stoesser, GOED Finance Director, at 605-773-GOED (4633) for more information. <https://boardsandcommissions.sd.gov/Meetings.aspx?BoardID=31>.

Tuesday, December 11, 1 p.m. MST, Rapid City – The Indian Education Advisory Council will meet in the Multipurpose Room at Rapid City High School, 601 Columbus St. An agenda is posted at <http://boardsandcommissions.sd.gov/Meetings.aspx?BoardID=200>.

Tuesday, December 11, 1 p.m. – 5 p.m. CST – The Statewide Independent Living Council will hold its quarterly meeting by videoconference with sites in Aberdeen, Pierre, Rapid City, Sioux Falls, and Spearfish. For more information, please contact Eric Weiss at 605-773-3195.

Wednesday, December 12, 10 a.m. CST, Sioux Falls – The South Dakota Board of Nursing will be holding a board meeting at Midwest Health Management Services, 4109 S. Carnegie Circle. For more information or to view the agenda please visit <https://boardsandcommissions.sd.gov/Meetings.aspx?BoardID=68>.

Wednesday, December 12, 1 p.m. CST, Pierre – The Aeronautics Commission of the South Dakota Department of Transportation will hold a meeting via conference call. Staff will be available in the Commission Room of the Becker-Hansen building located at 700 E. Broadway Ave. in Pierre. The public is invited to attend. To view the meeting agenda, posted 72 hours in advance, visit <http://boardsandcommissions.sd.gov/Meetings.aspx?BoardID=5>. For more information call 605-773-3265.

Wednesday, December 12, 6 p.m. CST and Thursday, December 13, 8:30 a.m. CST – The 9-1-1 Coordination Board meets in the South Dakota Association of County Commissioners Building, 211 E. Prospect Ave., Pierre. A draft agenda can found at: <https://boardsandcommissions.sd.gov/bcuploads/12-12%20&%2013%202018%20DRAFT%20Board%20Mtg%20Agenda.pdf>. Attendees also can dial into the meeting at 1-866-528-2256; access code 4999977. For more information, contact Shawnie Rechtenbaugh at 605-773-8145.

Thursday, December 13, 8 a.m. CST, Sioux Falls, State Penitentiary – The Board of Pardons and Paroles will meet in the Jameson Annex Visit Room. For more information, go to <http://boardsandcommissions.sd.gov/Meetings.aspx?BoardID=74>.

Thursday, December 13, 9 a.m. CST, Sioux Falls – The South Dakota Board of Medical and Osteopathic Examiners will be holding a board meeting at 101 N. Main Ave., Suite 215. For more information please visit <https://boardsandcommissions.sd.gov/Meetings.aspx?BoardID=65>.

Thursday, December 13, 1:30 p.m. CST, Pierre – DENR's Petroleum Release Compensation Board will meet in the Floyd L. Matthew Environmental Education and Training Center in the Joe Foss Building, 523 E. Capitol Ave. Agenda items are available through the Boards & Commission Portal at <https://boardsandcommissions.sd.gov/Meetings.aspx?BoardID=73>. For more information, contact Vickie Maberry, DENR, at 605-773-3769.

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Friday, December 14, 9 a.m. CST, Pierre – The Veterinary Medical Examining Board will hold a meeting at the Animal Industry Board office in Pierre. A full agenda can be found at <https://boardsandcommissions.sd.gov/bcuploads/2018.12.14%20Meeting%20Notice%20and%20Agenda.pdf>.

You Might Also Be Interested To Know:

Monday, December 10, and Tuesday, December 11, 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. CST, Sioux Falls – Furniture Mart USA will be conducting a job fair at its location, 140 E. Hinks Lane. Positions are available for warehouse, delivery, customer service, visual merchandiser and maintenance. DLR Sioux Falls Job Service can help. For more information, call 605-367-5300 or visit www.sdjobs.org.

Tuesday, December 11, to Wednesday, December 12 – The South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation will hold itinerant office hours. Both job seekers and employers interested in receiving employment and career services at no cost may visit or call during these office hours. More information on programs and services is available at www.sdjobs.org. Itinerant office hours will be held at the following locations:

Tuesday, December 11, 1 – 3 p.m. CST, Redfield – At the Spink County Court House, third floor or call 605-380-8930 during these hours and 605-626-2340 at any other time. Additional information at www.sdjobs.org.

Wednesday, December 12, 1 – 3 p.m. CST, Webster – At the Day County Court House basement or call 605-380-8930 during these hours and 605-626-2340 at any other time. Additional information at www.sdjobs.org.

Tuesday, December 11, 7:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. CST, Brookings – General Education Development (GED) testing will take place at the Brookings Job Service, 1310 Main Ave. S., Suite 103. For more information, call 605-688-4370 or visit www.GED.com.

Tuesday, December 11, 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. MST, Spearfish – The Credit Where Credit is Due Financial Literacy Class will be held at Spearfish Job Service, 1300 North Ave. For more information, call 605-642-6900 or visit www.sdjobs.org.

Tuesday, December 11, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. CST, Sioux Falls – Sanford Health will be conducting an employer information session at Sioux Falls Job Service, 811 E. 10th St. Positions available for environmental service technicians, food service assistants and nursing assistants. For more information, call 605-367-5300 or visit www.sdjobs.org.

Tuesday, December 11 – Benefits specialists from the Department of Social Services' Division of Economic Assistance will be available at the following itinerant office locations. For more information, contact Tia Kafka, 605-773-3165.

Kyle, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. MST

Canton, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. CST

Flandreau, 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. CST

Webster, 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. CST

Timber Lake, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. MST

Wednesday, December 12 to Thursday, December 13 – The South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation will host Job Search Assistance Programs (JSAP). JSAP is a workshop for people recovering from job loss or enhancing their job search skills. Trained instructors speak on modern-day techniques used to successfully find employment. Topics covered include resume and cover letter writing, interviewing etiquette, networking effectively, using social media and much more. JSAP will be offered at the following

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locations:

Wednesday, December 12, 9:30 a.m. – 3 p.m. CST, Sisseton – At 10 E. Hickory St., Suite 3. For more information, call 605-698-3964 or visit www.sdjobs.org.

Wednesday, December 12, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. MST, Spearfish – At 1300 North Ave. For more information, call 605-642-6900 or visit www.sdjobs.org.

Wednesday, December 12, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. CST, Vermillion – 904 E. Cherry St. A presentation on financial health will be offered by the Wells Fargo at Work Program as part of JSAP. For more information or to register for this workshop, please call 605-677-6900. For more information, please visit www.sdjobs.org.

Thursday, December 13, 8:30 a.m. – 3 p.m. CST, Aberdeen – At 420 S. Roosevelt St. Parties interested in attending should register by calling 605-626-2340 prior to 5 p.m. on Wednesday, December 12. For more information, visit www.sdjobs.org.

Thursday, December 13, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. CST, Huron – At 333 9th St. SW, in the Huron Campus Center, Hohm Conference Room. The Financial Literacy class is in the morning and the Job Search Assistance class is in the afternoon. For more information or to register to attend, call 605-353-7155 or visit www.sdjobs.org.

Thursday, December 13, 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. CST, Watertown – At 2001 9th Ave. SW, Suite 200. For more information, call 605-882-5131 or visit www.sdjobs.org.

Wednesday, December 12 to Thursday, December 13 – Bring Your 'A' Game to Work encompasses seven different skills including Appreciation, Attitude, Attendance, Appearance, Ambition, Accountability and Acceptance. These soft skills and a willingness to take direction are generally more desired by employers than the specific skills a particular job requires. Bring Your 'A' Game is being offered at no cost to businesses and individuals. For more information or to register online, visit: https://dlr.sd.gov/workforce_services/individuals/training_opportunities/soft_skills_training.aspx

The workshop will be offered at the following location(s):

Wednesday, December 12, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. MST, Rapid City – At Rapid City Job Service, 2330 N. Maple Ave. Lunch is provided. To register, call 605-394-5120 or register online at the link above.

Wednesday, December 12, 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. CST, Sioux Falls – At 811 E. 10th St. Registration required. Any class without four people registered by the previous Friday will be canceled. For more information or to register, call 605-367-5300.

Thursday, December 13, 9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. CST, Vermillion – At the Vermillion Job Service, 904 E. Cherry St. For more information or to register, please call 605-677-6912 or register online at the link above.

Wednesday, December 12 – Benefits specialists from the Department of Social Services' Division of Economic Assistance will be available at the following itinerant office locations. For more information, contact Tia Kafka, 605-773-3165.

Wanblee, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. MST

Salem, 9:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. CST

Dupree, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. MST

Flandreau, 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. CST

Thursday, December 13 – Benefits specialists from the Department of Social Services' Division of Economic Assistance will be available at the following itinerant office locations. For more information, contact Tia Kafka, 605-773-3165.

Canton, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. CST

Kyle, 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. MST

Flandreau, 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m. CST

Lemmon, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. MST

Armour, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. CST

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Today in Weather History

December 10, 2000: Heavy snow of 6 to 8 inches fell across parts of Lyman and Jones Counties on the 10th and 11th. Some amounts included 6 inches at Kennebec and Okaton and 8 inches at Murdo.

December 10, 1699: A severe ice storm hit Boston, Massachusetts causing much damage to orchards.

1946 - The temperature at New York City soared to 70 degrees. (David Ludlum)

1949 - The barometric pressure at Las Vegas, NV, reached a record low reading of 29.17 inches (987.8 millibars). (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A cold front brought high winds to the eastern slopes of the Northern and Central Rockies. Winds gusted to 97 mph at Mines Peak CO. In Wyoming, up to a foot of snow blanketed the Teton Village Ski Resort, northwest of Jackson. Strong chinook winds in the Central High Plains Region, gusting to 61 mph at Scottsbluff NE, warmed temperatures to near 70 degrees. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Squalls produced heavy snow in the Lower Great Lakes Region. Totals in northeastern Ohio ranged up to 14 inches at Harpersfield, and totals in western New York State ranged up to 14 inches at Sodus. In the snowbelt of Upper Michigan, the Ontonogon area reported two feet of snow in two days. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Heavy snow fell across the northern and central mountains of Colorado, with 24 inches reported at Steamboat Springs. Six to twelve inches of snow fell in the Denver and Boulder area delaying plane flights and snarling traffic. Heavy snow also spread across the Central Plains into the Mississippi Valley. Winner SD received 11 inches of snow, and more than ten inches of snow was reported north of Sioux City IA. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1992 - A slow-moving Nor'easter storm batters the northeast U.S. coast killing 19 people.

December 10, 2002: A shower of tiny fish rained down on Korona, a village in the mountains of northern Greece. A Greek television reported a waterspout caused the incident on Lake Doirani.

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Today

Tonight

Tuesday

Tuesday
Night

Wednesday



Sunny



Partly Cloudy



Increasing
Clouds



Slight Chance
Snow then
Mostly Cloudy



Partly Sunny

High: 35 °F

Low: 14 °F

High: 34 °F

Low: 18 °F

High: 36 °F

Today: A Mix Of Sun And Clouds

Highs: 30s and 40s

Minor Precipitation Chances Tuesday And Wednesday



National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD

Updated: 12/10/2018 4:36 AM Central

Published on: 12/10/2018 at 4:39AM

A mix of sun and clouds is in store for the region today. Temperatures should warm into the 30s and 40s. A couple of fast-moving low pressure systems could bring some minor precipitation chances on Tuesday, and again Wednesday through Wednesday night.

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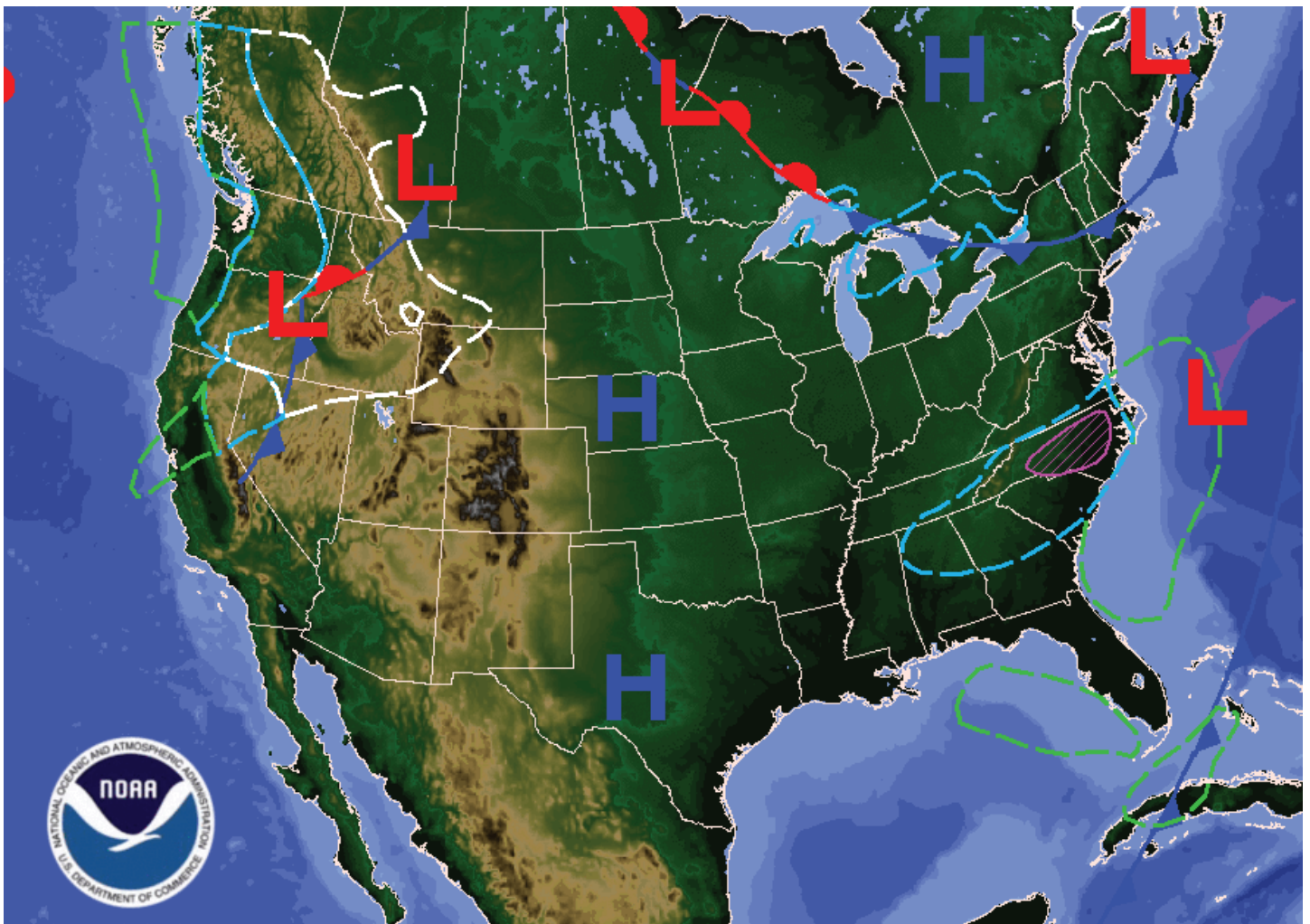
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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 28 °F at 4:09 PM
Low Outside Temp: 10 °F at 10:22 PM
High Gust: 10 mph at 6:27 AM
Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 58° in 1979
Record Low: -29° in 1972
Average High: 27°F
Average Low: 7°F
Average Precip in Dec.: 0.16
Precip to date in Dec.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 21.36
Precip Year to Date: 15.81
Sunset Tonight: 4:50 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:04 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Mon, Dec 10, 2018, issued 4:44 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McCreynolds with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

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

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WHOSE PARTY?

Competent! Outstanding! Careful! Friendly! Supportive! Bright! Cheerful! Caring! Gracious! And the list of words to describe Beth, the secretary to the president of the company, could go on and on. She was loved by everyone in the company.

When it came time for her birthday one year, her co-workers decided to honor her with a lavish party. They rented a beautiful ballroom, hired the best caterer, designed a special cake, had special napkins with her name on them and collected money to buy a gift.

All went well. The tables were beautifully set, the caterer was on time, the guests arrived and there was excitement in the room. Everyone kept looking at the entrance awaiting the arrival of Beth. After waiting for fifteen minutes the co-worker who organized the event said to Beth's best friend, Where is she?

Im not sure, she replied. Ill phone her.

She did and discovered that she was at her favorite sandwich shop enjoying her lunch alone. No one thought to invite Beth to her celebration!

There will be many parties this Christmas. And as usual, the Guest, Whose birthday we celebrate, will not be invited. Tables will be set, lights will blink, guests will arrive, laughter will ring out, gifts will be exchanged, everyone will have fun but Jesus will not be present. No one will think to invite Him the One who should be the main attraction.

Prayer: Lord of the season, may we place Your Son, our Savior, at the center of everything we do this Christmas. May we never forget, Its all about Him. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Matthew 2:11 And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

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

News from the Associated Press

Even the dogs get snow boots at this police department

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A police dog in South Dakota is learning how to walk a beat in snow boots. Video posted by the Rapid City police department shows Jary trying to adjust having the boots on its paws. The dog awkwardly lifts its legs while getting used to the new boots. The department says it equips its officers for the chilly weather, “even the furry ones!”

Faulkton School District residents to vote on \$9M project

FAULKTON, S.D. (AP) — Residents of the Faulkton School District are voting this month on whether to raise property taxes to pay for a \$9 million school improvement project.

The proposed bond issue would cover demolition of the existing middle school and high school and the construction of new buildings. It also would fund the renovation of elementary classrooms and various other school improvements.

The election is Dec. 18. The American News reports that four community informational meetings are scheduled this week.

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

Sioux Falls mother pleads not guilty to attempted murder

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A Sioux Falls mother accused of trying to kill herself and her baby by crashing her vehicle has pleaded not guilty.

Thirty-four-year-old Julia Alzoubaidi is charged with attempted first-degree murder and felony child abuse in the October crash off Interstate 229 near the Big Sioux River. She entered her pleas at a court appearance Friday.

Authorities allege Alzoubaidi left a suicide note in her car saying she decided to kill her six-month-old child because he showed signs of an attachment disorder. Law officers found Alzoubaidi in the river and her infant along the bank. Both survived.

She’s free on \$250,000 bond. She could face up to 40 years in prison if convicted.

Watertown bookstore owners struggle to stay in business

By J.T. FEY, Watertown Public Opinion

WATERTOWN, S.D. (AP) — The book-selling business in Watertown is alive and ... well, it’s alive, anyway. The city has two bookstores — DDR Books located in downtown Watertown, and The Book Zealot located in the East Point mini-mall across 14th Avenue from HyVee.

Neither of the owners said their business is robust.

“If I’m going to be completely honest with you, it’s a struggle from month to month,” said Renee Scriver of The Book Zealot.

Donus Roberts of DDR Books also used “struggle” to describe his business.

“We pay our bills, and we do all right on making expenses work,” he told the Watertown Public Opinion. “But if we had to make a living at it, we couldn’t.”

The two businesses really don’t cross competitive swords. The Book Zealot almost exclusively sells and trades in used books, and DDR Books is stocked with many new as well as some used books.

The two owners know each other. Scriver took a class under Roberts when attending Watertown High School but is also one of many of Roberts’ former debaters. They maintain a friendly relationship.

They are also both bound to the love of books. To avid readers, perusing a bookstore can take on an

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almost mystical quality as they seek their next great read. Unfortunately, first television and now the digital age have moved casual reading to near the bottom shelf.

Still, owners of the Watertown shops love books so they push on. Scriver has been selling for nine years and Roberts and his wife, Lovila, for 10, although he's been full-time for less than three. The Robertses operated a part-time bookstore for more than seven years in north Watertown.

Roberts said Watertown joins only Pierre and Rapid City as locations with independent bookstores. Sioux Falls has Barnes & Noble, but that's a corporate store. Most of the larger South Dakota cities have sellers of used books.

