

Groton Daily Independent

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Bates Township ROW Maintenance

Bates Township Board of Supervisors reminds all landowners and tenants that the road right-of-way extends 33 feet from the center of the township road. This ditch is to be maintained and mowed. Any crops planted in the road right-of-way will be mowed and expenses charged to the landowner.

Landowner is responsible for spraying all noxious weeds.

Bates Township Board of Supervisors

Betty Geist
Township Clerk
(0313.0320)

Published twice at the total approximate cost of \$20.11. 17307

Service Notice: Jack Mahan

Mass of Christian Burial for Jack Mahan, 93, of Groton will be 11:00 a.m., Wednesday, March 27th at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church. Father Mike Kelly will officiate. Burial will follow at a later date in Union Cemetery under the direction of Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton.

Visitation will be at the chapel from 5-7 p.m. on Tuesday with a wake service at 7:00 p.m.

Jack passed away March 20, 2019 at Sanford Aberdeen.

Card of Thanks

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who took the time to send me a card for my 80th birthday. You helped to make my birthday a joyous occasion.

Darlene Morton

CLOSED: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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Groton Dairy Queen's 25th Anniversary!

Come Celebrate With Us - March 25-29!

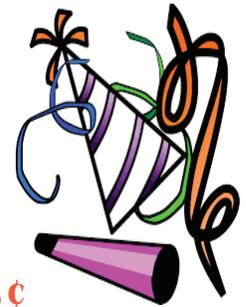
Monday: Soft Drinks for 25¢

**Tuesday: Buy one regular priced Blizzard®
and get one of the same size or smaller for 25¢**

Wednesday: Root Beer Float: \$1.25

Thursday: Indian Tacos: \$5.25

Friday: Small Cones for 25¢



11 East US 12, Groton

Thank You For 25 Years of Serving You, our great customers!



605-397-8627

AGENDA REGULAR MEETING BROWN COUNTY COMMISSION

COMMISSIONER'S CHAMBERS, COURTHOUSE ANNEX

25 MARKET STREET, ABERDEEN SD

TUESDAY, MARCH 26, 2019

8:45 a.m. - 8:50 a.m. - Ord. 134 Second reading & possible adoption (Campbell Rezone) & Ord. 135 Second reading & possible adoption (Remitz Rezone)

8:50 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. - Discussion & possible repeal of Title 9 Drainage Ordinance

9:00 a.m. - 9:05 a.m. - Scott Meints, EM Director & Aaron Schultz, Exec. Director of United Way of NESD - 211 Service update

- Approve General Meeting minutes of March 19, 2019
- Claims
- HR Report
- Load Limits Resolution
- Sheriff Report for Feb 2019
- Striping Agreement
- Permit to Land Aircraft
- Leases
- Fair Contracts
- Plats
- Bridge Re-inspection Program
- Tax Deed Property in Hecla

Any other matters to come before the Commission for discussion

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GFP Announces Additional Closures Due to Flooding

Includes: Lake Herman State Park and Moody County Access Areas

PIERRE, S.D. – Earlier yesterday, the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) closed Lake Herman State Park near Madison due to flooding. Water is currently running over the entrance road, which is the only way to access the park. The park will reopen when waters recede and the area is useable.

In addition, the following access areas are closed in Moody County:

Kamp Game Production Area and Access - 6 miles south of Brookings

Hazel's Haven Access Area - 2 miles northeast of Flandreau

Flandreau West Access Area - 1 mile west of Flandreau

Trent Access Area - at Trent

Signs have been posted in each of these areas to indicate their closures.

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HARR
Motors

4255 6th Ave
SE, Aberdeen

Hi, my name is Bary Keith, a Groton resident. I have just recently joined the Harr Motors sales team. I'm excited to start helping people get into the right vehicle for them. Right now, any vehicle purchased from me, until the end of April, will receive an Autostart at no charge. Give me a call (605-216-6952) or (605-725-8624) or stop out and see me at Harr Motors today!!!

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Area Girls' State

Back row : left to right : Sponsored by Claremont Legion Auxiliary Post #262- Kayla Jensen, Sponsored by Groton Legion Auxiliary Post #39- Kim Kohrs, Sponsored by Groton Legion Auxiliary Post #39-Ashley Flihs, and Sponsored by Columbia Legion Auxiliary Post #58-KaSandra Pappas

Front row: left to right : Sponsored by Columbia Legion Auxiliary Post #58-Rylee Rosenau, Sponsored by Groton Legion Auxiliary Post #39-Payton Colestock, and Sponsored by Pierpont Legion Auxiliary Post #99- Caitlynn Barse and missing from picture Sponsored by Groton Legion Auxiliary Post #39-Nicole Marzahnn. Nicole Marzahnn.

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CONGRESSMAN
DUSTY JOHNSON
Representing **SOUTH DAKOTA** at large



The Path to Success

I've believed for a long time that technical and career education are the backbone of a strong national workforce. It's one thing to hear about successful programs at the state and local level, but it's a totally different experience to witness them firsthand and see the impact programs have on local communities.

This past week, I spent several hours touring various programs at the Lake Area Technical Institute (LATI) in Watertown. With more than thirty programs, ranging from energy technology to nursing, LATI is ranked the number one two-year college in the nation. There aren't many programs in the entire country that can compete with the technology and innovation coursing through LATI's educational veins. It's truly impressive, and if you, your kid, or your neighbor are even thinking about a trade education, it's an institution you'll want to take a second look at.

Many of the students enrolled at LATI work part-time and go on to earn forty percent more than other new hires in the area. While in Watertown, I also sat down with Prairie Lakes Healthcare System. Many of their nurses and other medical professionals graduated from LATI. That's a direct investment back into the community and it's certainly inspiring to see firsthand.

I've found it extremely beneficial to visit the state's various educational programs to see what's working well and what we could do better. Last month, I spent time at Mitchell Tech and Southeastern Tech, and I will be visiting Western Tech next month. South Dakota's exceptional programs are examples I can bring back to D.C. and only amplify my work on the Education and Labor Committee. These tours, engaging with the faculty, and visiting with the students who have benefited from programs offered at schools like LATI allow me to learn lessons I would never learn from a brochure.

As a country, we need to ensure that curriculum opportunities are a good fit for what the industry needs. We should be doing a better job recruiting students to programs in high demand fields and then make sure they have the tools to succeed after graduation. Lake Area has done that.

What is being done in Watertown needs to be done across the country. This is our nation's path to success.

John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



It Was Good to See You

There are nearly 900,000 people who call South Dakota home, so when I'm not in Washington, either after the Senate wraps up its work for the week or during an extended state work period, like the one we just had, I do my best to crisscross the state to see and personally hear from as many people as possible.

Being a U.S. senator isn't a typical nine-to-five, Monday through Friday, go to and from the office kind of gig. There are no time clocks. There are no sick days. But you will never hear me complain. I love representing South Dakota, which is why even when I'm home and have traded my suit and tie for sneakers and blue jeans, I'm always willing to stop and chat. Whether it's at a basketball game on a Friday night or at a coffee shop on a Saturday morning, they are the perfect opportunities for me to hear what's on your mind without you having to take extra time out of your day to do it.

After having just spent some extra time in South Dakota, I had a productive few days meeting new people and seeing old friends in places like Aberdeen, Sioux Falls, De Smet, Arlington, Sinai, Nunda, Corsica, Armour, Parkston, Sturgis, and Piedmont. I learned a lot, and we got a lot accomplished, and I want to thank everyone for their time, suggestions, and feedback. I couldn't do my job without it.

One of the most humbling of these recent experiences was joining Gov. Kristi Noem and Sioux Falls Mayor Paul Ten Haken to tour some of the local flood damage. After seeing it firsthand, it's no wonder that it's even caught the attention of President Trump and his administration in Washington, D.C. I was struck by how many upbeat and confident people we encountered throughout the day. Even in the face of such tragedy, they saw hope. As the governor said, "the storms were strong, but South Dakotans are stronger."

The same can be said for folks in other parts of the state. For example, the snow-packed roads didn't keep people from coming out to discuss everything that's happening in Aberdeen and northeastern South Dakota. The community and its local leaders never cease to amaze me, so it was great to touch base and learn more about all of the big things they're working on these days. And a trip to Aberdeen during this time of year wouldn't be complete without stopping by the annual State B High School Basketball Tournament. If I'm in town, it's a must-do for me.

During a recent trip to Sturgis, I sat down with business owners and local leaders about broadband deployment in the United States. It's no secret that closing the digital divide is one of my top priorities in the Senate, particularly in my role as chairman of the Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, Innovation, and the Internet, and I'm as confident as ever that South Dakota can be a leader in the next generation of wireless broadband technology. The opportunity is at our fingertips, and we must continue working toward this digital revolution.

While getting the latest news and updates from today's local leaders is an important part of my job, visiting schools and meeting tomorrow's leaders is among the things I most enjoy about being an elected official. I recently caught up with students from De Smet, Arlington, Dakota Christian, Sturgis, and Parkston. I'm constantly inspired by how smart and talented these young South Dakotans are, and it makes me even more optimistic about what the future holds for the United States.

It was good to see so many of you throughout the state, and I mean what I said. I'm always willing to hear what's on your mind. Please, stop and chat. Call. Email. Don't ever hesitate to reach out. And if you're interested in following my travels in the state or my work in the Senate, be sure to follow me on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, too (@SenJohnThune).

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Obamacare Costs Continue to Put Financial Strain on South Dakota Families

This month marks the 9th anniversary of the Affordable Care Act, or Obamacare, being signed into law. Nine years is a long time for the millions of Americans who have been adversely affected by this failed law through higher premiums, fewer options and loss of health care all together. South Dakotans continue to contact me to share their stories about how Obamacare is just too expensive. For some of them, their health insurance premiums cost more than their mortgage payments. The American people deserve better.

In 2017, the Senate voted on legislation that would repeal and replace Obamacare. I supported the measure, but unfortunately it failed by a close vote of 49-51. Since that time, we have worked to dismantle Obamacare piece by piece by focusing on the law's unpopular provisions. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act that was signed into law last year repealed Obamacare's individual mandate that imposed an unfair tax primarily on the backs of families making less than \$50,000 per year. We were also able to get rid of the Independent Payment Advisory Board, which was often referred to as a "death panel."

I recently joined my colleague Sen. Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.) to introduce legislation that would repeal the "Cadillac Tax" provision in the Affordable Care Act. If implemented, the Cadillac Tax would impose a 40 percent tax on certain employer-sponsored health care plans. This would dramatically increase the costs of healthcare for South Dakota families. The Cadillac Tax is currently scheduled to go into effect in 2022, and unless we're able to repeal it, millions of middle-class families across the country will be impacted. Our legislation currently has more than 20 cosponsors—both Republicans and Democrats—and we're working hard to advance it in the Senate.

Obamacare has been a disaster for the millions of people who were forced off the health care plans they liked and who are now paying higher and higher premiums every year, while having fewer plans to choose from as providers leave the marketplace. I have always said that we need patient-centered, market-based health care reform that will reduce costs for patients by giving them more options for health care coverage. Competition within the marketplace will result in more choices for consumers, so they can find a plan that best fits their needs and their budget.

"Medicare-for-all" is an idea that has been discussed recently by some as a solution to the failed Obamacare law. Medicare is a government-run health insurance program for Americans aged 65 and older. Right now, the biggest driver of our debt is the rapid, unchecked growth of mandatory payments including Medicare. If we were to open up Medicare for Americans of all ages, our debt would skyrocket (even more than it already has) and future generations would be on the hook to pay for it.

We have seen firsthand how government-run healthcare fails those who it has a responsibility to care for, with examples at the Indian Health Service (IHS) and the Department of Veterans' Affairs. South Dakotans have heard the stories of babies being born on bathroom floors at IHS facilities, dirty or broken medical equipment, long wait times, excessive red tape and worst of all, patients being sent home from the doctor and dying because they failed to receive proper care. These are prime examples of what happens when the government is in charge of providing health care.

Every American deserves access to quality, affordable health care coverage, but Obamacare and Medicare-for-all are not the answers. I'll continue working in the Senate to support patient-centered, market-based reforms that are truly affordable.

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Today in Weather History

March 23, 1987: Strong winds and heavy snow produced blizzard conditions across South Dakota March 23rd through the 25th. Snow amounts ranged from 6 to 19 inches. Snow totals included 19" at Winner (in Tripp County), 15" at Murdo (in Jones County), and 12" at Woonsocket (in Sanborn County) and Platte (in Charles Mix County). The wind piled the snow into drifts up to 10 feet deep. The heavy, wet snow broke power lines in several counties in the south-central and east-central parts of the state knocking out power for up to a few days.

March 23, 2011:

A low-pressure system brought a variety of precipitation to central and eastern South Dakota and west central Minnesota on March 22nd and 23rd. Areas experienced rain, hail, sleet, snow and in some cases thundersnow. Click [HERE](#) for rain and snowfall totals.

1907: Today was the warmest March day ever recorded in Washington, DC with a maximum temperature of 93 degrees. Washington DC has seen three, 90 degree days in March, all of which occurred in 1907.

1913: A significant tornado outbreak occurred in eastern Nebraska and western Iowa on this day. Seven estimated F2 or stronger tornadoes killed 168 people and caused extensive damage to the area on Easter Sunday.

2007: A tornado obliterates a section of the town Clovis in eastern New Mexico, flattening about 100 homes and businesses, snapping telephone poles and even heaving a trailer through a bowling alley. At least three schools are damaged. The tornado is one of thirteen that strike a dozen communities along the New Mexico - Texas border, leaving two people critically injured.

1913 - A vicious tornado hit the city of Omaha, NE. The tornado struck during the late afternoon on Easter Sunday, and in just twelve minutes cut a swath of total destruction five miles long and two blocks wide across the city killing 94 persons and causing 3.5 million dollars property damage. (David Ludlum)

1916 - Pocatello, ID, received a record 14.6 inches of snow in 24 hours. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A blizzard raged across western Kansas, and the panhandle of Texas and Oklahoma. Pampa TX received 21 inches of snow, and winds gusted to 78 mph at Dodge City KS Altus OK. Governor Hayden declared forty-six counties in western Kansas a disaster area. In southwest Kansas, the storm was described as the worst in thirty years. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms developing along a strong cold front spawned tornadoes near Roberts ID and Bridger MT. Strong and gusty winds prevailed in the western U.S. Wind gusts in the southwest part of Reno NV reached 89 mph. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Charlotte and Wilmington, NC, reported rainfall records for the date as showers and thunderstorms prevailed in the southeastern U.S. Freezing rain glazed parts of North Carolina and southern Virginia. Gale force winds produced a heavy surf along the coast of North Carolina. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - An upper level storm system produced heavy snow in the Lower Missouri Valley. Snowfall totals ranged up to nine inches at Kansas City MO, with eight inches reported at Falls City NE, Columbia MO and Saint Louis MO. Thunderstorms produced heavy snow in the Kansas City area during the evening rush hour. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2007 - A trailer is thrown through a bowling alley as a tornado moves through Clovis, NM. About 100 homes and businesses are destroyed, at least three schools are damaged and telephone poles are snapped. Thirteen tornadoes struck a dozen communities along the New Mexico/Texas border. Two people were critically injured.

