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[2- Game, Fish & Parks News](#)

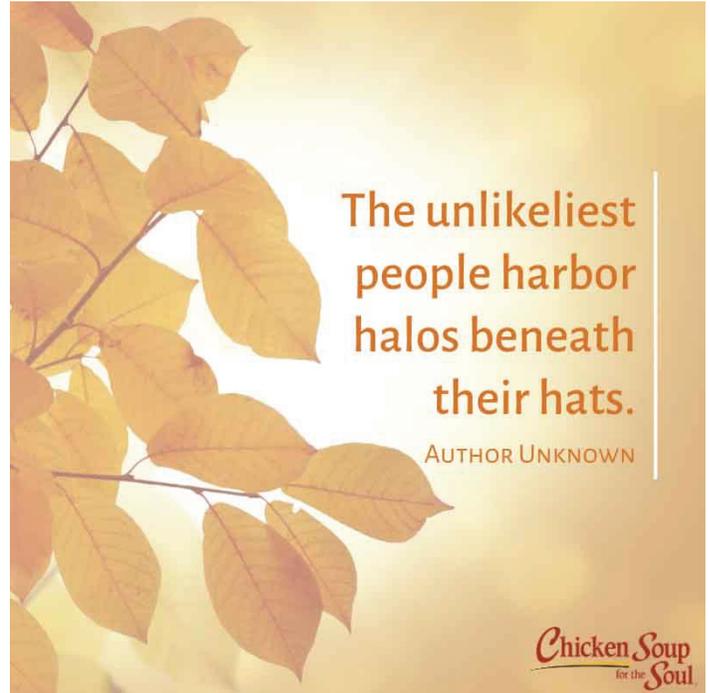
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No School on Thursday and Friday, Nov. 21 and 22 due to the state volleyball tournament

Top 3 reasons to get your dog licensed!

- 1) It greatly improves your chance of getting your dog back if it goes missing.
- 2) It lets people know that your dog is up-to-date on its rabies vaccine.
- 3) It's the Law!

2020 DOG LICENSES ARE AVAILABLE NOW!!

Licenses due by December 31, 2019

Fines start January 2, 2020

Spayed/Neutered dogs are \$5 per dog; otherwise \$10 per dog

Proof of rabies shot information is REQUIRED!!

Email proof to city.peggy@nvc.net

fax to (605) 397-4498 or bring a copy to City Hall!!!

Please contact City Hall at (605) 397-8422 as soon as possible if you no longer have a dog(s) that was previously licensed.



OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

GFP Commission Proposes Use of Rifles on Private Land During West River Prairie Spring Turkey Season

WATERTOWN, S.D. – The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) Commission proposed to allow the use of rifles on private land for the West River spring turkey prairie hunting units. Currently, the use of rifles is not allowed for any spring turkey hunting. This proposal would continue to exclude use of rifles on private land enrolled in the Walk-In Area Program and the entire Black Hills unit.

To comment in person, the public hearing will be held Dec. 12 at 2 p.m. CST at the Prairie Events Center in Madison. Individuals can comment online at gfp.sd.gov/forms/positions or mail them to 523 E. Capitol Ave., Pierre, SD 57501. To be included in the public record and to be considered by the commission, comments must include a full name and city of residence and meet the submission deadline of 72 hours before the public hearing (not including the day of the public hearing).

GFP Commission Rejects Petition for Change in Custer State Park Elk Hunting Season Drawing

WATERTOWN, S.D. – The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) Commission rejected a petition to add a separate drawing for Custer State Park elk hunting applicants over 70 years of age.

The proposal originated via the public petition process and suggested that hunters over the age of 70, who had a summed total of age and preference points over 100, would be included in a special drawing prior to the regular license drawing.

In 2019, nearly 9,000 hunters applied for the eight any-elk licenses offered in Custer State Park.

GFP Commission Proposes Length Restriction for Flathead Catfish

WATERTOWN, S.D. – The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) Commission proposed a change to harvest restrictions for flathead catfish. The change would limit anglers to only one flathead catfish 28 inches or longer per day as part of the daily limit, statewide.

This proposal originated via the public petition process.

To comment in person, the public hearing will be held Dec. 12 at 2 p.m. CST at the Prairie Events Center in Madison. Individuals can comment online at gfp.sd.gov/forms/positions or mail them to 523 E. Capitol Ave., Pierre, SD 57501. To be included in the public record and to be considered by the commission, comments must include a full name and city of residence and meet the submission deadline of 72 hours before the public hearing (not including the day of the public hearing).

Game, Fish and Parks Accepting Proposals for Roy Lake Resort Concession Operator

WATERTOWN, S.D. – According to South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP), entrepreneurs interested in operating Roy Lake Resort can now begin submitting proposals. The resort is located within Roy Lake State Park in northeastern South Dakota, 10 miles southeast of Lake City or 25 miles north of Webster on Highway 10.

The prospectus details the terms and conditions under which interested operators may submit a proposal for consideration. It also includes a detailed business opportunity and the requirements to submit a proposal. Required services include cabin and lodge room rental, retail goods, courtesy docks, and boat fuel.

Proposals are due December 9, 2019.

A copy of the prospectus is available by contacting the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks, Division of Parks and Recreation at 523 East Capitol, Pierre, SD 57501 or 605.773.3391. Printable versions of the prospectus are also available for free download from the Game, Fish and Parks website at gfp.sd.gov/parks/detail/roy-lake-state-park.

Awards Presented to Conservation Officers during GFP Commission Meeting

WATERTOWN, S.D. – At the November meeting of the Game, Fish and Parks Commission, wildlife conservation officers Kraig Haase and Dan Sternhagen were presented with awards.

Kraig Haase, Regional Conservation Officer Supervisor out of Watertown, was presented with the Shikar-Safari Officer of the Year Award. Following in his father's footsteps, Kraig became a conservation officer in 1997 and a supervisor in 2010. Throughout his career, he has dedicated himself to leadership. Mentoring new officers, serving as a training officer and investing time in his community has earned him the respect of many.

Shikar-Safari Club International is a conservation-based organization that presents awards annually to wildlife law enforcement officers in all states, provinces and territories in the United States and Canada.

The annual award honors a state officer whose efforts show outstanding performance and achievement among sworn conservation law enforcement personnel.

Dan Sternhagen, Wildlife Conservation Officer (WCO) out of Estelline, received the South Dakota Officer of the Year award from the Association of Midwest Fish & Game Law Enforcement Officers.

Sternhagen became a WCO after working with the Parks Division for 7 years. He has always been passionate about the outdoors and loves working with landowners and sportsmen to improve outdoor experiences for future generations.

Since its chartering in 1944, the Association of Midwest Fish & Game Law Enforcement Officers has become the lead group among wildlife enforcement organizations in the development and maintenance of training for field officers in wildlife law enforcement. The group initiated the Midwest Covert Investigator Training Seminar and developed the Wildlife Forensic Field Manual, and supports wildlife enforcement research through grants.

GFP Seeking Assistance from Hunters with CWD Surveillance

PIERRE, S.D. – With the much-anticipated arrival of the West and East River deer seasons, Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) is seeking the assistance of hunters in providing samples for chronic wasting disease (CWD) surveillance efforts.

"With a majority of the deer harvest occurring during the firearm seasons, hunters play a critical role in determining the distribution of CWD across South Dakota," said GFP wildlife program administrator Chad Switzer. "When we developed the CWD action plan, we identified high priority surveillance areas to focus effort and resources where wildlife managers are working to determine if CWD is present. Findings from these sampling efforts will help us implement regulations for transportation and carcass disposal, which are critical to reducing the spread of CWD."

Hunters can provide samples from their deer in a number of ways.

"There are numerous sample collection stations within and around the high priority surveillance areas, and sampling kits are available at GFP offices," said Switzer. "Also, a hunter can contact any GFP office and make arrangements to have a sample removed from a harvested deer."

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is a fatal brain disease of deer, elk, and moose caused by an abnormal protein called a prion. Animals in the later stages of infection with CWD may show progressive loss of

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weight and body condition, behavioral changes, excessive salivation, loss of muscle control and eventual death. Chronic wasting disease is always fatal for the afflicted animal. The disease cannot be diagnosed by observation of physical symptoms because many big game diseases affect animals in similar ways.

While GFP's focus will be to collect samples from high priority surveillance areas, samples from anywhere in South Dakota can be tested. For more information on CWD and how to submit samples from a harvested deer or elk, visit gfp.sd.gov/cwd-testing or contact your local GFP office.

***Groton's Angel Tree
cards are available
at Lori's Pharmacy
and
Dollar General***

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First showing of the all-school play, Clue, was held last night. If you didn't make it, there is a second performance on Saturday at 3:00 pm.



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Today

Tonight

Saturday

Saturday
Night

Sunday



Patchy Fog
then Partly
Sunny

Mostly Cloudy

Mostly Cloudy
then Chance
Rain

Chance Rain

Mostly Cloudy

High: 43 °F

Low: 28 °F

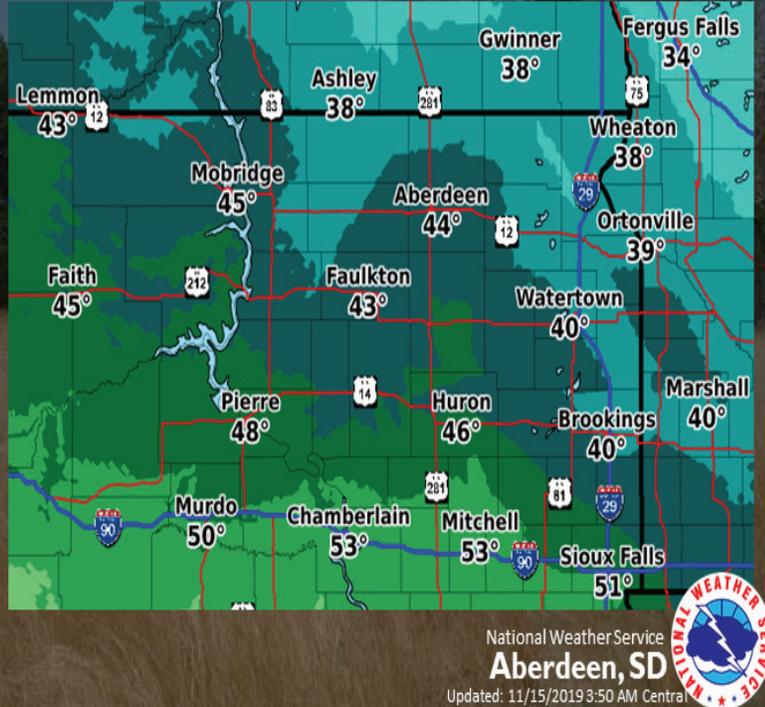
High: 44 °F

Low: 30 °F

High: 40 °F

Temperatures About Average For Next Few Days

- Dry Today
- Weak Front Passes Through Saturday
- Little If Any Moisture With This Next System



Published on: 11/14/2019 at 11:07PM

Not much going on today with average temperatures. A weak system crossing the region Saturday will bring a few light rain showers, with a front that will clear out the moisture for Sunday.

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Today in Weather History

November 15, 1988: A mixture of sleet, freezing rain and snow fell from north central South Dakota into west central Minnesota before changing over to all snow by the afternoon of the 15th. Snow continued across Minnesota during the morning hours on the 16th, along with increasing winds. The winds and falling snow created near zero visibility due to blowing snow in the northwest and west central Minnesota. A 60 mph wind gust was recorded in Morris, MN. Snow and blowing snow blocked roads, caused power outages and closed schools. Snow in many locations accumulated over a sheet of ice that coated roads from preceding rainfall.

1987: On November 15 and 16, intense thunderstorms rumbled through the South-Central US producing 49 tornadoes in Oklahoma, Texas, Louisiana, and Mississippi during a 34 hour period. Of the 49 tornadoes, four were F3, 12 were F2, 27 were F1, and 6 were F0. These severe storms caused 11 deaths and 303 injuries. This storm system also brought heavy rain to central Louisiana where five stations recorded over 10 inches in 24 hours. The highest amount was 14.22 inches at Olla on the 16.

1900 - A record lake-effect snowstorm at Watertown, NY, produced 45 inches in 24 hours. The storm total was 49 inches. (14th-15th) (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1967 - A surprise snow and ice coating paralyzed Boston during the evening rush hour. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Thunderstorms spawned twenty-two tornadoes in eastern Texas, Louisiana and Oklahoma. A tornado moving out of northeastern Texas killed one person and injured ninety-six others around Shreveport LA causing more than five million dollars damage. Tornadoes in Texas claimed ten lives, and injured 191 persons. A tornado caused more than nineteen million dollars damage around Palestine TX. Severe thunderstorms spawned eighteen tornadoes in Mississippi and seven in Georgia the next day, and thunderstorms in southeastern Texas produced wind gusts to 102 mph at Galveston, and wind gusts to 110 mph at Bay City, killing one person. There were a total of forty-nine tornadoes in the south central U.S. in two days. The tornadoes claimed eleven lives, injured 303 persons, and caused more than seventy million dollars damage. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from Oklahoma and northeastern Texas to northern Indiana and southern Wisconsin from mid morning through the pre-dawn hours of the following day. Thunderstorms spawned forty-four tornadoes, including thirteen in Missouri, and there were more than two hundred reports of large hail or damaging winds. A tornado in central Arkansas hit Scott and Lonoke killing five people, injuring sixty others, and causing fifteen million dollars damage. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - A tornado hit Southside, AR, killing one person, injuring ten others, and causing more than two million dollars damage, and a tornado near Clarksville AR injured nine persons and caused more than two million dollars damage. A tornado moving through the southwest part of Topeka KS injured twenty-two persons and caused nearly four million dollars damage. A tornado near Jane MO killed one person and injured twelve others, and a tornado moving across the southwest part of O'Fallon MO injured ten persons. Severe thunderstorms also produced hail three and a half inches in diameter east of Denison TX, and wind gusts to 85 mph at Kirksville MO. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Thunderstorms developing along a powerful cold front began to produce severe weather in the Middle Mississippi Valley before sunrise, and by early the next morning thunderstorms had spawned seventeen tornadoes east of the Mississippi River, with a total of 350 reports of severe weather. There were one hundred reports of damaging winds in Georgia, and five tornadoes, and there were another four tornadoes in Alabama. Hardest hit was Huntsville AL where a violent tornado killed 21 persons, injured 463 others, and caused one hundred million dollars damage. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 48 °F at 3:33 PM

Low Temp: 9 °F at 5:50 AM

Wind: 17 mph at 12:33 PM

Day Rain: 0.00

Record High: 72° in 1953

Record Low: -8° in 1900

Average High: 40°F

Average Low: 19°F

Average Precip in Nov.: 0.39

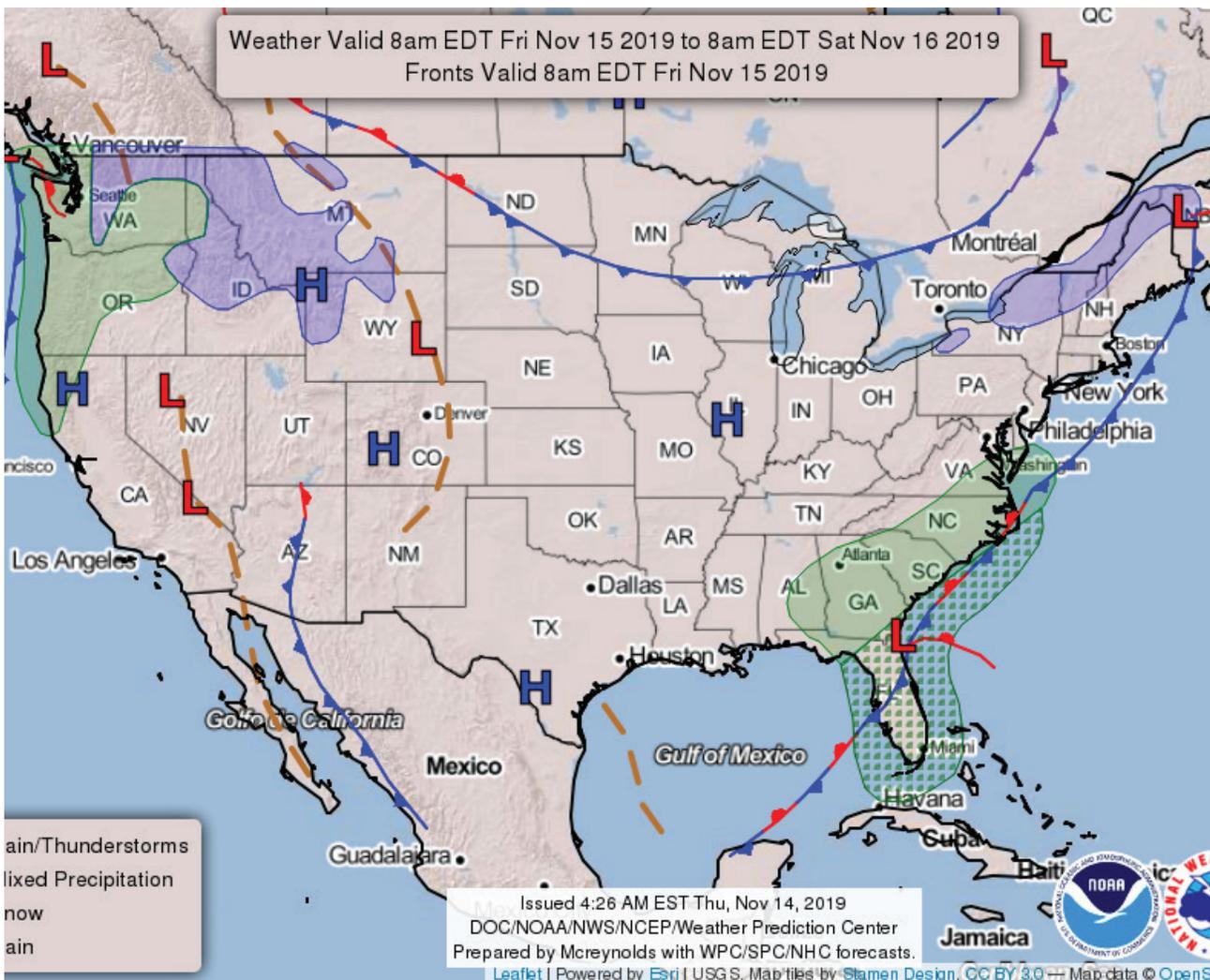
Precip to date in Nov.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 20.86

Precip Year to Date: 26.57

Sunset Tonight: 5:04 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:34 a.m.





