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CLOSED: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

Upcoming COMMUNITY EVENTS

Swimming Pool Hours

Open Swim Daily: 1 p.m. to 4:50 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. to 8:50 p.m.

Fun Night is every Friday from 6:30 p.m. to 8:50 p.m.

Adult Water Aerobics: Monday through Thursday: 8 a.m. to 8:45 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. to 6:15 pm

Adult Lap Swim: Monday through Friday: 7 a.m. to 8 a.m.; Monday through Thursday: 5:30 p.m. to 6:15 p.m.; Friday-Sunday: 4:50 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Tuesday, July 23

6:00 p.m.: Locke Electric Amateurs host Aberdeen

July 30 - Aug. 2

Amateur Districts in Groton

Thursday, Aug. 1

6:00 p.m.: Junior Legion hosts Northville, (DH)

August 5-18

State "B" Amateur Tournament at Mitchell

August 9-11

State Junior Legion Tourney in Groton

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Youth Seminars this fall in Groton

Instead of a fall youth rally this year, local churches will be hosting youth seminars. The group organizing the events had applied for a grant and even though it was turned down, they decided to proceed any way because of the importance of the subjects.

The United Methodist Church will be hosting one on September 11 entitled, "Drugs & Alcohol."

The Groton Christian & Missionary Alliance Church will be hosting one on October 9 entitled, "Sex Trafficking and Dating Abuse."

Emmanuel Lutheran Church will be hosting the third one on November 6 entitled, "Suicide and Bullying."

Each of these events will begin at 5:45 p.m. and will be on Wednesday evenings as the youth have church night any way. Parents and youth will be served a light supper and have speakers and pastors sharing at each event.

Editorial on freezing electric service territory

Dear Editor,

The state's rural electric cooperatives introduced a bill during the 2019 Legislative Session proposing to freeze electric service territory, preventing cities who operate their own electric utilities from providing service within their growing boundaries.

The bill sparked much controversy, ultimately being remanded to a summer study where the issue could be thoroughly studied. The first meeting takes place in Pierre July 25.

The Coalition to Preserve Consumer Choice was formed to advocate on behalf of cities that operate an electric utility, such as Groton, during this process.

When a city grows, consumers should not be denied their right to choose to be served by their locally owned utility. Annexations occur because residents and businesses ask to be part of the city in order to take advantage of all city services, including electric. Rural cooperatives should not have a monopoly over all new electric load in the state.

A territory freeze would result in higher costs for consumers and deter new businesses from locating in our state. It would also lead to less transparency as cooperatives are not required to hold open meetings. Municipal utilities are owned and operated by the people they serve and hold open meetings where the public can be heard.

South Dakotans deserve better than one-sided legislation designed to fully benefit private interests while stripping away the rights of the public.

Sincerely,

Russell Olson
Chair, Coalition to Preserve Consumer Choice



The class of 89 celebrated its class reunion this weekend

Front row: Glenda (Mahoney) LaMee, Jill (Hanson) Sandve, and Collin Gengerke,
Middle row: Todd Thurston, Tina (Brotzel) Kosel, Sandy (Brown) Sippel, Teri (Harry) Foertsch,
Rhonda (Meister) Foote, Becky (Fliehs) Larson, Troy Bahr, Tim Thurston, and Dwight Strom,
Back row: Sherry (Ringgenberg) Miller, Ward Dirksen, Lisa (Nierman) Adler, Robin (Wanous)
Williamson, Paula (Pray) Winther, and Dean Townsend. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

President Orders Flags at Half-Staff to Honor John Paul Stevens

PIERRE, S.D. – President Donald Trump has ordered flags nationwide to be flown at half-staff on Tuesday, July 23, 2019, to honor the life of John Paul Stevens, retired Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court.

Stevens served on the Supreme Court from 1975 until 2010.

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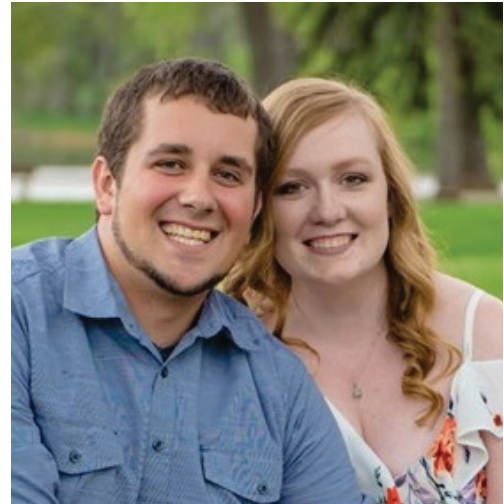
Come and Go Bridal Shower
Honoring Brooke Lesher
(Bride-to-be of Kevin Hagen)

Bridal Shower

July 27, 2019
9:30AM – 11:30AM
United Methodist Church
201 6th Street
Claremont, SD 57432

Brooke and Kevin are registered at Target and would love gift cards from Menards for home improvement projects

The couple will celebrate their marriage in October at Claremont United Methodist Church



Geist Bridal Shower

Please join us for a
bridal shower honoring
Andee Geist,
Bride-to-be of Kody Conlon
Saturday, July 27th, at 1 pm
Aberdeen Senior Citizens Center
1303 7th Ave SE
Aberdeen, SD

The couple is registered at Target, on
Amazon.com, and Lori's Pharmacy

The Groton Area School District is hiring for the 2019-2020 School Year.

MS/HS Administrative Assistant/Study Hall
Supervisor

Yearbook Advisor

Assistant Boys Basketball Coach

Applications are available at www.grotonrea.com
under the employment tab. Contact Joe Schwan,
Superintendent with questions at 605-397-2351.

Applications should be sent to
Groton Area School District
Joe Schwan, Superintendent
PO Box 410
Groton, SD 57445

The Groton Area School District is an Equal
Opportunity Employer.

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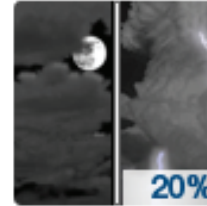
Today

Tonight

Wednesday

Wednesday
Night

Thursday



Sunny

Mostly Clear

Sunny

Mostly Cloudy
then Slight
Chance
T-storms

Slight Chance
T-storms

High: 82 °F

Low: 59 °F

High: 85 °F

Low: 68 °F

High: 88 °F

Warming through the Week
Next chance of rain: Wednesday night-Thursday night

TODAY

HIGHS: low to mid 80s

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
Aberdeen, SD 7/23/2019 4:14 AM

Published on: 07/23/2019 at 12:16AM

Dry high pressure will remain overhead today with highs in the low to mid 80s. Expect a warming trend for the rest of the work week, with the next chance of rain being Wednesday night-Thursday night.

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Today in Weather History

July 23, 2007: High heat indices along with very little wind contributed to the deaths of over 2800 cattle in Brown, Spink, Day, and Marshall Counties. Most of the cattle deaths occurred on July 23rd. The high heat indices continued through the 25th with some more cattle deaths, but protective measures kept the death count down. Most of the cattle that died were on feedlots. The total loss was around 3 million dollars.

July 23, 2010: A United States record setting hailstone fell from a powerful supercell thunderstorm moving southeast across central South Dakota. The record setting hailstone fell near Vivian, South Dakota and measured 8 inches in diameter, 18.625 inches in circumference, and weighed 1.9375 pounds. This hailstone broke the previous United States record for diameter (7.0 inches - 22 June 2003 in Aurora, NE) and weight (1.67 pounds - 3 September 1970 in Coffeyville, KS). The Aurora, Nebraska hailstone will retain the record for circumference (18.75 inches). Several other stones of 6 inches or more in diameter were measured during the storm survey.

Along with the huge hail, damaging winds more than 70 mph along with an isolated tornado occurred. The large hail and high winds caused extensive damage to homes, outbuildings, and vehicles as it moved southeast across the region. Some of the hail went entirely through car windshields, roofs, garages, and campers. The hail caused five minor injuries to motorists on Interstate 90 as it went through their windshields. A child was severely injured when the large hail completely shattered the glass in the mini-van he was traveling. The child suffered numerous cuts, many requiring stitches. Click [HERE](#) for more information from NOAA.

1788: Called the George Washington's Hurricane, this storm originated near Bermuda on the 19th before making landfall in Virginia. It passed directly over the Lower Chesapeake Bay and Mount Vernon, the home of George Washington. This track is very similar to the path of the Chesapeake-Potomac hurricane of 1933. At Norfolk, winds increased at 5 p.m. on the 23rd with the wind originating from the northeast. At 12:30 a.m., the wind suddenly shifted to the south and "blew a perfect hurricane, tearing down chimneys, fences"...some corn was also leveled. Also, large trees were uprooted, and houses were moved from their foundations.

Port Royal and Hobb's Hole experienced a violent northeast gale which drove several vessels ashore. In Fredricksburg, vast quantities of corn, tobacco, and fruit were destroyed. Houses and trees fell in significant numbers across Northumberland, Lancaster, Richmond, and Westmoreland counties. Crops were destroyed, and many livestock perished in Lower Mathews County. Many plantations saw their houses leveled. Homes were flooded with water six feet deep, and several inhabitants drowned.

Historical figures of the time logged the storm's antics. George Washington noted the sinking of the small ship Federalist and uprooted trees. Colonel James Madison, the father of the future president, experienced the passing of great winds and rains near Orange. In Alexandria, damage to wheat, tobacco, and corn was "beyond description." The information above is from the Weather Prediction Center and noted American historian David Ludlum.

2011: Chicago set an all-time daily record rainfall when 6.86 inches fell during the early morning hours of Saturday, July 23, 2011, at O'Hare airport. The previous daily record was 6.64 inches set on September 13, 2008.

1788 - A weather diary kept by George Washington recorded that the center of a hurricane passed directly over his Mount Vernon home. The hurricane crossed eastern North Carolina and Virginia before moving into the Central Appalachians. Norfolk, VA, reported houses destroyed, trees uprooted, and crops leveled to the ground. (David Ludlum)

1898 - A two hour thunderstorm deluged Atlanta, GA, with 4.32 inches of rain. More than a foot of water flooded Union Depot. Many street car motors burned out while trying to run through flooded streets. It grew so dark before the afternoon storm that gas lights were needed. (The Weather Channel)

1923 - Sheridan, WY, was drenched with 4.41 inches of rain, an all-time 24 hour record for that location. Associated flooding washed out 20 miles of railroad track. (22nd-23rd) (The Weather Channel)

