

# Groton Daily Independent

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**You're probably getting sick of snow photos! A snow shower went through the area early this morning. It was just a dusting though. And just a side note - the skating rink will be opening tomorrow..** (Photo by Paul Kosel)

## **OPEN:** Recycling Trailer in Groton

**The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.**

- 2- GROW SD Supporting Homeless Count January 22, 2019
- 2- Help Wanted Ads
- 2- Top prize Lucky For Life ticket sold in Aberdeen
- 3-5- Weather Pages
- 6- Daily Devotional
- 7- SD Community Events Calendar
- 8- News from the Associated Press

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## GROW SD Supporting Homeless Count January 22, 2019

Every year in January, the South Dakota Housing Development Authority conducts a one-day count of homeless persons in the state. The count is mandated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Again this year, SDHDA contracted with the four CAP agencies in the state to coordinate counts in their service areas, and GROW South Dakota will support the 17 Northeast South Dakota Community Action Program (NESDCAP) counties. The results of the count are used both to identify the extent of the problem and to request funds to address it. The date for the count is January 22, 2019.

The January 2018 count found a total of 1,159 people experiencing homelessness across the state. This number included 681 who were sheltered in non-domestic programs, 193 in domestic violence shelters, and 285 people who were unsheltered, that is, living on the street or other places unfit for human habitation. All of the NESDCAP counties participated in the count, and the area accounted for just under 5% of the state count, reporting a total of 54 people: 24 in non-domestic violence shelters, 28 in domestic violence shelters, and 2 who were unsheltered. Eleven of the counties reported no people who were homeless.

GROW SD is contacting potential agencies and volunteers in the counties to assist with local counts. The count includes a survey of individual homeless people as well as a survey of shelters. All data collected will go to SDHDA for reporting nationally. With relatively few homeless people in the area, supporting the count is light work.

People interested in supporting the count in their county should contact GROW SD. The NESDCAP counties are: Beadle, Brown, Campbell, Day, Edmunds, Faulk, Hand, Hughes, Hyde, Marshall, McPherson, Potter, Roberts, Spink, Stanley, Sully and Walworth.

For more information on the homeless count, visit <http://www.housingforthehomeless.org/>.

For more information about GROW South Dakota's housing and business development programs and services, please visit our website at [www.growsd.org](http://www.growsd.org) or call (605) 698-7654.

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GROW SOUTH DAKOTA is an Equal Opportunity Lender, Provider, and Employer. Complaints of discrimination should be sent to: USDA, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Ave SW, Washington DC 20250-9410.

**Homecare Services Caregivers**  
Flexible, part time positions available in the Groton area. Home Care Services is looking for friendly dependable people to provide care and companionship for elderly and disabled people in their homes. You will be assisting our clients with personal care needs, meal preparations, light housekeeping, errands and other tasks. If you have a passion for helping others and need a flexible schedule, please call our office at (605) 225-1076 or 1-800-899-2578. (1218.0101)

**Front Porch Manager Wanted**  
Immediate opening for Restaurant General Manager at The Front Porch Bar & Grill in Langford SD. Hiring bonus available! Salary DOE. Must be 21 years old. Contact Suzie Easthouse at (605) 493-6570 or email resume by to [langfordfrontporch@venture-comm.net](mailto:langfordfrontporch@venture-comm.net). (1227.0111)

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## Today in Weather History

January 2, 1999: Heavy snow of 6 to 8 inches fell across part of northeast South Dakota from the late afternoon hours of the 1st to the early morning hours of the 2nd. Strong north winds of 15 to 30 mph combined with temperatures in the single digits generated wind chills from 25 to 40 below and visibilities below 1/4 of a mile at times. Holiday travel along Interstate-29 and Highway 12 was most affected by this winter storm. There were some travel delays and some stranded motorists as a result. Some snowfall amounts included, 6 inches at Kidder, Victor, Sisseton, Webster, Waubay, Wilmot, and 8 inches at Britton and near Peever.

1870: One unofficial source reported the heaviest snowfall ever known in Louisville, Kentucky, piled up to about four feet. That would be more than twice as much as the accepted official record of 22.4 inches set February 4 through 6.

1897: Tornadoes in January? Two tornadoes touched down on this day. The first tornado touched down in the town of Mooringsport, Louisiana, killing five people and injuring 21 others. The second tornado occurred at Benton, Arkansas. Although this tornado was more destructive regards to property damage, it caused one death.

1910 - A great flood in Utah and Nevada washed out 100 miles of railroad between Salt Lake City UT and Los Angeles CA causing seven million dollars damage. (David Ludlum)

1955: Hurricane Alice passed through the Islands of Saint Martin and Saba in the Caribbean Sea on this day. Alice, which developed on December 30, 1954, is the only known Atlantic hurricane to span two calendar years.

1961 - The coldest temperature of record for the state of Hawaii was established with a reading of 14 degrees atop Haleakela Summit. (David Ludlum)

1987 - A winter storm moving up the Atlantic coast brought heavy snow and high winds to the north-eastern U.S. Wind gusts reached 82 mph at Trenton NJ and Southwest Harbor in Maine. Snowfall totals ranged up to two feet at Salem NH and Waterboro ME. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - "Old Man Winter" took a siesta, with snow a scarcity across the nation. For the second day in a row Alamosa CO reported a record low of 31 degrees below zero. (National Weather Summary)

1989 - Strong and gusty winds prevailed along the eastern slopes of the northern and central Rockies. Winds gusted to 71 mph at Colorado Springs CO and Livingston MT. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - The first winter storm of the new year and decade developed in the southwestern U.S., and blanketed the northern mountains of Utah with 12 to 23 inches of snow. Up to 22 inches of snow was reported in the Alta-Snowbird area. The storm brought Las Vegas NV their first measurable precipitation in four and a half months, since the 17th of August. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1994 - High winds buffeted the Northern Front Range of Colorado during the morning hours. Peak wind gusts included 105 mph atop Squaw Mountain near Idaho Springs and 89 mph at Fort Collins. A fast moving "Alberta Clipper" brought up to six inches of snow to Iowa. Up to a foot of snow blanketed the Snowy Range Mountains in southeastern Wyoming. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2008 - The second day of 2008 brought snow to areas of Indiana, Ohio and the Appalachians through the Northeastern United States. Parts of New England received the heaviest amounts, with some areas receiving storm totals of over 15 inches (38 cm) in several areas of central and eastern Maine. (NCDC)



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Today

Tonight

Thursday

Thursday  
Night

Friday



Decreasing  
Clouds

Partly Cloudy

Sunny

Mostly Clear

Mostly Sunny

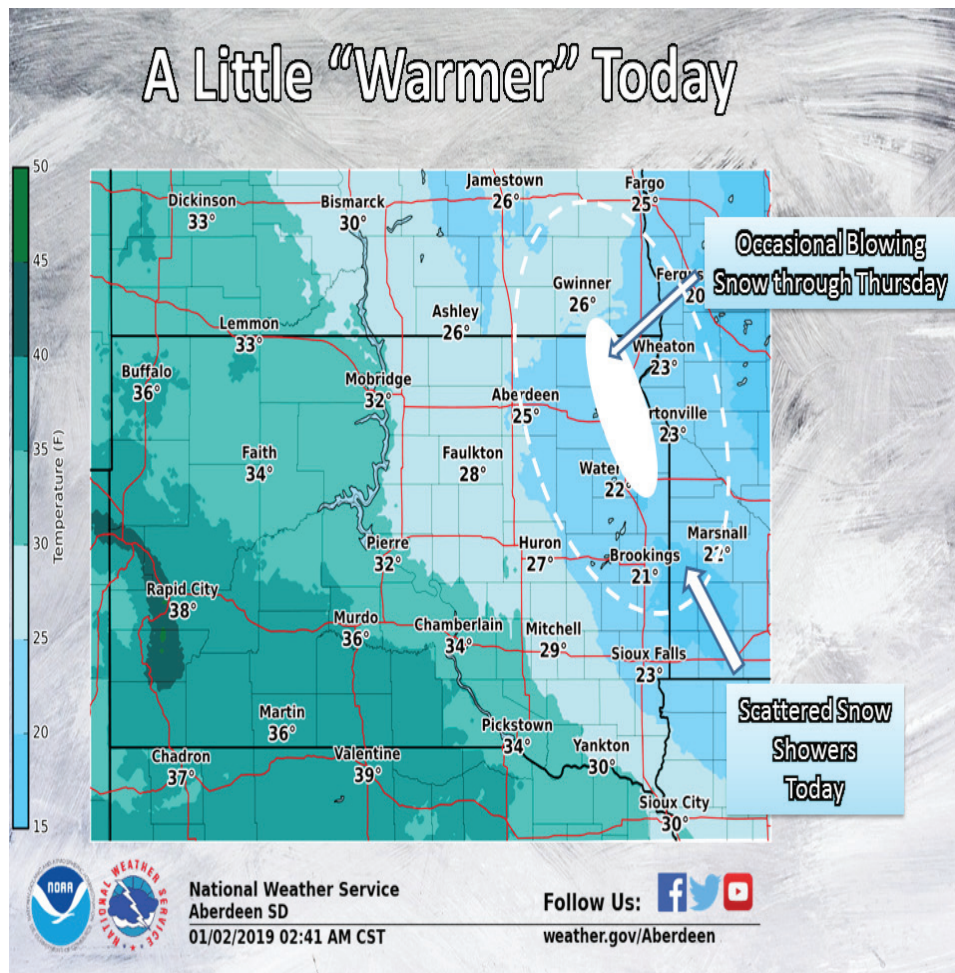
High: 25 °F

Low: 15 °F

High: 35 °F

Low: 19 °F

High: 38 °F



Published on: 01/02/2019 at 3:18AM

A milder air mass will begin moving into the region today, and then extend its stay through the rest of the work week. Also, a few snow showers are possible over northeast South Dakota, accumulations will be light. Lastly, the low level wind setup remains such that the lee of the Coteau will continue to get gusty winds through Thursday. The result, occasional blowing snow over that region.

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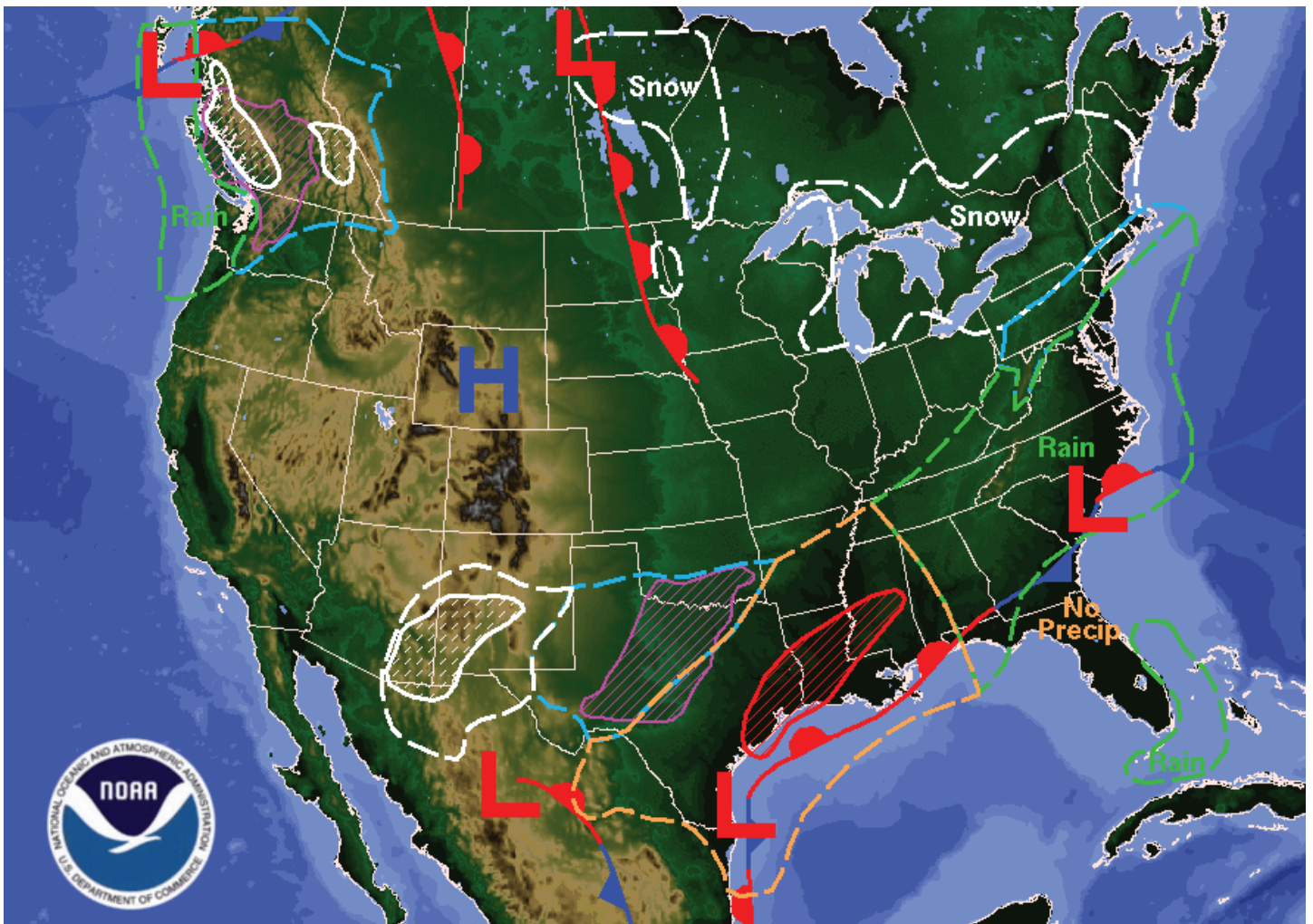
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## Yesterday's Weather

**High Outside Temp: 0 °F at 3:40 PM**  
**Low Outside Temp: -12 °F at 6:48 AM**  
**High Gust: 27 mph at 10:12 PM**  
**Precip:**

## Today's Info

**Record High: 50° in 1963**  
**Record Low: -30° in 2010**  
**Average High: 22°F**  
**Average Low: 2°F**  
**Average Precip in Jan.: 0.02**  
**Precip to date in Jan.: 0.00**  
**Average Precip to date: 0.02**  
**Precip Year to Date: 0.00**  
**Sunset Tonight: 5:02 p.m.**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:14 a.m.**



### Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Wed, Jan 02, 2019, issued 4:52 AM EST  
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center  
Prepared by McCreynolds with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

**Rain**  
**Rain and T'Storms**  
**Rain and Snow**  
**Snow**

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



## THE FLAW OF FLATTERY

An old English fable contains a truth well worth repeating.