Their biggest competition is internet giant Amazon, but Scriver doesn't think her business is greatly affected.

"I think the internet is there if you're mainly into new books," she said. "If you'd go to the internet for a book I've got in the store, you'd be paying \$4 to \$5 for it. If you bought it in my store you'd pay \$2.80 plus tax for the average paperback."

How each Watertown store is supplied is perhaps their biggest difference. Roberts buys from publishing companies. Scriver finds her inventory whenever she can — auctions, garage sales, secondhand stores, wherever used books are very cheap or free.

"I can't buy a lot of books from people," she said. "If I do buy a book I have to have somebody in mind who I know is going to buy it with cash. As for new books, they're expensive and nobody around here wants to pay new prices, which is fine. I've always said you can't pay bills with books. I wish I could."

Roberts, of course, does buy new books. He admits that trying to pick winners is not his strength and he doesn't have a market research department assisting him. He said he selects too many collectors' books and realizes perhaps those aren't the preferred choice of some local readers.

He explained he wants buyers to find the type of book they want but also perhaps find another that educates them as well.

"I believe that's part of the educational responsibility of a bookstore," he said. "If that means I'm an idealist, I plead guilty."

Both sellers said they'll try to obtain books at the request of buyers, but they differed somewhat on what are their store's best-selling genres.

"For me, it's romances, thrillers and mysteries," said Scriver. "We also have a lot of kids from the Lake Norden area who come in and buy westerns."

"If I knew the answer to that I'd be brilliant," said Roberts. "During different times of the year different things sell better. Mystery crime novels and young adult novels — those two would be the best."

Both owners rely on more than just local buyers to maintain their businesses.

"We don't have a lot of 5's pulling up to our store," said Scriver, referring to Codington County license plates. She relies on regulars from as far away as Sioux Falls and Brookings and as well as many local communities.

Roberts said summer months and the current holiday season are his best-selling times. What hurt his business was the closing of the Goss Building, which had brought tourists to the downtown area and his store. But he was well aware of that risk in 2016 when he took his part-time business to full-time in a downtown location.

"We're really pleased to have a bookstore here, and the reports we get from customers from elsewhere



In this Thursday, Nov. 29, 2018 photo, Renee Scriver, owner of the used bookstore The Book Zealot, poses in the store in Watertown, S.D. (J.T. Fey/The

Public Opinion via AP)

is that it's really a good store on the new bookstore level. Our goal is to not lose money. So far, we've done that, but we've been very effective in not making any, too."

Despite their problems, neither owner seemed ready to close.

"I guess the bottom line is when you come to work, do you like opening the door," Roberts said. "The answer is yes."

Information from: Watertown Public Opinion, <http://www.thepublicopinion.com>

Yankton special education instructor honored with award

By **RANDY DOCKENDORF**, Yankton Daily Press and Dakotan

YANKTON, S.D. (AP) — When Cody Lukkes learned of the treatment of a disabled relative, he wanted to give a voice to those who didn't have one.

"I grew up with a great-uncle who was born with Down syndrome. He was born back before (the special education laws) went into effect," he said. "My great-uncle went one day to country school, and the teacher said, 'Don't come back.' They didn't think he was teachable. He didn't get the privilege of going to school."

Instead, the great-uncle remained at home and grew up on the farm.

"When my great-grandma passed away, my mom and dad took (my great-uncle) under their wing and taught him to become independent," Lukkes told the Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan .

"I think he's in his 80s now. He's living in a nursing home, and he's always at our family (gatherings). I enjoy spending time with him."

Besides his great-uncle, Lukkes attended grade school and high school with two special-needs classmates.

"They had disabilities that impacted them. One had Down syndrome and the other had cognitive disabilities," he said. "I always had a soft spot for helping them when they were young, and I still see them when they're out and about."

Lukkes has channeled that compassion into a 13-year career as a special education teacher. He spent the first three years at the Irene-Wakonda school district. He has worked the past decade with the Yankton School District.

For his professionalism and impact on others, he has received the 2018 Distinguished Service Award from the Center for Disabilities. The University of South Dakota (USD) Sanford Medical Center sponsors the annual award, honoring a special educator in South Dakota.

"I didn't even realize I was nominated for it," he said. "I received the notice that I won the award, and I had to read the email twice."

Margaret Stewart at Ability Building Services (ABS) in Yankton nominated Lukkes for the award. She formerly worked as an education assistant in Lukkes' classroom.

Her nomination letter reflected her respect for him.



In this Nov. 30, 2018 photo, Yankton, S.D., special education instructor Cody Lukkes poses. Lukkes has received the 2018 Distinguished Service Award from the Center for Disabilities. Lukkes has spent 13 years in education, the last 10 in Yankton. He not only works with special needs students but also promote greater awareness about disabilities. (Cora Van Olson/Yankton Press & Dakotan via AP)

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"Mr. Cody' is a very devoted, caring and loving teacher in the special education department. He has nine years of experience (at the time) working with the Yankton School District. He believes that teaching children with special needs is a privilege," she said.

"He respects every child in his classroom and uses many different tools and outlets for these children so they can build and advance on their learning skills."

Lukkes has also coached the Special Olympics basketball teams in Yankton, Stewart noted in her nomination letter.

"It is not about winning for him, it's about being a part of something that is much bigger than that!" she said. "It's about belonging to a group where you can just be yourself and not be judged. It's all about being loved and accepted."

Lukkes grew up in Tyndall and graduated from Bon Homme High School. He earned his bachelor's, master's and specialist degrees from USD.

When he joined the Yankton School District, Lukkes worked in the middle school for four years. He has worked for six years at Stewart Elementary School as an early-childhood director for special education.

"They say, if you last (in education) for five years, you'll stay with it, and I've been in it for 13 years," he said.

Lukkes works with the Birth-to-3 coordinator and other sources to screen young children for special needs. He can arrange home-based services as well as those in the school setting.

It's important to reach children at an early age, Lukkes said. They can care for needs before they enter school. If they do require continued services, the early detection provides a head start.

"With earlier exposure, they can learn skills and develop more independence, which is a big thing," he said. "That's our top goal, to create independent students."

He also promotes peer learning, where students learn from each other. It can involve something as simple as how to line up, where to put coats or how to have a conversation.

On an average day, Lukkes works with about 35 students, each of them two or three times a week. He works with about 8-10 children at a time with the assistance of three educational assistants (EA).

"At Stewart Elementary, our students come to us if they need help in a certain area, but they remain in the classroom as much as possible," he said.

Lukkes approaches each student in a non-judgmental manner before deciding what, if any, services they may need.

"I like to come in on a clean slate. I start developing a sense of what they can learn before we start giving them a label," he said. "We're always getting new kids in our room, probably on a weekly basis. Parents may ask me, 'Does my child have autism?' I comment back, 'I'm not saying one way or the other. I want to get to know your child first.'"

At times, the child does show a learning disability, Lukkes said. He uses tact and compassion with parents who may show a wide range of emotions and uncertainty.

"A lot of the time, it's the first time a person has to tell a parent that something might be wrong with their child, and that's tough," he said. "It's also a matter of building a relationship with the parents and learning what we can do at the school to build that relationship. It's not just the student but the whole family that's affected."

As a measure of reassurance for parents, Lukkes shares his own experiences growing up.

"I often tell parents that I'm a prime example. When I was younger, I was in the early-childhood program for language (skills)," he said. "I was the youngest child in the family and didn't really talk much. I really benefited from the help I got when I was little, and now I want to pay it forward."

Children develop at different rates, he said. They shouldn't necessarily be compared to a certain standard or other children, he added.

"In one family, older siblings may do the talking for the younger child, or that child just hasn't discovered his voice yet," he said.

In addition, Lukkes uses his role to raise awareness and to create bonds between students of all abilities.

"As an educator, my goal is just teaching people that, because you have a disability, it doesn't make you

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different than anyone else and that we all need to be treated fairly," he said. "I feel, here in Yankton, our kids are really good about interacting with kids with disabilities. They are exposed to them from Day One."

Lukkes and Angela Hafner, another special education teacher, serve on Stewart Elementary School's events committee. They use the role to educate people about disabilities.

"We have the Disability of the Month. One day a month, we recognize a special disability and the kids wear whatever color recognizes that disability," he said. "At the beginning of the day, a student council member reads (something) about that disability. And we have a special quote."

Lukkes has also promoted bonds through coaching the Special Olympics basketball program. He became involved with the program when he joined the Yankton School District.

"I was the first coach to bring the junior team, the elementary and middle school aged students, into Special Olympics. It was fun to get them started with Special Olympics here," he said. "When I started coaching, it was with Sheila Woodward. Because I worked for the district, I knew who to ask or what kids to talk to (about Special Olympics)."

Lukkes has changed his Special Olympics role but continues working with the program.

"My plate was getting kind of full between my day job and coaching three high school sports," he said. "I don't actually coach a team anymore, but I still volunteer at the local and regional tournaments."

Lukkes stressed the importance of creating students who can care for themselves not only while in school but as they move into adulthood.

"Our goal is to create an independent student," he said.

Stewart Principal Jerome Klimisch pointed to Lukkes' philosophy as a prime reason he won the distinguished service award.

"Mr. Lukkes is very dedicated to early-learning education and working with kids of all ages. He believes, if kids are struggling, the sooner they receive intervention help the better," Klimisch said. "However, he does not believe in doing everything for kids. If they develop a learned helplessness because we do everything for them, they will never get to feel successful on their own."

Lukkes cares for all students in many ways, Klimisch said.

"I appreciate all the many ways he reaches out to kids, whether it be his early-intervention kids or the many coaching assignments and volunteering he does for the district and community," the principal said.

Lukkes quickly deflects the spotlight.

"I wouldn't be where I am today if it wasn't for my co-workers. We have five special education teachers in this building alone. Everyone is very helpful," he said. "I like to have those co-workers so that, even if I feel I've made the right decision in a situation, I can bounce ideas off them."

As for his future, Lukkes would like become an administrator, such as a special education director. But for now, he finds tremendous rewards in seeing his students achieve both large and small goals.

And the students show their affection for Lukkes in their own way. "One time, a student sang 'Happy Birthday' to me with a communicative device," he said.

Lukkes looks forward to continuing the adventure.

"With young ones, it's fun to see what they're doing in the classroom. There's always something new," he said. "And I like seeing how excited they get for figuring out things. It's fun to see when they put it all together."

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

Daugaard leaves governor's office proud of fiscal strength

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — In the newly unveiled portrait of Dennis Daugaard hanging in the Capitol, the outgoing governor stands before the building's granite cornerstone, a background chosen to emphasize Daugaard's relentless focus on maintaining state buildings and strengthening South Dakota's finances in his two terms in office.

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The retiring Republican takes deep pride in South Dakota's financial health, touting the state's structurally balanced budget, fully funded retirement system and AAA credit rating in his farewell address this month. It's a commitment that's spanned the partisan divide: Daugaard orchestrated a massive cut in state spending to erase a budget deficit early in his first term and then championed tax hikes unpopular with conservatives in his second.

"In South Dakota, we don't let ideology get in the way of solving problems, and we don't let politics get in the way of professionalism, respect and friendship," Daugaard said in the speech to lawmakers. "That's why our state works. That's why our Legislature works, and as I end 22 years of service in this Capitol, I thank you all for that. I hope that never changes."

Elected in 2010, Daugaard is leaving in January after term limits barred him from running again; before occupying the governor's office, he served as a state legislator and lieutenant governor. Daugaard's departure caps a tenure that saw South Dakota dramatically reshape its criminal justice system, move out of last in the nation for teacher pay and win a U.S. Supreme Court case allowing states to force online shoppers to pay sales tax. The state raised revenues for roads and bridges and weathered Missouri River flooding.

Daugaard is described by confidants as a thoughtful and pragmatic leader. He fought for the tax increases and sought to expand eligibility for Medicaid under former President Barack Obama's health care overhaul. He signed into law conservative priorities such as a 20-week abortion ban and giving legal protections to religious-affiliated adoption agencies that refuse to place children in certain households. He vetoed measures to expand gun rights and restrict which bathrooms transgender students could use at school.

"I'm sure there are some who see me as too conservative and some who see me as too liberal, and maybe that isn't a bad spot to be in," Daugaard said last year.

Looking back on his time at the helm of state government, Daugaard told The Associated Press that he feels good about the state's top-notch credit rating and his handling of state assets, including the Capitol building. He said he's followed the philosophy that "you ought leave things better than you found them." His not-so-flashy quest to achieve AAA status included sending officials to New York, making public more financial information and successfully urging voters to adopt a balanced budget constitutional amendment.

Incoming U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson, who was Daugaard's chief of staff during his first term, said the governor will be remembered for his fiscal responsibility during the Great Recession. He said Daugaard loves "structural integrity," finding something in danger of becoming deficient and making it stronger.

"To a remarkable degree, he is who people think he is. They think he's fiscally responsible, they think he's earnest, they think he's data-driven and pragmatic and those things are as true when no one is watching as when everyone is watching," Johnson said. "He cares about politics less than any other major league politician that I've met."

Working with lawmakers, Daugaard listed as accomplishments the adult and juvenile justice overhauls, the teacher pay hike and changes to the state's education funding formula to force school districts to



Gov. Dennis Daugaard speaks during the unveiling of his official Capitol portrait in Pierre, S.D., Tuesday, Dec. 4, 2018. Connecticut artist Susan Boone Durkee painted the portrait after being chosen through a national selection process. (AP Photo/James Nord)

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manage their staffing. Those legislative wins came after a shift in approach from Daugaard, who in 2012 shepherded into law a disputed measure to give bonuses to top teachers and phase out tenure only to see it rejected later in a public vote.

Daugaard said he learned from the rebuke. Instead of making policy on his own instincts, he turned instead to gathering data and people together to come up with solutions.

"He will be known as someone who cared about the details and was very, very concerned about making the best decision for the people of South Dakota," Republican Gov.-elect Kristi Noem said. "He is a good man, with a good heart that always kept South Dakota his priority, and that's a huge testimony to his legacy that he'll leave with South Dakota."

But some of the most conservative lawmakers in the Republican-controlled Legislature have been waiting for Daugaard's exit. It appears likely a measure he vetoed to allow people to carry concealed handguns without a permit in South Dakota, a conservative prize, will become law under Noem.

"There are a lot of Republicans that are very excited to have a conservative governor," incoming GOP Sen. Lynne DiSanto, sponsor of a permitless concealed carry bill that Daugaard rejected, said last month. "I think under a new governor it's very likely to pass."

After leaving office, Daugaard, 65, intends to work and return with First Lady Linda Daugaard to their family home near Dell Rapids. He plans on spending time with family, and his big project will be converting a three-season porch, doing much of the work himself.

Daugaard said in 2016 that he and the first lady are looking forward to leaving politics. He remarked in a November column that he's not someone who worries much about a legacy.

"I'd be unhappy if people thought I was doing something to make me look good," Daugaard said. "I want to do good — and not ... create a legacy in the sense that it makes me look good. If it's a legacy with a connotation that it has some lasting effect, that's good, and I'm happy with that."

Prosecutors indict Nissan's Ghosn for underreporting pay

By MARI YAMAGUCHI and YURI KAGEYAMA, Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Prosecutors have charged Nissan Motor Co.'s former chairman Carlos Ghosn, another executive and the automaker itself for allegedly violating financial laws by underreporting income.

The charges imposed Monday involve allegations Ghosn's pay was underreported by about 5 billion yen (\$44 million) in 2011-2015. The prosecutors said earlier that the allegations were the reason for Ghosn's arrest on Nov. 19.

The arrest of an industry icon admired both in Japan and around the world has stunned many and raised concerns over the Japanese automaker and the future of its alliance with Renault SA of France.

The prosecutors issued statements Monday outlining new allegations against Ghosn and Greg Kelly, the other executive. Those are of underreporting another 4 billion yen (\$36 million) in 2016-2018. Nissan as a company was not mentioned in the latest allegations, which did not give details about the income thought to have been underreported.

In Japan, a company can be charged with wrongdoing. A court date is still undecided as the prosecutors continue to question Ghosn and Kelly.

The maximum penalty for violating Japan's financial laws, as the prosecutors allege, is 10 years in prison, a 10 million yen (\$89,000) fine, or both.

Some kind of action by the prosecutors had been expected because the detention period allowed for the allegations disclosed earlier was to end on Monday.

Nissan Motor Co. confirmed the charges against it in a statement and vowed to strengthen its governance and compliance.

"Nissan takes this situation extremely seriously," it said. "Making false disclosures in annual securities reports greatly harms the integrity of Nissan's public disclosures in the securities markets, and the company expresses its deepest regret."

Kelly, 62, an American, is suspected of having collaborated with Ghosn.

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Kelly's attorney in the U.S., Aubrey Harwell, told The Associated Press earlier this month that his client is asserting his innocence. He said insiders at Nissan and outside experts had said the handling of the income reporting was legal.

Ghosn has not commented.

Ghosn was ousted as Nissan chairman and Kelly lost his representative director title following their arrests. They both remain on Nissan's board pending a shareholder's meeting.

Ghosn, 64, was sent to Nissan by its partner Renault SA of France in 1999. He led a dramatic turnaround of the near-bankrupt Japanese automaker. But his star-level compensation drew attention since executives in Japan tend to be paid far less than their international counterparts.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe told a news conference Monday that Japan-French relations are unshakable despite concerns over the future of Nissan's alliance with Renault after Ghosn's indictment. He said it was crucial for Nissan, Renault and alliance partner Mitsubishi Motor Co., to maintain united and improve their cooperate governance.

"It is important to maintain the alliance, which is a symbol of cooperation between Japan and France," he told a televised news conference Monday, adding that Japan will promote improved corporate governance in line with global standards.

It is typical in the Japanese legal system for there to be little access to comment by suspects. Prosecutors have also said little.

Only Ghosn's attorneys and embassy officials from Lebanon, France and Brazil, where he has citizenship, have been allowed to visit him.

Shin Kukimoto, deputy chief prosecutor at the Tokyo District Prosecutor's Office, declined Monday to say if the suspects were rejecting the allegations. He said Ghosn and Kelly were being detained because they are considered flight risks.

Japan's criminal justice system long has been criticized for detaining people for extended periods to pressure them to confess. The conviction rate for those charged is more than 99 percent.

Kukimoto denied prosecutors were working to force confessions.

"We do not have such a scenario. There is no such thing and we do not force suspects to make confessions to fit the story," Kukimoto said in response to a reporter's question.

Meanwhile, the Securities and Exchange Commission said it had filed criminal complaints against Ghosn, Nissan and Kelly, paving the way for the prosecutors to charge them. A commission official said Monday that Nissan, Ghosn and Kelly were suspected of falsifying reports on millions of dollars' worth of Ghosn's income.

Nissan has said that an internal investigation found three types of misconduct: underreporting income to financial authorities, using investment funds for personal gain and illicit use of company expenses.

Jury to recommend sentence for white nationalist

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. (AP) — A man convicted of first-degree murder for driving his car into counterprotesters at a white nationalist rally in Virginia faces 20 years to life in prison as jurors reconvene to consider his punishment.

The panel that convicted James Alex Fields Jr. will hear more evidence Monday before recommending a sentence for Judge Richard Moore.

Fields was convicted Friday of killing Heather Heyer during last year's "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, organized to protest the planned removal of a statue of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee.

The 21-year-old Fields, of Maumee, Ohio, also was found guilty of injuring dozens of others by driving into a crowd of people who were marching peacefully after the rally.

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. WHO TRUMP IS WEIGHING FOR CHIEF OF STAFF

After favorite Nick Ayers dropped out of the running, Mick Mulvaney and Republican congressman Mark Meadows are two of at least four candidates in the mix.

2. CHINESE PAPER CALLS HUAWEI DETENTION 'INHUMANE'

A bail hearing for a top Chinese technology executive is set to resume in Vancouver after the U.S. alleged the firm used a shell company to evade trade curbs on Iran.