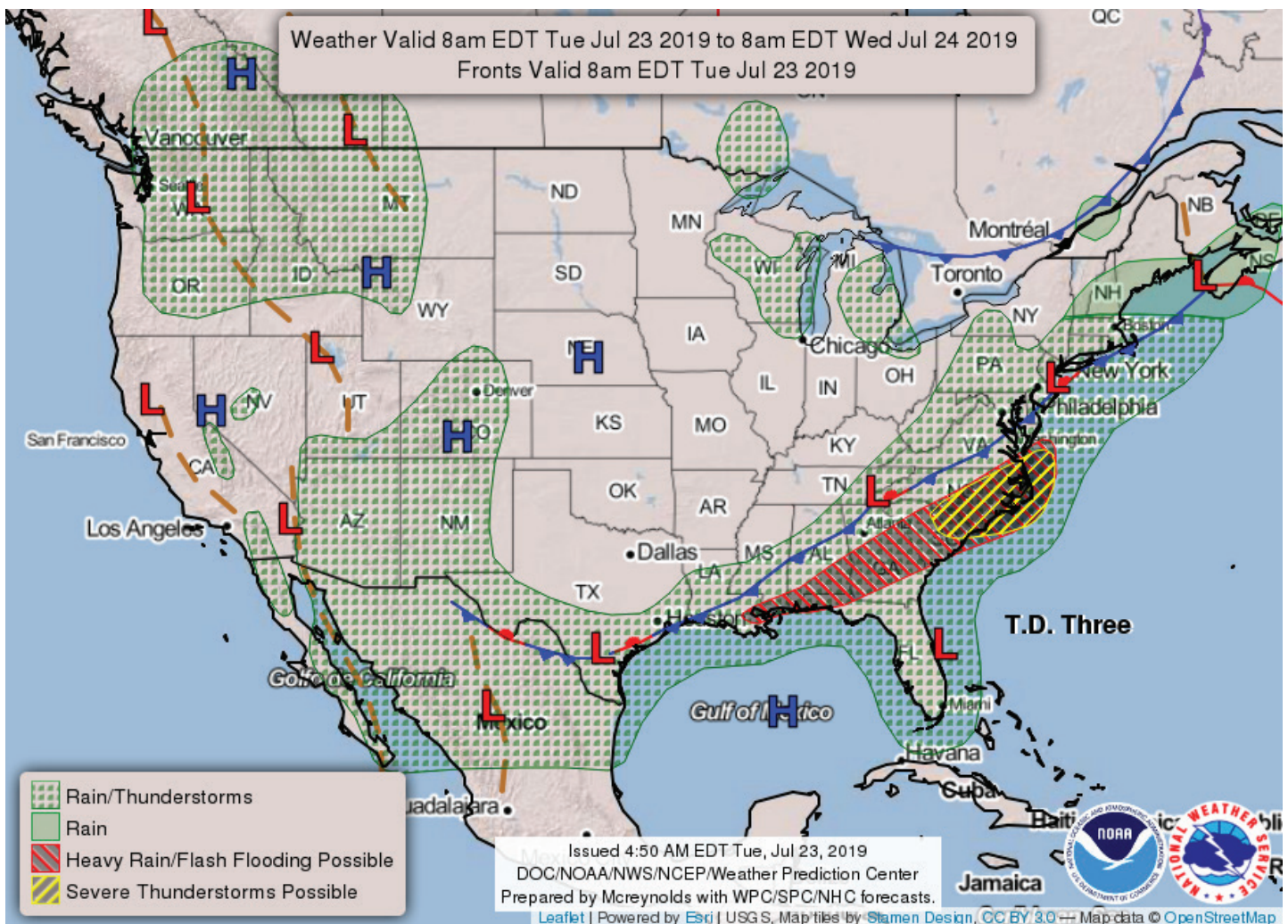
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 77 °F at 5:44 PM
Low Temp: 55 °F at 6:38 AM
Wind: 15 mph at 3:47 PM
Day Rain: 0.00

Record High: 109° in 1941
Record Low: 41° in 1904
Average High: 84°F
Average Low: 60°F
Average Precip in July.: 2.25
Precip to date in July.: 2.87
Average Precip to date: 13.09
Precip Year to Date: 15.59
Sunset Tonight: 9:12 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:09 a.m.



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WANT THE BEST IN LIFE?

Is it possible to actually measure the results of being righteous and showing love? Are there rewards for being like and doing the things that Jesus did? Apparently so.

Whoever pursues righteousness and love finds life, prosperity, and honor, promised Solomon. Notice, if you will, this proverb begins with the word whoever - an all-inclusive, unlimited invitation to everyone.

The rewards promised are tangible: life is a personal gift; prosperity is the physical gifts God gives us, and honor is social recognition for what we do for others in honor of God. We must realize, however, that these gifts are byproducts from the pursuit of being righteous and loving.

Only God is righteous and loving. We will never be completely righteous and loving in this life. So, we are confronted with the importance of pursuing righteousness and being completely loving. Can we know if we are living a righteous and loving life?

Righteous living has two dimensions: a horizontal and vertical dimension. Horizontal begins with my being in a right relationship with God through His Son, Jesus Christ. It begins with faith in Him and our faith in Him results in our being faithful to Him. Others will recognize a difference in the way we live because we are applying His teachings in and through and with our lives.

It is the application of His teachings that leads to righteous living by showing His love, mercy, and grace to others. This is what is meant by the vertical dimension. While never easy, we must, to the best of our ability, commit ourselves to do His work through His strength and power.

Thank God that He understands the difference between attaining and pursuing. If we submit our lives to Him, read His Word, pray earnestly and give His love to others, well be rewarded.

Prayer: Lord, after all Youve done for us, give us no rest until we pursue Your righteousness and love, and share it with others. May we worship You with all our hearts. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Proverbs 21:21 Whoever pursues righteousness and love finds life, prosperity, and honor.

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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 at the Legion Post #39

2020 Groton SD Community Events

- 04/4/2020 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 04/25/2020 Fireman's Stag (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 05/2/2020 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday in May)
- 06/8-10/2020 St. John's VBS 6/8-10/2020
- 07/12/2020 Summer Fest/Car Show 7/12/2020
- 10/10/2020 Pumpkin Fest 10/10/2020

News from the Associated Press

Sentencing delayed for man who defrauded fish farm investors

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Sentencing has been delayed for a former executive who defrauded investors in a scheme to build an \$11 million fish farm in South Dakota.

Tim Burns was found guilty of defrauding investors in Global Aquaponics near Brookings. Investors put up money for what was supposedly to be a high-tech indoor fish farm, but instead of using money for the project, Burns and his business partner, Tobias Ritesman, spent it on themselves.

Burns was to be sentenced Monday, but a federal judge granted his attorney's request to postpone sentencing because Burns has a family member diagnosed with terminal cancer. His new sentencing date is Aug. 26.

Ritesman was sentenced to nine years in federal prison last week and ordered to pay \$680,000 in restitution after pleading guilty to 18 felonies.

Vikings sign rookie LS, who has 2 years of Air Force service

EAGAN, Minn. (AP) — The Minnesota Vikings have signed rookie long snapper Austin Cutting, the seventh-round draft pick from Air Force whose two-year military service requirement needed to be scheduled around team activities before his contract could be finalized.

The Vikings announced the deal on Monday, when Cutting was one of 37 rookies and other selected players to report to training camp. The full squad takes the field for the first time on Friday.

The Vikings also signed Tiano Pupungatoa, an undrafted guard from South Dakota State who participated this spring in the team's rookie minicamp on a tryout basis. Running back Roc Thomas was waived, a week after the NFL issued him a three-game suspension for violating league policy on substances of abuse. Thomas was sentenced to three years of probation in May after pleading guilty to marijuana possession.

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

Pierre man accused of abusing child now facing murder charge

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A Pierre man arrested for child abuse is now facing murder charges.

Twenty-nine-year-old Derek Berman was arrested July 13 and accused of abusing a two-month-old baby. The child suffered serious injuries and died on Friday.

KELO-TV reports Berman is now facing a second-degree murder charge and is being held without bond at the Hughes County Jail.

Information from: KELO-TV, <http://www.keloland.com>

South Dakota guard unit welcomed home from Middle East

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota National Guard unit has been welcomed home after a nearly year-long deployment to the Middle East.

A ceremony was held Sunday afternoon for the 26 members of the 935th Aviation Support Battalion at the Army Aviation Support Facility in Rapid City. KOTA-TV says community members showed their appreciation with prayer and applause.

Gov. Krisit Noem told the guard members their dedication did not go unnoticed because of their exemplary work. The Rapid City-based unit provided aviation maintenance and repair support for the U.S. Army.

Information from: KOTA-TV, <http://www.kotatv.com>

Boris Johnson wins race to become UK's next prime minister

By JILL LAWLESS and DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Brexit hardliner Boris Johnson won the contest to lead Britain's governing Conservative Party on Tuesday and will become the country's next prime minister, tasked with fulfilling his promise to lead the U.K. out of the European Union.

Johnson resoundingly defeated rival Jeremy Hunt, winning two thirds of the votes in a ballot of about 160,000 Conservative members.

He will be installed as prime minister in a formal handover from Theresa May on Wednesday.

In a brief speech Tuesday meant to rally the party faithful, Johnson radiated optimism, and pledged to deliver Brexit, unite the country and defeat the Labour opposition.

"I think we know that we can do it and that the people of this country are trusting in us to do it and we know that we will do it," he said.

Johnson, a former London mayor, has wooed Conservatives by promising to succeed where May failed and lead the U.K. out of the European Union on the scheduled date of Oct. 31 — with or without a divorce deal.

Several Conservative ministers have already announced they will resign to fight any push for a "no-deal" Brexit, an outcome economists warn would disrupt trade and plunge the U.K. into recession. Fears that Britain is inching closer to a "no-deal" Brexit weighed on the pound once again Tuesday. The currency was down another 0.3 percent at \$1.2441 and near two-year lows.

May stepped down after Britain's Parliament repeatedly rejected the withdrawal agreement she struck with the 28-nation bloc. Johnson insists he can get the EU to renegotiate — something the bloc insists it will not do.

If not, he says Britain must leave the EU on Halloween, "come what may."

Johnson will preside over a House of Commons in which most members oppose leaving the EU without a deal, and where the Conservative Party lacks an overall majority.

Follow AP's full coverage of Brexit and the Conservative Party leadership race at: <https://www.apnews.com/Brexit>

10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press undefined

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

1. BORIS JOHNSON TO BECOME BRITAIN'S NEXT PRIME MINISTER

The Brexit hardliner replaces Theresa May and is tasked with fulfilling his promise to lead the U.K. out of the European Union "come what may."

2. HOW CONGRESS VIEWS BUDGET DEAL

Republicans point to the \$1.37 trillion agreement's call for large increases in military spending while Democrats say the deal protects spending on domestic programs.

3. WHAT FBI DIRECTOR'S TESTIMONY COULD PORTEND

Christopher Wray's hearing before a Senate committee could be something of a preview of the intense questioning special counsel Robert Mueller is likely to face the next day.

4. 'WE'RE FED UP'

Puerto Ricans remain unsatisfied with Ricardo Rosselló's apology for an offensive, obscenity-laden online chat and vow to keep protesting until he leaves office.

5. VENEZUELANAS IN THE DARK AGAIN

Reviving fears of the blackouts that plunged the country into chaos a few months ago, the government again accuses opponents of sabotaging the nation's hydroelectric power system.

6. US SANCTIONS SQUEEZE IRAN'S MIDDLE CLASS

Iranians have been hard hit by the collapse of the national currency, accelerating inflation and eroding

wages — up-ending the vital housing market.

7. HUNDREDS OF BLACK DEATHS IN 'RED SUMMER' IGNORED CENTURY LATER

From Arkansas to Maryland, and Washington to Chicago, the summer of 1919 saw hundreds of African Americans beat, lynched, shot and fatally burned around the country.

8. POPE FRANCIS NAMES NEW LEADER OF WEST VIRGINIA DIOCESE

Baltimore Auxiliary Bishop Mark Brennan takes over following a scandal over the former bishop's sexual harassment of adults and lavish spending of church money.

9. MORE WOMEN BEING NOMINATED TO MILITARY ACADEMIES

But an analysis finds men are still put forward by members of Congress for admission to U.S. service academies nearly three times as often.

10. OHIO SCHOOL MAKES ESPORTS HISTORY

A private school near Cleveland becomes the first U.S. all-girls school to launch a varsity esports program.

Kim inspects new sub, wants North Korea's military bolstered

By HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has inspected a newly built submarine and ordered officials to further bolster the country's military capabilities, state media reported Tuesday, as the North increases pressure on the United States ahead of the possible resumption of nuclear diplomacy.

Last week, North Korea said it may lift its 20-month suspension of nuclear and missile tests to protest expected military drills between the United States and South Korea that Pyongyang says are an invasion rehearsal.

The submarine report comes as the U.S. and North Korea work to resume talks after a meeting late last month on the Korean border between Kim and President Donald Trump. Diplomacy has been stalled since the second Kim-Trump summit in Vietnam in February fell apart due to differences over U.S.-led sanctions on North Korea.

The North's official Korean Central News Agency reported Tuesday that Kim expressed "great satisfaction" with the submarine after learning about its operational and tactical data and weapon systems.

