

Groton Daily Independent

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

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Tigers post 3-0 win over Florence/Henry

Groton Area's volleyball team went to 11-3 on the season with a 3-0 win over Florence/Henry. The match was played in Florence and was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Dakota Risk Management and C&B Operations.

The first game was tied three times before the Tigers scored 11 straight points to post a 25-12 win. Indigo Rogers had five kills while Nicole Marzahn had two, Kaylin Kucker had an ace serve and a kill while Stella Meier, Madeline Fliehs and Eliza Wanner each had a kill. Fliehs had the game winning kill. Groton Area earned 12 of the 25 points for 48 percent while Florence/Henry earned four of its 12 points for 33 percent.

The second game was tied just once at one before the Tigers took control of the game and posted a 25-9 win with Marzahn having the game winning block. Marzahn had four kills and a block in the second game while Eliza Wanner had an ace serve and a kill, Meier and Kucker each had a kill, Payton Colestock had two ace serves and Rogers had a kill and an ace serve. Groton Area earned 13 of its 25 points for 52 percent while Florence/Henry made two of nine for 22 percent.

Groton Area jumped out to a 12-0 lead in the third set to post a 25-11 win. Wanner had three ace serves, Kucker and Grace Wambach each had an ace serve, Meier had a kill, Allyssa Locke had a kill, Fliehs had a kill and two blocks, Rogers had two kills and Marzahn had five kills and a block. Groton Area made 18 of its 25 points for 72 percent and the Falcons made four of its 11 points for 36 percent.

In serving, Wanner had four ace serves while Kucker and Colestock each had two and Rogers and Wambach each had one. In setting, Kucker had 24 assists. Marzahn finished with 14 kills while Rogers had eight kills, Fliehs and Meier each had three, Wanner and Kucker each had two and Locke had one kill. Marzahn and Fliehs each had two blocks. Rogers had 16 of the team's 62 digs with Wanner and Marzahn each having 11.

Haley Hlavacek led the Falcons with two kills and an ace serve.

Groton Area won the junior varsity match, 25-15, 22-15 and 15-12. The Tigers won the C match, 11-25, 25-21 and 15-9, and the seventh graders lost their match, 2-1.

The Tigers will travel to Clark on Thursday to take on the Clark/Willow Lake Cyclones in a Northeast Conference contest.

- Paul Kosel

GDILIVE.COM will be broadcasting the games from Clark; however, at this time, we do not have any sponsors for the matches in Redfield on Saturday. If anyone is interested, call or text Paul at 605/397-7460.

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Today

Tonight

Thursday

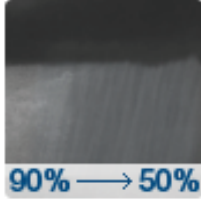
Thursday
Night

Friday



Slight Chance Showers then Showers and Patchy Fog

High: 44 °F



Showers and Areas Fog then Chance Showers

Low: 36 °F



Mostly Cloudy

High: 49 °F



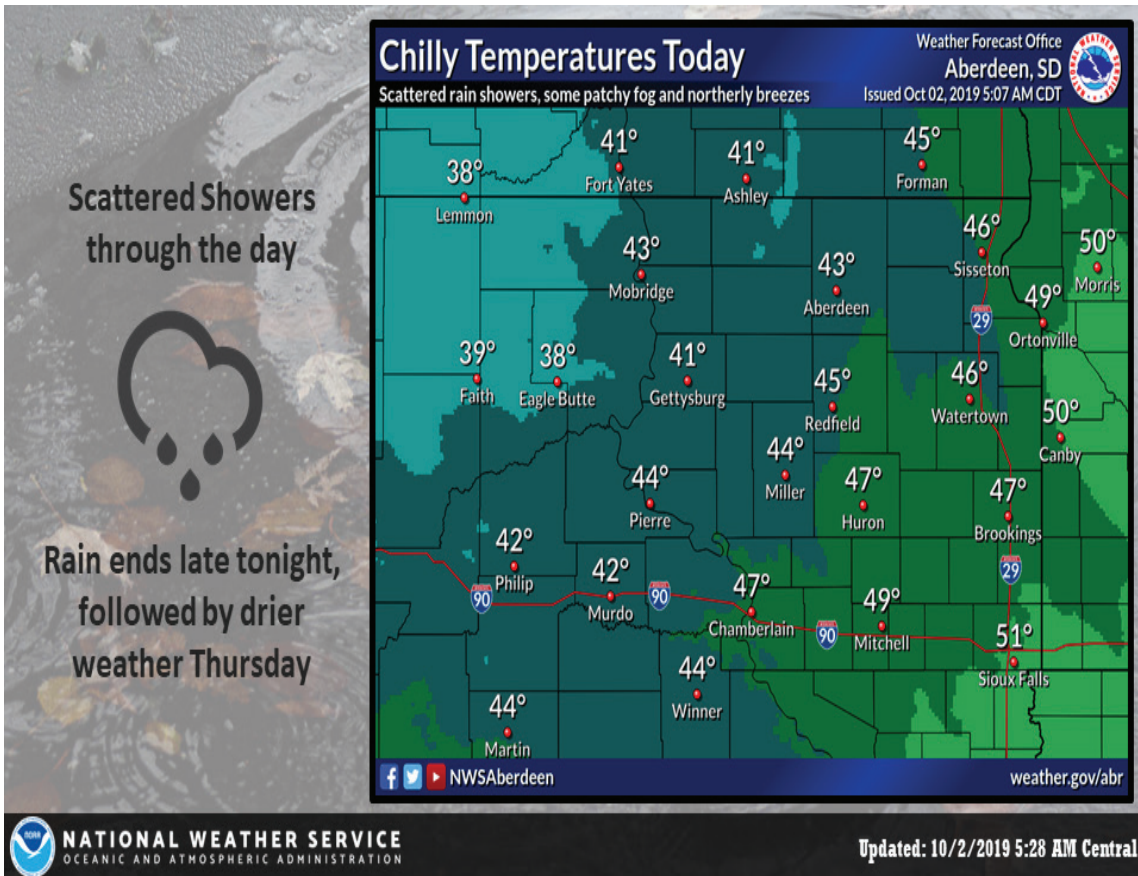
Partly Cloudy then Patchy Frost

Low: 36 °F



Patchy Frost then Mostly Sunny and Breezy

High: 58 °F



Published on: 10/02/2019 at 1:35AM

A disturbance will roll out of the Rockies and into the northern Plains spreading rain chances across South Dakota and into western Minnesota through the day. Skies will remain overcast keeping temperatures rather cool for early October. The rain will come to an end late tonight and early Thursday. Cloudy skies overnight will help to keep temps from reaching frosty levels, although a few spots West River could get close to the freezing mark. High pressure building in on Thursday and Friday will return drier conditions to the area along with a slow warming trend.

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Today in Weather History

October 2, 1971: Heavy wet snow of over a foot fell in the northern Black Hills. The heavy snow was accompanied by high winds which caused extensive damage to trees and utility lines. The power company said it was one of the worst storms they had experienced.

1882 - An early season windstorm over Oregon and northern California blew down thousands of trees and caused great crop damage in the Sacramento Valley. (David Ludlum)

1858: The only hurricane to impact California struck San Diego on this day. Two researchers with NOAA Michael Chenoweth and Christopher Landsea reconstructed the path of the storm using accounts from newspapers of the high winds. They estimated that if a similar storm were to have hit in 2004, it would have caused around \$500 million in damage.

1959 - A tornado struck the town of Ivy, VA (located near Charlottesville). Eleven persons were killed, including ten from one family. (The Weather Channel)

1980 - The temperature at Blue Canyon, CA, soared to 88 degrees, an October record for that location. (The Weather Channel)

1981 - Severe thunderstorms raked Phoenix, AZ, with heavy rain, high winds, and hail up to an inch and a half in diameter, for the second day in a row. Thunderstorms on the 1st deluged Phoenix with .68 inch of rain in five minutes, equalling their all-time record. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A fast moving cold front produced snow flurries from Minnesota to the Appalachian Mountains, and gale force winds behind the front ushered cold air into the Great Lakes Region. Valentine NE reported a record low of 25 degrees. Temperatures recovered rapidly in the Northern High Plains Region, reaching the lower 80s by afternoon. Jackson, WY, warmed from a morning low of 21 degrees to an afternoon high of 76 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Early morning thunderstorms in Georgia produced three inches of rain at Canton and Woodstock. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Flooding due to thunderstorm rains in the southeastern U.S. on the last day of September and the first day of October caused the Etowah River to rise seven feet above flood stage at Canton GA. Thunderstorms produced up to ten inches of rain in northeastern Georgia, with six inches reported at Athens GA in 24 hours. One man was killed, and another man was injured, when sucked by floodwaters into drainage lines. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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ASKING, SEEKING AND KNOCKING

A little girl was climbing into bed when her mother asked, "Ann, did you remember to say your prayers?"

"Well," she replied, "I got on my knees and started to say them as I do every night. And then all of a sudden I thought, 'I'll bet that God gets tired of hearing me pray about the same old things every night.' So, I decided that I would just lay here in bed and tell Him the story of 'The Three Bears.'"

Persistence in prayer and pursuing God's plan and purpose for our lives is very important. It's equally important, however, to understand how He answers our prayers and when He will answer our prayers. We must never allow ourselves to think that God will not accept our prayers or that He will ever forget our prayers. Prayers and praying are a serious and significant part of the life of the Christian. However, we must always remember that He will answer our prayers at the right time, in the right way, in a way that is in our best interests.

We need to remember that He responds to our requests with His wisdom and His never-ending and always compassionate love. When the answer does not come when we expect it, we must hold fast to the fact that "His grace is sufficient" now and into eternity. The answer will come when we need it most and will fulfill His plan for our well-being. When we give up, give in, and quit praying, God knows we are not sincere and that our request was "a passing fancy."

Prayer: Lord, give us a faith that does not falter, a trust that will not tire and persistence that will prevail. May our hope in Your faithfulness and our best interests prevail. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Matthew 7:7 Keep on asking, and you will receive what you ask for. Keep on seeking, and you will find. Keep on knocking, and the door will be opened to you.

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2019 Groton SD Community Events

- 09/07/2019 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 09/08/2019 Sunflower Classic at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 09/12/2019 St. John's Lutheran Luncheon
- 09/20/2019 Presbyterian Luncheon
- 09/28/2019 Granary Living History Fall Festival
- 10/11/2019 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/12/2019 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 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

- 01/26/2020 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)
- 04/04/2020 Groton Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt, 10 a.m. Sharp (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 04/25/2020 Fireman's Stag (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 05/02/2020 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. (1st Saturday in May)
- 05/25/2020 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
- 06/8-10/2020 St. John's VBS
- 07/04/2020 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)
Groton Hosting State B American Legion Baseball Tournament
- 07/12/2020 Summer Fest/Car Show
- 09/12/2020 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. (1st Sat. after Labor Day)
- 10/10/2020 Pumpkin Fest
- 10/31/2020 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat (Halloween)
- 11/14/2020 Groton American Legion Post #39 Annual Turkey Party (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)

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News from the Associated Press

Tuesday's Scores By The Associated Press

Volleyball

Aberdeen Christian def. Herreid/Selby Area, 25-20, 13-25, 25-22, 25-22
Aberdeen Roncalli def. Warner, 25-18, 26-24, 25-13
Andes Central/Dakota Christian def. Colome, 27-25, 25-17, 25-14
Avon def. Scotland, 25-19, 27-25, 22-25, 25-13
Beresford def. Lennox, 25-11, 20-25, 25-15, 25-15
Brookings def. Yankton, 25-12, 25-10, 23-25, 25-19
Canton def. West Central, 25-22, 22-25, 25-22, 25-14
Clark/Willow Lake def. DeSmet, 25-18, 28-26, 25-5
Corsica/Stickney def. Wessington Springs, 25-21, 25-22, 25-13
Douglas def. Custer, 25-19, 19-25, 25-18, 14-25, 15-11
Elkton-Lake Benton def. Garretson, 25-22, 14-25, 25-18, 23-25, 15-8
Estelline/Hendricks def. Flandreau Indian, 25-9, 25-5, 25-11
Ethan def. Bridgewater-Emery, 22-25, 22-25, 31-29, 25-6, 15-11
Faulkton def. Langford, 25-22, 25-21, 25-11
Gayville-Volin def. Bon Homme, 25-17, 25-19, 25-13
Great Plains Lutheran def. Lake Preston, 25-12, 25-14, 25-15
Groton Area def. Florence/Henry, 25-12, 25-9, 25-11
Harding County def. Dupree, 25-19, 25-21, 25-14
Highmore-Harrold def. Sanborn Central/Woonsocket, 18-25, 25-18, 25-12, 25-17
Hill City def. Philip, 25-21, 25-17, 25-9
Hitchcock-Tulare def. Sunshine Bible Academy, 25-5, 25-11, 25-10
Huron def. Aberdeen Central, 26-24, 25-18, 16-25, 25-10
Irene-Wakonda def. Menno, 25-12, 30-28, 25-17
James Valley Christian def. Iroquois/Doland, 25-12, 25-23, 23-25, 25-16
Kadoka Area def. Bennett County, 25-12, 25-12, 25-8
Kimball/White Lake def. Lyman, 25-21, 25-18, 25-19
Lead-Deadwood def. Red Cloud, 25-18, 21-25, 25-14, 25-23
McCook Central/Montrose def. Dell Rapids, 25-18, 25-14, 25-16
Miller def. Chamberlain, 25-14, 25-18, 25-12
Mobridge-Pollock def. Cheyenne-Eagle Butte, 25-22, 25-21, 25-19
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton def. Platte-Geddes, 25-12, 25-17, 25-23
North Central def. Leola/Frederick, 25-21, 17-25, 26-24, 25-22
Northwestern def. Redfield, 25-13, 25-14, 25-7
Parker def. Viborg-Hurley, 25-9, 25-6, 25-12
Rapid City Christian def. New Underwood, 25-15, 25-10, 25-15
Rapid City Stevens def. Rapid City Central, 25-23, 25-12, 23-25, 25-20
Sioux Falls Christian def. Vermillion, 25-19, 25-10, 25-17
Sioux Falls O'Gorman def. Sioux Falls Lincoln, 26-24, 25-19, 25-12
Sioux Falls Roosevelt def. Sioux Falls Washington, 25-19, 25-23, 25-11
Sioux Valley def. Flandreau, 25-19, 25-15, 25-22
St. Thomas More def. Spearfish, 25-18, 25-20, 25-8
Sully Buttes def. Potter County, 21-25, 23-25, 25-21, 25-22, 17-15

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Tripp-Delmont/Armour def. Marty Indian, 25-11, 25-17, 25-12
Wagner def. Hanson, 25-15, 25-11, 25-10
Watertown def. Mitchell, 25-13, 25-16, 25-16
Webster def. Waubay/Summit, 25-22, 25-12, 25-11
Edgemont Triangular

Edgemont def. Oelrichs, 25-17, 25-14, 25-18
Hay Springs, Neb. def. Edgemont, 16-25, 22-25, 25-20, 25-19, 15-8

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Mega Millions

10-17-39-42-59, Mega Ball: 3, Megaplier: 2

(ten, seventeen, thirty-nine, forty-two, fifty-nine; Mega Ball: three; Megaplier: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$45 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$60 million

2 women indicted for federal counts in pipeline

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Two women accused of damaging valves and setting fire to construction equipment along an oil pipeline that crosses Iowa and three other states have been indicted on federal charges in the case, federal prosecutors said Tuesday.