A crow swooped low over the lunch of a peasant and stole a piece of cheese. A wise fox, watching the crow with jealousy, wanted the cheese for himself.

O Crow, he said in his most flattering voice, how beautiful are your wings. How brightly shine your searching eyes. How graceful is your strong, flexible neck. Your chest is the chest of a soaring eagle. Your talons are no match for all the beasts of the field. O that such a bird would lack only a voice.

The crow was thrilled and excited over the flattery. Chuckling to herself, she decided to surprise the fox with her voice. When she opened her mouth, the cheese fell to the ground and the fox snapped it up and walked away.

A wise man once said, Flattery is a trap; evil men are caught in it. But the good men stay away and sing for joy.

Flattery is different from encouragement. We give courage to those who are struggling with life's problems when we recognize their efforts. We give hope to one who has fallen when we offer a hand to pick them up. We give peace when we smile at one with sadness in their eyes.

Flattery is different. It praises someone for something that is not true or honest to make them feel good about mediocrity - even failure. In the end it destroys. The Psalmist said, May the Lord cut off all flattering lips.

False praise, though well intended, is deceitful.

Prayer: Lord, may we offer hope to the struggling, help to the weak and recognition to those who do good things! In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 12:3 May the Lord silence all flattering lips and every boastful tongue



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## 2018 Groton SD Community Events

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

## News from the Associated Press

### **Survey suggests improving business conditions in Midwest**

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — A monthly survey report suggests that business conditions improved last month in nine Midwest and Plains states.

The report issued Wednesday says the Mid-America Business Conditions Index rose to 55.2 in December from 54.1 in November. The October reading was 54.9.

Creighton University economist Ernie Goss oversees the survey, and he says the shortages of skilled workers are still holding back even stronger growth.

The survey results are compiled into a collection of indexes ranging from zero to 100. Survey organizers say any score above 50 suggests growth. A score below that suggests decline.

The survey covers Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma and South Dakota.

### **Parents sue, claiming disabled students were abused**

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — The parents of three children with disabilities are suing the Aberdeen School District, claiming the students were physically and emotionally abused.

The plaintiffs are not identified in the federal lawsuit which seeks at least \$75,000 in damages. The school district has not yet responded to the lawsuit.

Aberdeen American News reports the parents say their 13-year-old children were physically and mentally abused by staff at May Overby Elementary School and that administrators failed to take action when notified of the abuse.

The plaintiffs say their children were happy and thriving at Lincoln Elementary until they reached third grade and had to transfer to May Overby. The lawsuit says each child began to express significant distress with attending school.

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

### **SD Lottery**

**By The Associated Press**

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

Mega Millions

34-44-57-62-70, Mega Ball: 14, Megaplier: 4

(thirty-four, forty-four, fifty-seven, sixty-two, seventy; Mega Ball: fourteen; Megaplier: four)

Estimated jackpot: \$425 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$53 million

### **Departure of Trump's GOP critics in Senate leaves a void**

**By KEVIN FREKING, Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's most prominent GOP critics on Capitol Hill are close to completing their Senate careers, raising the question of who — if anyone — will take their place as willing to publicly criticize a president who remains popular with nearly 9 in 10 Republican voters.

Sens. Jeff Flake of Arizona and Bob Corker of Tennessee engaged in a war of words with the president



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on myriad issues over the past 18 months, generating headlines and fiery tweets from a president who generally insists on getting the last word. Those battles put them on the outs with many in their own party, and they paid a price. Both decided to retire rather than take on a difficult re-election campaign.

Flake was far and away Trump's most consistent critic among Senate Republicans. Corker weighed in less often, but his description of the White House as an "adult day care center" rankled the president, who dubbed him "Liddle' Bob Corker." The feud continued as Corker headed for the exits, with Trump asserting that Corker's promise to serve only two terms was not the real reason he retired. Rather, Corker "wanted to run but poll numbers TANKED when I wouldn't endorse him," Trump tweeted.

Corker replied: "Yes, just like Mexico is paying for the wall... #AlertTheDaycareStaff."

One possible voice of dissent could come from Utah Sen.-elect Mitt Romney. In a Washington Post op-ed Tuesday, Romney wrote that Trump's "conduct over the past two years ... is evidence that the president has not risen to the mantle of the office."

Romney praised some of Trump's policy decisions, but added: "With the nation so divided, resentful and angry, presidential leadership in qualities of character is indispensable. And it is in this province where the incumbent's shortfall has been most glaring."

Romney has had his public run-ins with the president.

Throughout his Senate campaign, Romney insisted that he would agree with Trump on some issues and not be shy about disagreeing on others. Romney appears to have more room with GOP voters in Utah to take on the president. Most voters in Utah — 64 percent — would like to see the senator confront the president, according to data from AP VoteCast, a survey of midterm voters.

Sen. Ben Sasse of Nebraska has frequently criticized Trump for what he considers the president's uncivil rhetoric. Sasse has also said he "regularly" considers leaving his party and becoming an independent. He is up for re-election in 2020 and has said he'll decide by the summer whether to seek a second term. It would be tricky terrain for Sasse to publicly battle with Trump, who won the state in 2016 by 25 percentage points.

Rory Cooper, a GOP strategist who helped lead the "Never Trump PAC" during the 2016 Republican primary, said publicly criticizing the president makes Republican votes back home unhappy and earns the ire of the president. Meanwhile, Democratic voters and the media give them too little credit, he said.

"There is not an incentive structure for senators who disagree with or oppose the president to speak out right now, but that could change if the (Robert) Mueller investigation continues to move in the direction it has been or the economy churns negative," Cooper said.

Senate Republicans chafe at the notion they are unwilling to take on a president whose statements and policy positions often run counter to traditional conservative positions.

Sen. Mike Rounds, R-S.D., said he raised his concerns about trade policy privately with the president.

"I want results," Rounds said, "instead of hardening positions."

Rounds said he rode with Trump after meeting him at the airport when the president visited South Dakota during the midterm election season, telling him the state's soybean farmers were facing losses of some \$500 million because of retaliatory tariffs. He said Trump told him: "We're going to have a better deal for them. If they hang with me, we're going to make this better."

Rounds said his job is to make things better and "that doesn't mean I have to be out there in front fighting with someone."

Sen. David Perdue, R-Ga., said "there's all sorts of active disagreements that go on" with the White House behind the scenes.

"I support the president as well as anybody. Behind closed doors, there are things on tariffs and things like that where we've offered a differing opinion. But I support this president in terms of what he's trying to do. This agenda is working," Perdue said, citing strong economic growth and low unemployment.

Democratic Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., said he suspects the 2020 elections will prompt more Republican senators to confront Trump when they disagree with him, and that may already be happening, citing recent actions on Saudi Arabia.

The Senate passed a measure that blamed Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman for the kill-

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ing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi and called on Riyadh to “ensure appropriate accountability.” Senators also passed a separate measure calling for the end of U.S. support for the Saudi-led war in Yemen. The resolutions showed senators seeking to assert oversight of Trump administration foreign policy and the relationship with Saudi Arabia.

“Almost half of their caucus is up for re-election. They just saw what happened in 2018,” Durbin said of Republicans, who lost the House majority to Democrats. “I think, once they do polling back home, not all of them, but many of them will find that independence is being rewarded.”

## Man surrenders after shots fired during police welfare check

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Police in Rapid City say a man who fired gunshots while an officer was doing a welfare check at a residence has surrendered after a long standoff.

Authorities said in a tweet Tuesday afternoon that the suspect was safely taken into custody.

Assistant Police Chief Don Hedrick tells the Rapid City Journal two rounds were fired by the man after the officer made contact with him through an open window about 9:30 a.m. during the welfare check. Hendrick says the officer backed up, took cover and was not injured. Police say additional shots were fired about 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 a.m. More than a dozen police cars were on the scene as well as an armored vehicle.

## Hill leaders to attend White House briefing on border

By ZEKE MILLER and LISA MASCARO, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democratic and Republican congressional leaders are expected to attend a briefing on border security at the White House as the government remains partially shut down and President Donald Trump asks in a tweet, “Let’s make a deal?”

The partial government shutdown began on Dec. 22. Funding for Trump’s pet project, a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border, has been the sticking point in passing budgets for several government departments.

The briefing is scheduled for 3 p.m. EST Wednesday, the day before Democrats are to assume control of the House and end the Republican monopoly on government.

The exact agenda, however, was not immediately clear, according to a person with knowledge of the briefing who was not authorized to speak publicly about the issue and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and the top incoming House Republicans — Kevin McCarthy of California and Steve Scalise of Louisiana — planned to attend, according to aides. The departing House speaker, Paul Ryan, was not expected.

House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi, who is expected to become speaker on Thursday, and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer planned to attend. Pelosi said Tuesday that Democrats would take action to “end the Trump Shutdown” by passing legislation Thursday to reopen government.

“We are giving the Republicans the opportunity to take yes for an answer,” she wrote in a letter to colleagues. “Senate Republicans have already supported this legislation, and if they reject it now, they will be fully complicit in chaos and destruction of the President’s third shutdown of his term.”

The White House invitation came Tuesday after House Democrats released their plan to re-open the government without approving money for a border wall — unveiling two bills to fund shuttered government agencies and put hundreds of thousands of federal workers back on the job. They planned to pass them as soon as the new Congress convenes Thursday.

Responding to the Democratic plan, White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders late Tuesday night called it a “non-starter” and said it won’t re-open the government “because it fails to secure the border and puts the needs of other countries above the needs of our own citizens.”

Trump spent the weekend saying Democrats should return to Washington to negotiate, firing off Twitter taunts. After aides suggested there would not necessarily be a traditional wall as Trump had described since his presidential campaign, Trump stated that he really still wanted to build a border wall.

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On Tuesday morning, after tweeting a New Year's message to "EVERYONE INCLUDING THE HATERS AND THE FAKE NEWS MEDIA," Trump tweeted: "The Democrats, much as I suspected, have allocated no money for a new Wall. So imaginative! The problem is, without a Wall there can be no real Border Security."

But he seemed to shift tactics later in the day, appealing to Pelosi. "Border Security and the Wall 'thing' and Shutdown is not where Nancy Pelosi wanted to start her tenure as Speaker! Let's make a deal?" he tweeted.

Whether the Republican-led Senate would consider the Democratic bills — or if Trump would sign either into law — was unclear. McConnell spokesman Donald Stewart said Senate Republicans would not take action without Trump's backing.

"It's simple: The Senate is not going to send something to the president that he won't sign," Stewart said. Even if only symbolic, the passage of the bills in the House would put fresh pressure on the president. At the same time, administration officials said Trump was in no rush for a resolution to the impasse.

Trump believes he has public opinion on his side and, at very least, his base of supporters behind him, the officials said, speaking on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly.

The Democratic package to end the shutdown would include one bill to temporarily fund the Department of Homeland Security at current levels — with \$1.3 billion for border security, far less than the \$5 billion Trump has said he wants for the wall — through Feb. 8 as talks continued.

It would also include another measure to fund the departments of Agriculture, Interior, Housing and Urban Development and others closed by the partial shutdown. It would provide money through the remainder of the fiscal year, to Sept. 30.

Associated Press writer Kevin Freking contributed to this report.

## 6 killed, 16 injured in Danish bridge train accident

By JAN M. OLSEN, Associated Press

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP) — Six people were killed and 16 others injured early Wednesday when a Danish passenger train apparently hit falling cargo from a passing freight train as it crossed a bridge linking central Denmark's islands.

The rail operator, Danish Railways, earlier told Denmark's TV2 that the victims were passengers on a train going from the city of Odense, on the central Danish island of Fyn, to Copenhagen when the accident took place about 8 a.m. local time.

Police spokesman Lars Braemhoej said that while "we do not know precisely what caused the accident," one possible cause was that cargo from a passing freight train fell off and hit the passenger train. He added there was "considerable damage" on the passenger train.

Police declined to comment on a report from Denmark's TV2 channel that a container had likely fallen off the cargo train.

Danish media initially reported that a tarpaulin on a freight train hit the passenger train, which was going in the opposite direction, prompting it to brake violently.

"Ordinary Danes on their way to work or heading home from the Christmas holidays have had their lives smashed," said Prime Minister Lars Loekke Rasmussen.

Photos from the scene show the freight train was carrying crates of beer, and the tarpaulin that covered the train was torn in pieces.

Kasper Elbjoern, spokesman for Danish brewery group Carlsberg, confirmed that a freight train transporting its cargo was involved in the accident.

Police said those hurt sustained light to moderate injuries.

Jesper Nielsen, who was on the passenger train, told Denmark's TV2 the train "was out on the bridge when there was a huge 'bang' .... very quickly thereafter, the train braked."

The accident took place on a road-and-rail bridge, part of the Storebaelt system of bridges and a tunnel linking the Danish islands of Zealand and Funen.