Kim "stressed the need to steadily and reliably increase the national defense capability by directing big efforts to the development of the naval weapons and equipment such as submarine," according to KCNA.

KCNA said the submarine's operational deployment "is near at hand." But it didn't say exactly when or where Kim's inspection of the submarine occurred.

The construction of a new submarine suggests North Korea has been increasing its military capability despite nuclear diplomacy with the U.S. that began early last year. North Korea has repeatedly said it's willing to abandon its nuclear program in return for political and economic benefits.

It wasn't immediately known exactly what kind of a submarine North Korea has built. But its efforts to develop submarine-launched missile systems are a serious concern for rivals and neighbors because missiles from submerged vessels are harder to detect in advance. According to a South Korean defense report in 2018, North Korea has 70 submarines and submersibles.

Before it entered talks with the United States, North Korea claimed to have successfully test-fired ballistic missiles from submarines, though many outside analysts say the country likely remains years away from having an operational system.

There has been little public progress despite the most recent Trump-Kim meeting, and the North's release of the submarine photos could be a way to both increase pressure on the United States ahead of any renewed talks and remind its rival of its demands.

North Korea wants widespread relief from harsh U.S.-led sanctions in return for pledging to give up parts of its weapons program, but the United States is demanding greater steps toward disarmament before it agrees to relinquish the leverage provided by the sanctions.

While a submarine that North Korea used to fire a missile in 2016 and 2017 should be regarded as a test platform with a single launch tube, the new submarine is likely to be one with two to three launch tubes that

can be operational, said Kim Dong-yub, a North Korea expert at Seoul's Institute for Far Eastern Studies.

The development of a submarine with ballistic missile tubes would be a "sensitive" issue because it could be linked to an effort to strengthen North Korea's nuclear capability, Kim said. But he said the fact that North Korea still didn't disclose the submarine's capability suggested that it may be aiming to boost military morale at home, rather than threatening and pressuring the U.S.

The submarine's disclosure came as U.S. National Security Adviser John Bolton arrived in South Korea on Tuesday for talks on North Korea and other issues.

Testimony by FBI's Wray could be preview of Mueller hearing

By MICHAEL BALSAMO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — FBI Director Christopher Wray's appearance before a Senate committee could be something of a preview of the intense questioning special counsel Robert Mueller is likely to face in Congress the next day.

Wray is set to testify Tuesday morning before the Senate Judiciary Committee, which is chaired by one of President Donald Trump's closest allies, Sen. Lindsey Graham. The South Carolina Republican has vowed to investigate the origins of the Russia investigation.

Republicans are likely to spend time questioning Wray and Mueller about Peter Strzok, an FBI agent who helped lead the Trump investigation and exchanged anti-Trump text messages during the 2016 election with an FBI lawyer, Lisa Page.

Once Mueller learned of the existence of the texts, which were sent before his appointment as special counsel, he removed Strzok from his team investigating potential ties between Russia and the Trump campaign. Strzok ultimately was fired, and Page left the bureau.

Wray made headlines during a Senate hearing in May when he broke from Attorney General William Barr and said he didn't consider court-approved FBI surveillance to be "spying" and that there was no evidence the FBI illegally monitored Trump's campaign during the 2016 election. Barr has said he believes "spying did occur" on the campaign and suggested the origins of the probe may have been mishandled.

Barr didn't specify what he meant when he said he believed there had been spying on the Trump campaign, but he was likely alluding to the FBI obtaining a secret surveillance warrant in the fall of 2016 to monitor the communications of former Trump campaign aide Carter Page, whose interactions with Russians several years earlier had raised law enforcement suspicions even before he joined the campaign.

Barr has not said such surveillance was necessarily improper, but Trump nonetheless seized on those comments to suggest his campaign was spied on in an illegal and unprecedented act. The attorney general appointed U.S. Attorney John Durham, the chief federal prosecutor in Connecticut, to investigate the surveillance methods used during the investigation and to probe the origins of the Russia investigation. Part of Durham's mandate is to investigate whether there was a proper basis for the FBI to open a counterintelligence investigation into ties between the Trump campaign and Russia.

Wray has previously declined to discuss in detail the FBI's investigation into the Trump campaign because of Durham's investigation and a separate, ongoing Justice Department inspector general probe into the origins of the Russia inquiry.

As FBI director, he has sought to avoid public spats with Trump, but his appearance on Capitol Hill comes amid signs of possible tension between the two men.

President Donald Trump told ABC News last month that Wray was "wrong" to suggest that Donald Trump Jr. should have called the FBI as the organizer of a 2016 meeting with a Russian lawyer offering negative information on his political opponent, Hillary Clinton. Wray made the comment during the May congressional hearing and said the FBI would want to know about any outreach from a foreign government to an American political campaign.

Trump told ABC that if a foreign power were offering dirt on his 2020 opponent, he'd be open to accepting it and would have no obligation to call the FBI.

___ Associated Press writer Eric Tucker contributed to this report.

Deal sealed on federal budget ensures no shutdown, default

By ANDREW TAYLOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump and congressional leaders have announced a critical debt and budget agreement that's an against-the-odds victory for Washington pragmatists seeking to avoid political and economic tumult over the possibility of a government shutdown or first federal default.

The deal, announced Monday by Trump on Twitter and in a statement by Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer, will restore the government's ability to borrow to pay its bills past next year's elections and build upon recent large budget gains for both the Pentagon and domestic agencies.

"I am pleased to announce that a deal has been struck," Trump tweeted, saying there will be no "poison pills" added to follow-up legislation. "This was a real compromise in order to give another big victory to our Great Military and Vets!"

The agreement is on a broad outline for \$1.37 trillion in agency spending next year and slightly more in fiscal 2021. It would mean a win for lawmakers eager to return Washington to a more predictable path amid political turmoil and polarization, defense hawks determined to cement big military increases and Democrats seeking to protect domestic programs.

Nobody notched a big win, but both sides view it as better than a protracted battle this fall.

Pelosi and Schumer said the deal "will enhance our national security and invest in middle class priorities that advance the health, financial security and well-being of the American people." Top congressional GOP leaders issued more restrained statements stressing that the deal is a flawed but achievable outcome of a government in which Pelosi wields considerable power.

"While this deal is not perfect, compromise is necessary in divided government," said House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif.

However, it also comes as budget deficits are rising to \$1 trillion levels — requiring the government to borrow a quarter for every dollar the government spends — despite the thriving economy and three rounds of annual Trump budget proposals promising to crack down on the domestic programs that Pelosi is successfully defending now. It ignores warnings from deficit and debt scolds who say the nation's fiscal future is unsustainable and will eventually drag down the economy.

"This agreement is a total abdication of fiscal responsibility by Congress and the president," said Maya MacGuineas, president of the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget, a Washington advocacy group. "It may end up being the worst budget agreement in our nation's history, proposed at a time when our fiscal conditions are already precarious."

A push by the White House and House GOP forces for new offsetting spending cuts was largely jettisoned, though Pelosi, D-Calif., gave assurances about not seeking to use the follow-up spending bills as vehicles for aggressively liberal policy initiatives.

The head of a large group of House GOP conservatives swung against the deal.

"No new controls are put in place to constrain runaway spending, and a two-year suspension on the debt limit simply adds fuel to the fire," said Republican Study Committee Chairman Mike Johnson, R-La. "With more than \$22 trillion in debt, we simply cannot afford deals like this one."

Fights over Trump's U.S.-Mexico border wall, other immigration-related issues and spending priorities will be rejoined on spending bills this fall that are likely to produce much the same result as current law. The House has passed most of its bills, using far higher levels for domestic spending. Senate measures will follow this fall, with levels reflecting the accord.

At issue are two separate but pressing items on Washington's must-do agenda: increasing the debt limit to avert a first-ever default on U.S. payments and acting to set overall spending limits and prevent \$125 billion in automatic spending cuts from hitting the Pentagon and domestic agencies with 10 percent cuts starting in January.

The threat of the automatic cuts represents the last gasp of a failed 2011 budget and debt pact between former President Barack Obama and then-Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, that promised future spending

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and deficit cuts to cover a \$2 trillion increase in the debt. But a bipartisan deficit "supercommittee" failed to deliver, and lawmakers were unwilling to live with the follow-up cuts to defense and domestic accounts. This is the fourth deal since 2013 to reverse those cuts.

Prospects for an agreement, a months-long priority of top Senate Republican Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., became far brighter when Pelosi returned to Washington this month and aggressively pursued the pact with Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, who was anointed lead negotiator instead of more conservative options like acting White House Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney or hardline Budget Director Russell Vought.

Mnuchin was eager to avert a crisis over the government's debt limit. There's some risk of a first-ever U.S. default in September, and that added urgency to the negotiations.

The pact would defuse the debt limit issue for two years, meaning that Trump or his Democratic successor would not have to confront the politically difficult issue until well into 2021.

Washington's arcane budget rules give each side a way to paint the numbers favorably. Generally speaking, the deal would lock in place big increases won by both sides in a 2018 pact driven by the demands of GOP defense hawks and award future increases consistent with low inflation.

Pelosi and Schumer claimed rough parity between increases for defense and nondefense programs, but the veteran negotiator retreated on her push for a special carve-out for a newly reauthorized program for veterans utilizing private sector health care providers. Instead non-defense spending increases would exceed increases for the military by \$10 billion over the deal's two-year duration.

In the end, non-defense appropriations would increase by \$56.5 billion over two years, giving domestic programs 4% increases on average in the first year of the pact, with a big chunk of those gains eaten up by veterans increases and an unavoidable surge for the U.S. Census. Defense would increase by \$46.5 billion over those two years, with the defense budget hitting \$738 billion next year, a 3% hike, followed by only a further \$2.5 billion increase in 2021.

Trump retains flexibility to transfer money between accounts, which raises the possibility of attempted transfers for building border barriers. That concession angered the Senate's top Appropriations Committee Democrat, Patrick Leahy of Vermont, who said he has "many concerns" with a memorandum outlining the agreement that promised there will also be no "poison pills," new policy "riders," or bookkeeping tricks to add to the deal's spending levels.

The results are likely to displease some on both sides, especially Washington's weakening deficit hawks and liberals demanding greater spending for progressive priorities. But Pelosi and McConnell have long-time histories with the Capitol's appropriations process and have forged a powerful alliance to deliver prior spending and debt deals.

The measure would first advance through the House this week and win the Senate's endorsement next week before Congress takes its annual August recess. Legislation to prevent a government shutdown will follow in September.

Bernie Sanders thinks media is unfair, so he created his own

By JUANA SUMMERS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — When Bernie Sanders wanted to preview a speech about his signature health care plan, "Medicare for All," he did not opt for a traditional interview.

Instead, he made an appearance on "The 99," his Democratic presidential campaign's in-house livestreamed show, a controlled, decidedly on-message pro-Sanders program that streams on a variety of services including Twitch, a platform primarily used by gamers.

The makeshift studio for the show is in a room with a long wooden table, walls decorated with Sanders campaign signs and tchotchkes including a Sanders action figure. Sanders sat down for an interview — with his campaign manager, Faiz Shakir.

"We are doing these livestreams, we are talking to you directly," Shakir said. "One of the reasons is while we appreciate our friends in the elite media, they don't often cover the issues that truly matter to working Americans."

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The livestream represents just one spoke in a communications network that his campaign, frustrated by the coverage he gets in traditional media, has built to exclusively promote the candidate's worldview. Since Sanders announced his second bid for the presidency in February, the campaign has started not just a twice-weekly livestreaming show, but also a sleekly produced podcast, "Hear the Bern," hosted by national press secretary Brihana Joy Gray. On the first episode of the podcast, Gray described it as a "behind the scenes look at how campaigns work, how political movements grow and what motivates the man who has reintroduced big, transformative ideas into politics."

Candidates have long sought outlets to appeal directly to supporters without a media filter, and none more effectively than President Donald Trump. But Sanders' efforts have taken that approach a step further, and there's some evidence that people are watching and listening. His campaign says that the streaming show they aired before and after the first Democratic presidential debate had more than 300,000 views.