A grand jury on Sept. 19 indicted Jessica Reznicek and Ruby Montoya, both of Des Moines, on nine counts each, U.S. Attorney for Iowa Marc Krickbaum said in a news release. The two face federal charges of conspiracy to damage an energy facility, four counts of use of fire in the commission of a felony, and four counts of malicious use of fire.

The women are accused of damaging the valves and setting fire to earth-moving equipment at different times from 2016 into 2017. That includes machinery found extensively damaged by fire in August 2016 located at three oil pipeline construction sites in central Iowa near Newton, Reasnor and Oskaloosa.

If convicted, Reznicek and Montoya each face decades in prison.

The women released a statement in 2017 claiming they had burned construction machinery, cut through pipe valves with a torch and set fires with gasoline, rags and tires along the Dakota Access pipeline route. The \$3.8 billion pipeline crosses North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa and Illinois.

Krickbaum said Montoya was recently arrested in Arizona and is being detained pending court proceedings to determine her appearance in Iowa. Reznicek appeared Tuesday in a Des Moines federal court and was conditionally released pending trial, which is currently scheduled for Dec. 2.

It was not clear whether the women yet have attorneys. Publicly-listed phone numbers for the women could not be found Tuesday.

Mayor in Maine plans to declare Oct. 14 to be Columbus Day

WATERVILLE, Maine (AP) — A conservative mayor in Maine says he plans to declare Oct. 14 to be Columbus Day, in defiance of state law.

The Kennebec Journal reports Waterville Mayor Nick Isgro's proclamation would defy a state law passed in April that renamed the holiday Indigenous People's Day.

At the time of the April signing, Gov. Janet Mills said she hoped the legislation would help the state "take a step towards healing, towards inclusiveness."

Maine is one of several states, including Alaska, Hawaii, New Mexico, Oregon, South Dakota and Vermont

that have changed the holiday's name.

Isgro says he will read the proclamation at the City Council meeting on Tuesday night.

Information from: Kennebec Journal, <http://www.kjonline.com/>

Midwest economy: September state-by-state glance

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — The Institute for Supply Management, formerly the Purchasing Management Association, began formally surveying its membership in 1931 to gauge business conditions.

The Creighton Economic Forecasting Group uses the same methodology as the national survey to consult supply managers and business leaders. Creighton University economics professor Ernie Goss oversees the report.

The overall index ranges between 0 and 100. Growth neutral is 50, and a figure greater than 50 indicates growth in that factor over the next three to six months.

Here are the state-by-state results for September:

Arkansas: The overall index for Arkansas inched up to 48.3 in September from 48.2 in August. Index components were new orders at 44.2, production or sales at 49.6, delivery lead time at 56.5, inventories at 47.1 and employment at 44.3. Construction activity remained strong in the state, according to the report. "However, new orders and hiring among manufacturers for the last two months signal slowing economic conditions in the state," Goss said.

Iowa: Iowa's overall index remained below the growth neutral threshold for second straight month. It hit 49.6 last month. August's figure was 49.7. Index components were new orders at 45.9, production or sales at 49.1, delivery lead time at 57.0, employment at 48.3 and inventories at 47.9. Manufacturers experienced solid growth over the past several months, the report said, but new orders and hiring among manufacturers for the last two months signal slowing economic conditions.

Kansas: The state's overall index rose above growth neutral to reach 51.1 in September. Kansas' August figure was 49.9. Index components were new orders at 51.4, production or sales at 48.7, delivery lead time at 57.5, employment at 49.2 and inventories at 48.8. "Durable- and nondurable-goods producers have been expanding at a slow, but positive pace, over the past several months," Goss said. "However, survey results over the past two months point to even slower growth in the months ahead."

Minnesota: Minnesota's overall index dipped to 48.4 in September from 48.6 in August. Index components were new orders at 49.7, production or sales at 49.7, delivery lead time at 56.3, inventories at 43.1 and employment at 44.6. "Construction activity in the state remains very strong even as durable- and nondurable-goods manufacturers reported pullbacks in economic activity," Goss said.

Missouri: The state's overall index dropped below growth neutral last month. It hit 49.2, compared with August's 50.1. Missouri's index components were new orders at 48.9, production or sales at 48.8, delivery lead time at 55.2, inventories at 42.3 and employment at 48.8. Construction activity in the state continues to improve, and manufacturers are experiencing essentially flat growth with new orders and other indicators pointing to slow to no growth in the months ahead, Goss said.

Nebraska: Nebraska's overall index moved slightly into growth territory. The state's overall index climbed to 50.6 from August's 49.3. Index components were new orders at 49.3, production or sales at 49.0, delivery lead time at 57.1, inventories at 48.2 and employment at 49.4. Construction activity in the state continues to improve, and manufacturers are experiencing almost flat growth with new orders and other indicators pointing to slow to no growth in the months ahead, he said.

North Dakota: The state's overall index slipped to 50.1 from 51.2 in August. Index components were new orders at 49.2, production or sales at 49.4, delivery lead time at 56.6, employment at 47.7 and inventories at 47.4. "Growth in the state's large energy sector and related industries has slowed for much of 2019," Goss said. "Slow growth in the state's durable-goods manufacturing sector offset pullbacks among nondurable-goods producers in the state." Overall growth in the North Dakota economy will remain positive, he said, but slower in the final quarter of 2019.

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Oklahoma: Oklahoma's overall index rose to 50.1 last month from August's 49.2. Index components were new orders at 49.2, production or sales at 49.4, delivery lead time at 56.7, inventories at 47.5 and employment at 47.8. Growth in the state's large energy sector and related industries has slowed for much of 2019. "Business pullbacks among the state's durable-goods and nondurable-goods manufacturing sectors offset improving growth among the state's nonmanufacturing sector," Goss said. Overall growth in the state economy will remain positive, he said but slower in the final quarter of 2019.

South Dakota: The state's overall index sank further below growth neutral to hit 47.8 in September, compared with 48.3 in August. Index components were new orders at 42.6, production or sales at 49.5, delivery lead time at 56.5, inventories at 47.2 and employment at 43.2. South Dakota's construction activity continues to improve. Manufacturers, on the other hand, are experiencing "almost flat growth with new orders and other indicators pointing to slow to no growth in the months ahead," Goss said.

South Dakota considering beekeeping proposal in Sioux Falls

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Sioux Falls city officials are considering a proposal to allow people to keep bees at their homes.

The draft proposal the city council is discussing Tuesday would allow beekeeping permits at the one-time fee of \$50 as long as applicants show they've taken a beekeeping course and have gotten permission from nearby property owners.

The Argus Leader reports that beekeeping in Sioux Falls is currently only allowed on land zoned as agricultural.

People would be limited to four hives and they would need to be kept in back yards at least 25 feet from the nearest home.

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

Survey suggests little or no Midwest economic growth in view

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — A September survey of business supply manager suggests a slump in economic growth still grips nine Midwest and Plains states, according to a report issued Tuesday.

The Mid-America Business Conditions index fell further below growth neutral, hitting 49.1 last month compared with 49.3 in August. The figure was 52.0 in July.

The decline was the fifth in six months for the overall index, which had remained above growth neutral for 32 straight months.

"The trade war and the global economic slowdown have cut regional growth to approximately two-thirds that of the U.S.," said Creighton University economist Ernie Goss, who oversees the survey. "Based on the last two months of surveys of manufacturing supply managers, both the U.S. and Mid-America economies are likely to move even lower in the months ahead."

The survey results are compiled into a collection of indexes ranging from zero to 100. Survey organizers say any score above 50 suggests growth. A score below that suggests decline. The survey covers Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma and South Dakota.

Economic optimism, as captured by the business confidence index, rose slightly last month. It hit 47.7, compared with August's 45.0.

"I expect business confidence to depend heavily on trade talks with China, and the passage of the nation's trade agreement with Canada and Mexico," Goss said.

Companies shrank inventories of raw materials and supplies last month, the report said.

"This is yet another signal of weak business confidence as manufacturers reduce their inventories of raw materials and supplies based on an anemic sales outlook," Goss said.

The regional trade numbers remained far below growth neutral in September. The index for new export orders sank to 36.2, down from August's 39.6, and the import index increased slightly to 42.4 from 42.3 in August.

Residents of former SD detention facility getting evicted

CUSTER, S.D. (AP) — Residents of a former juvenile detention facility in South Dakota are being evicted by the state after it repossessed the campus from the current owner who fell behind on payments.

The Rapid City Journal reports the eviction notices say the state plans to sell the campus near Custer and residents have until Oct. 31 to leave their homes.

The state sold the 173-acre campus in 2016 when it closed the juvenile detention program and the purchaser leased out 11 residences and space for several businesses. But last month, the state repossessed the campus when SLIC-e Holdings bounced a \$116,588 check for an overdue payment.

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

Ukraine's ex-president discussed investments with Giuliani

By YURAS KARMANAU and ANGELA CHARLTON Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukraine's former president says he discussed investments with President Donald Trump's attorney, Rudy Giuliani, in 2017, but that he never discussed Ukrainian companies with any U.S. official.

Like many Ukrainians, former President Petro Poroshenko is trying to distance himself from the U.S. impeachment inquiry into Trump, triggered by a phone call between the American leader and Poroshenko's successor, Volodymyr Zelenskiy.

"We definitely do not want to be involved in the political process inside the United States," Poroshenko, now a Ukrainian lawmaker, told reporters in parliament Wednesday.

Poroshenko said he met Giuliani in 2017 as a "friend of Ukraine" and they discussed "political support and investment" but nothing else. He wouldn't elaborate.

"We never ever spoke about commercial companies" with Trump, former President Barack Obama, current Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden, or "any U.S. officials," said Poroshenko, Ukraine's leader from 2014 to 2019.

Giuliani wants Ukraine to investigate Biden, whose son Hunter served on the board of the Ukrainian gas company Burisma. Trump asked Zelenskiy to "look into" the Bidens in a July phone call that is now at the center of an impeachment inquiry.

Poroshenko said he was not aware that Giuliani had met with then-Ukrainian prosecutor Yuriy Lutsenko.

Like Poroshenko, many Ukrainians are shrugging off U.S. efforts to impeach Trump as someone else's problem.

But they are worried about one thing: that Ukraine's role in the Trump affair strengthens Russia's hand, and hobbles the politically inexperienced Zelenskiy just as he's trying to tackle the problems that matter to them most: corruption and an armed conflict with Russian-backed separatists in the east that has divided their nation.

Zelenskiy announced an agreement Tuesday with Ukrainian separatists that paves the way for peace talks to end five years of fighting, but Ukrainian nationalists denounced it as capitulation to Russia.

The U.S. scandal "is weakening Zelenskiy's standing inside the country," said Tatyana Stanovaya, head of the R.Politik political analysis firm.

A rough transcript of the July phone call between Trump and Zelenskiy shows the Ukrainian leader flattering Trump, criticizing the U.S. ambassador and European leaders, and saying Ukraine's chief prosecutor is "my guy."

"He gave a reason to doubt his ability to be an honest president," Stanovaya said. "It's the first big blow for him" since he overwhelmingly beat Poroshenko in Ukraine's April election.

Zelenskiy's comments on the call will fuel the Kremlin's view that Ukrainian leaders are beholden to U.S. interests.

As the impeachment process heats up, the U.S. State Department gave initial approval to a \$39 million sale of anti-tank missiles to Ukraine to help the country battle Russia-backed separatists. The proposed aid is in addition to some \$400 million in U.S. military aid released last month.

Nataliya Vasilyeva in Moscow contributed.

Big Tech's eco-pledges aren't slowing its pursuit of Big Oil

BY MATT O'BRIEN AP Technology Writer

Employee activism and outside pressure have pushed big tech companies like Amazon, Microsoft and Google into promising to slash their carbon emissions. But there's another thing these tech giants aren't cutting: Their growing business ties to the oil and gas industry.

When Microsoft held an all-staff meeting in September, an employee asked CEO Satya Nadella if it was ethical for the company to be selling its cloud computing services to fossil fuel companies, according to two other Microsoft employees who described the exchange on condition they not be named. Such partnerships, the worker told Nadella, were accelerating the oil companies' greenhouse gas emissions.

Microsoft and other tech giants have been competing with one another to strike lucrative partnerships with ExxonMobil, Chevron, Shell, BP and other energy firms, in many cases supplying them not just with remote data storage but also artificial intelligence tools for pinpointing better drilling spots or speeding up refinery production.

The oil and gas industry is spending roughly \$20 billion each year on cloud services, which accounts for about 10% of the total cloud market, according to Vivek Chidambaram, a managing director of Accenture's energy consultancy. It's not yet clear whether the extraction industry is getting its money's worth, although experts remain bullish about the application of advanced technology to oil and gas exploration.