LOST AND FOUND

An explorer became lost in a dangerous part of an African jungle. His compass was of no use to him because he did not know where he was or which direction to travel. He became desperate and was filled with fear when a native appeared and offered to take him to his camp.

Hesitatingly, with no options, but hopeful, he asked, "Do you know the way?"

Confidently the native replied, "I am the way."

People all around us are lost, seeking directions, and "looking for the way" for their lives. The world has many maps and GPS systems, but they offer no final destination that provides salvation, peace, and security. They are searching and seeking desperately, trying anything and everything, to discover a way out of their fear and hopelessness.

They need to hear the words of Jesus, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." In Him we have the directions we need for our life here and the life to come.

Prayer: Father, thank You for being "the Way" - our Savior and Guide. Help us to lead others to You, so they will know the Way, the Truth, and have life. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: John 14:6 Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me."

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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

No one hurt in Sioux Falls house explosion

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Nobody was injured after a house exploded and collapsed in Sioux Falls. Fire Rescue Division Chief Steve Fessler says no one was inside the one-story home at the time of the explosion Thursday afternoon.

Neighboring homes were evacuated as a precaution and streets were closed off in the area.

Neighbors told the Argus Leader that the home was boarded up and that emergency crews responded to a fire there last week.

Brian Dumdei lives across the street and says he heard a "single loud noise" and then saw a plume of smoke.

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

Thursday's Scores By The Associated Press

Volleyball

Class AA

State Qualifier

Harrisburg def. Aberdeen Central, 25-22, 15-25, 29-27, 25-20

Huron def. Sturgis Brown, 25-22, 25-8, 25-13

Rapid City Stevens def. Brandon Valley, 24-26, 22-25, 29-27, 25-19, 15-11

Sioux Falls Lincoln def. Rapid City Central, 21-25, 25-12, 25-23, 25-21

Sioux Falls O'Gorman def. Mitchell, 25-16, 25-10, 25-8

Sioux Falls Roosevelt def. Brookings, 25-17, 23-25, 25-18, 25-10

Sioux Falls Washington def. Pierre, 25-16, 25-21, 25-21

Watertown def. Yankton, 25-12, 25-15, 25-12

PREP FOOTBALL=

Class 11A=

Championship=

Canton 46, Lennox 8

Class 9AA=

Championship=

Viborg-Hurley 50, Bon Homme 24

Class 9A=

Championship=

Canistota-Freeman 46, Britton-Hecla 34

Class 9B=

Championship=

Colman-Egan 58, Herreid/Selby Area 6

Some high school football scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

Feds: South Dakota doc made millions on unneeded surgeries

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota neurosurgeon made millions of dollars by performing unnecessary and dangerous surgeries, including one that left a patient partially paralyzed, federal prosecutors

contend in a lawsuit against the doctor.

Dr. Wilson Asfora enriched himself by using medical devices he invented during surgeries and receiving kickbacks from companies whose devices he used without disclosing the arrangements, the Department of Justice alleges in the lawsuit filed Wednesday.

Asfora performed complex spinal surgeries that shouldn't have been done and that left at least one patient partially paralyzed, the Argus Leader reported.

Sanford Health settled a whistleblower lawsuit for \$20 million in penalties last month. The hospital system was accused of allowing Asfora to defraud the government, but it denied wrongdoing or liability under the settlement.

Asfora, who worked for Sanford from 2007 until he was fired in August 2019, has denied any wrongdoing. His attorney, Steve Landon, said in a statement Thursday that Asfora "strongly denies" the allegations.

"He did not ever do a surgery or provide medical treatment for personal gain. He has always made medical decisions he believed were in the best interests of his patients. Unfortunately he now has no choice but to defend himself from these unfounded accusations," Landon wrote.

Sanford Health said in a statement Thursday that Asfora is no longer employed by the Sioux Falls-based health system and that the lawsuit's allegations "are solely between Dr. Asfora and the federal government and there are no unresolved claims against Sanford Health related to this matter."

The new lawsuit alleges that Asfora performed surgeries that were "excessive," "quite aggressive" and "against conventional neurosurgical teaching and practice." When Asfora used the devices he either owned or in which he had a financial interest, he was using a kickback scheme to get payments from the federal government, prosecutors allege.

A 2011 surgery resulted in a patient's partial paralysis of the legs, according to the lawsuit. A review determined that the surgery was aggressive and that Asfora opted to use "an extremely lengthy complex procedure when a shorter procedure could have been used," prosecutors contend.

Other surgeons reviewed Asfora's surgical practices and questioned his aggressive techniques, the lawsuit alleges. It also contends that Asfora concealed some of his relationships with device makers in order to hide his financial interests in their products.

The government is seeking damages for false claims, unjust payments and incorrect payments, and is requesting a jury trial to determine damages.

South Dakota Sen. Rounds: Wife's cancer surgery a success

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota U.S. Sen. Mike Rounds says his wife is resting at home after undergoing successful cancer surgery.

Rounds says the couple returned home to Fort Pierre on Wednesday after Jean Rounds underwent surgery at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota. Rounds says his wife will now heal before undergoing five weeks of radiation treatment.

The Argus Leader reports Rounds said Thursday the "big part" of the cancer treatment is now done, and the couple is thankful about how it turned out.

Sen. Rounds says the family wants to say thanks for all the prayers and support they've received across South Dakota.

Jean Rounds was diagnosed in June with a malignant tumor near her sciatic nerve. She completed chemotherapy earlier this month.

The Republican senator is up for re-election in 2020.

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

South Dakota Supreme Court rejects appeal in rape conviction

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Supreme Court has rejected an appeal from a Sioux Falls man convicted in a 2015 rape.

Jurors convicted Jonathan Jerome Packard of second-degree rape after DNA evidence from a sexual assault examination kit matched him to the rape of a woman in her garage.

Packard argued the court should not have allowed the jury to see a nurse's note from the victim's sexual assault evaluation. In the note, the victim described her assailant.

During jury selection, a uniformed Sioux Falls police officer was excused after he said he knew Packard. The officer was not asked how he knew Packard, but Packard argued the other jurors likely assumed the officer knew Packard "due to his prior encounters with the criminal justice system."

The Argus Leader reports the Supreme Court denied both claims.

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

Sioux Falls police investigating shooting

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Sioux Falls police are investigating a shooting that left a bullet hole in the side of a mobile home.

Police spokesman Sam Clemens says officers responded to the sound of gunfire on the city's west side about 2:30 a.m. Thursday.

Clemens says he doesn't know how many shots were fired, but he says no one was hit. Police found several shell casings in the area.

Clemens says investigators will review a neighbor's surveillance video.

Convicted killer wants new identity

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A man sentenced to 90 years in prison for killing his stepfather has petitioned the court in Minnehaha County to change his name because he wants a fresh start.

Thirty-five-year-old Daniel Charles was 14 when he was sent to prison in 2000 for first-degree murder in Meade County. He was accused of putting a rifle to his stepfather's head and pulling the trigger at a ranch near Opal. He told law enforcement at the time he didn't know the gun was loaded.

The Argus Leader reports Charles' petition says he wants to change his name to Rameus Tiberius Aryada to start a new life with an adult identity.

The South Dakota Department of Corrections lists Charles' earliest parole eligibility as March 2045.

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

French police ratchet up evidence search in Epstein probe

By JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — French police launched a fresh appeal Friday for witnesses and victims to come forward to aid their probe of Jeffrey Epstein and allegations that one of the financier's associates drugged and raped young models.

The appeal was longer and more detailed than a previous, more limited call for evidence that police had made previously on Facebook and Twitter on Sept. 11.

"Given the complexity of the case and its international implications, we are once again asking victims and witnesses to come forward," said the new appeal, this time translated by the police into English.

It said police "are mobilized and ready to receive statements from victims and witnesses of sexual harassment or assault" and urged "anyone with information to come forward, regardless of when the incident occurred, what the circumstances were and who was involved."

The amplified appeal came after women who say they were raped and sexually assaulted by one of Epstein's associates, French modeling agent Jean-Luc Brunel, had this week told The Associated Press they were disappointed with the limited scope of police efforts to track down witnesses.

Brunel has denied wrongdoing and has said via his lawyer he is willing to talk to investigators. The new

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appeal, as was also the case in September, does not name Brunel, instead saying that police are investigating "the conduct of Jeffrey Epstein and his connections."

One of Epstein's accusers, Virginia Roberts Giuffre, has alleged that Brunel procured women, some of them minors, for sex with Epstein and other people, luring them with promises of modeling work.

Police commissioner Philippe Guichard, whose office is leading the probe, acknowledged in an AP interview Friday that their September appeal for witnesses, worded only in French, had had limited impact.

"The witnesses and the victims tell us that they had trouble identifying us and finding the number and reaching us to give evidence," he said.

He insisted that his Central Bureau for Violent Crime is "completely invested" in the probe and hopes to reach anyone with knowledge of crimes committed either in France or abroad by French people.

He said the evidence search had been hampered by a reluctance to talk in the "closed world" of modeling.

"We imagine that potential victims don't want to speak, to report crimes, because they must feel that, 'If I say something, will I keep my job?'" he said.

The French probe was launched in August after Epstein took his life while awaiting trial on sex-trafficking charges. So far, police have questioned eight alleged victims of rape and other abuse, and four other people who say they were witnesses, and have more hearings scheduled.

Thysia Huisman, one of the women who has told police she was drugged and raped by Brunel in 1991 at age 18, welcomed the amplified search for witnesses. She'd been among those who this week had told the AP that police needed to do more.

"That's great," she told the AP on Friday, adding that the September appeal, "on Twitter in French, once, is not enough to make people come forward."

She said the use of English in the latest appeal might help reach models and former models who travel frequently and who likely don't speak French.

"Let's wait and see what happens," she said. "I hope it is going to change something."

Police have also sought to spread the word internationally by turning to a non-governmental group, ECPAT, that fights the sexual exploitation of children.

ECPAT translated a detailed explanation of the probe into English, Russian, Spanish and Portuguese and shared it internally with members of its worldwide network, with a request that they then relay the call for witnesses.

Be careful out there: UK police warn candidates about safety

By GREGORY KATZ Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — British police are unveiling new tactics to protect politicians amid the country's fraught, even hostile political atmosphere, issuing safety recommendations for candidates running in the country's Dec. 12 general election.

All 650 seats in the House of Commons are up for grabs in the vote but more than 70 lawmakers have announced they are not running for re-election amid Britain's toxic political atmosphere.

Politicians on both sides of the Brexit argument over Britain's impending departure from the European Union have received abuse and threats — even death threats — both in person and online. Those leaving include many moderate pro-EU Conservatives, Labour legislators who say their party has not stamped out anti-Semitism and high-profile female legislators, who have received a disproportionate amount of the abuse.

There also have been increasing concerns for British politicians' personal safety since Labour Party legislator Jo Cox was stabbed to death during the 2016 Brexit referendum campaign.

The National Police Chiefs' Council said Friday it is urging candidates not to campaign alone if possible and to contact local police in advance of campaigning in specific areas.

It also advised candidates to check that any material they have posted online does not release "sensitive personal information," data that could possibly aid stalkers or those with malign intentions.

Chairman Martin Hewitt said all police forces will offer security briefings for candidates and will have a senior police officer responsible for handling safety issues.

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"We're not going to tell anyone to limit their campaigning or enthusiasm in any way, but we are taking precautionary steps ourselves and providing sensible advice to candidates," he said.

The advice will be distributed to all candidates as part of an information package developed by police, the Electoral Commission and prosecutors.

It also suggests that candidates "take active steps around personal safety to keep themselves and their campaign staff safe" and make sure that someone knows where they are canvassing voters for support.

Police say candidates should keep a record of any intimidating behavior or abuse they encounter.

The advice stops short of suggesting that candidates avoid knocking on doors after dark, given that the extremely rare December election is taking place during the darkest time of the year.

Britain is holding a national election on Dec. 12, two years early, because Prime Minister Boris Johnson, a Conservative, wants to secure a majority so he can take the U.K. out of the EU by the next Brexit deadline of Jan. 31.

In the latest policy announcement, the left-of-center opposition Labour Party published ambitious and costly plans to provide free, fast broadband internet to the entire country, paid for in part by taxing huge tech companies including Facebook, Amazon and Google.

Yet Labour was also hit by more criticism over its allegedly lax stance toward anti-Semitism in party ranks.

Twenty-four prominent British writers and entertainers, including author John Le Carre and actor Simon Callow, said Friday they won't vote for Labour candidates because of the party's failure to combat anti-Semitism.

Their letter, published in The Guardian newspaper, says Labour is under investigation for institutional racism, that two Jewish lawmakers have been bullied out of the party and that Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn has a "long record of embracing anti-Semites."

The signatories say these concerns overshadow the argument that supporting Labour is the only way to stop Johnson's Conservatives from taking the country out of the EU with or without a Brexit deal.

They say to ignore anti-Semitism "because Brexit looms larger is to declare that anti-Jewish prejudice is a price worth paying for a Labour government. Which other community's concerns are disposable in this way?"

Such a rejection by traditional Labour supporters could hurt the party as it seeks to overthrow the ruling Conservatives. The Conservatives now have 298 seats in Parliament, which is short of a majority, to the Labour Party's 243 seats. Analysts say the Conservatives need to flip Labour seats in central and northern England to win the majority needed to push Brexit through.

Most polls see the Conservatives leading, but for many British voters this year, their feelings about Brexit could trump traditional party loyalties.

Tactical alliances could play a part in the parties' success.

On the pro-Brexit front, the Brexit Party has said it won't run candidates in 317 districts where Conservatives have been strong so as not to split the pro-Brexit vote.

On the Remain side, three smaller parties — the Liberal Democrats, the Greens and the Welsh-based Plaid Cymru — have announced a deal to increase the chances of electing lawmakers who support remaining in the EU.

Danica Kirka and Jill Lawless contributed to this report.

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Translation issues mar start of Sun Yang doping case hearing

By **GRAHAM DUNBAR AP Sports Writer**

MONTREUX, Switzerland (AP) — A blockbuster doping case got lost in translation with Chinese swimmer Sun Yang on the stand.

Imprecise and incomplete exchanges relayed by courtroom translators into English and Chinese frustrated

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even Sun's own lawyers on Friday during his opening statement and cross-examination in the first session of a scheduled 12-hour hearing.

At one point, the three-time Olympic champion's London-based lawyer, Ian Meakin, apologized for asking his client leading questions "but the translation was so bad."