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Flemming Jensen, the CEO of state-owned Danish Railways, said police and the Danish Accident Investigation Board are investigating the damages. He said the operator "will contribute everything that we can to the investigations."

In a statement, police urged passengers to contact next of kin to inform them of their safety and urged people not to share photos and videos of the accident.

The government agency responsible for Danish railways, said on Twitter no trains would cross the Storebaelt link Wednesday, adding it was aiming to allow crossings Thursday.

The transport system was closed to cars overnight because of strong winds but trains could pass. Road traffic resumed Wednesday with a 50 kph (31 mph) speed limit.

## Tops on House Democrats' to-do list: Try to end shutdown

By LISA MASCARO, AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Democrats are sweeping into power this week on a campaign promise of improving government for ordinary Americans. But first, they'll have to get government reopened from the partial shutdown.

As the Congress gavels in for the 116th session the early votes will be the usual ones — establishing the House rules and electing the House speaker, presumably California Democrat Nancy Pelosi. But the new majority will quickly pivot Thursday to a pair of bills to fund the parts of the government that have been shuttered in the dispute over money for President Donald Trump's border wall with Mexico.

It's a cold opening for the new majority, setting up an early confrontation with the Republican-led Senate and the White House and testing the House Democrats' ability to make good on their campaign pledge to focus on kitchen-table issues in the new era of divided government.

"Our first order of business will be to end the reckless Trump shutdown and reopen the government," Rep. Hakeem Jeffries of New York, the incoming caucus chairman, said in an interview. Then, he said, "we will turn our attention to bringing our democracy to life and returning our government to the people."

So far, House Democrats appear largely unified in their plan to vote to reopen government without the money Trump is demanding to build the border wall.

Jeffries said that while Trump wants to "waste millions in taxpayer dollars on a medieval border wall," Democrats are drawing "a line in the sand" against the spending they say won't make the border any safer.

"The partisanship, rancor and dysfunction of the Trump shutdown is exactly what voters rebuked in November," said Rep.-elect Joe Neguse of Colorado, a new leader of the freshmen class, in the Democrats' weekly address. "And that is why on Jan. 3rd, when the new Democratic House majority arrives, we will bring the hope, vision and goals of effective governance back to the forefront."

But with Trump dug in over the \$5 billion he wants to build the wall, the shutdown could drag on. Senate Republicans are reluctant to consider the House bills unless they know the president is on board.

The first signal Trump has given that he may be willing to talk about the wall impasse came Tuesday, when he tweeted, "Let's make a deal?" He's invited Democratic and Republican congressional leaders to a White House meeting Wednesday on border security.

Democrats are eager to move forward in the House on multiple fronts.

They're set to approve a rules package on Thursday that sets a new tone for governing. For example, it requires that legislation first be considered in committees before bills are brought to the floor for votes. It bans lawmakers from serving on corporate boards. And it recognizes the diversity of the new freshmen class by easing a century-old rule against wearing hats on the chamber floor to allow Rep.-elect Ilhan Omar, a Muslim-American from Minnesota, to wear a head scarf.

By early next week, House Democrats are expected to consider a resolution to defend the Affordable Care Act in legal proceedings after a Texas judge ruled it largely unconstitutional in a legal challenge brought by Republican attorneys general from several states.

H.R. 1, the first bill of the new House majority, is a good-government package that tackles campaign finance reforms and other issues. It will begin making its way through the newly bolstered committee



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process.

And they will continue their oversight of the Trump administration and Russian interference in the 2016 election.

Incoming Rules Committee Chairman Rep. Jim McGovern, D-Mass., insists the new majority can “walk and chew gum” at the same time.

Still, corralling a large House majority has never been easy, and Democrats are ushering in the largest class since the Watergate era. Republicans under retiring Speaker Paul Ryan all but gave up trying to the muscle the conservative House Freedom Caucus in line. It was the Freedom Caucus leaders who urged Trump to fight for the border wall money and reject legislation that would have prevented the shutdown days before Christmas.

Pelosi is expected to regain the gavel Thursday, securing the votes to become speaker even after some new and returning lawmakers signaled they wanted new leadership. She would be the first woman to hold, then return, to the office.

But divisions remain, rearing up even before the newly elected members are sworn into office, as many are eager for change and ready to confront Trump.

Rep.-elect Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York has been critical of the leader’s plans to create a Select Committee on the Climate Crisis. She prefers a panel that focuses on renewable energy investments and whose members refuse campaign donations from oil and other fossil fuel industries.

“Our ultimate end goal isn’t a Select Committee,” Ocasio-Cortez tweeted as the panel was being formed. “Our goal is to treat Climate Change like the serious, existential threat it is by drafting an ambitious solution on the scale necessary - aka a Green New Deal - to get it done. A weak committee misses the point & endangers people.”

Trump and Republicans have been eager to widen those divisions, especially as the shutdown stretches into its second week.

Republican Rep. Kevin McCarthy of California, the incoming minority leader, panned the Democratic effort to reopen government without wall money.

Democrats vow to stay united as they work to reopen government, and press on with the priorities.

“As my mother used to say, ‘This too shall pass,’” Jeffries said. “We will get past this shutdown and there will be ample opportunity for us to communicate with the American people and get things done on their behalf.”

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## AP Exclusive: India’s hidden years of nuns abused by priests

By **TIM SULLIVAN**, Associated Press

KURAVILANGAD, India (AP) — The stories spill out in the sitting rooms of Catholic convents, where portraits of Jesus keep watch and fans spin quietly overhead. They spill out in church meeting halls bathed in fluorescent lights, and over cups of cheap instant coffee in convent kitchens. Always, the stories come haltingly, quietly. Sometimes, the nuns speak at little more than a whisper.

Across India, the nuns talk of priests who pushed into their bedrooms and of priests who pressured them to turn close friendships into sex. They talk about being groped and kissed, of hands pressed against them by men they were raised to believe were representatives of Jesus Christ.

“He was drunk,” said one nun, beginning her story. “You don’t know how to say no,” said another.

At its most grim, the nuns speak of repeated rapes, and of a Catholic hierarchy that did little to protect them.

The Vatican has long been aware of nuns sexually abused by priests and bishops in Asia, Europe, South America and Africa, but it has done very little to stop it, The Associated Press reported last year.

Now, the AP has investigated the situation in a single country — India — and uncovered a decades-long history of nuns enduring sexual abuse from within the church. Nuns described in detail the sexual pres-

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sure they endured from priests, and nearly two dozen other people — nuns, former nuns and priests, and others — said they had direct knowledge of such incidents.

Still, the scale of the problem in India remains unclear, cloaked by a powerful culture of silence. Many nuns believe abuse is commonplace, insisting most sisters can at least tell of fending off a priest's sexual advances. Some believe it is rare. Almost none, though, talk about it readily, and most speak only on the condition they not be identified.

But this summer, one Indian nun forced the issue into the open.

When repeated complaints to church officials brought no response, the 44-year-old nun filed a police complaint against the bishop who oversees her religious order, accusing him of raping her 13 times over two years. Soon after, a group of her fellow nuns launched a two-week public protest in India's Catholic heartland, demanding the bishop's arrest.

It was an unprecedented action, dividing India's Catholic community. Inside the accuser's convent in rural Kerala state, she and the nuns who support her are now pariahs, isolated from the other sisters, many of whom insist the bishop is innocent. The protesting nuns get hate mail and avoid going out.

"Some people are accusing us of working against the church, of being against the church. They say, 'You are worshipping Satan,'" said one supporter, Sister Josephine Villoonnickal. "But we need to stand up for the truth."

Villoonnickal has been a nun for 23 years, joining when she was a teenager. She scoffs at the idea that she wants to harm the church.

"We want to die as sisters," she said.

Some nuns' accounts date back decades — like that of the sister, barely out of her teens, who was teaching in a Catholic school in the early 1990s.

It was exhausting work, and she was looking forward to the chance to reflect on what had led her — happily — to convent life.

"We have kind of a retreat before we renew our vows," she said, sitting in the painfully neat sitting room of her big-city convent, where doilies cover most every surface, chairs are lined up in rows and the blare of horns drifts in through open windows. "We take one week off and we go for prayers and silence."

She had traveled to a New Delhi retreat center, a collection of concrete buildings where she gathered with other young nuns. A priest was there to lead the sisters in reflection.

The nun, who like others interviewed for this story spoke on condition she not be identified, is a strong and forceful woman who has spent years working with India's poor and dispossessed, from battered wives to evicted families.

But when she talks about the retreat her voice grows quiet, as if she's afraid to be overheard in the empty room: "I felt this person, maybe he had some thoughts, some attraction."

He was in his 60s. She was four decades younger.

One night, the priest went to a neighborhood party. He came back late, after 9:30 p.m., and knocked at her room.

"I need to meet you," he said when she cracked open the door, insisting he wanted to discuss her spiritual life. She could smell the alcohol.

"You're not stable. I'm not ready to meet you," she told him.

But the priest forced open the door. He tried to kiss her. He grabbed at her body, groping wherever he could.

Weeping, she pushed him back enough to slam the door and lock it.

It wasn't rape. She knows it could have been so much worse. But decades later she still reels at the memory, and this tough woman, for a few moments, looks like a scared young girl: "It was such a terrifying experience."

Afterward she quietly told her mother superior, who allowed her to avoid other meetings with the priest. She also wrote an anonymous letter to church officials, which she thinks may have led to the priest being

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re-assigned.

But nothing was said aloud. There were no public reprimands, no warnings to the many nuns the priest would work with through his long career.

She was too afraid to challenge him openly.

"I couldn't imagine taking that stand. It was too scary," she said. "For me it was risking my own vocation."

So the fierce nun remained silent.

Catholic history is filled with women who became martyrs to their own purity: Saint Agatha had her breasts torn off for refusing to marry; Saint Lucy was burned alive and stabbed in the throat for defending her virginity; Saint Maria Goretti was 11 years old when she was killed by a man who tried to rape her.

"It is a sin!" Maria is said to have cried out. "God does not want it!"

But for a nun, fighting off a priest's advances means pinballing through centuries-old sexual and clerical traditions. Celibacy is a cornerstone of Catholic religious life, as is sexual purity among nuns. Many nuns say a sister who admits to a sexual experience — even if it's forced — faces the risk of isolation within her order, and possibly even expulsion.

"You're not sure if you'll be kept in your congregation, because so much is about your vow of chastity," said Sister Shalini Mulackal, a New Delhi-based theologian. "That fear is there for the young ones to disclose what has happened to them."

At the same time, priests are seen as living representatives of Christ, with obedience to them another Catholic cornerstone.

Then there is the isolation of young women struggling to find their way in new communities after leaving their homes.

Caught at this intersection of sexual taboo, Catholic hierarchy and loneliness, sisters can be left at the mercy of predatory priests.

"There's a lot of emotion bottled up and when a little tenderness is shown by somebody it can be so easy for you to cross boundaries," said Sister Dorothy Fernandes, who has spent years working with the urban poor in eastern India. "It can be hard to tell what is love and what is exploitation."

It's particularly hard for sisters from Kerala, a deeply conservative region long the birthplace of most Indian nuns. Sex is rarely mentioned openly in small-town Kerala, boys and girls are largely kept apart, and a visible bra strap can be a minor crisis for a young woman.

"Once you grow up, once you get your first menstruation, you are not encouraged to speak normally to a boy. And the boys also vice-versa," said a nun from Kerala, a cheerful woman with sparkly glass earrings and an easy smile. She remembers the misery of Sunday mass as an adolescent, when boys would stand outside the church to watch girls filing in, eyes crawling over their young figures. "We have a terrible taboo about sex."

That naivety, she said, can be costly.

Like the time she was a novice nun, still in her teens, and an older priest came to the Catholic center where she worked. He was from Goa, a coastal region and former Portuguese colony.

She shook her head: "I was in charge of visitors, and we had this bad habit of being hospitable."

At one point, she brought the priest's laundry to his small room, where he was sitting. As she set down the clothes, he grabbed her and began to kiss her.

At first, she had no idea what was happening.

"The kissing was all coming here," she said, gesturing at her chest.

The confusion of that day is still clear on her face: "I was young. He was from Goa. I am from Kerala. In my mind I was trying to figure out: 'Is this the way that Goans kiss?'"

She quickly understood what was happening but couldn't escape his fierce grip. She also could not call out for help: "I cannot shout! He's a priest."

"I didn't want to offend him. I didn't want to make him feel bad," she said.

So she pushed herself away from him until she could slip out the door.

She quietly told a senior nun to not send novices to the priest's room. But, like the nun who fought the

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drunken priest, she made no official complaint.

A complaint against a priest means leveling an accusation against someone higher in the church hierarchy. It can mean getting pulled into a tangle of malicious rumors and church politics. It means risking your reputation, and the reputation of your order.

In the church, even some of those who doubt there is widespread abuse of nuns say the silence can be enveloping.

Archbishop Kuriakose Bharanikulangara, a New Delhi-based church leader, calls incidents of abuse "kind of sporadic. Once here, once there."

But "many people don't want to talk," he continued. "They may talk in the community, but they don't want to bring it to the public, to the court."

Speaking up can also risk financial troubles, since many congregations of nuns are financially subservient to priests and bishops.

The silence is magnified in India by demographics, religious politics and a deep-seated belief that women have little value.

There are roughly 18 million Catholics in India, but that's a small minority in this largely Hindu nation of 1.3 billion. Speaking up could tarnish the image of their church, many nuns worry, and feed criticism by Hindu hardliners.

"Even we, as religious sisters, even we try to keep it quiet," said Mulackal, the theologian. "A woman who goes through this experience, she just wants to hide it and pretend everything is OK."