"If you go on the premise that Bernie folks think they were boxed out of the mainstream party the last time around, I think the assumption that his folks made is they've just got to kind of build their own universe," said Joel Payne, a Democratic strategist who worked on Hillary Clinton's 2016 campaign.

Sanders' campaign says he is to use the new platforms to anchor his base and to reach voters who may be disengaged with the political process currently but who could be animated by Sanders' ideas and policies.

"This is different from a typical post on social media, which is putting out content. With the live show, we can actually have a conversation with people. It's bringing our supporters into the conversation, but also to bring people who may disagree with us into the conversation," said Josh Miller-Lewis, the campaign's digital director.

In his second run for president, Sanders is finding that the attention he received in his run against Clinton is harder to come by in a field with two dozen candidates. By expanding Sanders' already robust social media presence with streaming shows where they have outsize control offers a test of whether he has found a new way to break through.

"I think Bernie Sanders became accustomed to the level of news attention that a fresh face attacking the establishment normally gets and now thinks, (if) he got that attention in 2016, he should be getting it now, and, if not, there must be something wrong with the press," said Kathleen Hall Jamieson, director of the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg Public Policy Center.

His campaign also says it's a long-range strategy that looks ahead to a general election matchup with President Donald Trump. Miller-Lewis says he believes that anyone who wants to defeat Trump in 2020 has to be able to "challenge Trump's supremacy on digital platforms."

In a recent episode of "The 99," three top Sanders aides spent an hour discussing whether Sanders was "too consistent for corporate media," at times dissecting individual headlines and stories they criticized.

Ari Rabin-Havt, Sanders' chief of staff, argued that the media has a "bias for something new, for something exciting, for something salacious, and Bernie Sanders' continual history of standing up for these issues over 40 years is not new and exciting for people."

In that way, his consistency may have hurt his desire to get more attention. "News is something that's new, and the best thing that Bernie has going for him is that he's consistent, that he's pushing for what he's always pushed for," said Rebecca Katz, a New York-based Democratic strategist. "The problem that Bernie has going for him is he's not making news, he's repeating news."

Joe Trippi, a Democratic consultant who managed Howard Dean's 2004 presidential campaign, has heard the kind of complaints the Sanders campaign is making.

"Every politician who's ever had the problem of, it's not going very well and they're shrinking, complains about their coverage," Trippi said. "The question they need to ask themselves is, Is the coverage diminishing because his support's diminishing?"

Puerto Ricans worry about future if embattled governor stays

By DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — The political crisis in Puerto Rico has escalated to a point where many wonder how Gov. Ricardo Rosselló will be able to govern the U.S. territory in the coming days and possibly weeks amid the massive protests to oust him.

Rosselló dug his heels in late Monday after what seems to have been the biggest protest the island has seen in nearly two decades, telling Fox News that he has already apologized and made amends following the leak of an offensive, obscenity-laden online chat between him and his advisers that triggered the crisis.

But Puerto Ricans remained unsatisfied and vowed to keep protesting until he steps down, no matter how long it takes.

"We can endure anything," said Francisco Javier Díaz, a 30-year-old chemical engineer from the central mountain town of Corozal. "We have the power and the resilience. And the truth is, we're fed up."

Tuesday marked the 11th consecutive day of protests as government officials around Rosselló keep resigning. Even his own father, former governor Pedro Rosselló, stepped down from positions within their pro-statehood New Progressive Party and disaffiliated himself from it in a severe blow to party members.

Meanwhile, Ricardo Rosselló said he will not resign, noting that he already announced he would not seek re-election in 2020 and that he has stepped down as president of his party.

"That way, I can focus on the job at hand," he said, referring in part to fighting corruption and overseeing recovery efforts following Hurricane Maria. The Category 4 storm that hit Sept. 20, 2017 caused more than \$100 billion in damage, threw Puerto Rico into a year-long blackout and left thousands dead, most of them succumbing during the sweltering aftermath.

The island has also seen a recent string of arrests of officials on federal corruption charges, including former education secretary Julia Keleher.

Michelle De La Cruz, a spokeswoman for Rosselló, said he was not available for further comment.

Asked who was advising Rosselló on staying in office, Rosselló's secretary of public affairs, Anthony Ma-ceira, said the governor was speaking with his family and "that carries a great weight." Rosselló's father, Pedro, was governor from 1993 to 2001.

Some Puerto Ricans have accepted that Rosselló will not resign and say they instead will put pressure on legislators to start an impeachment process.

"They have that power in their hands," said Normarie Matos, a 43-year-old financial manager from San Juan. "People are no longer afraid."

Monday's massive protest came 10 days after the leak of 889 pages of online chats in which Rosselló and some of his close aides insulted women and mocked constituents, including victims of Hurricane Maria.

The leak has intensified long-smoldering anger on the island over ongoing corruption and mismanagement by the island's two main political parties that many blame for a 13-year recession and a severe debt crisis that has led to austerity measures including pension cuts.

"We don't want future generations to suffer what we have suffered," said Tania García, a 25-year-old engineer from the eastern town of Juncos who vowed to keep protesting. "This is only going to get stronger day by day."

Monday's demonstration represented the biggest protest movement on the island since Puerto Ricans rallied to put an end to U.S. Navy training on the island of Vieques more than 15 years ago, and more protests are expected this week.

Ready to fight, Trump says he'll watch 'a little' of Mueller

By JONATHAN LEMIRE Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — He won't watch. Well, maybe just a little bit.

President Donald Trump on Monday feigned indifference to Robert Mueller's upcoming congressional testimony, an eyebrow-raising claim for a media-obsessed president who has been concerned for months about the potential impact of the former special counsel's appearance.

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Much of Washington will stop in its tracks Wednesday as Mueller testifies on Capitol Hill for at least five hours, a nationally televised event that for many Americans will be their first detailed exposure to the former special counsel's findings on Russia's 2016 election interference.

The Justice Department on Monday told Mueller his testimony should not go beyond information that has already been released publicly.

Trump told reporters in the Oval Office: "I'm not going to be watching — probably — maybe I'll see a little bit of it. I'm not going to be watching Mueller because you can't take all those bites out of the apple."

That was a shift from Friday, when Trump insisted that he would not watch any of Mueller's back-to-back appearances before two House committees.

Either way, the president has continued to wage war on the former special counsel's credibility, sending out a series of tweets Monday in which he deemed Mueller, without evidence, "highly conflicted" and said that "in the end it will be bad for him and the phony Democrats in Congress who have done nothing but waste time on this ridiculous Witch Hunt."

Trump's Twitter account may well be the main vehicle for the White House to respond to Mueller's testimony.

Though the probe did not establish charges of criminal conspiracy or obstruction, there has been growing concern among those close to the president that Mueller's appearance could push undecided or reluctant Democrats toward impeachment. Even so, there appears to be little evidence of an organized White House response plan to the hearings.

The president has a light schedule Wednesday morning, when Mueller begins speaking, before heading to West Virginia for evening fundraisers. The TVs aboard Air Force One are likely to be tuned to coverage of the hearings, and the president is expected to watch or be briefed on most of the proceedings, according to four administration officials and Republicans close to the White House. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss internal plans.

When Mueller was originally scheduled to appear last Wednesday, before a one-week postponement, the president's campaign scheduled a rally that night in North Carolina so Trump could offer a rebuttal. That won't happen this time, though the president's personal attorneys, including Rudy Giuliani, may issue their own statements, and talking points could be circulated among conservatives.

There is also an expectation within the White House that House Republicans will pepper Mueller with tough questions, though they may be less comfortable taking a swipe at the decorated war hero from the chambers rather than via Twitter or Fox News.

White House press secretary Stephanie Grisham has yet to make an on-camera appearance after nearly a month in the job. But Kellyanne Conway, senior counselor to the president, previewed the attack lines Monday.

"Well, I want the taxpayers to see the way the Democratic Congress is spending their money day in and day out. A do-over of the do-over of the do-over," Conway said on Fox News. "Now they want Bob Mueller, they want to drag him before Congress and have him read out loud. Bob Mueller book on tape, courtesy of the taxpayer, I don't think so. They also think you're stupid, America, that you can't read the report for yourself."

The nation has heard the special counsel speak only once — for nine minutes — since his appointment in May 2017.

This time, the House Judiciary Committee and the House Intelligence Committee will question Mueller in separate hearings on the report. Judiciary panel Democrats planned to practice with a mock hearing behind closed doors Tuesday, according to two people who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were unauthorized to publicly discuss the planning.

Mueller plans to begin with an opening statement that a spokesman said would be similar in substance to his May 29 statement from the Justice Department podium. In that statement, he cautioned Congress that he would not go beyond the text of the report if called upon to testify and explained his team's decision to neither seek an indictment of the president nor exonerate him on obstruction of justice allegations.

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Responding to a request from Mueller about limitations or potential privilege issues, a senior Justice Department official, Bradley Weinsheimer, told Mueller in a letter that the department expects that he will not stray beyond his report when he testifies. Weinsheimer also told Mueller that he should not discuss the redacted portions of his report or the actions of people who were not charged.

While the report did not find sufficient evidence to establish charges of criminal conspiracy between the Trump campaign and Russia to swing the election, it said Trump could not be cleared of trying to obstruct the investigation.

Because the report was dense and, at times, lawyerly, Trump allies have long fretted that while few lawmakers and Americans read the report, they might be swayed by Mueller's in-person testimony.

The president has spent months concerned about the prospect of the media coverage that would be given to Mueller, who Trump believes has been unfairly lionized across cable news and the front pages of the nation's leading newspapers for two years, according to three White House officials and Republicans close to the White House.

Before the report's release, Trump had feared a repeat — but bigger — of the February testimony of his former lawyer and fixer, Michael Cohen, which dominated news coverage and even overshadowed his nuclear summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Vietnam.

That worry has faded some in recent weeks. White House officials believe that the public has grown tired of the Russia story line and is growing more convinced that it has been propped up by Democrats and media figures frustrated that Mueller didn't topple the administration.

Associated Press writers Eric Tucker, Michael Balsamo, Mary Clare Jalonick and Deb Riechmann contributed to this report from Washington.

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Much of Venezuela in the dark again after massive blackout

By **FABIOLA SÁNCHEZ** and **JOSHUA GOODMAN** Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — The lights went out across much of Venezuela, reviving fears of the blackouts that plunged the country into chaos a few months ago as the government once again accused opponents of sabotaging the nation's hydroelectric power system.

The power in the capital went out after 4 p.m. (2000 GMT) Monday and immediately backed up traffic as stop lights and the subway stopped working during rush hour. As night fell in Caracas many were wondering how long they would be left in the dark.

"This is horrible, a disaster," Reni Blanco, a 48-year-old teacher, said as she joined a crush of people who flooded into the streets of the capital trying to make it home before nightfall.

Almost three hours into the blackout authorities broke their silence and blamed an "electromagnetic attack" on a series of dams located in southern Venezuela — the same culprit it attributed an almost week-long outage in March that left millions of Venezuelans without water or the ability to communicate with loved ones.

"Those who've systematically attacked the noble people of Venezuela in all kinds of ways will once again be confronted with the mettle and courage that we, the children of our liberator Simón Bolívar, have demonstrated in the face of difficulties," Communications Minister Jorge Rodríguez said in a statement read on state TV.

Rodríguez said authorities were working to restore electricity as quickly as possible. He said security forces had been deployed, and contingency plans activated, to guarantee basic medical services and keep streets safe.

"Without light we have nothing," said María Teresa González, fretting over the meat she had in her freezer if the outage wore on as she walked her dog in the last rays of the evening sun.

Reports on social media said that 19 of 24 Venezuelan states were also affected. Netblocks, a group

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monitoring internet activity, said network data showed most of Venezuela was knocked offline with national connectivity at just 6% after the latest cuts. Normally non-stop state TV, a key way for the government to keep people informed, was also off the air for a while, adding to frustrations.