In a landmark public hearing — the first in 20 years held in open session by the Court of Arbitration for Sport — Sun could be banned from the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

The CAS judges are not expected to give a verdict until next year, and it was unclear at times how much of the early questions and testimony were exactly understood.

"My apologies for the poor quality of the interpretation," judging panel president Franco Frattini said when the hearing resumed after a break.

The court did not select the translators.

The appeal case was brought by the World Anti-Doping Agency. It centers on Sun's right to refuse cooperation with three anti-doping officials who tried to take blood and urine samples at his home in China last year.

A security guard instructed by Sun's mother used a hammer to smash a box containing a vial of his blood during a late-night dispute after the swimmer questioned the collection team's credentials.

Sun detailed how he and his entourage doubted the paperwork and qualifications of officials conducting a properly scheduled mission to get the samples.

"How are you able to trust them?" Sun recalled of a September 2018 incident that escalated into confrontation.

Sun, one of China's most popular sports stars, said he was not respected by the officials, including a chaperone he said asked to take his photograph.

"This is really ridiculous," Sun said in translated comments.

When the case was first judged in January, Sun was only cautioned by a tribunal appointed by world swimming body FINA.

Although Sun and his entourage were criticized for their conduct, the first tribunal panel said the sample mission was void and invalid because anti-doping protocol was not followed. Technically, Sun was judged to be not properly notified of needing to give samples.

WADA has asked for a ban of between two and eight years, believing Sun voluntarily refused to submit to give samples.

If WADA's appeal is upheld, Sun risks a longer sanction because it would be his second offense. He served a three-month ban imposed by Chinese authorities in 2014 after testing positive for a banned stimulant.

That initial ban was quickly addressed by Sun and his legal team on Friday. He said it was a prescribed medication for a heart issue because he sometimes fainted after training.

Translation mishaps complicated matters as lawyers for WADA repeatedly asked Sun if he had learned in his long career of the serious consequences for refusing to give a sample. The 27-year-old athlete repeatedly answered that the lead anti-doping official had not warned him specifically.

Sun's anti-doping history was detailed, with 180 samples given at competitions and during training from 2012-18. A total of 60 were organized by the Sweden-based firm IDTM, which sent the collection team to Sun's home.

CAS judge Philippe Sands pressed Sun whether IDTM staff had shown different documents of authorization on the 59 previous occasions he gave samples without problems.

The 2-meter (6-foot, 7-inch) Sun became a star in China as its first man to win an Olympic title in swimming. He won gold medals in the 400- and 1,500-meter freestyle races at the 2012 London Olympics. He added gold in the 200 at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics.

Sun also has 11 world championship titles and is a polarizing figure in the sport.

He provoked anger among rivals by winning two titles in July while the CAS appeal was pending. Medalists from Australia and Britain refused to stand on the podium with him in Gwangju, South Korea.

An ambassador fired: What to watch on Day 2 of impeachment

By LAURIE KELLMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — An ambassador, her firing and a pair of fixers.

Those details stand at the center of Marie Yovanovitch's story, a personal ordeal she'll describe to Americans and the world Friday as part of the Democrat-driven impeachment inquiry against President Donald Trump.

What led to the career diplomat's firing, Democrats say, is a key chapter in Trump's holdup of military aid while he pressured Ukraine to investigate Joe Biden's son. Republicans dismiss that as not credible.

Was Yovanovitch an obstacle to corruption and casualty of a bribery scheme? Or disloyal to a president fully empowered to choose his own ambassadors? And how will Trump and his allies treat what he called "the woman" as she speaks out for the first time?

Congress digs into her testimony at 9 a.m. on the second day of public impeachment hearings against the nation's 45th president.

Here's what to know:

THEY CALL HER MASHA

Expect to hear extensive details about Yovanovitch's biography as Democrats seek to bolster her credibility and suggest that Trump fired her for being a little too effective at her job.

She had twice served as an ambassador — to the Kyrgyz Republic and to Armenia — before being confirmed as the U.S. ambassador to Ukraine in a Senate voice vote in July 2016. Yovanovitch, 60, testified on Oct. 11 that she was told that people were "looking to hurt" her. One senior Ukraine official said she needed to "watch my back." Asked in the private session whether she felt threatened, Yovanovitch replied, "Yes."

After her firing, more of the story began to come out. Yovanovitch said she was told that the State Department had been under pressure from Trump to remove her from Ukraine since the summer of 2018. At the heart of it was president's lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, who told Ukrainian journalists that Yovanovitch was pulled from Kyiv because she was part of efforts against the president.

During the private deposition last month, Yovanovitch grew emotional and asked for a break, according to the transcript.

Yovanovitch is a career diplomat who served as a principal deputy assistant secretary for the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, a senior adviser and the dean of the language school at the Foreign Service Institute. She is now working as a senior State Department fellow at Georgetown University.

TRUMP CALLED HER "THE WOMAN"

Watch how Yovanovitch and the president's defenders — and Trump himself — interact during the hearing.

The president had fired Yovanovitch months before the July 25 phone call in which he pressured Ukraine's president on the Bidens. Even though she had been gone for months, Yovanovitch clearly was on the president's mind and connected to his goals in Ukraine. He says he was rooting out corruption generally.

"The former ambassador from the United States, the woman, was bad news," Trump said, according to the rough transcript of the call with Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. "She's going to go through some things."

It's unclear what he meant, but he says that call was "perfect." But the president has a long history of denigrating women who stand up to him, especially those of his generation in positions of power.

At a rally in Louisiana just hours before Yovanovitch's testimony, Trump spoke in rare personal terms about his own impeachment journey.

"Impeachment to me is a dirty word," he told his supporters in Bossier City. "It's been very unfair, very hard on my family."

RUDY'S FIXERS

Listen for mention of Lev Parnas and Igor Fruman, two associates of Giuliani's arrested at an airport last

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month while trying to leave the country with one-way tickets.

The businessmen are charged with making illegal campaign contributions while looking to expand their energy business in Ukraine. The core of Giuliani's involvement appears to revolve around his work with them.

Soviet-born Parnas is prepared to cooperate with the impeachment inquiry. He's accused of using foreign money to make illegal campaign contributions while lobbying U.S. politicians to oust Yovanovitch.

Parnas's attorney, Joseph Bondy, sent lawmakers a letter saying Parnas is prepared to answer questions and produce documents for the impeachment inquiry as long as they don't step on his Fifth Amendment rights against self-incrimination.

NO QUID PRO QUO

The president and his allies insist there was "no quid pro quo," which is Latin for, roughly, an offer of this for that.

But quid pro quo is not in the Constitution. "Bribery" is specifically spelled out as a potential ground for presidential impeachment.

So Democrats are shifting to "bribery" to describe Trump's conduct, though it's not yet clear whether that charge will form the basis of an article of impeachment.

What's certain is that Democrats are focused like a laser on making the case for impeachment clear to Americans in a bid to build up public support.

"Quid pro quo: Bribery," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said Thursday. "The bribe is to grant or withhold military assistance in return for a public statement of a fake investigation into elections. That's bribery."

2020 LOOMS

Trump continued to assail the proceedings as "a hoax" on Thursday. House GOP Leader Kevin McCarthy dismissed the witness testimony as hearsay, at best second-hand information.

The president's re-election campaign says Americans are increasingly behind that defense.

Trump's reelection effort raised more than \$3 million on the first day of public impeachment hearings, and campaign manager Brad Parscale announced it now hopes to raise \$5 million within a 24-hour span.

Follow Kellman on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/APLaurieKellman>

Ousted ambassador to testify in Trump impeachment probe

By LISA MASCARO and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House will hear from a singular witness Friday in the Trump impeachment hearings: Marie Yovanovitch, the former U.S. ambassador to Ukraine who was targeted by the president's allies in a "smear" campaign now central to the inquiry.

The career diplomat, who served both Republican and Democratic presidents, is expected to relay her striking story of being suddenly recalled by Donald Trump and told to "watch my back" in a swiftly developing series of events that sounded alarms about the White House's shadow foreign policy.

She and other officials now testifying publicly in the historic House hearings scrambled to understand Trump's actions, providing revelatory accounts that Democrats are now relying on to make the case that the president's behavior is impeachable.

In particular, Yovanovitch and others have described Rudy Giuliani, Trump's personal lawyer, as leading what one called an "irregular channel" outside the diplomatic mainstream of U.S.-Ukraine relations. Asked during her closed-door deposition if anyone at the State Department who was alerted to Giuliani's role tried to stop him, she testified, "I don't think they felt they could."

With the start of a second day of historic hearings to consider removal of America's 45th president, Democrats and Republicans are hardening their messages to voters as they try to sway public opinion.

Americans are deeply entrenched in two camps over impeachment, resulting in a mounting political battle that will further test the nation in one of the most polarizing eras of modern times.

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House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Thursday brushed aside the Latin phrase "quid pro quo" that Democrats have been using to describe Trump's actions with a more colloquial one: Bribery.

"Quid pro quo: Bribery," Pelosi said about Trump's July 25 phone call in which he asked Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy for a favor.

Trump says the call was perfect. Pelosi said, "It's perfectly wrong. It's bribery."

Trump continued to assail the proceedings as "a hoax" on Thursday, and House GOP Leader Kevin McCarthy dismissed the witness testimony as hearsay, at best second-hand information.

"Beltway charade," the president's son, Eric Trump, told reporters. He said good, hard-working Americans "don't give a damn about that stuff."

At its core, the impeachment inquiry concerns Trump's July phone call with Zelenskiy that first came to attention when an anonymous government whistleblower filed a complaint.

In the phone conversation, Trump asked for a "favor," according to an account provided by the White House. He wanted an investigation of Democrats and 2020 rival Joe Biden. Later it was revealed that the administration was also withholding military aid from Ukraine.

"The bribe is to grant or withhold military assistance in return for a public statement of a fake investigation into the elections," Pelosi said. "That's bribery."

It's also spelled out in the Constitution as one of the possible grounds for impeachment -- "treason, bribery or other and high crimes and misdemeanors."

Rep. Jim Himes, D-Conn., a member of the Intelligence Committee conducting the hearings, explained the shift: "English words are easier to understand than Latin words."

The president flatly denied the latest revelations. During Wednesday's hearing, William Taylor, the top diplomat who replaced Yovanovitch in Ukraine testified that another State Department witness overheard Trump asking about "the investigations" the day after his phone call with Kyiv.

"First I've heard of it," he said, brushing off the question at the White House.

The Associated Press reported Thursday that a second US Embassy official also overheard Trump's conversation.

During the first day of testimony, Taylor and another seasoned foreign service officer, George Kent, the deputy assistant secretary of State, delivered somber accounts about recent months.

They testified in defense of Yovanovitch amid what Kent called Giuliani's "smear" campaign against her; about the dangers of abandoning Ukraine as it faces Russia; and of what Taylor called an "irregular channel" of foreign policy orchestrated by the president's lawyer and carried out by other Trump allies.

It's a dramatic, complicated story, and the Democrats' challenge is to capture voter attention about the significance of Trump's interactions with a distant country.

Ukraine, a young democracy with a hostile Russia at its border, is relying on the U.S. as it reaches to the West.

While Trump applauded the aggressive stance of some of his GOP defenders, he felt that many of the lawmakers in the opening hearing could have done more to support him and he pressed that case with congressional allies ahead of Friday, according to Republicans who were not authorized to speak publicly about private conversations and were granted anonymity.

Still, Trump's reelection effort raised more than \$3 million on the first day of public impeachment hearings, and campaign manager Brad Parscale announced it now hopes to raise \$5 million within a 24-hour span.

Behind closed doors this week Pelosi reminded Democratic lawmakers of the importance of presenting a "common narrative" to the public as the proceedings move forward, according to a Democratic aide.

"We're in Chapter One of a process," said Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi, D-Ill., a member of the Intelligence Committee conducting the inquiry. The challenge, he said, is educating Americans about what happened "and then explaining why it matters."

Associated Press writers Jonathan Lemire, Laurie Kellman and Jill Colvin in Washington contributed to this report.

Hong Kong protesters issue demands, begin leaving university

By KEN MORITSUGU Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Many of the protesters who had barricaded themselves in a Hong Kong university this week began to leave Friday after temporarily clearing a road they had blocked and demanding that the government commit to going ahead with local elections on Nov. 24.

It wasn't immediately clear why the protesters at the Chinese University of Hong Kong were leaving, or where they might go next. Some remained but in much smaller numbers.

The university's president, Rocky Tuan, urged everyone to leave, saying the situation was out of control and that the university may need to seek government help.

In the morning, the protesters cleared one lane in each direction on Tolo Highway and gave the government 24 hours to agree to their demand. After the deadline expired, they blocked the road again.

"In the face of the inconvenience we have caused to the elderly and other young people, we have decided to take the initiative to show our goodwill," one masked protester said before the lanes were cleared. "We would like to re-iterate that our target is the government."

Workers sent in to clean up remaining debris and set up traffic cones were heckled by protesters, who pointed bows and arrows at them, government officials said, but the two lanes were re-opened around midday.

The district council elections are seen as a barometer of public sentiment in the semi-autonomous Chinese territory, which has been riven by anti-government protests for more than five months. Pro-democracy activists say the government may use the escalating violence as a reason to cancel the elections.

Patrick Nip, the secretary for constitutional affairs, said the government hasn't changed its decision to hold the vote.

"We are all worried as to whether the election can be held in a safe manner," he said at a news conference. "If we want to hold an orderly election it takes the whole society to chip in so we can lower the risk."

The police, meanwhile, said they would investigate the death of a 70-year-old man who was hit in the head by a brick as a murder case.

The man, who was using his phone to film a skirmish between protesters and others trying to clear a street earlier this week, died Thursday night. The Hong Kong government expressed outrage over what it called "the malicious acts of the rioters."

In London, the Chinese Embassy said that Hong Kong Justice Secretary Teresa Cheng was pushed to the ground by activists who were following her and shouting at her, injuring her hand. It wasn't clear if she was pushed or fell in the confrontation.

"We express strong indignation and unequivocally condemn the activists," the embassy said in a statement. "Now, they are taking such violence abroad and into the U.K."

Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam called the attack "barbaric" and said it violated the principles of a civilized society.

Asked about the incident, Metropolitan Police in London said they are investigating an allegation of assault of a woman who was taken to the hospital with an arm injury.

Students and other protesters have taken over major campuses in Hong Kong this week, building barricades and stockpiling gasoline bombs and other weapons.

In Taiwan, civic and religious groups protested outside Hong Kong's representative office, calling for an end to what they said were abuses against anti-government protesters in the territory.

Cheng Ying-er, a pastor in the Presbyterian church that has long been active on pro-democracy issues, said the situation in Hong Kong was a matter of "religious values and human rights."

"Taiwan stands with you all," he told those gathered outside the Hong Kong Economic, Trade and Cultural Office in Taipei.

Taiwanese lawyers have formed a pro-bono committee to help any Hong Kong residents who want to seek refuge in Taiwan, said Lin Chun-hung, a member of the group.

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"Our lawyers will provide them with assistance so that they can stay here," he said.

Many in Taiwan have come out strongly against the crackdown on the Hong Kong protest movement.

Taiwan underwent a largely peaceful transition to full democracy in recent decades and has rejected China's proposal of unification with the mainland under the same "one country, two systems" formula implemented in Hong Kong.

Associated Press videojournalists Johnson Lai in Hong Kong and Taijing Wu in Taipei, Taiwan, and writer Kelvin Chan in London contributed to this story.

For Obama and Patrick, a long friendship and political bond

By **JULIE PACE AP Washington Bureau Chief**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Deval Patrick was in need of a pep talk.

He was staring down reelection as Massachusetts governor in 2010, in the midst of a sluggish economic recovery that would ultimately contribute to sweeping Democratic defeats across the country. In stepped President Barack Obama, a close friend and political ally, who was in town for an event. The two men met for a "get in the game" conversation that helped put Patrick on the path to a second term.

"I think it was very meaningful to Deval," said David Axelrod, a political adviser to both Obama and Patrick. "That's the kind of relationship they have. There's a level of trust and mutual caring between them."

That relationship will test whether Obama can maintain his vigorously neutral approach to the 2020 Democratic primary now that Patrick has launched a late bid for the presidential nomination. Although Obama has ties to several candidates — most notably Joe Biden, who spent eight years as his No. 2 in the White House — his ties to Patrick are unique. The two men were friends well before the White House years and have bonded over shared personal experiences and a strikingly similar approach to politics.

"They both had Chicago roots, they both had the Harvard experience and they shared a set of values," Axelrod said. "You go back and listen to some of Patrick's speeches from when he was running for governor and you hear echoes of Obama."