2011 - A series of tornados are spawned from severe thunderstorms in Pennsylvania. In Hempfield Township dozens of homes and a high school auditorium where students are rehearsing a play are severely damaged.

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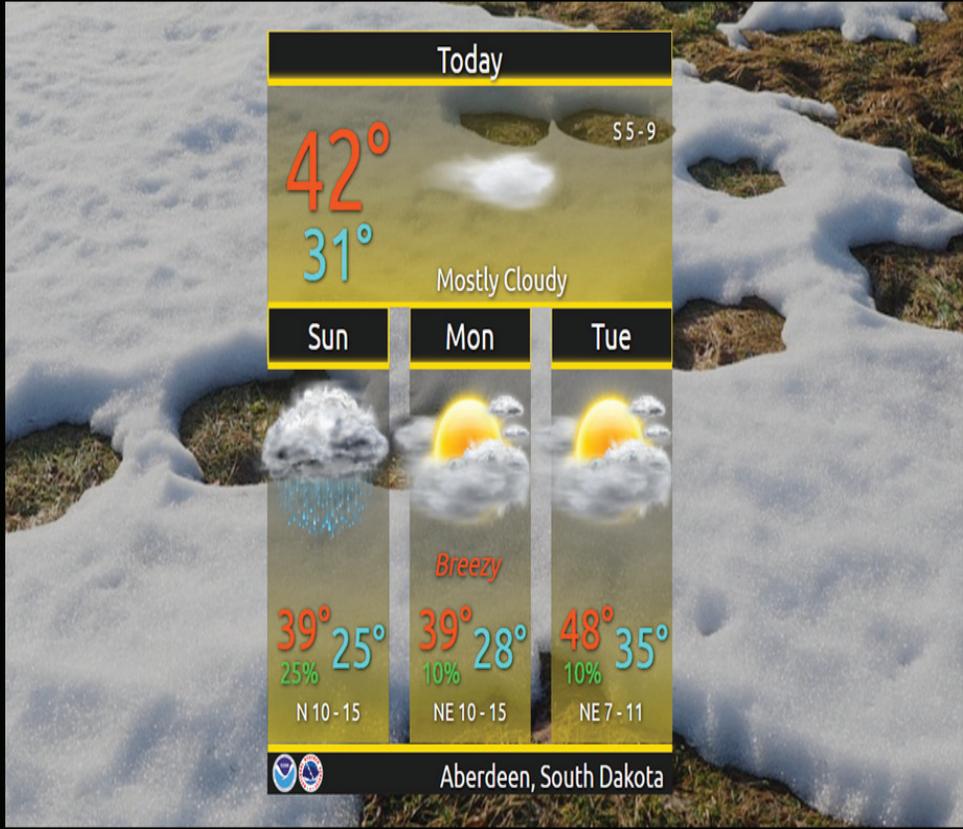
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Today	Tonight	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday
				
Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Slight Chance Rain/Freezing Rain then Slight Chance Rain	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy
High: 43 °F	Low: 30 °F	High: 38 °F	Low: 25 °F	High: 38 °F



Snow Melt Continues





Today

42°

31°

55-9

Mostly Cloudy

Sun	Mon	Tue
		
39° 25°	39° 28°	48° 35°
25%	10%	10%
N 10-15	NE 10-15	NE 7-11

Breezy

Aberdeen, South Dakota


National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD


Published on: 03/23/2019 at 5:25AM

The progress for spring temperatures and just a few light rain showers tonight means we will continue to slowly eat away at the snowpack, but at a speed which is very favorable. Anything faster and we would see a lot more inundation of rivers and overland flooding. This trend will continue for the foreseeable future.

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 36 °F at 4:41 PM

Low Outside Temp: 15 °F at 7:49 AM

High Gust: 11 mph at 5:37 PM

Precip:

Today's Info

Record High: 81° in 1963

Record Low: -21° in 1899

Average High: 44°F

Average Low: 23°F

Average Precip in Mar.: 0.75

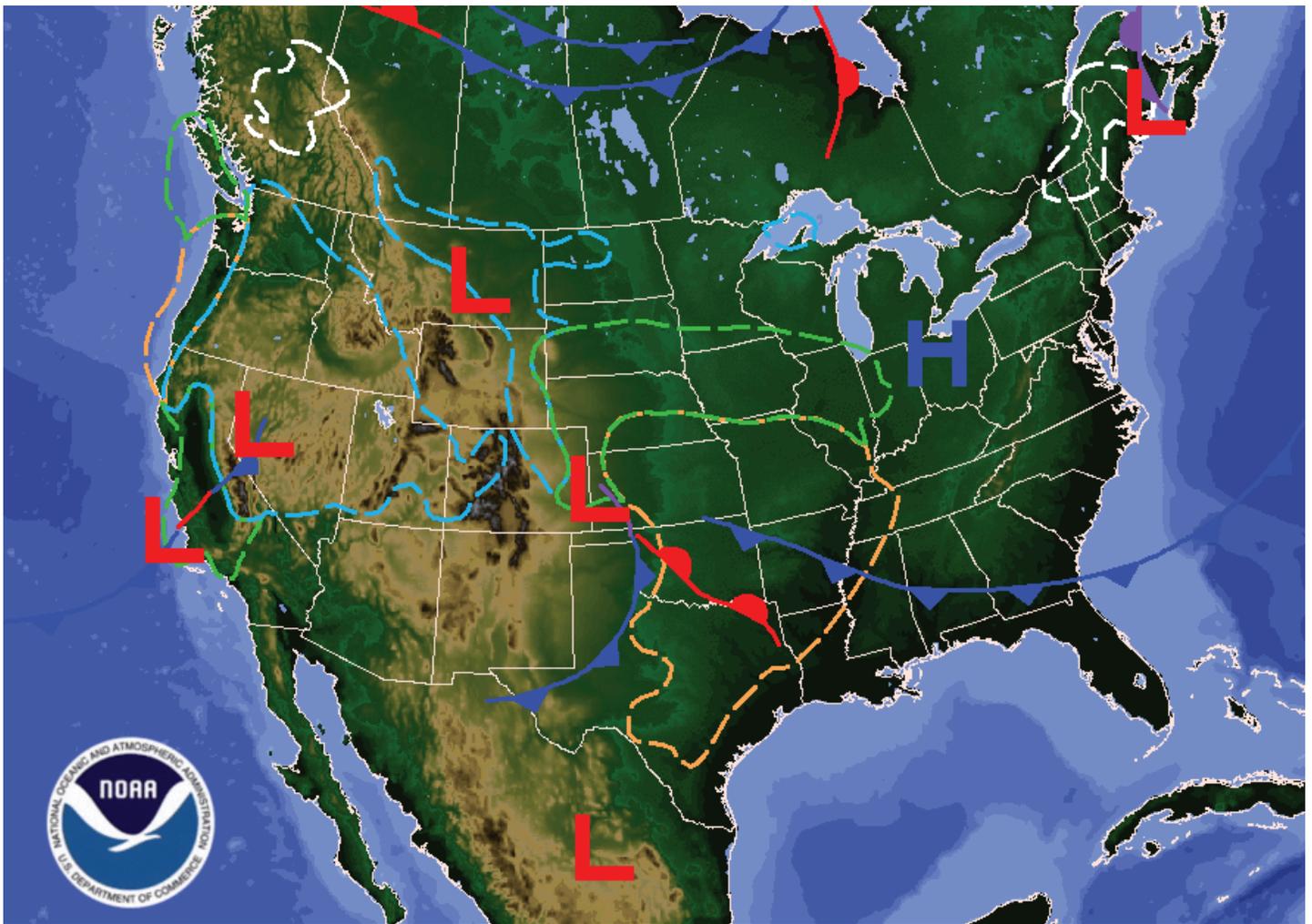
Precip to date in Mar.: 0.87

Average Precip to date: 1.77

Precip Year to Date: 3.06

Sunset Tonight: 7:50 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:30 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Sat, Mar 23, 2019, issued 5:01 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Hammond with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

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

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WHATS IN YOUR EYE?

Lord, he prayed over me, take care of Larry. Hes the apple of Your eye.

Although I was semiconscious, the word apple echoed in my ear and came back to my mind again and again. What did he mean, An apple in Gods eye? Didnt God have other things to look after that were much more important than an apple?

A few days later the man who prayed this prayer came to visit me. Fortunately, what some thought was a heart attack was an uncomfortable case of indigestion. All was well physically, but, my mind still wondered about the apple. So I asked.

What did you mean when you prayed, Hes the apple of Your eye? Im curious about what an apple and I have in common, especially in Gods eye.

Well, he said, clearing his throat, in Proverbs, there is a phrase that says, Guard my teachings as the apple of your eye.

After a moment of deep thought, he added, The apple of your eye means the little man in your eye. If you gaze or stare intently at someone, he said, you can see the reflection of that person in the pupil of your eye. So, it means that whatever someone is staring at intently and unflinchingly must be carefully protected because it is precious in the eye of the beholder.

Larry, he continued, you are very precious to the Lord, and I wanted Him to protect and guard you because it was something I couldnt do, but He could.

Prayer: Lord, all of Your children are equally precious to You. We are so grateful that You have no favorites. Thank You for watching over and protecting us for our sake. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Proverbs 7:2 Obey my commands and live! Guard my instructions as you guard your own eyes.

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2019 Groton SD Community Events

- 01/27/2019 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)
- 03/17/2019 Legion Post #39 Spring Fundraiser (Sunday closest to St. Patrick's Day, every other year)
- 04/13/2019 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 04/27/2019 Fireman's Stag (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 05/04/2019 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday in May)
- 05/27/2019 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Program (Memorial Day)
- 06/13/2019 Transit Fundraiser (Thursday Mid-June)
- 06/14/2019 SDSU Golf Tournament at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 06/15/2019 Triathlon (Saturday before Father's Day)
- 06/21/2019 Best Ball Golf Tourney
- 06/22-23/2019 Groton Junior Legion Tournament
- 06/29/2019 Groton U10/U12 Round Robin Tournament
- 07/04/2019 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)
- 07/14/2019 Summer Fest/Car Show (Sunday Mid-July)
- 07/18/2019 Olive Grove Golf Course Pro Am Tournament
- 07/21/2019 Granary Ice Cream Social & Family Music Fest
- 08/02/2019 Olive Grove Golf Course Wine on Nine
- 08/09-11/2019 State Junior Legion Tournament in Groton
- 08/22/2019 First Day of School
- 09/07/2019 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 09/08/2019 Sunflower Classic at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 09/08/2019 Granary Living History Fall Festival
- 10/12/2019 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 10/11/2019 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/31/2019 Trunk or Treat/Halloween on Main (Halloween)
- 11/09/2019 Legion Post #39 Turkey Shoot (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
- 12/07/2019 Olive Grove Golf Course Holiday Party
- 12/07/2019 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services
- Bingo: every Wednesday, Labor Day-Memorial Day, 6:30pm at the Legion Post #39

2020 Groton SD Community Events

- 4/4/2020 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 4/25/2020 Fireman's Stag (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 5/2/2020 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday in May)

News from the Associated Press

Noem signs law that targets companies marketing 'fake meat'

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Gov. Kristi Noem has signed legislation that requires "fake meat" products to be correctly labeled.

The law says a product is misbranded if it intentionally labels products in a false, deceptive or misleading manner that misrepresents it as meat or a meat byproduct.

The American News reports that Gov. Noem signed the bill Monday and it will go into effect July 1.

Rep. Carl Perry says the bill simply makes it unlawful to purposely mislead consumers.

The bill will rely on the current inspection system to catch violators who mislabel artificial meat products as real meat.

Proponents say the measure will help protect the livestock industry from being impacted if problems arise with artificial meat products

Critics argue such statues are concerning when it comes to free speech marketing.

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

Sisters play together on University of South Dakota team

By **BRIAN HAENCHEN** Argus Leader

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — A week before Allison Arens' senior day at the University of South Dakota, an assistant coach noted that she is one of the few college athletes who has played four years with a sibling who isn't a twin.

The 5-foot-10 guard hadn't thought of her unique opportunity in those terms, but realized he was probably right.

One of six siblings, Allison grew up on a farm in Crofton, Nebraska, a town of fewer than 700 located 14 miles south of Yankton. She played alongside her oldest sister, Bridget, for two seasons with the Coyotes.

When Bridget graduated as the program's all-time leader in games played with 137 in 2017, Allison welcomed their younger sister, Monica, to the program, the Argus Leader reported.

"It's hard to even say what it would be like without one of them here, because I've never experienced it," Allison said. "It's been really cool."

Not surprisingly, the Arens sisters have made the most of their final season together. Allison, the team's lone senior, is a do-everything guard who will graduate as one of only three players in program history with over 1,300 points, 500 rebounds and 300 assists for her career. Monica, a 5-foot-10-inch sophomore, has emerged as one of the team's key players off the bench, averaging 6.5 points and 4.0 rebounds.

"They helped each other a lot," said their mother, Joselyn Arens. "They encouraged each other and made each other better."

Away from the floor, Allison and Monica have been doing their best to take nothing for granted, from the late-night conversations at Allison's house or Monica's dorm to the quick trips back to Crofton, where small-town memories still carry meaning.

"Those little moments aside from basketball are ones we'll miss and cherish a lot," Allison said.

Monica was one of the first area recruits coach Dawn Plitzuweit scouted when she took over as USD head coach in April 2016.

The third-youngest Arens sister had recently led nearby Crofton to its fifth consecutive state championship, averaging 18 points and seven rebounds as a junior. Plitzuweit had seen her on film and hoped she would attend the Coyotes' summer team camp.

But Monica couldn't join her Crofton teammates in Vermillion. She had construction camp.

"What do you mean construction camp? What even is that?" Plitzuweit laughs at the memory. "I didn't

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really appreciate how important that was until we visited Monica early in her senior year.”

During that trip to the family farm, the first-year coach saw the shed Monica and Allison had been working on. The two had poured the concrete and were in the process of wiring it, an impressive display which, as Plitzuweit has learned, barely scratched the surface of their unique skill sets.

Allison, who will student-teach for a year in Beresford after graduation, is a talented painter and baker (she makes wedding cakes). Monica drew praise for her willingness to learn and her toughness. She wanted to play football as a youngster — and probably could have, according to her parents.

“There’s so much to them,” Plitzuweit said. “They are so talented in so many different ways.”

Life on the farm helped shape Allison and Monica, both as basketball players and as sisters.

Some chores, like cleaning out a barn or walking a half-mile to feed their 80 rabbits, were conducive to sibling bonding. Others were more competitive.

Their father, Gary Arens, would task them with grabbing and knocking down the baby calves. They would break off into two-person teams, determined to not let their calf get away. It was their little competition, he explained. But their work ethic and the teamwork, they had it at a young age because they did a lot of things together.

“I probably took it for granted back then,” admitted Bridget, who works at the elementary school in Crofton and is an assistant coach at Crofton High, where their youngest sister, Alexis, is a junior. “But a lot of what we did on the farm, it translated to athletics.”