3. MACRON ADDRESSES FRANCE AMID PROTESTS

After weeks of "yellow vest" protests that have rattled the country, the president is expected to announce measures to reduce taxes and boost purchasing power.

4. 'IT FELT LIKE PUNISHMENT'

Women and their newborns in Slovakia are often unjustifiably detained in hospitals, leaving Roma women vulnerable to racist abuse and physical violence, AP finds.

5. WHAT THEY'RE SEEING IN CYPRUS

The Mediterranean island has experienced a sharp rise in migrant arrivals this year as other European countries tighten their borders.

6. WHO SAYS UK CAN STILL CHANGE ITS MIND

The EU's top court rules that Britain can revoke Brexit, boosting the hopes of people who want to stay in the 28-nation bloc that the process can be reversed, while Theresa May could face a humiliating defeat for her divorce plan.

7. IRAQ MARKS ANNIVERSARY OF VICTORY OVER ISLAMIC STATE GROUP

Baghdad declares a national holiday after the grueling three-year war in which tens of thousands of people were killed and hundreds of thousands displaced.

8. DEMOCRATS ADD LEGAL PRESSURE TO TRUMP

Top House lawmakers raise the prospect of impeachment or almost-certain prison time for Trump if it's proved that he directed illegal hush-money payments to women.

9. CHURCH RENOVATION LIFTS CHRISTMAS SPIRIT IN BETHLEHEM

A renovation of the Church of the Nativity offers visitors a look at ancient mosaics and columns restored to their original glory for the first time in 600 years.

10. MIRACLE IN MIAMI

Kenyan Drake runs the last 52 yards as the Dolphins score on a pass and double lateral on the final play to stun New England 34-33.

GM fights government to retain tax credit for electric cars

By RICHARD LARDNER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — General Motors is fighting to retain a valuable tax credit for electric vehicles as the nation's largest automaker tries to deal with the political fallout triggered by its plans to shutter several U.S. factories and shed thousands of workers.

Preserving the \$7,500 tax incentive for buyers is crucial for GM as the company pivots from internal combustion engines in favor of building cars powered by batteries or hydrogen fuel cells. Yet the layoffs and plant closings could imperil GM's push to keep the incentive. It helps make plug-ins such as the \$36,000 Chevy Bolt more affordable at a time when competition from other electric vehicle makers is heating up.

GM faces opposition from President Donald Trump and other Republicans who consider the credit a waste of taxpayer money and want it eliminated. Trump, who has pledged a manufacturing rebirth in the Midwest, reacted angrily to GM's "transformation" announcement late last month, declaring that his administration was "looking at cutting all GM subsidies, including for electric cars."

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The company already is on the verge of being phased out of the tax credit program unless Congress changes a law that caps the break at 200,000 vehicles per manufacturer. Without the incentive, GM may be forced to cut the price of its electric cars to keep prospective customers from taking their business elsewhere, according to automotive industry experts.

As evidence of the credit's importance to GM's future, the automaker has expanded its lobbying footprint in Washington and even joined forces with two rivals, Tesla and Nissan, to call for 200,000-vehicle limit to be scrapped.

Standing in the way of that goal is Sen. John Barrasso, R-Wyo., the chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. Barrasso introduced legislation in October to abolish the tax credit, a move he said would save about \$20 billion over the next 10 years. He has argued the market for electric vehicles is already established and "no longer needs the crutch of government assistance."

"The idea of the subsidies had to do with trying to make sure that electric vehicles would be a viable technology," Barrasso said. "Well, that's clearly there."

The tax credit came up briefly during a private meeting on Wednesday between Ohio's senators, Republican Rob Portman and Democrat Sherrod Brown, and GM chief executive Mary Barra, according to a congressional aide familiar with the conversation. As part of the restructuring, GM said it will stop making the Chevy Cruze at its Lordstown, Ohio, plant by March and is considering closing the plant for good.

Portman told Barra that it's difficult to help with priorities such as the electric vehicle credit when GM is moving production out of Ohio, according to the aide, who was not authorized to publicly discuss the private conversation and spoke on condition of anonymity.

One of the lobbyists working to salvage the credit for GM is Kent Hance, a former chancellor of Texas Tech University who is well connected in GOP circles, according to his online profile. Hance lists his role as a fundraiser for the campaigns of outgoing House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., and others. He has known Rick Perry, the energy secretary and former Texas governor, for nearly 30 years.

GM in early August named a former Trump White House official, Everett Eissenstat, its senior vice president for global public policy, a post that oversees the company's lobbying operations. Eissenstat, however, is not registered as a lobbyist, according to disclosure records filed with Congress. Before coming to GM, he was Trump's deputy assistant for international economic affairs.

Under federal law, the \$7,500 credit for buyers begins to phase out after a manufacturer has sold 200,000 qualifying electric vehicles. GM has estimated it will hit that threshold by the end of December, just as the Bolt will be facing new and potentially stiff competition.

Sam Abuelsamid, a senior analyst at Navigant Research, said Hyundai and Kia each will be selling compact SUVs in the U.S. beginning early next year that can travel 240 miles on a single battery charge, about the same as the Bolt. Ford will be launching a number of new plug-in hybrid models in 2019, including the Lincoln Aviator, Explorer and Escape.

"With the intensifying market shift away from cars to utility vehicles all of these are expected to be more popular than the Bolt," Abuelsamid said. To remain competitive against the new entries, "GM will likely have to cut the (retail price) of the Bolt as well as any additional EVs they launch next year by the corresponding reduction in the tax credits," he said.

Karl Brauer, executive publisher of Autotrader and Kelley Blue Book, said the credit is "hugely important" to electric vehicle manufacturers. Lowering the up-front cost of the vehicle typically plays a significant role in sales, he said, citing surveys that show more consumers would buy electric vehicles if the cars were affordably priced.

GM joined forces with Tesla and Nissan as well as several consumer and environmental groups to broaden its lobbying push even further. The EV Drive Coalition, which was launched in November, urged lawmakers in an open letter last week to put a provision in the must-pass government spending bill that does away with the 200,000-car limit.

"Eliminating the per-manufacturer cap will level the playing field for all EV manufacturers and spur innovation among domestic manufacturers, ensuring America's leadership in the hyper-competitive, global

auto market," the coalition said.

Jeannine Ginivan, a GM spokeswoman, said the tax credit should be modified but declined to say whether the automaker backs a specific piece of legislation that would remove the cap.

"We believe an important part of reaching a zero emissions future and establishing the U.S. as the leader in electrification is to continue to provide a federal tax credit to help make electric vehicles more affordable for all customers," Ginivan said in an email.

In addition to GM's in-house lobbyists, four lobbyists from Hance Scarborough, the Austin, Texas-based firm that Hance founded in 1994, are working on GM's behalf, including Hance, according to disclosure records.

GM also contracted with two other lobbying firms earlier this year to focus on electric and automated vehicle issues: the Polaris-Hutton Group and the DS2 Group. A fourth firm, the S-3 Group, was hired by GM in 2014 and earlier this year added the tax credit to its portfolio of lobbying issues.

Follow Richard Lardner on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/rplardner>

China pressures US, Canada ahead of Huawei hearing

By **KEN MORITSUGU, Associated Press**

BEIJING (AP) — China raised the pressure on the United States and Canada as a bail hearing for a top Chinese technology executive was set to resume Monday in Vancouver, British Columbia.

A headline in a Communist Party newspaper called Canada's treatment of Meng Wanzhou, the chief financial officer of Huawei Technologies, "inhumane." The editorial published in Monday's Global Times followed formal government protests to the ambassadors of both Canada and the United States over the weekend.

Meng was detained on Dec. 1 while changing planes in Vancouver. The U.S. wants her extradited. It alleges Huawei used a Hong Kong shell company to evade U.S. trade curbs on Iran.

Her arrest could fuel U.S.-China trade tensions at a time when the two sides are seeking to resolve a dispute over Beijing's technology and industrial strategy. Both sides have sought to keep the issues separate, at least so far.

"This is a criminal justice matter," U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer said on CBS' "Face the Nation" on Sunday. "It is totally separate from anything that I work on or anything that the trade policy people in the administration work on. ... We have a lot of very big, very important issues. We've got serious people working on them, and I don't think they'll be affected by this."

The hearing on whether to grant her release on bail was due to resume later Monday. Canadian prosecutor John Gibb-Carsley asked the court Friday to reject Meng's bail request. Justice William Ehrcke said he would think about proposed bail conditions over the weekend.

Vice Foreign Minister Le Yucheng summoned Canadian Ambassador John McCallum on Saturday and American Ambassador Terry Branstad on Sunday. He called Meng's detention "extremely egregious" and demanded that the U.S. vacate the arrest warrant, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

Le warned both countries that Beijing will take steps based on their response. Asked Monday what those steps might be, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said only that "it totally depends on the Canadian side itself."

The Canadian province of British Columbia has already canceled a trade mission to China amid fears China could detain Canadians in retaliation for Meng's detention.

Commercial retaliation against firms from countries at odds with China has grown increasingly common as Beijing exercises its leverage as the world's second largest economy.

Authorities closed most of Lotte's supermarkets in China after the South Korean retailer sold land at home for a U.S. anti-missile system that was stridently opposed by Beijing.

At least two companies are rallying to support Huawei.

Shenzhen Menpad Technology Group, which makes teleconferencing, security monitoring and hotel TV systems, is offering a 15 percent subsidy to employees who buy Huawei mobile phones. It also said it would not buy American vehicles, computers and other office equipment and that employees buying

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Apple iPhones would be fined.

A major wine importer is offering employees a 10 percent discount on Huawei products for the next six months, according to a notice circulating on social media.

While such movements have grassroots support, they are almost certainly countenanced by the ruling Communist Party. The government doesn't confirm its role to avoid damaging its image as a champion of free trade.

Huawei, the biggest global supplier of network gear for phone and internet companies, has become the target of U.S. security concerns because of its ties to the Chinese government. The U.S. has pressured other countries to limit use of its technology, warning they could be opening themselves up to surveillance and theft of information.

Canadian officials have declined to comment on Chinese threats of retaliation, instead emphasizing the independence of Canada's judiciary and the importance of Ottawa's relationship with Beijing.

Both the Global Times and the China Daily noted that Meng had been handcuffed and wore ankle restraints. "It is hard to escape the conclusion that her treatment is something of a show trial intended to humiliate her and the Chinese people," the China Daily said in a Monday editorial.

While protesting what it calls Canada's violation of Meng's human rights, the Communist Party is regularly accused by outsiders of rights violations at home. They include the widespread interment of Muslims in restive regions without due process to refusing to allow citizens of other countries to leave China to pressure their Chinese relatives living overseas and accused of financial crimes.

Associated Press writers Rob Gillies in Toronto and Christopher Bodeen and researcher Shanshan Wang in Beijing contributed to this report.

Iraq marks anniversary of victory over Islamic State

By **SINAN SALAHEDDIN, Associated Press**

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraq on Monday celebrated the anniversary of its costly victory over the Islamic State group, which has lost virtually all the territory it once held but still carries out sporadic attacks.

The government declared victory last December after a grueling three-year war in which tens of thousands of people were killed and hundreds of thousands displaced. Entire towns and neighborhoods were reduced to rubble in the fighting.

The government declared Monday a national holiday, and a moment of silence is planned for later in the day. Checkpoints in the capital were decorated with Iraqi flags and balloons, as security forces patrolled the streets playing patriotic music.

As part of the celebrations, authorities plan to reopen parts of Baghdad's fortified Green Zone — home to key government offices and embassies — to the public. The move is billed as an act of transparency following protests against corruption and poor public services.

Addressing a group of Iraqi military officers, Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi said it was a "proud day for all of us when our brave country defeated the enemies of life, dignity, freedom and peace."

He commended the security forces as well as Iraq's top Shiite cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, who issued a fatwa, or religious edict, mobilizing volunteers after the armed forces collapsed in the face of the IS onslaught in 2014. Tens of thousands of volunteers joined an array of state-sanctioned militias, many of them backed by Iran.

"That fatwa will be a bright spot in the history of this country and the people, from whom the decisive response started, laying the foundations of the victory," Abdul-Mahdi said.

He called on Iraqis to renounce their differences and to come together for a better future. "The time has come to leave behind all the past mistakes and conspiracies to open the doors of hope for our children for a better future," he said, vowing to rebuild the demolished areas and help displaced people to return to their homes.

The Islamic State group, which traces its roots back to the insurgency that followed the 2003 U.S.-led

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invasion, swept into Iraq from neighboring Syria in the summer of 2014. It carved out a self-styled caliphate across a third of both countries, imposing a harsh form of Islamic rule and massacring its opponents. The group abducted thousands of women and girls from the Yazidi religious minority and forced them into sexual slavery.

Iraqi forces aided by a U.S.-led coalition eventually drove the group from all the territory it once held in Iraq, including in the climactic battle for Mosul, the country's second-largest city. IS still holds a small pocket of territory in Syria, near the Iraqi border.

Iraq is still grappling with the legacy of the extremist group's brutal rule.

More than 1.8 million Iraqis remain displaced across the country, and a staggering 8 million require some form of humanitarian aid, according to the Norwegian Refugee Council. Those with suspected links to IS have been rejected by their communities, while thousands of children fathered by IS militants — including those born to enslaved Yazidi women — are still unrecognized by the state.

Nearly two-thirds of displaced people say they are unwilling or unable to return home in the next year, with more than half saying their homes were damaged or destroyed, said the aid group.

"If this is what 'victory' looks like, then there is little to celebrate for millions of Iraqis still haunted by the crimes of the IS and the long war to eliminate it," said Norwegian Refugee Council Secretary General Jan Egeland. "They have largely been forgotten by their own government and the international community."

Trump looking at several candidates for chief of staff

By ZEKE MILLER, JILL COLVIN and CATHERINE LUCEY, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is weighing at least four people to serve as his next chief of staff, after plans for an orderly succession for departing John Kelly fell through.

The high-profile hiring search comes at a pivotal time as the president looks to prepare his White House for the twin challenges of securing his re-election and fending off inquiries once Democrats gain control of the House next year.

Trump's top pick for the job, Nick Ayers, is out of the running and Trump is now soliciting input on at least four individuals, including Office of Management and Budget director Mick Mulvaney and Rep. Mark Meadows, R-N.C., the chair of the conservative House Freedom Caucus.

Ayers, who is chief of staff to Vice President Mike Pence, was seen as the favorite for the job when Trump announced Saturday that Kelly would leave around year's end. But a White House official said Sunday that Trump and Ayers could not reach agreement on Ayers' length of service and that he would instead assist the president from outside the administration. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive personnel matters.

Ayers confirmed the decision in a tweet Sunday, thanking Trump and Pence for giving him the opportunity to work in the White House. "I will be departing at the end of the year but will work with the #MAGA team to advance the cause," he said.

Trump offered his own take on the development: "I am in the process of interviewing some really great people for the position of White House Chief of Staff. Fake News has been saying with certainty it was Nick Ayers, a spectacular person who will always be with our #MAGA agenda. I will be making a decision soon!"

Even senior White House officials were caught off guard Sunday, most having believed the Ayers move was a done deal. No obvious successor to Kelly was in sight and there was some fretting that Trump may not be able to fill the job by the time Kelly leaves.

Ayers and Trump had discussed the job for months, making the breakdown Sunday all the more surprising. Trump said Saturday that he expected to announce a replacement for Kelly in a day or two. But with Ayers no longer waiting in the wings, Trump may now take until the end of the year, according to a person familiar with the president's thinking.

Mulvaney was not interested in becoming chief of staff, according to a person close to him who spoke on condition of anonymity. Mulvaney has been saying for almost two months now that he would be more interested in becoming commerce or treasury secretary if that would be helpful to the president, the

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person said.

Also among those thought to be in the mix were Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin and U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, who said in a CBS interview that he hadn't spoken to anyone at the White House about the job and was "entirely focused" on his position. A person familiar with Mnuchin's thinking said he, too, was happy with his work at Treasury and had not sought the job of chief of staff.

Acting Attorney General Matthew Whitaker and Trump's former deputy campaign manager, David Bossie, were also among the names being floated by some close to the White House.

Trump's administration has set records for staff turnover, and he has often struggled to attract experienced political professionals, a challenge that has grown more difficult by the upcoming threat of costly Democratic oversight investigations and an uncertain political environment.

In any administration, the role of White House chief of staff is split between the responsibilities of supervising the White House and managing the man sitting in the Oval Office. Striking that balance in the turbulent times of Trump has bedeviled both Kelly and his predecessor, Reince Priebus, and will be the defining challenge for whomever is selected next.

Kelly, whose last day on the job is set to be Jan. 2, had been credited with imposing order on a chaotic West Wing after his arrival in June 2017 from his post as homeland security secretary. But his iron fist also alienated some longtime Trump allies, and over time he grew increasingly isolated.

Trump wants his next chief of staff to hold the job through the 2020 election, the officials said. Ayers, who has young triplets, had long planned to leave the administration at the end of the year and had only agreed to serve in an interim basis through next spring.

Ayers had earned the backing of the president's influential daughter and son-in-law, White House advisers Ivanka Trump and Jared Kushner, but was viewed warily by other aides.

Ayers will run a pro-Trump super PAC, according to a person familiar with his plans who was not authorized to discuss them by name.

Pence's deputy chief of staff, Jarrod Agen, is expected to assume Ayers' role for the vice president.

Follow Miller on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/ZekeJMiller>

Top House Dems raise prospect of impeachment, jail for Trump

By HOPE YEN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Top House Democrats have raised the prospect of impeachment or the real possibility of prison time for President Donald Trump if it's proved that he directed illegal hush-money payments to women, adding to the legal pressure on the president over the Russia investigation and other scandals.

"There's a very real prospect that on the day Donald Trump leaves office, the Justice Department may indict him, that he may be the first president in quite some time to face the real prospect of jail time," said Rep. Adam Schiff, the incoming chairman of the House intelligence committee. "The bigger pardon question may come down the road as the next president has to determine whether to pardon Donald Trump."

Rep. Jerry Nadler, the incoming chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, described the details in prosecutors' filings Friday in the case of Trump's former personal lawyer, Michael Cohen, as evidence that Trump was "at the center of a massive fraud."

"They would be impeachable offenses," Nadler said.

In the filings, prosecutors in New York for the first time link Trump to a federal crime of illegal payments to buy the silence of two women during the 2016 campaign. Special counsel Robert Mueller's office also laid out previously undisclosed contacts between Trump associates and Russian intermediaries and suggested the Kremlin aimed early on to influence Trump and his Republican campaign by playing to both his political and personal business interests.

Trump has denied wrongdoing and has compared the investigations to a "witch hunt."

Nadler, D-N.Y., said it was too early to say whether Congress would pursue impeachment proceedings based on the illegal payments alone because lawmakers would need to weigh the gravity of the offense

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to justify "overturning" the 2016 election. Nadler and other lawmakers said Sunday they would await additional details from Mueller's investigation into Russian election interference and possible coordination with the Trump campaign to determine the extent of Trump's misconduct.

Regarding the illegal payments, "whether they are important enough to justify an impeachment is a different question, but certainly they'd be impeachable offenses because even though they were committed before the president became president, they were committed in the service of fraudulently obtaining the office," Nadler said.

Mueller has not said when he will complete a report of any findings, and it isn't clear that any such report would be made available to Congress. That would be up to the attorney general. Trump on Friday said he would nominate former Attorney General William Barr to the post to succeed Jeff Sessions.

Nadler indicated that Democrats, who will control the House in January, will step up their own investigations. He said Congress, the Justice Department and the special counsel need to dig deeper into the allegations, which include questions about whether Trump lied about his business arrangements with Russians and about possible obstruction of justice.

"The new Congress will not try to shield the president," he said. "We will try to get to the bottom of this, in order to serve the American people and to stop this massive conspiracy — this massive fraud on the American people."