Obama advisers say there are currently no plans for the former president to endorse in the Democratic primary race, though he's met with most of the major candidates and is said to be following the primary campaign closely. Yet advisers have purposely left some wiggle room in that position, well aware that there could be a moment that demands the input of the nation's most popular Democrat, particularly if the primary appears to be headed toward a contentious conclusion.

For now, the former president appears content to stay on the sidelines and offer occasional counsel to the candidates he is closest to, including Patrick.

When Patrick called him this week to tell him he was making a late bid for the nomination, he got advice similar to what Obama has told other White House hopefuls: Make an affirmative case for yourself, show up and be present even in places you might lose, and stay focused on the urgency of defeating President Donald Trump.

Patrick, who made his first campaign appearance in New Hampshire on Thursday, said Obama had given him "great insights about his own experiences and about his experience with some of the other candidates and what he thought the strengths and weaknesses of the campaign, of my campaign, might be."

"He's been, I think, entirely appropriate in saying, Look, this is your decision, no one else's," Patrick said shortly after filing papers to get on the ballot in New Hampshire. "And I'm not encouraging you or discouraging you. Be clear-eyed about how heavy the lift is."

Obama and Patrick first connected in the 1990s, long before either was a national political figure. Both graduated from Harvard Law School and were shaped by their experiences on the South Side of Chicago, where Patrick grew up and Obama worked as a community organizer. Later, when Obama and his family vacationed during their summers in the White House at Martha's Vineyard, Patrick and his family made regular visits from Boston.

As barrier-breaking African Americans, Obama and Patrick have also drawn comparisons throughout

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their political careers. The day after Patrick won his first campaign for governor in 2006 — running on a “Together We Can” slogan — two of his top political consultants, Axelrod and David Plouffe, met with Obama to start charting his 2008 presidential campaign. That campaign’s motto: “Yes We Can.”

In addition to Axelrod and Plouffe, Obama confidante and White House senior adviser Valerie Jarrett is particularly close to Patrick and urged his campaign for president.

It’s unclear whether those connections will help Patrick, who is launching his campaign less than three months before voting begins. Many Obama staffers are already working for other candidates or have left the political arena. It’s also uncertain whether Patrick, who was the first black governor of Massachusetts, will be seen by African American voters as the heir to Obama’s legacy.

So far, it’s Biden who has had the strongest appeal with black voters, one of the most important constituencies in Democratic politics. And it’s Biden who has wrapped himself in Obama’s legacy, frequently reminding voters of the eight years he spent by the 44th president’s side. He’s also staked his candidacy in part on a robust defense of the landmark health care overhaul Obama signed into law.

Obama has stayed in touch with Biden throughout the campaign, and the two huddled privately last month at funeral services for U.S. Rep. Elijah Cummings of Maryland.

Biden also remains the only candidate whose entry into the race was greeted with a formal statement from Obama, who praised his former vice president but stopped short of endorsing his White House run.

Follow Julie Pace at <http://twitter.com/jpaceDC>

Israel says it has completed Gaza strikes after rocket fire

By **FARES AKRAM** and **JOSEPH KRAUSS** Associated Press

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israel said early Friday it has completed a series of airstrikes on targets linked to the Islamic Jihad militant group in Gaza after overnight rocket fire that rattled a day-old truce.

The Palestinian territory’s Hamas rulers, who kept to the sidelines of this week’s fighting, cancelled the weekly protests they organize along the perimeter fence without explanation — apparently in an effort to preserve the calm.

Israel reiterated that it was willing to abide by the cease-fire if there are no additional rocket attacks. The army said in a statement that it struck a military compound, a rocket-manufacturing site and a militant headquarters in the town of Khan Younis overnight.

The airstrikes came after a barrage of rockets late Thursday. There were no immediate reports of casualties on either side. The situation was calm on Friday.

The unofficial cease-fire that began early Thursday ended a two-day escalation triggered by Israel’s targeted killing of an Islamic Jihad commander. The fighting killed 34 Palestinians, including 16 civilians. Palestinian militants fired more than 450 rockets toward Israel, paralyzing much of southern Israel without causing any deaths or serious injuries.

An Israeli airstrike overnight Thursday struck a home in the central Gaza town of Deir al-Balah, killing eight people, including two women and five children under the age of 13. The airstrike apparently targeted the home of an Islamic Jihad commander who was not there at the time. Neighbors said the airstrike killed his brother, who was not involved in militant activity.

The military said Friday that it struck “Islamic Jihad military infrastructure” in Deir al-Balah and did not intend to harm civilians.

“According to the information available to the IDF at the time of the strike, no civilians were expected to be harmed as a result of the strike,” the Israeli Defense Forces said in a statement. It said an investigation is underway.

Hundreds of Palestinian civilians have been killed in previous rounds fighting in Gaza, drawing heavy international criticism, and the International Criminal Court in The Hague has opened a preliminary investigation into Israel’s battlefield tactics.

Israel rejects the criticism, saying it takes numerous precautions to prevent unnecessary civilian casualties.

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It also accuses Palestinian militants of using civilians as human shields and firing rockets from residential areas. It says militant commanders often have weapons or command centers inside their homes, making them legitimate targets.

Islamic Jihad announced the Egyptian-brokered cease-fire early Thursday, claiming it had extracted several concessions from Israel. Israel does not generally comment on informal understandings with militant groups and said only that it would halt fire as long as the militants did the same.

The truce angered many Islamic Jihad supporters, who held protests across Gaza. The barrage of rockets fired into Israel late Thursday, which Israel said were intercepted by its missile defenses, may have been an expression of discontent with the militant group's leadership.

Unlike in previous rounds of violence, the more powerful Hamas stayed on the sidelines, adhering to understandings reached through Egyptian mediators after previous rounds of fighting with Israel. Both militant groups are committed to Israel's destruction, but Islamic Jihad is seen as more radical and has closer ties to Iran.

Hamas has held weekly demonstrations along the frontier for more than a year to call for the lifting of an Israeli-Egyptian blockade imposed on Gaza when the group seized power from the internationally backed Palestinian Authority in 2007.

The protests often turn violent, with demonstrators hurling rocks and firebombs and Israeli forces responding with tear gas and live ammunition. Hamas has tamped down the protests in recent weeks, apparently as part of the understandings with Egypt.

In return, Israel has loosened the blockade and allowed Qatar to deliver millions of dollars in cash so that Hamas can pay its civil servants.

Hamas and Israel have fought three wars, the most recent in 2014, and have exchanged fire on a number of occasions since then. In the latest fighting, Israel refrained from targeting Hamas, which does not appear to have fired any rockets, a sign that both want to maintain the calm.

Krauss reported from Jerusalem.

AP Interview: Evo Morales wants UN mediation in Bolivia

By E. EDUARDO CASTILLO Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Bolivia's Evo Morales called for the United Nations, and possibly Pope Francis, to mediate in the Andean nation's political crisis following his ouster as president in what he called a coup d'état that forced him into exile in Mexico.

In an interview with The Associated Press Thursday in Mexico City, Morales said he is in fact still the president of Bolivia since the country's Legislative Assembly has not yet accepted his resignation, which he presented Sunday at the urging of military leaders following weeks of protests against a re-election that his opponents called fraudulent.

"The assembly has to reject or approve the resignation" which it has not done, said the man who ruled Bolivia for almost 14 years as its first indigenous president. "If they don't approve or reject it I can say that I am still president."

Morales said he would return to Bolivia from Mexico, which has granted him political asylum, if that would contribute to his country's pacification.

Political analyst Kathryn Ledebur of the nonprofit Andean Information Network in Bolivia, who has lived in the country for nearly 30 years, said Morales could have a case.

"A resignation letter has to be presented and considered, and accepted in the plenary before it goes into effect," she said. "Do I think that Evo wants to return and be president - I don't see that. But does he want to mess with them? Yes. He wants to keep them guessing."

Two days after arriving in Mexico, Morales told the AP he has received information that some Bolivian army troops are planning to "rebel" against the officers who urged him to resign. But he gave no further specifics on how many were in on the plan, or how they would rebel.

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Morales said he was "surprised by the betrayal of the commander in chief of the armed forces," Williams Kaliman.

He called for calm and dialogue in Bolivia. "I want to tell them (his supporters) that we will have to recover democracy, but with a lot of patience and peaceful struggle."

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said Thursday he is sending Jean Arnault, a personal envoy, to Bolivia to support efforts to find a peaceful solution to the nation's crisis.

"I have a lot of confidence in the U.N.," Morales said. But he noted he wants the world body "to be a mediator, not just a facilitator, perhaps accompanied by the Catholic church and if Pope Francis is needed, we should add him."

He said the United States was the "great conspirator" behind the "coup d'état" that forced him from Bolivia. Morales has long had a tense relationship with Washington and in 2008 expelled U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration officials from Bolivia.

Bolivia's interim leader Jeanine Añez has been recognized by some countries, but faces an uphill battle in organizing new elections.

According to the constitution, an interim president has 90 days to organize an election. The disputed accession of Añez, who until Tuesday was second vice president of the Senate, was an example of the long list of obstacles she faces. Morales' backers, who hold a two-thirds majority in Congress, boycotted the session she called Tuesday night to formalize her claim to the presidency, preventing a quorum.

Late Thursday, legislators with Morales' Movement Toward Socialism party, or MAS, and Añez were working on an agreement for new elections that would help resolve the crisis. The deal would make Eva Copa Murga Senate president with the backing of legislators from Añez's Democratic Unity party.

"It's a historic agreement to pacify the country," Copa Murga said. But other legislators said a deal had not yet been reached.

Meanwhile Thursday, Morales' backers demonstrated for his return from asylum in Mexico.

They had come overnight from Chapare, a coca-growing region where Morales became a prominent union leader before he became president. Soldiers blocked them from reaching the nearby city of Cochabamba, where Morales' supporters and foes have clashed for weeks.

Morales' resignation followed nationwide protests over suspected vote-rigging in an Oct. 20 election in which he claimed to have won a fourth term in office. An Organization of American States audit of the vote found widespread irregularities. Morales denies there was fraud.

Much of the opposition to Morales sprang from his refusal to accept a referendum that would have forbidden him from running for a new term.

In the wake of Morales' resignation, it was unclear whether Bolivian election officials would have to formally bar him from running in a new election.

Añez, who claimed the interim presidency, was moving to establish authority in the turbulent country. She announced that Morales could not participate in elections again but his MAS party could.

Morales upended politics in this nation long ruled by light-skinned descendants of Europeans by reversing deep-rooted inequality. The economy benefited from a boom in prices of commodities and he ushered through a new constitution that created a new Congress with seats reserved for Bolivia's smaller indigenous groups while also allowing self-rule for all indigenous communities.

Although some supporters became disenchanted by his insistence on holding on to power, Morales remains popular, especially among other members of his native Aymara ethnic group.

AP journalist Luis Andres Henao in Cochabamba, Bolivia contributed to this report.

LA suburb mourns student victims after school shooting

By STEFANIE DAZIO and CHRIS WEBER Associated Press

SANTA CLARITA, Calif. (AP) — A boy described as bright, quiet and "normal" pulled a gun from his backpack on his 16th birthday and opened fire at his high school before saving the last bullet for himself,

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authorities said.

The shooting that killed two teenagers and wounded three others Thursday at Saugus High School in a Los Angeles suburb took just 16 seconds and left the attacker hospitalized in critical condition with a head wound, authorities said.

Investigators searched the boy's home as they sought a motive for the attack, which seemed to target students at random, Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Captain Kent Wegener said.

Someone posted a message under a pseudonym on an Instagram account that was reported as possibly belonging to the boy, authorities said. The message said: "Saugus, have fun at school tomorrow."

"However, the account has yet to be authenticated," a Sheriff's Department statement said.

It wasn't clear when the message was posted or by whom, Wegener said. It was deleted after the shootings, either by a hacker or someone who had access to the account, he added.

Authorities said the teenager apparently acted alone. There was no indication that he was affiliated with a group or ideology, said Paul Delacourt, the agent in charge of the FBI's Los Angeles field office.

Gunfire erupted at about 7:30 a.m. as students were "milling around" and greeting each other in an outdoor quad area, Wegener said. Surveillance video showed the shooter standing still while "everyone is active around him."

"He just fires from where he is. He doesn't chase anybody. He doesn't move," Wegener said.

The suspect appeared to fire at whoever was in front of him. He had no known connection to those he shot, Wegener said.

Video showed the last thing the assailant did was shoot himself with the final bullet in the .45-caliber handgun, Wegener said. The weapon was empty when it was recovered.

A 16-year-old girl and a 14-year-old boy died.

Two girls, ages 14 and 15, were each in good condition after being treated for gunshot wounds at a hospital.

A 14-year-old boy was treated and released from another hospital, authorities said.

Shauna Orandi, 16, was in her Spanish class when she heard four gunshots and a student burst into the room saying he'd seen the shooter.

"My worst nightmare actually came true," she said. "This is it. I'm gonna die."

She was later escorted from the school and reunited with her father in a nearby park.

At a Thursday evening vigil, Lea Reas said her nephew, a 14-year-old freshman, saw his friend shot to death before he ran from the gunfire and was pulled into a room by a teacher.

"At first he thought it was a graze" but later was told his friend had died, she said.

"He lost it," she said.

Reas also said her 15-year-old cousin was walking onto the campus when she heard the gunshots that she said sounded "like a balloon" popping and saw the gunman.

She and her friends ran to a house across the street for safety, Reas said.

"It's something no kid should deal with," she said.

A sheriff's detective and two off-duty police officers from Los Angeles and Inglewood who had dropped off children at the school ran to the shooting within moments and provided first aid, Los Angeles County Sheriff Alex Villanueva said.

Police have not publicly identified the suspect because he's a minor. The Associated Press determined his identity based on property records for his home and interviews with three of his friends.

The boy lived with his mother in a modest home on a leafy street in Santa Clarita, a Los Angeles suburb of about 210,000 people known for good schools, safe streets and relatively affordable housing.

He was a smart, quiet boy who played chess and had been active in a local Boy Scout troop, acquaintances said.

He seemed like "one of those normal kids," according to a student in his physics class.

One girl who knew him for years said he wasn't bullied and had a girlfriend.

The teen's father died two years ago. An online obituary said he loved big-game hunting. In 2015, the

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father had been arrested amid a domestic dispute with the boy's mother but no charges were filed.

The Sheriff's Department hadn't been called to the home recently and there was no indication of "turmoil" there, Wegener said.

Saugus High has no metal detectors but it has a dozen security cameras and a fence with a limited number of gates.

Security is provided by one unarmed sheriff's deputy and nine "campus supervisors" who act as guards, said Collyn Nielson, chief administrative officer for the William S. Hart Union High School District, which cancelled classes for Friday.

All district schools hold lockdown drills three times a year, including two in the fall that have already occurred, Nielson said.

"In speaking with staff and hearing reports, students reported they knew what to do and immediately went into lockdown mode," he said.

Venice flooded again 3 days after near-record high tide

VENICE, Italy (AP) — Exceptionally high tidal waters returned to Venice on Friday, prompting the mayor to close the iconic St. Mark's Square and call for donations to repair the Italian lagoon city just three days after it experienced its worst flooding in 50 years.

The high tide peaked at 1.54 meters (5 feet) above sea level just before noon on Friday, flooding most of the historic center.

Mayor Luigi Brugnaro told reporters he was forced to ask police to block off St. Mark's Square, which was covered in knee-high water. Even as the water started to subside, workers in high boots began removing the platforms used by the public to cross the square without getting wet.

The city saw the second-worst flooding on record late Tuesday when the water level reached 1.87 meters (6 feet, 1 inch) above sea level, prompting the Italian government to declare a state of emergency.

On Thursday, the government also approved 20 million euros in funding to help Venice repair the most urgent damage.

Venice's mayor said the damage is estimated at hundreds of millions of euros and blamed climate change for the "dramatic situation" in the historic city. He called for the speedy completion of the city's long-delayed Moses flood defense project.

He also called for donations from Italy and abroad to help repair the damage caused by the flooding.

"Venice is the pride of all of Italy," Brugnaro said in a statement Friday. "Venice is everyone's heritage, unique in the world. Thanks to your help, Venice will shine again."

The leader of the right-wing opposition League party, Matteo Salvini, visited Venice on Friday morning and also called for a common effort to complete the Moses project, which the Italian government now expects to be completed by 2021.

"We can't waste time, this city is crying for help," Salvini said, adding that similar incidents must be avoided.