When it came time for Bridget to start looking at colleges, she brought Allison along, telling her younger sister that she had to like wherever she went, because otherwise she wouldn’t go there.

“Bridget led the way by deciding which one we liked,” said Allison of her commitment to USD. “Then Monica followed me.”

Allison played two seasons with Bridget before she graduated and Monica entered the program. As Allison forged an impressive junior campaign, her tough-as-nails younger sister appeared in all 36 games for the Coyotes, averaging 3.2 points in her first season.

“Allison is a great leader, which helps in a lot of things, especially for me,” Monica said. “I was always coming into something new and she was always there to help me out.”

As Monica’s role has expanded in 2018-19, she and Allison have had more opportunity to show off their connection. Allison recognizes the look in her sister’s eye when she wants the ball. Monica knows when her older sister catches her eye then looks away, it usually means a pass is coming her way.

Against North Dakota State in late February, Allison whipped a no-look, cross-court pass to Monica, who caught the pass and drilled an open 3-pointer in one fluid motion. “If Allison’s passing it, I can’t miss it,” said Monica, gently nudging her sister.

Monica admits she had a difficult time adjusting when Allison graduated from Crofton, but she’s doing her best to remain optimistic, citing both previous experience and a group of “really good teammates” who will help make things easier this time around.

“I’m not ready to be playing without a sister again, but I think she’s got a lot of good stuff coming ahead,” she said, turning to Allison. “But I’m not ready to let you go.”

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

South Dakota artist designs retro-futuristic guitars

By **MATTHEW GUERRY** Rapid City Journal

SUMMERSET, S.D. (AP) — At 68, John Backlund feels like he’s yet to get his big break.

Still, he concedes, he’s satisfied knowing there are scores of people who own and play the guitars that bear his last name — especially when that list includes names like Todd Rundgren and Joe Walsh.

“It gives you a lot of street cred to have those guys play that stuff,” Backlund told the Rapid City Journal.

A professional illustrator of more than 40 years, Backlund has been designing electric guitars for roughly the past 10. The cozy living room of his Summerset home is strewn with guitars, the looks of which are

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often compared to classic car tail fins and vintage motel signs.

"Retro-futuristic is one of the terms they use for it," he said. "That's sort of a mythical future as predicted or viewed from the past."

Prior to moving to Summerset in 1993, Backlund and his wife, Teresa Verburg, worked as textbook illustrators at a small firm in Minneapolis. The two took to the Rapid City area having previously passed through on motorcycle trips.

While he prefers playing acoustic guitar, Backlund began sketching electric ones in the mid-2000s that were inspired by design trends of the 1930s, '40s and '50s. Backlund works now with the Ontario-based Eastwood Guitars to bring them to life, and they run between \$1,200 and \$1,600 a pop.

"The people who like them really like them, and I've known about them for probably 10 years before we got together with John," Eastwood President Michael Robinson said.

Most Backlunds look classically automotive, sporting pastel colors and bearing shiny, steel inlays. The first few models are unique in their winged shape, but recent ones take their cues from more recognizable body styles: the figure-eight form of the Rockerbox, the newest model, calls to the Gibson Les Paul to mind.

The Model 200, meanwhile, resembles a Fender Telecaster.

"I didn't try to reinvent this wheel, but I put a shinier, brighter white wall hubcap on the old one," Backlund said.

Growing up in Pipestone, Minnesota, Backlund said he didn't doodle more than any other kid. He entered the art industry as a self-taught artist with little in the way of formal training.

"All of it's instinctive," he said.

After dropping out of high school at age 17 and earning his GED, he briefly studied art at Southwest Minnesota State University but withdrew after six months. He soon moved to St. Paul, where he began working as a freelance illustrator.

One of his early gigs was cartooning for the Saturday editorial page of the St. Paul Pioneer Press.

His career would take him all throughout the Midwest. He and Verburg met in Mason City, Iowa, in 1983 while working in the art department of Decal Specialties.

His foray into guitar design wouldn't come until years later.

"I would sketch little designs for different guitar bodies," he recalled. "I would post them on some of the guitar forums on the internet, in particular one called Harmony Central."

The drawings caught the eye of a luthier in Chattanooga, Tennessee, who wanted Backlund to build them for real. They went into business together for several years, with the very first Backlund guitars fetching prices of more than \$3,000.

Backlund began working with Eastwood about three years ago. If all goes smoothly, he said, it takes three to four months for a rough drawing to become a playable instrument.

Designs are first sketched and refined in pencil. Backlund further polishes them using a 10-year-old version of Corel PaintShop Pro.

Eastwood then works with their manufacturer, which Backlund said is based in South Korea, to determine how something practical can be built from the drawings. Because Backlund doesn't render the guitars as 3D models, technicians must work to see how and where individual parts can be mounted.

"They try as well as they can to make them as faithful to my original art as possible," Backlund said.

Inevitably, a few quirks are left on the cutting room floor. Original drawings of the rocket-shaped Backlund Marz, for example, featured a grill-like cover over the bridge.

The piece would have been too expensive to machine en masse, Backlund said, and would likely have got in the way of players' hands.

Robinson said that most of Eastwood's guitars are sold online, and Backlunds appeal to a small crowd rife with repeat customers.

"If somebody buys one, they buy five or six of them," Robinson said.

That Rundgren, Walsh and other rock stars are among them, Backlund said, is surreal. Rundgren played several of them onstage during his Utopia tour last year.

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"I didn't do it to stand out. I started doing this because I wanted to have guitars that really appealed to me. And it just so happened enough other people liked them," Backlund said.

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

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Mega Millions

07-36-58-60-62, Mega Ball: 10, Megaplier: 3

(seven, thirty-six, fifty-eight, sixty, sixty-two; Mega Ball: ten; Megaplier: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$50 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$625 million

Edwards' 3s lead Clemson over South Dakota 79-66 in NCAAs

By DAVID BRANDT AP Sports Writer

STARKVILLE, Miss. (AP) — Danielle Edwards endured three straight years of a lot of losses before finally getting a chance to play in the Big Dance. With every 3-pointer that splashed through the net in the fourth quarter, it was obvious the Clemson senior was ready for her opportunity.

Simone Westbrook scored 27 points, Edwards added 25 and ninth-seeded Clemson pulled away in the fourth quarter to beat No. 8 seed South Dakota 79-66 on Friday in the first round of the women's NCAA Tournament.

Edwards made four 3-pointers in the fourth quarter to turn a tight game into a fairly comfortable victory. She made 10 of 17 shots, including 5 of 9 from 3-point range.

"It was amazing," Edwards said. "Honestly, I was a little nervous in the first quarter. But once I started going to the basket and trusting my teammates I got a little comfortable. They did a great job of finding me."

Then she grinned.

"Once I hit the first one, I was calling for it whether I was open or not."

Clemson, which was in the NCAA Tournament for the first time since 2002, won a tourney game for the first time in 18 years.

Clemson (20-12) trailed for much of the game until late in the third quarter, when Westbrook made a 3-pointer to give the Tigers a 47-45 lead. The Tigers never trailed again, partly because of Edwards and partly because South Dakota's shooting touch vanished.

Clemson had 10 steals, including four by Westbrook. On one play, she simply ripped away an inbound pass on the baseline and made an easy layup to extend the Tigers' lead in the fourth quarter.

"As soon as they caught it we wanted to be in their mouth, making them uncomfortable," Westbrook said. "That's where we thrive. That's where we get our offense from is from our defense."

South Dakota (28-6) shot just 3 of 19 from 3-point range in the second half. The Coyotes were in the NCAA Tournament after earning the first at-large bid in Summit League history.

Hannah Sjerven led South Dakota with 17 points, 12 rebounds and six assists. South Dakota senior Alison Arens, who had 15 points, said Clemson did a good job getting the Coyotes out of rhythm.

"They put some really good ball pressure on us, they picked us up full court," Arens said. "We didn't see that a lot this season. We prepared for it, but sometimes you just can't prepare for things like that."

South Dakota shot 50 percent from the field in the first half to take a 35-31 halftime lead. Sjerven hit all five of her shots before the break to lead the Coyotes with 10 points.

TECHNICAL TROUBLE

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South Dakota had a 44-36 lead in the third quarter when a rare technical foul hurt the team's momentum. The Coyotes were called for the technical after a substitution infraction.

Coyotes coach Dawn Plitzuweit said the referees told her that one of her players checked in while the ball was in play. Clemson made both free throws and scored on the next possession to cut into the Coyotes' lead.

BIG PICTURE

Clemson: It's another great win in a remarkable season for the Tigers. Clemson was picked to finish near the bottom of the ACC, but has flourished under first-year coach Amanda Butler. Now the Tigers have won 20 games and will play again on Sunday.

South Dakota: The Coyotes looked unstoppable for parts of the first half, but couldn't hit a basket in the fourth quarter while Edwards got hot. South Dakota appears to have a decent shot to make the NCAA Tournament again next year considering it loses just one senior.

More AP college basketball: <https://apnews.com/WomensNCAATournament> and https://twitter.com/AP_Top25

Syracuse NCAA host again; another Final Four run coming?

SYRACUSE, N.Y. (AP) — Syracuse coach Quentin Hillsman couldn't ask for a better place to be — at home to open the NCAA Tournament.

"It means a lot. We know where the path is to the championship game. It's hosting," Hillsman said. "We've been there and done it. We understand the importance of playing the first two games at home. We have a tough road, but we're really excited we're going to be home."

Third-seeded Syracuse (24-8) will meet 14th-seeded Fordham (25-8) in a first-round game of the Portland Regional on Saturday afternoon. It's the highest seed Syracuse has had in the NCAA Tournament. The only other time the Orange hosted the first and second rounds they were the fourth seed in 2016 and reached the Final Four for the first time in program history, losing to UConn in the championship game.

"It's amazing," Orange guard Gabby Cooper said. "When you host, the road to the Final Four is much easier. We've been trying to get back to that since I've been here. Now that we're finally here and we're hosting, we're playing these games at home, on our turf, much better feeling."

Sixth-seed South Dakota State (26-6), champs of the Summit League, meet Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference champion Quinnipiac (26-6), the 11th seed, on Saturday morning in the Carrier Dome opener. The winners will meet in a second-round game here on Monday night.

The Orange have made the NCAA Tournament in seven straight seasons and eight times overall under Hillsman. This is the highest seed Syracuse has ever earned in the NCAA Tournament. The other time the Orange hosted the first and second rounds they were tabbed as a No. 4 seed in the 2016 tournament and reached the Final Four for the first time in program history, losing to UConn in the championship game.

Home court advantage can be a key, with sight lines under the Carrier Dome's Teflon roof different than most.

"It's a big advantage," Cooper said. "The dome is just not a regular gym. It's not your normal arena. Depth perception that tends to throw people off. That's always something you have to look out for. Some other people, they might have a little trouble with it."

RAM TOUGH

Fordham (25-8) earned an automatic bid to the NCAA Tournament by winning its second Atlantic 10 title and is riding a 12-game winning streak, which matches the school record. The Rams, who are 20-3 since splitting their first 10 games, defeated Massachusetts, Duquesne, and VCU by an average of just under 23 points per game to secure their third trip to the NCAA Tournament.

"We are excited to be in a region where family, friends, and fans can come see us play," Fordham coach Stephanie Gaitley said. "I believe in our players and feel we are playing our best basketball at the right time. This is an exciting time of year where anything can happen."

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The Rams' duo of guard Bre Cavanaugh and forward Mary Goulding earned first team all-conference honors, becoming the first Fordham teammates to do so in the same season. Cavanaugh finished second in the league with a 17.3 points-per-game average, while Goulding leads the Rams in every statistical category besides scoring, field goals, and three-point makes.

QUINNIPIAC'S RUN

Quinnipiac has won 21 straight games, second in the nation behind No. 1 Baylor, and 52 consecutive conference games dating to the 2016-17 season.

Forward Jen Fay, a fifth-year senior, is a force to be reckoned with. She scored 20 points in an NCAA Tournament victory over Marquette two years ago during the Bobcats' surprising run to a regional semifinal. She had 19 points last season in a first-round triumph over Miami and scored 25 points in Quinnipiac's MAAC championship game victory.

HELPING HANDS

Fordham's top four scorers — Cavanaugh, Mary Goulding, Lauren Holden and Kendell Heremaia — are averaging 2.4 assists or more per game. As a team, the Rams average 13.2 assists and 11.4 turnovers for a turnover margin of plus-2.2. Overall, they are sixth in the nation in turnovers per game after leading all of Division I for several weeks earlier in the season.

JACKS RISING

South Dakota State is riding a 16-game winning streak, completed its 13th 20-win season in 15 years, and is making its ninth NCAA Tournament appearance in 11 years. The Jackrabbits are 2-8 in the NCAA Tournament and their No. 6 seed is the highest in school history.

More AP college basketball: <https://apnews.com/Collegebasketball> and https://twitter.com/AP_Top25

Authorities identify woman killed in Hughes County crash

BLUNT, S.D. (AP) — Authorities have identified a woman who died after a crash in Hughes County involving a semitrailer and a sport utility vehicle.

The Highway Patrol says 55-year-old Shelli Jones was killed when the SUV she was driving drifted into the path of the semi on U.S. Highway 14 Monday afternoon. She died at the scene about a mile east of Blunt.

The driver of the semi was taken to a Pierre hospital with minor injuries.

Sioux Falls prepares for river flooding

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Officials in Sioux Falls are preparing for flooding along the Big Sioux River by installing an elaborate sandbag system in a neighborhood along the river, while the South Dakota Air National Guard has moved its fighter jets to another airfield.

Between 800 and 900 tons of sand have been brought in to fill nearly 40,000 sandbags to protect more than 80 homes from flooding expected early next week. The work comes as Sioux Falls residents are still recovering from last week's flooding that prompted the rescue of 17 people.

Known as a trap-bag system, plastic bags filled with sand are being stacked in a wall 2 feet (0.6 meters) tall. The bags will be open on the top to allow water to fill the bag before overflowing.

Sioux Falls engineer Brad Ludens tells the Argus Leader the trap bags have successfully been used in Fargo, North Dakota, and other communities.

The South Dakota Air National Guard in Sioux Falls is also on alert. The Guard has moved its F-16 fighter jets to an alternate airfield and pre-staged other equipment in case troops are called upon to assist in the flood efforts.

KELO-TV reports that crews have been stockpiling sandbags at the base for the past few days to protect the millions of dollars in assets and property on site.

Offutt Air Force base in Omaha is still recovering from last week's flooding in Nebraska. A third of the base was covered in water even after crews used nearly a quarter of a million sandbags and hundreds of flood barriers to try and protect the military installation.

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

Key findings coming next as Mueller wraps Russia-Trump probe

By ERIC TUCKER, MICHAEL BALSAMO and CHAD DAY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Attorney General William Barr was reviewing the special counsel's confidential report on the Russia investigation Saturday to determine what should be made public after a nearly two-year probe that cast a dark shadow over Donald Trump's presidency.

The Justice Department was expected to release the main findings as soon as Saturday, and Barr was at the department's headquarters going over Robert Mueller's report, a person familiar with the process said. The person requested anonymity to discuss Barr's work.