Schiff, D-Calif., also stressed a need to wait "until we see the full picture." He has previously indicated his panel would seek to look into the Trump family's business ties with Russia.

"I think we also need to see this as a part of a broader pattern of potential misconduct by the president, and it's that broad pattern, I think, that will lead us to a conclusion about whether it rises to the level to warrant removal from office," Schiff said.

In the legal filings, the Justice Department stopped short of accusing Trump of directly committing a crime. But it said Trump told Cohen to make illegal payments to porn actress Stormy Daniels and former Playboy model Karen McDougal, both of whom claimed to have had affairs with Trump more than a decade ago.

In separate filings, Mueller's team detail how Cohen spoke to a Russian who "claimed to be a 'trusted person' in the Russian Federation who could offer the campaign 'political synergy' and 'synergy on a government level.'" Cohen said he never followed up on that meeting. Mueller's team also said former campaign chairman Paul Manafort lied to them about his contacts with a Russian associate and Trump administration officials, including in 2018.

Republican Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida called the latest filings "relevant" in judging Trump's fitness for office but said lawmakers need more information to render judgment. He also warned the White House about considering a pardon for Manafort, saying such a step could trigger congressional debate about limiting a president's pardon powers.

Such a move would be "a terrible mistake," Rubio said. "Pardons should be used judiciously. They're used for cases with extraordinary circumstances."

Sen. Angus King, an independent from Maine and a member of the Senate intelligence committee, cautioned against a rush to impeachment, which he said citizens could interpret as "political revenge and a coup against the president."

"The best way to solve a problem like this, to me, is elections," King said. "I'm a conservative when it comes to impeachment. I think it's a last resort and only when the evidence is clear of a really substantial legal violation. We may get there, but we're not there now."

Democratic Sen. Chris Murphy of Connecticut urged Mueller to "show his cards soon" so that Congress can make a determination early next year on whether to act on impeachment.

"Let's be clear: We have reached a new level in the investigation," Murphy said. "It's important for Congress to get all of the underlying facts and data and evidence that the special counsel has."

Nadler spoke on CNN's "State of the Union" Sunday, Rubio was on CNN and ABC's "This Week," and Schiff appeared on CBS' "Face the Nation." Murphy spoke on ABC, and King was on NBC's "Meet the Press."

Roma mothers held in Slovak hospitals against their will

By MARIA CHENG, AP Medical Writer

KEZMAROK, Slovakia (AP) — Monika Krcova did not want to follow the official guidelines and remain in the hospital for four days after her third baby's birth. And so she escaped.

Like many other Roma, she tells horror stories about giving birth in the hospital: How doctors at the Kezmarok hospital in eastern Slovakia slapped her face and legs repeatedly during the delivery of her first two children, screaming that she didn't know how to push properly. How in the following days, she was subjected to racist taunts, and her post-partum pain was not treated.

Krcova knew that hospital staffers would stop her and her baby if she tried to leave after two days. So she waited until visiting hours, when the doors of the maternity ward were unlocked, and slipped away, alone.

Slovakia's Ministry of Health strongly recommends four-day stays for mothers and babies, regardless of their health. But many hospitals — seeking insurance reimbursements — have turned that guidance into a mandate.

An investigation by The Associated Press has found that women and their newborns in Slovakia are routinely, unjustifiably and illegally detained in hospitals across the European Union country. Roma women, vulnerable to racist abuse and physical violence, suffer particularly. They're also often poor, and mothers who leave hospitals before doctors grant permission forfeit their right to a significant government childbirth allowance of several hundred euros.

When Krcova returned to pick up her infant a couple of days after she left, the hospital charged her 20 euros (\$23) — an illegal fine.

"It felt like punishment," she said. "If you and your baby are healthy and you have to stay there, it's like prison."

In October, the AP reported that hospitals in more than 30 countries illegally hold patients when they cannot pay their bills, including in Kenya, Congo, India, the Philippines and Bolivia. While there are some differences, some experts say the situation in Slovakia — which also is seen to some extent in other eastern European countries like Bulgaria and the Czech Republic — amounts to hospital imprisonment.

"Detention in African hospitals is about money, but in Slovakia, it's about power," said Zuzana Kriskova, a maternal rights activist. "Women are having their fundamental human rights violated when they have no freedom of movement and cannot decide how their child is to be treated."

In the U.S., the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists says women with no delivery problems can be discharged with their babies after one to two days. Britain recommends women and their infants stay for at least six hours after an uncomplicated birth, but they are free to leave at any time. International human rights law prohibits the forced detention of a woman or her baby after she has given birth, as long as there is no imminent danger to anyone.

Slovak doctors, however, say babies must be kept in the hospital because numerous screening tests are needed. The Ministry of Health said they are currently considering shortening the required period of post-birth hospitalization to three days, but that new mothers "should follow the instructions of the attending physician" on issues including when they and their newborns are allowed to go home.

"I know of no medical evidence to justify what's being done to women and their newborns in Slovakia," said Mindy Roseman, a global health and human rights expert at Yale Law School. "They're basically being kidnapped and unlawfully detained."

Hospitals and insurance play a central role. Several hospital staffers said institutions often only get reimbursed if mothers and babies stay for at least four days after delivery.

Dovera, Slovakia's biggest private health insurance provider, said it reimburses hospitals separately for mothers and newborns and that the minimum length of stay after childbirth for both is four days. It said mothers can leave earlier if they have a signed application approved by the hospital.

The situation weighs most heavily on Roma (also known, pejoratively, as Gypsies). Having suffered from discrimination across Europe for generations, they say they are treated abysmally by hospitals.

Numerous Roma women who fled hospitals told the AP they were tied up and beaten, shouted at, or

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ignored when they needed medical attention, including during birth. Some said there were often two women and babies squeezed into a single bed; others said the health care staff laughed at them, saying they were dirty and had too many children. Many women declined to give their names, fearing retribution from local authorities.

"For Roma, they treat us worse than dogs," said Krcova, who was only allowed to see her newborn babies two days after they were born. She is no longer afraid of her local hospital since she isn't planning to have more children, but worries about her daughter Ivana, who says she also was slapped by nurses when she previously gave birth and is now pregnant.

One Roma woman tearfully told the AP that when she escaped from Kezmarok hospital after giving birth to twins four years ago, she got sick and couldn't retrieve them for 10 days. By that time, the institution had given away her baby boy and girl to an orphanage. She has not seen them since. She would not give her name, fearing the hospital would refuse to treat her family. Maria Lumkova, a Roma health assistant, said there are usually about three such cases every year in the village where she works.

Alzbeta Siva, a spokeswoman for Kezmarok hospital, also known as the Dr. Vojtecha Alexandra Hospital, said Roma babies left in a hospital can be sent to an orphanage, but only "rarely." She also acknowledged that nurses do strike Roma women during delivery. "Sometimes there are cases like that, but very few," she said.

At the Kezmarok hospital in mid-November, four out of 17 newborns were still being detained after their mothers absconded. Siva said Roma mothers fleeing the hospital after birth was "an everyday occurrence" and that mothers were charged 4 euros (\$4.60) every day their baby was held in the mother's absence.

Officials at several other hospitals in the region estimated that about 10 to 25 percent of Roma women slip out of the hospital within two days of giving birth, leaving their babies detained.

Some doctors said Roma women were taking advantage of the situation. Dr. Jozef Adam, head of gynecology and obstetrics at the J.A. Reiman University Hospital in Presov, said Roma women worry their husbands will be unfaithful: "They run away to be with their men. They know their babies will be taken care of here so they leave them."

In 2014, the Slovak government passed a law that penalizes women who leave the hospital after birth without permission, by withholding social benefits payments of up to 800 euros (\$914). Critics say the law unfairly targets Roma women, who are disproportionately affected by the penalty, since they typically have few resources.

Even white, privileged Slovak women complain they have been imprisoned by hospitals after giving birth.

Renata Kupcova Kazimirova had her daughter Sona in early November, and was told they were both healthy. But when she informed the head of obstetrics that she wanted to leave with her baby the following day, a struggle ensued.

"They told me that a woman after birth does not have the capacity to make this decision," Kazimirova said. "And they told my husband: 'There is no way this baby is leaving.'" During the next three days, Kazimirova and her husband clashed repeatedly with doctors, who threatened to call the police and social services if the couple left with their newborn.

"I was crying constantly," Kazimirova said. "I didn't have the ability to protect my daughter and bring her home."

Theoretically, women who want to leave the hospital before obtaining doctors' approval are to be given a legal form to sign, acknowledging they are leaving the hospital against medical advice.

"If a woman keeps insisting that she wants to leave, that's when the psychological terror starts," said Zuzana Kostkova, a midwife at a Bratislava university hospital. "They will play on a mother's fears, and say things like, 'what if there's a problem with the baby's heart?' and they will refuse to bring the (legal) form she has to sign." In practice, Kostkova said, it was impossible for any woman to leave the hospital before doctors agreed.

To avoid Slovakia's obligatory hospital detention period after birth, Kostkova simply had her baby across the border in Austria.

Most Roma women, however, lack the finances for such options.

Jarmila Noskova, a Roma woman now pregnant with her seventh child, said she cried for days every time she was forced to remain in the hospital after birth, terrified the hospital would alert the police if she left. "I was told to stay in the hospital," she said, "and so I endured it for my baby."

Karel Janicek in Prague contributed to this report.

Goldman, dominant defense leads Bears over Rams 15-6

By ANDREW SELIGMAN, AP Sports Writer

CHICAGO (AP) — The Chicago Bears harassed Jared Goff and squashed the Los Angeles Rams' high-powered offense while shuffling their way to a surprising victory over the team that came in with the NFL's best record.

In a season of huge strides, this might be their biggest one yet.

Eddie Goldman led a dominant effort by the defense and the NFC North-leading Bears beat the NFC West champion Rams 15-6 on Sunday night.

"Our play on defense — all I can say is wow," coach Matt Nagy said.

The Rams (11-2) missed a chance to secure a first-round playoff bye and fell into a tie with New Orleans for home-field advantage throughout the NFC playoffs.

Goff threw a career-high four interceptions and was sacked three times, with Goldman getting to him for a tiebreaking safety early in the third quarter.

Bradley Sowell became the first Bears offensive lineman in 11 years with a touchdown reception when he caught a 2-yarder from Mitchell Trubisky in the third quarter. And after four straight last-place finishes in the NFC North, Chicago continued to close in on its first division title and playoff appearance since 2010.

"For them to go out and do it (against) a team that had only one loss all year long ... is so powerful for our guys now because it helps us grow," Nagy said. "It helps us grow with confidence. It helps us grow togetherness. When you teach that and you talk about it over and over and over — as a culture, as a building, everyone together as a family — and then they do it, it lights a fire. It puts us in a great position. We do talk about one game at a time. They're gonna enjoy tonight and then we're gonna get right back in it and get ready for next week."

Coming off a shaky outing against Detroit, Goff was 20 of 44 for 180 yards with a 19.1 rating. NFL rushing leader Todd Gurley ran for a season-low 28 yards on 11 carries, and the Rams' three-game win streak came to an end.

The Rams' only other loss was at New Orleans. But against the Monsters of the Midway, they managed just 214 yards.

"Really, consistently over and over I continue to put our players in bad spots," Los Angeles coach Sean McVay said. "Certainly a humbling night, but it's one you get a chance to look at yourself critically, find a way to get better and move forward accordingly and that's exactly what we're going to do and that's all I know how to do. And I have to be better for our football team. This loss is on me. I didn't do a nearly good enough job for us today. I trust we will respond the right way."

The Bears (9-4) bounced back from a wild overtime loss at the New York Giants and won for the sixth time in seven games.

Khalil Mack and Akiem Hicks had sacks. Roquan Smith, Prince Amukamara, Eddie Jackson and Kyle Fuller had interceptions, helping Chicago come away with the win despite a shaky effort from Trubisky.

"All 11 guys collectively going against the offense, it was going to be a big challenge for us," Mack said. "We stepped up to the challenge."

The Bears needed it with Trubisky struggling about as badly as Goff.

After missing the previous two games because of a right shoulder injury, he was 16 of 30 for 110 yards and three interceptions.

"It's hard to be down when you get such a big win like that," Trubisky said. "You've just got to put your own selfish thoughts about how you played aside. ... I'm just very proud of the way the team had my back."

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PULLING AHEAD

Goldman broke a 6-6 tie in the opening minute of the third quarter when he sacked Goff for Chicago's first safety this season.

The Bears then used a trick play they call "Santa's Sleigh" to make it 15-6, when Sowell hauled in a 2-yarder from Trubisky on a play-action with defensive end Hicks. That made him the first Bears offensive lineman with a TD reception since John St. Clair against Kansas City on Sept. 16, 2017.

"We needed a play so they gave it to the play-maker," Sowell said.

The Rams had a big opportunity late in the third when John Johnson III returned an interception 35 yards to the Chicago 27. But Fuller picked off a wobbly pass from Goff intended for Josh Reynolds on the next play.

Los Angeles' Greg Zuerlein missed a 40-yard field goal off the right upright in the opening minutes of the fourth after making a 50-yarder earlier in the game.

INJURIES

Rams: CB Dominique Hatfield was taken from the field on a cart with an ankle injury in the third quarter. He was hurt on the kickoff following Sowell's TD. ... C John Sullivan was evaluated for a concussion after being shaken up blocking on a run by Gurley late in the first quarter. But he returned in the second half.

Bears: CB Bryce Callahan left the game with a foot injury late in the first half.

UP NEXT

Rams: Host Philadelphia on Dec. 16.

Bears: Host Green Bay on Dec. 16.

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

Presidential hopefuls pushed to go big on climate change

By **ELANA SCHOR**, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Environmental activists are ramping up a pressure campaign designed to drum up Democratic support for a sweeping agenda to fight climate change, with the 2020 presidential campaign in their sights.

Hundreds of young demonstrators are planning to turn out Monday on Capitol Hill to push Democrats on a package of ambitious environmental goals — including a nationwide transition to 100 percent power from renewable sources within as little as 10 years — that's collectively dubbed the Green New Deal. Already embraced by Rep.-elect Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., an increasingly influential figure on the left, the Green New Deal is designed to nudge prospective Democratic presidential candidates to stake out aggressive positions on climate change. Some cast the goals as idealistic and politically risky.

Organizers with the Sunrise Movement activist group frame it as a make-or-break issue for Democratic voters, particularly young ones. But they're fighting recent history on that point.

Hillary Clinton and Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., jockeyed during the 2016 Democratic presidential primary over their plans to stave off the devastating effects that scientists have warned of as temperatures continue to rise. Ultimately, however, other issues dominated the debate, and climate change barely registered during the 2016 general election.

Stephen O'Hanlon, a spokesman for the Sunrise Movement, said, "Any senators or any other politician who wants the votes of young people in 2020 needs to back a Green New Deal that would transform our economy and create millions of new jobs stopping climate change."

As he weighs another White House run, Sanders has staked out an early claim on the issue, hosting Ocasio-Cortez for a climate change town hall last week and preparing a forthcoming proposal that an aide said is likely to align with the broad goals of the Green New Deal.

"Next Congress I will be working on legislation that addresses the scope of the crisis we face, creates tens of millions of jobs and saves American families money while holding fossil fuel companies accountable for the enormous damage they have done to our planet," Sanders said in a statement to The Associated

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Press. "Our job is to be bold, to think very big and to go forward in a moral struggle to protect our planet and future generations."

When Sanders introduced single-payer health care legislation last year, most Senate Democrats also considering presidential runs signed on at the outset. It's not clear, however, whether other prominent Democrats eyeing the White House would back Sanders' forthcoming climate change bill or seek to carve out their own territory.

Sen. Cory Booker, D-N.J., said last week that "obviously, we have been doing a lot of work trying to find some bolder things we as a nation could be doing" on climate change. Booker spokeswoman Kristin Lynch that his staff has held dozens of meetings since the summer aimed at shaping a broad climate bill and that he welcomes the activists' effort to spotlight the issue.

The staff of Sen. Kamala Harris, D-Calif., has been in contact with the organizers behind the Green New Deal push, according to spokeswoman Lily Adams, who said the senator is broadly supportive of the sort of sweeping climate change agenda that the effort envisions. As legislation aimed at enacting the Green New Deal begins to take shape, Adams added, Harris plans to take a close look at it.

The Green New Deal deliberately omits details on how to reorient the United States toward the drastic carbon emissions reductions it calls for, instead calling for a select committee in the House to devise a plan by 2020. That timetable is designed to rally Democrats behind a climate change strategy as they're picking a nominee to take on President Donald Trump, who has rolled back multiple environmental regulations and cast doubt on the scientific consensus that human activity is driving global warming.

Bill McKibben, a leading environmentalist whom Sanders tapped to help write the Democratic National Committee's party platform in 2016, said that it would be "hard for me to imagine a serious Democratic candidate emerging" in the 2020 presidential race who doesn't support a version of the Green New Deal, single-payer health care and a \$15-per-hour minimum wage.

The plan, named for the New Deal that reshaped America under former President Franklin D. Roosevelt, envisions a costly and dramatically remodeled U.S. energy infrastructure as soon as 2030. It's a shift from where Democrats laid down their symbolic markers on climate change as recently as last year. Sanders and Booker, as well as potential presidential hopeful Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Ore., introduced legislation then that aimed to shift the nation to 100 percent renewable and clean energy sources by 2050.

Fossil fuels, mostly natural gas and coal, generated 63 percent of U.S. electricity in 2017, compared with 17 percent for renewable sources such as wind and solar, according to the nonpartisan Energy Information Administration. Nuclear energy comprised the remaining 20 percent.

"Is it all that realistic? Probably not, in the environment where we work. Certainly not now," Sen. Tom Carper, D-Del., the party's senior member on the environment committee, said of the Green New Deal's target. "But it's a good aspirational goal."

Sarah Dolan, communications director for the conservative opposition research group America Rising, warned that Democratic presidential hopefuls' "race to the left" on climate change, as well as on health care, minimum wage and immigration, would backfire in 2020.

"Being the first to take the most progressive position of the day will only lead to a party that can't compete in the general election as it becomes unrecognizable to independent voters," she said.

AP FACT CHECK: Prosecutors' filings do not exonerate Trump

By HOPE YEN and ERIC TUCKER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is in denial when it comes to the Russia investigation and other scandals besieging him.

The president insists he's been fully vindicated by court filings released Friday that lay out the level of cooperation from two of his former top advisers, whom prosecutors have accused of lying to federal investigators or Congress. In fact, Trump's Justice Department puts him in even greater legal jeopardy by directly implicating him in an illegal scheme involving hush money payments to a porn actress and a

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former Playboy model.

In comments over the weekend, Trump cites the filings in the cases involving his former personal lawyer, Michael Cohen, and onetime campaign chairman Paul Manafort, as proof that no collusion had been found in the special counsel's investigation. That's also not true. That probe into contacts between the Trump campaign and Russia during the 2016 election is still ongoing, so the filings do not yet render a judgment on collusion.

The statements capped a week in which Trump also claimed without evidence that Paris protesters were chanting support for him, made questionable assertions about China trade and tariffs and derided U.S. weapons spending as crazy, despite earlier boasts about increasing the military budget.

Meanwhile, Democratic Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez skimmed over the facts when she suggested the Pentagon has a hidden pot of \$21 trillion that could help pay for "Medicare for All."

A look at the claims and the reality:

COHEN

TRUMP: "Totally clears the President. Thank you!" — tweet Friday.

THE FACTS: The court filings Friday are the first time that federal prosecutors directly connect Trump to a crime.

The violations stemmed from payments Cohen made to buy the silence of porn actress Stormy Daniels and former Playboy model Karen McDougal during the 2016 presidential campaign. Both women alleged they had extramarital affairs with Trump, which the White House denies.

Prosecutors in New York, where Cohen pleaded guilty in August to campaign finance crimes in connection with those payments, said the lawyer "acted in coordination and at the direction" of Trump. Though Cohen had previously implicated Trump in the payments, the Justice Department is now linking Trump to the scheme and backing up Cohen's allegations.