Tuesday's devastating floods have reignited a yearslong debate on Moses, a multibillion-euro flood defense project that has been under construction since 2003. The project has not yet been activated, after being delayed a number of times due to corruption scandals, costs overruns and environmentalist opposition over its effects on Venice's lagoon ecosystem.

Rosalía marks historic night for women at Latin Grammys

By MESFIN FEKADU AP Music Writer

Spanish singer Rosalía, the breakthrough performer known for blending flamenco music with sounds like reggaeton and Latin trap, won album of the year at the 2019 Latin Grammys, becoming the first solo female performer to win the top honor since Shakira's triumph 13 years ago.

Rosalía won three awards Thursday, tying top nominee Alejandro Sanz and besting the veteran singer-songwriter in categories like album of the year and best contemporary pop vocal album with her project,

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"El Mal Querer."

"Thanks to the academy for giving me one of my first opportunities a few years ago. I want to share that, as a musician, nothing gives more pride than winning a Grammy. It is the biggest thing that can happen, so thank you very much," Rosalía said in Spanish at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas.

"Especially to my fans, I love you with all my heart. Thanks for embracing my music."

Shakira's "Fijación Oral Vol. 1" won album of the year at the Latin Grammys in 2006. The only other female performers to win album of the year honors were parts of groups, including the female members of Juan Luis Guerra 4.40 and Ileana Cabra Joglar (iLe), who won the top prize as a member of the alternative hip-hop band Calle 13 alongside Residente and Visitante.

Sanz walked into Thursday's show as the most-nominated act with eight, eventually taking home record of the year and best pop song for "Mi Persona Favorita," shared with pop singer Camila Cabello. He helped the former Fifth Harmony member, who didn't attend the show, win her first pair of Latin Grammys before she's even won a Grammy Award.

"Eight years ago more or less, my mother left us and today precisely is her birthday, so this is a gift for her," said Sanz, who also won best long form music video.

Rosalía's third win was for best urban song for "Con Altura," her collaboration with J Balvin, who skipped the Latin Grammys this year and was part of the group of uber-popular Latin trap and reggaeton artists who were dissed in top categories like album, song and record of the year. Instead, they were restricted to nominations in the urban categories.

During the live show, Bad Bunny — also a part of the overlooked group of performers alongside Daddy Yankee, Maluma and Nicky Jam — praised the reggaeton genre as one of the key sounds of Latin music.

"To all the musicians, to all the people that belong to the academy, with all due respect, reggaeton is part of the Latin culture and is representing the same way as other genres," Bad Bunny said in Spanish after winning best urban music album for his debut album, "X 100Pre."

"Anyway, I tell my colleagues let's work hard, let's keep bringing creativity and community," he continued.

Like Bad Bunny, Daddy Yankee earned a nomination in one of the urban categories: best urban fusion/performance. But his song lost to "Calma (Remix)" by Pedro Capó, who celebrated his 39th birthday at the show. The original version of "Calma" won Capó one of the show's biggest awards — song of the year. Capó joined Alicia Keys — who is featured on another version of "Calma" — onstage to sing the song alongside Farruko and Miguel.

One of the night's best performances was Vicente Fernández, who retired from performing in 2016. The audience stood on its feet as the iconic performer passionately sang onstage. He performed alongside his son Alejandro Fernández and grandson Alex Fernández. Both Vicente and Alex were nominated for best ranchero/mariachi album, but lost to Christian Nodal.

After performing a medley of his hits, Juanes was shocked to see Metallica's Lars Ulrich, who was there to present the Colombian musician with the Latin Recording Academy's 2019 Person of the Year award.

"I proclaim myself a Juanes fan," Ulrich yelled, also calling Juanes "my brother in rock."

"You guys changed my life," Juanes said of Metallica. "Thank you so much."

The Latin Grammys kicked off its 20th anniversary show with a festive performance highlighting various sounds from the genre as 20 artists united onstage to honor Latin music. Prince Royce, Anitta, Fito Páez, Reik, Natalia Jiménez, Beto Cuevas and Calibre 50 were among the acts who performed popular songs from Latin greats like Celia Cruz, Juan Gabriel, Joan Sebastian and Soda Stereo.

Ricky Martin, who hosted the show with Roselyn Sánchez and Paz Vega, helped close the performance by singing a few notes.

Other performers included Luis Fonsi, Ozuna and Residente, who extended his record as the most decorated artist in the history of the Latin Grammys to 25 wins. He won best short form music video for "Banana Papaya."

Rosalía, who is predicted to earn a nomination when the Grammys announce its 2020 nominees next week, also saw "El Mal Querer" win best engineered album and best recording package — honors not awarded to her, but to the engineers, mixers and art directors who worked on the project.

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Several acts won two awards each Thursday, including Juan Luis Guerra, Tony Succar, Andrés Calamaro, Kany García, Capó and Nodal.

Associated Press Writers Sigal Ratner-Arias and Berenice Bautista contributed to this report.

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. OUSTED AMBASSADOR TO TESTIFY IN IMPEACHMENT PROBE

Marie Yovanovitch is expected to relay her striking story of being suddenly recalled by Donald Trump and told to "watch my back," events that sounded alarms about the White House's shadow foreign policy in Ukraine.

2. 'MY WORST NIGHTMARE ACTUALLY CAME TRUE'

A boy described as bright, quiet and "normal" pulled a gun from his backpack on his 16th birthday and opened fire at his suburban Los Angeles high school, killing two classmates and wounding three others.

3. ISRAEL SAYS IT HAS COMPLETED GAZA STRIKES

The military statement indicates that Israel is willing to abide by the cease-fire with the Islamic Jihad militant group if there are no additional rocket attacks.

4. BOLIVIAN INTERIM LEADER SAYS MORALES CAN'T RUN

The Andean nation is headed into uncharted territory with lawmakers trying to reach a deal for new elections, protests raging in parts of the country and rival claims to the presidency.

5. A LONG FRIENDSHIP AND POLITICAL BOND

Barack Obama and Deval Patrick were friends well before the White House years and have bonded over personal experiences and a strikingly similar approach to politics.

6. VENICE DELUGED BY HISTORIC FLOODING

Waters are on the rise again in the Italian lagoon city, where the tide is reaching exceptional levels just three days after it experienced its worst flooding in more than 50 years.

7. WHAT QANTAS HOPED TO ACHIEVE WITH LONG FLIGHT

Australia's national carrier completes a 19 ½-hour, nonstop flight from London to Sydney, which was used to assess the effects of ultralong-haul flights on crew fatigue and passenger jetlag.

8. EGYPTIAN FIGHTS UNEQUAL ISLAMIC INHERITANCE LAWS

Huda Nasrallah, a Christian, is making her case on religious grounds because she believes Egyptian courts are more likely to respect existing structures within the society.

9. 'BAD BLOOD': TAYLOR SWIFT, MUSIC MOGULS IN STANDOFF

The Grammy winning singer says that she may not perform at the American Music Awards because the men who own her old recordings won't allow her to play her songs.

10. BROWNS WIN MARRED BY ON-FIELD MELEE

Cleveland's Myles Garrett is facing an unprecedented suspension by the NFL after he ripped off Pittsburgh quarterback Mason Rudolph's helmet and clubbed him on the head in the final seconds of the Browns' 21-7 win.

Trump says impeachment probe has been 'very hard' on family

By ZEKE MILLER and MELINDA DESLATTE Associated Press

BOSSIER CITY, La. (AP) — President Donald Trump said the impeachment probe has been "very hard" on his family, even as he tried to flex his political muscle to flip the governor's mansion in deep-red Louisiana.

Speaking in friendly territory in a state he carried in 2016 by 20 percentage points, Trump lashed out Thursday at Democratic investigators and what he called a "deranged impeachment witch hunt." While arguing it was a political boon for his reelection, he acknowledged for the first time a personal toll from

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the impeachment process that stands to cloud his legacy.

"I have one problem," Trump said. "Impeachment to me is a dirty word, it's been very unfair, very hard on my family."

The House began public impeachment hearings Wednesday.

Trump repeated his denials of wrongdoing in his dealings with Ukraine, asserting he had no need to ask that nation to investigate former Vice President Joe Biden and his family.

"We took down Bush, Clinton, Obama, with no experience, but I had you and we won," Trump said of his 2016 victory. "Think about that and then think about me — 'Gee, let's get some help from Ukraine in order to beat sleepy Joe Biden.' I don't think so."

He added, "The people of this country aren't buying it," claiming polls show a benefit to Republicans as Democrats focus on impeachment.

"We did nothing wrong," Trump insisted, "and they're doing nothing."

Even in reliably Republican Louisiana, the gubernatorial contest has reached its final days ahead of Saturday's election as a tossup. Democrat John Bel Edwards is vying for a second term against little-known Republican political donor Eddie Rispone.

"If you want to defend your values, your jobs, and your freedom, then you need to replace radical John Bel Edwards with a true Louisiana patriot, Eddie Rispone," Trump said at the rally in north Louisiana's Bossier City.

The Shreveport area is prime territory to reach out to backers of Republican U.S. Rep. Ralph Abraham, the gubernatorial primary's third-place finisher. Both Edwards and Rispone are targeting Abraham's voters, knowing those 317,000 people can help decide the race's outcome. Abraham endorsed Rispone and appeared at the rally with Trump.

Louisiana has the last of three Southern governor's races this year, all targets of intense interest from the GOP and Trump. While Republicans kept the seat in Mississippi, they lost Kentucky's governorship, with Republican incumbent Matt Bevin conceding the race Thursday.

Smarting from the Kentucky outcome, Trump has turned his focus to Louisiana and defeating Edwards, the Deep South's only Democratic governor. Thursday's event was the president's third in the state's gubernatorial competition.

Arguing for Edwards' removal, Trump told the crowd that while the nation is doing great economically, Louisiana isn't. He said it's at the bottom for economic development while at the top for murders, adding, "You're doing lousy compared to others."

Rispone, owner of an industrial contracting firm, spent millions on the race, hitched his candidacy to Trump and hammered a pro-Trump theme ever since.

"What Trump has done for our country has been phenomenal. ... The economy is booming in the United States, but it's not booming in Louisiana. We're falling behind," Rispone said at an event in Baton Rouge. "We want to do for Louisiana what Trump has done for the nation."

Edwards suggested Rispone has turned repeatedly to Trump because he can't stand on the strength of state-specific issues. Rispone has dodged details of how he'd balance the budget with his proposed tax cuts and what he wants to accomplish in a constitutional convention.

Rispone is "trying to nationalize this race because that's the only shot he has," Edwards said Thursday at a campaign rally in Shreveport.

Race watchers say Trump's influence can only stretch so far.

"I don't think Trump's bringing more to the table than has already been brought into the campaign," said Michael Henderson, director of Louisiana State University's Public Policy Research Center.

Edwards supporters say Trump's visits are actually boosting their own chances, helping to turn out black voters and other Democrats who skipped the primary.

Melissa Toler, a 65-year-old retiree who voted early in New Orleans, chose Edwards "because he's the best candidate, the most qualified, and the most reasonable." She said Trump's visits to Louisiana stirred up interest.

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"I'm a registered independent and he whips me up, not in a good way," Toler said.

In New Orleans and other cities with high concentrations of African American voters, a wave of ads says Rispone's tight ties with Trump are a reason to vote for Edwards. And while Edwards sidesteps direct criticism of the president, the Louisiana Democratic Party posted ads on Facebook declaring, "If Rispone wins, Trump wins" and asking voters to "keep hate out of Louisiana" by supporting Edwards.

The anti-Trump messaging by outside groups and Edwards' own grassroots outreach effort to black voters appear to be having an effect. African American turnout during the early voting period jumped significantly above primary levels, a critical piece of Edwards' strategy to win a second term.

Associated Press writers Kevin Freking and Jill Colvin contributed to this report from Washington.

Follow Miller on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/ZekeJMiller> and Deslatte at <http://twitter.com/melindadeslatte>

Browns star Garrett facing NFL discipline after outburst

By TOM WITHERS AP Sports Writer

CLEVELAND (AP) — Myles Garrett swung a helmet. The NFL will soon swing back at the Cleveland Browns star.

Garrett could be facing an unprecedented league suspension for his violent outburst Thursday night, when he ripped off Pittsburgh quarterback Mason Rudolph's helmet and clubbed him on the head during the final seconds of Cleveland's 21-7 win.

Garrett's shocking actions on national TV will come with a price. It's possible the league could come down hard on the former No. 1 overall pick, who made strides in cleaning up his game after picking up some personal fouls earlier this season.

Following the game, Garrett was contrite, but the damage was already done.

"What I did was foolish, and I shouldn't have allowed myself to slip like that," Garrett said softly. "It's out of character."

It's now out of his hands, and it's possible the league could end Garrett's season by docking him the final six games.

In 2006, Tennessee's Albert Haynesworth was suspended five games after he stomped on Dallas Cowboys center Andre Gurode's head. Haynesworth's punishment is the longest for on-field behavior in league history.

After pulling Rudolph down with eight seconds to go following a short pass, Garrett wrestled with Pittsburgh's QB on the ground with both players grabbing at each other's heads. When they got to their feet, Garrett ripped off Rudolph's helmet and swung wildly, hitting the second-year QB on top of the head.

Garrett was thrown to the ground by Steelers guard David DeCastro and center Maurkice Pouncey threw punches and kicked Garrett in the head as players from both sidelines poured onto the field in a scene that goes to the top of the list of skirmishes in the bitter Pittsburgh-Cleveland rivalry.

The Steelers were livid about Garrett's conduct.

"I don't know how he got to the point that it's OK to use a helmet as a weapon," said Steelers defensive tackle Cameron Heyward. "I know we play a sport that's violent, but it should never have gotten handled like that. That dumb stuff shouldn't be allowed. For someone to use a helmet as a weapon is uncalled for."

Garrett, Pouncey and Browns defensive tackle Larry Ogunjobi were ejected and all face league discipline.

Browns coach Freddie Kitchens said Garrett apologized to him and the defensive end said he intends to talk to his teammates.

"The next time I see them, I'll address them," he said. "I am hurting my whole team with what I did, and it could come back to bite us. I don't know what kind of repercussion I face, but I have to be better."

The Browns will visit the Steelers on Nov. 14.

Kitchens was disappointed with Garret for losing his cool and overshadowing a huge win for the Browns,

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who have won two straight games to salvage a season that was starting to slip away.

"You have to be able to maintain your composure in times like that and under no circumstances do we want anything to do with anything like that," Kitchens said. "I am embarrassed. Myles is embarrassed. It is not good. He understands what he did, he understands it is totally unacceptable, and we have to get through it."

The Browns have been among the league's most penalized teams, and their lack of discipline has been a poor reflection on Kitchens in his first year as coach.

Cleveland committed eight penalties for 121 yards against the Steelers, and Browns defensive backs delivered two helmet-to-helmet blows that gave concussions to Steelers wide receivers.

The second such shot was by Browns safety Damarious Randall, who lowered his head and delivered a nasty hit on Steelers rookie Diontae Johnson, who suffered a concussion and had blood coming from one ear.

Kitchens took issue with the idea his team is reckless, and said he was disappointed for his other players. "We have five seconds to go in a game. That cannot happen," he said. "We have five seconds to go in a game — the biggest game that this team has won. Never beat Baltimore and Pittsburgh in the same year since 1999, and then we have to talk about this. There are 52 other guys on the team that that hurt, and it is going to hurt moving forward. We do not condone that. Myles understands what he did wrong."

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

Esper defends as fair Pentagon contract disputed by Amazon

By **ROBERT BURNS** Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper said Friday he was certain that the awarding of a \$10 billion cloud-computing contract to Microsoft instead of Amazon was done fairly.

The Pentagon awarded the contract to Microsoft in late October, and Amazon said there was "unmistakable bias" on the government's part and it intended to challenge the decision in court.

Esper recused himself from the contract decision because his son had worked for one of the other unsuccessful bidders.

"I am confident that it was conducted freely and fairly without any type of outside influence," Esper said at a news conference in Seoul, South Korea.

Amazon's competitive bid for the "war cloud" project drew criticism from President Donald Trump and its business rivals. The project, formally called the Joint Enterprise Defense Infrastructure, or JEDI, pitted leading tech titans Microsoft, Amazon, Oracle and IBM against one another.

In a statement Thursday, Amazon said "numerous aspects" of the bidding process involved "clear deficiencies, errors, and unmistakable bias." It did not elaborate on those allegations but said "it's important that these matters be examined and rectified."

Microsoft did not respond to a request for comment. A Defense Department spokeswoman would only say that the Pentagon won't speculate on potential litigation.