The attorney general ignored reporters' questions as he arrived at work.

Even with the details still under wraps, Friday's end to the 22-month probe without additional indictments by Mueller was welcome news to some in Trump's orbit who had feared a final round of charges could ensnare more Trump associates, including members of the president's family.

The report was accessible to only a handful of Justice officials while Barr prepared to summarize the "principal conclusions."

Trump, who has relentlessly criticized Mueller's investigation as a "witch hunt," was on the golf course in Florida on Saturday, and House Democrats were planning to gather by phone later in the day as they waited for Barr's summary.

Word of the report's delivery to Barr on Friday triggered reactions across Washington, including Democrats' demands that it be quickly released to the public and Republicans' contentions that it ended two years of wasted time and money.

The next step was up to Barr, who declared he was committed to transparency and speed.

The White House sought to keep some distance, saying it had not seen or been briefed on the report. Trump, surrounded by advisers and political supporters at his resort in Florida, stayed uncharacteristically quiet on Twitter.

With no details released at this point, it was not known whether Mueller's report answers the core questions of his investigation: Did Trump's campaign collude with the Kremlin to sway the 2016 presidential election in favor of the celebrity businessman? Also, did Trump take steps later, including by firing his FBI director, to obstruct the probe?

But the delivery of the report does mean the investigation has concluded without any public charges of a criminal conspiracy between the campaign and Russia, or of obstruction by the president. A Justice Department official confirmed that Mueller was not recommending any further indictments.

That person, who described the document as "comprehensive," was not authorized to discuss the probe and asked for anonymity.

That was good news for a handful of Trump associates and family members dogged by speculation of possible wrongdoing. They include Donald Trump Jr., who had a role in arranging a Trump Tower meeting at the height of the 2016 campaign with a Kremlin-linked lawyer, and Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, who was interviewed at least twice by Mueller's prosecutors. It wasn't immediately clear whether Mueller might have referred additional investigations to the Justice Department.

All told, Mueller charged 34 people, including the president's former campaign chairman, Paul Manafort, his first national security adviser, Michael Flynn, and three Russian companies. Twenty-five Russians were indicted on charges related to election interference, accused either of hacking Democratic email accounts during the campaign or of orchestrating a social media campaign that spread disinformation on the internet.

Five Trump aides pleaded guilty and agreed to cooperate with Mueller and a sixth, longtime confidant Roger Stone, is awaiting trial on charges that he lied to Congress and engaged in witness tampering.

Justice Department legal opinions have held that sitting presidents may not be indicted.

The conclusion of Mueller's investigation does not remove legal peril for the president. Trump faces a

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separate Justice Department investigation in New York into hush money payments during the campaign to two women who say they had sex with him years before the election. He's also been implicated in a potential campaign finance violation by his former lawyer, Michael Cohen, who says Trump asked him to arrange the transactions. Federal prosecutors, also in New York, have been investigating foreign contributions made to the president's inaugural committee.

In his letter to lawmakers, Barr noted the department had not denied any request from the special counsel, something Barr would have been required to disclose to ensure there was no political inference. Trump was never interviewed in person, but submitted answers to questions in writing.

The mere delivery of the confidential findings set off swift demands from Democrats for full release of Mueller's report and the supporting evidence collected during the sweeping probe.

As Mueller's probe has wound down, Democrats have increasingly shifted their focus to their own congressional investigations, ensuring the special counsel's words would not be the last on the matter.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer declared it "imperative" to make the full report public, a call echoed by several Democrats vying to challenge Trump in 2020.

"The American people have a right to the truth," Schumer and Pelosi said in a joint statement.

It was not clear whether Trump would have early access to Mueller's findings. Spokeswoman Sarah Sanders suggested the White House would not interfere, saying "we look forward to the process taking its course." But Trump's personal attorney, Rudy Giuliani, told The Associated Press Friday that the president's legal team would seek to get "an early look" before the findings were made public.

Giuliani said it was "appropriate" for the White House to be able "to review matters of executive privilege." He said had received no assurances from the Department of Justice on that front. He later softened his stance, saying the decision was "up to DOJ and we are confident it will be handled properly."

The White House did receive a brief heads-up on the report's arrival Friday. Barr's chief of staff called White House Counsel Emmet Flood on Friday about 20 minutes before sending the letter to the Republican and Democratic leaders of the Senate and House Judiciary committees.

The chairman of the Senate panel, Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, was keynote speaker Friday night at a Palm Beach County GOP fundraising dinner at Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort. Trump made brief remarks to the group but did not mention the report, according to a person who attended the event, which was closed to the press.

Barr has said he wants to make as much public as possible, and any efforts to withhold details are sure to prompt a tussle with lawmakers who may subpoena Mueller and his investigators to testify before Congress. Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., chairman of the House intelligence committee, threatened a subpoena Friday.

Such a move would likely be vigorously contested by the Trump administration.

No matter the findings in Mueller's report, the investigation has already illuminated Russia's assault on the American political system, painted the Trump campaign as eager to exploit the release of hacked Democratic emails to hurt Democrat Hillary Clinton and exposed lies by Trump aides aimed at covering up their Russia-related contacts.

The special counsel brought a sweeping indictment accusing Russian military intelligence officers of hacking Clinton's campaign and other Democratic groups during the 2016 campaign. He charged another group of Russians with carrying out a large-scale social media disinformation campaign against the American political process that also sought to help Trump and hurt Clinton.

Mueller also initiated the investigation into Cohen, who pleaded guilty in New York to campaign finance violations arising from the hush money payments and in the Mueller probe to lying to Congress about a Moscow real estate deal. Another Trump confidant, Stone, is awaiting trial on charges that he lied about his pursuit of Russian-hacked emails ultimately released by WikiLeaks.

Mueller has also been investigating whether the president tried to obstruct the investigation. Since the special counsel's appointment in May 2017, Trump has increasingly tried to undermine the probe by calling it a "witch hunt" and repeatedly proclaiming there was "NO COLLUSION" with Russia.

One week before Mueller's appointment, Trump fired FBI Director James Comey, later saying he was thinking of "this Russia thing" at the time.

Associated Press writer Jonathan Lemire in New York contributed to this report.

Anti-Brexit marchers swarm London streets, demand new vote

By GREGORY KATZ Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Anti-Brexit protesters swarmed the streets of central London by the tens of thousands on Saturday, demanding that Britain's Conservative-led government hold a new referendum on whether Britain should leave the European Union.

The "People's Vote March" kicked off shortly after noon and snaked from Park Lane and other locations to converge on the U.K. Parliament, where the fate of Brexit will be decided in the coming weeks.

Many marchers carried European Union flags and signs praising the longstanding ties between Britain and continental Europe.

Liberal Democrat leader Vince Cable, invited to help lead the march, called the crowd impressive and unified.

"There is a huge turnout of people here from all walks of life, of all ages and from all over the country," he tweeted. "We are a Remain country now with 60 percent wanting to stop the Brexit mess."

More than 4 million people endorsed an electronic petition this week in favor of revoking Article 50, the act that formally triggered the Brexit process.

The march comes as British Prime Minister Theresa May, who opposes a second referendum on Britain's EU membership, is easing away from plans to hold a third vote on her troubled Brexit withdrawal plan, which has been strongly rejected twice by Parliament.

In a letter to lawmakers on Friday night, May said she might not seek passage of her Brexit withdrawal plan in Parliament next week. The embattled leader said she would only bring her EU divorce plan back to Parliament if there seems to be enough backing for it to pass.

"If it appears that there is not sufficient support to bring the deal back next week, or the House rejects it again, we can ask for another extension before 12 April, but that will involve holding European Parliament elections," she said.

May's changing stance reflects the plan's dismal chances in the House of Commons after two prior defeats.

She also says she would need the approval of House Speaker John Bercow to bring the plan back for a third time. Bercow has said a third vote would violate parliamentary rules against repeatedly voting on the same thing unless May's Brexit divorce plan is altered.

Almost three years after Britons voted to walk away from the EU, the bloc's leaders this week seized control of the Brexit timetable from May to avert a chaotic departure on March 29 that would be disruptive for the world's biggest trading bloc and deeply damaging for Britain.

EU leaders at a summit in Brussels set two deadlines for Britain to leave the bloc of nearly half a billion people or to take an entirely new path in considering its EU future.

They agreed to extend the Brexit date until May 22, on the eve of the EU Parliament elections, if May can persuade the British Parliament to endorse her Brexit divorce deal.

Failing that, they gave May until April 12 to choose between leaving the bloc without a divorce deal or deciding on a radically new path, such as revoking Britain's decision to leave, holding a new referendum on Brexit or finding a cross-party consensus for a very different kind of Brexit.

Despite May's letter to lawmakers, it was not clear what path her minority government would take this week.

The anti-Brexit marchers on Saturday included 63-year-old Edmund Sides, who spent the last three weeks walking from Wales to London in order to take part.

Sides, a geologist, said he wanted to be able to speak to people along the way, encouraging families that have been split between Leave and Remain to mend their fences and talk.

"The whole country isn't doing enough of that," he said.

He is worried about the vicious tone that Brexit arguments have started to take and worries about national cohesion.

"People fear the atmosphere is very dangerous in this country," Sides said.

Danica Kirka contributed to this report.

Follow AP's full coverage of Brexit at: <https://www.apnews.com/Brexit>

Beyond Mueller report, Trump faces flurry of legal perils

By JIM MUSTIAN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — President Donald Trump still has to contend with state and federal investigators in New York, even though special counsel Robert Mueller has wrapped up his investigation with no additional indictments.

Federal prosecutors in Manhattan are pursuing at least two known criminal inquiries involving Trump or people in his orbit, one involving his inaugural committee and another focused on the hush-money scandal that led his former lawyer, Michael Cohen, to plead guilty last year to campaign finance violations.

The president also faces inquiries from New York's attorney general, Letitia James, who recently opened a civil inquiry into Cohen's claims that Trump exaggerated his wealth when seeking loans for real estate projects and a failed bid to buy the NFL's Buffalo Bills. Meanwhile, a state regulatory entity is looking into whether Trump gave false information to insurance companies.

Cohen told Congress in testimony last month he is in "constant contact" with prosecutors involving ongoing investigations.

Trump has dismissed the New York investigations as politically motivated.

"These investigations could pose a danger to everybody in Trump's inner circle," said Patrick J. Cotter, a former federal prosecutor in the Southern District of New York. "They are very real and very significant. If you're Trump, this has got to feel, in some ways, like an even greater threat than the Russia probe."

Mueller on Friday gave his report on possible collusion with the Kremlin in the 2016 presidential election to the office of U.S. Attorney General William Barr. Its contents remain confidential, but Barr said he will decide soon how much of the report he will release to Congress and the public. As of Friday evening, the White House said it had not seen or been briefed on the document.

The U.S. attorney's office in Manhattan declined to comment on the New York probes but has told a federal judge it is still investigating campaign-finance violations committed when Cohen helped orchestrate six-figure payments to a porn actress, Stormy Daniels, and a former Playboy model, Karen McDougal, to keep them quiet during the campaign about alleged affairs with Trump. Cohen says Trump ordered the payments and later reimbursed him for his efforts. So far, nobody besides Cohen has been charged.

Political observers have continued to speculate that Cohen, who is scheduled to report to prison in May, might secretly be providing investigators with additional information.

"If you've got Michael Cohen, the president's former lawyer, as a tour guide, that means you could go anywhere," former Gov. Chris Christie of New Jersey told MSNBC recently.

Cohen stoked speculation when he told Congress he was aware of other "wrongdoing" involving Trump but couldn't talk about it because it was "part of the investigation that's currently being looked at by the Southern District of New York."

Among other things, he suggested prosecutors were investigating communications he had with either Trump or one of his representatives in spring 2018 in the months after the FBI raided his home and office. At the time, Cohen was looking for information about whether Trump might consider giving him a pardon.

But there was a sign Friday that the federal probe in Manhattan also could be winding down or shifting course: the news that Robert Khuzami, the prosecutor leading the Cohen probe, will step down April 12. The case went to Khuzami when U.S. Attorney Geoffrey S. Berman was recused for undisclosed reasons. Berman remains in charge of other investigations related to Trump.

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The president has denied breaking any laws and dismissed Cohen as a liar. He derided the state investigations in New York as a "witch hunt," calling the state and its Democratic governor and attorney general "proud members of the group of PRESIDENTIAL HARASSERS."

Trump says the payments to Daniels and McDougal were a private matter unrelated to his campaign.

The White House has said Trump was not involved in the operations of his inaugural committee, which raised \$107 million to celebrate his election.

The inquiry into the committee has focused partly on whether donors received "benefits" after making contributions or whether foreign nationals made barred donations, according to a subpoena sent to the committee. The same document shows prosecutors are looking at whether the committee's vendors were paid with unreported donations.

The U.S. Justice Department has held for nearly a half-century that a sitting president is constitutionally immune from criminal prosecution, a conclusion Cotter, the former prosecutor, referred to as Trump's "ace in the hole."

If prosecutors find evidence Trump committed a crime, they could wait to charge him after he leaves office, though the legal deadline for filing charges is five years for most federal offenses, including the campaign-finance violations in question in the Cohen case.

The possibility of Trump's re-election has raised questions about whether that deadline could be tolled — suspended — for the duration of his presidency.

Jennifer Rodgers, a former federal prosecutor in the Southern District of New York, said it's unlikely a judge would allow that because no law expressly forbids charges against a sitting president. Tolling the statute of limitations is typically reserved for circumstances beyond the government's control, like when a defendant becomes a fugitive.

"The DOJ, in fact, could proceed with a case" against the president, said Rodgers, who lectures at Columbia Law School. "They aren't because of their own policy."

James, New York's attorney general, also has a pending lawsuit alleging Trump and his family illegally ran the Trump Foundation as an extension of his businesses and presidential campaign. And she has called for a "full examination" of a New York Times report accusing Trump's family of benefiting from "dubious tax schemes" in the 1990s.

The foundation has agreed to dissolve. Its lawyers have argued that the lawsuit is flimsy and politically motivated.

Experts have said the president is unlikely to be criminally prosecuted over the tax matters, which are far past the statute of limitations, but state officials could pursue Trump for millions of dollars in civil fines.

US-allied Syrian force declares victory over Islamic State

By PHILIP ISSA, ANDREA ROSA and MAYA ALLERUZZO Associated Press

BAGHOUZ, Syria (AP) — U.S.-backed forces declared military victory over the Islamic State group in Syria on Saturday after liberating the last pocket of territory held by the militants, marking the end of a brutal self-styled caliphate the group carved out in large parts of Iraq and Syria in 2014.

The nearly five-year war that has devastated cities and towns across north Syria and Iraq ended in Baghouz, a minor border village where the cornered militants made their last stand, under a grueling siege for weeks.

On Saturday, the Syrian Democratic Forces raised their bright yellow banner from a shell-pocked house where the militants once flew their notorious black flag. Below it stretched a field shattered by the battle, pitted by trenches and bomb craters and littered with scorched tents, twisted wreckage of burned out vehicles, unspent explosives and few remaining corpses.