It's unclear whether Trump will actually be charged with illegal activity, because Justice Department legal memos from 1973 and 2000 have suggested that a sitting president is immune from indictment and that criminal charges would undermine the commander in chief's ability to do the job. But it is possible Congress could use prosecutors' findings to start impeachment proceedings. There also would presumably be no bar against charging a president after he leaves the White House.

Federal law requires that any payments made "for the purposes of influencing" an election must be reported in campaign finance disclosures. Friday's filings make clear the payments were made to benefit Trump politically.

RUSSIA INVESTIGATION

TRUMP: "On the Mueller situation, we're very happy with what we are reading because there was no collusion whatsoever. There never has been." — remarks to reporters Saturday.

TRUMP: "NO COLLUSION!" — tweet Saturday.

THE FACTS: Trump's incorrect to suggest the filings clear him of collusion. Part of an ongoing investigation, they do not yet draw a conclusion and instead lay out evidence of previously undisclosed contacts between Trump associates and Russian intermediaries.

In one of the filings, special counsel Robert Mueller details how Cohen spoke to a Russian in 2015 who "claimed to be a 'trusted person' in the Russian Federation who could offer the campaign 'political synergy' and 'synergy on a government level.'" The person repeatedly dangled a meeting between Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin, saying such a meeting could have a "phenomenal" impact "in a business dimension as well."

That was a reference to a proposed Moscow real estate deal that prosecutors say could have netted Trump's business hundreds of millions of dollars and would likely require assistance of the Russian government. Cohen admitted this month to lying to Congress by saying discussions about a Trump Tower in Moscow ended in January 2016 when in fact they stretched into that June, well into the presidential campaign.

Cohen said he never followed up on the proposed meeting, because he was working with a "different

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individual" with connections to the Russian government.

Cohen also told prosecutors he and Trump discussed a potential meeting with Putin on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly in September 2015, shortly after Trump announced his candidacy for president.

In another filing Friday, prosecutors said Manafort lied about his contacts with Russia and Trump administration officials, including in 2018. Mueller's team cited Manafort's interactions with Konstantin Kilimnik, an associate who prosecutors say has ties to Russian intelligence. Mueller's team said they would be able to offer additional information at a hearing, such as the nature of Manafort's contacts with the Trump administration in 2018, to prove Manafort was lying.

Trump's attorneys last month turned over the president's written answers to Mueller's questions about his knowledge of any ties between his campaign and Russia. Mueller hasn't said when he will complete any report of his findings.

TRUMP: "The last thing I want is help from Russia on a campaign." — remarks Saturday.

THE FACTS: Actually, Trump did request Russia's help during the 2016 campaign.

In a July 27, 2016, speech, then-candidate Trump called on Russian hackers to find emails from Hillary Clinton, his Democratic opponent in the presidential campaign.

"Russia, if you're listening," Trump said, "I hope you're able to find the 30,000 emails that are missing."

Hours later, the Main Intelligence Directorate in Moscow appeared to heed the call — targeting Clinton's personal office and hitting more than 70 other Clinton campaign accounts. That's according to a grand jury indictment in July charging 12 Russian military intelligence officers with hacking into the Clinton campaign and the Democratic Party as part of a sweeping conspiracy by the Kremlin to meddle in the 2016 U.S. election.

That indictment by Mueller says July 27 was the first time Clinton's personal office was targeted.

The attempt to penetrate Clinton's campaign began March 10, 2016, and hit a significant success on March 19 when the Russian intelligence officers busted open the email account of John Podesta, Clinton's campaign chairman, an AP investigation last year found.

They "phished" intensively and repetitively. Throughout at least March and April there were repeated efforts to break into about 120 Democratic National Committee, Clinton and left-leaning activists' accounts across the country.

Then they brought Clinton's personal office into their scope, the indictment says — the very evening Trump appeared to beckon Russians to do just that.

PARIS

TRUMP: "The Paris Agreement isn't working out so well for Paris. Protests and riots all over France. People do not want to pay large sums of money, much to third world countries (that are questionably run), in order to maybe protect the environment. Chanting 'We Want Trump! Love France.'" — tweet Saturday.

THE FACTS: Neither Associated Press journalists covering protests in the city nor any French television networks have shown evidence that supporters were chanting any slogans in support of Trump. The protests that began as a revolt against a gas tax increase have turned increasingly violent and France imposed exceptional security measures Saturday to prevent a repeat of rioting a week ago.

JERUSALEM

TRUMP: "We quickly moved the American embassy to Jerusalem and we got it built." — remarks Thursday at Hanukkah event.

THE FACTS: Nothing's been built yet. The Trump administration designated an existing U.S. consular facility in Jerusalem for the U.S. Embassy, retrofitting some offices and holding a big dedication ceremony in May. The U.S. has yet to identify a permanent site for the new embassy, a process that is expected to take years. The State Department has estimated that constructing a new embassy would cost more than \$500 million.

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TARIFFS

TRUMP: "China has agreed to reduce and remove tariffs on cars coming into China from the U.S. Currently the tariff is 40%." — tweet on Dec. 2.

THE FACTS: A week later, it's still not clear if this will happen. When asked about the matter, Kudlow would only say that he hoped China would remove its tariffs on U.S. autos. "We don't yet have a specific agreement on that, but I will just tell you, as an involved participant, we expect those tariffs to go to zero," he told reporters last Monday. Pressed again Tuesday, Kudlow told "Fox and Friends" that he expected China to move quickly on removing the tariffs "if they're serious about this."

"I think it's coming, OK?" he said. "It hasn't been signed and sealed and delivered yet."

The White House's confusing and conflicting words have left Wall Street skeptical.

"It doesn't seem like anything was actually agreed to at the dinner and White House officials are contorting themselves into pretzels to reconcile Trump's tweets (which seem if not completely fabricated then grossly exaggerated) with reality," JPMorgan told investors in a trading note.

On Thursday, a Chinese official said that China will "immediately implement the consensus reached by the two sides on farm products, cars and energy," but did not address the auto tariffs specifically or provide any additional details.

Trump has cast doubt on whether a firm agreement had been reached, tweeting that his administration will determine "whether or not a REAL deal with China is actually possible."

TRUMP: "I am a Tariff Man. When people or countries come in to raid the great wealth of our Nation, I want them to pay for the privilege of doing so. It will always be the best way to max out our economic power. We are right now taking in \$billions in Tariffs. MAKE AMERICA RICH AGAIN." — tweet Tuesday.

THE FACTS: Trump seems to be claiming that tariffs are some kind of a membership fee for foreign companies to trade in the U.S. economy.

They're not. Tariffs are a tax, per Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution.

The costs of this tax are borne by U.S. consumers and businesses, often in the form of higher prices. Foreign companies may end up selling fewer goods and services if the United States imposes high tariffs. So they pay a price, too.

In some cases, the tariffs exist to protect industries that are vital for national security. Or, the tariffs exist to retaliate against the trade practices of other countries. Or, they might protect politically connected companies.

In the past, White House aides have insisted that Trump's tariffs are a negotiating ploy. Yet the president offered no such qualifications on Tuesday.

Tariffs are not seen as some easy way of generating massive wealth for an economically developed nation. After Trump announced steel and aluminum tariffs earlier this year, the University of Chicago asked leading academic economists in March whether Americans would be better off because of import taxes. Not a single economist surveyed said the country would be wealthier.

Nor do the budget numbers suggest they can come anywhere close to covering the costs of the federal government.

Trump is correct that tariffs did generate \$41.3 billion in tax revenues last budget year, according to the Treasury Department. But to put that in perspective, the federal budget exceeds \$4.1 trillion.

The taxes collected on imports were equal to about 1 percent of all federal spending.

MEDICARE

OCASIO-CORTEZ: "\$21 TRILLION of Pentagon financial transactions 'could not be traced, documented, or explained.' \$21T in Pentagon accounting errors. Medicare for All costs (tilde)\$32T. That means 66% of Medicare for All could have been funded already by the Pentagon. And that's before our premiums." — tweet Dec. 2.

THE FACTS: Ocasio-Cortez is generally correct to suggest that one way of paying for the huge cost of

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"Medicare for All" would be to cut spending elsewhere. But she is wrong to suggest that there's a pot of misspent defense dollars that could cover the health care expenses. The New York Democrat also misrepresents the findings of an academic study that found the \$21 trillion in Pentagon errors to be accounting "adjustments," not a tally of actual money wasted.

The study by Mark Skidmore, an economist at Michigan State University and Catherine Austin Fitts, a former assistant secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, did find \$21 trillion in Pentagon transactions from 1998 to 2015 that could not be verified. Their study is cited in a Nation article retweeted in part by Ocasio-Cortez, even though that article makes clear that not "all of this \$21 trillion was secret or misused funding ... the plugs are found on both the positive and the negative sides of the ledger, thus potentially netting each other out."

Total defense spending from 1998 to 2015 was \$9 trillion. That means defunding the military entirely would only cover a small portion of the estimated \$32 trillion cost over 10 years for the "Medicare for All" legislation by Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt. Ocasio-Cortez wrongly suggests that fixing Pentagon accounting errors would net 66 percent of costs.

"What she was referencing was the total number of transactions that happened with DoD — there's a lot of double and triple counting as money gets moved around in the department," said Todd Harrison, director of defense budget analysis at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "All of that basically means is that those transactions don't have a full trail," akin to an employee who submits an expense report without providing all the receipts.

"Just because you don't have the proper audit trail for transactions doesn't mean that those transactions are fraudulent," Harrison said.

David Norquist, the Pentagon's comptroller, has attributed the accounting errors to the department's older bookkeeping "systems that do not automatically pass data from one to the other." He said in testimony to the House Armed Services Committee in January that the errors do not amount to a pot of lost money. "I wouldn't want the taxpayer to confuse that with the loss of something like a trillion dollars, it's not. That wouldn't be accurate," Norquist said.

MILITARY SPENDING

TRUMP: "I am certain that, at some time in the future, President Xi and I, together with President Putin of Russia, will start talking about a meaningful halt to what has become a major and uncontrollable Arms Race. The U.S. spent 716 Billion Dollars this year. Crazy!" — tweet Dec. 3.

THE FACTS: His criticism of U.S. weapons spending as "crazy" vastly overstates the amount spent on the arms race. It also is a sudden change of tone from his previous boasts about increased military spending.

Trump's statement appeared to confuse the total Defense Department budget with America's investment in the missile defense systems and strategic nuclear weapons usually associated with the arms race. The Pentagon's budget for 2019 totals about \$716 billion, but that includes everything from health care and pay for service members to the costs of the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria. The arms race is just a fraction of that amount, totaling about \$10 billion this year for a wide range of missile defense and nuclear weapons programs.

Until recently, Trump has bragged about his increase in military spending, railing about what he claims is previous administrations' neglect of America's armed forces. He said his administration is "rebuilding our military." He has occasionally complained about specific programs such as Air Force One and the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, but his criticism was leveled at the defense contractors and focused on demanding savings.

He has been far more supportive of the broader defense increases, and specifically has endorsed hikes for missile defense in line with a U.S. defense strategy that targets China and Russia as key adversaries.

IMMIGRATION

TRUMP: "Could somebody please explain to the Democrats (we need their votes) that our Country losses (sic) 250 Billion Dollars a year on illegal immigration, not including the terrible drug flow. Top Border Security, including a Wall, is \$25 Billion. Pays for itself in two months. Get it done!" — tweet Tuesday.

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THE FACTS: He's inflating the cost of illegal immigration. Trump's numbers left even those sympathetic to the president's position scratching their heads.

"I'm not sure where the president got his numbers," said Dave Ray, a spokesman for the nonprofit group FAIR, the Federation for American Immigration Reform, which advocates for lower immigration numbers.

Neither the White House nor the Department of Homeland Security responded to questions about where the \$250 billion estimate had come from.

The Heritage Foundation, for instance, estimated in 2013 that households headed by immigrants living in the U.S. illegally impose a net fiscal burden of around \$54.5 billion per year.

Even Trump himself has contradicted the figure. During his 2016 campaign, Trump claimed that illegal immigration cost the country more than \$113 billion a year — less than half the number he tweeted Tuesday.

That estimate appeared based on a paper by FAIR, which released an updated report in 2017 that claimed taxpayers "shell out approximately \$134.9 billion to cover the costs incurred by the presence of more than 12.5 million illegal aliens, and about 4.2 million citizen children of illegal aliens" at the federal, state and local levels, with "a tax burden of approximately \$8,075 per illegal alien family member and a total of \$115,894,597,664."

The \$116 billion figure included services such as health care and education, as well as spending on agencies including U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, minus the \$19 billion the group concluded those who are living in the country illegally pay in taxes. But it also included costs associated with the children of those immigrants in its tally, even when they are U.S. citizens. The estimate was criticized for making broad generalizations and other major methodological flaws.

Associated Press writers Chad Day, Christopher Rugaber, Josh Boak, Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar, Jill Colvin and Lolita Baldor in Washington and Lori Hinnant in Paris contributed to this report.

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Pence aide out of running to be Trump's next chief of staff

By ZEKE MILLER, JILL COLVIN and CATHERINE LUCEY, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump evaluated new candidates to serve as his next chief of staff Sunday after plans for an orderly succession for departing John Kelly fell through.

The new hire was to be key to a West Wing reshuffling to shift focus toward the 2020 re-election campaign and the challenge of governing with Democrats in control of the House.

But even senior White House officials were caught off guard Sunday when Trump and Nick Ayers, whose hiring was believed to be a done deal, couldn't come to terms. No obvious successor was in sight and there was some fretting that Trump may not be able to fill the job by the time Kelly was set to leave around year's end.

Ayers, the chief of staff to Vice President Mike Pence, was seen as the favorite for the job when Trump announced Saturday that Kelly would step down. But a White House official said Sunday that Trump and Ayers could not reach agreement on Ayers' length of service and that he would instead assist the president from outside the administration.

Ayers confirmed the decision in a tweet, thanking Trump and Pence for giving him the opportunity to work in the White House. "I will be departing at the end of the year but will work with the #MAGA team to advance the cause," he said.

In a tweet of his own, Trump laid out the agenda: "I am in the process of interviewing some really great people for the position of White House Chief of Staff. Fake News has been saying with certainty it was Nick Ayers, a spectacular person who will always be with our #MAGA agenda. I will be making a decision soon!"

With Ayers out of the running, Trump was considering four candidates for the post, including Office of Management and Budget director Mick Mulvaney, according to a person familiar with the president's

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thinking. Also emerging as a candidate was Rep. Mark Meadows, a North Carolina Republican and the chairman of the House Freedom Caucus.

But Mulvaney was not interested in becoming chief of staff, according to a person close to him who spoke on condition of anonymity. Mulvaney has been saying for almost two months now that he would be more interested in becoming commerce or treasury secretary if that would be helpful to the president, the person said.

Also among those thought to be in the mix were Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin and U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, who said in a CBS interview that he hadn't spoken to anyone at the White House about the job and was "entirely focused" on his position. A person familiar with Mnuchin's thinking said he, too, was happy with his work at Treasury and had not sought the job of chief of staff.

Acting Attorney General Matthew Whitaker and Trump's former deputy campaign manager, David Bossie, were also among the names being floated by those close to the White House.

Trump wants his next chief of staff to hold the job through the 2020 election, said the White House official, who was not authorized to discuss the personnel issue by name and, as did others, spoke on condition of anonymity.

Ayers and Trump had discussed the job for months. The father of young triplets, he had long planned to leave the administration at the end of the year, and had only agreed to serve in an interim basis through next spring.

Ayers will run a pro-Trump super PAC, according to a person familiar with his plans who was not authorized to discuss them by name.

Kelly, whose last day on the job is set to be Jan. 2, had been credited with imposing order on a chaotic West Wing after his arrival in June 2017 from his post as homeland security secretary. But his iron fist also alienated some longtime Trump allies, and over time he grew increasingly isolated, with an increasingly diminished role.

Follow Miller on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/ZekeJMiller>

Drake Escape: Miami's score on final play beats Pats 34-33

By STEVEN WINE, AP Sports Writer

MIAMI GARDENS, Fla. (AP) — The celebratory mob scene in the corner of the end zone broke out far from Ryan Tannehill, leaving him in the open field, running and screaming as he waved his arms. Since he couldn't find anyone to hug, he flopped to the grass on his back, the job done and the game won.

"I collapsed — just the emotion of the whole thing," Tannehill said.

Sixteen seconds from defeat, Tannehill threw a short pass and then watched his teammates save the season with the "Drake Escape."

Kenyan Drake ran the last 52 yards as the Dolphins scored on a pass and double lateral on the final play Sunday to beat the New England Patriots 34-33. With that, Miami lived up to its nickname — the Magic City.

"They just made one more play than we did," Patriots coach Bill Belichick said.

And what a play. The Patriots were on the verge of clinching their 10th consecutive AFC East title when the Dolphins lined up at their 31 after a kickoff return trailing 33-28.

"We had them right where we wanted," Tannehill said dryly. "Not really surprised with how things turned out."

He threw a 14-yard pass to Kenny Stills, who lateraled to DeVante Parker, who quickly lateraled to Drake along the sideline. He cut toward the middle and found a seam, helped by a block from guard Ted Larsen at the 30.

Drake beat two Patriots to the corner of the end zone — defensive back J.C. Jackson and tight end Rob Gronkowski, who was on the field as part of New England's prevent defense.

"Drake runs a 4.3, and Gronk probably runs a 4.6 or 4.7, so you feel good about that matchup," Tannehill said.

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Then came one last pass to punctuate the play — Drake reared back for a celebratory heave into the stands as the Dolphins' bench emptied and teammates swarmed him.

"Football," said Patriots quarterback Tom Brady, "is a crazy game."

The Dolphins call the play "Boise" because it was borrowed from the Boise State playbook, and they had been working on it all year.

"You rep it in practice over and over," receiver Kenny Stills said. "Sometimes it's like, 'Why are we doing this?' And now we know why."

It brought to mind other NFL last-second stunners, including Roger Staubach's "Hail Mary", the "Miracle in the Meadowlands" and the "Immaculate Reception". The play was the longest from scrimmage to win a game with no time remaining in the fourth quarter since the 1970 merger.

Brady threw for 358 yards and three scores, but the stunned Patriots (9-4) lost in Miami for the fifth time in their past six visits. The Dolphins (7-6) came from behind five times to help their slim wild-card chances.

"We're playing one week at a time right now," Miami coach Adam Gase said. "Any loss could be the end."

The Patriots' Stephen Gostkowski missed an extra point for the first time in 38 tries this season early in the game, and also missed a 42-yard field goal try. But his 32-yarder to cap a 55-yard drive put the Patriots ahead 30-28 with 6:45 left.

Belichick opted to have Gostkowski kick a 22-yarder in the closing seconds rather than pin the Dolphins near their goal line. Instead, Miami returned the ensuing kickoff to the 31 — and on the next play pulled off a miracle.

Brady broke the NFL record for career touchdown passes including postseason and now has 582, three more than Peyton Manning. His scores covered 2 yards to Julian Edelman, 37 to Cordarrelle Patterson and 16 to Gronkowski .

Tannehill missed two plays at the end of the first half after a teammate stepped on his right foot . He returned to start the second half, and his 23-yard touchdown pass to Brice Butler put the Dolphins ahead 28-27 late in the third quarter.

But they managed only three first downs and no points thereafter — until the final play.

FRANTIC SEQUENCE

The teams swapped touchdowns and the lead for five consecutive possessions in the second quarter over an entertaining span covering less than 11 minutes.

Miami's fourth-string running back Brandon Bolden, who spent six years with the Patriots, scored untouched on a career-long 54-yard run up the middle, and added a 6-yard scoring run.

MISSED OPPORTUNITY

The Patriots squandered a scoring chance at the end of the first half. With 14 seconds left and no timeouts, Brady took the snap at the Miami 2, and when he was sacked by Robert Quinn the clock ran out, leaving the Patriots with a 27-21 lead.