JEDI will store and process vast amounts of classified data, allowing the U.S. military to use artificial intelligence to speed up its war planning and fighting capabilities.

Amazon was long thought to be the front-runner for the contract. Its Amazon Web Services division is far ahead of second-place Microsoft in cloud computing, and Amazon has experience handling highly classified government data.

It survived earlier legal challenges after the Defense Department eliminated Oracle and IBM and whittled the competition to the two Seattle-area tech giants before choosing Microsoft in late October.

The Pentagon was preparing to make its final decision when Trump publicly waded into the fray in July, saying he had heard complaints about the process and that the administration would "take a very long look." He said other companies told him that the contract "wasn't competitively bid." Oracle, in particular, had unsuccessfully argued Pentagon officials unfairly favored Amazon for the winner-take-all contract.

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Experts had generally expected Amazon to appeal the award, saying it had little to lose. Steven Schooner, a professor of government procurement law at George Washington University, said Trump's comments were "inappropriate and improvident," but said it would be a challenge for Amazon to prove the White House applied undue pressure in a way that made a difference.

Amazon said it filed its protest in the U.S. Court of Federal Claims, which deals with financial claims against the federal government.

It's not uncommon for losing bidders to file a protest, either with the U.S. Government Accountability Office or in court. Unlike a review by the GAO, Amazon's court filing will enable it to seek documents from the government as evidence for its case.

Australia's Qantas operates 19 1/2-hour London-Sydney flight

By TRISTAN LAVALETTE Associated Press

PERTH, Australia (AP) — Australia's national carrier Qantas on Friday successfully completed a 19 1/2-hour, nonstop flight from London to Sydney, which was used to run a series of tests to assess the effects of ultralong-haul flights on crew fatigue and passenger jetlag.

The Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner took off from London's Heathrow Airport on Thursday morning and touched down at Sydney Airport 45 minutes behind schedule at 12:30 p.m. Friday.

The 17,800-kilometer (11,060-mile) journey was part of Project Sunrise — Qantas' goal to operate regular, nonstop commercial flights from Australia's east coast cities of Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne to London and New York.

Last month, Qantas completed the first nonstop flight from New York to Sydney, which took 19 hours and 16 minutes.

Another New York to Sydney flight is expected next month to round out the project.

There were 52 people — mostly Qantas employees — on board. They participated in various experiments, including using wearable technology devices to track sleep patterns, food and drink intake, lighting and physical movement.

A final decision on whether the ultralong-haul flights will become a commercial reality is expected by the year's end, with the service potentially launching by 2022.

It was the second time a commercial airline has flown the route. The first was in 1989, with a journey time of 20 hours and 9 minutes.

Ahead of the flight, Qantas chief executive Alan Joyce said the airline wants to improve comfort on long-haul flights.

"We know that travelers want room to move on these direct flights, and the exercises we encouraged on the first research flight seemed to work really well," he said.

"So, we're definitely looking to incorporate on-board stretching zones and even some simple modifications like overhead handles to encourage low impact exercises," he added.

Joyce and Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison welcomed the arrival of crew and passengers as the airline celebrates its centenary year.

Egyptian woman fights unequal Islamic inheritance laws

By NOHA ELHENAWY Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — One Egyptian woman is taking on the country's inheritance laws that mean female heirs inherit half that of men.

Since her father's death last year, Huda Nasrallah, a Christian, has stood before three different judges to demand an equal share of the property left to her two brothers by their father. Yet courts have twice issued rulings against her, basing them on Islamic inheritance laws that favor male heirs.

Nasrallah, a 40-year-old Christian human rights lawyer, is now challenging the rulings in a higher court. A final verdict is expected to be handed down later this month. She has formulated her case around Christian doctrine which dictates that heirs, regardless of their sex, receive equal shares.

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"It is not really about inheritance, my father did not leave us millions of Egyptian pounds," she said. "I have the right to ask to be treated equally as my brothers."

Calls for equal inheritance rights began to reverberate across the Arab world after the Tunisian government had proposed a bill to this effect last year. Muslim feminists hailed the bill.

But there has been a backlash from elsewhere in the Arab world. Egypt's Al-Azhar, the highest Sunni religious institution in the Muslim world, vehemently dismissed the proposal as contradictory to Islamic law and destabilizing to Muslim societies. But there is hope that Tunisia could have broken the taboo on the topic for the region.

Nasrallah belongs to Egypt's estimated ten million Coptic Christians, who live in a predominantly Muslim society governed by a constitution in which Islamic Shariah is the main source of legislation. Christians face restrictions in inter-religious marriages and church building, and are banned from proselytizing to Muslims.

Egypt's legal system grants the Coptic church full authority over personal status matters of Copts, namely marriage and divorce. But the church does not have the same powers over its followers' inheritance rights.

One of the oldest Christian communities in the world, the Egyptian Coptic church is also deeply conservative on social matters, banning divorce except in cases of adultery or conversion to Islam.

Nasrallah says she is making her case on religious grounds because she believes the court is more likely to respect existing structures within the society. She says she is trying to capitalize on a rare Christian doctrine that respects gender equality.

Karima Kamal, a Coptic female columnist at the privately-owned al-Masry al-Youm daily, says that Nasrallah's case highlights the double discrimination that Coptic women can face in a society where religion is printed on government-issued identification cards.

"You should not implement the rules of one faith on people of another faith," she says.

In early December 2018, Nasrallah's father, a former state clerk, died, leaving behind a four-story apartment building in a Cairo low-income neighborhood and a bank deposit. When she and her brothers filed their request for inheritance at a local court, Nasrallah invoked a church-sanctioned Coptic bylaw that calls for equal distribution of inheritance. She says she was encouraged by a 2016 ruling that a Cairo court handed down in favor of a Coptic woman who challenged Islamic inheritance laws.

Nasrallah's brothers also testified that they would like their father's inheritance to be divided fairly between them, but the court has twice ignored their testimony.

Many Coptic men prefer to benefit from the Islamic laws, Nasrallah said, using the excuse that it's out of their hands.

"The issue of inheritance goes beyond religious rules. It has to do with the nature of the society we are living in and Egypt's misogynistic judicial system," said Hind Ahmed Zaki, a political science assistant professor with Connecticut University.

She says the state fears that if they grant equal property rights to Christian women, Muslim women will soon ask for the same.

Girgis Bebawy, a Coptic lawyer, has represented dozens of Copts in similar cases over the last two years, though he has yet to win a single one. He's hoping that the latest case, which is currently before Egypt's Supreme Constitutional Court, could end differently.

"It's religious intolerance," he says.

Many Coptic families decide to settle inheritance matters outside the legal system, but Nasrallah says that as a lawyer, she hopes her case could set a precedent for others.

"If I didn't take it to court, who would?" she said.

Garrett loses cool, hits Steelers QB with helmet in brawl

By TOM WITHERS AP Sports Writer

CLEVELAND (AP) — The Browns were seconds away from a season-changing win when Myles Garrett lost his composure in a moment of rage rarely seen on an NFL field.

Garrett tore off Pittsburgh quarterback Mason Rudolph's helmet, wildly swung it and hit the QB in the

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head, a shocking act that will likely result in a lengthy suspension for Cleveland's star defensive end and perhaps cost the Browns any chance of making the playoffs.

Garrett's outburst came with 8 seconds left in Cleveland's 21-7 win over the rival Steelers on Thursday night, a game that will not be remembered for anything that happened in the first 59 minutes.

Garrett faces a stiff NFL suspension and Steelers center Maurkice Pouncey will likely be disciplined for kicking Garrett in the head.

"I lost my cool and I regret it," Garrett said. "It's going to come back to hurt our team. The guys who jumped into the scrum, I appreciate my team having my back, but it never should have gotten to that point.

"It's on me."

Players from both sidelines spilled on the field during the melee, which began after Garrett wrestled Rudolph to the ground well after he completed a short pass on a meaningless play. Garrett, Pouncey and Browns defensive tackle Larry Ogunjobi were ejected.

Rudolph got his hand on Garrett's helmet first as the players grappled on the ground, but Garrett escalated the brawl after he got back on his feet. He yanked the helmet off Rudolph and slammed it into the top of the quarterback's head.

Rudolph threw his arms in the air in disbelief after the impact, and Pouncey retaliated by punching and kicking Garrett.

"I thought it was pretty cowardly and bush league," Rudolph said. "I'm not going to back down from any bully. I felt like I had a bone to pick with him. I appreciate the line always having my back, but I was angry."

Browns quarterback Baker Mayfield called Garrett's actions "inexcusable" and Fox commentator Troy Aikman said they were "barbaric."

Mayfield said he didn't speak with Garrett, but he expects his teammate to be accountable.

"This is a physical, violent game and there's moments if you don't keep your cool, bad things can happen and he knows that. It's inexcusable and he knows that," Mayfield said. "There's no other way around it, he's going to own up to it and he's going to handle it and this locker room is going to have to come together because this is going to be a soap opera on the outside much like the media has portrayed us to be for the whole season."

The incident overshadowed a win that put Cleveland back in the playoff picture and breathed some life into a season that had been slipping away.

"It feels like we lost," Mayfield said.

Browns receiver Odell Beckham Jr. was shown replays of the brawl on the NFL Network set.

"It's ugly," Beckham said. "It's not something we want in the NFL."

Rudolph, a second-year player who took over for the injured Ben Roethlisberger in Week 2, has already missed time this season with a concussion after he was knocked unconscious from a helmet-to-helmet hit by Baltimore Ravens safety Earl Thomas.

Steelers coach Mike Tomlin refused to discuss the disturbing end-game situation.

Several Pittsburgh players were eager to give their views on what happened.

"I don't know how he got to the point that it's OK to use a helmet as a weapon," said Steelers defensive tackle Cameron Heyward. "I know we play a sport that's violent, but it should never have gotten handled like that. That dumb stuff shouldn't be allowed.

"For someone to use a helmet as a weapon is uncalled for. I know you've got to ask me the question, but he's got to answer for that."

Before the ugly ending, Mayfield threw two touchdown passes and scored on a 1-yard plunge as Cleveland held on to defeat the banged-up Steelers for just the fourth time in 10 years and improved to 2-0 in the AFC North for the first time.

The Browns (4-6) have won two in a row after dropping four straight, a skid that put coach Freddie Kitchens' job in jeopardy.

But Mayfield's 8-yard TD pass to undrafted rookie tight end Stephen Carlson with 5:25 left helped clinch a rare win over the rival Steelers. And a softer upcoming schedule has eased the pressure on Kitchens and given the Browns some hope they can end the NFL's longest playoff drought.

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The loss was especially damaging to the Steelers (5-5).

Pittsburgh lost its top two playmakers as running back James Conner (shoulder) and wide receiver JuJu Smith-Schuster (concussion) suffered injuries in the second quarter and didn't return.

Without them, Rudolph didn't have enough help and threw four interceptions.

In the third quarter, Steelers rookie wide receiver Diontae Johnson got concussed from a vicious hit by Browns safety Damarious Randall, who was ejected.

Browns running back Nick Chubb had 92 yards and went over 1,000 this season.

Despite the injuries, the Steelers were within 14-7 entering the fourth quarter after Rudolph connected with Jaylen Samuels for a 3-yard touchdown pass.

CALLAWAY RELEASED

The Browns have been wrapped up in drama all season, and that was the case again Thursday as the team released wide receiver Antonio Callaway just hours before kickoff.

Callaway, who served a four-game suspension for violating the NFL's substance-abuse policy earlier this season, was benched by Kitchens for arriving late to Sunday's game against Buffalo.

KAEPERNICK WORKOUT

The Browns are one of 11 teams committed to attending former quarterback Colin Kaepernick's workout in Atlanta this weekend.

Owner Dee Haslam said didn't know who from the team would be at the workout to evaluate Kaepernick, who hasn't played since 2016 and became a polarizing figure when he kneeled during the national anthem to protest social and racial injustice.

"We are in support of anybody getting an opportunity to play football," Haslam said. "We love that."

INJURIES

Steelers: Along with the others, Pittsburgh lost LB Olanitanmi Adeniyi (concussion) and CB Artie Burns (knee).

Browns: Safety Morgan Burnett sustained an Achilles injury in the first half and didn't return.

WATT'S UP

Steelers LB T.J. Watt took down Mayfield in the third quarter, giving him eight sacks in five career contests against the Browns. Watt has at least one-half sack in seven straight games, the longest active streak in the NFL.

UP NEXT

Steelers: Visit winless Cincinnati on Nov. 24.

Browns: Host Miami on Nov. 24.

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

N. Korea calls Biden a 'rabid dog' for insulting its dignity

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea called former U.S. Vice President Joe Biden a "rabid dog" that "must be beaten to death with a stick" in its latest swipe against foreign and political leaders it sees as hostile to the North's leadership.

The commentary by Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency said the U.S. presidential hopeful "reeled off a string of rubbish against the dignity" of the North's supreme leadership, an act it said deserves "merciless punishment."

It referred to him only with his surname and as vice president under Barack Obama, and in some versions spelled his name as "Baiden."

The North correctly spelled Biden's name in May when it labeled him a "fool of low IQ" after he called North Korean leader Kim Jong Un a tyrant during a speech.

North Korea often insults foreign leaders and politicians over what it sees as slanderous remarks toward its leadership or hostile policies against its government. It has made racist or sexist diatribes against Obama

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and former South Korean President Park Geun-hye, the country's first female leader.

Its frequent insults against Trump, including famously calling him a "dotard," turned to praise after he in 2018 made diplomatic overtures to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un that resulted in their three summits, including one brief handshake at the Korean Demilitarized Zone.

"Anyone who dare slanders the dignity of the supreme leadership of the D.P.R.K, can never spare the D.P.R.K's merciless punishment whoever and wherever," said the North Korean statement, referring to the country by its formal name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

"Rabid dogs like Baiden can hurt lots of people if they are allowed to run about. They must be beaten to death with a stick, before it is too late," it said.

It wasn't immediately clear which of Biden's comments provoked North Korea's anger. The Democrat has accused Trump of cozying up to "dictators and tyrants" and has been highly critical of his summitry with Kim, calling the meetings "three made-for-TV summits."

South Korea's Yonhap News Agency speculated that North Korea by insulting Biden was trying to appeal to Trump, who has continued to describe his personal relationship with Kim as good despite a stalemate in nuclear negotiations over disagreements in exchanging sanctions relief and disarmament steps.

Biden, especially at campaign fundraisers, laments Trump's embrace of authoritarian foreign leaders. He has specifically named Kim and Russia's Vladimir Putin, calling the pair "thugs" and sometimes detailing Kim's human rights abuses and attacks against dissenters.

"It's becoming more and more obvious that repugnant dictators, as well as those who admire and 'love' them, find Joe Biden threatening," said Andrew Bates, a Biden campaign spokesman. "That's because he'd restore American leadership in the world on day one by putting our security, interests and values at the heart of our foreign policy."

Even while North Korea has praised Trump, it criticized members of his administration seen as holding a hard line against North Korea, such as former national security adviser John Bolton. Last week, it called Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe an "idiot and villain" after he criticized a North Korean weapons test.

Associated Press journalist Bill Barrow in Atlanta contributed to this report.

Amid Gaza fighting, Israel could face questions on tactics

By **FARES AKRAM** and **JOSEF FEDERMAN** Associated Press

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP) — Residents say the airstrike came without warning: With fighting raging between Israel and Islamic Jihad militants throughout Gaza, two loud blasts shook the night, destroying the Abu Malhous home and killing eight members of the family in a split second.

As Israel claims victory in its latest battle against Gaza militants, its tactics of carrying out airstrikes on private homes suspected of harboring militants could once again come under scrutiny over the civilian death toll. Among the 34 people killed in the two-day flareup were 16 civilians, including two 7-year-old boys and two toddlers, according to human rights investigators.

A truce announced early Thursday appeared to be breaking down less than 24 hours later, as Israel resumed airstrikes on Gaza overnight Friday after a series of Palestinian rocket attacks.

Abdelhaj Musleh, a neighbor, said many children lived in the house in the central Gaza town of Deir el-Balah. "If there had been a warning, no one would have waited for this death and destruction," he said.

Since Hamas seized power in Gaza in 2007, Israel has fought three wars and dozens of skirmishes against Islamic militant groups. While the wars have inflicted heavy damage on Hamas and the smaller Islamic Jihad group, hundreds of civilians have also died in Israeli airstrikes.

The high civilian death toll has drawn heavy international criticism, and the International Criminal Court in The Hague has opened a preliminary investigation into Israel's battlefield tactics.

Israel rejects the criticism, saying it takes numerous precautions to prevent unnecessary civilian casualties.