"Baghouz is free and the military victory against Daesh has been achieved," tweeted Mustafa Bali, a spokesman for the Kurdish-led SDF, referring to IS by its Arabic acronym.

The fall of Baghouz brings to a close a nearly 5-year global campaign against the Islamic State group that raged in two countries, spanned two U.S. presidencies and saw a U.S.-led coalition unleash more than

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100,000 strikes. The campaign has left a trail of destruction in cities in Iraq and Syria, likely killed tens of thousands and drove hundreds of thousands from their homes.

The campaign put an end to the militants' proto-state, which at its height four years ago was the size of Britain and home to some 8 million people. But the extremist group still maintains a scattered presence and sleeper cells across Syria and Iraq. It's not known whether the group's leader, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, is still alive or where he might be hiding.

IS affiliates in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, Afghanistan and other countries continue to pose a threat, and the group's ideology has inspired so-called lone-wolf attacks that had little if any connection to its leadership.

The "caliphate's" end also marks a new phase in Syria's civil war, now in its ninth year. The country is carved up, with the Iranian- and Russian-backed government of President Bashar Assad controlling the west, center and south, the U.S.-backed Kurdish-led forces holding the north and east, and Turkish allies controlling a pocket in the north. The fear now is of new conflict among those players.

At a ceremony held later Saturday at the nearby al-Omar oil field base, a senior U.S. diplomat, William Roebuck, said the territorial defeat of the Islamic State group is a "critical milestone" that delivers a crushing and strategic blow to the extremist group. But he stressed it remains a significant threat.

"We still have much work to do to achieve an enduring defeat of IS," he said.

The commander in chief of the SDF, Gen. Mazloum Abdi, appealed for continued assistance to his group until the full eradication of the extremist group. He spoke at the ceremony during which fighters marched to a military band.

The victory declaration sets the stage for President Donald Trump to begin withdrawing most of the 2,000 U.S. troops stationed in northern Syria, as he abruptly announced in December that he would do. Trump, however, later agreed to leave a small peacekeeping force of 200 soldiers in Syria to ensure Turkey will not get into a conflict with the SDF. Turkey views Kurdish members of the SDF as terrorists.

The Kurds fear being abandoned by the Americans. They are squeezed between a belligerent Turkey from the north, which regards them as a national threat and Syrian President Bashar Assad's forces from the south.

Saturday's announcement came a day after Trump declared that Islamic State militants no longer control any territory in Syria, a victory he had been teasing for days.

Associated Press journalists in Baghouz on Saturday, however, reported hearing mortars and gunfire directed toward a cliff overlooking the village, where U.S.-led coalition airstrikes were carried out a day earlier. SDF spokesman Kino Gabriel said Friday there were IS fighters hiding in caves near Baghouz and that clearing operations were still underway.

The site of IS's last stand was centered on a tent encampment in Baghouz where, unknown to the besieging SDF forces, thousands of civilians were holed up. During the weeks-long siege, an estimate 30,000 men, women and children were evacuated from the pocket, most of them IS family members, a mix of Syrians, Iraqis and foreigners. They were exhausted, hungry, many of them wounded and traumatized by the loss of relatives, but some remained die-hard supporters of the "caliphate."

On Saturday, journalists were taken to the encampment — a wasteland of wrecked vehicles, torn tents and scorched trees. A few bodies could be seen and a faint smell of rotting corpses hung in the air.

Scattered across the dirt amid empty foxholes and trenches were personal belongings, blankets, generators, oil barrels, water tanks and satellite dishes. Cars and motorcycles were turned to rusted, twisted heaps of metal. There were unused rockets, mortars and grenades, as well as a pile of suicide vests.

Ciya Kobani, an SDF commander, announced the end of the operation from the roof of the building with the SDF flag: "We have been victorious against Daesh," he declared.

At its height, the Islamic State group ruled a third of both Syria and Iraq, holding millions hostage to its harsh and violent interpretation of Islamic law. The group carried out massacres and documented them with slickly produced videos circulated online. It beheaded foreign journalists and aid workers and burned alive a captured Jordanian pilot. During a rampage through Iraq's Sinjar region in 2014, it captured thousands of women and girls from the Yazidi religious minority and forced them into sexual slavery. Many

remain missing to this day.

The group also used its caliphate as a launchpad for attacks around the globe, including the assaults in Paris in 2015 that killed more than 130 people.

French President Emmanuel Macron tweeted that "a major danger to our country is now eliminated, yet the threat remains and the fight against terrorist groups must continue." France has been a member of the coalition fighting the IS since 2014.

While it imposed its unforgiving interpretation of Islamic law through public beheadings and crucifixions, the group also carried out the mundane duties of governance in its territories, including regulating prices at markets and repairing infrastructure.

Cornered in Baghouz, the group fought fiercely and desperately to hang on to the last shred of territory it controlled, using thousands of civilians, including women and children, as human shields. In the final weeks, they streamed out of Baghouz, bedraggled, angry and hungry, overwhelming Kurdish-run camps in northern Syria where they are being held.

Aid organizations say more than 100 people have died in the journey from Baghouz to the al-Hol camp in Hassakeh province, or soon after arriving.

Associated Press writer Zeina Karam in Beirut contributed to this report.

Lawyer's office shot at after cop's acquittal in teen death

By RAMESH SANTANAM and MARK SCOLFORO Associated Press

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Gunshots were fired overnight through the window of the attorney who defended a white police officer acquitted Friday in the shooting death of an unarmed black teenager.

But police around Pittsburgh said there were otherwise no reports of arrests or property damage following the verdict that left Antwon Rose II's family distraught but not surprised at the jury's decision, they said.

Patrick Thomassey told WTAE-TV he was called after midnight about the shots fired into the Monroeville building, which sits on a busy street in a residential area. Two bullet holes could be seen from outside and the window is taped up.

Former East Pittsburgh Police Officer Michael Rosfeld was charged with homicide for shooting Antwon Rose II in the back as the 17-year-old ran away from a high-stakes traffic stop last June. But Rosfeld walked out of the courtroom a free man Friday after jurors rejected the prosecution's argument that he acted as Rose's "judge, jury and executioner," in the words of an assistant district attorney.

"I hope that man never sleeps at night," Rose's mother, Michelle Kenney, said of Rosfeld, according to the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. "I hope he gets as much sleep as I do, which is none."

The verdict leaves Rose's family to pursue the federal civil rights lawsuit they filed last August against Rosfeld and East Pittsburgh, a small municipality about 10 miles (16 kilometers) from downtown Pittsburgh.

Rose's death — one of many high-profile killings of black men and teens by white police officers in recent years — spurred angry protests in the Pittsburgh area last year, including a late-night march that shut down a major highway.

Pittsburgh police said Saturday that demonstrations Friday night were "peaceful" and only a couple garbage cans and newsstands were kicked over, both of which were quickly picked back up.

So far Saturday, no protests were noted.

Rose was riding in an unlicensed taxi that had been involved in a drive-by shooting minutes earlier when Rosfeld pulled the car over and shot the 17-year-old in the back, arm and side of the face as he ran away. The former officer told jurors he thought Rose or another suspect had a gun pointed at him, insisting he fired his weapon to protect himself and the community. Neither teen was holding one when Rosfeld opened fire, though two guns were later found in the car.

Rose "posed no threat whatsoever to Rosfeld or others," said the family's lawyer, Fred Rabner. "Make no mistake, there is nothing reasonable or appropriate about the manner Officer Rosfeld took Antwon's life."

The panel of seven men and five women — including three black jurors — saw video of the fatal con-

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frontation, which showed Rose falling to the ground after being hit. The acquittal came after fewer than four hours of deliberations on the fourth day of the trial.

Defense lawyer Patrick Thomassey told reporters that Rosfeld is "a good man. He said to me many times, 'Patrick, this has nothing to do with the kid's color. I was doing what I was trained to do.'"

Thomassey said he hoped the city remained calm, and "everybody takes a deep breath and gets on with their lives."

Michelle Kenney, Rose's mother, said she was upset but unsurprised by the verdict, given other cases in which police officers have either avoided charges or won acquittals in similar shootings.

"It isn't what I hoped for, but it's what I expected," she said, adding she feels her son ended up dead because he was black.

At trial, the prosecution and the defense sparred over whether Rosfeld — who'd worked for the East Pittsburgh Police Department for only a few weeks and was officially sworn in just hours before the fatal shooting — was justified in using lethal force.

Assistant District Attorney Jonathan Fodi declared in his closing argument that Rosfeld had acted as "judge, jury and executioner," and the video evidence showed "there was no threat" to the officer.

"We don't shoot first and ask questions later," the prosecutor added.

But a defense expert testified Rosfeld was within his rights to use deadly force to stop suspects he thought had been involved in a shooting. Prosecutors did not call their own use-of-force expert.

"The prosecution's handling of this case, particularly the decision not to call a police expert, raises many questions," said Reggie Shuford, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Pennsylvania.

Rose had been riding in the front seat of the cab when another occupant, Zaijuan Hester, in the back, rolled down a window and shot at two men on the street, hitting one in the abdomen. A few minutes later, Rosfeld spotted their car, which had its rear windshield shot out, and pulled it over. Rosfeld ordered the driver to the ground, but Rose and another passenger jumped out and began running away. Rosfeld fired three times in quick succession.

The defense said the shooting was justified because Rosfeld believed he was in danger and couldn't wait for other officers to get there.

"He's a sitting duck," Thomassey told jurors in his closing argument, asking them to consider "the standard of what a reasonable police officer would do under the circumstances."

Hester, 18, pleaded guilty last week to aggravated assault and firearms violations. Hester told a judge that he, not Rose, did the shooting.

Prosecutors had charged Rosfeld with an open count of homicide, meaning the jury had the option of convicting him of murder or manslaughter. The prosecution said Rosfeld gave inconsistent statements about the shooting, including whether he thought Rose was armed.

Associated Press writers Michael Rubinkam in northeastern Pennsylvania and Keith Srakocic in Pittsburgh contributed to this story.

Suddenly, cost-cutting states turn friendly to teachers

By PAUL J. WEBER Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Schoolteacher raises of \$5,000 are on the table in Texas — a proposed pay hike that ranks among the biggest in the U.S. since a wave of teacher unrest began last year. But protests aren't why the money is suddenly available.

Texas hasn't even had a teacher strike. But as in other GOP strongholds this spring, lawmakers who have spent years clashing with public schools by slashing budgets, ratcheting up testing and cheerleading private schools are blinking in the face of election pressure as much as picket lines.

Rattled by a dreadful midterm election for Republicans — and looking ahead to 2020 — conservative-leaning states including Georgia, Oklahoma and South Carolina are pouring new money into schools. And to ensure it doesn't go unnoticed, Republicans are making a show of a renewed commitment to public

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classrooms, courting voters turned off by years of cost-cutting that catered to the party's base.

Nowhere is this political whiplash more on display than in Texas, where just two years ago conservatives pushed heavily for private school vouchers and restrictions on which bathrooms transgender students could use. That was followed last November by Republicans losing 14 seats in the Statehouse, their worst election in a generation.

To some, the message was clear. Said Republican state Sen. Kel Seliger, quoting a top GOP official "way up" whom he wouldn't name: "Urban Texas is now blue. Suburban Texas is purple and it's rural Texas that is still red. And then what does that mean for the future" of the party?

Seliger added, "You're not hearing anything about a bathroom bill. You're not hearing anyone utter the word 'vouchers' this session. And I think that's significant."

A nationwide teacher revolt that began with walkouts in West Virginia in early 2018 is still kicking. In Kentucky, recurring "sickouts" for teacher protests forced schools to cancel classes, and a six-day teacher strike in Los Angeles ended with a 6 percent pay hike and commitment to smaller classes.

Elsewhere, new worries over elections are moving Republicans to act on their own.

In Oklahoma, the state's new CEO-turned-governor, Kevin Stitt, made giving teachers another pay boost a key plank of his campaign. He's pushing ahead with an additional \$1,200 pay increase for classroom teachers, a year after several Republican opponents of a pay package were ousted in GOP primaries. In South Carolina, a state budget passed by House lawmakers would give all teachers a 4 percent raise and bump the minimum salary for first-year teachers to \$35,000. Teachers there have asked for a 10 percent raise.

Public concern about education is growing, said Pat McFerron, a GOP pollster and strategist in Oklahoma. "In a red state where Republicans are in control, it's going to fall on Republicans."

Texas is in the middle of the pack nationally in classroom funding for the state's 5.5 million public school students, and teacher pay is about \$7,000 below the national average. In recent years, conservatives have pushed for directing some funding to students attending private and religious schools.

That talk has now gone silent. Republican Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, who pushed the "bathroom bill" in 2017, is now calling for \$5,000 teacher raises, while House Republicans have called for an extra \$9 billion for public schools.

"There's no doubt about it. When Dan Patrick goes from bathrooms and vouchers to, 'We need to give every teacher a \$5,000 pay raise,' his pollsters are telling him you took a bath with educators this time around," said Louis Malfaro, president of the Texas chapter of the American Federation of Teachers. "We're nine seats off from flipping the House."

Not all Republicans are running scared: Some GOP lawmakers in West Virginia and Arizona have proposed measures that would effectively punish striking teachers, but those bills have had little support. And while governors in at least 18 states have proposed teacher pay hikes this year, elections are not always the driving factor, said Michael Leachman of the Washington-based Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

For both parties, "you do have a political constituency that supports public schools that reaches deep into the business community, deep into school boards and parent groups," Leachman said.

Near Austin, Shea Smith brings home about \$55,000 in her 10th year teaching in the Del Valle school district. She took a half-day from work to take part in a rally for more funding this month at the Texas Capitol, where some Republican lawmakers stood side-by-side with union leaders.

"I think people are fired up because of the results in November," Smith said.

Associated Press Writer Sean Murphy in Oklahoma City, Okla., and Jeffrey Collins in Columbia, S.C., contributed to this report.

Follow Paul J. Weber on Twitter: www.twitter.com/pauljweber

Italy, China sign memorandum deepening economic ties

ROME (AP) — Italy signed a memorandum of understanding with China on Saturday in support of Beijing's "Belt and Road" initiative, which aims to weave a network of ports, bridges and power plants linking China with Africa, Europe and beyond.

The memorandum makes Italy the first member of the Group of Seven major economies, which includes the United States, to join Belt and Road, following Portugal's embrace of the initiative in December.

Premier Giuseppe Conte and Chinese President Xi Jinping were present during a ceremony in Rome where 29 separate protocols of the memorandum were signed by members of both governments, with the flags of China, Italy and the European Union behind them.

Luigi di Maio, the Italian minister of economic development, told reporters after the ceremony that his country's goal is to increase exports to China in order to correct trade imbalances and give a boost to Italian businesses and the economy. He said the value of the individual deals signed on Saturday amounts to 2.5 billion euros (\$2.8 billion), with the potential to grow to 20 billion euros.

"Our goal with these accords is to start to rebalance an imbalance for which there is a lot of 'Made in China' coming to Italy and too little 'Made in Italy' that goes to China," Di Maio said.