Nadella sought to assuage employee concerns at the September 12 meeting, first by reiterating Microsoft's internal efforts on environmental sustainability, according to the workers, who asked for anonymity because they feared retaliation for speaking about an internal meeting. The employees said Nadella also defended Microsoft's energy partners, pointing out their investments in researching and developing more sustainable energy production methods.

"There's no fossil fuel CEO who sits there and says, 'You know, I'm just gonna deny climate change,'" Nadella said, according to the employees' transcript of his remarks. "If anything, they're all saying, 'Let us have, in fact, the regulation, the pricing mechanisms that get us to this future.'"

Microsoft said in an emailed statement Tuesday that it is "focused on helping companies of all kinds become more efficient, including energy companies." It declined to comment on Nadella's remarks, which were part of a regularly scheduled "all-hands" gathering in which the CEO welcomes questions on a range of topics.

Less than a week after that exchange and days before a planned worldwide protest over climate change, Microsoft announced yet another major deal for its Azure cloud computing platform — this time with Chevron and oilfield services giant Schlumberger. The timing of the announcement ahead of the climate protest and United Nations climate action meetings angered some environmentally-minded Microsoft workers and caught the attention of outsiders.

"It is unconscionable that amid global climate protests, tech giants like Microsoft are announcing major partnerships with Big Oil," said Democratic presidential candidate and Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, in a tweet that coincided with the September 20 global climate strike. "We must hold them accountable, demand they break ties with the fossil fuel industry, and move rapidly to sustainable energy."

Echoing that message was a small group of Microsoft employees who carried cardboard signs to a lunchtime protest that day outside of Microsoft's headquarters in Redmond, Washington. "No Azure For Oil," said one of the signs.

After months of employee activism, Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos said he was pushing his company to the forefront on sustainability, committing it to have 100% of its energy use come from solar panels and other renewable energy by 2030. But he also defended Amazon's work with the oil and gas industry, arguing

that “we need to help them instead of vilify them.”

Some experts say AI and cloud services could actually play a role in curbing emissions.

Denying cloud computing services to the oil and gas industry would do little to address the bigger problem of the world’s ongoing dependence on fossil fuels, said Aseem Prakash, director of the Center for Environmental Politics at the University of Washington.

“We would not want to collapse the fossil fuel industry,” Prakash said. “We would want a soft landing.”

If anything, he said, an oil company’s shift to another company’s cloud platform may have some environmental benefits because it is more efficient than running its digital operations on its own servers. Driving down costs could also help open the door to investments in other, less polluting methods for generating energy.

It’s less clear whether AI is mitigating pollution or worsening it. In their pitches to work with oil and gas companies, cloud providers such as Amazon and Microsoft have boasted of advanced machine-learning tools that can sift through huge troves of geologic and seismic data to help make decisions about where to extract resources. IDC oil analyst Gaurav Verma said AI is a critical technology for oil and gas companies that want to learn from that data to study oil reservoirs or predict when maintenance is needed on a pipeline.

Earlier this year, ExxonMobil struck a deal to tap into Microsoft’s technology to capitalize on the shale oil boom in Texas and New Mexico. Microsoft has said that real-time data collected from a region spanning hundreds of miles would enable ExxonMobil “to make faster and better decisions” on drilling and well completion and support production growth by as much as 50,000 oil-equivalent barrels per day by 2025.

An unsigned statement from Microsoft’s protesting workers said they’ve been “made complicit” by the company’s role in warming the planet.

“Microsoft makes millions of dollars in profits by helping fossil fuel companies extract more oil,” the statement said.

But it’s not clear if tech giants are actually helping that much — in part because they may be overstating their own role in transforming Big Oil with AI.

“The sundae they’re selling is the cloud,” said Chidambaram, the Accenture analyst. “The cherries they’re putting on it is the analytics.”

Chidambaram said that’s because oil industries are still cagey about sharing what they know about underground reserves and don’t want third parties analyzing that data.

Chidambaram said in the long run, however, AI could actually help meet climate goals. For example, machines that can capture better data and quickly analyze it could also help detect and reduce the leakage of methane from wells and pipelines, a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions.

“Data can be used in many ways,” he said. “It’s about how it’s being used.”

Dallas officer who fatally shot neighbor faces sentencing

By JAKE BLEIBERG Associated Press

DALLAS (AP) — The same jury that convicted a white Dallas police officer in the fatal shooting of her black neighbor returns to court Wednesday to consider her sentence — a penalty that could be anywhere from five years to life in prison.

Amber Guyger, who said she mistook the man’s apartment for her own, which was directly below, was convicted of murder in a verdict that drew tears of relief from his family and chants of “black lives matter” from a crowd outside the courtroom.

Guyger sat alone, weeping, at the defense table.

Her defense attorneys can argue that she deserves a light sentence because she acted out of confusion and fear that she had found an intruder in her home. Prosecutors have given no indication in court of the sentence they will seek. Attorneys are under a gag order.

It was unclear how long the punishment phase of the trial would last. Testimony began Tuesday after the verdict, starting with Botham Jean’s friends and family, who explained how his death affected them.

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First on the stand was Allison Jean, who said her son was killed just before he was to turn 27.

"My life has not been the same. It's just been like a roller coaster. I can't sleep, I cannot eat. It's just been the most terrible time for me," she said.

Botham Jean's sister, Allisa Findley, told the jury that she and her mother cry a lot. Her formerly "bubbly" younger brother has retreated as if into a shell, and her father is "not the same."

"It's like the light behind his eyes is off," Findley said.

She said her children are now afraid of police.

Prosecutors submitted text messages that indicated Guyger lacks sensitivity toward black people. In one, she suggests participants at a Martin Luther King Jr. Day parade in Dallas could be persuaded to go home with the use of physical violence and pepper spray.

In a message sent to Guyger's phone, the messenger suggests she would like a German shepherd because the dog is racist. Guyger declares that she hates "everything and everyone but y'all."

The basic facts of the unusual shooting were not in dispute throughout the trial. Guyger said that after a long shift at work and still in uniform, she walked up to Jean's apartment — which was on the fourth floor, directly above hers on the third — and found the door unlocked. She said she thought the apartment was her own when she drew her service weapon and entered.

Jean, an accountant from the Caribbean island nation of St. Lucia, had been eating a bowl of ice cream when Guyger fired.

The shooting drew widespread attention because of the strange circumstances and because it was one in a string of shootings of unarmed black men by white police officers.

The verdict was "a victory for black people in America," said Lee Merritt, one of the lawyers for Jean's family. "It's a signal that the tide is going to change here. Police officers are going to be held accountable for their actions, and we believe that will begin to change policing culture around the world."

The jury was largely made up of women and people of color.

Attorney Ben Crump, also representing the family, credited the makeup of the jury with Tuesday's conviction, and said he expects them to deliver a weighty sentence.

"I look at this jury. And I look at the diversity of this jury," he said. "They will see past all the technical, intellectual justifications for an unjustifiable killing. And I believe they will do the right thing."

Dallas Police Association President Mike Mata declined to comment Tuesday, saying Guyger's lawyers asked him to wait until after sentencing. The group, which represents city police officers, has paid for Guyger's legal defense and security.

The verdict may have defused tensions that began simmering Monday when jurors were told they could consider whether Guyger had a right to use deadly force under a Texas law known as the castle doctrine — even though she was not in her own home. The law is similar to "stand your ground" measures across the U.S. that declare a person has no duty to retreat from an intruder.

In a frantic 911 call played repeatedly during the trial, Guyger said "I thought it was my apartment" nearly 20 times. Her lawyers argued that the identical physical appearance of the apartment complex from floor to floor frequently led to tenants going to the wrong apartments.

But prosecutors questioned how Guyger could have missed numerous signs that she was in the wrong place. They also asked why she did not call for backup and suggested she was distracted by sexually explicit phone messages with her police partner.

Guyger, 31, was arrested three days after the killing. She was later fired and charged with murder. Tension has been high during the trial in Dallas, where five police officers were killed in an attack three years ago.

Associated Press writer Jill Bleed in Little Rock, Arkansas, contributed this this report.

Follow Jake Bleiberg at www.twitter.com/jzbleiberg

Taliban send high-level delegation to Islamabad

By **MUNIR AHMED** and **KATHY GANNON** Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — The Taliban announced Wednesday they are sending a high-level delegation to Pakistan's capital as part of a tour that has included Russia, China and Iran in a push to resurrect an Afghanistan peace deal with Washington that seemed imminent just a month ago.

Taliban spokesman Suhail Shaheen said Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, a co-founder of the Taliban and head of their political office in Qatar, will lead the 11-member delegation during talks with Pakistani officials in Islamabad.

Zalmay Khalilzad, Washington's special peace envoy, is also in the Pakistani capital for "consultations" with the Pakistani leadership, a U.S. official said. He spent the last year negotiating a peace deal with the Taliban, which seemed imminent until Sept. 7 when U.S. President Donald Trump declared the deal "dead."

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media, said Khalilzad is not in Islamabad to resume the peace process.

Rather the U.S. peace envoy will follow up on discussions he held with Pakistani leaders, including Prime Minister Imran Khan, during the U.N. General Assembly session in New York.

It wasn't immediately known if Khalilzad will meet with Taliban leader Baradar. The two men held several one-on-one meetings during the many rounds of negotiations held in the Middle Eastern state of Qatar where the Taliban maintain a political office.

Trump ended peace talks after a series of Taliban attacks on the capital Kabul, including one in which a U.S. soldier was killed.

Neither Pakistan's Foreign Ministry nor the military would comment on the Taliban and Khalilzad visits.

Since Trump ended talks with the Taliban, Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan and other officials have been urging Washington to resume talks on ending nearly 18 years of fighting in neighboring Afghanistan where, violence has increased in recent months.

Over the past year, the Afghan government was sidelined in the U.S.-Taliban talks with the Taliban refusing to negotiate with Kabul officials as they consider the Afghan government a U.S. puppet. Meanwhile, Taliban attacks have continued unabated, even as Afghanistan held presidential elections Saturday, and weeks after the U.S.-led peace talks collapsed.

Saturday's vote was marred by violence, Taliban threats and widespread allegations of mismanagement and abuse. It was the fourth time Afghans have gone to the polls to elect a president since 2001 when the U.S.-led coalition ousted the Taliban regime.

Gannon reported from Kabul, Afghanistan

Former GOP congressman Pete Sessions eyeing 2020 comeback

By **PAUL J. WEBER** and **ALAN FRAM** Associated Press

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — Former Rep. Pete Sessions of Texas is expected to run again in 2020 but not in his old Dallas district, which Democrats flipped last year.

Prominent Republican megadonor Roy Bailey and two GOP operatives with knowledge of the decision told The Associated Press that Sessions will run for the rural central Texas seat of outgoing Rep. Bill Flores.

Bailey, who is finance co-chairman of President Donald Trump's reelection campaign, said he has discussed the decision extensively with Sessions. The two GOP operatives requested anonymity to discuss Sessions' candidacy.

"He has been motivated by the Democrats move towards impeachment of our duly elected President," Bailey said in a text message to the AP.

Sessions, who spent 22 years in Congress, was a longtime GOP party leader and once the campaign chief for House Republicans. He was ousted by Democrat Colin Allred — a loss that was further proof of Texas' big cities growing more liberal.

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Flores' district runs through Waco, where Sessions was born, and is considered a safe Republican enclave. An announcement was scheduled for Thursday in Waco.

Flores is one of 20 House Republicans leaving Congress next year. Seventeen are retiring after their current term and three have resigned or already left office.

Sessions didn't face a Democratic challenger in 2016, but his district voted for Hillary Clinton over Trump.

Two years later, Democrats won Sessions' seat and another near Houston that is now represented by Rep. Lizzie Fletcher, and they're targeting six more they narrowly lost in 2018. All run through suburbs where shifting demographics and an aversion to Trump among educated women are weakening the GOP.

Fram reported from Washington.

Accusations over Trump probe fly between Pompeo, Democrats

By LISA MASCARO, MARY CLARE JALONICK and JONATHAN LEMIRE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Setting a defiant tone, the Trump administration resisted Congress' access to impeachment witnesses, even as House Democrats warned such efforts themselves could amount to an impeachable offense.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo tried to delay five current and former officials from providing documents and testimony in the impeachment inquiry that could lead to charges against President Donald Trump. But Democrats were able to set closed-door depositions for Thursday for former special envoy to Ukraine Kurt Volker and next week for ousted U.S. Ambassador Marie Yovanovitch.

The escalating exchange of accusations and warnings on Tuesday signaled yet another stiffening in the confrontation between the executive and legislative branches amid the Democrats' launching of the impeachment inquiry late last week. That followed a national security whistleblower's disclosure of Trump's July phone call seeking help from the new Ukrainian president in investigating Democratic political rival Joe Biden and Biden's son Hunter.

In a Tuesday evening tweet, Trump cast the impeachment inquiry as a coup "intended to take away the Power of the People, their VOTE, their Freedoms, their Second Amendment, Religion, Military, Border Wall, and their God-given rights as a Citizen of The United States of America!" In fact, a coup is usually defined as a sudden, violent and illegal seizure of government power. The impeachment process is laid out in the U.S. Constitution.

Pompeo said the Democrats were trying to "intimidate" and "bully" the career officials into appearing and claimed it would be "not feasible" as demanded. House investigators countered that it would be illegal for the secretary to try to protect Trump by preventing the officials from talking to Congress.

Some Trump supporters cheered Pompeo's muscular response to the Democrats. But it also complicated the secretary's own situation, coming the day after it was disclosed that he had listened in during Trump's July phone call with Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelenskiy that helped trigger the impeachment inquiry.

"Any effort to intimidate witnesses or prevent them from talking with Congress — including State Department employees — is illegal and will constitute evidence of obstruction of the impeachment inquiry," said three House chairmen, Adam Schiff of the intelligence committee, Eliot Engel of Foreign Affairs, and Elijah Cummings of Oversight.

They said that if he was on Trump's call, "Secretary Pompeo is now a fact witness in the House impeachment inquiry." And they warned, "He should immediately cease intimidating Department witnesses in order to protect himself and the President."

On Wednesday, the State Department's inspector general is expected to brief congressional staff from several House and Senate appropriations, oversight, foreign affairs and intelligence committees on their requests for information and documents on Ukraine, according to an aide familiar with the planning. The inspector general acts independently from Pompeo.