It says its targets are based on sophisticated intelligence and cleared by legal advisers and other experts, and that it often warns inhabitants to evacuate before their homes are struck. It says it has fine-tuned its

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guided missiles, delivering small payloads that minimize damage beyond the precise target.

"Our operations against the Islamic Jihad were very accurate, very deliberate, based on the highest level of intelligence that we have," Lt. Col. Jonathan Conricus, a military spokesman, told reporters Thursday after a cease-fire was declared.

"One of the key considerations was and remains to limit to the greatest extent possible collateral damage and the effect on noncombatants," he added.

The latest round of fighting began early Tuesday when an Israeli airstrike killed Bahaa Abu el-Atta, a senior Islamic Jihad commander who Israel said was responsible for numerous rocket attacks and was planning a deadly infiltration operation into Israel. The airstrike hit the top-floor apartment in Gaza City where he was sleeping, killing him and his wife.

Conricus said Israel had been following Abu el-Atta for 10 days but had held off attacking him sooner because he routinely surrounded himself with crowds of civilians for protection.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu visited a group of Israeli soldiers to congratulate them on what he called a successful mission. "Our enemies got the message," he said. "We can reach anyone, even in their beds."

Such airstrikes can be permissible under international law, depending on the threat posed by the target and whether the damage to civilians is "proportional" to the military gain, said Omar Shakir, the country director of Human Rights Watch.

"Too often civilians pay the price for political brinkmanship by states and armed group," Shakir said. "We've seen several rounds of fighting now in Gaza where civilians have lost their lives or had their property damaged and faced harrowing circumstances as the result of unlawful attacks by both parties."

Palestinian militants also have come under international criticism for firing rockets indiscriminately at Israeli civilian areas. The Israeli military said dozens of the rockets this week were misfired and landed inside Gaza, with one believed to have damaged the offices of the International Commission for Human Rights, a Palestinian watchdog group. The group stopped short of criticizing the militants and called for an investigation of the incident.

In the case of Thursday's airstrike in Deir el-Balah, neighbors said an Islamic Jihad commander lived in the home that was destroyed. However, the commander wasn't home and had apparently gone into hiding.

Instead, his brother, Rasmi Abu Malhous was killed, along with both of their wives and five children under the age of 13. They including his 7-year-old son and two nephews, ages 2 and 3.

The neighbors, speaking on condition of anonymity because they did not want to anger the family, said Rasmi Abu Malhous, 45, was not involved in any militant activity.

The home was virtually disintegrated by the blast, leaving a large crater with kitchenware, pillows and mattresses strewn about. Neighbors dug out eight bodies and tried to salvage some school backpacks and clothes.

"When we came, we did not recognize where the house was standing," said Musleh, the neighbor. "The airstrike intentionally targeted civilians."

Israel argues that civilian casualties are inevitable in Gaza's densely populated urban environment. Militants often fire rockets from crowded residential areas, drawing Israeli retaliatory strikes, and Israel accuses the militants of using civilians, including their own families, as human shields.

Conricus, the military spokesman, said he had no information about the particular airstrike. But he defended the attacks on private homes, saying Islamic Jihad commanders used their residences to store weapons or as command and control centers, making them legitimate military targets.

"All of our operations were measured, proportionate and focused only on military assets belonging to the Islamic Jihad," he said.

While the Israeli military said as many as 25 militants were killed, Palestinian human rights monitors said the dead included 18 militants and 16 civilians. They included three women and eight minors.

It was the deadliest round of fighting since a devastating 50-day war in 2014. Since then, the bitter enemies have fought a number of smaller rounds, each lasting a few days.

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The policy of attacking militants' homes became a common tactic in that war, in which a tally by The Associated Press found that 508 civilians were killed in airstrikes.

In this week's fighting, Islamic Jihad fired some 450 rockets toward Israel, with most landing in open areas or being intercepted by Israel's Iron Dome defense system.

But the nonstop rocket fire crippled life across southern and central Israel as far away as Tel Aviv, some 80 kilometers (50 miles) away. Three Israelis were slightly wounded by shrapnel or shattered glass.

Islamic Jihad said the cease-fire went into effect at 5:30 a.m. and claimed it was based on three conditions: an end to targeted killings, a halt in Israeli shootings of protesters at weekly demonstrations along the Israeli frontier and easing a 12-year Israeli blockade that has devastated Gaza's economy. Israeli officials insisted they had made no concessions.

Supporters of Islamic Jihad held scattered protests across Gaza late Thursday to express anger at the truce. Renewed rocket fire overnight drew Israeli retaliatory strikes. There were no immediate reports of new casualties.

Israel imposed the blockade after Hamas violently seized control of Gaza from the internationally backed Palestinian Authority. Israel considers Hamas and Islamic Jihad, which both seek its destruction, to be terrorist groups.

Residents of hard-hit southern Israeli towns welcomed the quiet on Thursday, but said Israel had to keep the pressure on militants.

"We need to hit them hard, that's what needs to be done until they say, 'Enough, we want a cease-fire,'" said Yosef Itach, a resident of Sderot. "This is the way to show them who's the strong one."

Federman reported from Jerusalem. Associated Press writers Patty Nieberg in Jerusalem, Shlomo Mor in Sderot and Mohammed Jahjough in Deir al-Balah, Gaza Strip, contributed.

AP Interview: Evo Morales wants UN mediation in Bolivia

By E. EDUARDO CASTILLO Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Bolivia's Evo Morales on Friday called for the United Nations, and possibly Pope Francis, to mediate in the Andean nation's political crisis following his ouster as president in what he called a coup d'état that forced him into exile in Mexico.

In an interview with The Associated Press in Mexico City, Morales said he is in fact still the president of Bolivia since the country's Legislative Assembly has not yet accepted his resignation, which he presented Sunday at the urging of military leaders following weeks of protests against a re-election that his opponents called fraudulent.

"The assembly has to reject or approve the resignation" which it has not done, said the man who ruled Bolivia for almost 14 years as its first indigenous president. "If they don't approve or reject it I can say that I am still president."

Morales said he would return to Bolivia from Mexico, which has granted him political asylum, if that would contribute to his country's pacification.

Political analyst Kathryn Ledebur of the nonprofit Andean Information Network in Bolivia, who has lived in the country for nearly 30 years, said Morales could have a case.

"A resignation letter has to be presented and considered, and accepted in the plenary before it goes into effect," she said. "Do I think that Evo wants to return and be president - I don't see that. But does he want to mess with them? Yes. He wants to keep them guessing."

Two days after arriving in Mexico, Morales told the AP he has received information that some Bolivian army troops are planning to "rebel" against the officers who urged him to resign. But he gave no further specifics on how many were in on the plan, or how they would rebel.

Morales said he was "surprised by the betrayal of the commander in chief of the armed forces," Williams Kaliman.

He called for calm and dialogue in Bolivia. "I want to tell them (his supporters) that we will have to re-

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cover democracy, but with a lot of patience and peaceful struggle.”

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said Thursday he is sending Jean Arnault, a personal envoy, to Bolivia to support efforts to find a peaceful solution to the nation’s crisis.

“I have a lot of confidence in the U.N.,” Morales said. But he noted he wants the world body “to be a mediator, not just a facilitator, perhaps accompanied by the Catholic church and if Pope Francis is needed, we should add him.”

He said the United States was the “great conspirator” behind the “coup d’etat” that forced him from Bolivia. Morales has long had a tense relationship with Washington and in 2008 expelled U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration officials from Bolivia.

Bolivia’s interim leader Jeanine Añez has been recognized by some countries, but faces an uphill battle in organizing new elections.

According to the constitution, an interim president has 90 days to organize an election. The disputed accession of Añez, who until Tuesday was second vice president of the Senate, was an example of the long list of obstacles she faces. Morales’ backers, who hold a two-thirds majority in Congress, boycotted the session she called Tuesday night to formalize her claim to the presidency, preventing a quorum.

Late Thursday, legislators with Morales’ Movement Toward Socialism party, or MAS, and Añez were working on an agreement for new elections that would help resolve the crisis. The deal would make Eva Copa Murga Senate president with the backing of legislators from Añez’s Democratic Unity party.

“It’s a historic agreement to pacify the country,” Copa Murga said. But other legislators said a deal had not yet been reached.

Meanwhile Thursday, Morales’ backers demonstrated for his return from asylum in Mexico.

“Evo: Friend, the people are with you!” shouted protesters in the city of Sacaba.

They had come overnight from Chapare, a coca-growing region where Morales became a prominent union leader before he became president. Soldiers blocked them from reaching the nearby city of Cochabamba, where Morales’ supporters and foes have clashed for weeks.

Morales’ resignation followed nationwide protests over suspected vote-rigging in an Oct. 20 election in which he claimed to have won a fourth term in office. An Organization of American States audit of the vote found widespread irregularities. Morales denies there was fraud.

Much of the opposition to Morales sprang from his refusal to accept a referendum that would have forbidden him from running for a new term.

In the wake of Morales’ resignation, it was unclear whether Bolivian election officials would have to formally bar him from running in a new election.

Añez, who claimed the interim presidency, was moving to establish authority in the turbulent country. She announced that Morales could not participate in elections again but his MAS party could.

Morales upended politics in this nation long ruled by light-skinned descendants of Europeans by reversing deep-rooted inequality. The economy benefited from a boom in prices of commodities and he ushered through a new constitution that created a new Congress with seats reserved for Bolivia’s smaller indigenous groups while also allowing self-rule for all indigenous communities.

Although some supporters became disenchanted by his insistence on holding on to power, Morales remains popular, especially among other members of his native Aymara ethnic group.

AP journalist Luis Andres Henao in Cochabamba, Bolivia contributed to this report.

Student opens fire in California high school, killing 2

By STEFANIE DAZIO and JOHN ANTCZAK Associated Press

SANTA CLARITA, Calif. (AP) — A student pulled a gun from his backpack and opened fire at a Southern California high school Thursday, killing two students and wounding three others before shooting himself in the head on his 16th birthday, authorities said.

The attacker was hospitalized in critical condition, officials said, and investigators offered no immediate

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motive.

The gunfire began around 7:30 a.m. at Saugus High School in the Los Angeles suburb of Santa Clarita. Authorities estimated that the suspect took just 16 seconds to pull out the weapon, shoot five classmates and turn the gun on himself.

At the time, students were "milling around" and greeting each other in an outdoor quad area, sheriff's homicide Capt. Kent Wegener said. Surveillance video showed the shooter standing still while "everyone is active around him."

"He just fires from where he is. He doesn't chase anybody. He doesn't move," Wegener said.

The suspect appeared to fire at whoever was in front of him. He had no known connection to those he shot, Wegener said.

Video showed the last thing the assailant did was shoot himself with the final bullet in the .45-caliber handgun, Wegener said. The weapon was empty when it was recovered.

A 16-year-old girl and a 14-year-old boy died.

Two girls, ages 14 and 15, were each in good condition after being treated for gunshot wounds, according to Patricia Aidem, a spokeswoman for Providence Holy Cross Medical Center.

A 14-year-old boy was treated and released from another hospital, authorities said.

Sheriff Alex Villanueva said the shooter was a student at the school but did not identify him.

The sheriff said a biography on an Instagram account reported as possibly belonging to the teen contained the posting: "Saugus, have fun at school tomorrow."

The message was discovered Thursday morning after the shooting. It was unclear when it was made and by whom, the sheriff said.

It was later removed, and investigators do not know who made the change, Wegener said.

Investigators were searching the suspect's home. Wegener said the sheriff's department had not received any recent calls to the boy's house "that would indicate that there was turmoil" there.

The teen's father died two years ago. Two years before that, the father had been arrested amid a domestic dispute with the boy's mother.

Fellow students and a neighbor say he was a Boy Scout who was smart, quiet and gave no indication he would become violent. One girl who knew him for years said he wasn't bullied and had a girlfriend.

"At this point in time, we have no indication of motivation or ideology," said Paul Delacourt, the agent in charge of the FBI's Los Angeles field office. Santa Clarita is a city of more than 200,000 about 30 miles (48 kilometers) northwest of downtown LA.

The sound of gunfire sent some students running while others and staff followed recently practiced security procedures.

Kyra Stapp, 17, was watching a documentary in class when she heard two gunshots. Panicked students ran in and reported the shooting.

Stapp's class and others were herded into a teacher break room where they locked the door and turned off the lights.

Kyra texted her mother and tried not make any noise. They exchanged messages as sirens screamed and helicopters and deputies carrying rifles and shotguns swarmed the campus. Then Kyra fell silent while officers escorted students out.

"She's been texting me and all of a sudden she's not," Tracy Stapp said. "That was like the worst 10 minutes of my life, I swear."

Shauna Orandi, 16, said she was in her Spanish class doing homework when she heard four gunshots that she initially mistook as instruments from a band class. She said a student burst into the room saying he'd seen the gunman, and her classmates were stunned into silence.

"My worst nightmare actually came true," she said later as she left a nearby park with her father. "This is it. I'm going to die."

Freshman Rosie Rodriguez said she was walking up the library stairs when she heard noises that sounded like balloons popping. She realized they were gunshots when she saw other students running.

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Still carrying a backpack laden with books, she ran across the street to a home, where a person she didn't know gave shelter to her and about 10 other students.

"I just heard a lot of kids crying. We were scared," Rodriguez said.

A huge crowd of anxious parents gathered in the park, waiting to be reunited with their children.

Undersheriff Tim Murakami tweeted an apology to the parents, saying investigators needed to interview the students before they could be released.

Orandi said she has heard about so many school shootings that she always assumed she'd panic. But she stayed calm with the help of her teacher, who locked down the classroom.

Saugus High's security is provided by one unarmed sheriff's deputy and nine "campus supervisors" who act as guards, said to Collyn Nielson, chief administrative officer for the William S. Hart Union High School District.

The campus is surrounded by a fence, and students enter through a limited number of gates each morning. There are a dozen security cameras but no metal detectors.

All district schools hold lockdown drills three times a year, including two in the fall that have already occurred, Nielson said.

"In speaking with staff and hearing reports, students reported they knew what to do and immediately went into lockdown mode," he said.

Antczak reported from Los Angeles. Associated Press writers Christopher Weber, Brian Melley and Justin Pritchard in LA also contributed to this report.

Swift says AMAs performance in jeopardy over music dispute

By **ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer**

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Taylor Swift said Thursday that she may not perform at the American Music Awards and may have to put other projects including a forthcoming Netflix documentary on hold because the men who own her old recordings won't allow her to play her songs.

"Right now my performance at the AMAs, the Netflix documentary and any other recorded events I am planning to play until November 2020 are a question mark," Swift said on Twitter and Instagram.

Swift said she had planned to play a medley of her hits when she's named Artist of the Decade at the American Music Awards on Nov. 24, but the men who own the music, Scooter Braun and Scott Borchetta, are calling the television performance an illegal re-recording.

"I just want to be able to perform MY OWN music. That's it," Swift said. "I've tried to work out this out privately through my team but have not been able to resolve anything."

The 29-year-old singer-songwriter has loudly spoken out against her old master recordings falling into the hands of the music manager Braun, who bought them by acquiring Borchetta's Big Machine Label Group in June. Swift has used the sale and its aftermath to publicly advocate for the rights of artists and to further a feud with the two men.

Swift said in the posts that Borchetta has told her he will allow the projects to go forward if she drops plans to record copycat versions of her older songs next year, which Swift says she plans to do and has the legal right to, and if she stops her public trashing of the two men.

"The message being sent to me is very clear," Swift said. Basically, be a good little girl and shut up. Or you'll be punished."

Messages seeking comment sent to representatives for Braun, Borchetta and the AMAs were not immediately returned.

Swift called on her legion of fans to put pressure on Braun and Borchetta to allow her performance and other projects to go forward.

That ignited social media, with the hashtags "IStandWithTaylor" and "FreeTaylor" trending worldwide on Twitter.

She also urged her fellow artists, some of whom include Ariana Grande and Justin Bieber are managed

by Braun, to speak out and speak to him.

Swift said she's especially asking for help from the Carlyle Group, the private equity firm that financed the sale.

The Netflix documentary, which has chronicled the last few years of her life, was previously unannounced. "This isn't the way I planned on telling you this news," Swift said.

Amazon appeals \$10B Pentagon contract won by Microsoft

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Amazon is protesting the Pentagon's decision to award a \$10 billion cloud-computing contract to Microsoft, citing "unmistakable bias" in the process.