MOVING UP

Miami's Frank Gore ran for 92 yards and had a 24-yard catch, giving him 18,530 career yards from scrimmage, surpassing LaDainian Tomlinson (18,456) for the fifth-most in NFL history. Next up for Gore are Hall of Famers Marshall Faulk (19,154), Walter Payton (21,264), Emmitt Smith (21,579) and Jerry Rice (23,540).

INJURY REPORT

X-rays of Tannehill's right ankle were negative, but he acknowledged it didn't feel good after the game. "I rolled it pretty good," he said. "Got X-rays and buttoned it up tight."

Tannehill finished 14 for 19 for 265 yards, three scores and no turnovers. He has won nine consecutive home starts.

UP NEXT

New England plays Sunday at Pittsburgh. The Patriots also traveled there in Week 15 last year, and won 27-24.

Miami plays Sunday at Minnesota.

Follow Steven Wine on Twitter: http://twitter.com/Steve_Wine

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China summons US envoy to protest detention of Huawei exec

By CHRISTOPHER BODEEN, Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — China summoned the U.S. ambassador to Beijing on Sunday to protest Canada's detention of a senior executive of Chinese electronics giant Huawei at Washington's behest and demand the U.S. cancel an order for her arrest.

The official Xinhua News Agency said Vice Foreign Minister Le Yucheng "lodged solemn representations and strong protests" with Ambassador Terry Branstad against the detention of Huawei's chief financial officer, Meng Wanzhou. Meng, who is reportedly suspected of trying to evade U.S. trade curbs on Iran, was detained on Dec. 1 while changing planes in Vancouver, Canada.

The Xinhua report quoted Le as calling Meng's detention "extremely egregious" and demanded the U.S. vacate an order for her arrest. It quoted Le as calling for the U.S. to "immediately correct its wrong actions" and said it would take further steps based on Washington's response.

The move followed the summoning of Canadian Ambassador John McCallum on Saturday over Meng's detention and a similar warning of "grave consequences" if she is not released.

The Canadian province of British Columbia said in a statement Sunday it canceled a trade mission to China because of Meng's detention. The announcement came amid fears China could detain Canadians in retaliation.

Huawei is the biggest global supplier of network gear for phone and internet companies and has been the target of deepening U.S. security concerns over its ties to the Chinese government. The U.S. has pressured European countries and other allies to limit use of its technology, warning they could be opening themselves up to surveillance and theft of information.

Meng's arrest has threatened to increase U.S.-China trade tensions and shook stock markets globally last week. But U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer, speaking on CBS' "Face the Nation," downplayed the impact of the arrest on trade talks between the two countries aimed at defusing the tensions.

"This is a criminal justice matter," he said. "It is totally separate from anything that I work on or anything that the trade policy people in the administration work on. ... We have a lot of very big, very important issues. We've got serious people working on them, and I don't think they'll be affected by this."

Meng, the daughter of Huawei's founder, was detained on the same day that President Donald Trump and his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping, agreed over dinner to a 90-day cease-fire in the trade dispute.

The surprise arrest raises doubts about whether the trade truce will hold and whether the world's two biggest economies can resolve the complicated issues that divide them.

The U.S. alleges that Huawei used a Hong Kong shell company to sell equipment in Iran in violation of U.S. sanctions. It also says that Meng and Huawei misled American banks about its business dealings in Iran.

Roland Paris, a former foreign policy adviser to Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, said that Chinese pressure on Canada's government won't work.

"Perhaps because the Chinese state controls its judicial system, Beijing sometimes has difficulty understanding or believing that courts can be independent in a rule-of-law country. There's no point in pressuring the Canadian government. Judges will decide," Paris tweeted in response to the comments from Beijing.

A Canadian prosecutor urged a Vancouver court to deny bail to Meng.

Canadian prosecutor John Gibb-Carsley said in a court hearing Friday that a warrant had been issued for Meng's arrest in New York on Aug. 22. He said Meng, arrested en route to Mexico from Hong Kong, was aware of the investigation and had been avoiding the United States for months, even though her teenage son goes to school in Boston.

Gibb-Carsley alleged that Huawei had done business in Iran through a Hong Kong company called Skycom. Meng, he said, had misled U.S. banks into thinking that Huawei and Skycom were separate when,

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in fact, "Skycom was Huawei." Meng has contended that Huawei sold Skycom in 2009.

In urging the court to reject Meng's bail request, Gibb-Carsley said the Huawei executive had vast resources and a strong incentive to bolt: She's facing fraud charges in the United States that could put her in prison for 30 years.

The hearing is to resume Monday.

Huawei, in a brief statement emailed to The Associated Press, said "we have every confidence that the Canadian and U.S. legal systems will reach the right conclusion."

Canadian officials have declined to comment on Chinese threats of retaliation over the case, instead emphasizing the independence of Canada's judiciary along with the importance of Ottawa's relationship with Beijing.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Chrystia Freeland said Canada "has assured China that due process is absolutely being followed in Canada, that consular access for China to Ms. Meng will absolutely be provided."

"We are a rule-of-law country and we will be following our laws as we have thus far in this matter and as we will continue to do," Freeland said Friday.

While protesting what it calls Canada's violation of Meng's human rights, China's ruling Communist Party stands accused of mass incarcerations of its Muslim minority without due process, locking up people exercising their right to free speech and refusing to allow foreign citizens to leave the country in order to bring pressure on their relatives accused of financial crimes. The party also takes the lead in prosecutions of those accused of corruption or other crimes in a highly opaque process, without supervision from the court system or independent bodies.

Associated Press writer Rob Gillies in Toronto contributed to this report.

Prescott's 3rd TD to Cooper lifts Cowboys over Eagles in OT

By SCHUYLER DIXON, AP Pro Football Writer

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — Amari Cooper's impact on Dallas quarterback Dak Prescott has been dramatic. The new No. 1 receiver for the Cowboys shook up the NFC East race, too.

Prescott threw his third touchdown pass to Cooper on the first possession of overtime, and the Cowboys took a big step toward the division title with a 29-23 victory over the Philadelphia Eagles on Sunday.

On third down, Rasul Douglas tipped the pass into the air by getting inside the slant route, and Cooper grabbed it and had a clear path to the end zone from the Philadelphia 7 for the 15-yard score. The Cowboys used almost all of the 10-minute overtime, scoring with 1:55 remaining.

"I knew I had the slant route there, but I knew he would sit on it," Cooper said. "I tried to sell the fade. It didn't really work, but I just stayed with the ball and there you have it."

By winning the third overtime game in the past four seasons at A&T Stadium between these division rivals, the Cowboys (8-5) won their fifth straight game and took a two-game lead over the defending Super Bowl champion Eagles (6-7) and Washington with three games left.

Carson Wentz threw for three touchdowns, including a pair of tying scores in the fourth quarter. But he never got a chance in overtime because Prescott engineered a 13-play, 75-yard drive.

Prescott overcame two interceptions and a lost fumble to set career highs in completions (42), attempts (54) and yards passing (455).

"Helpless feeling," Wentz said. "I've got a lot of lot of confidence in the defense. They were making plays today. We just didn't do enough early offensively and that cost us."

The Cowboys dominated almost from the start, but let the Eagles stay close to set up a wild fourth quarter. Dallas, which can clinch the NFC East title with a win at Indianapolis next Sunday, finished with 576 yards, the most since gaining 578 against the St. Louis Cardinals in 1973.

Cooper finished with a career-high 217 yards receiving on 10 catches in his second game in the past three with at least 180 yards and two scores. All three of Cooper's touchdowns — the others from 75 and 28 yards — were in the fourth quarter and overtime.

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Acquired from Oakland for a 2019 first-round draft pick seven games into the season, Cooper leads the NFL with 642 yards receiving since Week 9, his first game with the Cowboys. He had nine catches for 190 yards after halftime.

The Cowboys went for it on fourth-and-1 from the Eagles 19 in overtime and got it with a 1-yard plunge from Ezekiel Elliott, who had 192 yards from scrimmage on 40 touches — 28 carries for 113 yards and 12 catches for 79.

Cooper converted a pair of third downs on the winning drive. The first one was big, too — a 12-yarder on third-and-9 from the Philadelphia 40.

"I was almost I guess I would say astonished that we were able to get that trade," said Prescott, whose has seen a significant jump in completion percentage, yards per game and passer rating in six games with Cooper.

"So I guess if you say that, when we're getting a trade, well, what's wrong? And then to get him and see everything turning out and playing out the way it is, we're very, very fortunate."

Brett Maher set a Dallas franchise record with a 62-yard field goal on the final play of the first half and had three field goals.

The game went from a defensive struggle with missed Dallas opportunities that kept the Eagles close to a wild fourth-quarter shootout.

Wentz thought he had answered the 75-yard touchdown to Cooper with 3:01 remaining with a matching 75-yarder to tight end Dallas Goedert.

But Goedert was called for pass interference, apparently for pushing off against Jeff Heath before bouncing off a helmet-to-helmet hit from Xavier Woods that wasn't called and running to the end zone from midfield.

Philadelphia scored anyway, with Wentz leading a more methodical march to his third touchdown pass, a 6-yarder to Darren Sproles for a 23-23 tie with 1:39 to go in regulation.

Douglas had the first interception of Prescott in the first half, but couldn't get a second hand on the ball for the depleted Philadelphia secondary against Cooper with the game on the line.

"I played it perfectly," he said. "I couldn't get the other hand in there to get the pick. I tried to bat it down."

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Two years ago, the Cowboys won by the same score with a touchdown on the first possession of overtime. Prescott was on his way to NFL Offensive Rookie of the Year honors, and Elliott went on to win the league rushing title as a rookie. The 12-play, 75-yard drive took 7:12 and was capped by Prescott's 5-yard TD to now-retired tight end Jason Witten.

LOPSIDED STATS, CLOSE GAME

The Cowboys outgained the Eagles 576-256 and had twice as many first downs (32-16). Dallas ran 93 plays to 48 for Philadelphia and had the ball for 45:33 compared to 22:32 for the Eagles.

"Give them credit for fighting and scratching and clawing and doing the things necessary to stay in the ballgame," Cowboys coach Jason Garrett said.

INJURIES

Cowboys RG Zack Martin left in the second half with a knee injury. The four-time Pro Bowler has been battling a knee issue all season. ... Philadelphia RB Corey Clement injured his right knee when he was stopped for a 4-yard loss late in the first quarter and didn't return. ... Eagles defensive end Josh Sweat left in the first half with an ankle injury and didn't return.

UP NEXT

Eagles: At LA Rams next Sunday.

Cowboys: At Indianapolis next Sunday.

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

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Winter storm causes icy roads across swath of South

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — A massive storm brought snow, sleet, and freezing rain across a wide swath of the South on Sunday — causing dangerously icy roads, immobilizing snowfalls and power losses to hundreds of thousands of people.

Accidents on snow-covered interstates caused major delays, hundreds of flights were canceled and drivers in North Carolina and Virginia got stuck in snow or lost control on icy patches. Meanwhile, kids and the young at heart took advantage of the early winter snow with snowball fights, sledding and snowmen.

Police in North Carolina and Virginia said they'd responded to hundreds of snow-related traffic accidents as of Sunday afternoon, as cars, trucks and tractor-trailers all struggled with the snow and ice.

North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper strongly urged residents to stay off the roads Sunday, asking drivers not to put lives of first responders needlessly at risk. Cooper said emergency crews, including the National Guard, worked overnight to clear traffic accidents on major roadways.

"Stay put if you can," Cooper said. "Wrap a few presents, decorate the tree, watch some football."

Five members of a dive team searched the Neuse River in Kinston, North Carolina, for a missing truck driver Sunday after a tractor-trailer ran off a road and into the river, WRAL-TV reported. Police just outside of Charlotte said a driver died when a tree fell on a moving vehicle.

Governors and local officials in several states declared emergencies ahead of the storm crossing several Southern states, which hit portions of North Carolina and Virginia particularly hard.

Virginia State Police said Interstate 81 in far southwest Virginia was particularly dangerous, with snow coming down faster Sunday afternoon than crews could clear it. Police said several tractor-trailers slid off the highway.

Officials warned residents to prepare emergency kits and stay off roads in impacted areas. Several schools districts in North Carolina and Virginia announced they'll be closed Monday.

"Virginians should take all necessary precautions to ensure they are prepared for winter weather storm impacts," said Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam.

The National Weather Service said a "prolonged period of snow" began late Saturday and would last until Monday in the region, with the heaviest snow expected in northwest North Carolina and southern Virginia. Some areas of North Carolina and Virginia saw more than a foot (30 centimeters) of snow by Sunday afternoon.

More than 300,000 power outages were reported across the region with the majority of those — about 240,000 — in North Carolina, according to poweroutage.us. Parts of Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia also saw outages.

Charlotte Douglas International Airport, the sixth busiest airport in the country, said American Airlines reduced its operations, with more than 1,000 flights canceled on Sunday.

American Airlines also issued a travel alert for nine airports throughout the Carolinas, Tennessee, and Virginia, meaning passengers may be able to change travel plans without a fee.

Travelers were advised to check their flight status before heading to the airport. Cancellations were reported on flights from as far as the Midwest.

Macron to break silence, address French nation amid protests

By ELAINE GANLEY, Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Pressure mounted on French President Emmanuel Macron to announce concrete measures to calm protests marked by violence when he addresses the nation Monday evening, and breaks a long silence widely seen as aggravating a crisis that has shaken the government and the whole country.

The president will consult in the morning with an array of national and local officials as he tries to get a handle on the ballooning and radicalizing protest movement triggered by anger at his policies, and a growing sense that they favor the rich.

Macron will speak from the presidential Elysee Palace at 8 p.m. (1900 GMT), an Elysee official said. The official wasn't authorized to speak publicly and requested anonymity.

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Government spokesman Benjamin Griveaux said earlier on LCI TV station he was "sure (Macron) will know how to find the path to the hearts of the French, speak to their hearts." But, he added, a "magic wand" won't solve all the problems of the protesters, known as "yellow vests" for the fluorescent safety vests they often wear.

Last week, Macron withdrew a fuel tax hike — the issue that kicked off protests in mid-November — in an effort to appease the protesters, but the move was seen as too little too late.

For many protesters, Macron himself, widely seen as arrogant and disconnected from rank-and-file French, has become the problem. Calls for him to resign were rampant on Saturday, the fourth weekend of large-scale protests.

"Macron is there for the rich, not for all the French," 68-year-old retiree Jean-Pierre Meunier said Saturday. Retirees are among the categories to be punished by his policies.

Labor Minister Muriel Penicaud dampened any notion that the minimum wage would be raised, telling LCI that "there will be no boost for the Smic (minimum wage)," because "it destroys jobs."

Paris tourist sites reopened Sunday, while workers cleaned up debris from protests that left widespread damage in the capital and elsewhere. At least 71 were injured in Paris on Saturday.

The economy minister, meanwhile, lamented the damage to the economy.

"This is a catastrophe for commerce, it's a catastrophe for our economy," Bruno Le Maire said Sunday while visiting merchants around the Saint Lazare train station, among areas hit by vandalism as the pre-Christmas shopping season got underway.

After the fourth Saturday of nationwide protests by the grassroots movement with broadening demands, officials said they understood the depth of the crisis. Le Maire said it was a social and democratic crisis as well as a "crisis of the nation" with "territorial fractures."

However, the president must also speak to protesters' pocketbooks. Among myriad demands was increased buying power.

French media reported 136,000 protesters nationwide on Saturday, similar to the previous week. However, the number of injured in Paris and nationwide was down. Still, TV footage broadcast around the world of the violence in Paris neighborhoods popular with tourists has tarnished the country's image.

Several tourists questioned at the Eiffel Tower, which reopened Sunday after closing Saturday, said they were avoiding the Champs-Élysées, Paris' main avenue that is lined with shops and cafes and normally a magnet for foreign visitors.

"Yes, we're very concerned with security ... but we couldn't cancel the trip," Portuguese tourist Elizabet Monteiro said. But, she added, "We don't go to dangerous zones like the Champs-Élysées."

Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian politely chastised U.S. President Donald Trump for mocking France in tweets over the 2015 Paris climate accord, which the U.S. is leaving and which Macron has championed worldwide.

"We don't take part in American debates. Let us live our own national life," Le Drian said in an interview on the LCI TV station. He said Macron had told Trump the same thing.

Trump tweeted twice on the issue over the weekend, saying in one that "the Paris agreement isn't working out so well for Paris," referring to Macron's predicament.

Nearly 1,000 people, almost 100 of them minors and most without police records, were being held in custody after the Saturday protests in the French capital, Paris chief prosecutor Remy Heitz said, adding that most of those in custody were men under 40 from various regions who came to Paris to protest. Most were taken in for carrying weapons, like knives, or objects that could be used to cause injury, including petanque balls or tear gas.

Courts were working overtime to process the cases, he said.

France deployed around 89,000 police but still failed to deter the determined protesters. More than 125,000 "yellow vests" took to the streets Saturday around France with a bevy of demands related to high living costs and a sense that Macron favors the elite and is trying to modernize the French economy too fast.

Thierry Paul Valette, who helps coordinate yellow vest protesters who come to Paris, said the president

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must announce concrete measures to quell the fury.

It won't be enough to announce negotiations, he said in an interview with The Associated Press. People want change and "concrete, immediate, right now" measures.

Even if Macron withdraws his signature slashing of the wealth tax, "half of the yellow vests will go home, the other half will want him to resign and will stay in the streets," Valette predicted. "Because the movement isn't controllable."

There was also damage in other cities, notably Marseille, Toulouse and Bordeaux.

Seventeen of the injured were police officers. Jean-Claude Delage of the Alliance police union urged the government on Sunday to come up with responses to France's "social malaise." He told BFM television that working class protesters were deliberately targeting high-end shops in Paris that were selling goods they couldn't afford.

Luxury shops on the posh Avenue Montaigne were totally boarded up on Saturday.

In a knock at Macron, graffiti on the wall of one read: "You don't cross the street, you take it," mocking the president's response to a young unemployed gardener that he can "cross the street" to find a job.

Associated Press journalists Angela Charlton, Nicolas Garriga, Florent Bajrami and Sylvie Corbet contributed to this report.

In Gaza protests, Israeli troops aim for the legs

By TODD PITMAN, Associated Press

GAZA CITY, Gaza (AP) — Israeli forces deployed along the volatile border with the Gaza Strip have fired live rounds at rock-throwing Palestinian protesters ever since demonstrations against Israel's long-running blockade of Gaza began in March.

And for eight months, Israeli snipers have targeted one part of the body more than any other — the legs.

The Israeli army says it is responding to weekly assaults on its frontier by Palestinians armed with stones, grenades and firebombs. The military says it opens fire only as a last resort, and considers firing at the lower limbs an act of restraint.

Still, 175 Palestinians have been shot to death, according to an Associated Press count. And the number of wounded has reached colossal proportions.

Of the 10,511 protesters treated at hospitals and field clinics in Gaza so far, at least 6,392, or roughly 60 percent, have been struck in the lower limbs, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. At least 5,884 of those casualties were hit by live ammunition; others have been hit by rubber-coated metal bullets and tear gas canisters.

The upsurge in violence has left a visible mark on Gaza that will likely remain for decades to come. It is now common to see young men walking through dilapidated streets on crutches. Most have legs bandaged or fitted with a metal frame called a fixator, which uses pins or screws that are inserted into fractured bones to help stabilize them.

The wounded can often be seen gathering at a treatment clinic run by the Paris-based medical charity Doctors Without Borders in Gaza City, where Associated Press photographer Felipe Dana took portraits of some of them.

Some of those he photographed acknowledged throwing stones toward Israeli troops during the demonstrations. One said he had hurled a firebomb. But others said they were unarmed bystanders; one paramedic said he was helping rescue the wounded, while another man said he was waving a Palestinian flag and another said he was selling coffee and tea.

