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"IF WE ALL DO ONE RANDOM ACT OF KINDNESS DAILY, WE JUST MIGHT SET THE WORLD IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION."

MARTIN KORNFIELD



Tuesday, December 3, 2019

Sippel Novice Debate at Groton Area High School

10 a.m. to 4 p.m.: James Valley Telecommunications Open House

4:15pm: Basketball: Girls 7th/8th Game hosts Clark/Willow Lake

7:00pm: City Council Meeting at Groton Community Center

Wednesday, December 4, 2019

12:30pm- 3:00pm: MathCounts at Aberdeen Roncalli Middle School

Thursday, December 5, 2019

7:00pm: MS/HS Christmas Concert at GHS Gymnasium

Friday, December 6, 2019

State Oral Interp at Yankton High School

(Rescheduled to 12-13-19) 4:15pm: Basketball: Girls 7th/8th Game (Rescheduled from 11-21-19) hosts Britton-Hecla JH

7th Grade @ 4:15 and 8th Grade @ 5:15

Saturday, December 7, 2019

9 a.m. to Noon: Santa Day at Professional Management Services

11:00am: Basketball: Girls Varsity Jamboree vs. Warner @ Warner High School

11:00am: Basketball: Boys Varsity Jamboree vs. Warner @ Warner High School

State Oral Interp at Yankton High School

10:00am: Wrestling: Varsity Tournament at Clark Junior-Senior High School

10:00am: Basketball: Girls 7th/8th Jamboree at Groton Area High School

4 p.m. to 7 p.m.: Olive Grove Tour of Homes

Sunday, December 8, 2019

2:00pm- 6:00pm - Open Gym - Groton Area High School Arena

2:00-4:00 PM Grades JK-8 (Students must be accompanied by an adult) 4:00-6:00 PM Grades 6-12

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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Marzahn named to Volleyball All State Second Team

The South Dakota Coaches Association is proud to announce the All State Players for each class this 2019 season. Well done and well deserved ladies! You have made your communities, school programs, coaches and families all proud. Hard work and dedication pay off:

2019 All State Teams

Class AA First Team All-State 1st Team

Phekran Kong (SR) - SF Washington
Emma Ronsiek (SR)- SF O'Gorman
Tatum Kooima (SR) -SF Roosevelt
Sophie Tietz (SR) -Watertown
Havyn Heinz (SR) - Huron
Meghan Heggelund (SR)- Watertown
Brooklyn Kusler (JR)- Aberdeen Central
Bergen Reilly (Fresh) - SF O'Gorman

Class AA Second Team All-State

Tenley Buddenhagen (JR) - Huron
Kyah Watson (SR) - Rapid City Stevens
Mckenzie Buisker (SR) - Watertown
Raegan Reilly (JR) - SF O'Gorman
Brynn Krisch (SOPH) - SF Lincoln
Hallie Mertz (SR) - Harrisburg
Elizabeth Denevan (SOPH) - SF Roosevelt

Class A First Team All-State

Ally Beresford (SR) – Dakota Valley
Abby Brunsing (JR) – Wagner
Kayde Fernholz (SR) – Miller
Abby Glanzer (JR) – SFC
Morgan Hammerbeck (SR) – Winner
Grace Nelson (SR) – Madison

Class A Second Team All-State

Emily Bies (SR) – MCM
Ellie Brozik (SO) – Winner
Katelyn Chytka (SR) – EPJ
Nicole Marzahn (SR) – Groton Area
Caitlyn Pruis (SR) – SFC
VonnaGail Schlecter (SR) – Miller

Class A Honorable Mention

Abby Brooks (JR) – Madison
Riley Freeland (JR) – Rapid City Christian
Kelsi Heard (JR) – SFC
Aleah Ries (SR) – MCM
Lizzie Tyler (FR) – Wagner
Abigail Van Ruler (SR) - MCM

Class B First Team All-State

Madalyn Groft- Northwestern- Sr.- Setter
Sydney Schell- Northwestern- Jr. -OH
Makenna Larson-Chester Area- Sr.- OH/DS
Peyton Melius-Faulkton Area- Jr.- OH
Taylee Indahl- Burke- Sr.- OH/MH
Ava Nilsson- Warner- 8th Grader- Setter
Aiyana Byrd- Faith- Jr.- MH