The committees are seeking voluntary testimony from the current and former officials as the House digs into State Department actions and Trump's other calls with foreign leaders that have been shielded

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from scrutiny.

In halting any appearances by State officials, and demanding that executive branch lawyers accompany them, Pompeo is underscoring Attorney General William Barr's expansive view of White House authority and setting a tone for conflicts to come.

"I will use all means at my disposal to prevent and expose any attempts to intimidate the dedicated professionals," Pompeo wrote.

When issuing a separate subpoena last week as part of the inquiry, the chairmen of the three House committees made it clear that stonewalling their investigation would be fought.

"Your failure or refusal to comply with the subpoena shall constitute evidence of obstruction of the House's impeachment inquiry," the three chairmen wrote.

Democrats often note that obstruction was one of the impeachment articles against Richard Nixon, who resigned the presidency in 1974 in the face of almost certain impeachment.

Volker played a direct role in arranging meetings between Rudy Giuliani, who is Trump's personal lawyer, and Zelenskyy, the chairmen said.

The State Department said that Volker has confirmed that he put a Zelenskyy adviser in contact with Giuliani, at the Ukraine adviser's request.

The former envoy, who has since resigned his position and so is not necessarily bound by Pompeo's directions, is eager to appear as scheduled on Thursday, said one person familiar with the situation, but unauthorized to discuss it and granted anonymity. The career professional believes he acted appropriately and wants to tell his side of the situation, the person said.

Yovanovitch, the career diplomat whose abrupt recall from Ukraine earlier this year raised questions, is set to appear next week. The Democrats also want to hear from T. Ulrich Brechbuhl, a counselor at the State Department, who also listened in on the Trump-Zelenskyy call, they said.

It's unclear whether Pompeo will comply with the committees' request for documents by Friday. He had declined to comply with their previous requests for information.

Pompeo, traveling in Italy to meet with the country's president and prime minister, ignored shouted question about the impeachment inquiry on Tuesday.

The House investigators are prepared for battle as they probe more deeply into the State Department to try to understand why the administration sought to restrict access to Trump's conversations with foreign leaders.

The whistleblower alleged in an Aug. 12 letter to Congress that the White House tried to "lock down" Trump's July 25 phone call with the new Ukrainian president because it was worried about the contents being leaked to the public.

In recent days, it has been disclosed that the administration similarly tried to restrict information about Trump's calls with other foreign leaders, including Russia's Vladimir Putin and Saudi Arabia's Mohammed bin Salman, by moving memos onto a highly classified computer system.

"It's going to be one heck of a fight to get that information," Schiff told House Democrats during a conference call over the weekend, according to a person granted anonymity to discuss the private session.

As Trump continued to rage against the impeachment inquiry, there was little evidence of a broader White House response. And few outside allies were rushing to defend the president.

Trump has long measured allies' loyalty by their willingness to fight for him on TV, and he complained bitterly this week that few had done so. And those who did, including House GOP leader Kevin McCarthy on CBS' "60 Minutes," he believed had flubbed their appearance, according to a person not authorized to publicly discuss private conversations.

Though there has been growing discontent with Giuliani in the West Wing and State Department, where some officials blame him for leading Trump into the Ukraine mess, the president continued to stand by his personal lawyer.

Giuliani, who hired former assistant special Watergate prosecutor Jon Sale a day after being hit with his own subpoena, continued to push false Biden corruption accusations and promised to fight against

Democratic investigators.

The Ukraine matter remains the central focus as Democrats investigate whether Trump's suggestion that the east European country's new president be in touch with Giuliani and Barr to "look into" Biden amounts to a solicitation of foreign interference in the upcoming 2020 election.

The call unfolded against the backdrop of a \$250 billion foreign aid package for Ukraine that was being readied by Congress but stalled by the White House.

Ukraine's president told reporters Tuesday he has never met or spoken with Giuliani.

Zelenskyy insisted that "it is impossible to put pressure on me." He said he stressed the importance of the military aid repeatedly in discussions with Trump, but "it wasn't explained to me" why the money didn't come through until September.

Not all business was halted between the White House and Congress. Even as the impeachment confrontation boiled, House Democrats briefed White House staffers on House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's prescription drug legislation. Lowering drug costs is a top policy priority for both the speaker and the president. Joe Grogan, a top Trump domestic policy adviser, called it a "very productive start."

Associated Press writers Matthew Lee in Rome; Angela Charlton in Kyiv, Ukraine; and Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar in Washington contributed to this report.

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Gun control risks losing momentum as impeachment fever rises

By KATHLEEN RONAYNE Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — After back-to-back mass shootings in Ohio and Texas this summer, gun control burst back on the scene as a major political issue for Democrats. Now it risks taking a back seat as impeachment fever overtakes Washington.

Gun control advocates are determined to prevent that from happening.

Ten White House hopefuls will be in Las Vegas for a forum on gun policy on Wednesday, almost two years to the day after a gunman killed 58 people at a country music festival on the Las Vegas Strip in the deadliest mass shooting in modern American history. The event is being hosted by MSNBC, March for Our Lives and Giffords, the advocacy organization set up by former Arizona congresswoman Gabby Giffords, who was shot and gravely wounded during a constituent meeting in 2011.

The forum is an effort to keep gun violence front and center of the debate and gives 2020 presidential candidates a chance to showcase their plans to combat the epidemic. Polls show that a majority of Americans favor stricter gun laws, while even more support specific proposals like universal background checks. But negotiations between President Donald Trump's administration and lawmakers have halted over background checks legislation, an effort that faced long odds even before the impeachment inquiry began.

"Impeachment sucks everything out of the room. Certainly it's the focus of Trump's attention," said Jack Citrin, a professor emeritus of political science at the University of California-Berkeley. "If you need to reach some kind of bipartisan agreement and one party is determined to throw the president out of office, rightly or wrongly, it's a little hard to see how that builds the kind of goodwill that's necessary on this or any other issue."

Ariel Hobbs, a 21-year-old student organizer with March for Our Lives in Houston, said her group wants "to hear from the candidates that they are taking this seriously and they understand they can no longer ignore America's gun violence epidemic." She doesn't think the impeachment inquiry is a reason for lawmakers to stop their push for a bipartisan solution.

The 10 candidates slated to participate in the forum are former Vice President Joe Biden; New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker; South Bend, Indiana, Mayor Pete Buttigieg; former Obama Housing Secretary Julián Castro; California Sen. Kamala Harris; Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar; former Texas Rep. Beto O'Rourke;

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Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders; Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren; and businessman Andrew Yang.

O'Rourke recast his campaign around gun control after the August shooting in his hometown of El Paso, Texas, where a gunman targeting Hispanics killed 22 people. O'Rourke even vowed to ban assault weapons, saying at a debate in Houston in September, "Hell, yes, we're gonna take your AR-15, your AK-47, and we're not going to allow it to be used against your fellow Americans anymore."

One expert said he doesn't see a downside for O'Rourke or any of his fellow presidential candidates to talk about impeachment alongside other issues like gun control.

"If (O'Rourke) is pointing out that because of impeachment, the president has decided not to work at all on an issue that involves people's lives, he could make the argument if he wanted that this is itself an impeachable offense," said Michael Green, a history professor at the University of Las Vegas-Nevada focused on state and national politics. "If you are trying to get your base, your base probably does not mind the idea of impeachment."

Another challenge for candidates is to distinguish themselves on the issue of guns. O'Rourke stands out with this call for a mandatory federal buyback program for military-style weapons used in many mass shootings. That goes beyond most other Democratic candidates who have focused their proposals around expanded background checks and banning the future manufacture and sales of certain high-powered weapons — but not making it illegal to possess those already in the market.

Ahead of the debate, Biden released a detailed gun policy plan emphasizing his role as a leading senator in adopting a background law in 1993 and a ban on certain semi-automatic weapons as part of a sweeping 1994 crime law. That ban expired after 10 years.

Besides renewing that ban and including high-capacity magazines, Biden's proposals include an outright ban on online sales of guns and ammunition, along with a voluntary buyback program for the military-style guns. Biden doesn't offer a price tag for his voluntary buyback proposal but proposes a \$900 million, eight-year grant program for evidence-based intervention programs in 40 cities with high homicide rates. The idea reflects a point Biden and some other candidates make often when campaigning: Mass shootings making headlines account for only a small fraction of U.S. gun deaths.

Democratic Sen. Chris Murphy of Connecticut has been leading negotiations with the White House on a background checks deal and will attend the forum. The conversations have gone silent in the past two weeks, but he's told the White House that he's still willing to talk. Trump himself has accused Democrats of ignoring other issues to focus on impeachment.

"The Democrats are so focused on hurting the Republican Party and the President that they are unable to get anything done because of it, including legislation on gun safety, lowering of prescription drug prices, infrastructure, etc. So bad for our Country!" he tweeted Sept. 24.

Murphy says reaching consensus may still be possible.

"I think that the president is going to have some pressure to show that impeachment isn't consuming him, and a breakthrough on a background checks deal that nobody thought was possible would probably be a pretty good tonic for the administration right now," he said.

While his fellow Democrats may not be keen on the idea of giving Trump a win, Murphy said he'll keep pushing because gun control remains top of mind for voters.

"Our party needs to find mechanisms to keep our focus on the issues that matter to voters, and guns is right at the top of that list," he said. "The forum is an effort to try to keep the primary dialogue focused on an issue that is absolutely going to be top of mind for swing voters."

Associated Press writer Bill Barrow contributed from Atlanta.

Follow Ronayne on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/kronayne>

Hong Kong police slammed as 'trigger-happy' after teen shot

By EILEEN NG and JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Hong Kong office workers and schoolmates of a teenage demonstrator shot at close range in the chest by a police officer rallied Wednesday to condemn police tactics and demand accountability.

The shooting Tuesday during widespread anti-government demonstrations on China's National Day was a fearsome escalation in Hong Kong's protest violence. The 18-year-old is the first known victim of police gunfire since the protests began in June. He was hospitalized and his condition was described by the government as stable on Wednesday.

The officer fired as the teen, Tsang Chi-kin, struck him with a metal rod. The officer's use of lethal weaponry is sure to inflame widespread public anger about police tactics during the crisis, widely condemned as heavy handed.

"The Hong Kong police have gone trigger-happy and nuts," pro-democracy lawmaker Claudia Mo said Wednesday.

After viewing a video of the shooting, Mo said: "The sensible police response should have been to use a police baton or pepper spray, etc., to fight back. It wasn't exactly an extreme situation and the use of a live bullet simply cannot be justified."

Several hundred people, including students, chanted anti-police slogans outside Tsang's school in Tsuen Wan district in northern Hong Kong on Wednesday.

Sitting crossed-legged, some held an arm across their chest below their left shoulder — the location of the teenager's gunshot wound. One held a hand-written message condemning "thug police."

Schoolmates said Tsang loves basketball and was passionate about the pro-democracy cause. A student who wore a Guy Fawkes mask and declined to be named because of fear of retribution said Tsang was "like a big brother" to him and other junior students.

"During the protests, we would feel safe if he is around because he was always the first to charge forward and would protect us when we were in danger," the student said.

"I vividly remember him saying that he would rather die than be arrested. What an awful twist of fate that it was he of all people who was shot by the police."

Many students felt that firing at Tsang's chest, close to his heart, was an attempt to kill him. Police said Tsang has been arrested despite being hospitalized and that authorities will decide later whether to press charges.

More than 1,000 office workers skipped their lunch to join an impromptu march in the city's business district against the police shooting. Dozens of black-clad protesters also protested at a luxury mall in Kowloon district.

Police have defended the officer's use of force as "reasonable and lawful." Police Commissioner Stephen Lo said late Tuesday that the officer had feared for his life and made "a split-second" decision to fire a single shot at close range.

Responding to questions about why the officer shot at Tsang's chest, instead of his limbs, Deputy Police Commissioner Tang Ping-Keung said Wednesday the officer had fired at an area that could immobilize the youth quickly.

Tang denied that police had been given permission to shoot to kill. He said the officer's action was in line with international procedures, but that police would mount an in-depth investigation into the shooting.

Hong Kong's government said the widespread rioting Tuesday was "planned and organized" and called on parents and teachers to help restrain young protesters.

Videos on social media of the shooting showed a dozen black-clad protesters throwing objects at police and closing in on a lone officer, who opened fire as the masked teenager came at him with a metal rod. The protester toppled backward onto the street, bleeding from below his left shoulder.

As another protester rushed in to try to drag away the wounded youth and was tackled by an officer, a gasoline bomb landed in the middle of the group of officers in an explosion of flames.

Riot police fired tear gas in at least six locations on Tuesday and used water cannons in the business

district, as usually bustling streets across the city became battlefields. Thumbing their noses at Chinese President Xi Jinping, protesters ignored a security clampdown and fanned across the city armed with gasoline bombs, sticks and bricks.

British Foreign Minister Dominic Raab said Tuesday the shooting was "disproportionate" and warned it could risk inflaming the situation. Some U.S. lawmakers also joined in the condemnation.

The Chinese foreign ministry office in Hong Kong slammed British and American politicians and accused them of condoning violence and crime.

"No time should be lost to stop violence, end the chaos and restore order to Hong Kong," it said in a statement, calling the rioters the "greatest threat to Hong Kong and the common enemy of the international community."

Ukraine's ex-president slams peace deal with separatists

By YURAS KARMANAU and NATALIYA VASILYEVA Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Ukraine's former leader on Wednesday accused the current government of betraying the country's interests, a day after it signed accords with Russia-backed separatists in the east.

"This is a capitulation to Russia," former President Petro Poroshenko told reporters in parliament.

The agreement signed Tuesday with the separatists, Russia and European mediators pledged to hold a local election in the rebel-held east. Current Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy hailed it as a major step toward resolving the five-year conflict between the separatists and government troops that has killed more than 13,000 people.

The opposition, including Poroshenko who left office earlier this year after losing the election to Zelenskiy, on Wednesday raised the alarm about the agreement, saying that it opens the door for cementing Russia's presence in the region.

The agreement is "playing into Russia's hands" because Ukraine has committed to holding the local election but did not receive any guarantees that it would regain control of all of its border with Russia, Poroshenko said.