The rapes, the nun says, happened in Room 20 of a small convent at the end of a one-lane road in rural Kerala.

Set amid rows of banana and rubber trees near the little town of Kuravilangad, the sisters at the St. Francis Mission Home spend their days in prayer or caring for the aged. In the garden, a statue of the Virgin Mary overlooks a decorative fish pond the size of a child's wading pool. The pond is covered in green scum.

The rapist, she says, was the most powerful man in this tiny small world: Bishop Franco Mulakkal.

Smart and ambitious, Mulakkal had risen from small-town Kerala to become a bishop in north India, overseeing a sprawling Catholic community. He was also the official patron of her community of 81 sisters, the Missionaries of Jesus, wielding immense influence over its budgets and job assignments.

The nun is a friendly woman with jet black hair known for her quiet confidence. Every few months, she says, Mulakkal would visit the St. Francis convent and summon her. Then, according to a letter she wrote to church officials, he raped her.

The letter says the first rape happened on May 5, 2014. The last time was Sept. 23, 2016. The dates are recorded in the convent's visitor logs.

Mulakkal angrily denies the accusations, telling reporters the charges were "baseless and concocted" and accusing the sister of trying to blackmail him into giving her a better job.

"I am going through painful agony," said Mulakkal, who was jailed for three weeks and released on bail in October. "I tell everyone to pray to God: Let the truth prevail."

Catholicism envelopes this part of Kerala. Towns are marked by their cathedrals, convents and roadside shrines, where the Virgin watches passing traffic or St. George slays the dragon. Businesses proclaim their owners' faith: St. Mary's Furniture and Bed Center; Ave Maria Electronics; Jesus Oil Industries.

Around here, many see Mulakkal as a martyr.

A string of supporters visited him in jail, and crowds greeted him when he returned home, a ring of policemen holding back people who showered him with flower petals. "Hearty Welcome!" a banner proclaimed.

But at the St. Francis convent, one group of nuns watched news reports about that welcome with dismay. While the sister leveling the accusations against Mulakkal does not speak publicly, a half-dozen nuns cluster around her, offering support and speaking on her behalf.

"Nobody came to see sister, but so many people came to wait in line to meet Bishop Franco in jail," said Villoonickal, the nun, who moved back to Kerala to support the woman she calls "our survivor sister."



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That sister was the second of five children in a Kerala family. Her father was in the army. Her mother died when she was in high school. Wracked with grief, she was sent to stay with a cousin - a priest - living in north India. Inspired by her time with him, she became a nun in 1994, working in her early years as a teacher.

She knew Mulakkal, of course. Everyone in the Missionaries of Jesus knows him. But the two were never close, the accuser's friends say, and had no consensual sexual relationship.

It was about fear.

"The bishop is such a powerful person and standing against him, where will she go?" asked Villoonickal. "If she went home what will happen to her?"

"Many times she was telling him to stop. But each time he was forcing himself on her," she continued.

Eventually, they say, she told some sisters what was happening. Then she says she repeatedly complained to church authorities. When nothing happened, she went to the police.

She also went to confession.

There, according to the other nuns, she was told she had to resist the bishop.

"Even if you have to die, don't submit yourself." the priest told her in confession, according to Villoonickal. "Be courageous."

Catholic authorities have said little about the case, with India's Catholic Bishops' Conference saying in an October statement that it has no jurisdiction over individual bishops, and that the investigation and court case, which could take many years, must run their course.

"Silence should in no way be construed as siding with either of the two parties," the group said. "We request prayers for the Church at this difficult time."

In Malayalam, the language of Kerala, sisters who leave the convent are sometimes marked as "Madhilu Chadi" — Wall Jumpers. It's a mocking term for the sexually frustrated and is often used for nuns and priests who have fled religious life.

Those who stay get respect. They have communities that embrace them. Their lives have direction, purpose. Those who leave often find themselves adrift in India, searching for new identities and spurned by families and friends. The events that knit families together — weddings, funerals, reunions — are suddenly off-limits. The emotional toll can be immense.

Speaking up about the church's troubles, many nuns say, could end with them forced from their convents, cut off in many ways from what they've always known.

"It's a fear of being isolated if I speak the truth," said the nun who fought off the drunken priest. "If you do that, you have to go against your own community, your own religious superiors."

The result is an engulfing silence. Silence is the armor that sisters use to protect themselves and the lives they have created, even if it also means struggling with their memories, and protecting the men who abused them.

In the end, most say nothing.

"I didn't tell anybody," said the nun who escaped the priest kissing her chest, and who waited many years to talk about what had happened to her. "So you understand how these things are covered up."

## Romney criticizes Trump's 'character' in scathing op-ed

WASHINGTON (AP) — Days away from joining the Senate's Republican majority, Sen.-elect Mitt Romney broadly criticized President Donald Trump's policies and character and argued that the president "has not risen to the mantle of the office."

"With the nation so divided, resentful and angry, presidential leadership in qualities of character is indispensable," the Utah Republican and 2012 presidential nominee wrote in a Washington Post op-ed posted online Tuesday night. "And it is in this province where the incumbent's shortfall has been most glaring."

Romney's biting public assessment came as Trump and Senate Republicans faced a new governing dynamic. Republicans on Thursday will cede control of the House to Democrats, who were prepared to

oppose Trump on a number of policies and promised a slew of investigations into his actions and those of his aides and campaign officials, particularly with regard to Russia's election meddling.

Romney, a former Massachusetts governor, had criticized Trump before — notably, in a March 2016 speech he called Trump a “fraud” and opposed his bid for the GOP nomination — but later he made peace with the president-elect and even expressed interest in joining his administration.

Romney's rebuke of Trump drew a cutting reply from Brad Parscale, Trump's campaign manager. In a tweet Tuesday night, Parscale said Romney “lacked the ability to save this nation” and contended that Trump “has saved it.”

“Jealously is a drink best served warm and Romney just proved it,” Parscale wrote. “So sad, I wish everyone had the courage” Trump? had.?

In the column, Romney offered approval of Trump's corporate tax policies and efforts to cut regulations, appoint conservative judges and other “policies mainstream Republicans have promoted for years. But policies and appointments are only a part of a presidency.”

“To a great degree, a presidency shapes the public character of the nation,” Romney said. He later added: “With the nation so divided, resentful and angry, presidential leadership in qualities of character is indispensable. And it is in this province where the incumbent's shortfall has been most glaring.”

While saying Trump's early administration appointments had been encouraging, Romney added that, “on balance, his conduct over the past two years, particularly his actions this month, is evidence that the president has not risen to the mantle of the office.”

In describing a “deep descent” by the Trump presidency in December, Romney cited the departures of Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and White House chief of staff John Kelly and what he called the appointment of people of lesser experience, the abandonment of allies, and Trump's “thoughtless claim that America has long been a ‘sucker’ in world affairs.”

Looking ahead, Romney wrote that he would act as he would with any president from either party in the White House, supporting policies he believes are in the best interest of the country and his state and opposing those that are not. And he said he didn't intend to comment on every tweet or fault.

“But I will speak out against significant statements or actions that are divisive, racist, sexist, anti-immigrant, dishonest or destructive to democratic institutions,” he said.

Romney will be sworn in as a senator on Thursday.

## Israeli settlement activity appears to surge in Trump era

By JOSEF FEDERMAN, Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — With little resistance from a friendly White House, Israel has launched a new settlement push in the West Bank since President Donald Trump took office, laying the groundwork for what could be the largest construction binge in years, according to data obtained by The Associated Press.

The figures, gathered from official government sources by the anti-settlement monitoring group Peace Now, show an increase in building in 2018 and a sharp spike in planning for future construction.

This trend, highlighted last week when an Israeli committee advanced plans for thousands more settlement homes on war-won lands, has only deepened Palestinian mistrust of the Trump administration as it says it is preparing to roll out a Mideast peace plan. Each new settlement expansion further diminishes the chances of setting up a Palestinian state alongside Israel.

Both supporters and opponents of settlements confirm a change in atmosphere since early 2017, when Trump took over from Barack Obama, whose administration had tried to rein in construction.

“The feeling of the (Israeli) government is everything is allowed, that the time to do things is now because the (U.S.) administration is the most pro-settlement you can ever have,” said Hagit Ofran of Peace Now's Settlement Watch program.

Peace Now uses several measurements of settlement activity. These include “plans,” or the bureaucratic stages of preparing a project, including initial proposals; “tenders,” when bids are solicited from contractors to do large projects; and “construction starts,” when the building actually begins.

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Each of these figures tells a different story. While construction starts give a snapshot of the current level of settlement activity, they reflect decisions made years ago. In contrast, the planning and tender stages are seen as forward-looking indicators of a government's intentions.

The data compiled by Peace Now showed a drop in construction starts during Trump's first year in office, to 1,643 units in 2017 from 3,066 units the previous year. This drop appears to reflect the lingering effect of reduced planning during the final two years of the Obama administration.

But the data for the first nine months of 2018 indicate the beginning of a Trump effect, with construction starts 20 percent higher than the same period a year earlier.

These trends are even more evident when looking at the planning process. In 2017, plans were advanced to build 6,712 new settlement homes, roughly 2.5 times the 2016 level.

In 2018, plans for an additional 5,618 units were advanced, nearly half of which were processed last week alone. Together, these numbers are the highest level of planning seen since 2013. At that time, Israel pushed forward settlement construction to counter criticism of its release of Palestinian prisoners as part of then-Secretary of State John Kerry's peace efforts.

The biggest surge in settlement activity during the Trump era is in tenders— large projects that are ready to be launched.

In 2017, 3,154 tenders were issued, up from just 42 during Obama's final year in office. In 2018, that number rose to over 3,800, the highest number by far since Peace Now started compiling the data in 2002. This sets the stage for a huge jump in construction in the near future.

"There's definitely a change of atmosphere. There's definitely a change of winds," said Oded Revivi, mayor of Efrat, a major settlement near Jerusalem, and the chief foreign envoy of the Yesha settlement council.

Revivi said that Obama pressured Israel into greatly curtailing settlement activity. Now, he said, Israel is trying to make up for lost time.

"Basically what you're seeing now is the statistics are trying to catch up to the needs that were built up during the eight years of the Obama administration, when everything was in a standstill," Revivi said.

White House Mideast envoy Jason Greenblatt's office declined comment, and State Department officials were not immediately available for comment due to the government shutdown.

The Palestinians and most of the international community consider Israeli settlements to be illegal and obstacles to peace. Over 400,000 Israelis now live in the West Bank, in addition to 200,000 in east Jerusalem. The Palestinians seek both areas, captured by Israel in 1967, as parts of their state.

For decades, a string of U.S. presidents, both Republican and Democrat, condemned settlement construction.

Things quickly changed when Trump took office. Trump refused to condemn settlement construction and surrounded himself with advisers — including his son-in-law Jared Kushner and Ambassador to Israel David Friedman — who are Orthodox Jews with close ties to settlements. Trump at times has asked Israel to show restraint, but his administration has remained largely silent as Israel has pressed ahead with its construction efforts over the past two years.

This has been welcome news to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, whose outgoing coalition is dominated by religious and nationalist settlement sympathizers. Favored to win re-election in April, Netanyahu has said he expects his next government to look very similar.

Israel never annexed the West Bank, meaning the Israeli military remains the sovereign there. Construction in the West Bank requires approval from COGAT, a Defense Ministry body that oversees civilian affairs in the territory.

Plans are submitted by the government to COGAT's Higher Planning Council, which decides if they meet legal criteria.

COGAT routinely portrays decisions on new settlement activity as a technical matter, playing down the political impact. In a statement, COGAT said it acts in accordance with planning and building laws in the West Bank.

Critics say COGAT routinely promotes settlement expansion and development at the expense of Pales-

inian communities in the 60 percent of the West Bank that is under full Israeli control. Palestinians have varying degrees of autonomy, including over building permits, in the remaining areas of the West Bank, where most Palestinians live.

The offices of Avigdor Lieberman, who served as defense minister in 2017 and 2018, and his deputy, Eli Ben-Dahan, did not respond to requests for comment. Both are strong supporters of the settlements and settlers themselves.

The settlement surge has added to the Palestinians' distrust of the White House. The Palestinians cut off ties with the administration over a year ago after Trump recognized contested Jerusalem as Israel's capital. President Mahmoud Abbas has said he will reject any peace plan the Trump team presents.

Abbas' spokesman, Nabil Abu Rdeneh, said U.S. "silence and lack of condemnation and pressure" have given a "green light" to the Israeli government to step up settlement activity.

## US fires tear gas across Mexico border to stop migrants

TIJUANA, Mexico (AP) — U.S. authorities fired tear gas into Mexico during the first hours of the new year to repel about 150 migrants who tried to breach the border fence in Tijuana.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection said in a statement later Tuesday that the gas was used to target rock throwers apart from the migrants who were trying to cross.

"No agents witnessed any of the migrants at the fence line, including children, experiencing effects of the chemical agents, which were targeted at the rock throwers further away," the statement said.

An Associated Press photographer saw at least three volleys of gas launched onto the Mexican side of the border near Tijuana's beach that affected the migrants, including women and children, as well as journalists. The AP saw rocks thrown only after U.S. agents fired the tear gas.

The agency said agents saw "toddler sized children" being passed over concertina wire with difficulty. It said its agents could not assist the children because of the rocks being thrown. Agents responded with smoke, pepper spray and tear gas, it said. The AP journalist also saw plastic pellets fired by U.S. agents.

The agency said 25 migrants were detained while others crawled back into Mexico through a hole under the fence.

Customs and Border Protection said that under its use of force policy the incident would be reviewed by its Office of Professional Responsibility.

Migrants who spoke with AP said they arrived in Tijuana last month with the caravan from Honduras.