International human rights groups have said the military's open-fire rules are unlawful because they allow the use of potentially lethal force in situations where soldiers' lives are not in immediate danger.

Lt. Col. Jonathan Conricus, an Israeli military spokesman, rejected international criticism that Israel's response has been excessive. Instead, he said that firing at people's legs was a sign of restraint.

"Hamas is responsible for orchestrating violent riots where thousands of Palestinians assault our borders

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with the goal of breaching our defensive lines and attacking Israeli forces and civilian communities," he said.

"Israeli soldiers use live fire only as a last resort, after written and verbal warnings, as well as extensive use of tear gas and other non-lethal means have been exhausted. It is our duty to defend our civilians and sovereignty, and we do it with the minimal use of force possible," he said.

Doctors Without Borders said this month that the huge number of patients was overwhelming Gaza's health care system, which has already been severely weakened by a blockade imposed by Israel and Egypt that has fueled economic stagnation and rampant unemployment, and devastated water and electricity supplies.

The Paris-based aid group said the majority of the 3,117 patients it has treated have been shot in the legs, and many will need follow-up surgery, physiotherapy and rehabilitation.

"These are complex and serious injuries that do not quickly heal," the group said. "Their severity and the lack of appropriate treatment in Gaza's crippled health system means that infection is a high risk, especially for patients with open fractures."

"The consequences of these wounds ... will be lifelong disability for many," the aid group said. "And if infections are not tackled, then the results could be amputation or even death."

Gaza's Health Ministry says it has carried out 94 amputations since the protests began, 82 of them involving lower limbs.

Associated Press journalists Fares Akram and Felipe Dana contributed to this report.

US states to meet at deadline on Colorado River drought plan

By KEN RITTER, Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — With drought entering a second decade and reservoirs continuing to shrink, seven Southwestern U.S. states that depend on the overtaxed Colorado River for crop irrigation and drinking water had been expected to ink a crucial share-the-pain contingency plan by the end of 2018.

They're not going to make it — at least not in time for upcoming meetings in Las Vegas involving representatives from Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming and the U.S. government, officials say.

Arizona has been the holdout, with farmers, cities, Indian tribes and lawmakers in the state set to be first to feel the pinch still negotiating how to deal with water cutbacks when a shortage is declared, probably in 2020.

"There will be cuts. We all know the clock is ticking. That's what a lot of the difficult negotiations have been around," said Kim Mitchell, Western Resource Advocates water policy adviser and a delegate to ongoing meetings involving the Arizona Department of Water Resources, Central Arizona Project, agricultural, industrial and business interests, the governor, state lawmakers and cities including Tucson and Phoenix.

In Arizona, unlike other states, a final drought contingency plan must pass the state Legislature when it convenes in January.

Federal water managers wanted a deal to sign at the annual Colorado River Water Users Association conference beginning Wednesday in Las Vegas, and threatened earlier this year to impose unspecified measures from Washington if a voluntary drought contingency plan wasn't reached.

However, Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Brenda Burman is signaling that the agency that controls the levers on the river is willing to wait. She is scheduled to talk to the conference on Thursday.

"Reclamation remains cautiously optimistic that the parties will find a path forward," the bureau said in a statement on Friday, "because finding a consensus deal recognizing the risks of continuing drought and the benefits of a drought contingency plan is in each state's best interest."

Colorado River water supports about 40 million people and millions of acres of farmland in the U.S. and Mexico.

After 19 years of drought and increasing demand, federal water managers project a 52 percent chance that the river's biggest reservoir, Lake Mead behind Hoover Dam, will fall low enough to trigger cutbacks

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under agreements governing the system.

The seven states saw this coming years ago, and used Colorado River Water Users Association meetings in December 2007 to sign a 20-year "guidelines" plan to share the burden of a shortage.

Contingency agreements would update that pact, running through 2026. They call for voluntarily using less to keep more water in the system's two main reservoirs, lakes Powell and Mead.

Lake Powell upstream from of the Grand Canyon is currently at 43 percent capacity; Lake Mead, downstream, is at 38 percent.

Colorado, New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming, the river's Upper Basin states, aim to keep the surface of Lake Powell above a target level to continue water deliveries to irrigation districts and cities and also keep hydroelectric turbines humming at Glen Canyon Dam.

The Lower Basin states of California, Arizona and Nevada aim to keep Lake Mead above a shortage declaration trigger point by using less water than they're legally entitled to.

If Lake Mead falls below that level, Arizona will face a 9 percent reduction in water supply, Nevada a 3 percent cut and California up to 8 percent. Mexico's share of river water would also be reduced.

Water officials in most states — from the Southern Nevada Water Authority in Las Vegas to the Colorado River Water Conservation District in Glenwood Springs, Colorado — have signed off on plans in recent weeks.

In Arizona, the board governing the Central Arizona Project irrigation system approved the Lower Basin plan on Thursday.

In California, the sprawling Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, which serves some 19 million people, is set to approve it Tuesday.

Board members there were reminded the agreements are only a short-term fix.

According to a board briefing, the Bureau of Reclamation, seven basin states and water contractors will begin negotiating again beginning no later than 2020.

"That process is expected to result in new rules for management and operation of the Colorado River after 2026," the board briefing said.

UK leader warns of 'uncharted waters' if Brexit deal nixed

By SYLVIA HUI, Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — With a crucial parliamentary vote on Brexit looming, British Prime Minister Theresa May warned lawmakers Sunday that they could take Britain into "uncharted waters" and trigger a general election if they reject the divorce deal she struck with the European Union.

May is fighting to save her unpopular Brexit plan and her job ahead of a showdown in Parliament on Tuesday, when lawmakers are widely expected to vote down the deal she negotiated with Brussels. Her Downing Street office insisted that the vote will go ahead despite speculation that the government may be forced to delay it.

A defeat in the vote could see Britain crashing out of the EU on March 29, the date for Britain's exit, with no deal in place — an outcome that could spell economic chaos.

In an interview with the Mail on Sunday, May said nixing her deal would "mean grave uncertainty for the nation with a very real risk of no Brexit or leaving the European Union with no deal."

"When I say if this deal does not pass we would truly be in uncharted waters, I hope people understand this is what I genuinely believe and fear could happen," she said.

May's government does not have a majority in the House of Commons, and opposition parties — as well as many of May's own Conservatives — have already said they will not back the divorce deal that May and EU leaders agreed on last month.

Pro-Brexit lawmakers say the deal keeps Britain bound too closely to the EU, while pro-EU politicians say it erects barriers between the U.K. and its biggest trading partner and leaves many details of the future relationship undecided.

The main sticking point is a "backstop" provision in the Brexit agreement that aims to guarantee an open

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border between EU member Ireland and the U.K.'s Northern Ireland post-Brexit.

The temporary measure would keep Britain under EU customs rules, and is supposed to last until superseded by permanent new trade arrangements. But critics say it could leave Britain tied to the EU indefinitely, unable to strike new trade deals around the world.

Boris Johnson, May's former foreign secretary and leading Brexiteer, said the backstop puts Britain in a "diabolical negotiating position," and insisted Sunday that it must be taken out of the divorce deal. He urged May to renegotiate with the EU, and postpone the Irish border issue so it forms part of the talks on a future trade deal.

"We have to change it," Johnson told the BBC. "We can have a withdrawal agreement that does not contain the backstop. We can do much, much better than this."

It's unclear what would happen next if lawmakers vote down the deal.

May could return to Brussels seeking changes to the Brexit deal and bring it back to Parliament for another vote. But EU leaders have insisted the divorce agreement is final and not renegotiable.

However, while the 585-page withdrawal deal is set, the declaration on future relations between the EU and Britain is shorter and vaguer and may be open to amendment.

Meanwhile, pro-Brexit Conservative rebels who have long wanted to oust May can trigger a no-confidence vote if they amass enough support.

The Labour Party may also attempt to force a general election or seek to form a minority government.

"What we would urge (May) to do is either call a general election — because she wouldn't have the confidence of Parliament to carry on as prime minister," Rebecca Long-Bailey, Labour's business spokeswoman, told the BBC. "But alternatively, she could offer to renegotiate around a deal that would provide consensus in Parliament."

Some have also floated the idea of a second referendum on the question of Britain's EU membership but the government is firmly opposed to that.

Voters who favor pulling out of the EU narrowly won a 2016 referendum that triggered the exit process, but the subject still deeply divides the nation. On Sunday, riot police were deployed on central London streets amid fears of clashes between a pro-Brexit rally led by far-right activist Tommy Robinson and counter-protesters.

Thousands of supporters of the Eurosceptic U.K. Independence Party and Robinson, whose real name is Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, rallied to accuse May of compromising over Brexit. They were met with thousands of Labour activists and anti-fascist protesters.

See the AP's Brexit coverage at: <https://www.apnews.com/Brexit>

Cardi B, Pharrell, Kanye draw crowds during Art Basel Miami

By KELLI KENNEDY, Associated Press

MIAMI BEACH, Fla. (AP) — Royalty, Real Housewives and the fathers of two Kardashian babies were among the celebs that fanned out across Miami for a week of glamorous parties toasting the world's best artists during Art Basel.

Less than 24 hours after announcing she was splitting from her husband, Cardi B was spotted Wednesday night partying at 24/7 ultra-club E11EVEN MIAMI, sporting long, rainbow streaked hair and a skin-tight black dress. She grabbed the microphone and sang along when the DJ played her hits, including "Bodak Yellow" and "Drip," which features her ex, Offset.

G-Eazy and Travis Scott also gave separate performances at the all-night club over the weekend. Neither Kylie Jenner nor Kanye West were with Scott when he performed on top of the DJ booth and asked the crowd to put away their cell phones so they could enjoy the moment.

And at the private upstairs club at Casa Tua, Basel regular Leonardo DiCaprio hung out with U2's Bono at a late-night karaoke party where Paris Hilton and Serena Williams danced to Beyonce's "Formation."

Downstairs at the exclusive Italian restaurant, Princess Eugenie hosted an intimate seated dinner for the

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London-based art gallery Hauser & Wirth where she serves as director.

On Thursday night, Jennifer Lopez was spotted getting cozy with boyfriend Alex Rodriguez at Prime 112 restaurant. And over at the former Versace Mansion, Creed 2 star Tessa Thompson hosted a party to announce the finalists of Bombay Sapphire Artisan Series' annual arts competition. Guests included BlackKkLansman actress Laura Harrier, singer Teyana Taylor and former NBA champion Kevin Garnett. The girls did a quick photo shoot in Donatella Versace's former quarters.

Art Basel Miami Beach, the prestigious extension of the annual contemporary art fair in Basel, Switzerland, didn't officially open until Thursday, but the fair has become so popular that it's spawned dozens of others around Miami along with star-studded parties days in advance.

One of the biggest draws of the week was at the RC Cola Factory in Wynwood, where rappers Kanye West and Lil Wayne gave surprise performances to honor late rapper XXXTentacion for the posthumous release of his album *Skin*. Kanye brought down the house as he performed their new song "One Minute" with the late rapper who was gunned down in South Florida this year.

Lil Wayne performed again at an intimate party for Republic Records at the Confidante Hotel, telling the crowd he hoped they were having so much fun during the over the top week of parties that they "don't make it back to where you're from because you just don't want to leave here."

On Saturday night, Pharrell teamed up with American Express Platinum for a private beachside concert at the swanky 1 Hotel South Beach.

One of the things he loves most about Art Basel is the way it brings "the curious youth here to see what it is you can do when you grow older if you continue to hone in on art in the way that you love it," he said. "I love being in an environment that fosters creativity."

The "Happy" singer's new restaurant, Swan and Bar Bevy, proved to be one of the hottest reservations of the week. Kanye West dined there with Kim Kardashian's bestie Jonathan Cheban. Rocker Lenny Kravitz joined Pharrell one night and Leonardo DiCaprio and Bono were also seen enjoying a quiet dinner together.

In South Beach, music producer Swizz Beatz' No Commission was again a magnet for big name celebs.

The two-day event with Bacardi featured performances by Meek Mill, Fat Joe and A\$AP Ferg at night. By day, The Dean Collection gives artists free space to exhibit their work, along with a rare deal that gives 100 percent of sales directly to the artists as part of his No Commission theme. The art aficionado, who is married to Alicia Keys, has talked about his desire to promote starving artists.

Celeb supporters included supermodel Adriana Lima who was an eyeing a piece by artist Jamel Shabazz, saying it had an "old school" feel that she thought would inspire her in her home gym when she's working out.

Also spotted around town were Real Housewives star Bethenny Frankel, Brooke Shields, and actress Rosario Dawson.

The late night crowd headed to nightclub Rockwell, which teamed up with 10AK for a three-night pop-up that included performances by hometown rapper Rick Ross. He brought Meek Mill onstage and the two performed their new song "What's Free."

"Last year this time Meek Mill was in prison. Right now he's got the album of the year," Ross said.

Courvoisier also hosted an after-hours bash in Wynwood to close out the weekend Saturday that featured art installations and a performance by rapper and avid art collector 2 Chainz.

"I get a few pieces here every year for my studio or my homes," he said. "I enjoy discovering new art. I enjoy discovering new artists."

This story corrects Cardi B song to "Drip" and that Taylor is a singer, not a model.

Newtown shooter described 'scorn for humanity'

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — Documents from the investigation into the massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut are shedding light on the gunman's anger, scorn for other people, and deep social isolation in the years leading up to the shooting.

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The documents that a court ordered Connecticut State Police to release include several writings by Adam Lanza, who gunned down 20 children and six educators on Dec. 14, 2012. He fatally shot his mother before driving to the school and ultimately killed himself.

Lanza wrote in what appears to be an online communication with a fellow gamer: "I incessantly have nothing other than scorn for humanity," the Hartford Courant reported. "I have been desperate to feel anything positive for someone for my entire life," he wrote.

The criminal investigation ended a year after the massacre without determining a motive. Thousands of pages of documents were released at the time, but in a lawsuit brought by the Courant, the Connecticut Supreme Court ruled in October that personal belongings of the shooter that had been withheld, including journals, also had to be made public because they were not exempt from open record laws.

A report by the Connecticut child advocate said Lanza's severe and deteriorating mental health problems, his preoccupation with violence and access to his mother's weapons "proved a recipe for mass murder."

From the 10th grade, Lanza's mother kept him at home, where he was surrounded by an arsenal of firearms and spent long hours playing violent video games. His medical and school records included references to diagnoses of autism spectrum disorder, anxiety and obsessive compulsive disorder.

The newly released documents were seized by authorities during a search of Lanza's home. They include writings that had been described or summarized by previous investigative reports such as the "Big Book Of Granny," a book describing violence against children that he wrote with another boy in the fifth grade, and a spreadsheet listing mass killings dating back to 1786.

On one handwritten list titled "Problems," Lanza details a range of grievances including lights that are too bright and his hair touching his brother's towel.

"I am unable to distinguish between my problems because I have too many," Lanza wrote.

In other writings, he rages against "fat people" doctors who touched him during physical examinations as a child and writes about pedophilia as a form of love.

In the document where he described his scorn for other people, he also indicated a desire for some form of companionship.

"Most of my social contact was through those players," he wrote to the other gamer. "All of them are typical detestable human beings, and it bred an aura of innumerable negative emotions for me. You were a respite from that."

Comey: FBI probe of Russia initially looked at 4 Americans

By ERIC TUCKER, CHAD DAY and MARY CLARE JALONICK, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The FBI's counterintelligence investigation into potential ties between the Trump campaign and Russia initially focused on four Americans and whether they were connected to Russian efforts to interfere in the 2016 presidential election, former FBI Director James Comey told lawmakers during hours of closed-door questioning.

Comey did not identify the Americans but said President Donald Trump, then the Republican candidate, was not among them.

He also told the House Judiciary Committee that, contrary to Trump's claims, he was "not friends in any social sense" with special counsel Robert Mueller, who is now leading the Russia investigation. Trump has repeatedly portrayed the men as exceptionally close as part of a long-running effort to undermine the investigation and paint the lead figures in the probe as united against him.

"I admire the heck out of the man, but I don't know his phone number, I've never been to his house, I don't know his children's names," said Comey, who added that he had "never hugged or kissed the man" despite the president's insistence otherwise.

"A relief to my wife," he deadpanned.

The committee released a transcript of the interview on Saturday, just 24 hours after privately grilling the fired FBI chief about investigative decisions related to Hillary Clinton's email server and Trump's campaign and potential ties to Russia. Comey largely dodged questions connected to the current Mueller-led probe,

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including whether his May 2017 firing by Trump constituted obstruction of justice.

The Republican-led committee interviewed Comey as part of its investigation into FBI actions in 2016, a year when the bureau — in the heat of the presidential campaign — recommended against charges for Clinton and opened an investigation into Russian interference in the election.

The questioning largely centered on well-covered territory from a Justice Department inspector general report, Comey's own book and interviews and hours of public testimony on Capitol Hill. But the former FBI chief also used the occasion to take aim at Trump's frequent barbs at the criminal justice system, saying "we have become numb to lying and attacks on the rule of law by the president," as well as Trump's contention that it should be a crime for subjects to "flip" and cooperate with investigators.

"It's a shocking suggestion coming from any senior official, no less the president. It's a critical and legitimate part of the entire justice system in the United States," Comey said.

In offering some details of the investigation's origins, Comey said it started in July 2016 with a look at "four Americans who had some connection to Mr. Trump" during that summer and whether they were tied to "the Russian interference effort." The campaign itself, he said, was not investigation at that time.

He did not identify the Americans, though Mueller's investigation has made clear that by that time, there had already been outreach from Russian intermediaries to Trump associates — including a 2015 encounter revealed for the first time in a court filing Friday. Also by that time Democratic email accounts had been hacked by Russian intelligence and a Trump campaign foreign policy adviser, George Papadopoulos, had been told that Russians had "dirt" on Clinton in the form of stolen emails.

That October, the FBI obtained a secret search warrant to monitor the communications of a Trump campaign adviser, Carter Page, on suspicions he was acting as a foreign agent — something he has denied.

Multiple Trump associates, including Papadopoulos, former national security adviser Michael Flynn and Trump's former personal lawyer, Michael Cohen, have pleaded guilty to lying about their interactions with Russians during the campaign and presidential transition period. Former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort's foreign dealings, including to an associate the U.S. says has ties to Russian intelligence, has also attracted law enforcement scrutiny.

Comey reiterated to lawmakers that it was the 2016 Papadopoulos encounter with a Russian intermediary in London that ignited the Russia investigation, rather than — as some Republicans have maintained — Democratic-funded opposition research compiled by a former British spy.

"It was weeks or months later that the so-called Steele dossier came to our attention," Comey said.

He said that by the time of his firing, the FBI had not come to a conclusion about whether the Trump campaign coordinated with Russia's efforts to sway the election.

And he insisted that the FBI would recover from the president's attacks on the bureau.

"The FBI will be fine. It will snap back, as will the rest of our institutions," Comey said. "There will be short-term damage, which worries me a great deal, but in the long run, no politician, no president can, in a lasting way, damage those institutions."

Besides the questioning on Russia, Republicans lawmakers pressed Comey on the FBI's handling of an investigation into whether Clinton mishandled classified information on her private email server. Comey's July 2016 announcement that Clinton and her aides had been "extremely careless" but did not deserve criminal charges infuriated Republicans who contended that someone less powerful and well-connected would have faced prosecution.

Under questioning from Rep. Trey Gowdy, a South Carolina Republican, Comey reiterated that the FBI and Justice Department didn't have a prosecutable case against Clinton because they couldn't prove she willfully violated the law by setting up the server.

Read the transcript: <http://apne.ws/1fZwQyj>

At scene of South Sudan mass rape, 'no one could hear me'

By SAM MEDNICK, Associated Press

NHIALDIU, South Sudan (AP) — Wrapping an arm around her stomach, the young woman hung her head and recounted the day in early November when she and a friend were bound, dragged into the bush and raped by four men with guns.