Andriy Parubiy, former parliament speaker, said that he would push for hearings into the accords, accusing the Zelenskiy administration of sidelining society from decision-making. Zelenskiy's party holds a majority in parliament after a resounding defeat for Poroshenko and Parubiy's allies in a snap election this summer.

Over the past years, Russia has used the border with eastern Ukraine to send in troops and weapons to the separatists.

Zelenskiy, however, insisted on Tuesday that the local election would be held only under Ukrainian law and after Ukraine regains control of the border.

Darka Olifer, spokeswoman for Ukrainian envoy to the talks Leonid Kuchma, told The Associated Press on Wednesday that all parties have committed to consider the vote valid only if monitors from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe rule that the election was free and fair.

The election agreement was seen as the final hurdle before a summit between Zelenskiy, Russian President Vladimir Putin and the leaders of France and Germany, who have helped mediate the peace talks.

Russia has tried to play down its involvement in eastern Ukraine in recent years, pulling back its troops and mostly relying on proxy forces. The separatists, in the meantime, re-branded their fighters as police or other law enforcement officers.

Vasilyeva reported from Moscow.

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. WARNINGS OVER TRUMP INQUIRY FLY BETWEEN POMPEO, DEMOCRATS

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The secretary of state tries to delay five current and former officials from providing documents and testimony, but Democrats have set closed-door depositions for two former officials.

2. WHERE WHITE HOUSE HOPEFULS WILL BE

In Las Vegas for a forum on gun policy, almost two years to the day after a gunman killed 58 people at a country music festival on the Las Vegas Strip.

3. DALLAS OFFICER CASE TURNS TO SENTENCING

Amber Guyger, convicted in the fatal shooting of her black neighbor, faces anywhere from five years to life in prison.

4. EU AWAITS 'FINAL OFFER' BREXIT DEAL

Boris Johnson calls the proposal a "fair and reasonable compromise," but EU leaders doubt the U.K. has a workable plan to avoid border checks between Ireland and Northern Ireland.

5. 'TRIGGER-HAPPY AND NUTS'

Those are the words of a pro-democracy lawmaker about Hong Kong police after an officer shot and wounded a teenager in an escalation of protest violence.

6. WHERE BIG TECH AND BIG OIL HAVE COMMON GROUND

Eco-friendly companies like Amazon, Microsoft and Google are supplying cloud computing services and artificial intelligence tools to ExxonMobil, Chevron, Shell and BP.

7. INDIA'S MOVES IN KASHMIR RAISE TENSION IN PART NEXT TO CHINA

After the Indian government stripped statehood from Kashmir, new tensions are brewing in Ladakh, a remote and picturesque part of that territory.

8. NETANYAHU'S PRE-INDICTMENT CORRUPTION HEARING BEGINS

A jittery political world seeks clarity on the Israeli prime minister's legal standing amid the stalemate that followed the country's second inconclusive election of the year.

9. WHO'S EYEING A POLITICAL COMEBACK

Former Rep. Pete Sessions of Texas is expected to run again in 2020, but not in his old Dallas district that Democrats flipped last year.

10. NATIONALS COMPLETE 'WILD' COMEBACK

Juan Soto delivers a bases-loaded single that scored three runs in the eighth inning, and the Nationals rallied to beat the Brewers 4-3 in the NL wild-card game.

At Vatican, Pompeo urges alliance for religious freedom

VATICAN CITY (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Wednesday criticized governments that wield absolute power as threats to religious freedom, as he scrambled to contain a political crisis back home.

Amid a growing storm in Washington over an impeachment inquiry into President Donald Trump, Pompeo went to the Vatican to urge it and other nations to join the Trump administration in an alliance to promote global religious freedom. He told a conference on human dignity and faith that when governments hold all the power, religion is a threat.

"When the state rules absolutely, human dignity is trampled, not cherished," he said.

"When the state rules absolutely, moral norms are crushed completely. When the state rules absolutely, it demands its citizens worship government, not God."

He singled out China, Cuba, Iran, Myanmar and Syria in particular for repressing religious freedom.

Pompeo delivered the speech as he came under increasing scrutiny from House Democrats leading the impeachment proceedings. On Tuesday, he pushed back on demands for House demands for interviews with State Department officials about the administration's dealings with Ukraine that are at the center of the inquiry.

India's moves in Kashmir raise tension in part next to China

By AIJAZ HUSSAIN Associated Press

LEH, India (AP) — Nearly two months after the Indian government changed the status of the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir, new tensions are brewing in Ladakh, a remote and picturesque part of that territory that borders China.

On Aug. 5, New Delhi stripped Indian-controlled Kashmir of its statehood and divided it into two centrally governed union territories — Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

India and Pakistan both claim predominantly Muslim Kashmir, and the territory is divided between them, with insurgents battling Indian forces for three decades. Since the move eight weeks ago by India's Hindu-led government, it has flooded the region with additional troops that enforced a security crackdown and communication blockade.

Tensions also have existed for years in the Ladakh region in northeastern Kashmir, which is further divided administratively into the Leh district, which is predominantly Buddhist, and the Kargil district, which is mostly Muslim. There also have been occasional border skirmishes between India and China.

On Oct. 31, New Delhi will formally take direct control of Ladakh, which is famous for its sparsely populated and stunning landscapes, Buddhist monks in mountaintop monasteries and elusive snow leopards prowling rugged terrain.

That move is raising fears about the future in both the Buddhist and Muslim communities, although so far the tension has been confined to cultural and political differences, without violence.

When the change in governmental status was announced for Ladakh, there were celebrations by its Buddhist population, which has been demanding separation from Kashmir since shortly after India achieved independence from British rule in 1947.

For decades, Buddhist leaders complained that Muslims controlled funds and jobs allotted by the central government. Those demands gathered momentum in the late 1980s when an insurgency against Indian rule broke out in Kashmir.

But the Buddhists' joy in August has given way to fears of land grabs, a loss of trade and damage to the fragile ecosystem of the region's high-altitude deserts.

Buddhist leaders in Leh also are wary of demographic change, as residents from elsewhere in majority-Hindu India seek to put down stakes in the sublime mountain landscape. In both districts, the Indian army maintains dozens of bases along the Pakistan and China frontiers.

"We celebrated for this, true. But we realize that with good things some bad things also come," said Sonam Dawa, general secretary of Ladakh Buddhist Association, which spearheaded a campaign for the territory to be directly controlled by New Delhi.

He vowed that the community would "not sell even an inch of land to any outsider."

"We want guarantees that our land, people and businesses are safe. We trust that central government will take measures to protect us on these accounts," Dawa said.

Their concerns spread beyond political and religious issues. About 370,000 foreign and domestic tourists visited Leh last year. By the end of this year's peak season in August, however, the region recorded fewer than 200,000 tourists.

Days before the Kashmir reorganization plan was presented in Parliament, tens of thousands of additional troops were deployed to the restive region — already one of the most militarized in the world — and authorities ordered tourists, Hindu pilgrims and students to leave.

Tsetan Angchuk, who heads the All Ladakh Tour Operators Association, said its members worry about their future.

"So far, we have had about 45% downfall in tourism. We don't want direct investment by outsiders in the tourism sector. We should be our own masters," he said.

The region is also home to world's highest battlefield: the icy expanse of the Siachen Glacier, where thousands of troops from India and Pakistan are stationed at elevations of up to 6,700 meters (22,000 feet). More soldiers have died there from the harsh weather than combat.

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Portions of the Indian-Chinese border also are disputed, with Beijing controlling a part of the territory's Aksai Chin area. Both countries fought a bitter war in 1962 that spilled into Ladakh. Skirmishes between soldiers from the two countries have occurred as recently as last month.

Sonam Wangchuk, an engineer who runs the Himalayan Institute of Alternatives, hopes the Ladakh region can become a model for ecotourism.

"We need to have protection for our people, land and ecology. We need to have safeguards to protect not just Ladakh from outsiders but also from Ladhakis," he said at his institute outside Leh that is still under construction.

Wangchuk, who is influential among local civil society and policy circles, said his group sent five teams to parts of India that already enjoy protected status to study successful administrative models.

"We're not alien to the fact that many times these (decisions) are good on paper but disastrous on the ground," he said. "I'm not afraid of tourism. I'm afraid of lacking management for it."

The approaching Oct. 31 change in administrative rule from New Delhi is largely unwelcome in Ladakh's Kargil district, where Muslims want to remain tied to the Kashmir valley. Residents of the area, which is famous for its apricot orchards, initially greeted the news with protests and by shutting down their businesses in August to express their desire to stay linked to the Kashmir valley.

After a few days, the protests ended in the town of Kargil, which has seen unprecedented militarization after India and Pakistan came close to a fourth war when troops from the two nuclear-armed neighbors fought for months along the Kargil Himalayan heights in 1999. India said Pakistani soldiers disguised as Kashmiri rebels had taken over some heights in the region, but Pakistan denied this and said the intruders were local insurgents.

About a dozen people interviewed by The Associated Press said officials had threatened local politicians, religious leaders and activists with being charged under the Public Safety Act that could mean imprisonment for up to two years without trial.

Kargil's district administrator, Baseer-ul-Haque Chowdhary, insisted there was no coercion involved in ending the demonstrations and that authorities "persuaded the public to return to their businesses."

Asgar Ali Karbalai, a political and social leader in Kargil, said the population has an "unbreakable cultural, political, religious, geographical and historical relationship" with the Kashmir valley, where many of the region's 7 million people support a 30-year armed insurgency demanding an independent Kashmir or a merger with Pakistan.

Posters and banners demanding Kashmir's independence from India dotted several mosques and religious sites where the area's mainly Shiite Muslims recently commemorated Muharram, marking the death of the Prophet Muhammad's grandson Imam Hussein in the battle of Karbala.

On a recent chilly night at a religious center in the village of Hardaas, where a preacher narrated the tale of the battle, chest-beating worshippers burst into pro-Kashmir slogans and called for an end to India's crackdown.

"India made the decision against our will. We will rise, and rise we will against this oppression like our leader Imam Hussein," said apricot farmer Akhoon Mohammed Ali as the crowd dispersed around midnight.

Farmers like Zakir Hussain complained the apricot harvest was rotting because the main market in the Kashmir valley was locked down.

"Our market is Kashmir, not Leh," he said. "The lockdown is destroying our livelihood."

Muslims in Kargil say the India's administrative changes in the region won't alter any of the territorial disputes with either Pakistan or China.

"Even if they carve out 10 union territories out of our land, it'll remain part of the Kashmir dispute," said activist Mohammed Rizwan, pointing to a remote barren mountaintop where a Pakistani military post overlooked the town.

Follow Aijaz Hussain on Twitter at twitter.com/hussain_aijaz

Soto lifts Nats to 4-3 comeback wild-card win over Brewers

By HOWARD FENDRICH AP Sports Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — After all the heartache and close calls, all the early exits, maybe it makes sense that a 20-year-old kid who never had been to the postseason, Juan Soto, would help the Washington Nationals finally advance.

And maybe, just maybe, it makes sense that it would be this particular edition of the Nationals, a club that went from 12 games under .500 in May to playoff participant, that demonstrated the necessary never-give-up fortitude when things looked bleak.

Soto delivered a bases-loaded single against Milwaukee closer Josh Hader that scored three runs with two outs in the eighth inning, thanks in part to an error by rookie outfielder Trent Grisham, and the Nationals came back to beat the Brewers 4-3 in the NL wild-card game Tuesday night.

"We started off horrible, as we all know, and we vowed that we wouldn't quit," Nationals manager Dave Martinez said, talking about the year as a whole but sounding like he could have meant this particular evening. "I told the boys, 'I promise you, stay with it, don't quit, this will turn around.' And it did. And here we are today."

The Nationals carry a nine-game winning streak into their best-of-five NL Division Series against the league-best Dodgers.

Game 1 is Thursday in Los Angeles, and some in the sellout crowd of 42,993 chanted "Beat LA! Beat LA!" as members of the Nationals began their celebration on the infield with family members.

That included Soto's father leaping onto his back and tackling him amid the excitement.

The Nationals, who moved to Washington from Montreal before the 2005 season, had been 0-3 in winner-take-all postseason games — all NLDS Game 5 losses at home, by a grand total of four runs. Indeed, eight of their past nine playoff losses had been by one run apiece.

This time, it went the other way.

"We've been here a bunch of times. Never kind of broke through," said Ryan Zimmerman, the Nationals' first draft pick back in 2005, so someone who has been through all the disappointment. "Finally caught a break tonight."

It was Zimmerman's broken-bat bloop single as a pinch hitter that helped load the bases in the eighth off Hader, who took the loss.

Hader hit another pinch hitter, Michael A. Taylor, a ruling that stood up when the Brewers challenged, according to Major League Baseball, because there wasn't "clear and convincing evidence to overturn the call."

Said Hader: "Definitely looked like it got the bat, but it also got his hand."

Hader, who had 37 saves this season, also walked Anthony Rendon, filling the bags and bringing Soto to the plate.

What was Soto thinking right then?

"Just get a base hit up the middle," he said, "and try to help to tie the game."

The runner-up for 2018 NL Rookie of the Year did more than that. Soto ripped a 96 mph fastball to right, and the ball skipped under Grisham's glove for an error. That allowed the go-ahead run to cross the plate and Soto to get to second, then turn for third.

"Right guy, right spot," winning pitcher Stephen Strasburg said about Soto.

Eventually, Soto was caught in a rundown to end the inning, but that didn't matter: He had turned a 3-1 deficit into a lead, and so he clapped his hands, then pounded his chest and high-fived third base coach Bob Henley, before shouting "Let's go!" and its Spanish equivalent, "Vamonos!"

"The inning was an ugly inning," Brewers manager Craig Counsell said. "Crazy things happen."

Grisham, who has appeared in only 51 games in the majors and took over in right after reigning NL MVP Christian Yelich was lost for the season three weeks ago with a broken kneecap, said the ball "came in with a little topspin, took a funny hop."

His teammates tried to console a tearful Grisham with a series of hugs in the clubhouse afterward.

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"It's going to sting," he said.