The caravan, which left Honduras in mid-October, grew to more than 6,000 members during its month-and-a-half trek north. It has been a constant target of President Donald Trump, who referred to it frequently in the run-up to U.S. mid-term elections in November.

Many of the migrants are waiting in Tijuana for a chance to apply for asylum in the U.S., but there was a backlog before the caravan's arrival and the wait is expected to be many months. Others have found jobs in Mexico and tried to settle there.

In a previous incident, U.S. agents launched tear gas across the border after some migrants tried to breach the border following a peaceful march in Tijuana on Nov. 26. Hundreds of migrants who were downwind of the gas were affected.

Trump is currently locked in a fight with congressional Democrats over funding for the border wall that he wants to build. The stalemate has led to a partial government shutdown.

## California inmate takes unlikely path to freedom: Podcasting

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

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — In California, inmates typically are granted parole by doing good deeds or showing they have been rehabilitated by becoming pastors, drug counselors or youth advocates. For Walter "Earlone" Woods, the path to freedom was podcasting.

Woods, 47, was recently released from San Quentin State Prison after California Gov. Jerry Brown com-



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mutated his 31-years-to-life sentence for attempted armed robbery. Brown cited Woods' leadership in helping other inmates and his work at "Ear Hustle," a podcast he co-hosts and co-produces that documents everyday life inside the prison.

Woods has since been hired as a full-time producer for the often funny and at times heart-wrenching podcast, which has been a smashing success since its launch in 2017. The show's roughly 30 episodes have been downloaded 20 million times by fans all over the world.

Listeners have praised "Ear Hustle" online as "eye-opening" and "incredibly humanizing." But for Woods, one of the most meaningful reviews came from the governor's office when they called with the good news.

"The one thing that the lady said, you know, she told me, 'We love the podcast in this office,'" Woods told The Associated Press of the commutation call from Brown's office. "I don't know if the governor listens, but people in his office listen. People really like what we do."

During their podcast, Woods and fellow creator and outside co-host, prison volunteer Nigel Poor, give listeners a peek into the hardships and small joys of men incarcerated at the medium-security facility.

In interviews with the hosts, inmates discuss struggles such as finding a compatible cellmate to share a 5- by 10-foot (1.5- by 3-meter) cell, share why they take care of frogs or black widow spiders as if they were pets, or describe the impact of solitary confinement or being on death row.

Woods, an affable man with a quick smile and a sharp sense of humor, helps listeners understand prison life, while Poor brings an outsider's perspective, asking insightful questions that at times push inmates to reflect on what put them behind bars.

The podcast offers listeners an intimate look into lives society doesn't spend much time thinking about, said Woods, who spent 21 years behind bars.

"People get to see the car chases. They get to see the trial. But they don't know what happens after you get to prison," Woods said. "We've been able to really humanize people, and people realize that those in prison are just people who made dumb decisions."

Brown agreed, and in his commutation letter, issued the day before Thanksgiving, the governor said Woods "has clearly shown that he is no longer the man he was when he committed this crime."

"He has set a positive example for his peers and, through his podcast, has shared meaningful stories from those inside prison," Brown wrote.

The podcast project started after Poor, a San Francisco Bay Area artist who has volunteered at San Quentin since 2011, approached Woods.

In 2016, Poor saw Public Radio Exchange's Radiotopia network was sponsoring a podcast talent contest, and she asked Lt. Sam Robinson, San Quentin's spokesman, for permission to enter. Another co-creator, Antwan Williams, who is serving 15 years for armed robbery, came on board to do its sound design.

Their pitch beat more than 1,500 contestants from 53 countries, and they received the backing of a group of radio professionals, Poor said.

"Everyone was shocked when we won, especially the prison. Lt. Robinson told me he let us enter because he never thought we would win," she said, laughing.

"Ear Hustle," — eavesdropping, in prison slang — has found international success, with fans sending cards and letters from as far as New Zealand, Qatar in the Middle East, and Mauritius in East Africa. The free show also can be accessed in prisons throughout California and the United Kingdom. New episodes are posted every couple of weeks.

Julie Shapiro, Radiotopia executive producer, describes the podcast as a "roller coaster of emotions" that challenges what people understand about life in prison.

"People don't expect to have something in common with those telling their stories from prison, but the details of their lives resonate with listeners because they hear these men encounter daily life in some of the same ways that we do," Shapiro said.

The outpouring of love and appreciation for the show has grown since Woods announced on a Nov. 24 episode that Brown commuted his sentence.

The first thing Woods did after walking through the prison gates on Nov. 30 was take in the view of the San Francisco Bay and of the ocean "as far as the eye can see." An episode featured his first moments

as a free man.

Since then, he's been noticing new styles, like women everywhere in yoga pants, and people walking through the streets with their heads bowed. He quickly realized they were looking at their smartphones, which didn't exist when he started his sentence in 1997.

Woods has also spent time people-watching at a high-end department store, visited Disneyland and recently made eggs for the first time in two decades.

The fourth season of "Ear Hustle," which will be released this summer, will feature stories of his re-entry to society and interviews with other inmates released after long sentences. He and Poor also plan to visit maximum-security prisons and tell the stories of prisoners there.

"There's a lot of people that's in there that should be out," Woods said. "I created a podcast, but I'm not the exception."

## US Catholic bishops to pray over clergy sexual abuse scandal

By JEFF KAROUB, Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — U.S.-based Roman Catholic bishops will gather Wednesday for a weeklong retreat near Chicago on the church sexual abuse scandal that organizers say will focus on prayer and spiritual reflection and not formulating policy.

The retreat begins a day after The Associated Press reported that the Vatican blocked U.S. bishops from taking measures last year to address the scandal because U.S. church leaders didn't discuss the legally problematic proposals with the Holy See enough beforehand.

The rebuke from Rome was contained in a letter from a Vatican official before the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops met in November. The move stunned abuse survivors and some other Catholics demanding actions.

The retreat also is a prelude to a summit of the world's bishops at the Vatican next month to forge a comprehensive response to the crisis that has lashed the church.

The meetings follow two blistering reports during 2018 from state attorneys general — in Illinois and Pennsylvania — alleging negligence by state church leaders.

Here's a look at the retreat.

### WHAT'S ON THE AGENDA?

This is about prayer, not policy-making, organizers say.

According to the Archdiocese of Chicago spokeswoman Anne Maselli, bishops gathering at the Mundelein Seminary will be praying, fasting and participating in spiritual lectures. And they will be alone: No staff members, other priests or members of the public or media are invited. Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said in a news release that they are convening "to pray on the intense matters before us."

The Catholic seminary at the University of St. Mary of the Lake in Mundelein, 40 miles (64 kilometers) north of Chicago, is the largest of its kind in the U.S. and home to roughly 200 seminarians from about 40 dioceses across the country and globe. According to its website, the lakefront campus blends "Colonial Revival and the architecture of Renaissance Rome, joining the Roman traditions of Catholicism with American cultural traditions."

### WHO ARE THE MAIN PLAYERS?

Pope Francis has dispatched Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa, the official papal preacher, to lead the retreat. And it's no accident that it's being held in Chicago, long considered a center of American Catholicism. The hosting Chicago archbishop, Cardinal Blase Cupich, was Francis' first major U.S. appointment and was picked by the pope to help organize the Vatican summit.

Cupich, who is considered a moderate, was the lead signatory on a recent letter to bishops around the world warning that a failure to deal with abuse now will jeopardize the church's mission globally. It also urged summit attendees to meet with clergy sexual abuse victims "to learn firsthand the suffering they

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have endured." Cupich issued a statement expressing regret for "our failures to address the scourge of clerical sexual abuse," after Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan's report in December alleging that the church had failed to disclose the names of at least 500 clergy members in the state accused of sexually abusing children.

A Pennsylvania grand jury report early last year alleged that hundreds of priests abused at least 1,000 children over seven decades in that state.

## WHAT CAN IT REALLY ACCOMPLISH?

Potentially a good deal, according to Notre Dame researcher and teacher Timothy O'Malley. He says one of Francis' biggest concerns has been that the bishops experience a spiritual renewal — and "a spirit of penance" — along with regulations governing their behavior.

"When the bishops meet in public to discuss these procedures, there is a danger that it's less an act of contrition and more an occasion for scoring political points," he said. "Part of the corruption is based in a certain clerical culture where bishops pursued self-interest, whether their own or their diocese's, at the expense of listening to lay victims. This retreat ... is a first step toward a renewal of the (church leadership) as a whole in the United States."

O'Malley added that it only works if they recognize that their office isn't about accruing power but becoming "a shepherd," or "someone who is willing to engage in self-sacrifice for the sake of the Church."

## HOW DO ABUSE VICTIMS FEEL ABOUT IT?

Many are dismayed that it has taken so long for the church leadership to meet and act after so many years. Two advocacy groups, the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP) and Ending Clergy Abuse, plan to hold a public demonstration Wednesday in Chicago.

SNAP says in a statement that it wants Cardinal Cupich removed from his prominent role in planning the papal summit, and that Cardinal DiNardo should not lead the U.S. delegation to the Rome summit.

Zach Hiner, SNAP's executive director, said he's glad leaders are gathering "to find ways to address this crisis, but a week spent in silent prayer is not the response the public is looking for."

"If church officials truly want to do what is best, then they should be spending this week discussing how they can best comply with independent investigations by law enforcement, or how they can compel law enforcement officials in their state to act if no such investigation has begun yet," Hiner said. "At this point, regardless of what bishops decide to do in the first week of January, we are placing our hopes for reform in the hands of secular, not church officials."

Jeff Karoub is a member of AP's Race and Ethnicity Team and frequently writes about religion. Follow him on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/jeffkaroub>.

## Congress leaders invited to White House for border briefing

By ZEKE MILLER and LISA MASCARO, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Tuesday invited congressional leaders to a White House briefing on border security as the partial government shutdown dragged on over funding for a border wall, with Trump tweeting, "Let's make a deal?"

The briefing will happen at 3 p.m. EST Wednesday, the day before the Democrats take control of the House, but the exact agenda wasn't immediately clear, according to a person with knowledge of the briefing who was not authorized to speak publicly about the issue and spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

The White House said the briefing would be provided by senior Department of Homeland Security officials. Republican leaders will be attending. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, as well as the top incoming House Republicans, Kevin McCarthy of California and Steve Scalise of Louisiana, are planning to be at the briefing, according to aides. Retiring Speaker Paul Ryan will not.

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Nancy Pelosi, who is expected to take over as House speaker, and top Senate Democrat Chuck Schumer will also be in attendance.

Pelosi said Democrats would take action to "end the Trump Shutdown" by passing legislation Thursday to reopen government.

"We are giving the Republicans the opportunity to take yes for an answer," Pelosi wrote in a letter to colleagues late Tuesday. "Senate Republicans have already supported this legislation, and if they reject it now, they will be fully complicit in chaos and destruction of the President's third shutdown of his term."

The White House invitation comes after House Democrats released their plan to re-open the government without approving money for a border wall — unveiling two bills to fund shuttered government agencies and put hundreds of thousands of federal workers back on the job. They planned to pass them as soon as the new Congress convenes Thursday.

Trump spent the weekend saying Democrats should return to Washington to negotiate, firing off Twitter taunts. He then revised his aides' comments to state that he really still wants to build a border wall.

On Tuesday morning, after tweeting a New Year's message to "EVERYONE INCLUDING THE HATERS AND THE FAKE NEWS MEDIA," Trump tweeted: "The Democrats, much as I suspected, have allocated no money for a new Wall. So imaginative! The problem is, without a Wall there can be no real Border Security."

But he seemed to shift tactics later in the day, appealing to Pelosi. "Border Security and the Wall 'thing' and Shutdown is not where Nancy Pelosi wanted to start her tenure as Speaker! Let's make a deal?" he tweeted.

Whether the Republican-led Senate, under McConnell, would consider the Democratic bills — or if Trump would sign either into law — was unclear. McConnell spokesman Donald Stewart said Senate Republicans would not take action without Trump's backing.

"It's simple: The Senate is not going to send something to the president that he won't sign," Stewart said.

Even if only symbolic, the passage of the bills in the House would put fresh pressure on the president. At the same time, administration officials said Trump was in no rush for a resolution to the impasse.

Trump believes he has public opinion on his side and, at very least, his base of supporters behind him, the officials said, speaking on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly.

White House officials, including the departing chief of staff, had indicated that Trump's signature campaign pledge to build the wall would not be fulfilled as advertised. Chief of staff John Kelly told the Los Angeles Times in an interview published Sunday that Trump abandoned the notion of "a solid concrete wall early on in the administration."

The Democratic package to end the shutdown would include one bill to temporarily fund the Department of Homeland Security at current levels — with \$1.3 billion for border security, far less than the \$5 billion Trump has said he wants for the wall — through Feb. 8 as talks continued.

It would also include another measure to fund the departments of Agriculture, Interior, Housing and Urban Development and others closed by the partial shutdown. It would provide money through the remainder of the fiscal year, to Sept. 30.

Democrats under Pelosi were all but certain to swiftly approve the package in two separate votes Thursday. They would take place after the election of a new House speaker, a contest Pelosi was expected to win as leader of the new House majority.

Responding to the Democratic plan, White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders late Tuesday night called it a "non-starter" and said it won't re-open the government "because it fails to secure the border and puts the needs of other countries above the needs of our own citizens."

Republican senators left for the holidays refusing to vote on any bills until all sides, including Trump, were in agreement. The lawmakers were frustrated that Trump had dismissed their earlier legislation.

The president has not said he would veto the Democratic legislation, if the bills were to land on his desk. But a prolonged crisis could hobble House Democrats' ability to proceed with their agenda, which includes investigations of the president and oversight of his administration, including Russian interference in the 2016 election.