Class B Second Team All-State

Ady Dwight- Langford Area- Sr.- MH
Jada Plastow-Ethan- Sr.- OH
Kenna Brown- Chester Area- Jr.- Setter
Hannah Krog- Elkton-Lake Benton- Jr.- MH/OH
Cameryn Logan- Ethan- Jr.- MH
Brooke Niederbaumer- Faulkton Area- Sr.- MB

Class B Honorable Mention

Copper Lurz- Philip- Soph.- M/OH
Madisyn Cameron- Avon- Sr.- Setter
Sydnie Schauer- Faith- Sr.- Setter
Chesney Olivier- Ipswich- Jr.- Libero
Jade Hutchinson- Kadoka Area- Jr.- OH



JAMES VALLEY TELECOMMUNICATIONS
HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE
Tuesday, December 3rd 10am - 4pm
235 E 1st Ave, Groton
DOOR PRIZES - TREATS - SPECIALS
Register in stores or online
at jamesvalley.com for the
12 Days of Christmas Giveaway!

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Weekly Vikings Roundup

By Jordan Wright

Coming off a bye week, the Minnesota Vikings traveled to Seattle to battle the Seahawks, a game featuring two of the top teams in the NFC. This game had plenty of ups and downs, but the Vikings' comeback hopes ended on a CJ Ham fumble and the Seahawks won 37-30.

Kirk Cousins is still winless on Monday Night Football, but this loss wasn't his fault. He wasn't perfect, but he made some big plays in this game and kept the Vikings in it until the end. Cousins finished the game with 276 yards, two touchdowns, one interception and a 58% completion percentage. After his interception – a pass that hit Diggs in the hands but was dropped – the Seahawks scored another touchdown, bringing the score to 34-17. The Vikings got the ball back with 13:30 left in the fourth quarter, and Cousins didn't waste any time, throwing three passes that went for 75-yards and a touchdown. After the Seahawks fumbled on their next drive, Cousins led an eight play, 72-yard drive that resulted in another touchdown – bringing the score to 30-34 (Bailey missed extra point). There are plenty of reasons the Vikings lost this game, but quarterback play isn't one of them.

Dalvin Cook was looking good in the first half, touching the ball 11 times for 64 yards and a touchdown. On the Vikings' second drive of the second half, Cook took the handoff up the middle and was tackled after a minimal gain – but was injured on the play. After staying on the turf for a while, visibly distraught, Cook went immediately to the locker room. He was back on the sideline later, and Mike Zimmer said after the game that the injury isn't serious, but it will be something to keep an eye on.

Adam Thielen had a setback in practice earlier last week, and was unable to go against the Seahawks. Diggs was targeted a team-high nine times on Monday, but only hauled in four of those passes for 25 yards. He had multiple drops and was a total non-factor in this game. Laquon Treadwell led the team in receiving yards which all came on one pass, a 58-yard touchdown.

The Vikings' defense has taken an inexplicable step back this season, and they are now average at best. They gave up 444 yards to the Seahawks, including 218 yards on the ground. Xavier Rhodes had another poor performance on Monday, and he was repeatedly picked on by Russel Wilson. Rhodes entered the game allowing 9.5 yards per attempt and a QB rating of 126 when throwing into his coverage – 11th worst out of 135 cornerbacks in the league. Against the Seahawks, he allowed 4/4 for 99 yards and a touchdown, while also having a pass interference call against him. Either he needs to turn it around, or the Vikings need to bench him.

The player of the game on offense was Kyle Rudolph, who caught four passes for 50 yards and a touchdown. After having a beautiful one-handed catch against the Cowboys, he one-upped himself on Monday, making TWO one-handed catches against Seattle.

The player of the game on offense was Anthony Harris, who was able to haul in a twice-tipped pass and return it for a touchdown. It was a great heads up play, and a big momentum swing in the game.