He said that with the deals, Italy expects "a substantial and gradual increase of exports and we hope that in the next years we can balance out the trade imbalances."

Italy's move appears to also be driven by hopes that Chinese investment in Italy's ports might help revive the country's traditional role as a key link in trade between the East and West.

The signing ceremony took place at Villa Madama, a Renaissance villa designed by Raphael, where Xi was greeted with full honors on the second day of a two-day visit to Italy. He was traveling later Saturday to Sicily.

Italy's involvement gives China a crucial inroad into Western Europe and a symbolic boost in its economic tug-of-war with Washington, where President Donald Trump seeks to challenge China over trade and other issues.

The European Union is also worried about unfair competition from Chinese companies, which are controlled by the Chinese government and benefit from the state's financial backing. EU leaders in Brussels are preparing a strategy to counter the growing influence of China, which they describe as a "systemic rival."

Di Maio stressed that Italy remains firmly rooted in its alliance with the United States, NATO and its European partners, but said Italy must look out for its own economic interests.

"Like someone in the United States said 'America first,' I continue to repeat: 'Italy first' in commercial relations," Di Maio said.

He said that the memorandum would help goods manufactured in Italy "to colonize the world."

"That is a good colonialization," he said.

The Belt and Road project has so far seen investments totaling more than a trillion dollars since its launch more than five years ago, and China says some 150 countries have signed agreements related to the project.

Beijing has marketed the initiative as a way to give some of the world's neediest countries a leg up, helping them gain access to more trade and investment. But it also helps Chinese companies tap new markets for their products while helping Beijing amass greater global influence.

Some governments including the U.S., Japan and India worry that Beijing is trying to build a China-centered sphere of influence that would undermine their own sway, pulling developing nations into so-called "debt traps," that would give China ever-more control over their territories and economies.

China's official position is that Belt and Road is solely an economic initiative with no political motives. Xi said in a speech late last year that even as China moves closer to the center of the world stage, it will never seek hegemony.

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In a plain envelope, a monumental message: Mueller's done

By JONATHAN LEMIRE, MICHAEL BALSAMO and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The manila envelope in her hand held a single sheet of paper.

Wearing a black puffer coat, the woman and her delivery were so unassuming in appearance that she was able to quietly slip past the crowd of reporters gathered in the hallways of the Rayburn House Office Building. Without being noticed, she was able to deliver to Congress the simple envelope that contained a monumental message: Special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into Russia's interference into the 2016 election was over.

The probe had taken nearly two years and imperiled a presidency. It divided Washington, delivered charges against 34 people and drew the wrath of President Donald Trump. Speculation about its findings, and when they would be delivered, had consumed Washington for weeks. Fittingly for Mueller, who never once spoke publicly about the probe, the investigation concluded in a by-the-book, under-the-radar manner.

Before dawn, television crews and photographers began lining the sidewalk outside Mueller's Washington office.

The stakeout had grown as the week went on and the speculation mounted. The media frenzy only grew after Mueller, who is rarely spotted outside his office, was photographed arriving just after 7 a.m. Thursday with his face hidden underneath a baseball cap as he pulled up to the office's parking garage in a gray Subaru.

On Friday, the wind whipped as the journalists kept their eyes peeled on the office's three different garage entrances. Families and tourists visiting Washington stopped over and over to ask the crowd of photographers and videographers what they were waiting for, some amazed they were right in the middle of a story that had dominated news coverage around the world.

In suburban Virginia, a crowd of journalists gathered outside Attorney General William Barr's house with their eyes glued on the forest-green front door of his home. As he emerged Friday morning, his keys in one hand and a brown satchel in the other, Barr greeted his security detail and hopped into the back of a waiting SUV in his driveway.

He didn't address the group of reporters gathered across the street.

As the afternoon dragged on, reporters in newsrooms across Washington and onlookers around the globe furiously refreshed their Twitter feeds and stared at cable channels looking for anything labeled "This Just In."

Television bookers lined up experts days in advance and told them to be on standby in case the report dropped. Twitter users killed time by musing about Mueller as a man with a crippling case of writer's block, just sitting at his computer with a spinning cursor over a blank document titled, simply, "The Mueller Report."

"It's like waiting for a baby to be born," said Rudy Giuliani, who flew to Washington late Wednesday just in case the report was turned over. "I'll hand out cigars if it's good news."

Giuliani may be the president's attorney but he wasn't given any heads-up on the timing; he simply thought he should be near the White House "just in case," he said.

"I'm watching TV just like everyone else," Giuliani said.

Even the president was forced to wait without any inside knowledge. As he strode onto the White House South Lawn on his way to Florida on Friday morning, he told waiting reporters that he had "no idea about the Mueller report" and warned again that the investigation was damaging for the country.

As the engines from the idling Marine One helicopter roared, it was hard for reporters to immediately make out everything Trump said, though his repeated declaration of his catchphrase denial of any Russian wrongdoing — "No collusion" — was unmistakable.

Trump was already at his lush Palm Beach estate, a thousand miles from the White House, when the waiting game finally, mercifully, quietly ended.

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A security officer from Mueller's office walked into the Justice Department headquarters, just steps from the National Mall, carrying a letter. As established by protocol, the document was to inform the attorney general that Mueller's work was done.

Within minutes, it was sent to Barr. Around 4:40 p.m., the attorney general's chief of staff, Brian Rabbitt, spoke to White House counsel Emmet Flood and told him the report was in and read to him a letter that would soon be distributed to House and Senate leaders. Amid the flurry of activity, Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein called Mueller to thank him for his work over the last couple of years and expressed his appreciation for him and the team.

At 5 p.m., the woman with the manila envelope arrived on Capitol Hill to deliver the letter to aides on the House and Senate Judiciary committees, which have oversight responsibilities of the department. She delivered the letter to lawyers for Rep. Jerry Nadler, the Democratic chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, and Republican Rep. Doug Collins of Georgia. The lawmakers were back in their home districts.

Nadler's counsel scanned the letter and sent it to the congressman in New York. Soon after, staff for Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., and California Sen. Dianne Feinstein, the top Democrat on the panel, received the letter.

Once the news dropped, and cable news stations splashed "Breaking News" chyrons across the television screens, elected official after elected official, some more relevant than others, released statements about the report, many calling for it to be made public immediately. Trump huddled with his attorneys at Mar-a-Lago but, for the moment, held his tongue and Twitter feed.

Friday night, the president and first lady Melania Trump stopped by a Palm Beach County GOP dinner at his resort. Trump spoke for a few minutes but didn't mention the Mueller report, according to a senior administration official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to share details of the event, which was closed to the press. The official said Trump had a separate dinner with his family.

Barr, in a far less glamorous setting, was reviewing Mueller's report. In a letter to Congress, he said he may be able to provide some updates about the special counsel's findings as soon as this weekend.

And the waiting game began again.

Associated Press writers Eric Tucker and Catherine Lucey contributed to this report.

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AP-NORC Poll: Majority of Americans favor stricter gun laws

By LISA MARIE PANE and EMILY SWANSON Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A majority of Americans favor stricter gun laws, and most believe places of worship and schools have become less safe over the last two decades, according to a new poll conducted by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

The survey was conducted both before and after this month's mass shooting at two mosques in New Zealand. It found that 67 percent of Americans support making US gun laws stricter, while 22 percent say they should be left as they are and 10 percent think they should be made less strict.

The New Zealand shooting on March 15 did not appear to have an impact on Americans' support for new gun laws; support for tighter gun laws was the same in interview conduct before and after the shooting.

While a majority of Americans have consistently said they support stronger gun laws, proposals have stalled repeatedly in Congress in recent years, a marked contrast to New Zealand and some other countries, such as Australia, that have acted swiftly after a mass shooting. Less than a week after the mosque shootings, New Zealand moved to ban "military-style" semi-automatic weapons and high-capacity magazines; similarly, after a mass shooting in 1996, Australia enacted sweeping gun bans within two weeks.

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The new poll suggests many Americans would support similar measures, but there's a wide gulf between Democrats and Republicans on banning specific types of guns. Overall, 6 in 10 Americans support a ban on AR-15 rifles and similar semiautomatic weapons. Roughly 8 in 10 Democrats, but just about 4 in 10 Republicans, support that policy.

Republicans are also far less likely than Democrats to think that making it harder to buy a gun would prevent mass shootings, 36 percent to 81 percent. Overall, 58 percent of Americans think it would.

Still, some gun restrictions get wide support across party lines. Wide shares of both Democrats and Republicans support a universal background check requirement, along with allowing courts to prevent some people from buying guns if they are considered dangerous to themselves or others, even if they have not committed crimes.

In contrast to New Zealand, the United States has enacted few national restrictions in recent years. In part, that's a reflection of gun rights being enshrined in the U.S. Constitution; in a poll by the Pew Research Center in spring of 2017, 74 percent of gun owners said the right to own guns is essential to their own sense of freedom.

That poll also found that gun owners were far more likely than those who don't own guns to contact public officials about gun policy or donate to organizations that take a stance on the issue.

A divided Congress after last year's midterm elections only serves to make any new national gun laws unlikely for the foreseeable future.

Overall support for stricter gun laws is unchanged since an AP-NORC poll conducted one year ago, a month after the school shooting in Parkland, Florida, that left 17 people killed. The post-Parkland poll marked an increase in support for stricter gun laws, from 61 percent in October 2017.

But the strength of that support appears to have ebbed. The percentage who say gun laws should be made much stricter, rather than just somewhat stricter, drifted down slightly after reaching a peak in the post-Parkland poll, from 45 percent then to 39 percent now.

The poll showed a wide share of Americans say safety in churches, synagogues, mosques and other places of worship has worsened over the past two decades. Sixty-one percent say religious houses have grown less safe over the last two decades. Slightly more said so after the New Zealand shooting than before, 64 percent to 57 percent.

Nearly 7 in 10 believe elementary and high schools have become less safe than they used to be. And 57 percent say the same about colleges and universities.

Charlene Bates, who works in the library at a high school in Idaho, said she believes a combination of factors has made schools less safe than in the past. Mental illness, parents who aren't as engaged in their kids' lives, social media and violent video games are among the reasons she cites for gun violence in schools.

"There are a lot of kids that you're just unsure about, they're kind of unstable," said Bates, 46, from Pocatello, about 235 miles east of Boise. There are some students who are quiet, keep to themselves and she wonders if they're "like a bomb waiting to go off. ... I think that's what scares me the most."

While Idaho is one of the safest places in the United States, she sees coverage of mass shootings and violence elsewhere in the United States and around the world. Her school's resource officer conducted some training recently and "he said it's not if, it's when. This is very likely to happen even in our community."

"We aren't isolated," she said.

When it comes to places of entertainment, the public has mixed views. Nearly half consider concerts to be less safe than they were, and about as many say the same of bars and restaurants. Fewer — roughly a third — say sporting events have gotten less safe.

While many consider public transportation systems to be less safe, about a third of Americans say airports have gotten more safe over 20 years — likely a reflection of the stepped up security since the 9/11 terror attacks.

Pane reported from Boise, Idaho.

The AP-NORC poll of 1,063 adults was conducted Mar. 14-18 using a sample drawn from NORC's proba-

bility-based AmeriSpeak Panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 4.1 percentage points.

Online:

AP-NORC Center: <http://www.apnorc.org/>

Q&A: The end of the Islamic State group's "caliphate"

By ZEINA KARAM Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — The announcement of victory over the Islamic State group in Syria marks the end of the extremists' self-styled caliphate, a proto-state in which they held millions hostage to their dark and brutal vision.

But IS, which traces its roots back to the bloody emergence of al-Qaida in Iraq after the 2003 U.S.-led invasion, has survived past defeats and is already waging a low-level insurgency in areas it was driven from months or even years ago.

The grueling 4 1/2-year campaign to drive IS from the territories it once held has left entire towns and neighborhoods in ruins, in both war-torn Syria and Iraq. If the long-standing grievances of Sunni Muslims in both countries continue to fester, the extremists could rise again.

WHAT HAS ENDED EXACTLY?

What is over is the Islamic State group's physical "caliphate," after the Syrian Democratic Forces, a Kurdish-led group supported by the United States, declared on Saturday the capture of the last tiny patch of territory controlled by the militants, in the eastern Syrian village of Baghouz.

That domain once stretched over large parts of Syria and Iraq, which the group conquered in a blitz in the summer of 2014, capturing towns and cities, including Mosul, Iraq's second-largest.

The fighters bulldozed berms along the border and proclaimed a contiguous caliphate stretching across a third of both countries. At its height, the territory was the size of Britain, stretching from near the northern Syrian town of Aleppo to the outskirts of the Iraqi capital, Baghdad, and home to 8 million people.

The extremists governed under a harsh and violent interpretation of Islam. They massacred those who resisted their rule and beheaded hostages, including Western journalists and foreign aid workers, in gruesome videos circulated online. Alleged adulterers were stoned to death, those believed to be gay were thrown from the tops of buildings, and children were made to watch the atrocities as part of their brainwashing. The group captured thousands of women from Iraq's Yazidi minority, forcing them into sexual slavery.

IS also carried out the more mundane actions of a state — collecting taxes, printing school textbooks, minting its own currency and restoring public infrastructure. It was an experiment in statehood that not even al-Qaida ever tried on a significant scale.

From its de facto capital of Raqqa, in northern Syria, its leaders plotted spectacular attacks abroad, including the 2015 Paris attacks that killed 130 people. As IS began to hemorrhage territory, it began opportunistically claiming attacks without any evidence of its involvement.

The self-proclaimed caliphate attracted tens of thousands of people from around the world, lured by the group's online activism and slickly produced propaganda videos. Young, troubled men were eager to wage war against those branded enemies of Islam, while others were drawn to the promise of life in an Islamic state governed by God's law.

That physical "caliphate" was declared dead, for now.

WHAT IS THE COST OF LIBERATION?

The grueling four-year air and ground campaign against IS has killed or wounded tens of thousands of people, driven hundreds of thousands from their homes and left a swath of destruction stretching from

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the suburbs of Damascus to central Iraq.

The major cities IS once held — Mosul, Raqqa, Fallujah and Ramadi — have all seen major devastation. The group put up fierce resistance nearly everywhere, using civilians as human shields and launching waves of car bomb and suicide attacks. As it slowly retreated, it left behind booby traps and explosives that in many areas have yet to be cleared.

The U.S.-led coalition dropped tens of thousands of bombs over Syria and Iraq to help its allies on the ground advance, sometimes pulverizing entire city blocks. Syrian government forces backed by Russian air power battled IS in some areas, as did Iraq's state-sanctioned militias, with help from Iran.

The death toll from the campaign remains uncounted. In a report released last year, the coalition confirmed the deaths of 1,139 civilians in airstrikes conducted between August 2014 and November 2018. Rights groups say the number is much higher.

An Associated Press investigation found at least 9,000 civilians died in the assault to retake Mosul alone. In Raqqa, the U.S.-backed campaign killed hundreds of civilians and caused destruction on a massive scale.