At least one Republican, South Carolina Sen. Lindsey Graham, encouraged Trump to use the budget



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impasse as an opportunity to address issues beyond the border wall. But a previous attempt to reach a compromise that addressed the status of “Dreamers” — young immigrants brought to the U.S. as children — broke down last year as a result of escalating White House demands. Graham said Trump was “open minded” about his proposal.

The partial government shutdown began Dec. 22 after Trump bowed to conservative demands that he fight to make good on his vow and secure funding for the wall before Republicans lose control of the House on Wednesday. Democrats have remained committed to blocking any funding for the wall.

With neither side engaging in substantive negotiation, the effect of the partial shutdown was set to spread and to extend into the new year.

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Associated Press writer Kevin Freking contributed to this report.

## 4 ideas from NKorean leader Kim Jong Un’s New Year’s speech

By ERIC TALMADGE, Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Looking almost banker-like in a business suit and sitting in an upholstered leather armchair, Kim Jong Un gave his annual televised New Year’s address on Tuesday.

The North Korean leader’s big curtain-raiser for 2019 comes after a couple of very tumultuous years. In 2017, his rapid-fire missile tests brought him to the brink with President Donald Trump and 2018 saw his sudden rise on the world stage with hints of detente, summits with China and South Korea and an unprecedented meeting with Trump in Singapore.

What’s ahead in 2019? Here are four big takeaways.

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### IT’S STILL ABOUT THE ECONOMY

About two-thirds of the entire speech was devoted to the economy.

Kim last year jettisoned his signature slogan of “simultaneous tracks” — developing nuclear weapons and the economy at the same time — in favor of claiming to focus everything on the economy, which is now the national buzz phrase.

Kim hasn’t given up on his nuclear weapons, he just says he has perfected the arsenal enough to shift the focus of “socialist construction” elsewhere. Kim also didn’t commit to anything in the speech like the kind of major, structural economic changes that might generate sustainable growth, but which could also undermine his own power.

Even so, he does appear to genuinely want to boost the standard of living of his nation and to grow the country’s economy. He underscored that desire by calling for an increased electricity supply and pointed to the possibility of developing nuclear power, along with the need for modernization and innovation across the board.

Despite repeated mentions during the speech of the North’s cherished principle of “Juche,” or self-reliance, Kim understands his country’s economic realities. He is openly seeking more foreign investment and trade.

And he’s hoping to enlist Seoul’s help in that endeavor.

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### KIM WANTS THE KOREAS TO BE TAKING THE LEAD

Though the attention was on his relationship with Trump, Kim’s biggest moves in 2018 were toward South Korea.

Kim’s pitch has been that it is high time Pyongyang and Seoul were leaders in determining their own fate, which is also a shot at the role of the United States on the peninsula.

Kim’s speech was broadcast simultaneously in South Korea.

Addressing both nations at once, he called on all Koreans to — in his decidedly North Korean manner — to “uphold the slogan “Let’s usher in a heyday of peace, prosperity and reunification of the Korean Peninsula by thoroughly implementing the historic North-South declarations!”

Those declarations include a good deal of joint efforts to help Kim with his economic goals, including the

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renovation and reconnection of the North's railways to the South. He said he would support the reopening of an industrial park that relies on South Korean capital investments and a tourism zone on the North's Mount Kumgang, or Diamond Mountain.

Such efforts can't go very far until sanctions are lifted. Seoul is a lot more willing to forge ahead than Washington.

Pyongyang is also seeking an end to joint U.S.-South Korea military exercises, while Washington is pushing the South to pay more of the cost of keeping its troops there.

The growing Washington-Seoul discord is an added bonus for Kim.

Expect him to keep pushing those buttons.

## THE NUKES AREN'T GOING ANYWHERE ANYTIME SOON

In the most tantalizing sentence of the speech, Kim hinted at a possible cap on nuclear weapons production if the U.S. takes equivalent steps, whatever that might mean.

He also stood by his commitment to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, which, contrary to some wishful thinking in Washington and Seoul, does not mean the unilateral denuclearization of North Korea.

Both areas need to be further clarified in negotiations.

Kim's calculus has never been to throw away his nuclear arsenal and hope for the best from a newly friendly and supportive administration in Washington. It has from the start been an effort to play the nuclear hand to its greatest advantage.

Kim sees nuclear weapons as a valuable deterrent to a U.S. military strike. Unless that threat is eliminated, he won't give them up. He also believes his weapons put him in a position of strength from which he can make demands and extract concessions.

The North has been pretty clear about these points. But Kim spelled them out once again.

His message to Trump: Start addressing his concerns about security and sanctions relief soon or he will have no choice but to try a different, less friendly approach. And he is warning that he will be able to make a case to China, Russia and possibly even Seoul that if things fall Washington will be the one to blame.

## KIM WANTS TO BE SEEN AS HIS OWN MAN

This year's 30-minute speech was an exercise in making Kim look worldly, firmly in charge and comfortable in his own skin — as opposed to the caricatures of him that are so popular in the West.

Though not a stirring public speaker, Kim confidently delivered the pre-recorded address in a study with dark-wood paneling and the national and ruling party flags.

He was flanked by big portraits of his charismatic grandfather, national founder Kim Il Sung, and his father, the late leader Kim Jong Il, who was famously speech-averse and never spoke like this on New Year's.

That lineage is as important as ever.

But the images beamed to the nation and to the world Tuesday of Kim delivering the speech were engineered to have a freshness to them that is uniquely his — and to leave the impression that Kim Jong Un is his own man, a modern, respectable leader who belongs on the world stage.

He may very well be sharing that stage next with Trump, for their second summit.

Talmadge has been the AP's Pyongyang bureau chief since 2013. Follow him on Twitter and Instagram: @EricTalmadge

## Changes may be ahead for criticized Georgia election system

By KATE BRUMBACK, Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Georgia's outdated election system has drawn criticism from cybersecurity experts and voting integrity advocates, and now a commission tasked with examining potential replacements is preparing to make recommendations to lawmakers.

The paperless system was closely scrutinized during last year's nationally watched gubernatorial race

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between Democrat Stacey Abrams and Republican Brian Kemp, who was Georgia's secretary of state and chief elections official. Abrams and her allies accused Kemp of suppressing minority votes and mismanaging the election, including by neglecting elections infrastructure. Kemp, now governor-elect, has vehemently denied those allegations.

Cybersecurity experts have warned that the touchscreen voting machines Georgia has used since 2002 are unreliable and vulnerable to hacking, and provide no way to do an audit or confirm that votes have been recorded correctly because there's no paper trail.

The state's voting system has been challenged in lawsuits, including one filed after the November election by Fair Fight Action, a nonprofit backed by Abrams. In addition to the outdated machines, critics also raised concerns after security lapses exposed the personal information of Georgia voters.

U.S. District Judge Amy Totenberg wrote in September that Georgia election officials had stalled too long in the face of "a mounting tide of evidence of the inadequacy and security risks" of the state's voting system. She declined to order the state to use paper ballots in the midterm elections, saying there was not enough time before voting began. But she warned that "these same arguments would hold much less sway in the future."

Kemp has insisted that the current system is secure and reliable. But after legislative efforts to replace it failed earlier this year, he established the Secure, Accessible and Fair Elections, or SAFE, Commission in April to study potential replacements.

Made up of lawmakers, political party representatives, voters and election officials, the commission is expected to make recommendations before the legislative session begins Jan. 14. A vendor demonstration of election technology is scheduled for Thursday.

Ryan Germany, general counsel for the secretary of state's office, told the commission at a meeting last month in Macon that Georgia must act quickly.

"The 2020 election cycle is an aggressive goal, but I think it's the correct goal," he said, adding that the state would almost certainly face additional litigation if a new system isn't in place by then.

The commissioners seemed to agree Georgia's system should produce a paper record and that election officials should conduct post-election audits.

Some commission members said they support paper ballots that voters mark by hand, filling in bubbles with a pen or pencil. But others prefer touchscreen ballot-marking machines that print a paper record.

Republican State Rep. Barry Fleming, who co-chairs the commission, said costs vary widely. Initial expenditures would be roughly \$50 million for a hand-marked paper ballot system and about \$150 million for a ballot-marking machine system, he said at last month's meeting.

Georgia Tech computer science professor Wenke Lee, the only computer and cybersecurity expert on the commission, told his fellow commissioners that technology evolves quickly and investing in an expensive, tech-heavy system could leave Georgia with an outdated system again within just a few years. He recommended hand-marked paper ballots read by optical scanner.

"From a cybersecurity point of view, that's the best available solution," he said at the meeting. "Now, if you say we don't want that, you need to justify why."

Supporters of ballot-marking machines argue that they reduce voter error and provide better accessibility for voters with disabilities. They say the touchscreen machines are similar to those in use now, so voters already know how to use them.

Critics say such machines are no more secure than the current system and don't actually allow voters to verify their votes.

The machines print out barcodes that correspond to the voter's selections, as well as a separate list that's readable by a voter. But votes are counted by machines that scan the barcodes, so there's no way for voters to know whether what's scanned actually reflects their votes, said Marilyn Marks, executive director of the Coalition for Good Governance, which has sued the state over the current system.

Additionally, she said, voters may not notice if a race is missing or may not remember how they voted on, say, "Statewide Referendum B."

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Wenke said voters might not bother to review a printout. If what the machine recorded is incorrect and the voter doesn't catch it, the ability to audit is meaningless, he said.

Commission member Darin McCoy, the probate judge and election superintendent in Evans County, dismissed that concern.

"If we provide the voter with a paper ballot of what they've done and they don't take the time to look at that and verify, there's nothing we can do," he said. "That's the voter's responsibility."

After the commission makes its recommendations, lawmakers would have to pass legislation to change the state's election laws. Funding would have to be secured and the system purchased in time to educate election workers and voters.

Whatever they decide, the timeline is tight. Commission members seemed to agree they'd like to have a trial run during the November 2019 municipal elections and implement a new system statewide for the 2020 election cycle.

## **Brazil's Bolsonaro assumes presidency, promises big changes**

**By YESICA FISCH, MAURICIO SAVARESE and PETER PRENGAMAN, Associated Press**

BRASILIA, Brazil (AP) — Jair Bolsonaro was sworn in as Brazil's president Tuesday, taking the reins of Latin America's largest and most populous nation with promises to overhaul myriad aspects of daily life and put an end to business-as-usual governing.

For the far-right former army captain, the New Year's Day inauguration was the culmination of a journey from a marginalized and even ridiculed congressman to a leader who many Brazilians hope can combat endemic corruption as well as violence that routinely gives the nation the dubious distinction of being world leader in total homicides.

A fan of U.S. President Donald Trump, the 63-year-old longtime congressman rose to power on an anti-corruption and pro-gun agenda that has energized conservatives and hard-right supporters after four consecutive presidential election wins by the left-leaning Workers' Party.

Bolsonaro was the latest of several far-right leaders around the globe who have come to power by riding waves of anger at the establishment and promising to ditch the status quo.

"Congratulations to President @jairbolsonaro who just made a great inauguration speech," Trump tweeted. "The U.S.A. is with you!"

Tuesday's festivities in the capital of Brasilia began with a motorcade procession along the main road leading to Congress and other government buildings. Bolsonaro and his wife, Michelle, stood up in an open-top Rolls-Royce and waved to thousands of onlookers.

They were surrounded by dozens of guards on horses and plain-clothes bodyguards who ran beside the car.

Once inside Congress, Bolsonaro and his vice president, retired Gen. Hamilton Mourao, took the oath of office. Bolsonaro then read a short speech that included many of the far-right positions he staked out during the campaign.

He promised to combat the "ideology of gender" teaching in schools, "respect our Judeo-Christian tradition" and "prepare children for the job market, not political militancy."

"I call on all congressmen to help me rescue Brazil from corruption, criminality and ideological submission," he said.

A short time later, Bolsonaro spoke to thousands of supporters outside, promising to "free Brazil" from socialism and political correctness.

As he spoke, supporters began to chant "Myth! Myth! Myth!"— a nickname that began years ago with internet memes of Bolsonaro and became more common during last year's campaign. Bolsonaro's middle name is Messias, or Messiah in English, and many supporters believe he was chosen by God to lead Brazil, an assertion bolstered after Bolsonaro survived a stabbing during a campaign rally in September.

During Tuesday's speech, Bolsonaro stopped at one point, pulled out a Brazilian flag and wildly waved it, prompting roars from the crowd.



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"Our flag will never be red," Bolsonaro said, a reference to communism. "Our flag will only be red if blood is needed to keep it green and yellow."

Brasilia was under tight security, with 3,000 police patrolling the event. Military tanks, fighter jets and even anti-aircraft missiles also were deployed. Journalists were made to arrive at locations seven hours before festivities began, and many complained on Twitter of officials confiscating food they had brought for the wait.

The increased security came at Bolsonaro's request. His intestine was pierced when a knife-wielding man stabbed and nearly killed him, and today Bolsonaro wears a colostomy bag. His sons, politicians themselves, had insisted their father could be targeted by radicals, but security officials have not spoken of threats.

Bolsonaro did little moderating since being elected in October, with progressives and liberals decrying stances that they say are homophobic, sexist and racist.

The new president, who spent nearly three decades in Congress, has also drawn international criticism for his plans to roll back regulations in the Amazon and his disinterest in social programs in a country that is one of the world's most unequal in terms of income.

On the economic front, where Bolsonaro will ultimately lead Latin America's largest economy is unknown, as during the campaign he reversed course from previous statist stances with pledges to lead market-friendly reforms. He also promised to overhaul Brazil's pension system and privatize several state-owned companies, which gave him wide support among financial players.

On Tuesday, Bolsonaro reiterated his commitment to fighting crime in a nation that has long led the world in annual homicides. More than 63,000 people were killed last year.