President Nicolás Maduro blamed the March outage on a U.S.-sponsored attack against the nation's biggest hydroelectric dam. More recently, as power service in the politically turbulent capital has improved amid widespread rationing in the interior, officials have even taken to downplaying the outages as similar to a nationwide blackout in Argentina and even one that knocked off the power for several thousand residents of Manhattan for a few hours amid the summer heat.

But his opponents said the outage laid bare years of underinvestment in the nation's grid by corrupt officials who mismanaged an oil bonanza in the nation sitting atop the world's largest crude reserves.

"They tried to hide the tragedy by rationing supplies across the country, but their failure is evident: they destroyed the system and they don't have answers," opposition leader Juan Guaidó said on Twitter.

Guaidó, who the U.S. and more than 50 other nations recognize as Venezuela's rightful leader, reiterated an earlier call for nationwide protests on Tuesday.

"We Venezuelans won't grow accustomed to this," he said.

Much of the government's focus since the March blackouts has been on repairing transmission lines near the Guri Dam, which provides about 80 percent of Venezuela's electricity.

José Aguilar, a U.S.-based power expert who hails from Venezuela, said that alternative power plants running on diesel fuel and gas are unable to make up the difference.

He estimates that since the March outages the country has lost about 1,200 Megawatts of thermal power, or about 40% of its thermal generating capacity at the start of the year, as the government overburdens the fragile system in a desperate attempt to keep the lights on in Caracas and other cities.

"Even in the best-run grids equipment is going to fail," Aguilar, who is an informal adviser to Guaidó on electricity issues, told The Associated Press. "But when you operate on a limb, outside of safe limits, you expose yourself to these types of domino events. It's like Russian Roulette."

Despite the risks of another extended collapse, some Venezuelans were taking the blackout in stride.

Cristian Sandoval, a 37-year-old owner of a motorcycle repair business, said he is more prepared for a prolonged outage having equipped his home with a water tank and a generator for his workshop. As Venezuela's crisis deepens, the sale of electric generators is one of the few growth industries in a country ravaged by six-digit inflation and cratering public services.

"If the blackout continues we'll have another round of dessert," he chuckled while sharing a piece of chocolate cake with a friend at a cafeteria growing dark as the night began to fall.

"But it's very difficult for the people," he conceded. "This creates a lot of discomfort."

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Goodman reported from Bogota, Colombia. AP Writers Christopher Torchia, Scott Smith and Christine Armario contributed to this report from Caracas.

Trump expands fast-track deportation authority across US

By ELLIOT SPAGAT Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — The Trump administration announced Monday that it will vastly extend the authority of immigration officers to deport migrants without allowing them to appear before judges, its second major policy shift on immigration in eight days.

Starting Tuesday, fast-track deportations can apply to anyone in the country illegally for less than two years. Previously, those deportations were largely limited to people arrested almost immediately after crossing the Mexican border.

Kevin McAleenan, the acting Homeland Security secretary, portrayed the nationwide extension of "expedited removal" authority as another Trump administration effort to address an "ongoing crisis on the southern border" by freeing up beds in detention facilities and reducing a backlog of more than 900,000 cases in immigration courts.

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U.S. authorities do not have space to detain "the vast majority" of people arrested on the Mexican border, leading to the release of hundreds of thousands with notices to appear in court, McAleenan said in the policy directive to be published Tuesday in the Federal Register. He said Homeland Security officials with the new deportation power will deport migrants in the country illegally more quickly than the Justice Department's immigration courts, where cases can take years to resolve.

The agency "expects that the full use of expedited removal statutory authority will strengthen national security, diminish the number of illegal entries, and otherwise ensure the prompt removal of aliens apprehended in the United States," McAleenan said.

The American Civil Liberties Union and American Immigration Council said they would sue to block the policy.

"Under this unlawful plan, immigrants who have lived here for years would be deported with less due process than people get in traffic court," said Omar Jawdat, director of the ACLU's Immigrants' Rights Project.

"Expedited removal" gives enforcement agencies broad authority to deport people without allowing them to appear before an immigration judge with limited exceptions, including if they express fear of returning home and pass an initial screening interview for asylum.

The powers were created under a 1996 law but went largely unnoticed until 2004, when Homeland Security said it would be enforced for people who are arrested within two weeks of entering the U.S. by land and caught within 100 miles (160 kilometers) of the border.

The fast-track deportations have become a major piece of U.S. immigration enforcement over the last decade. Critics have said it grants too much power to immigration agents and U.S. Customs and Border Protection officials.

The potential impact of the new measure is difficult to predict. McAleenan said 20,570 people arrested in the nation's interior from October 2017 through September 2018 year had been in the U.S. less than two years, which would make them eligible for fast-track deportation under the new rule. Critics said the new measure's impact could be more far-reaching because many in the U.S. for longer than two years may be unable to prove they have been in the country for so long.

"Expanding the fast-track procedure to apply anywhere in the U.S. is a recipe for ripping thousands more families apart and devastating communities," said Grace Meng, Human Rights Watch's U.S. program acting deputy director. "This is a massive and dangerous change."

The administration said the expanded authority will likely mean less time for migrants in detention while cases wind their way through immigration court. The average stay in immigration detention for people in fast-track removal was 11.4 days from October 2017 through September 2018, compared to 51.5 days for people arrested in the nation's interior.

The announcement was the second major policy shift in eight days following an unprecedented surge of families from Central America's Northern Triangle of Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador.

Last week, the administration said it will deny asylum to anyone who passes through other countries en route to the U.S. without seeking protection in at least one of those countries. Two lawsuits were filed challenging the move. A judge in Washington, D.C., heard arguments Monday on whether to block the policy. Judge Timothy Kelly said he would "endeavor to rule on this as quickly as I can."

A judge in San Francisco has set a hearing for Wednesday in a similar lawsuit.

Also Monday, a three-judge panel of the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a decision by a federal judge in Seattle that blocked a policy to indefinitely detain asylum seekers without a chance to be released on bond. The policy to deny bond hearings had been set to take effect July 15.

The White House issued a statement Monday night saying, "We strongly disagree with that decision and expect to prevail on the merits of the appeal and to see the law upheld."

Associated Press Writer Colleen Long contributed to this report from Washington.

NYC mayor calls for probe as many wait for power to return

NEW YORK (AP) — Mayor Bill de Blasio called for an investigation Monday of power outages that came at the end of this weekend's oppressive heat, saying he no longer trusts utility Con Edison after it decided to turn off power to thousands of customers.

Around 30,000 customers in Brooklyn were taken off power Sunday, so the utility could make repairs and prevent a bigger outage, de Blasio had said earlier.

On Monday, he offered a blistering assessment of that decision.

"This should not have happened," he told reporters, "and we need to make sure it doesn't happen again."

De Blasio said the private company is "not accountable to the public in a way a public agency would be."

"Con Ed is very haughty about this," the mayor said. "They don't give real answers, and they don't feel they have to."

The company defended its decision, saying in a statement to The Associated Press that it was "necessary to prevent longer outages to the impacted customers that would have occurred as a result of additional equipment damage."

"We are completely focused on getting customers back in service, and we regret the distress they are under," spokesman Allan Drury wrote in an email.

De Blasio's remarks came as Con Ed was working to restore power to about 19,000 customers, many of them in southeast Brooklyn.

The utility said in an emailed statement that it was working to restore power to everyone by the afternoon.

At one point, less than 8,000 remained without power, mostly in Brooklyn, but a line of severe thunderstorms rolled through the area, downing some power lines and flooding streets. By 10 p.m. Monday, roughly 18,000 customers had no power, with most of the new outages affecting Queens.

Like much of the East Coast, New York City experienced temperatures in the high 90s over the weekend — and felt much hotter with the humidity. Temperatures were starting to fall Monday, and city emergency management officials warned of thunderstorms.

"It's still hot and people have a right to be frustrated. We're pushing Con Ed to get power back as fast as possible," De Blasio tweeted.

De Blasio said that New York City emergency management was adding personnel on the ground in southeast Brooklyn, including at nursing homes and adult care facilities, to respond to emergencies and keep people safe.

De Blasio told reporters the city still does not have answers in the wake of outages a week ago that crippled the heart of Manhattan, knocking out power businesses and residents for more than three hours along a 30-block stretch.

"I'm extremely disappointed with Con Ed," the mayor said. "They have been giving us consistently inconsistent information over these last days."

Gov. Andrew Cuomo said he deployed 200 state troopers, 100 generators and 50 light towers to Brooklyn, as well as personnel and command vehicles from the state Office of Emergency management. He urged New Yorkers to check on neighbors, especially the elderly.

"We have been through this situation with Con Ed time and again, and they should have been better prepared — period," Cuomo said in a statement. "This was not a natural disaster; there is no excuse for what has happened in Brooklyn."

Cuomo also said he directed the state Department of Public Service to widen its investigation into last week's blackout in Manhattan to include Sunday's outages in Brooklyn. Equipment failure, not heat, caused the roughly five-hour blackout July 13 that affected a 40-block stretch of Manhattan, including Times Square and Rockefeller Center.

This story has been corrected to show that 30,000 people in Brooklyn were taken off power Sunday, not 20,000.

India launches spacecraft to explore water deposits on moon

By ASHOK SHARMA Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — India sent a spacecraft to explore water deposits on the far side of the moon in a successful launch Monday after a technical problem caused a week's delay.

Scientists at the mission control center burst into applause as the rocket lifted off in clear weather as scheduled at 2:43 p.m. from Sriharikota in southern India. K. Sivan, head of India's space agency, said the rocket successfully injected the spacecraft into orbit.

The Chandrayaan, the Sanskrit word for "moon craft," is scheduled to land on the lunar south pole in September and send a rover to explore water deposits confirmed by an earlier, orbiting mission. India would become only the fourth nation to land on the moon, following the U.S., Russia and China.

India's first moon mission in 2008 helped confirm the presence of water. The country plans to send its first manned spaceflight by 2022.

India's launch coincided with the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 mission this month. It came at a time when the world's biggest space agencies are returning their gaze to the moon, seen as an ideal testing ground for technologies required for deep space exploration, and with the confirmed discovery of water, as a possible pit stop along the way. The U.S. is working to send a manned spacecraft to the moon's south pole by 2024.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the country's lunar program will get a substantial boost, writing on Twitter that the country's existing knowledge of the moon "will be significantly enhanced."

Sivan said at a news conference that the successful launch of the spacecraft was the "beginning of India's historic journey" to the moon.

The launch of the \$141 million moon mission last week was called off less than an hour before liftoff because of a "technical snag." Media reports scientists from the Indian Space Research Organization identified a leak while filling helium in the rocket's cryogenic engine. The space agency neither confirmed nor denied the reports, saying instead that the problem had been identified and corrected.

The spacecraft that launched Monday is carrying an orbiter, lander and rover that will move around on the lunar surface for 14 Earth days. It will travel about 47 days before landing on the moon.

India put a satellite into orbit around Mars in the nation's first interplanetary mission in 2013 and 2014.

With India poised to become the world's fifth-largest economy, Modi's ardently nationalist government is eager to show off the country's prowess in security and technology.

India successfully test-fired an anti-satellite weapon in March, which Modi said demonstrated the country's capacity as a space power alongside the United States, Russia and China.

Chris Kraft, 1st flight director for NASA, dies at 95

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Behind America's late leap into orbit and triumphant small step on the moon was the agile mind and guts-of-steel of Chris Kraft, making split-second decisions that propelled the nation to once unimaginable heights.

Kraft, the creator and longtime leader of NASA's Mission Control, died Monday in Houston, just two days after the 50th anniversary of what was his and NASA's crowning achievement: Apollo 11's moon landing. He was 95.

Christopher Columbus Kraft Jr. never flew in space, but "held the success or failure of American human spaceflight in his hands," Neil Armstrong, the first man-on-the-moon, told The Associated Press in 2011.