Syria is still mired in civil war, and Iraq estimates it will need \$100 billion to rebuild. Local leaders in Mosul say they need that much for their city alone. No one has offered to foot the bill, and hard-hit areas remain empty, even years later.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The official declaration of victory is of mostly symbolic value. Thousands of IS militants have dispersed and gone to ground, and U.S. defense officials have warned that IS could stage a comeback in Syria within a year if military and counterterrorism pressure is eased.

"They've cut the trunk of this malignant tree, but they haven't pulled up its roots, which are still capable of growing and spreading," Hisham al-Hashemi, a researcher in extremism and expert on IS, wrote in a Twitter post.

Activists who closely follow the conflict in Syria already point to signs of a growing insurgency and sleeper cells carrying out assassinations, setting up flying checkpoints and claiming roadside bombs in liberated areas across Syria and Iraq.

That insurgency could gain strength as President Donald Trump presses ahead with his planned U.S. withdrawal from Syria. The American commander overseeing the fight against IS, Gen. Joseph Votel, has warned that the group is far from being defeated, saying its leaders have dispersed and gone underground.

"What we are seeing now is not the surrender of ISIS as an organization but a calculated decision to preserve the safety of their families and preservation of their capabilities," he said earlier this month, adding that the insurgents are "waiting for the right time to resurge."

The withdrawal of American forces from eastern Syria would open the door for major turmoil as various actors — including the Syrian government, allied with Russia and Iran — race to fill the vacuum.

IS was all but defeated once before, when U.S. forces withdrew from Iraq in 2011; experts warn it could stage another devastating comeback.

And IS has established affiliates across Asia and Africa, and continues to be active in places like Afghanistan, Libya, Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, Yemen and the Philippines.

WHAT ABOUT DETAINED FIGHTERS AND THEIR FAMILIES?

Another major concern is jihadis finding their way back to Europe.

Around 1,000 foreign fighters are currently being held in Kurdish-run prisons in northern Syria. Their wives — many of them from Western countries — and their children are in camps in northern Syria.

Syrian Kurdish authorities are calling on countries to take back their nationals, saying they cannot afford to keep shouldering the burden. Trump has weighed in, calling on Britain, France, Germany and other European allies to repatriate their nationals and put them on trial.

"The U.S. does not want to watch as these ISIS fighters permeate Europe, which is where they are expected to go," he tweeted in February.

But few countries are willing to bring back people they view as a security threat, posing a dilemma for

the Kurdish-led forces as the U.S. prepares to withdraw.

Battle over Mueller report to be pressed by Democrats

By MARY CLARE JALONICK and MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Within minutes of receiving notification that special counsel Robert Mueller had turned over his report on the Russia investigation, congressional Democrats were calling for the report to be fully released, including the underlying evidence. They have threatened subpoenas if it is not.

The demands are setting up a potential tug of war between congressional Democrats and President Donald Trump's administration that federal judges might eventually have to referee.

Six Democratic committee chairmen wrote in a letter to Attorney General William Barr on Friday that if Mueller has any reason to believe that Trump "has engaged in criminal or other serious misconduct," then the Justice Department should not conceal it.

"The president is not above the law and the need for public faith in our democratic institutions and the rule of law must be the priority," the chairmen wrote.

It's unclear what Mueller has found related to the president, or if any of it would be damning. In his investigation of whether President Donald Trump's campaign coordinated with Russia to sway the 2016 election, Mueller has already brought charges against 34 people, including six aides and advisers to the president, and three companies.

Lawmakers say they need the underlying evidence — including interviews, documents and material turned over to the grand jury — because the Justice Department has maintained that a president cannot be indicted, and also that derogatory information cannot be released about people who have not been charged. So if the investigation did find evidence incriminating Trump, they may not be able to release it, under their own guidelines.

The Democrats say it could be tantamount to a cover-up if the department did not let Congress and the public know what they found.

Barr said in the letter advising the top lawmakers on the House and Senate Judiciary Committees on Friday that he had received Mueller's report that he intends to share its "principal conclusions" with lawmakers soon, potentially over the weekend. He also said he will consult Mueller and Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein about what other parts of the report can be shared with Congress or the public.

Barr testified at his confirmation hearings that he wants to release as much information as he can about the inquiry. But the department's regulations require only that the attorney general report to Congress that the investigation has concluded and describe or explain any times when he or Rosenstein decided an action Mueller proposed "was so inappropriate or unwarranted" that it should not be pursued. Barr said Friday there were no such instances where Mueller was thwarted.

But anything less than the full report won't be enough for Democrats.

"If the AG plays any games, we will subpoena the report, ask Mr. Mueller to testify, and take it all to court if necessary," said Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney, D-N.Y. "The people deserve to know."

House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff told CNN on Friday that he's willing to subpoena Mueller and Barr, if needed, to push for disclosure.

Though Trump himself has said the report should be made public, it's not clear whether the administration would fight subpoenas for testimony or block the transmission of grand jury material.

If the administration decides to fight, lawmakers could ask federal courts to step in and enforce a subpoena. A court fight could, in theory, reach the Supreme Court. But few tussles between Congress and the White House get that far. They often are resolved through negotiation.

In both the Clinton and Obama administrations, even when talks failed and courts got involved in assessing claims of executive privilege, the White House decided not to take the fight to the high court and complied with lower court rulings against it.

The Democrats, led by Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler, could also formally ask Mueller to send his committee evidence that could be used in possible impeachment proceedings against Trump, as

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suggested by Benjamin Wittes, a senior Brookings Institution fellow and editor-in-chief of the Lawfare blog. That's the course one of Nadler's predecessors followed during Watergate, although an impeachment inquiry against President Richard Nixon had already started by that point. Grand jury material from special counsel Leon Jaworski, provided through the federal judge who presided over the Watergate trials, became the road map that the House committee used to vote for articles of impeachment. Nixon resigned before the full House acted on his impeachment.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said recently that she's not for impeaching Trump, at least for now.

Duke's Zion Show has successful NCAA Tournament debut

By PETE IACOBELLI AP Sports Writer

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — Everything was set for Zion Williamson's starring turn on the biggest stage in college basketball.

The Duke megastar made his NCAA Tournament debut some 90 miles away from his high school, in front of what was essentially a hometown crowd, with a CBS camera dedicated to his every move.

Too much hype for a freshman? Not this one.

Williamson, as expected, had a spectacular showing and proved once again he's the most prolific player in the game right now.

He scored 25 points in an explosive performance to lead top-seeded Duke to an 85-62 win over North Dakota State in Friday night's first round game.

"Wow," the 18-year old said he thought to himself in his hotel room a day before the debut, "I'm really here."

His debut will go down as one of the strongest in recent memory, and his second-half show was a dazzling display of the talents that have him projected as the top player in the NBA draft.

RJ Barrett led Duke with 26 points and 14 rebounds, and combined with Williamson they made for an unstoppable 1-2 freshman punch. Barrett and Williamson gave Duke two players with 20 or more points in their NCAA Tournament debuts for the first time since Mark Alarie and Johnny Dawkins did it in 1984.

But this was Williamson's show and he could not be contained in the second half as Duke turned a tight early contest into a runaway in the first round of the East Region.

Williamson was disappointed in the Blue Devil's sluggish first half as Duke led just 31-27 at the break. Teammates were in his ear, he said, telling the star to "be me."

When that happens, there's no one in college basketball like Williamson.

He opened the half by driving on two defenders for a layup that drew a foul. He missed the free throw but Williamson answered with a monster slam.

The highlight, though, came moments later on Williamson's breathtaking dribble-behind-his-back-after-chasing-down-his-own-steal layup.

The 6-foot-7, 285-pound freshman outran 5-11, 190-pound Vinnie Shahid of North Dakota State for the ball after he tipped it for a steal. Williamson then dribbled behind his back, briefly losing and regaining his balance with a hand on the floor. That cleared room for Williamson to get to the lane and go up and under for a layup.

Just like that, the Blue Devils were up 40-27 and cruising. The Bison (19-16) never recovered.

"In the second half, we played beautiful basketball," Duke coach Mike Krzyzewski said.

Barrett said Duke, which starts four freshmen, may have been overly excited about the NCAAs. When they settled down and began to play, Barrett said, things came easier.

The Blue Devils (30-5) will face No. 9 seed UCF on Sunday for a spot in the Sweet 16, setting up a match of game's most captivating player in Williamson with college basketball's tallest player in the Knights' 7-foot-6 Tacko Fall.

Shahid led the Bison with 20 points.

North Dakota State coach David Richman knew Duke had the potential for a backbreaking run that would put his team on its heels. Shahid was as awed by Williamson as everyone else.

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"Probably one of the best athletes I've seen with my own eyes," he said.

Still, Richman's spunky team held a 25-24 lead late in the opening half. That was when the Blue Devils settled for too many jump shots, Krzyzewski said, giving North Dakota State the chance to hang around.

Once Williamson got going, Duke showed why it is the top overall seed in this tournament and why CBS is dedicated to following Williamson's journey.

Duke was expected to pick up where it left off last week when it won its 21st Atlantic Coast Conference Tournament title. Williamson was electric in the conference tournament — he went 13 of 13 from the field in a quarterfinal win over Syracuse — and became the first freshman to win both ACC player of the year and tournament MVP.

Now on the big stage with the "Zion Cam" tracking his every move, Williamson was active early with a driving basket and a monster block on the other end.

Then a crazy thing happened — the Blue Devils struggled to score. They missed 3-pointers and close-in shots, mid-range jumpers and driving layups and found themselves trailing the Summit League Tournament champions 16-12 midway through the half.

Barrett and Reddish rallied Duke toward the end — Barrett had three straight baskets — and Jordan Goldwire's 3-pointer with a minute left sent Duke into the locker room with the lead.

Williamson's early highlight came with the game tied at 16 as he took a pass on the baseline a few feet from the rim, rose up and put down a power jam. The sold-out crowd at 18,000-seat Colonial Life Arena watched it unfold and drew in a collective breath before exploding at the result. Williamson played high school basketball in Spartanburg, 90 miles away.

BIG PICTURE

North Dakota State: The Bison closed the season strongly simply to make the NCAAs. With a 15-15 record before the conference tournament, the Bison won three straight to win the Summit League Tournament. They then defeated North Carolina Central 78-74 on Wednesday night's First Four matchup.

Duke: The Blue Devils had a sluggish start to the first — and probably only — NCAA Tournament for many of its freshman stars. But their ability to turn up the intensity will serve them well going forward, particularly if they hope to chase a sixth national title under coach Mike Krzyzewski.

TURNING UP THE D

North Dakota State shot 41 percent in the opening half, a number that dropped to 31 percent the final 20 minutes as Duke dug in on defense. The Blue Devils had 17 points off turnovers to just eight for the Bison.

LEFTIES

Barrett and Williamson were asked if part of their tight bond is because both are left-handed. After a moment, Barrett said, "I guess it's cool for sure," when his coach, Mike Krzyzewski piped in, "Being right-handed is cool, too."

UP NEXT

Duke will move on to face ninth-seeded UCF on Sunday.

More AP college basketball: <https://apnews.com/MarchMadness> and https://twitter.com/AP_Top25

White cop cleared in fatal shooting of black teenager

By RAMESH SANTANAM and MARK SCOLFORO Associated Press

PITTSBURGH (AP) — A jury acquitted a white former police officer Friday in the fatal shooting of an unarmed black teenager as he was fleeing a high-stakes traffic stop outside Pittsburgh, a confrontation that was captured on video and led to weeks of unrest.

Former East Pittsburgh Police Officer Michael Rosfeld was charged with homicide for killing Antwon Rose II last June. Rose was riding in an unlicensed taxi that had been involved in a drive-by shooting minutes earlier when Rosfeld pulled the car over and shot the 17-year-old in the back, arm and side of the face as he ran away.

The panel of seven men and five women — including three black jurors — saw video of the fatal con-

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frontation, which showed Rose falling to the ground after being hit. The acquittal came after fewer than four hours of deliberations on the fourth day of the trial.

Rose's family remained stoic as the verdict was read, with his mother telling his sister not to cry. Rosfeld's wife began sobbing, and she and Rosfeld were hustled out of the courtroom by deputies.

There were tears and gasps in an overflow courtroom, and several people broke out in song: "Antwon Rose was a freedom fighter, and he taught us how to fight."

Rose's death spurred angry protests in the Pittsburgh area last year, including a late-night march that shut down a major highway.

But on Friday, the reaction was measured.

After the verdict, a group of about 100 protesters headed to the trendy East Liberty neighborhood, about 5 miles (8 kilometers) from the downtown Pittsburgh courthouse, and they blocked intersections and briefly entered two hotels, chanting "17" for Rose's age and reading a poem written by Rose.

The family's attorney, S. Lee Merritt, had urged a murder conviction, saying before closing arguments that it's "pretty obvious" Rose was not a threat to Rosfeld.

He said afterward that Rose's mother, Michelle Kenney, was "upset about the state of the law. But she didn't really expect a different verdict," given other high-profile cases in recent years in which police officers have either avoided charges or won acquittals in the shooting deaths of black men and teens.

"She has joined a community of mothers who have lost children in really, really horrific ways," he said.

Defense lawyer Patrick Thomassey told reporters that Rosfeld is "a good man. He said to me many times, 'Patrick, this has nothing to do with the kid's color. I was doing what I was trained to do.'"

Thomassey said he hoped the city remained calm, and "everybody takes a deep breath and gets on with their lives."

Stephen Zappala Jr., the district attorney in Pittsburgh, said he disagreed with the decision.

At trial, the prosecution and the defense sparred over whether Rosfeld — who'd worked for the East Pittsburgh Police Department for only a few weeks and was officially sworn in just hours before the fatal shooting — was justified in using lethal force.

Assistant District Attorney Jonathan Fodi declared in his closing argument that Rosfeld had acted as "judge, jury and executioner," and the video evidence showed "there was no threat" to the officer.

"We don't shoot first and ask questions later," the prosecutor added.

But the former officer told the jury he thought Rose or another suspect had a gun pointed at him, insisting he fired his weapon to protect himself and the community. Neither teen was holding one when Rosfeld opened fire, though two guns were later found in the car.

"It happened very quickly," Rosfeld said. "My intent was to end the threat that was made against me."

A defense expert testified Rosfeld was within his rights to use deadly force to stop suspects he thought had been involved in a shooting.

Rose had been riding in the front seat of the cab when another occupant, Zaijuan Hester, in the back, rolled down a window and shot at two men on the street, hitting one in the abdomen. A few minutes later, Rosfeld spotted their car, which had its rear windshield shot out, and pulled it over. Rosfeld ordered the driver to the ground, but Rose and another passenger jumped out and began running away. Rosfeld fired three times in quick succession.

The defense said the shooting was justified because Rosfeld believed he was in danger and couldn't wait for other officers to get there.

"He's a sitting duck," Thomassey told jurors in his closing argument, asking them to consider "the standard of what a reasonable police officer would do under the circumstances."

Prosecutors had charged Rosfeld with an open count of homicide, meaning the jury had the option of convicting him of murder or manslaughter. The prosecution said Rosfeld gave inconsistent statements about the shooting, including whether he thought Rose was armed.

Hester, 18, pleaded guilty last week to aggravated assault and firearms violations. Hester told a judge that he, not Rose, did the shooting.