He wants to tackle the problems in part by shielding police who kill during an operation from criminal prosecution.

"We are counting on Congress to provide the judicial support so police can do their jobs," Bolsonaro said, signaling that he may soon submit legislation that would allow police to be tried outside the criminal system.

Human rights groups fear that defense of police violence could shield officers from investigations of misconduct and lead to more extrajudicial killings.

The most notable foreign leaders who attended were associated with far-right movements: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban.

Leftist Presidents Nicolas Maduro of Venezuela, Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua and Miguel Díaz-Canel of Cuba, deemed dictators by Bolsonaro, were uninvited by Bolsonaro's team after the foreign ministry sent them invitations. Leftist President Evo Morales of Bolivia, however, was invited and warmly embraced Bolsonaro after the ceremony. The United States was represented by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

Seven of Bolsonaro's 22 Cabinet ministers are former military personnel, more than in any administration during Brazil's 1964-1985 dictatorship. That has sparked fears among his adversaries of a return to autocratic rule, but Bolsonaro insists he will respect the country's constitution.

Riordan Roett, a professor and director emeritus of Latin American Studies at Johns Hopkins University, noted that generals have administration skills that can be useful in government.

"The danger is that as a former low-ranking military officer, (Bolsonaro) will be swayed by some of the generals to come down hard on criminality, drug dealers, etc., and that may cause a backlash and many innocent people could be caught in the crossfire," Roett said.

Bolsonaro's Liberal and Social Party will have 52 seats in Brazil's 513-member lower house, the second largest bloc behind the Workers' Party.

Gary Hufbauer of the Peterson Institute for International Economics, a Washington-based think tank, said a central challenge for Bolsonaro will be curbing spending and entitlements, no easy task given the makeup of Congress and entrenched interests.

"Bolsonaro needs some quick successes to get off on the right foot with the public and the political elites," said Hufbauer, adding that a failure to do that would likely reduce Bolsonaro's honeymoon period to six months.

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Associated Press video journalist Yesica Fisch reported this story in Brasilia, AP writer Mauricio Savarese

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reported from Sao Paulo and AP writer Peter Prengaman reported from Rio de Janeiro. AP writer Stan Lehman in Sao Paulo contributed to this report.

## Spacecraft opens new year with flyby on solar system's edge

By **MARCIA DUNN, AP Aerospace Writer**

LAUREL, Md. (AP) — NASA's New Horizons spacecraft pulled off the most distant exploration of another world Tuesday, skimming past a tiny, icy object 4 billion miles from Earth that looks to be shaped like a bowling pin.

Flight controllers in Maryland declared success 10 hours after the high-risk, middle-of-the-night encounter at the mysterious body known as Ultima Thule on the frozen fringes of our solar system, an astounding 1 billion miles (1.6 billion kilometers) beyond Pluto.

"I don't know about all of you, but I'm really liking this 2019 thing so far," lead scientist Alan Stern of Southwest Research Institute said to applause. "I'm here to tell you that last night, overnight, the United States spacecraft New Horizons conducted the farthest exploration in the history of humankind, and did so spectacularly."

The close approach came a half-hour into the new year, and 3 ½ years after New Horizons' unprecedented swing past Pluto.

For Ultima Thule — which wasn't even known when New Horizons departed Earth in 2006 — the endeavor was more difficult. The spacecraft zoomed within 2,200 miles (3,500 kilometers) of it, more than three times closer than the Pluto flyby.

Operating on autopilot, New Horizons was out of radio contact with controllers at Johns Hopkins University's Applied Physics Laboratory from late Monday afternoon until late Tuesday morning. Scientists wanted the spacecraft staring down Ultima Thule and collecting data, not turning toward Earth to phone home.

Mission operations manager Alice Bowman said she was more nervous this time than she was with Pluto in 2015 because of the challenges and distance, so vast that messages take more than six hours, one way, to cross the 4 billion miles (6.4 billion kilometers). When a solid radio link finally was acquired and team members reported that their spacecraft systems were green, or good, she declared with relief: "We have a healthy spacecraft." Later, she added to more applause: "We did it again."

Cheers erupted in the control center and in a nearby auditorium, where hundreds more — still weary from the double countdowns on New Year's Eve — gathered to await word. Scientists and other team members embraced and shared high-fives, while the spillover auditorium crowd gave a standing ovation.

Stern, Bowman and other key players soon joined their friends in the auditorium, where the celebration continued and a news conference took place. The speakers took delight in showing off the latest picture of Ultima Thule, taken just several hundred-thousand miles (1 million kilometers) before the 12:33 a.m. close approach.

"Ultima Thule is finally revealing its secrets to us," said project scientist Hal Weaver of Johns Hopkins.

Based on the early, rudimentary images, Ultima Thule is highly elongated — about 20 miles by 10 miles (32 kilometers by 16 kilometers). It's also spinning end over end, although scientists don't yet know how fast.

As for its shape, scientists say there are two possibilities.

Ultima Thule is either one object with two connected lobes, sort of like a spinning bowling pin or peanut still in the shell, or two objects orbiting surprisingly close to one another. A single body is more likely, they noted. An answer should be forthcoming Wednesday, once better, closer pictures arrive.

By week's end, "Ultima Thule is going to be a completely different world, compared to what we're seeing now," Weaver noted.

Still, the best color close-ups won't be available until February. Those images should reveal whether Ultima Thule has any rings or moons, or craters on its dark, reddish surface. Altogether, it will take nearly two years for all of New Horizons' data to reach Earth.

The observations should help scientists ascertain how deep-freeze objects like Ultima Thule formed, along with the rest of the solar system, 4.5 billion years ago.

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As a preserved relic from that original time, Ultima Thule also promises to shed light on the so-called Kuiper Belt, or Twilight Zone, in which hundreds of thousands of objects reside well beyond Neptune.

"This mission's always been about delayed gratification," Stern reminded reporters. He noted it took 12 years to sell the project, five years to build it and nine years to reach the first target, Pluto.

Its mission now totaling \$800 million, the baby grand piano-sized New Horizons will keep hurtling toward the edge of the solar system, observing Kuiper Belt Objects, or KBOs, from afar, and taking cosmic particle measurements. Although NASA's Voyagers crossed the Kuiper Belt on their way to true interstellar space, their 1970s-era instruments were not nearly as sophisticated as those on New Horizons, Weaver noted, and the twin spacecraft did not pass near any objects known at the time.

The New Horizons team is already pushing for another flyby in the 2020s, while the nuclear power and other spacecraft systems are still good.

Bowman takes comfort and pleasure in knowing that long after New Horizons stops working, it "will keep going on and on."

"There's a bit of all of us on that spacecraft," she said, "and it will continue after we're long gone here on Earth."

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## Russian baby rescued after nearly 36 hours in frozen rubble

By JIM HEINTZ, Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Laboring through sub-freezing temperatures, Russian rescue workers were digging into a sprawling heap of jagged rubble from a collapsed apartment building when one heard the faintest sound. It was the sound of life.

On Tuesday, to everyone's delight and surprise, they pulled a baby boy out of the rubble alive, nearly 36 hours after the disaster that blew apart his home. His father called it "a New Year's miracle."

The building collapse in the Russian city of Magnitogorsk before dawn Monday has killed at least nine people so far, and officials say 32 people who lived in the building have still not been accounted for.

The collapse followed an explosion that was believed to have been caused by a gas leak.

The boy, an 11-month-old named Ivan Fokin, was in extremely serious condition, officials said, with fractures, a head injury and suffering from hypothermia and frostbite after his ordeal in temperatures around minus 20 degrees Celsius (minus 4 degrees Fahrenheit).

He was flown to Moscow late Tuesday in a desperate attempt to save his life. He was in stable condition on arrival in the capital, the head of the national public health institute Vladimir Uiba was quoted as telling state news agency Tass.

Although Ivan's prospects for survival appeared dire, "it's a New Year's miracle," his father Yevgeny was quoted as saying by the RT satellite TV channel.

The father was at work when his wife phoned to say the building had collapsed. She escaped the rubble with a 3-year-old son, Russian news reports said.

"I was sleeping on the couch with my older son, hugging him and the young one was sleeping in his baby bed," mother Olga Fokina said on Russian TV. "I and the older one fell down and quickly got out and I didn't know what happened to the baby bed afterward."

Rescue worker Pyotr Gritsenko said on Russian television that baby's discovery came after one of the crew heard faint cries.

"They stopped all the equipment. He began to cry louder," but the crew couldn't find him, he said. A search dog was brought in and confirmed that someone was under the rubble, focusing the rescue effort.

The father said he helped rescuers dig in the rubble and "showed them a place where he approximately could be."

Regional governor Boris Dubrovsky was quoted as saying by the Interfax news agency that the child

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apparently had been protected by being in a crib and being wrapped warmly.

The rescue operation, aided by powerful heaters and lights, was continuing overnight into Wednesday in the city about 1,400 kilometers (870 miles) southeast of Moscow.

Russian President Vladimir Putin visited the accident site on Monday and went to a local hospital, where he spoke to a 13-year old-boy who had head injuries and frostbite after spending an hour under the rubble. "You will get well soon, you are a fighter," Putin told the boy, one of five people hospitalized from the building collapse.

Russian officials say the odds of finding anyone else alive in the debris look increasingly slim, given the extreme weather.

Late Tuesday, three people died in Magnitogorsk about two kilometers (1.2 miles) down the same street as the collapsed building when their passenger van exploded and caught fire. Police said the vehicle was carrying gas canisters.

In other Russian holiday disasters, seven people including a couple and their three children died in a house fire in the town of Orsk, 1,500 kilometers (900 miles) southeast of Moscow, Interfax reported. The fire early Tuesday is believed to have been caused by an electrical short-circuit, the report said.

In Moscow, the mayor fired the director of the city's renowned Gorky Park after 13 people were injured when a wooden pedestrian bridge packed with New Year's celebrants collapsed.

Video on Russian television showed a section of the bridge collapsing early Tuesday as the national anthem played on loudspeakers, marking the beginning of 2019. The park in central Moscow is a popular gathering place for the holiday.

The bridge, 350 meters (1,100 feet) long, runs along the park's enormous outdoor ice rink.

## AP Exclusive: Vatican letter undermines US cardinal on abuse

By NICOLE WINFIELD, Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — The Vatican blocked U.S. bishops from taking measures to address the clergy sex abuse scandal because U.S. church leaders didn't discuss the legally problematic proposals with the Holy See enough beforehand, according to a letter obtained by The Associated Press.

The Nov. 11 letter from the Vatican's Cardinal Marc Ouellet provides the primary reason that Rome balked at the measures that were to be voted on by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops at its Nov. 12-14 meeting. The blocked vote stunned abuse survivors and other Catholics who were demanding action from U.S. bishops to address clergy sex abuse and cover-up.

Ouellet's letter undermines the version of events provided by the conference president, Cardinal Daniel DiNardo. It could also provide fodder for questions during a spiritual retreat of U.S. bishops, dedicated to the abuse crisis, that opens Wednesday in Chicago.

They may want to know why, as Ouellet noted in the letter, the draft proposals only arrived at the Vatican on Nov. 8, four days before the U.S. bishops' meeting began. While the Vatican is known for its slow pace, even the speediest bureaucracy would have found it difficult to review and sign off on sensitive legal documents in that time.

"Considering the nature and scope of the documents being proposed by the (conference), I believe it would have been beneficial to have allowed for more time to consult with this and other congregations with competence over the ministry and discipline of bishops," Ouellet wrote to DiNardo.

Such back-and-forth, he wrote, would have allowed the documents to "properly mature."

The main goal of the U.S. bishops' fall meeting had been to approve a code of conduct for bishops and create a lay-led commission to receive complaints against them. The measures were a crisis response to the scandal over ex-Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, a once-senior American cleric who is now accused of molesting minors and adults, and new revelations of old sex abuse cases in Pennsylvania.

DiNardo stunned the bishops when he opened the assembly Nov. 12 by announcing that "at the insistence of the Holy See" the bishops would not be voting on the measures after all. He said the Vatican wanted them to delay a vote until after Pope Francis hosts a global summit in February on preventing



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sex abuse by priests.

While DiNardo blamed the Vatican, the letter from Ouellet suggests that the Vatican thought DiNardo had tried to pull a fast one by intentionally withholding legally problematic texts until the last minute.

It is not surprising that Rome wanted a say in crafting the text, given the Holy See has exclusive authority to investigate and discipline problem bishops.

"While fully aware that a bishops' conference enjoys a rightful autonomy ... to discuss and eventually approve measures that are within the conference's powers, the conference's work must always be integrated within the hierarchical structure and universal law of the church," Ouellet wrote.

In a statement Tuesday to AP, DiNardo characterized the dispute as a misunderstanding. He said he assumed the Vatican would have had a chance to "review and offer adjustments" to the measures after the U.S. bishops approved them, not before. He insisted that U.S. bishops were not trying to appropriate Vatican powers for themselves.

"It is now clear there were different expectations on the bishops conference's part and Rome's part that may have affected the understanding of these proposals," DiNardo said in a statement. "From our perspective, they were designed to stop short of where the authority of the Holy See began."

The U.S. strategy, it seems, was to avoid drawn-out negotiations before the vote so the U.S. bishops could present the Vatican with documents after the fact.

Legally speaking, the U.S. bishops didn't need Vatican approval prior to the vote. But since the Holy See would have to approve the proposals afterward for them to become binding, consultation on the text was necessary and strategically wise to do so beforehand, said Nicholas Cafardi, a U.S. canon lawyer.

DiNardo, in his statement to the AP, said he had shared the "content and direction" of the proposals with multiple Vatican offices in October and drafted the final text after encountering no opposition.