After Max Scherzer fell behind 3-0 by giving up homers to Yasmani Grandal in the first and Eric Thames in the second, Strasburg replaced him in the sixth and threw three scoreless innings to earn the win in the first relief appearance of his major league career, regular season or playoffs.

Daniel Hudson pitched the ninth for the save, getting Ben Gamel to fly out to the warning track in center with a man on to end it.

"Hats off for us to for continuing to fight, because we know if we could keep it close we could have a chance at the end," said Trea Turner, who got Washington within 3-1 with a solo shot off Brandon Woodruff in the third.

It wasn't until the eighth, though, that the Nationals would push more runs across. Just the sort of dramatic turnaround they pulled off this season, going from 19-31 in May to playoff team.

And now it continues.

"Kind of sums up our season, the way this game went," Zimmerman said. "We'll take it and we'll move on."

TRAINER'S ROOM

Brewers: OFs Ryan Braun (calf) and Lorenzo Cain (ankle) were in the starting lineup despite late-season injuries. They came into Tuesday a combined 0 for 29 with 12 Ks against Scherzer and went 0 for 4 while he was in the game.

Nationals: C Kurt Suzuki, who missed most of September because of a bothersome right elbow, played nine innings Tuesday.

ODD FOURTH

The fourth inning was bizarre. Fire alarms — false alarms, thankfully, the Nationals eventually said — rang out. The public address system went completely silent for several minutes, so the Racing Presidents mascot race in the middle of the inning went on without the usual play-by-play, and the initial two Nationals batters in the bottom half went to the plate without any walk-up music or announcement of their names.

UP NEXT

Left-hander Patrick Corbin will start Game 1 for the Nationals against the Dodgers, who eliminated Washington in Game 5 of their 2016 NLDS. LA won the teams' season series this year 4-3.

More AP baseball: <https://apnews.com/MLB> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Bizarre deaths of bulls in Oregon recall 1970s mutilations

By ANDREW SELSKY Associated Press

SALEM, Ore. (AP) — The first dead bull was found in a timbered ravine in eastern Oregon. There was no indication it had been shot, attacked by predators or eaten poisonous plants. The animal's sex organs and tongue had been removed. All the blood was gone.

In the next few days, four more Hereford bulls were found within 1.5 miles (2.4 kilometers) in the same condition. There were no tracks around the carcasses. Ranch management and law enforcement suspect that someone killed the bulls. Ranch hands have been advised to travel in pairs and to go armed.

Ever since the bulls were found over several days in July, Harney County Sheriff's Deputy Dan Jenkins has received many calls and emails from people speculating what, or who, might be responsible.

The theories range from scavengers such as carrion bugs eating the carcasses to people attacking the animals to cause financial harm to ranchers. One person suggested that Jenkins look for craters underneath the carcasses, saying it would be evidence the bulls had been levitated into a spaceship, mutilated, and then dropped back to the ground.

Jenkins, who is leading the investigation that also involves state police, has run into only dead ends, with no witnesses. "If anyone has concrete information or knows of any cases that have been solved in the past, that would definitely be helpful," he said from his office in Burns.

Colby Marshall, vice president of the Silvies Valley Ranch that owned the bulls, has another theory: "We

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think that this crime is being perpetuated by some sort of a cult," he said.

The case recalls mutilations of livestock across the West and Midwest in the 1970s that struck fear in rural areas. Thousands of cattle and other livestock were found dead with the reproductive organs, and sometimes part of their faces, removed, in territory ranging from Minnesota to New Mexico.

Ranchers began carrying guns. Folks said helicopters had been heard around the kill sites. A federal agency canceled an inventory by helicopter of its lands in Colorado, worried that it would get shot down.

A couple of U.S. senators urged the FBI to investigate, according to FBI documents. After saying it lacked jurisdiction, the FBI agreed to investigate cases on tribal lands. But the mutilations stopped. Former FBI agent Kenneth Rommel, who headed the investigation, said there was no indication that anything other than common predators were responsible.

Cases have emerged sporadically since then. In the 1980s, a few cows were found dead and mutilated in eastern Oregon. More recently, there have been cases on a ranch near Flagstaff, Arizona.

Some of the mutilations can be attributed to natural causes. An animal drops dead, the blood pools at the bottom of the carcass, the carcass bloats and the skin dries out and splits. The tears often appear surgical. Carrion bugs, birds and other scavengers go for soft tissues like rectum, genitals, udders and eyes.

Dave Bohnert, director of Oregon State University's Eastern Oregon Agricultural Research Center in Burns, said he believes people killed the Silvies bulls because there is no indication they were felled by predators or had eaten poisonous plants. However, the state of the carcasses could be attributable to nature, said Bohnert, who is not officially investigating the case.

If people killed the bulls, a motive could be to financially harm the ranch, he said, noting that breeding bulls cost thousands of dollars each, and the 100-plus calves each of them sire are collectively worth much more.

Marshall doubts it was a malicious attack on the ranch, which employs 75 people, many from local communities. Silvies Valley Ranch covers 140,000 acres (57,000 hectares) of deeded and leased National Forest lands around a mile above sea level.

In 2006, a wealthy veterinarian bought the ranch and made it a combination working ranch and an elite destination resort. It has four golf courses, a spa, shooting ranges, fishing and luxury cabins going for up to \$849 per night.

Marshall suspects the bulls were killed to get the organs of the free-ranging bulls for some reason. The bull parts would be available cheaply or free at a slaughterhouse, but he believes some people are going to a lot of trouble to get these parts on the range.

There's no sign that scavengers removed the organs of the bulls, and instead someone using a knife or scalpel probably did, Marshall said.

"To lose a completely healthy animal would be an oddity," Marshall said. "To lose five young, very healthy, in great shape, perfect bulls that are all basically the same age ... that is so outside the bounds of normal activity."

Marshall speculates the bulls were darted with a tranquilizer that knocked them out. While some people acted as lookouts, others bled the animals out by inserting a large-gauge needle into the tongue and into an artery, then removed the organs after the heart stopped beating, he surmised.

Jenkins, the deputy, has a similar theory.

"Personally, I would lean more toward the occult, where people for whatever reason -- whether it's a phase of the moon or whatever rituals they're going to do with their beliefs -- are coming to different areas and doing that," he said.

The Oregon Cattlemen's Association is offering a \$1,000 reward for information leading to the conviction of those responsible. The ranch is offering \$25,000.

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

San Francisco residents use rocks to block homeless camping

By **OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ** Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A group of San Francisco neighbors said they had to do something to make their street safe. Their answer? Some giant rocks.

Fed up with what they see as the city's failure to combat homelessness and rampant drug use, the neighbors had boulders delivered to their sidewalk to block people from pitching tents on their street.

That started a fight that shows the frustration with an unprecedented homelessness crisis in California. Cities are struggling to address the lack of affordable housing and a growing number of homeless encampments that are popping up on city streets, sometimes in neighborhoods.

"Everyone was so desperate that we decided to team up because this was not a tent or two with homeless people," said John, a neighbor who spoke on the condition he only be identified by his first name because of threats residents have received over the boulders. "These were drug dealers in large tents, and people coming in and out, and people not feeling safe walking to their own home at night."

The boulders went up in an alley off Market Street, one of San Francisco's major thoroughfares. They stopped people from putting up tents for a couple of weeks, until homeless advocates learned about them and rolled some into the street.

The city stepped in because they posed a safety hazard, hoisting the giant rocks back onto the sidewalk. But the activists returned, pushing them onto the street again.

The tug-of-war appears to have ended this week after neighbors asked the city to remove the rocks, saying they are being harassed with calls, emails and people shouting threats when they leave their homes.

It shows the clash in California over how to curb a growing crisis. While residents want to protect themselves from drug dealing or other safety issues, advocates say there's nowhere else for people to go who have been squeezed out by rising housing prices and income inequality.

"I believe there has to be a better solution than blocking people from using a public sidewalk," Greg Aherne, who was bringing sandwiches and hygiene kits to the homeless, told the San Francisco Chronicle. "The rocks send the wrong message. But it shows how desperate people are."

Los Angeles also is struggling with homelessness, and the owner of a cultural center used a similar approach this summer by erecting massive planters to block people from camping around his building.

The crisis also has triggered a new fight with President Donald Trump, who accused San Francisco and Los Angeles of failing to clean up waste, including needles, and blamed their liberal policies for the problem. He has said he would do something to fix it but didn't offer specifics.

The mayors of both cities have pushed back on his claims but have said they welcome his help if he contributes federal funding.

In San Francisco, John said that in the last six months, neighbors started reporting dealers armed with knives and guns hiding drugs in planters outside their windows. Their street felt so unsafe that he and his wife would meet their guests at a grocery store nearby and walk them to their house, he said.

John said about 40 neighbors chipped in to buy the boulders after calling the city and police dozens of times. He said they asked the city to remove the rocks after the harassment started.

City workers removed the boulders Monday and are storing them while the neighbors decide what to do, Public Works Director Mohammed Nuru said Tuesday.

"Nobody wants drug dealers across the street from their homes, and the city has a responsibility to partner with neighbors to make sure they have a clean and safe neighborhood," Nuru said.

He said the neighbors did not have a permit for the boulders and agreed to work with the city in the future.

Despite a \$12.3 billion annual budget, San Francisco has long struggled to house homeless people and keep streets clean of human waste and needles, especially in districts with many people who are homeless or addicted to drugs.

The city set up public toilets and announced formation of a team last year to clean up human waste. It says there are at least 1,000 people on a waiting list for shelter beds on any given day.

In Los Angeles, figures released in June showed a 16% jump in its homeless population over the last year, to 36,300 people — the size of a small city.

Peter Mozgo, who runs the Hungarian Cultural Center in downtown Los Angeles, had become so frustrated with losing business because of the rows of tents along the perimeter of the building that he set up about 140 planters on the sidewalk to prevent homeless people from camping.

"We lost so much weddings because people don't want to rent it anymore," Mozgo told the Los Angeles Times.

He didn't return a message seeking comment Tuesday.

Missouri executes killer despite concern about painful death

By JIM SALTER Associated Press

ST. LOUIS (AP) — A Missouri inmate was executed Tuesday for killing a man in 1996 in a string of violence that included several other crimes, despite concerns that the prisoner's rare medical condition would cause a gruesome lethal injection.

Russell Bucklew was put to death at the state prison in Bonne Terre. It was Missouri's first execution since January 2017.

Bucklew had twice previously been within hours of execution, only to have the U.S. Supreme Court grant last-minute reprieves over concerns that he might suffer during the execution process. He had a condition called cavernous hemangioma and had blood-filled tumors in his head, neck and throat. He breathed with help from a tracheostomy tube.

His attorneys said in a clemency request to Gov. Mike Parson that a throat tumor could burst, causing Bucklew to choke and die painfully and in violation of the constitutional guarantee against cruel and unusual punishment.

Bucklew looked around and twitched his feet beneath the sheet as he lay on the gurney just before the lethal injection. He suddenly took a deep breath and all movement stopped. He showed no outward signs of distress.

Cheryl Pilate, one of Bucklew's attorneys, said several steps were taken to try to ensure that he didn't suffer, including sedating him prior to the execution and elevating the gurney to help prevent him from choking.

"We believe the significant efforts that went into making this a less horrible process were beneficial," Pilate said.

Adding to the concern was Missouri's secretive execution drug. The state uses a single dose of pentobarbital but refuses to say where it gets it. The source is believed to be a compound pharmacy since large pharmaceutical companies prohibit the use of their drugs in executions.

The Supreme Court stepped in to halt Bucklew's execution in 2014 and again in 2018. But in April, the high court gave the go-ahead for Bucklew to be executed.

Human rights groups and death penalty opponents, including all four Roman Catholic bishops in Missouri and the American Civil Liberties Union, urged Parson to grant clemency and remand Bucklew to life in prison without parole. The ACLU and Missourians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty presented the governor's office on Thursday with petitions that they said included more than 57,000 signatures.

But Parson, a Republican who worked in law enforcement for more than 20 years and is a staunch death penalty supporter, decided early Tuesday that the execution could proceed.

Inmates' medical conditions have affected other recent execution attempts.

In 2017, the execution of twice-convicted killer Alva Campbell, who suffered from smoking-related breathing problems, had to be halted in Ohio when a usable vein couldn't be found to administer execution drugs. He died in 2018 at age 69.

In 2018, Alabama halted the lethal injection of Doyle Lee Hamm when the execution team had trouble getting the intravenous line connected. Hamm had damaged veins because of lymphoma, hepatitis and drug use. A doctor hired by Hamm's lawyers wrote in a report that Hamm had at least 11 puncture sites

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and bled heavily from his groin during the attempts to connect the line.

Bucklew's girlfriend, Stephanie Ray, left him on Valentine's Day 1996. Over the next few weeks, according to court records, he harassed her, cut her with a knife and punched her in the face.

Ray feared for her life and the lives of her children, so she moved into the Cape Girardeau County mobile home that her new boyfriend, Michael Sanders, shared with his children.

On March 21, after stealing his nephew's car and taking two pistols, handcuffs and duct tape from his brother, Bucklew followed Ray to Sanders' home. Sanders confronted Bucklew with a shotgun inside the home. Bucklew fired two shots, one piercing Sanders' lung. He bled to death.

Bucklew then shot at Sanders' 6-year-old son and missed. Court records say he struck Ray in the face with the pistol, handcuffed her and dragged her to his car. He later raped Ray before heading north on Interstate 55.

A trooper spotted Bucklew's car and eventually became engaged in a gunfight near St. Louis. Both men were wounded. Bucklew later escaped from the Cape Girardeau County Jail. He attacked Ray's mother and her boyfriend with a hammer before being recaptured.

Pilate and another attorney for Bucklew, Jeremy Weis, said in a statement that Bucklew was remorseful for his crimes.

Morley Swingle, who was Cape Girardeau County prosecutor when the crimes occurred, said they were among the most heinous of his career.

"He is probably the most pure sociopath I ever prosecuted," Swingle said of Bucklew. "He was relentless in the way he came after his victims."

China's 70-year parade shows global ambition as HK protests

By **JOE McDONALD Associated Press**

BEIJING (AP) — China's Communist Party marked 70 years in power with a military parade Tuesday that showcased the country's global ambitions while police in Hong Kong fought protesters in a reminder of strains at home.