This story has been corrected to show that Thomassey said Rosfeld referred to Rose's "color," not his "race."

Associated Press writer Michael Rubinkam in northeastern Pennsylvania contributed to this story.

Flight attendant detained by immigration on return to US

By AMY TAXIN Associated Press

A Texas flight attendant who was enrolled in the government's program for "Dreamers" flew to Mexico for work and was stopped by immigration authorities who forced her to spend more than a month in detention, her attorney said.

Selene Saavedra Roman, 28, who immigrated illegally to the U.S. as a child, was released Friday from a detention center in Conroe, Texas, according to a statement from Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

"Being released is an indescribable feeling," she said through a spokesman. "I cried and hugged my husband and never wanted to let go. I am thankful and grateful for the amazing people that came to fight for me, and it fills my heart. Thank you to everyone that has supported. I am just so happy to have my freedom back."

Originally from Peru and married to an American citizen, she raised concerns with Mesa Airlines about her immigration status after being assigned to an international flight, attorney Belinda Arroyo said.

The airline assured her she would be fine, but she was stopped by U.S. authorities on Feb. 12, when she returned to Houston, and was sent to detention, where she remained for more than five weeks, Arroyo said.

Soon after her lawyer, her husband, the airline and a flight attendants' group publicly demanded her release, Saavedra Roman called to tell her husband she was getting out.

"She was crying and she said, 'Please come get me,'" her husband, David Watkins, told reporters.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement said the agency was looking into her status. Earlier, the agency said Saavedra Roman did not have a valid document to enter the country and was being detained while going through immigration court proceedings.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services — the agency that oversees the program known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA — declined to discuss the case. But the agency says on its website that participants who travel outside the country without a special document allowing them to do so are no longer covered by the program.

The agency no longer issues the document to the program's enrollees, according to the website.

People enrolled in the program are commonly referred to as "Dreamers," based on never-passed proposals in Congress called the DREAM Act.

The Trump administration sought to end the Obama-era program but was blocked by litigation. New applications have been halted, but renewals continue for hundreds of thousands of immigrants already enrolled.

In a joint statement with the Association of Flight Attendants, Mesa Airlines chief executive Jonathan Ornstein apologized to Saavedra Roman and asked U.S. authorities to release her, arguing that it was unfair to continually detain someone "over something that is nothing more than an administrative error and a misunderstanding."

"She should have never been advised that she could travel," Arroyo said. "It was a big mistake."

Saavedra Roman — who is scheduled to appear before an immigration judge in April — attended Texas A&M University, where she met her husband.

Watkins said he was not initially worried about her assignment because they already obtained approval from Citizenship and Immigration Services to apply for her green card as the wife of an American citizen. She has no criminal record and has long paid her taxes, he said, and she checked with her employer before the trip.

Then she was detained. He could visit her only once a week and could only see her through thick glass. She sounded hopeless, he said.

"I told her, 'Even if you get deported to Peru, I'll just go with you,'" he said to reporters. "Regardless of whatever happens in the future, I am not giving up. I am going to keep fighting."

In a statement, the union representing Saavedra Roman and her colleagues said the event "highlights the urgency of commonsense immigration reform and resolution for America's children who are part of DACA."

Associated Press Writer Terry Wallace contributed to this report.

Indonesian airline wants to cancel Boeing order after crash

NINIEK KARMINI Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — In a blow for Boeing, Indonesia's flag carrier is seeking the cancellation of a multibillion dollar order for 49 of the manufacturer's 737 Max 8 jets, citing a loss of confidence after two crashes within five months.

It is the first announcement of a cancellation since Boeing's new model aircraft were grounded following fatal crashes in Indonesia and Ethiopia.

PT Garuda Indonesia, which had ordered 50 Max 8 jets in 2014 and had received just one plane last year, sent a letter to Boeing last week requesting to cancel the order worth \$4.9 billion, company spokesman Ikhsan Rosan said Friday. The carrier has so far paid Boeing about \$26 million for the order.

Garuda joined other airlines worldwide in grounding its one Max 8 jet after the crash of an Ethiopian Airlines flight this month which killed all 157 people aboard. It came less than five months after 189 people died in the Oct. 29 crash of another Max 8, operated by Indonesian private carrier Lion Air.

"Passengers always ask what type of plane they will fly as they have lost trust and confidence in the Max 8 jet," Rosan told The Associated Press. "This would harm our business."

He said that Garuda plans to meet with Boeing representatives next week in Jakarta to discuss details of canceling the order.

"We don't want to use Max jets ... but maybe will consider switching it with another Boeing model of plane," Rosan said. He said Indonesian passengers are afraid to take flights using any Max model, whether it's the 8, 9 or 10 series.

A preliminary report from Indonesia's National Transportation Safety Committee in December stopped short of declaring a probable cause of the Oct. 29 crash.

Officials have provided scant details since then, saying they are still analyzing data from a cockpit voice recorder that was only recovered from the sea in January.

Meanwhile, in Europe, Polish national carrier PLL LOT said it was considering asking for financial compensation from Boeing or even a delay to deliveries of purchased 737 Max 8 aircraft after the planes were grounded globally following the crash in Ethiopia.

In a statement to the AP on Friday, LOT said it would wait for communications from Boeing and flight regulators on whether to put the Max 8 planes back into service. LOT has five 737 Max 8 planes and is to receive nine more this year. Its total fleet counts over 80 aircraft.

Another Polish carrier, charter airline EnterAir, said Friday it would also seek damages. It has two Max 8 planes and has placed orders for another four.

Earlier this month, Norwegian Air Shuttles said it would seek compensation from Boeing. It had grounded its 18 Boeing 737 Max 8 aircraft.

With Boeing's backlog of 4,600 unfilled orders for Max jets, the loss of the Garuda order figures to have little financial impact on the Chicago-based company. The danger is that other airlines could follow, particularly if investigators fault the plane for the accidents in Indonesia and Ethiopia.

"We think other cancellations may follow as global customers remain spooked after two crashes with seemingly similar causes," Jim Corridore, an airline analyst with CFRA Research, said in a note to clients.

Corridore said, however, that if Boeing delivers a software patch to a flight-control system suspected in the crashes, and the planes are allowed to resume flying, "most customers will be reassured." He said investors will eventually focus on strong demand for airliners.

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The Wall Street Journal reported late Friday that federal investigators are looking into whether Boeing gave U.S. regulators and the company's customers incomplete or misleading information about the jets. The report cited people familiar with the matter who were not named.

Earlier this week, a person briefed on the matter told The Associated Press that U.S. prosecutors are looking into the development of the 737 Max jets. The Transportation Department's inspector general is also investigating the FAA's approval of jets, a U.S. official told AP.

Boeing Co. shares closed Friday down \$10.53, or 2.8 percent, at \$362.17 amid a broad stock market decline. Boeing shares have dropped 14 percent since the Ethiopia Airlines crash.

AP Airline Writer David Koenig in Dallas contributed to this report.

'Brace ourselves': Cyclone death toll tops 600 in Africa

By CARA ANNA and FARAI MUTSAKA Associated Press

BEIRA, Mozambique (AP) — With the flooding easing in parts of cyclone-stricken Mozambique on Friday, fears are rising that the waters could yield up many more bodies. The confirmed number of people killed in Mozambique and neighboring Zimbabwe and Malawi climbed past 600.

Eight days after Cyclone Idai struck southeast Africa's Indian Ocean coast, touching off some of the worst flooding in decades, the homeless, hungry and injured slowly made their way from devastated inland areas to the port city of Beira, which was heavily damaged itself but has emerged as the nerve center for rescue efforts.

"Some were wounded. Some were bleeding," said Julia Castigo, a Beira resident who watched them arrive. "Some had feet white like flour for being in the water for so long."

Aid workers are seeing many children who have been separated from their parents in the chaos or orphaned.

Elhadj As Sy, secretary-general of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, said the relief efforts so far "are nowhere near the scale and magnitude of the problem," and the humanitarian needs are likely to grow in the coming weeks and months.

"We should brace ourselves," he said.

Helicopters set off into the rain for another day of efforts to find people clinging to rooftops and trees.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres appealed for stepped up support for victims of Idai saying the U.N. and its humanitarian partners are scaling up the response but "far greater international support is needed."

The U.N. chief said in a statement that "with crops destroyed in the breadbasket of Mozambique more people are at risk of food insecurity in all three countries."

With water and sanitation systems largely destroyed, waterborne diseases are also a growing concern.

"The situation is simply horrendous. There is no other way to describe it," As Sy said after touring camps for the growing number of displaced. "Three thousand people who are living in a school that has 15 classrooms and six, only six, toilets. You can imagine how much we are sitting on a water and sanitation ticking bomb."

The death toll in Mozambique rose to 293, with an untold number of people missing and the mortuary at Beira's central hospital already reported full. Deaths could soar beyond the 1,000 predicted by the country's president earlier this week, As Sy said.

The number of dead was put at 259 in Zimbabwe and 56 in Malawi.

Thousands made the trek from inland Mozambique toward Beira, some walking along roads carved away by the raging waters. Hundreds of others arrived by boat, ferried by fishermen who plucked stranded people from patches of land that had been turned into islands. Many of the arrivals were children.

In Beira, people salvaged the metal strips of roofs that had been peeled away like the skin of a fruit. Downed trees littered the streets.

And yet there were flashes of life as it used to be. White wedding dresses stood pristine behind a shop

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window that hadn't shattered.

A downtown sidewalk was Marta Ben's new home. The 30-year-old mother of five clutched a teary child to her hip as she described the sudden horror of the storm that destroyed their home in Beira.

"I've never seen anything like this," she said, barefoot, a cooking pot bubbling nearby. "We were not warned. Suddenly the roof flew away."

She and others now homeless begged passers-by for help, saying they had received nothing from the government or aid groups, not even bread.

In Zimbabwe, where roads began to open and some basic communications were set up, a fuller picture of the extent of the damage began to emerge.

The victims included a mother buried in the same grave with her child; headmasters missing together with dozens of students; illegal gold and diamond miners swept away by raging rivers; and police officers washed away with their prisoners.

In the city of Mutare, Maina Chisiriirwa said she buried her son-in-law, who had gone to the diamond fields to mine illegally.

"There are no jobs and all he wanted was to feed his family. He was with his colleagues. They thought it would be easier to mine since the rains would keep the guards and the police away from patrolling," Chisiriirwa said.

His colleagues survived, but her son-in-law was swept away, she said.

Farai Mutsaka reported from Mutare, Zimbabwe.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today is Saturday, March 23, the 82nd day of 2019. There are 283 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On March 23, 1942, the first Japanese-Americans evacuated by the U.S. Army during World War II arrived at the internment camp in Manzanar, California.

On this date:

In 1775, Patrick Henry delivered an address to the Virginia Provincial Convention in which he is said to have declared, "Give me liberty, or give me death!"

In 1806, explorers Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, having reached the Pacific coast, began their journey back east.

In 1914, the first installment of "The Perils of Pauline," the silent film serial starring Pearl White, premiered in the greater New York City area.

In 1933, the German Reichstag adopted the Enabling Act, which effectively granted Adolf Hitler dictatorial powers.

In 1956, Pakistan became an Islamic republic.

In 1965, America's first two-person space mission took place as Gemini 3 blasted off with astronauts Virgil I. "Gus" Grissom and John W. Young aboard for a nearly 5-hour flight.

In 1983, President Ronald Reagan first proposed developing technology to intercept incoming enemy missiles — an idea that came to be known as the Strategic Defense Initiative. Dr. Barney Clark, recipient of a Jarvik permanent artificial heart, died at the University of Utah Medical Center after 112 days with the device.

In 1990, the romantic comedy "Pretty Woman," starring Richard Gere and Julia Roberts, was released by Buena Vista Pictures.

In 1994, Aeroflot Flight 593, an Airbus A310, crashed in Siberia with the loss of all 75 people on board; it turned out the teenage son of a pilot who was allowed to sit at the controls accidentally disengaged the autopilot, causing the jetliner to plunge to the ground.

In 1998, "Titanic" tied an Academy Awards record by winning 11 Oscars, including best picture, director

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(James Cameron) and song ("My Heart Will Go On").

In 2003, during the Iraq War, a U.S. Army maintenance convoy was ambushed in Nasiriyah (nah-sih-REE'-uh); 11 soldiers were killed, including Pfc. Lori Ann Piestewa (py-ES'-tuh-wah); six were captured, including Pfc. Jessica Lynch, who was rescued on April 1, 2003.

In 2005, truck driver Tyrone Williams was convicted in federal court in Houston for his role in the 2003 deaths of 19 immigrants he was smuggling across Texas. (After initially receiving a life sentence, Williams was resentenced in Jan. 2011 to nearly 34 years in prison.)

Ten years ago: The Obama administration unveiled a plan to take over up to \$1 trillion in sour mortgage securities with the help of private investors; Wall Street responded by hurtling the Dow Jones industrials upward nearly 500 points. Japan defended its 2006 World Baseball Classic title with a 5-3 win over South Korea at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles.

Five years ago: During a visit to Beijing, U.S. first lady Michelle Obama told Chinese professors, students and parents that she wouldn't have risen to where she was if her parents hadn't pushed for her to get a good education. Adolfo Suarez, Spain's first democratically elected prime minister after decades of right-wing rule under Gen. Francisco Franco, died in Madrid at age 81.

One year ago: A French-Moroccan gunman killed four people before being killed by police in southern France who stormed a supermarket where he had taken hostages; the victims included a police officer who had swapped himself for a hostage being held in the supermarket. President Donald Trump released an order banning most transgender troops from serving in the military except under "limited circumstances." The online classified ads site Craigslist removed its personals section; the action came after the U.S. Senate passed an anti-sex-trafficking bill that could hold the website and other responsible for illegal activity.

Today's Birthdays: Movie director Mark Rydell is 90. International Motorsports Hall of Famer Craig Breedlove is 82. Singer-producer Ric Ocasek is 70. Former Secretary of State Rex Tillerson is 67. Singer Chaka Khan is 66. Actress Amanda Plummer is 62. Actress Catherine Keener is 60. Actress Hope Davis is 55. Actor Richard Grieco is 54. Country musician Kevin Griffin (Yankee Grey) is 54. Actress Marin Hinkle is 53. Rock singer-musician Damon Albarn (Blur) is 51. Actor Kelly Perine is 50. Actress-singer Melissa Errico is 49. Rock musician John Humphrey (The Nixons) is 49. Bandleader Reggie Watts (TV: "The Late Late Show With James Corden") is 47. Actor Randall Park is 45. Actress Michelle Monaghan is 43. Actress Keri Russell is 43. Actress Anastasia Griffith is 41. Gossip columnist-blogger Perez Hilton is 41. Actress Nicholle Tom is 41. Country singer Paul Martin (Marshall Dyllon) is 41. Country singer Brett Young is 38. Actor Nicolas Wright is 37. Actor Ben Rappaport is 33.

Thought for Today: "What some call health, if purchased by perpetual anxiety about diet, isn't much better than tedious disease." — Alexander Pope, English poet (1688-1744).