"My body hasn't been the same since," the 18-year-old said. The men attacked during an hours-long walk home to the South Sudan village of Nhialdiu. "I was crying and screaming but I was so far from the village that no one could hear me," she told The Associated Press, which doesn't identify survivors of sexual assault.

Shock and outrage followed when the medical charity Doctors Without Borders announced that 125 women and girls had been raped, whipped and clubbed over 10 days last month in a dramatic spike in sexual violence. "Horrific," the United Nations secretary-general said. They were attacked as they made the long walk to a food distribution site in Bentiu, in Unity state.

In an exclusive look at the aftermath, the AP joined a U.N. peacekeeping patrol where the attacks occurred as humanitarians, rights groups and South Sudan's government scrambled to find out more.

Rape has been used widely as a weapon in South Sudan. Even after a peace deal was signed in September to end a five-year civil war that killed nearly 400,000 people, humanitarians have warned of higher rates of sexual assault as growing numbers of desperate people try to reach aid. While some aid groups have quietly questioned whether all 125 people in the Doctors With Borders report were raped, they do not dispute that the problem has become grave.

The 18-year-old was not included in that report, and the real toll of sexual assault is not known.

Joining the U.N. patrol on Friday, the AP traveled the potholed road where the recent assaults took place. Shrouded by trees and elephant grass, some stretches provide cover for perpetrators to lurk.

Several local women said the violence is escalating.

Nyalgwon Mol Moon said she was held at gunpoint last month while two men in civilian clothes, their faces covered, stole her clothes, her shoes and the milk she meant to sell at market. Standing beside the road, pointing to her borrowed, oversized sneakers, she said she now tries to take alternative routes on her weekly walks to Bentiu.

She has no other choice. Food in Nhialdiu and nearby villages is scarce. Most people could not cultivate last season because of fighting and too much rain. Many rely on monthly aid from the U.N.'s World Food Program.

That means a walk of almost 40 kilometers (24 miles) to Bentiu town. Unable to carry the heavy rations back in one trip, most women leave some behind with relatives and make several journeys throughout the month.

Some said they make the 11-hour trek at least six times.

Alarmed by the sexual assaults, the World Food Program said it is prepared to bring distribution points closer to communities. The U.N. is now clearing the road from Bentiu to Nhialdiu of debris to make access easier.

No one has taken responsibility for the wave of assaults that the U.N. and African Union have condemned as "abhorrent" and "predatory."

South Sudan's government has acknowledged the assaults occurred in areas it controls, on the road between Nhialdiu and Bentiu and in surrounding villages. But it blames them on "unregulated youth" who fought alongside warring factions before the peace deal, Laraka Machar Turoal, deputy governor of Northern Liech state that was once part of Unity, told the AP.

Youth who were never officially integrated with armed groups have been left idle, guns in hand, to take what they want by force, Turoal said.

South Sudan's government has called on all sides to demobilize the youth. It said it has deployed troops to areas in Unity state suspected of harboring criminals.

And yet the army in Nhialdiu has not detained anyone in the assaults and denies responsibility for finding

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the perpetrators, said John Dor, army commander for the area. He said they took place far from town, outside his jurisdiction.

But several local people said they knew of attacks in villages less than 15 kilometers from the army base. Some who were attacked at gunpoint said they believe the armed youth are affiliated with government troops. The government has done nothing so far to stop the violence, one woman explained.

The U.N., which has increased patrols, is pushing South Sudan's government to take more responsibility. The U.N. Security Council in a statement on Saturday noted its willingness to impose sanctions on those who threaten the peace, including by sexual violence.

"They're obliged to make sure everyone's protected ... it's not enough just to sit in one place and not be involved," said Paul Adejoh Ebikwo, the U.N. mission's senior civil affairs officer in Bentiu.

Unity state was one of the hardest-hit areas in the civil war, and Bentiu has changed hands several times. Government and opposition forces remain at odds, even as factions across the country try to reconcile. A meeting on Thursday to build trust was canceled because the parties couldn't agree on a place to meet, said the independent monitoring group charged with overseeing the peace deal's implementation.

Meanwhile, many women and girls are terrified.

Cautiously peering through the trees, several hesitantly emerged from the bush, inching toward the side of the road.

"We're walking here because we're scared of coming on the main path," said Nyachieng Gatman. Three days ago, she said, she met a breast-feeding mother and young girl who had been raped in a nearby town.

Standing beside her, 11-year Anchankual Dood lowered her heavy bag of grain and gulped from a bottle of water.

"It's a long distance to go and come from Bentiu," the girl said. "But we do it because we need food and because we're suffering."

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Oklahoma's Murray beats Alabama's Tagovailoa for Heisman

By RALPH D. RUSSO, AP College Football Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Kyler Murray waited three years to fulfill the five-star potential he brought to college football. With one shot to deliver, Murray replaced a Heisman Trophy winner by becoming a Heisman Trophy winner.

The Oklahoma quarterback won college football's most prestigious individual award Saturday night, beating out Alabama's Tua Tagovailoa and setting up a College Football Playoff matchup of Heisman winner versus runner-up.

"This is crazy," Murray said in his acceptance speech. "This is an honor, something that I'll never forget. Something that I'll always cherish for the rest of my life."

The fourth-ranked Sooners play the top-ranked Crimson Tide in the Orange Bowl semifinal Dec. 29 in the seventh bowl matchup of Heisman winner and runner-up, and first since second-place finisher Vince Young and Texas beat Reggie Bush and Southern California in the 2006 Rose Bowl.

This season, Murray stepped into the starting job at Oklahoma held by last year's Heisman winner and first overall NFL draft pick, Baker Mayfield. Oklahoma is the first school with Heisman-winning quarterbacks in consecutive seasons and the fifth overall with winners in back-to-back years. Mayfield was also a finalist in 2016.

"Luckily, we've been here three years in a row," Oklahoma coach Lincoln Riley said. "We're going to have to start paying taxes here."

Unlike most seasons, the winner was no foregone conclusion, but Murray (517 first-place votes and 2,167 points) ended up with a fairly comfortable margin of 296 points over Tagovailoa. Ohio State quarterback Dwayne Haskins, the other finalist, was a distant third with 783 points. Three more quarterbacks followed: Will Grier of West Virginia, Gardner Minshew II of Washington State and McKenzie Milton of Central Florida.

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Murray appeared on 92 percent of the Heisman ballots, third most all time. Tagovailoa's 1,871 points was the most for a runner-up in the 84-year history of the Heisman.

Murray, a pinpoint passer and explosive runner, surpassed the production of Mayfield. Murray has averaged 380 yards of offense per game and accounted for 51 touchdowns in leading the Sooners to the Big 12 title and the playoff. Mayfield averaged 353 yards of offense and accounted for 49 touchdowns as Oklahoma won the conference and lost a playoff semifinal to Georgia.

"This didn't just happen," Murray said later during a news conference. "I've put so much time and effort into this game."

Murray said he was in constant contact with Mayfield this week.

"It was just casual, bro to bro. He just told me to enjoy it. Have fun with it. It's a once-in-a-lifetime deal," Murray said.

Tagovailoa was the Heisman front-runner for most of the season, but Murray surged late as the Sooners turned to him and the rest of their offense to bail out a leaky defense down the stretch. Meanwhile, Tagovailoa picked a bad time to have his worst game of the season, throwing two interceptions in the Southeastern Conference championship game against Georgia and leaving early with a sprained ankle.

Murray's first season as a starting quarterback in college is set up to also be his last. The junior already signed a \$4.66 million contract with the Oakland Athletic after he was selected in the first round of the Major League Baseball draft in June. Listed at 5-foot-10 and 195 pounds, Murray is small for an NFL quarterback but talented enough to be an intriguing prospect if he ever decided to give it a try.

For the next month, though, Murray is focused on capping his college career with a national championship. He took a circuitous route to get to a place most always expected him to be.

Playing for Texas powerhouse Allen High School, just outside of Dallas, Murray won three straight state championships at the state's highest level and his team went 42-0 with him starting.

"Kyler's journey, in particular, it's kind of the stuff of legends," Riley said. "But with all the high points there's been a lot of tough moments."

Murray signed with Texas A&M in 2015 but transferred after one tumultuous season.

At Oklahoma, the plan was to sit out the 2016 season to fulfil NCAA transfer rules and then step in for Mayfield in 2017. But Mayfield was granted an extra year of eligibility and returned for 2017, relegating Murray to backing up the best quarterback in the country.

This season, as the focal point of Riley's creative offense, Murray developed into the dominant player he had seemed destined to become while at Allen.

"I trusted the process," Murray said.

He fought back tears while thanking Riley during his speech.

"You pushed me harder than any coach ever has and I just want to say thank you for believing in me and allowing me to be the quarterback of this team. The leader of this team," Murray said.

Murray is the fourth Oklahoma quarterback since 2003 to win the Heisman, joining Jason White, Sam Bradford and Mayfield, and the 16th quarterback overall to win the award in the last 19 years.

Oklahoma's seventh Heisman matches Ohio State, Southern California and Notre Dame for the most by any school. That means another statue in Heisman Park in Norman, next to Memorial Stadium.

"I just hope they put the bandana on me," Murray said. "I hope they get the swag right."

Follow Ralph D. Russo at <https://twitter.com/ralphDrussoAP> and listen at <https://podcastone.com/AP-Top-25-College-Football-Podcast>

More AP college football: <https://apnews.com/Collegefootball> and https://twitter.com/AP_Top25

For Palestinian children in Gaza, an education in conflict

By TODD PITMAN, Associated Press

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP) — When Mazen al-Dalo took two of his young sons to see the Palestinian protests against Israel's decade-old blockade of Gaza, he knew it could be dangerous.

Rock-throwing demonstrators were being shot by Israeli soldiers, and armored Israeli jeeps were firing endless volleys of tear gas into the crowds.

But it was important to teach the boys about Palestinian history, he said, and give them a glimpse of the modern-day struggles their people face. "Seeing things with your own eyes is different than reading about them in books," the 44-year-old father said, explaining his decision to take the children, aged 8 and 11, one day last April.

The family only ventured about 400 meters (yards) from the border — a spot al-Dalo believed was safe, away from the violent confrontations. But just as he pointed to a group of Israeli soldiers atop a berm on the other side of the Israeli fence, a single gunshot rang out.

The round ripped off al-Dalo's thumb and struck his 8-year-old son, Mohamed, in the leg — two more casualties in a simmering conflict that began last spring and has seen a staggering 948 Palestinians under the age of 18 shot and wounded by Israeli forces, according to the United Nations.

In a statement, Israel's military said it does "everything possible to avoid harming children." But Hamas, the militant group that rules Gaza, "cynically uses Gaza residents, especially women and children, as human shields and places them at the forefront of the violent riots."

Hamas, which has orchestrated the demonstrations, denies such allegations. Hazem Qassem, a Hamas spokesman in Gaza, said "there is no way to prevent the people from participating. There are entire families (who go) and there is no way to prevent them."

Ever since the demonstrations began in March, children have been a constant presence among the surging crowds — some hurling stones with slingshots or burning tires, others merely watching from afar. While many are brought by parents who hold their hands and carry them on their shoulders, others make their way on their own.

Of the 175 Palestinians killed so far, at least 34 were 18 or under, according to an Associated Press count. Gaza's Health Ministry says 2,295 minors have been hospitalized, 17 of whom have had a limb amputated; at least 5,124 have been injured in all.

Young victims are not a new phenomenon in the region. In the first Palestinian uprising that began in 1987, children and teens often threw stones at Israeli soldiers, who frequently responded with live rounds. According to the Israeli human rights group, B'Tselem, minors comprised about 21 percent of deaths back then. In the latest protests, that percentage is roughly the same.

The Israeli military, which deploys snipers atop pyramid-shaped bunkers positioned at regular intervals along the frontier, says it takes pains to avoid civilian casualties and only uses live fire as a last resort. But it also says it must defend against "terrorist" crowds hurling grenades and firebombs, and stop those who penetrate or damage the fence.

Amnesty International and other human rights groups argue that under international law, the use of live ammunition can only be justified in the face of imminent death or serious injury. Israel argues that is exactly what its forces face. One Israeli soldier was killed by a Hamas sniper during a demonstration last July, and at least six have been wounded.

Video images circulating on social media, however, have also shown unarmed protesters being shot, including some struck while running away or waving the Palestinian flag, Amnesty said. One incident in September showed a 16-year-old boy being shot in the chest while waving his hands in the air; he had just hurled a stone toward the fence, but it's unclear if it had even reached it.

After another teen was shot dead in April, U.N. envoy Nickolay Mladenov asked in a tweet: "How does the killing of a child in #Gaza today help #peace?" Mladenov answered his own question, saying "It doesn't! It fuels anger and breeds more killing."

The protests have been fueled by desperate living conditions in Gaza, a place most residents are prohibited

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from leaving. More than a decade since Israel and Egypt imposed the blockade on Gaza, unemployment is over 50 percent, tap water has become undrinkable and electricity is sporadic. Israel says the blockade is necessary to prevent Hamas from importing weapons.

When the demonstrations began, Raed Abu Khader told his 12-year-old son Mohammed to stay away, and the boy promised he would. But on Aug. 24, Khader received an urgent phone call from a friend: Mohammed had been shot in the leg at one of the demonstrations held that day.

"He shouldn't have been there," Abu Khader said of the boy, who has been unable to move his left leg since and fears it will be amputated. "But the Israelis should only be shooting to scare children off — not hit them."

It's unclear what Mohammed was doing when the shooting took place. Speaking in a wheelchair surrounded by friends on a Gaza street, he boasted that he had just hung a Palestinian flag on the fence when gunfire rang out. Later, lying in his darkened home with his distraught father looking on, the teen could not answer when asked where he was. Staring at the ground, his brown eyes welled with tears.

Abu Khader said the boy had been transported to the protest site via one of the Hamas-organized buses that park outside Gaza's mosques every Friday. At the end of the ride was a spectacle that is consistently part-war, part-festival: cultural shows, corn on the cob, balloons and Palestinian kites laden with trails of flaming embers meant for Israeli farms. Plus the weekly confrontation itself: Palestinians armed with stones and firebombs battling armed Israeli forces flying spider-like drones equipped with tear gas.

"They see their friends going, and they want to go," Abu Khader said. "They think it's a game. They think they're going to have fun. They don't know how dangerous it is."

The round that struck Mohammed Abu Khader severed the nerves in his leg so completely, he can neither feel nor move his limb at all. If he does not get out of Gaza, his 39-year-old father says, he will likely lose his leg.

Today, the boy often cries. He no longer goes to school. His father says the boy feels useless.

Mohammed al-Dalo, the boy whose father took him to the protest, has been similarly traumatized. His father said he is markedly quieter now.

And like Mohammed Abu Khader, his life may be changed forever.

At a clinic run by Doctors Without Borders, physiotherapist Eyad Abedelaal says Mohammed al-Dalo suffers from "foot drop." Nerve damage means he cannot move his toes up and down; the boy limps when he walks.

They will try to perform another surgery to fix the problem. "But unfortunately, this kind of nerve damage will likely last forever," Abedelaal said. "It means to walk correctly, he'll probably need special shoes for the rest of his life."

Mohammed's father, Mazen al-Dalo, says the boy asked to go back to the protests, but he refused because he doesn't want him to get hurt again.

Still, he has no regrets. "This is the tax you have to pay to achieve the right of return," he said, referencing a deep-held desire to take back land that hundreds of thousands of Palestinians fled or were forced from seven decades ago after the war that created Israel. "Nothing is free. We all have to sacrifice."

Associated Press writer Fares Akram contributed.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Monday, Dec. 10, the 344th day of 2018. There are 21 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 10, 1964, Martin Luther King Jr. received his Nobel Peace Prize in Oslo, saying he accepted it "with an abiding faith in America and an audacious faith in the future of mankind."

On this date:

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In 1817, Mississippi was admitted as the 20th state of the Union.

In 1869, women were granted the right to vote in the Wyoming Territory.

In 1898, a treaty was signed in Paris officially ending the Spanish-American War.

In 1906, President Theodore Roosevelt became the first American to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for helping to mediate an end to the Russo-Japanese War.

In 1931, Jane Addams became the first American woman to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize; the co-recipient was Nicholas Murray Butler.

In 1967, singer Otis Redding, 26, and six others were killed when their plane crashed into Wisconsin's Lake Monona; one passenger, Ben Cauley, survived.

In 1987, President Ronald Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail S. Gorbachev concluded three days of summit talks in Washington. Violinist Jascha Heifetz died in Los Angeles at age 86.

In 1994, Yasser Arafat, Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin received the Nobel Peace Prize, pledging to pursue their mission of healing the anguished Middle East.

In 1995, the first group of U-S Marines arrived in the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo to join NATO soldiers sent to enforce peace in former Yugoslavia.

In 1996, South African President Nelson Mandela signed the country's new constitution into law during a ceremony in Sharpeville.

In 2005, former Senator Eugene McCarthy died in Washington, D.C., at age 89; actor-comedian Richard Pryor died in Encino, California, at age 65.

In 2007, suspended NFL star Michael Vick was sentenced by a federal judge in Richmond, Virginia, to 23 months in prison for bankrolling a dogfighting operation and killing dogs that underperformed (Vick served 19 months at Leavenworth). Former Vice President Al Gore accepted the Nobel Peace Prize with a call for humanity to rise up against a looming climate crisis and stop waging war on the environment.

Ten years ago: Defying calls for his resignation, Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich (blah-GOY'-uh-vich) showed up for work on his 52nd birthday despite charges he'd schemed to enrich himself by offering to sell President-elect Barack Obama's Senate seat. The House approved a plan, 237-170, to speed \$14 billion in loans to Detroit's automakers. U.S. Special Forces killed six Afghan police in a case of mistaken identity by both sides after the police fired on the Americans during an operation against an insurgent commander.

Five years ago: South Africa held a memorial service for Nelson Mandela, during which U.S. President Barack Obama energized tens of thousands of spectators and nearly 100 visiting heads of state with a plea for the world to emulate "the last great liberator of the 20th century." (The ceremony was marred by the presence of a sign-language interpreter who deaf advocates said was an impostor waving his arms around meaninglessly.) General Motors named product chief Mary Barra its new CEO, making her the first woman to run a U.S. car company.

One year ago: Philadelphia Eagles quarterback Carson Wentz suffered a torn ACL during the team's win over the Rams; backup Nick Foles rallied the Eagles to a victory that secured the NFC East title. (Foles and the Eagles would go on to win the Super Bowl.) Wearing a face mask, actor Rob Lowe live-streamed the evacuation of his family from one of the homes threatened by a massive Southern California wildfire.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Tommy Kirk is 77. Actress Fionnula Flanagan is 77. Pop singer Chad Stuart (Chad and Jeremy) is 77. Rhythm-and-blues singer Ralph Tavares is 77. Actress-singer Gloria Loring is 72. Pop-funk musician Walter "Clyde" Orange (The Commodores) is 72. Country singer Johnny Rodriguez is 67. Actress Susan Dey is 66. Former Illinois Gov. Rod Blagojevich is 62. Jazz musician Paul Hardcastle is 61. Actor John York (TV: "General Hospital") is 60. Actor-director Kenneth Branagh (BRAH'-nah) is 58. Actress Nia Peeples is 57. TV chef Bobby Flay is 54. Rock singer-musician J Mascis is 53. Rock musician Scot (cq) Alexander (Dishwalla) is 47. Actress-comedian Arden Myrin is 45. Rock musician Meg White (The White Stripes) is 44. Actress Emmanuelle Chriqui is 43. Rapper Kuniva (D12) is 43. Actor Gavin Houston is 41. Actor Alano Miller is 39. Violinist Sarah Chang is 38. Rock musician Noah Harmon (Airborne Toxic Event) is 37. Actor Patrick John Flueger is 35. Country singer Meghan Linsey is 33. Actress Raven-Symone is 33.

Thought for Today: "Beauty is not caused. It is." — Emily Dickinson, American poet (born this date in 1830, died in 1886).