Trucks carrying nuclear missiles designed to evade U.S. defenses, a supersonic attack drone and other products of a two-decade-old weapons development effort rolled through Beijing as soldiers marched past President Xi Jinping and other leaders on Tiananmen Square. Fighter jets flew over spectators who waved Chinese flags under a cloudy autumn sky.

The display highlighted Beijing's ambition for strategic influence to match its status as the second-largest global economy, even as Xi's government suppresses dissent that illustrates the tensions between a closed, one-party dictatorship and a rapidly evolving society.

Those strategic goals include displacing the United States as the Pacific region's dominant power and enforcing potentially volatile claims to Taiwan, the South China Sea and other disputed territories.

"No force can stop the progress of the Chinese people," Xi said in a nationally televised speech.

In Hong Kong, pro-democracy protesters who wanted to embarrass the party during this year's highest-profile political event fought with police as tens of thousands of people demonstrated.

One man was shot in the shoulder by a police officer, the first time a protester is known to have been shot. Video that spread quickly on social media appeared to show the officer opening fire as the protester came at him with a baton, striking the officer's shooting arm.

Protests in the former British colony have prompted concerns Beijing might intervene. But Xi promised in a speech Monday to stick to a commitment to allow the territory's leaders to manage its affairs.

Xi was joined on the Tiananmen rostrum by Premier Li Keqiang, former Presidents Hu Jintao and Jiang Zemin and other party figures. Authorities said the event would include 15,000 troops, more than 160 aircraft and 580 pieces of military equipment.

The anniversary commemorates the Oct. 1, 1949, founding of the People's Republic of China by then-leader Mao Zedong following a civil war with the Nationalist government, which retreated to Taiwan.

The display of "high-quality weapons" is meant to show Beijing is on track to "rejuvenate China in the

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global arena," said Henry Boyd, a military analyst at the International Institute of Strategic Studies in London. "The message is, this is a great power China to be taken seriously," Boyd said. "It is not to be treated as an inferior."

Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam attended with a delegation of Hong Kong officials and dignitaries in a show of unity with the ruling party.

Xi, wearing a gray Mao jacket, rode in an open-topped limousine past dozens of rows of truck-mounted missiles, armored personnel carriers and other military gear.

Soldiers in helmets and combat gear shouted, "Hello, leader!" and "Serve the people!" Xi replied, "Hello, comrades."

Supported by China's economic boom, military spending has risen 400% over the past decade as Beijing tries to match the United States, Russia and Europe in weapons technology. Foreign analysts say China is, along with the United States, a leader in unmanned aircraft and is catching up in missiles and some other areas.

The parade "aims to show the outside world China's confidence" and ability to protect its "overseas interests," said Yue Gang, a retired army colonel and military commentator.

Despite "great improvements," China "should not relax vigilance and needs to continue to make efforts," Yue said.

The People's Liberation Army, the world's biggest military with 2 million men and women in uniform, also is working on fighter planes, the first Chinese-built aircraft carrier and a new generation of nuclear-powered submarines.

A closely watched weapon unveiled Tuesday was the Dongfeng-17, a nuclear-armed glider that foreign analysts say is designed to maneuver at high speed to evade anti-missile defenses. That could help counter American systems like those deployed in South Korea and Japan.

Another was an unmanned aircraft dubbed Sharp Sword that, if equipped with bombs or missiles, would be the first combat drone developed by a power other than Washington and its European allies.

Drones have "become an indispensable weapon" for Chinese forces, said Song Zhongping, a military analyst.

Beijing's emphasis on missiles and other long-range weapons reflects official ambitions, after decades as an army confined to land, to project power beyond Chinese shores.

Analysts say the long-range H-6N bomber, shown for the first time Tuesday, could be used to attack U.S. or other forces in the Pacific.

Another missile displayed, the Dongfeng-41, is believed to have the world's longest range at up to 15,000 kilometers (9,400 miles). Analysts say it may be able to reach the United States in as little as 30 minutes and carry as many as 10 warheads to hit separate targets.

The soldiers and military hardware were followed by 70 floats celebrating China's economic achievements and former Communist leaders.

China's military spending last year was the world's second-highest at an estimated \$250 billion, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. The United States, with a force of 1.3 million, led in spending at \$650 billion, or more than 2½ times China's level.

China's nuclear arsenal has about 280 warheads, compared with 6,450 for the United States and 6,850 for Russia, according to SIPRI. Beijing says it wants a "minimum credible nuclear deterrent" but won't be the first to use atomic weapons in a conflict.

The Communist Party's hold on power appears to be secure three decades after it crushed pro-democracy protests centered on Tiananmen Square in 1989.

Beijing is trying to shore up cooling economic growth and prevent politically dangerous job losses amid a tariff war with Washington over trade and technology that has battered Chinese exporters.

China's Communists are closing in on the 74-year record of the former Soviet Communist Party as the longest-ruling Marxist-Leninist party.

The party's tumultuous history is marked by disasters including the 1958-61 Great Leap Forward, a failed attempt at rapid industrialization that led to famine that killed at least 30 million people, as well as market-

style economic reform in the 1980s that allowed millions of Chinese to lift themselves out of poverty.

Xi's government has tightened political control and cracked down on human rights and pro-democracy activism. Beijing faces criticism over its treatment of Muslims in China's northwest, where the U.S. government, activists and researchers say as many as 1 million people have been detained.

Xi, the son of a commander in Mao's guerrilla army, has emerged as China's most powerful leader in decades. The party removed limits on his term as president last year, rolling back efforts to create a consensus-based system and limit the power of individual leaders.

In a speech Monday, Xi reminded Taiwan, which Beijing claims as its own territory, of the ruling party's pledge to unite the self-ruled island with the mainland, by force if necessary.

Associated Press researcher Yu Bing contributed to this report.

Sanders raises \$25.3M in 3rd quarter, but Trump swamps all

By BRIAN SLODYSKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Bernie Sanders raked in \$25.3 million over the past three months, putting him on top of the Democratic presidential fundraising field for now. But in a sign of what he and his rivals are up against, President Donald Trump and his allies raised \$125 million.

Other leading Democrats, including former Vice President Joe Biden and Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, have yet to reveal their fundraising figures for the third quarter.

But the staggering sum on the Republican side, which was split between the Trump campaign and the Republican National Committee, highlights the cash gulf between Democrats and the GOP. It could revive anxieties among Democrats that a protracted primary featuring nearly 20 candidates could be counterproductive while Trump builds a massive cash advantage that can be used against the ultimate nominee.

"This is a (ton) of money," Bakari Sellers, a top surrogate for California Sen. Kamala Harris, tweeted in reference to Trump's fundraising. Although activists who contribute small amounts online have been widely celebrated, he said that won't stand up to the Trump operation. "Small dollar donations alone ain't going to save our democracy."

Sanders posted the largest quarterly sum for a Democratic White House hopeful this year. The haul ensures the Vermont senator will be an enduring presence in the primary even as Warren and Biden have surpassed him in some polls. Much of the money he raised came from his army of small-dollar online contributors.

Meanwhile, Pete Buttigieg, who entered the race as the little-known mayor of South Bend, Indiana, pulled in \$19.1 million. That's an almost \$6 million dip from his field-leading sum last quarter but a figure that's all but certain to place him in the top tier.

Now the question turns to how much money Biden and Warren raised during the third quarter. The former vice president and the Massachusetts senator are in an increasingly close race for first place, according to several polls.

There's a growing sense of urgency for the White House hopefuls as the primary becomes a fierce battle for a limited pool of cash. In the days and hours before Monday's deadline, they pleaded for money, making appeals on social media and collectively blasting out more than 80 emails asking supporters to "chip in" \$5, \$10 or \$50. The third-quarter figures have to be reported to the Federal Election Commission by Oct. 15.

Those outside the top tier are facing pressure to post competitive numbers or get out. They will not only face challenges paying for advertising to amplify their message, but are also likely to struggle reaching fundraising thresholds set by the Democratic National Committee to qualify for future debates.

"If you are being outraised 3-to-1 by Elizabeth Warren, Bernie Sanders or Joe Biden, you have no viable path to victory," said Rufus Gifford, Barack Obama's former finance director. "Even if you can compete in the early states ... shortly thereafter you will run out of money."

Over the summer, Harris kept up an aggressive fundraising schedule to stockpile the cash needed to build up her operation in early states. Yet she did not improve on her past performance amid a series of

stumbles and restarts. The \$11.6 million she reported raising keeps virtually even with her totals from each of the past two quarters, suggesting she hasn't caught on with much of the party's activist donor base.

Still, it's enough to keep her in contention in the months to come, and Harris' campaign manager, Juan Rodriguez, said they were "built to win this primary."

Others face dimmer odds.

Cory Booker recently warned that unless he juiced his fundraising numbers by an additional \$1.7 million he'd likely have to drop out. The New Jersey senator announced Tuesday he was "proud" of his team for surpassing the goal while pulling in a total of \$6 million for the quarter.

But campaign manager Addisu Demissie then issued a memo stating they'd have to do even better and raise \$3 million by the end of October.

Montana Gov. Steve Bullock, who has also struggled to raise money, is applying for public financing, turning to a fund that is replenished by those who volunteer to chip in \$3 from their taxes. He hopes it will supplement his campaign with a \$2 million boost, though the FEC board does not currently have enough commissioners to sign off on the request.

The third quarter came to a close as Trump faces an impeachment inquiry in Congress related to his attempts to get the Ukrainian government to investigate Biden. The development has scrambled politics in Washington but has turned into a fundraising rallying cry for both major political parties.

Trump has turned his outrage over the inquiry into a flood of campaign cash. Trump and the RNC reported raising \$13 million in the three days after House Speaker Nancy Pelosi announced the probe last week. And Trump's son Eric tweeted later that the total grew to \$15 million.

That's a source of worry for some Democrats.

"Trump's presidency is wounded but not mortally wounded, and their operation is as good as it gets," Gifford said.

Associated Press writers Juana Summers, Will Weissert and Zeke Miller in Washington and Alexandra Jaffe in Des Moines, Iowa, contributed to this report.

Salazar's ban overshadows action at track championships

By EDDIE PELLIS AP National Writer

DOHA, Qatar (AP) — Not a single runner passing through the orbit of famed track coach Alberto Salazar has been implicated for doping, so when Donovan Brazier coasted in for a blowout victory Tuesday in the 800-meter race at world championships, there was no reason to suspect he would be, either.

But for Brazier, the 22-year-old who became the first American to win a world championship at this distance, there was no avoiding the subject of Salazar.

And for track and field, there is no avoiding the ever-present specter of doping. On a night when American men won gold in the 200, 800 and pole vault, many of the questions were about a 61-year-old coach who was kicked out of the event earlier in the day.

Brazier runs for the Nike Oregon Project, a 12-person track team headed by Salazar. He was ejected after receiving a four-year suspension for violations that involved pushing his runners to use pills, gels and infusions in ways designed to stretch the rules without quite breaking them.

In a way, Salazar's schemes were a success because none of his athletes ever got caught.

Brazier says the man who coaches him at NOP isn't Salazar, but an assistant, Pete Julian, who was present after the finish, beaming like a proud papa. In fact, Brazier said he barely knows Salazar.

It didn't mean the new champion, whose time of 1 minute, 42.34 seconds set an American record, wouldn't face questions about his affiliation with the team Salazar runs — a team that had been under investigation by the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency for around six years before the ban came down Tuesday.

"I think it would be pretty ignorant to associate me with that," Brazier said. "I think the investigation started when I was in high school, and I had nothing to do with it."

Brazier joins distance runner Sifan Hassan as the second athlete from the NOP to win a gold medal at

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these championships. Over the years, Salazar's most decorated champion was Britain's Mo Farah, the four-time Olympic gold medalist who isn't anywhere near Doha but still felt compelled to issue a statement distancing himself from his old coach.

"I left the Nike Oregon Project in 2017 but as I've always said, I have no tolerance for anyone who breaks the rules or crosses a line," Farah said.

Exculpatory doping statements from non-competing athletes probably aren't what this sport had in mind when it looked for new ways to make headlines in this new era now void of the sport's only superstar, the retired Usain Bolt.

One man who might have the star power to fill some of that void is American sprinter Noah Lyles. He needed about six steps to overtake the competition at the start of the homestretch of the men's 200, then beat Canada's Andre De Grasse going away, in 19.83 seconds.

Lyles, who died his hair silver for this race, took a leisurely victory lap, stopping a couple times to kneel and kiss the track as photographers chased him around the oval.

Lyles and 100-meter champion Christian Coleman, another American caught in a doping saga, are headed for what could be a fun showdown at the Tokyo Olympics next year, when both are expected to go for the 100-200 double.

"This gold, overall, was taken care of," said Lyles, who is expected to team with Coleman on the U.S. 4x100 relay team later this week. "Now we're going to get that double gold, maybe even triple, for Tokyo."

But Lyles isn't Bolt — and Doha certainly isn't Tokyo ... or London ... or Beijing ... or anyplace Bolt has ever run.

An already-thin crowd had disappeared almost completely by the time Lyles was done with his celebration. Thus closed another low-attendance and embarrassing session for organizers, whose insistence on not scheduling day action in the air-conditioned stadium made for a long night filled with lots of field events — fans watching lonely javelin and hammer throwers do their thing, interrupted by an occasional burst of action on the track.

In the day's two field finals, Australia's Kelsey-Lee Barber won the javelin throw and American Sam Kendrick defended his pole vault title, then celebrated by trampolining around on the landing mat with his co-medalists: Armand Duplantis of Sweden (silver) and Piotr Lisek of Poland (bronze).

But as the day's developments illustrated, track and field can only dream that its worst problems involve the debate over why its biggest event is being held in a land where very few people care about the sport.

Instead, the main topic was doping — on this day, in the form of Salazar, a legend who made more news by being barred from the stadium than anyone did while running inside of it.

Not Brazier's problem, he insisted.

The theme he harped on through all the questioning: He's coached by Julian, not Salazar.

"It's disappointing," Brazier said, "that the most coverage we get in track and field is for bad things like that."

He was hardly the first winner at a track meet to share that sentiment — and he almost certainly won't be the last.