Kraft founded Mission Control and created the job of flight director — later comparing it to an orchestra conductor — and established how flights would be run as the space race between the U.S. and Soviets heated up. The legendary engineer served as flight director for all of the one-man Mercury flights and seven of the two-man Gemini flights, helped design the Apollo missions that took 12 Americans to the moon from 1969 to 1972 and later served as director of the Johnson Space Center until 1982, overseeing the beginning of the era of the space shuttle.

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Armstrong once called him "the man who was the 'Control' in Mission Control."

"From the moment the mission starts until the moment the crew is safe on board a recovery ship, I'm in charge," Kraft wrote in his 2002 book "Flight: My Life in Mission Control."

"No one can overrule me. ... They can fire me after it's over. But while the mission is under way, I'm Flight. And Flight is God."

NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine Monday called Kraft "a national treasure," saying "We stand on his shoulders as we reach deeper into the solar system, and he will always be with us on those journeys."

Kraft became known as "the father of Mission Control" and in 2011 NASA returned the favor by naming the Houston building that houses the nerve center after Kraft.

"It's where the heart of the mission is," Kraft said in an April 2010 AP interview. "It's where decisions are made every day, small and large ... We realized that the people that had the moxie, that had the knowledge, were there and could make the decisions."

That's what Chris Kraft's Mission Control was about: smart people with knowledge discussing options quickly and the flight director making a quick, informed decision, said former Smithsonian Institution space historian Roger Launius. It's the place that held its collective breath as Neil Armstrong was guiding the Eagle lunar lander on the moon while fuel was running out. And it's the place that improvised a last-minute rescue of Apollo 13 — a dramatic scenario that later made the unsung engineers heroes in a popular movie.

Soon it became more than NASA's Mission Control. Hurricane forecasting centers, city crisis centers, even the Russian space center are all modeled after the Mission Control that Kraft created, Launius said.

Leading up to the first launch to put an American, John Glenn, in orbit, a reporter asked Kraft about the odds of success and he replied: "If I thought about the odds at all, we'd never go to the pad."

"It was a wonderful life. I can't think of anything that an aeronautical engineer would get more out of, than what we were asked to do in the space program, in the '60s," Kraft said on NASA's website marking the 50th anniversary of the agency in 2008.

In the early days of Mercury at Florida's Cape Canaveral, before Mission Control moved to Houston in 1965, there were no computer displays, "all you had was grease pencils," Kraft recalled. The average age of the flight control team was 26; Kraft was 38.

"We didn't know a damn thing about putting a man into space," Kraft wrote in his autobiography. "We had no idea how much it should or would cost. And at best, we were engineers trained to do, not business experts trained to manage."

NASA trailed the Soviet space program and suffered through many failed launches in the early days, before the manned flights began in 1961. Kraft later recalled thinking President John F. Kennedy "had lost his mind" when in May 1961 he set as a goal a manned trip to the moon "before this decade is out."

"We had a total of 15 minutes of manned spaceflight experience, we hadn't flown Mercury in orbit yet, and here's a guy telling me we're going to fly to the moon. ... Doing it was one thing, but doing it in this decade was to me too risky," Kraft told AP in 1989.

"Frankly it scared the hell out of me," he said at a 2009 lecture at the Smithsonian.

One of the most dramatic moments came during Scott Carpenter's May 1962 mission as the second American to orbit the earth. Carpenter landed 288 miles off target because of low fuel and other problems. He was eventually found safely floating in his life raft. Kraft blamed Carpenter for making poor decisions. Tom Wolfe's book "The Right Stuff" said Kraft angrily vowed that Carpenter "will never fly for me again!" But Carpenter said he did the best he could when the machinery malfunctioned.

After the two-man Gemini flights, Kraft moved up NASA management to be in charge of manned spaceflight and was stunned by the Apollo 1 training fire that killed three astronauts.

Gene Kranz, who later would become NASA's flight director for the Apollo mission that took man to the moon, said Kraft did not at first impress him as a leader. But Kranz eventually saw Kraft as similar to a judo instructor, allowing his student to grow in skills, then stepping aside.

"Chris Kraft had pioneered Mission Control and fought the battles in Mercury and Gemini, serving as the role model of the flight director. He proved the need for real-time leadership," Kranz wrote in his book,

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"Failure Is Not An Option: Mission Control from Mercury to Apollo 13 and Beyond."

Born in 1924, Kraft grew up in Phoebus, Virginia, now part of Hampton, about 75 miles southeast of Richmond. In his autobiography, Kraft said with the name Christopher Columbus Kraft Jr., "some of my life's direction was settled from the start."

After graduating from Virginia Polytechnic Institute in 1944, Kraft took a job with aircraft manufacturer Chance Vought to build warplanes, but he quickly realized it wasn't for him. He returned to Virginia where he accepted a job with the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics, not far from Phoebus.

Kraft's first job was to figure out what happens to airplanes as they approach the speed of sound.

After his retirement, Kraft served as an aerospace consultant and was chairman of a panel in the mid-1990s looking for a cheaper way to manage the shuttle program.

Later, as the space shuttle program was being phased out after 30 years, Kraft blasted as foolish the decision to retire the shuttles, which he called "the safest machines ever built."

Kraft said he considered himself fortunate to be part of the team that sent Americans to space and called it a sad day when the shuttles stopped flying.

"The people of Mercury, Gemini, and Apollo are blossoms on the moon. Their spirits will live there forever," he wrote. "I was part of that crowd, then part of the leadership that opened space travel to human beings. We threw a narrow flash of light across our nation's history. I was there at the best of times."

Kraft and his wife, Betty Anne, were married in 1950. They had a son, Gordon, and a daughter, Kristi-Anne.

Analysis: Hong Kong protests could push China to intervene

By KEN MORITSUGU Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — While China doesn't want to intervene in the summer-long protests that have shaken Hong Kong, that doesn't mean it won't.

The movement, now in its seventh week, has veered into more dangerous territory on two fronts.

Protesters, who had previously besieged the city's legislature and police headquarters, directed their ire at China itself on Sunday, defacing the central government's official emblem and pelting its building in Hong Kong with eggs. Needless to say, their actions were not well-received in Beijing.

In an escalation on the other side, a group armed with metal rods and wooden poles beat up anti-government protesters and others inside a subway station late Sunday night. The attack injured 45 people, including a man who remained in critical condition. Beijing supporters had tussled with protesters previously, but not on this scale.

Neither side wants China's People's Liberation Army to step in, but the growing chaos and what China will see as a direct challenge to its authority raise the risks. The thuggish attack on the protesters brought accusations of connivance between police and criminal gangs, though Hong Kong's police commissioner flatly denied it and it remained unclear who was behind it.

Any intervention by China would likely bring international condemnation and could endanger Hong Kong's status as a financial center governed by rule of law. It would also draw comparisons to China's deadly military crackdown on Beijing's pro-democracy Tiananmen Square protests in 1989, an event the government wants the world to forget.

For China, it's not just an economic question but also a political one. Hong Kong, a former British colony, was returned to China in 1997 under a "one country, two systems" concept that gives the city a fair degree of autonomy over its affairs. Hong Kong residents have much broader rights and freedoms than mainland Chinese.

The success of the formula is important to China, which wants to use it to bring the self-governing island of Taiwan back under its control. Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen is already using the unrest in Hong Kong to argue that "one country, two systems" doesn't work, and a Chinese military intervention would confirm the fears of many Taiwanese.

The best outcome for China would be a deescalation of the protests and a return to relative normalcy, as happened after the last major pro-democracy demonstrations in Hong Kong, the student-driven "Umbrella

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Movement" that occupied streets for more than two months in 2014.

Many of this summer's protesters are Umbrella Movement veterans who were disappointed that those protests failed to bring about change. At least some have shown themselves unwilling to back down this time — but the question is how far they will push, and how far Beijing will let them.

"The problem is that it is not entirely up to the central government," said Zhang Lifan, a Chinese historian and political commentator. "If the radical people in Hong Kong put forward the advocacy of independence, making the situation spin out of control, the central government will certainly intervene."

That is not the most likely outcome, but with no clear way out of the ongoing protests, they could well escalate further, making Beijing more skittish.

Among the many messages the protesters have taken to spray-painting on walls is "Hong Kong is not China." On one level, it is a statement that Hong Kong has a more independent legal system and greater freedoms than the mainland — the "one country, two systems" principle.

On another level, it reflects a growing disenchantment with life as part of China, not only political but also economic. An influx of Chinese money is blamed for pushing up real estate prices beyond the reach of many young people. Some demonstrators have carried the Hong Kong flag from the British colonial era at protests.

For China, losing Hong Kong a second time would be worse than a collapse of the "one country, two systems" model. The pro-Beijing government in Hong Kong last year outlawed a political party that advocated independence for the city of 7.4 million people.

"One begins to wonder whether the Chinese Communist Party wants Hong Kong to descend into chaos, so that it has an excuse to step in, or whether its mismanagement means that such chaos is inevitable," said Kevin Carrico, a senior lecturer in Chinese studies at Monash University in Australia.

The ruling Communist Party values stability above all, a choice it made in deciding to end the Tiananmen protests by force. It has since become a mantra that the stability the party has brought to China has underpinned the country's rise to become the world's second-largest economy, lifting millions out of poverty.

China's stability has come at a price to personal freedoms such as free speech. Under current President Xi Jinping, the party has sought to increase control over society, from religion to social media, in moves that have reverberated in Hong Kong.

Both the Chinese and Hong Kong governments have turned around the protesters' argument that the rule of law is under threat by saying it is the violent acts by some protesters that are threatening the rule of law in Hong Kong.

"At the end of the day, it is the young people who will suffer the most if Hong Kong's prosperity and stability are damaged," pro-Beijing lawmaker Regina Ip said Monday.

Her statement illustrates a fundamental divide over the future of Hong Kong, between a more conservative pro-Beijing establishment focused on stability and economic growth and a liberal youth that feels left out and is clamoring for democracy.

It is the failure to close this divide, in repeated cycles of protests over the years, that keeps nudging Hong Kong and the government in Beijing closer to the tipping point.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Ken Moritsugu, the AP's Greater China news director, has covered Asian issues for more than a decade.

Elevated opioid risks found at Native American hospitals

By FELICIA FONSECA Associated Press

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. (AP) — U.S. government hospitals put Native American patients at increased risk for opioid abuse and overdoses, failing to follow their own protocols for prescribing and dispensing the drugs, according to a federal audit made public Monday.

The report by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Inspector General does not say whether patients suffered because of the hospitals' practices. But all five Indian Health Service hos-

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pitals that were reviewed had patients who were given opioids in amounts exceeding federal guidelines, the report said.

"There are vulnerabilities with this particular population in the opioid prescribing and dispensing practices," said Carla Lewis, one of the auditors.

The overdose epidemic that has killed more people than any other drug epidemic in U.S. history has hit indigenous communities hard. Native Americans and Alaska Natives had the second-highest rate of opioid overdose out of all U.S. racial and ethnic groups in 2017, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez called the audit's findings "very concerning" and said the tribe plans to reach out to its congressional members and the Indian Health Service to ensure the recommendations are addressed.

New Mexico Sen. Tom Udall, vice chairman of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee, said the report "is a deeply troubling indication that structural issues at the IHS are potentially worsening the opioid crisis in Indian Country."

The report made more than a dozen recommendations to the Indian Health Service to better track patients' health records and pain management, ensure opioids are stored under tighter security and update its information technology systems. The agency agreed on every point and said changes are coming.

The Indian Health Service, the federal agency that administers primary health care for Native Americans, has put an increased focus on opioids lately with a new website and the creation of a committee focused on decreasing overdose deaths, promoting culturally appropriate treatments and ensuring that communities know how to respond.

The audit covered five of the 25 hospitals directly run by the Indian Health Service: the Phoenix Indian Medical Center in Phoenix; Northern Navajo Medical Center on the Navajo Nation in Shiprock, New Mexico; the Lawton Indian Hospital in Lawton, Oklahoma; the Cass Lake Indian Hospital on the Leech Lake reservation in Cass Lake, Minnesota; and the Fort Yates Hospital on the Standing Rock Sioux reservation in Fort Yates, North Dakota.