Amazon's competitive bid for the "war cloud" project drew criticism from President Donald Trump and its business rivals. The project, formally called the Joint Enterprise Defense Infrastructure, or JEDI, pitted leading tech titans Microsoft, Amazon, Oracle and IBM against one another.

In a statement Thursday, Amazon said that "numerous aspects" of the bidding process involved "clear deficiencies, errors, and unmistakable bias." It did not elaborate.

Amazon added that "it's important that these matters be examined and rectified."

Microsoft did not immediately respond to a request for comment. A Defense Department spokeswoman would only say that the Pentagon won't speculate on potential litigation.

JEDI will store and process vast amounts of classified data, allowing the U.S. military to use artificial intelligence to speed up its war planning and fighting capabilities.

Amazon was long thought to be the front-runner in the competition for the huge military contract. Its Amazon Web Services division is far ahead of second-place Microsoft in cloud computing, and Amazon has experience handling highly classified government data.

It survived earlier legal challenges after the Defense Department eliminated rival bidders Oracle and IBM and whittled the competition down to the two Seattle area tech giants before choosing Microsoft in late October.

The Pentagon was preparing to make its final decision when Trump publicly waded into the fray in July, saying he had heard complaints about the process and that the administration would "take a very long look." He said other companies told him that the contract "wasn't competitively bid." Oracle, in particular, had unsuccessfully argued that Pentagon officials unfairly favored Amazon for the winner-take-all contract.

Experts had generally expected Amazon to appeal the award, saying it had little to lose. Steven Schooner, a professor of government procurement law at George Washington University, said Trump's comments were "inappropriate and improvident," but said it would be a challenge for Amazon to prove the White House applied undue pressure in a way that made a difference.

Amazon said it filed its protest in the U.S. Court of Federal Claims, which deals with financial claims against the federal government.

It's not uncommon for losing bidders to file a protest, either with the U.S. Government Accountability Office or in court. Unlike a review by the GAO, Amazon's court filing will enable it to seek documents from the government as evidence for its case.

Pelosi says Trump's Ukraine actions amount to 'bribery'

By LISA MASCARO and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Democrats are refining part of their impeachment case against the president to a simple allegation: Bribery.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Thursday brushed aside the Latin phrase "quid pro quo" that Democrats have been using to describe President Donald Trump's actions toward Ukraine. As the impeachment hearings go public, they're going for a more colloquial term that may resonate with more Americans.

"Quid pro quo: Bribery," Pelosi said about Trump's July 25 phone call in which he asked Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy for a favor.

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Trump says the call was perfect. Pelosi said: "It's perfectly wrong. It's bribery."

The House has opened its historic hearings to remove America's 45th president, with more to come Friday, launching a political battle for public opinion that will further test the nation in one of the most polarizing eras of modern times.

Democrats and Republicans are hardening their messages to voters, who are deeply entrenched in two camps.

Trump continued to assail the proceedings as "a hoax" on Thursday, and House GOP Leader Kevin McCarthy dismissed the witness testimony as hearsay, at best second-hand information.

The president, who said he was too busy to watch the initial hearing as it was televised, caught up in the White House residence Wednesday evening and tweeted along with a Fox News morning recap Thursday.

The president flatly denied the latest revelations. During Wednesday's hearing a diplomat testified that another State Department witness overheard Trump asking about Ukraine investigations the day after his phone call with Kyiv.

"First I've heard of it," he said, brushing off the question at the White House.

The Associated Press reported Thursday that a second U.S. Embassy official also overheard Trump's conversation.

While Trump applauded the aggression of some of his GOP defenders, he felt that many of the lawmakers could have done more to support him and he pressed that case with congressional allies ahead of the next hearing, according to Republicans who were not authorized to speak publicly about private conversations and were granted anonymity.

On Friday, Americans will hear from Marie Yovanovitch, the career foreign service officer whom Trump recalled as the U.S. ambassador to Ukraine after what one State Department official has called a "campaign of lies" against her by the president's personal lawyer, Rudy Giuliani.

At its core, the impeachment inquiry concerns Trump's July phone call with Zelenskiy that first came to attention when an anonymous government whistleblower filed a complaint.

In the phone conversation, Trump asked for a "favor," according to an account provided by the White House. He wanted an investigation of Democrats and 2020 rival Joe Biden. Later it was revealed that at the time the administration was withholding military aid from Ukraine.

"The bribe is to grant or withhold military assistance in return for a public statement of a fake investigation into the elections," Pelosi said. "That's bribery."

It's also spelled out in the Constitution as one of the possible grounds for impeachment -- "treason, bribery or other and high crimes and misdemeanors."

During Day One of the House hearings, career diplomats William Taylor and George Kent delivered somber testimony about recent months.

They testified how an ambassador was fired, the new Ukraine government was confused and they discovered an "irregular channel" — a shadow U.S. foreign policy orchestrated by Giuliani that raised alarms in diplomatic and national security circles.

It's a dramatic, complicated story, and the Democrats' challenge is to capture voter attention about the significance of Trump's interactions with a distant country.

With a hostile Russia its border, Ukraine is a young democracy relying on the U.S. as it reaches to the West.

Trump's reelection effort raised more than \$3 million on the first day of public impeachment hearings, and campaign manager Brad Parscale announced it now hopes to raise \$5 million within a 24-hour span.

A spokesman for the national Republican Party, Rick Gorka, said there's been a surge of volunteers and the response "we're receiving from the field has been tremendous."

Trump, who was set to headline a rally Thursday night in Louisiana, remained out of sight for most of the day and was monitoring a mass school shooting in California, according to aides.

Behind closed doors this week Pelosi reminded Democratic lawmakers of the importance of presenting a "common narrative" to the public as the proceedings push forward, according to a Democratic aide.

"We're in Chapter One of a process," said Rep. Raja Krishnamoorthi, D-Ill., a member of the Intelligence Committee conducting the inquiry. The challenge, he said, is educating Americans about what happened "and then explaining why it matters."

Associated Press writers Jonathan Lemire, Laurie Kellman and Jill Colvin in Washington contributed to this report.

Bolivian interim leader says Morales can't run in new vote

By LUIS ANDRES HENAO Associated Press

LA PAZ, Bolivia (AP) — Bolivia's former President Evo Morales cannot run as a candidate in any new elections, the country's interim leader said Thursday, as supporters of the ousted president demonstrated for his return from asylum in Mexico.

"Evo: Friend, the people are with you!" shouted protesters in the city of Sacaba.

They had come overnight from Chapare, a coca-growing region where Morales became a prominent union leader before he became Bolivia's first indigenous president. Soldiers blocked them from reaching the nearby city of Cochabamba, where Morales' supporters and foes have clashed for weeks.

Many protesters waved the national flag and the multicolor "Wiphala" flag that represents indigenous peoples.

"We want respect," said Maura Trujillo, a 52-year-old coca farmer who wore a colorful traditional billowing skirt and a hat commonly worn by Quechua women.

In the capital of La Paz, some gasoline stations ran out of supply because of street blockades in the nearby city of El Alto, a pro-Morales stronghold that is a major distribution point for fuel.

Jeanine Añez, a Senate deputy leader who claimed the interim presidency, was moving to establish authority in the turbulent country. She announced that Morales, who resigned Sunday after allegations of election fraud, could not participate in elections again and criticized Mexico's government for allowing Morales to rally support from Mexico City.

"We have to let the Mexican government know that cannot be happening," Añez said.

Mexico, however, said Morales has a right to make political statements.

"Asylum recipients' freedom of expression should not be subject to any greater limitations than those that would apply to any Mexican citizen," Mexico's foreign relations department said.

Morales resigned on Sunday at military prompting, following massive nationwide protests over suspected vote-rigging in an Oct. 20 election in which he claimed to have won a fourth term in office. An Organization of American States audit of the vote found widespread irregularities.

Much of the opposition to Morales sprang from his refusal to accept a referendum that would have forbidden him from running for a new term.

In the wake of Morales' resignation, it was unclear whether Bolivian election officials would have to formally bar him from running in a new election.

The pro-Morales Movement Toward Socialism party "has all the right to participate in elections, they can look for candidates," Añez said.

Bolivia's new interim government has begun winning some international recognition but faced challenges to its legitimacy at home.

Mexico welcomed Morales this week after he resigned. Mexico's government referred to the ouster as a coup d'état, as have other left-leaning administrations in Latin America. But Añez has gained recognition from other regional governments, including Brazil, Guatemala and Colombia, as well as Britain and the United States.

Añez also announced she would recognize Venezuela's U.S.-backed opposition leader, Juan Guaidó, as that country's legitimate leader, joining the U.S. and 50 other countries in repudiating socialist President Nicolás Maduro, an ally of Morales.

But the new Bolivian leadership was focused on challenges at home.

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Members of the Movement Toward Socialism party, who dominate both houses of Congress, held legislative sessions aimed at questioning the legitimacy of Añez, who had been no higher than fifth in the line of succession before Morales resigned. She won recognition because those above her, all Morales backers, also resigned — though some later tried to recant their resignations.

In addition to accusing Morales of inciting violent dissent, the new government took aim at some of his allies at home.

Añez's new interior minister, Arturo Murillo, said Wednesday that he had spoken with police and ordered a hunt for his predecessor, Juan Ramón Quintana — using the Spanish word for hunt that applies to chasing an animal.

"Why is it a hunt? Because he is an animal who is killing people," Murillo said. Quintana apparently had vanished from sight.

"Those who deal in sedition, as of tomorrow, take care," he warned.

Añez needs to win recognition from more Bolivians, stabilize the nation and organize new elections within 90 days, rebuilding after weeks of violent protests against Morales following the disputed election.

"If this is seen by the indigenous social movement as an effort by the old elite to restore the old order in Bolivian society, I think that is a recipe for tremendous political conflict," said Kenneth Roberts, professor of government at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is sending a personal envoy to Bolivia to support efforts to find a peaceful solution to the crisis.

The new envoy, Jean Arnault, was traveling to Bolivia on Thursday, according to U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric.

In Brazil, Russian President Vladimir Putin said at a meeting of the BRICS group of emerging economies that the situation in Bolivia is alarming.

"They have no leadership at all. It's similar to the situation in Libya, though there is no direct armed intervention. However, the country is close to chaos," Putin said.

The interim government on Thursday gave journalists a tour of a modern 29-story presidential office building with a heliport built by Morales and that his foes had criticized as one of his excesses. The empty presidential suite on the 24th floor contained a wall painting showing leaders including Nelson Mandela and Fidel Castro; a reading room with several biographies about Morales; a few items of clothing in the main bedroom; and a jacuzzi.

Morales upended politics in this nation long ruled by light-skinned descendants of Europeans by reversing deep-rooted inequality. The economy benefited from a boom in prices of commodities and he ushered through a new constitution that created a new Congress with seats reserved for Bolivia's smaller indigenous groups while also allowing self-rule for all indigenous communities.

Although some supporters became disenchanted by his insistence on holding on to power, Morales remains popular, especially among other members of his native Aymara ethnic group.

Morales' backers, who hold a two-thirds majority in Congress, boycotted the session that Añez called Tuesday night to formalize her claim to the presidency, preventing a quorum.

She claimed power anyway and swore in a Cabinet, saying the constitution did not require congressional approval. The military, police and opposition parties accepted her. Bolivia's top constitutional court laid out the legal justification for Añez taking the presidency, without mentioning her by name.

But other legal experts questioned her claim, saying at least some of her steps required a session of Congress.

Associated Press writers Carlos Valdez and Paola Flores in La Paz contributed.

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Friday, Nov. 15, the 319th day of 2019. There are 46 days left in the year.

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Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 15, 1942, the naval Battle of Guadalcanal ended during World War II with a decisive U.S. victory over Japanese forces.

On this date:

In 1777, the Second Continental Congress approved the Articles of Confederation.

In 1806, explorer Zebulon Pike sighted the mountaintop now known as Pikes (cq) Peak in present-day Colorado.

In 1864, during the Civil War, Union forces led by Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman began their "March to the Sea" from Atlanta; the campaign ended with the capture of Savannah on Dec. 21.

In 1935, the Commonwealth of the Philippines was established as its new president, Manuel L. Quezon (KAY'-zahn), took office.

In 1937, at the U.S. Capitol, members of the House and Senate met in air-conditioned chambers for the first time.

In 1958, actor Tyrone Power, 44, died in Madrid, Spain, while filming "Solomon and Sheba." (Power's part was recast with Yul Brynner.)

In 1959, four members of the Clutter family of Holcomb, Kansas, were found murdered in their home. (Ex-convicts Richard Hickock and Perry Smith were later convicted of the killings and hanged in a case made famous by the Truman Capote book "In Cold Blood.")

In 1961, former Argentine President Juan Peron, living in exile in Spain, married his third wife, Isabel.

In 1966, the flight of Gemini 12, the final mission of the Gemini program, ended successfully as astronauts James A. Lovell and Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin Jr. splashed down safely in the Atlantic after spending four days in orbit.

In 1984, Stephanie Fae Beauclair, the infant publicly known as "Baby Fae" who had received a baboon's heart to replace her own congenitally deformed one, died at Loma Linda University Medical Center in California three weeks after the transplant.

In 1987, 28 of 82 people aboard a Continental Airlines DC-9, including the pilots, were killed when the jetliner crashed seconds after taking off from Denver's Stapleton International Airport.

In 2003, two Black Hawk helicopters collided and crashed in Iraq; 17 U.S. troops were killed.

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama concluded a two-day summit with Asia-Pacific leaders in Singapore, where they pledged to persist with stimulus spending until a global recovery was assured. Kosovo's first independent elections ended peacefully, with Prime Minister Hashim Thaci (HAH'-shihm THAH'-chee) claiming victory for his party. Michelle Wie (wee) earned her first win on the LPGA Tour, closing with a 3-under 69 to finish two strokes ahead of Paula Creamer in the Lorena Ochoa (lohr-AY'-nah oh-CHOH'-uh) Invitational.

Five years ago: Closing out his Asia-Pacific tour in Brisbane, Australia, President Barack Obama called on Asian nations to join the United States in confronting the globe's biggest challenges, from climate change and poverty to violent extremism. Army Gen. Martin Dempsey, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, arrived in Iraq on a previously unannounced visit, his first since a U.S.-led coalition began launching airstrikes against the extremist Islamic State group. Pope Francis denounced the right to die movement, telling the Association of Italian Catholic Doctors it was a "false sense of compassion" to consider euthanasia an act of dignity when it was in fact a sin against God and creation.

One year ago: The number of confirmed dead from the wildfire that had virtually destroyed the Northern California town of Paradise reached 63, and authorities said they had 631 names on a missing persons list. (The death toll eventually reached 85.) Buses carrying Central American asylum seekers reached the U.S. border as the Mexican city of Tijuana converted a municipal gymnasium into a temporary shelter; U.S. border inspectors at the main crossing into San Diego were processing only about 100 asylum claims a day. Christian Yelich of the Milwaukee Brewers and Mookie Betts of the Boston Red Sox were named winners of baseball's Most Valuable Player awards. Country star Roy Clark, a guitar virtuoso and singer who headlined the TV show "Hee Haw" for nearly a quarter century, died in Oklahoma at the age of 85.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Ed Asner is 90. Singer Petula Clark is 87. Comedian Jack Burns is 86. Actress

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Joanna Barnes is 85. Actor Yaphet Kotto is 80. Actor Sam Waterston is 79. Classical conductor Daniel Barenboim is 77. Pop singer Frida (ABBA) is 74. Actor Bob Gunton is 74. Former New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson is 72. Actress Beverly D'Angelo is 68. Director-actor James Widdoes is 66. Rock singer-producer Mitch Easter is 65. News correspondent John Roberts is 63. Former "Jay Leno Show" bandleader Kevin Eubanks is 62. Comedian Judy Gold is 57. Actress Rachel True is 53. Rapper E-40 is 52. Country singer Jack Ingram is 49. Actor Jay Harrington is 48. Actor Jonny Lee Miller is 47. Actress Sydney Tamiia (tuh-MY'-yuh) Poitier-Heartsong is 46. Christian rock musician David Carr (Third Day) is 45. Rock singer-musician Chad Kroeger is 45. Rock musician Jesse Sandoval is 45. Actress Virginie Ledoyen is 43. Actor Sean Murray is 42. Pop singer Ace Young (TV: "American Idol") is 39. Golfer Lorena Ochoa (loh-AY'-nah oh-CHOH'-uh) is 38. Hip-hop artist B.o.B is 31. Actress Shailene Woodley is 28. Actress-dancer Emma Dumont is 25.

Thought for Today: "To oppose something is to maintain it." — Ursula K. LeGuin, American writer (1929-2018).

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