More AP sports: <https://apnews.com/apf-sports> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Federal judge upholds affirmative action at Harvard

By COLLIN BINKLEY AP Education Writer

BOSTON (AP) — A federal judge Tuesday cleared Harvard University of discriminating against Asian American applicants in a ruling that was seen as a major victory for supporters of affirmative action in college admissions across the U.S.

In a closely watched lawsuit that had raised fears about the future of affirmative action, a group called Students for Fair Admissions accused the Ivy League college of deliberately — and illegally — holding down the number of Asian Americans accepted in order to preserve a certain racial balance on campus.

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U.S. District Judge Allison D. Burroughs, however, ruled that Harvard's admissions process is "not perfect" but passes constitutional muster. She said there is "no evidence of any racial animus whatsoever" and no evidence that any admission decision was "negatively affected by Asian American identity."

"Race conscious admissions will always penalize to some extent the groups that are not being advantaged by the process," Burroughs wrote, "but this is justified by the compelling interest in diversity and all the benefits that flow from a diverse college population."

Her ruling, which came after a three-week trial a year ago, brings temporary relief to other universities that consider race as a way to ensure campus diversity. But it also sets the stage for a prolonged battle that some experts predict will go all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Harvard President Lawrence S. Bacow welcomed the ruling, saying that the consideration of race and many other factors "helps us achieve our goal of creating a diverse student body that enriches the education of every student."

"Today we reaffirm the importance of diversity — and everything it represents to the world," he said.

Students for Fair Admissions said it will appeal.

"Students for Fair Admissions is disappointed that the court has upheld Harvard's discriminatory admissions policies," Edward Blum, the group's president, said in a statement. "We believe that the documents, emails, data analysis and depositions SFFA presented at trial compellingly revealed Harvard's systematic discrimination against Asian-American applicants."

The American Council on Education, which represents dozens of college and university presidents, said the decision is gratifying against a backdrop of "continuing attacks on what remains the settled law of the land in this area."

"We applaud this ruling and are confident that the nation's courts, including its highest court, will continue to uphold the vital principle that colleges and universities that choose to do so can consider race as one factor in reviewing applicants to achieve the goal of a talented, diverse incoming class," Ted Mitchell, the group's president, said in a statement.

In the case at Harvard, the plaintiffs argued that Asian Americans were held to a higher standard in admissions, amounting to an "Asian penalty," while the school gave preference to black and Hispanic students with poorer grades.

A 2013 internal report at Harvard found that if the school weighed applicants on academics alone, 43% of the admitted class would be Asian American, while in reality it was 19%. Harvard said the report was only meant to be "exploratory" and was based on incomplete data.

Much of the lawsuit centered on a subjective "personal rating" that Harvard assigns to applicants. The suit argued that Asian Americans consistently receive lower personal ratings because of racial bias, leading many to be rejected.

The plaintiffs built their case around a statistical analysis of six years of Harvard admissions data. It found that Asian Americans had the lowest personal ratings and the lowest admission rates, while black and Hispanic students fared far better in both areas.

Harvard countered with its own analysis finding no evidence of bias. During the trial, the dean of admissions offered possible reasons to explain the low personal rating for Asian Americans, saying they may come with weaker letters of recommendation.

The judge sided with Harvard on every count of wrongdoing alleged in the lawsuit. She said differences in personal ratings are "relatively minor" and can be explained by a variety of factors. She said Harvard proved that its use of race is limited and that abandoning it would lead to a sharp decline in diversity.

But she also said the admissions process could be improved by providing "implicit bias" training to admissions officers and by maintaining clear guidelines on the use of race.

Like many elite colleges, Harvard acknowledges it considers race in admissions as a way to boost diversity but says it is only one of many factors in deciding which applicants to admit. Some states ban consideration of race in admissions.

The Supreme Court last examined affirmative action in 2016 and upheld the practice at the University

of Texas.

That decision was written by Justice Anthony Kennedy, who has since retired. The two justices appointed by President Donald Trump, Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh, are generally more conservative than Kennedy but do not have extensive records on affirmative action.

The trial offered a rare glimpse into Harvard's secretive admissions process, including the ways it favors wealth and privilege. In a series of emails released in the case, Harvard officials openly discussed the fundraising prospects of applicants.

Harvard has called Students for Fair Admission a political group with no real interest in helping Asian Americans. Instead, its critics say, the organization's real goal is to end affirmative action altogether. Blum is a legal strategist who has orchestrated lawsuits to ban it at other colleges.

The group says it has more than 20,000 members, including one Asian American who was unfairly rejected in 2014, but none have come forward publicly. During the trial, no students testified that they faced discrimination by Harvard.

The organization's leaders also include Abigail Fisher, who sued the University of Texas in the case that went to the Supreme Court in 2016. Fisher said she was rejected because she is white. In a 4-3 decision, the court upheld the school's use of race.

Supreme Court decisions have allowed colleges to consider race as long as it is "narrowly tailored" to promote diversity and is just one factor among many. Racial quotas have been ruled unconstitutional.

The Trump administration has fought affirmative action at several schools. In August 2018, the Justice Department issued a statement siding with Students for Fair Admissions, accusing Harvard of "outright racial balancing." It is also investigating the use of race at Yale.

Students for Fair Admissions has also sued the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, over alleged discrimination against Asian American applicants. That suit, also filed in 2014, is still going on.

Follow Collin Binkley on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/cbinkley>

Asian shares track Wall St losses on weak US factory data

By ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writer

BANGKOK (AP) — Asian shares are lower after U.S. stocks posted their worst loss in five weeks on Wednesday after a surprisingly limp report on the nation's manufacturing that stirred worries about the economic outlook.

Japan's Nikkei 225 index shed 0.6% to 21,758.02 while the Hang Seng in Hong Kong lost 0.4% to 25,980.37. Sydney's S&P ASX 200 gave up 1.3% to 6,658.20.

The Kospi in South Korea sank 1.4%, to 2,044.01 after North Korea fired a ballistic missile toward the sea Wednesday, South Korea's military said, in a display of its expanding military capabilities hours after saying it would resume nuclear diplomacy with the United States this weekend.

The report showed that manufacturing weakened in September for the second straight month as President Donald Trump's trade war with China dragged on confidence and factory activity. It dashed economists' expectations that August's contraction had been an aberration, and stocks and bond yields immediately reversed course to drop sharply lower following the report.

The S&P 500 slumped 1.2% to 2,940.25 for its sharpest loss since August. The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 1.3% to 26,573.04, and the Nasdaq composite dropped 1.1% to 7,908.68.

Small-company stocks fell more than the rest of the market. The Russell 2000 index lost 2%, to 1,493.43.

In the bond market, the yield on the 10-year Treasury dropped to 1.66% from 1.74% before the report's release, which is a big move. Three stocks fell for every one that rose on the New York Stock Exchange, and gold climbed as investors sought safer ground.

Economists had been expecting growth to resume in September, and they had forecast a reading of 50.4, according to FactSet.

Manufacturers say global trade remains the most significant issue, and all the uncertainty caused by the

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trade war is hurting exporters in particular. Businesses are unsure what the rules of international trade will be, and it's causing CEOs to pull back on their spending plans. In a separate report, the World Trade Organization said global trade growth will slow to its weakest pace this year since 2009.

"The disappointing data is only fanning long-standing fears of slowing global growth," said Alec Young, managing director of Global Markets Research at FTSE Russell.

Manufacturing is a relatively small part of the economy, but investors worry about whether it will spill into other areas. That puts an even bigger spotlight on Friday's jobs report, which economists expect to show an acceleration in hiring.

Household spending has been a pillar for the economy, particularly when manufacturing and business spending are under threat, and a strong job market helps households keep spending. But uncertainty is looming even there.

A report last week showed that consumer spending rose less than economists expected in August. Two reports on consumer confidence last week gave a mixed picture, with one falling below expectations and the other rising above.

Last month's jobs report was also surprisingly weak, but that may have been a one-off, some analysts say.

"The month of August over the last 10 years has been the wonkiest jobs report of the year," said Philip Orlando, chief equity market strategist at Federated Investors. It often falls below expectations, only for the numbers to be revised higher in subsequent months, he said.

"There's no question the data has been softer, slower, weaker, pick your adjective for today versus a year ago," Orlando said about the broad economy. "But I do think we're going to get through this."

The Fed and other central banks around the world have been aggressive in keeping rates low to shield against the effects of the trade war and slowing global economic growth. The Fed lowered short-term rates twice this summer, down to a range of 1.75% to 2%, the first cuts since the financial crisis was toppling economies around the world in 2008.

Benchmark crude oil rebounded, gaining 56 cents to \$54.18 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It fell 45 cents to \$53.62 a barrel on Tuesday. Brent crude oil, the international standard, picked up 41 cents to \$59.30 per barrel.

The dollar rose to 107.87 Japanese yen from 107.73 yen on Tuesday. The euro strengthened to \$1.0937 from \$1.0934.

___ AP Business writers Damian J. Troise and Alex Veiga contributed.

Today in History By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Oct. 2, the 275th day of 2019. There are 90 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 2, 1967, Thurgood Marshall was sworn as an associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court as the court opened its new term.

On this date:

In 1919, President Woodrow Wilson suffered a serious stroke at the White House that left him paralyzed on his left side.

In 1941, during World War II, German armies launched an all-out drive against Moscow; Soviet forces succeeded in holding onto their capital.

In 1944, German troops crushed the two-month-old Warsaw Uprising, during which a quarter of a million people had been killed.

In 1950, the comic strip "Peanuts," created by Charles M. Schulz, was syndicated to seven newspapers.

In 1970, one of two chartered twin-engine planes flying the Wichita State University football team to Utah crashed into a mountain near Silver Plume, Colorado, killing 31 of the 40 people on board.

In 1971, the music program "Soul Train" made its debut in national syndication.

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In 1984, Richard W. Miller became the first FBI agent to be arrested and charged with espionage. (Miller was tried three times; he was sentenced to 20 years in prison, but was released after nine years.)

In 1985, actor Rock Hudson, 59, died at his home in Beverly Hills, California, after battling AIDS.

In 2002, the Washington, D.C.-area sniper attacks began, setting off a frantic manhunt lasting three weeks. (John Allen Muhammad and Lee Boyd Malvo were finally arrested for killing 10 people and wounding three others; Muhammad was executed in 2009; Malvo was sentenced to life in prison.)

In 2005, a tour boat, the Ethan Allen, capsized on New York's Lake George, killing 20 elderly passengers. Playwright August Wilson died in Seattle at age 60. Actor-comedian Nipsey Russell died in New York at age 87.

In 2013, a jury in Los Angeles cleared a concert promoter of negligence, rejecting a lawsuit brought by Michael Jackson's mother claiming AEG Live had been negligent in hiring Conrad Murray, the doctor who killed the pop star with an overdose of a hospital anesthetic.

In 2017, rock superstar Tom Petty died at a Los Angeles hospital at the age of 66, a day after suffering cardiac arrest at his home in Malibu, California.

Ten years ago: The International Olympic Committee, meeting in Copenhagen, chose Rio de Janeiro to be the site of the 2016 Summer Olympics; Chicago was eliminated in the first round, despite a last-minute in-person appeal by President Barack Obama. A man accused of stalking ESPN reporter Erin Andrews and secretly videotaping her inside her hotel room was arrested at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport. (Michael David Barrett later pleaded guilty to interstate stalking and was sentenced to 2 1/2 years in federal prison.)

Five years ago: President Barack Obama acknowledged his pivotal role in the midterm political campaign, arguing in a speech at Northwestern University that the November congressional elections were a referendum on his economic policies and blaming Republicans for blocking his efforts to boost wages and create more jobs. Hong Kong's embattled leader, Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying, refused demands by pro-democracy protesters to step down.

One year ago: President Donald Trump ignited a crowd at a campaign rally in Mississippi by mocking Christine Blasey Ford over her claim that she had been sexually assaulted by Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh decades ago; Trump also said it's a "very scary time for young men in America" who could be considered guilty based on an accusation. The New York Times reported that Trump had received at least \$413 million from his father over the decades, much of it through dubious tax dodges including outright fraud; a lawyer for Trump told the Times that there was no "fraud or tax evasion." Amazon announced a minimum wage of \$15 an hour for its U.S. employees. (Some longtime workers said the higher pay wouldn't make up for benefits they were losing.)

Today's Birthdays: Retired MLB All-Star Maury Wills is 87. Movie critic Rex Reed is 81. Singer-songwriter Don McLean is 74. Cajun/country singer Jo-el Sonnier is 73. Actor Avery Brooks is 71. Fashion designer Donna Karan is 71. Photographer Annie Leibovitz is 70. Rock musician Mike Rutherford (Genesis, Mike & the Mechanics) is 69. Singer-actor Sting is 68. Actress Robin Riker is 67. Actress Lorraine Bracco is 65. Country musician Greg Jennings (Restless Heart) is 65. Rock singer Phil Oakey (The Human League) is 64. Rhythm-and-blues singer Freddie Jackson is 63. Singer-producer Robbie Nevil is 61. Retro-soul singer James Hunter is 57. Former NFL quarterback Mark Rypien is 57. Rock musician Bud Gaugh (Sublime, Eyes Adrift) is 52. Folk-country singer Gillian Welch is 52. Country singer Kelly Willis is 51. Actor Joey Slotnick is 51. Rhythm-and-blues singer Dion Allen (Az Yet) is 49. Actress-talk show host Kelly Ripa (TV: "Live with Kelly and Ryan") is 49. Rock musician Jim Root (AKA #4 Slipknot) is 48. Singer Tiffany is 48. Rock singer Lene Nystrom is 46. Actor Efren Ramirez is 46. Rhythm-and-blues singer LaTocha Scott (Xscape) is 46. Gospel singer Mandisa (TV: "American Idol") is 43. Actress Brianna Brown is 40. Rock musician Mike Rodden (Hinder) is 37. Tennis player Marion Bartoli is 35. Actor Christopher Larkin is 32. Rock singer Brittany Howard (Alabama Shakes) is 31. Actress Samantha Barks is 29. Actress Elizabeth McLaughlin is 26.

Thought for Today: "There's one way to find out if a man is honest — ask him. If he says 'yes' you know he is a crook." — Groucho Marx (1890-1977).