Auditors considered the amount of opioids each hospital dispensed and the percentage increase over three years when deciding which ones to review. They looked at 30 patient records at each hospital, visited the facilities and interviewed staff.

The auditors found that the hospitals strayed from guidelines in the Indian Health Manual in reviewing treatment for patients and their causes of pain every three months. Patients also must sign a written consent form and an agreement to treat chronic pain with opioids so they know the risks and benefits, as well as the requirement for drug screenings. More than 100 patient records did not include evidence of informed consent, and dozens did not have evidence that providers adequately educated patients.

The Centers for Disease Control recommends that patients be prescribed no more than 90 morphine milligram equivalents per day, a measure used to compare an opioid dose with morphine.

The audit found that each hospital met or exceeded that amount at times. At the Shiprock hospital, the daily dosage was more than four times as high. The auditors also found some patients were prescribed opioids and benzodiazepines — commonly used to treat anxiety and insomnia — at the same time, which "puts patients at a greater risk of a potentially fatal overdose."

The Indian Health Service said all of its facilities now submit that data so the agency's top leadership can track it.

Among the report's other findings:

—More than two dozen records showed no evidence patients were screened for drugs with urine tests when they started opioid treatment and periodically after. Providers did not have an alert system to know when patients were due for the urine tests. The Phoenix hospital has since implemented one.

—Pharmacists are supposed to review patients' files before filling prescriptions from an outside provider, but that was not done at four of the hospitals. In one case, Fort Yates filled a prescription from an outside provider despite the hospital discontinuing treatment because the patient violated a pain management agreement. The Indian Health Service said it would issue a directive in December for prescribers to track

that information.

—Only the Lawton hospital had opioids secured in a storage cabinet requiring employee authentication for access. One photo attached to the report showed the combination to a safe listed on the safe itself. The Indian Health Service said it has revised its manual to require opioids awaiting pickup to be locked up.

—Agreements with their states require that hospitals report daily on opioid prescriptions that are filled so patients do not seek the drugs from multiple providers at the same time. Fort Yates and Phoenix now are complying. The Indian Health Service said the reporting would be automated by June 2020.

At all hospitals, auditors noted that providers did not always review the data before seeing new patients or during the time patients were on opioids for pain.

“Part of it is to ensure the holistic approach of providing care,” Lewis said.

Hospital officials and providers often said they were overwhelmed by the number of patients or could not control how regularly they came in — sometimes due to the long distances between patients’ homes and the hospitals.

Lewis said auditors try to be reasonable in their requests.

“We try to make recommendations that are going to be actionable and cost-effective for an organization,” she said.

Marvel’s next films will bring diversity, onscreen and off

RYAN PEARSON and KATIE CAMPIONE Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Marvel’s push for more women and people of color in its immensely popular film franchise is extending to behind the camera as it launches its next round of films after the massive success of “Avengers: Endgame.” Of the five films the superhero studio announced at Comic-Con on Saturday, only one is set to be directed by a white man.

“It’s about fresh voices and new voices and great filmmakers who can continue to steer the (Marvel Cinematic Universe) into new places,” Marvel Studios president Kevin Feige said in an interview after the studio’s explosive Hall H panel. “And I am as proud of that lineup of directors as you saw today as any.”

In addition to a slew of women and people of color at the helm of the upcoming Marvel films, the week-end’s announcements promised more diversity on screen.

First up for release is the long-awaited solo film starring Scarlett Johansson as the Black Widow, the lethal assassin she has played for nearly a decade. The film is set for release in May 2020.

Johansson said the search for “Black Widow” director Cate Shortland wasn’t easy.

“It’s really interesting because when we were looking for a director, you start to see some of the systemic problems,” Johansson said. “Even looking for a female director who has had enough experience — who has had the opportunity to have the experience to sit at the helm of something huge like this, you know, choices are limited because of that. And it sucks.”

The actress added that she was proud to see the diversity on stage during Marvel’s Hall H panel.

“Looking out on that stage tonight, it was incredible. It was really moving, also just to see how incredibly diverse the universe is — and reflects what we see all around us. It’s incredible,” she said.

In terms of more diversity, “Black Widow” is just the beginning.

“The Eternals” will feature a cast full of actors of color, including Kumail Nanjiani, Brian Tyree Henry, and Salma Hayek. Simu Liu will become Marvel’s first big screen Asian American superhero when “Shang-Chi and the Legend of the Ten Rings” is released in February 2021. Natalie Portman will play a female Thor in the new “Thor: Love and Thunder,” which will also feature Tessa Thompson’s character, Valkyrie, as the MCU’s first LGBTQ superhero.

“First of all, as new King (of Asgard), she needs to find her queen, so that will be her first order of business. She has some ideas. Keep you posted,” Thompson said during the panel. Feige later confirmed the news in an interview with the website io9.

The studio is also reviving one of Marvel’s most iconic black characters, Blade (previously played by Wesley Snipes), with the help of Academy Award winner Mahershala Ali. Feige told The Associated Press

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that right after winning his second Academy Award for "Green Book" earlier this year, Ali set up a meeting.

"Within 10 minutes, he basically was like, 'What's happening with 'Blade'? I want to do it.' And we went, that's what happening with 'Blade.' Let's do it," Feige said.

"Captain Marvel," released in March, was the first of Marvel Studios film to be centered entirely on a female character. It earned \$427 million domestically, and along with the DC Comics film "Wonder Woman" has created momentum for more films with female heroes leading the way.

"Marvel is really focused on having very strong female characters at the forefront of their stories," said actress Rachel Weisz, who also stars in "Black Widow." "And I think that's great. This film has got three. It's Scarlett, Florence Pugh, myself. So I think yeah, they are doing wonderful work to represent women, people of color, and tell different kinds of stories."

The sliver of Hollywood still on the outside of the Marvel's cinematic empire was paying close attention to the news.

Actress, writer and director Lena Waithe tweeted Sunday: "Captain America is black. Thor is a woman. the new Blade got two Oscars. 007 is a black woman. And The Little Mermaid bout to have locs. (Expletive). Just. Got. Real."

Franken says he 'absolutely' regrets resigning from Senate

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Former Democratic U.S. Sen. Al Franken of Minnesota told The New Yorker magazine in a story published Monday that he "absolutely" regrets resigning from the Senate after several women accused him of unwanted kissing or touching.

In the same article, seven current or former senators say they regret calling for Franken's resignation in December 2017. Franken resigned his seat after conservative talk radio host Leeann Tweeden and seven other women accused him of sexual harassment.

The article, Franken's first interview since leaving the Senate, calls into question some of the assertions against Franken and quotes several female former staff members and close friends who described him as physically clumsy but not predatory.

Franken said at the time that the allegations were false, and he repeats that in The New Yorker article. A former comedian who made his name on "Saturday Night Live," Franken resigned amid a national wave of sexual harassment allegations against men in powerful positions as the #MeToo movement was gaining momentum.

Both Franken and Tweeden had called for an independent investigation at the time, but none was conducted before fellow Democrats forced Franken to resign three weeks after Tweeden made her claims.

Asked by The New Yorker whether he regretted stepping down, Franken said: "Oh, yeah. Absolutely."

"I can't go anywhere without people reminding me of this, usually with some version of 'You shouldn't have resigned,'" he told the magazine.

Tweeden alleged in 2017 that Franken told her during a USO tour to entertain soldiers in 2006 that he had written a comedy skit with her in mind that required her to kiss him. She said Franken forcibly kissed her and stuck his tongue in her mouth during a rehearsal of the sketch before they performed it in Afghanistan.

The New Yorker cited two actresses, Karri Turner and Traylor Portman, who had played the same role as Tweeden on earlier USO tours with Franken. Both told the magazine that they had performed the same role as Tweeden on earlier tours with Franken and that there was nothing inappropriate about his behavior.

Tweeden also released a photo showing Franken, who was then a comedian, reaching out toward her breasts, as if to grope her, as she slept in a flak jacket while on a military aircraft during the USO tour. The New Yorker reported that the pose echoed another USO skit in which a "Dr. Franken" approaches Tweeden's character with his hands aiming at her breasts.

Tweeden, during her KABC-AM radio show in California on Monday, briefly reacted to The New Yorker article by saying she wishes she had been among the women who performed the kissing skit with Franken and didn't feel like they had been harassed.

"I wish I was in that group," she said.

Seven senators who had called for Franken's resignation said they'd been wrong to do so. They are Democratic Sen. Patrick Leahy of Vermont, now-former Democratic Sen. Heidi Heitkamp of North Dakota, Democratic Sen. Tammy Duckworth of Illinois, independent Sen. Angus King of Maine, Democratic Sen. Jeff Merkley of Oregon, Democratic Sen. Tom Udall of New Mexico and now-former Democratic Sen. Bill Nelson of Florida.

Leahy said that seeking Franken's resignation without first getting all the facts was "one of the biggest mistakes I've made" in his 45-year Senate career.

U.S. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand of New York was among the first to call for Franken's resignation. Some Democratic donors have turned away from Gillibrand because of that, hurting her 2020 bid for the presidency.

"I'd do it again today," Gillibrand said in the article. "If a few wealthy donors are angry about that, it's on them."

Asked at an event in New York late Monday if she regretted calling for Franken's resignation, Gillibrand said she "could have told" any of the senators who are now expressing remorse that "there is no prize for someone who tries to hold accountable a powerful man who is good at his day job. But we should have the courage to do it anyway."

"So no," Gillibrand added. "I do not have any regrets."

She also noted that female senators like herself were hounded every day about whether they would call for Franken's resignation while their male colleagues were not.

"Let's be clear, there is absolutely a double standard," Gillibrand said. "Women are asked to hold accountable their colleagues; the men are not. Who is being held accountable for Al Franken's decision to resign? Women senators, including me. It's outrageous. It's absurd."

Franken was replaced in the Senate by Tina Smith, a Democrat appointed by Democratic Gov. Mark Dayton who had been serving as his lieutenant governor. Smith won a special election in 2018 and is running in 2020 for a full six-year term. Several Republicans are weighing bids to challenge her.

Iran says it arrested 17 Iranians allegedly recruited by CIA

By AYA BATRAWY and NASSER KARIMI Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iran on Monday announced the arrest of 17 Iranians accused of spying on the country's nuclear and military sites for the CIA and said some of them have been sentenced to death. President Donald Trump called it "another lie" from Iran.

The arrests happened over the past months, an Iranian intelligence official said at a news conference in Tehran. He said those taken into custody worked on "sensitive sites" in military and nuclear installations. The official did not say how many were given death sentences.

The announcement came amid weeks of rising tensions between Washington and Tehran over Trump's decision to pull the United States out of Iran's nuclear agreement with world powers last year and impose sweeping sanctions on the country.

The official said the 17 were recruited by the CIA and had "sophisticated training" but did not succeed in their sabotage missions. Their spying missions included collecting information at the facilities where they worked and installing monitoring devices, he said.

He said some were staff members at the targeted facilities, and the rest were working as consultant and contractors. The official said the CIA had promised them U.S. visas or jobs in America.

"That's totally a false story. That's another lie," Trump said at the White House.

Trump also said Iran has "disrespected" the United States, adding: "If they want to make a deal, frankly it's getting harder for me to want to make a deal with Iran because they've behaved very badly. They're saying bad things."

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, a former CIA director, declined to address specifics of the arrests but said: "The Iranian regime has a long history of lying."

"I think everyone should take with a grain of salt everything that the Islamic Republic of Iran asserts

today," he said.

With tensions rising recently, the U.S. has increased its military presence in the region and is sending at least 500 U.S. soldiers to Saudi Arabia, Iran's rival.