"We had not planned, nor had the Holy See made a request, to share the texts prior to the body of bishops having had an opportunity to amend them," he said.

During a Nov. 12 press conference, DiNardo was asked when the Vatican was actually consulted about the measures. He replied the texts were finalized Oct. 30 and that the delay in finishing them might have been a problem.

"So it's not surprising, on one level, that people would be catching their breath, perhaps even in Rome," he told reporters. DiNardo also acknowledged, when pressed by a reporter, that the texts themselves had some legal problems, though he downplayed the severity of them.

In his statement to AP, DiNardo said he had told Ouellet that failing to vote on the texts "would prove a great disappointment to the faithful, who were expecting their bishops to take just action. Though there were canonical precisions mentioned, the emphasis seemed to be on delaying votes and not wanting to get ahead of the (pope's) February meeting of episcopal conference presidents," he said.

Ouellet did indeed cite the February meeting in his letter, saying any document "should incorporate the input and fruits of the college of bishops' work of common discernment."

But the February summit was announced Sept. 13. If that were the primary reason for Ouellet's demand to scrap the U.S. vote, he could have communicated that to DiNardo a lot sooner.

Instead, as the Nov. 12 deadline loomed for the start of the U.S. meeting and still no text proposals had arrived in Rome, Ouellet wrote DiNardo an initial warning on Nov. 6 not to vote. Five days later, in his Nov. 11 letter, Ouellet reaffirmed that decision after having finally read the text.

That also undermined DiNardo's claim to have only received the request to delay the vote the night before the meeting began.

## Low carb? Low fat? What the latest dieting studies tell us

By CANDICE CHOI, AP Food & Health Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Bacon and black coffee for breakfast, or oatmeal and bananas?

If you're planning to try to lose weight in 2019, you're sure to find a fierce debate online and among friends and family about how best to do it. It seems like everyone has an opinion, and new fads emerge

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every year.

Two major studies last year provided more fuel for a particularly polarizing topic — the role carbs play in making us fat. The studies gave scientists some clues, but, like other nutrition studies, they can't say which diet — if any — is best for everyone.

That's not going to satisfy people who want black-and-white answers, but nutrition research is extremely difficult and even the most respected studies come with big caveats. People are so different that it's all but impossible to conduct studies that show what really works over long periods of time.

Before embarking on a weight loss plan for the new year, here's a look at some of what was learned last year.

## FEWER CARBS, FEWER POUNDS?

It's no longer called the Atkins Diet, but the low-carb school of dieting has been enjoying a comeback. The idea is that the refined carbohydrates in foods like white bread are quickly converted into sugar in our bodies, leading to energy swings and hunger.

By cutting carbs, the claim is that weight loss will be easier because your body will instead burn fat for fuel while feeling less hungry. A recent study seems to offer more support for low-carb proponents. But, like many studies, it tried to understand just one sliver of how the body works.

The study, co-led by an author of books promoting low-carb diets, looked at whether varying carb levels might affect how the body uses energy. Among 164 participants, it found those on low-carb diets burned more total calories than those on high-carb diets.

The study did not say people lost more weight on a low-carb diet — and didn't try to measure that. Meals and snacks were tightly controlled and continually adjusted so everyone's weights stayed stable.

David Ludwig, a lead author of the paper and researcher at Boston Children's Hospital, said it suggests limiting carbs could make it easier for people to keep weight off once they've lost it. He said the approach might work best for those with diabetes or pre-diabetes.

Ludwig noted the study wasn't intended to test long-term health effects or real-world scenarios where people make their own food. The findings also need to be replicated to be validated, he said.

Caroline Apovian of Boston University's School of Medicine said the findings are interesting fodder for the scientific community, but that they shouldn't be taken as advice for the average person looking to lose weight.

## DO I AVOID FAT TO BE SKINNY?

For years people were advised to curb fats, which are found in foods including meat, nuts, eggs, butter and oil. Cutting fat was seen as a way to control weight, since a gram of fat has twice as many calories than the same amount of carbs or protein.

Many say the advice had the opposite effect by inadvertently giving us license to gobble up fat-free cookies, cakes and other foods that were instead full of the refined carbs and sugars now blamed for our wider waistlines.

Nutrition experts gradually moved away from blanket recommendations to limit fats for weight loss. Fats are necessary for absorbing important nutrients and can help us feel full. That doesn't mean you have to subsist on steak drizzled in butter to be healthy.

Bruce Y. Lee, a professor of international health at Johns Hopkins, said the lessons learned from the anti-fat fad should be applied to the anti-carb fad: don't oversimplify advice.

"There's a constant look for an easy way out," Lee said.

## SO WHICH IS BETTER?

Another big study this past year found low-carb diets and low-fat diets were about equally as effective for weight loss. Results varied by individual, but after a year, people in both groups shed an average of 12 to 13 pounds.

The author noted the findings don't contradict Ludwig's low-carb study. Instead, they suggest there may be some flexibility in the ways we can lose weight. Participants in both groups were encouraged to focus on minimally processed foods like produce and meat prepared at home. Everyone was advised to limit

added sugar and refined flour.

"If you got that foundation right, for many, that would be an enormous change," said Christopher Gardner of Stanford University and one of the study's authors.

Limiting processed foods could improve most diets by cutting down overall calories, while still leaving wiggle room for people's preferences. That's important, because for a diet to be effective, a person has to be able to stick to it. A breakfast of fruit and oatmeal may be filling for one person, but leave another hungry soon after.

Gardner notes the study had its limitations, too. Participants' diets weren't controlled. People were instead instructed on how to achieve eating a low-carb or low-fat in regular meetings with dietitians, which may have provided a support network most dieters don't have.

SO, WHAT WORKS?

In the short term you can probably lose weight by eating only raw foods, or going vegan, or cutting out gluten, or following another diet plan that catches your eye. But what will work for you over the long term is a different question.

Zhaoping Li, director of clinical nutrition division at the University of California, Los Angeles, says there is no single set of guidelines that help everyone lose weight and keep it off. It's why diets often fail — they don't factor into account the many factors that drive us to eat what we do.

To help people lose weight, Li examines her patients' eating and physical activity routines to identify improvements people will be able to live with.

"What sticks is what matters," Li said.

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## Federer on winning team after facing Serena for 1st time

By TRISTAN LAVALETTE, Associated Press

PERTH, Australia (AP) — Roger Federer won the bragging rights over fellow tennis great Serena Williams as they faced each other on court for the first time on Tuesday, with Federer spearheading Switzerland's 4-2, 4-3 (3) victory over the United States in a mixed doubles decider at the Hopman Cup.

"I was nervous returning (Williams' serve). People talk about her serve so much and I see why it is such a wonderful serve because you just can't read it," Federer said. "It was great fun. You see how determined and focused she is, and I love that about her."

Federer and playing partner Belinda Bencic overcame Williams and Frances Tiafoe in the Fast4 format as Switzerland beat the U.S. 2-1 in front of a 14,000 capacity crowd.

Federer and Williams shared a good-natured interview afterward and then engaged in a selfie.

"It was so fun. This is super cool that we get to do it at such a pinnacle point of our careers," Williams said. "I was so excited, and literally it was the match of my career. Just playing someone so great, and someone you admire so much, and a match that actually means something."

Federer and Williams, both 37, have won 43 Grand Slam singles titles between them.

Defending champion Switzerland will qualify for Saturday's final if it beats Greece on Thursday in Group B. The United States, which lost to Greece on Monday, can't now advance.

The much-hyped contest quickly lived up to its billing with Federer almost running down Williams' smash into the open court. Williams and Federer served strongly and were unable to return any of each other's serves in the first set.

Federer's sublime touch at the net proved decisive as he moved closer to a record third Hopman Cup title.

Williams grabbed at her right shoulder on several occasions late in the second set but played down any injury concern.

"It was such a quick turnaround, I didn't have enough time to reload the cannon. It's totally normal," she said.

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Earlier, Federer beat Tiafoe 6-4, 6-1 in the men's singles before Williams' 4-6, 6-4, 6-3 victory over Bencic. Williams started fast in the women's singles against Bencic — with an early break to storm to a 3-0 lead — before an error-strewn performance ensued as Bencic recovered to win the opener.

The 23-time Grand Slam singles champion fought back in a tight second set and captured the pivotal break in the 10th game. A flustered Bencic slammed her racket on the court as the match leveled and she never seriously threatened in the decider.

Federer was made to work during a tough first set before overwhelming the 20-year-old Tiafoe and taking control by winning seven straight games.

The 20-time Grand Slam champion needed just 57 minutes to claim his fourth straight victory over the rising American player.

Switzerland swept Britain in its opener when Federer had a masterclass win over British player Cameron Norrie in his opening match. Federer has lost just seven games in his first two matches of the round-robin tournament.

Federer's appearances at the past two Hopman Cups laid the groundwork for successful Australian Open campaigns.

More AP sports: <https://apnews.com/apf-sports> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Sports](https://twitter.com/AP_Sports)

## Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Jan. 2, the second day of 2019. There are 363 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 2, 1900, U.S. Secretary of State John Hay announced the "Open Door Policy" to facilitate trade with China.

On this date:

In 1788, Georgia became the fourth state to ratify the U.S. Constitution.

In 1792, the first classes began at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C.

In 1929, the United States and Canada reached agreement on joint action to preserve Niagara Falls.

In 1935, Bruno Hauptmann went on trial in Flemington, New Jersey, on charges of kidnapping and murdering the 20-month-old son of Charles and Anne Lindbergh. (Hauptmann was found guilty, and executed.)

In 1942, the Philippine capital of Manila was captured by Japanese forces during World War II.

In 1960, Sen. John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts launched his successful bid for the presidency.

In 1967, Republican Ronald Reagan took the oath of office as the new governor of California in a ceremony that took place in Sacramento shortly just after midnight.

In 1974, President Richard Nixon signed legislation requiring states to limit highway speeds to 55 miles an hour as a way of conserving gasoline in the face of an OPEC oil embargo. (The 55 mph limit was effectively phased out in 1987; federal speed limits were abolished in 1995.) "Singing cowboy" star Tex Ritter died in Nashville at age 68.

In 1983, the original Broadway production of the musical "Annie" closed after a run of 2,377 performances.

In 1986, former baseball owner Bill Veeck (vehk), remembered for his well-publicized stunts and promotional gimmicks, including an exploding scoreboard and a midget pinch-hitter, died in Chicago at age 71.

In 2000, Retired Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, Jr., known early in his career for modernizing the Navy and later for ordering the spraying of Agent Orange in Vietnam, died in Durham, N.C. at age 79.

In 2006, a methane gas explosion at the Sago (SAY'-goh) Mine in West Virginia claimed the lives of 12 miners, but one miner, Randal McCloy, Jr., was eventually rescued. The roof of a skating rink collapsed in the German town of Bad Reichenhall (bahd RYK'-ehn-hahl), killing 15 people.

Ten years ago: President George W. Bush branded Hamas rocket attacks on Israel an "act of terror" and outlined his own condition for a cease-fire in Gaza. President-elect Barack Obama and his family arrived



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in Chicago after a holiday vacation in Hawaii. AirTran Airways apologized to nine Muslims kicked off a New Year's Day flight to Florida. Actor John Travolta's 16-year-old son, Jett, died at the family's vacation home in the Bahamas. Peyton Manning won a record-tying third Associated Press NFL Most Valuable Player award. No. 7 Utah finished a perfect season with a 31-17 upset of No. 4 Alabama in the Sugar Bowl.

Five years ago: Fifty-two passengers trapped for more than a week on an icebound Russian research ship in the Antarctic were rescued when a Chinese helicopter swooped in and plucked them from the ice a dozen at a time. In the Sugar Bowl, No. 11 Oklahoma took down third-ranked Alabama 45-31.

One year ago: Republican Sen. Orrin Hatch of Utah said he would not seek re-election after serving more than 40 years in the Senate; the announcement cleared the way for 2012 GOP presidential nominee Mitt Romney to successfully run for the seat. Sen. Al Franken formally resigned from the Senate a month after the Minnesota Democrat announced his plan to leave Congress amid a series of sexual misconduct allegations. NBC News announced that Hoda Kotb would be the co-anchor of the first two hours of the "Today" show, replacing Matt Lauer following his firing due to sexual misconduct allegations.

Today's Birthdays: Country musician Harold Bradley is 93. Former House Speaker Dennis Hastert is 77. TV host Jack Hanna is 72. Actress Wendy Phillips is 67. Actress Cynthia Sikes is 65. Actress Gabrielle Carteris is 58. Movie director Todd Haynes is 58. Retired MLB All-Star pitcher David Cone is 56. Actress Tia Carrere is 52. Actor Cuba Gooding Jr. is 51. Model Christy Turlington is 50. Actor Taye Diggs is 48. Actress Renee Elise Goldsberry is 48. Rock musician Scott Underwood is 48. Rock singer Doug Robb (Hoobastank) is 44. Actor Dax Shepard is 44. Actress Paz Vega is 43. Country musician Chris Hartman is 41. Ballroom dancer Karina Smirnoff (TV: "Dancing with the Stars") is 41. Rock musician Jerry DePizzo Jr. (O.A.R.) is 40. Rhythm-and-blues singer Kelton Kessee (IMX) is 38. Pop singer-musician Ryan Merchant (Capital Cities) is 38. Actress Kate Bosworth is 36. Actor Peter Gadiot is 34. Jazz singer-musician Trombone Shorty is 33. Singer-songwriter Mandy Harvey (TV: "America's Got Talent") is 31. Rhythm-and-blues singer-rapper Bryson Tiller is 26.

Thought for Today: "You are not very good if you are not better than your best friends imagine you to be." — Johann Kaspar Lavater (LAH'-vah-tur), Swiss theologian (1741-1801).