Last month, U.S. officials said American military cyberforces struck Iranian Revolutionary Guard computers, disabling systems that controlled its rocket and missile launchers. The cyberattack came after Trump backed away from an airstrike in response to Iran's downing of a U.S. surveillance drone.

The Iranian official did not give his name but was identified as the director of the counterespionage department of Iran's Intelligence Ministry. It is rare in Iran for intelligence officials to appear before media, or for any official to give a news conference without identifying himself.

The official said some of the agents recruited by the CIA had turned and are now working with his department against the United States.

He also handed out a CD with video of what Iran said was a foreign female spy working for the CIA. The disc also included the names of several U.S. Embassy staff members in Turkey, India, Zimbabwe and Austria who Iran said were in touch with the recruited Iranian spies.

Iran occasionally announces the detention of people it says are spying for foreign countries, including the U.S. and Israel. In June, Iran said it executed a former Defense Ministry employee convicted of spying for the CIA. In April, it said it uncovered 290 CIA spies inside and outside the country over the past several years.

Karimi reported from Tehran, Iran. Associated Press writer Brendan Farrington in Tallahassee, Florida, contributed.

Study: Millions should stop taking aspirin for heart health

By LAURAN NEERGAARD AP Medical Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Millions of people who take aspirin to prevent a heart attack may need to rethink the pill-popping, Harvard researchers reported Monday.

A daily low-dose aspirin is recommended for people who have already had a heart attack or stroke and for those diagnosed with heart disease.

But for the otherwise healthy, that advice has been overturned. Guidelines released this year ruled out routine aspirin use for many older adults who don't already have heart disease — and said it's only for certain younger people under doctor's orders.

How many people need to get that message?

Some 29 million people 40 and older were taking an aspirin a day despite having no known heart disease in 2017, the latest data available, according to a new study from Harvard and Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center. About 6.6 million of them were doing so on their own — a doctor never recommended it.

And nearly half of people over 70 who don't have heart disease — estimated at about 10 million — were taking daily aspirin for prevention, the researchers reported in *Annals of Internal Medicine*.

"Many patients are confused about this," said Dr. Colin O'Brien, a senior internal medicine resident at Beth Israel who led the study.

After all, for years doctors urged people to leverage aspirin's blood-thinning properties to lower the chances of a first heart attack or stroke. Then last year, three surprising new studies challenged that dogma. Those studies were some of the largest and longest to test aspirin in people at low and moderate risk of a heart attack, and found only marginal benefit if any, especially for older adults. Yet the aspirin users experienced markedly more digestive-tract bleeding, along with some other side effects.

In March, those findings prompted a change in guidelines from the American Heart Association and American College of Cardiology:

—People over 70 who don't have heart disease — or are younger but at increased risk of bleeding — should avoid daily aspirin for prevention.

—Only certain 40- to 70-year-olds who don't already have heart disease are at high enough risk to war-

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rant 75 to 100 milligrams of aspirin daily, and that's for a doctor to decide.

Nothing has changed for heart attack survivors: Aspirin still is recommended for them.

But there's no way to know how many otherwise healthy people got the word about the changed recommendations.

"We hope that more primary care doctors will talk to their patients about aspirin use, and more patients will raise this with their doctors," O'Brien said.

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Global stocks rise on hopes for US-China trade talks

By JOE McDONALD AP Business Writer

BEIJING (AP) — Global stock markets rose Tuesday on optimism over the potential re-opening of U.S.-China trade talks and despite heightened Middle East tensions.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin suggested last week that trade envoys might meet in person following two rounds of phone conversations, though he gave no timeline. That helped to temper anxiety over U.S.-Iranian tensions.

In midday trading, London's FTSE 100 rose 0.6% to 7,562 after Boris Johnson was named as the new prime minister, a move that could increase the risks of a disorderly Brexit. Frankfurt's DAX soared 1.5% to 12,470 and France's CAC-40 jumped 0.7% to 5,605.

On Wall Street, futures for the benchmark Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 0.4% to 27,280, while futures for the Standard & Poor's 500 index gained 0.3% to 2,998.

Traders have focused on signs of movement toward a settlement of the U.S.-China tariff war over Beijing's technology ambitions.

They were reassured by an agreement in June by Presidents Donald Trump and Xi Jinping to resume stalled talks. That is despite warnings the truce is fragile because the two sides are divided by the same array of disagreements that caused negotiations to collapse in May.

Investors also were looking ahead to meetings by the European Central Bank this week and the U.S. Federal Reserve next week.

"Reports of the U.S. and China resuming trade negotiations next week are positive for risk sentiment, but escalating tensions in the Middle East pushing oil higher are negative," said analysts at ING in a report. "We anticipate wait and watch sentiment" ahead of the central bank meetings.

In Asia, the Shanghai Composite Index gained 0.5 to 2,899.94 and Tokyo's Nikkei 225 climbed 1 % to 21,620.88. Hong Kong's Hang Seng advanced 0.3% to 28,465.65. Seoul's Kospi was 0.4% higher at 2,011.45. India's Sensex gained 0.4% to 38,191.44.

Sydney's S&P-ASX 200 gained 0.5% to 6,724.60. New Zealand and Taiwan climbed while Southeast Asian markets were mixed.

Earnings reports are due over the next two weeks from about three-fifths of S&P 500 companies. Expectations are generally modest.

Slowing global economic growth and rising costs are weighing on companies. Many investors are more interested in what CEOs say about how Trump's trade war will affect profits than in their results for the spring.

Markets also are watching tensions over Iran's nuclear program.

Washington announced sanctions this week on a Chinese oil company, Zhuhai Zhenrong, that it said violated controls on transporting Iranian crude. Beijing has said it supports nuclear nonproliferation efforts but rejects unilateral U.S. sanctions.

"This simultaneously turns U.S. pressure up on Iran and also stresses the already strained U.S.-China relations," Mizuho Bank said in a report.

ENERGY: Benchmark U.S. crude shed 34 cents to \$55.88 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York

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Mercantile Exchange. The contract rose 46 cents on Monday to close at \$56.22. Brent crude, used to price international oils, lost 50 cents to \$62.76 in London. It gained 79 cents the previous session to \$63.26.

CURRENCY: The dollar gained to 108.14 yen from Monday's 107.86 yen. The euro fell to \$1.1180 from \$1.1209.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, July 23, the 204th day of 2019. There are 161 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 23, 1999, space shuttle Columbia blasted off with the world's most powerful X-ray telescope and Eileen Collins, the first woman to command a U.S. space flight.

On this date:

In 1829, William Austin Burt received a patent for his "typographer," a forerunner of the typewriter.

In 1885, Ulysses S. Grant, the 18th president of the United States, died in Mount McGregor, New York, at age 63.

In 1914, Austria-Hungary presented a list of demands to Serbia following the killing of Archduke Franz Ferdinand by a Serb assassin; Serbia's refusal to agree to the entire ultimatum led to the outbreak of World War I.

In 1962, the first public TV transmissions over Telstar 1 took place during a special program featuring live shots beamed from the United States to Europe, and vice versa.

In 1967, five days of deadly rioting erupted in Detroit as an early morning police raid on an unlicensed bar resulted in a confrontation with local residents that escalated into violence that spread into other parts of the city; 43 people, mostly blacks, were killed.

In 1983, an Air Canada Boeing 767 ran out of fuel while flying from Montreal to Edmonton; the pilots were able to glide the jetliner to a safe emergency landing in Gimli, Manitoba. (The near-disaster occurred because the fuel had been erroneously measured in pounds instead of kilograms at a time when Canada was converting to the metric system.)

In 1996, at the Atlanta Olympics, Kerri Strug made a heroic final vault despite torn ligaments in her left ankle as the U.S. women gymnasts clinched their first-ever Olympic team gold medal.

In 1997, the search for Andrew Cunanan, the suspected killer of designer Gianni Versace (JAH'-nee vur-SAH'-chee) and others, ended as police found his body on a houseboat in Miami Beach, an apparent suicide.

In 2001, Pope John Paul II urged President George W. Bush in their first meeting, held at Castel Gandolfo, Italy, to bar creation of human embryos for medical research.

In 2003, a new audiotape purported to be from toppled dictator Saddam Hussein called on Iraqis to resist the U.S. occupation. Massachusetts' attorney general issued a report saying clergy members and others in the Boston Archdiocese probably had sexually abused more than 1,000 people over a period of six decades.

In 2011, singer Amy Winehouse, 27, was found dead in her London home from accidental alcohol poisoning.

In 2017, a tractor trailer was found in a Walmart parking lot in San Antonio, Texas, crammed with dozens of immigrants; ten died and many more were treated at a hospital for dehydration and heat stroke. (The driver, James Bradley Jr., was sentenced to life in prison after pleading guilty to transporting the immigrants resulting in death.) President Donald Trump tweeted that he has "complete power" to issue pardons. Jordan Spieth (speeth) won the British Open for his third career major championship.

Ten years ago: Michael Jackson's personal physician, Dr. Conrad Murray, was named in a search warrant as the target of a manslaughter probe into the singer's death. (Murray was later convicted of involuntary manslaughter.) Authorities arrested 44 people in New Jersey in a corruption probe. Mark Buehrle (BUR'-lee) of the Chicago White Sox pitched the 18th perfect game in major league history, a 5-0 win over Tampa Bay.

Five years ago: Taiwan's TransAsia Airways Flight 222, an ATR-72, crashed while attempting to land on

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Penghu Island, killing 48 of the 58 people on board. The state of Arizona executed Joseph Rudolph Wood, convicted of murdering his ex-girlfriend and her father. (Wood repeatedly gasped as it took nearly two hours for him to die from his lethal injection.)

One year ago: The White House said President Donald Trump was considering revoking the security clearances of six former top national security officials who had been critical of his administration. The New York Daily News cut half of its newsroom staff, including the paper's editor in chief. The Senate, by a vote of 86-9, confirmed Pentagon official Robert Wilkie to be secretary of Veterans Affairs. The U.S. Anti-Doping Agency suspended swimming star Ryan Lochte (LAHK'-tee) from competition for a year for violating anti-doping rules by getting an intravenous injection of vitamins.

Today's Birthdays: Concert pianist Leon Fleisher (FLY'-shur) is 91. Retired Supreme Court Justice Anthony M. Kennedy is 83. Actor Ronny Cox is 81. Radio personality Don Imus is 79. Actor Larry Manetti is 76. Rock singer David Essex is 72. Singer-songwriter John Hall is 71. Actress Belinda Montgomery is 69. Rock musician Blair Thornton (Bachman Turner Overdrive) is 69. Actress-writer Lydia Cornell is 66. Actor Woody Harrelson is 58. Rock musician Martin Gore (Depeche Mode) is 58. Actor Eriq LaSalle is 57. Rock musician Yuval Gabay is 56. Rock musician Slash is 54. Actor Juan Pope is 52. Model-actress Stephanie Seymour is 51. Actress Charisma Carpenter is 49. Rhythm-and-blues singer Sam Watters is 49. Country singer Alison Krauss is 48. Rhythm-and-blues singer Dalvin DeGrate is 48. Rock musician Chad Gracey (Live) is 48. Actor-comedian Marlon Wayans is 47. Country singer Shannon Brown is 46. Actress Kathryn Hahn is 46. Retired MLB All-Star Nomar Garciaparra (NOH'-mar gar-CEE'-ah-par-rah) is 46. Former White House intern Monica Lewinsky is 46. Actress Stephanie March is 45. Actor Shane McRae is 42. Country musician David Pichette is 42. Rhythm-and-blues singer Michelle Williams is 39. Actor Paul Wesley is 37. Actress Krysta Rodriguez is 35. Actor Daniel Radcliffe is 30. Country musician Neil Perry is 29. Actress Lili Simmons is 26. Country singer Danielle Bradbery (TV: "The Voice") is 23.

Thought for Today: "To be proud and inaccessible is to be timid and weak." — Jean Baptiste Massillon (zhahn bah-TEEST' mah-see-YOHN'), French clergyman (1663-1742).