Looking ahead, the Vikings (8-4) return home to take on the Lions (3-8-1). The Lions have already been eliminated from the playoffs, and their quarterback Matthew Stafford has missed the last few games with an injury. This should be an easy win for the Vikings, and will give them a chance to right the ship. Skol!

Groton City Council Meeting Agenda

December 3, 2019 – 7:00pm

Groton Community Center

1. Open 2020 Gravel Bids
2. Public Comments - pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1

(Public Comments will offer the opportunity for anyone not listed on the agenda to speak to the council. Speaking time will be limited to 3 minutes. No action will be taken on questions or items not on the agenda.)
3. Minutes
4. Bills
5. Department Reports
6. Web Water Annual Meeting – December 6th
7. 2nd reading of Ordinance #731 – Supplemental Appropriation Ordinance
8. Christmas Light Contest
9. 2020 Fees
10. NECOG Joint Cooperative Agreement
11. Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
12. 1st reading of Ordinance #732 – 2020 Salary Ordinance
13. Hire skating rink employees
14. Hire Planning and Zoning Code Inspector
15. Adjournment

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*Olive Grove's
4th Annual*

Christmas Tour of Homes & Holiday Party

SATURDAY, DEC. 7, 2019

TOUR OF HOMES - 4-7 P.M.

Steve & Betty Dunker
Brett & Anna Schwan
Ryan & Jennifer Schelle
Olde Bank n' Café

**COFFEE, APPLE CIDER AND
GOODIES AT THE CLUBHOUSE**

HOLIDAY PARTY - 4 P.M. TO CLOSE

A variety of snacks served
Silent Basket Items

Bidding Closes at 8:30 p.m.

Live Auction begins at 8:30 p.m.

**\$15 TICKETS AVAILABLE AT
LORI'S PHARMACY, GROTON
GROTON FORD
HAIR & COMPANY, ABERDEEN**

COME ON OUT FOR A FUN EVENING!

Support your local golf course!

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Today



Sunny

High: 34 °F

Tonight



Mostly Clear

Low: 24 °F

Wednesday



Mostly Sunny

High: 31 °F

Wednesday
Night



Increasing
Clouds


Low: 20 °F

Thursday



Mostly Cloudy


High: 29 °F

 NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

**Slow Snow Melt
Today**

**Highs Today:
30-40°**

**Highs on
Wednesday:
29-37°**



Published on: 12/03/2019 at 12:30AM

Slow snow melt expected across portions of the area today and Wednesday as highs climb into the 30s under high pressure and a warmer Pacific airmass.

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Today in Weather History

December 3, 1991: Strong northwesterly winds behind a departing surface low brought blizzard conditions and dangerously cold wind chill readings across west central and southwest Minnesota on the 3rd. A general 1 to 3-inch snowfall occurred across the area and combined with winds gusting to 50 mph at times to generate whiteout conditions from the morning into the evening. Air temperatures coupled with the strong wind to produce wind chill values ranging from 30 to 50 below zero. Some schools and businesses were closed during the morning as the storm intensified. Several car accidents and jackknifed tractor-semitrailers littered roadways. Many roads were closed at the height of the storm. Power outages occurred over a small portion of the area due to the strong winds downing ice-covered power lines.

December 3, 1838: Cleveland Abbe, an American meteorologist, and advocate of time zones was born on this day. He was trained as an astronomer and was appointed the director of the Cincinnati Observatory in 1868. He eventually turned to meteorology and inaugurated a public weather service that served as a model for today's National Weather Service.

1856 - A severe blizzard began to rage across Iowa and Kansas. It produced as much as 16 inches of snow in Iowa. (David Ludlum)

1926 - Yuma, AZ, was soaked with 1.10 inch of rain, and by the 10th of the month had received 4.43 inches, making it the wettest December of record. The average annual rainfall for Yuma is 3.38 inches. (3rd-10th) (The Weather Channel)

1983 - Birmingham, AL, was drenched with 9.22 inches of rain in 24 hours. The rains caused severe flash flooding which literally submerged traffic. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Stormy weather in the northwestern U.S. finally began to abate, but not before Gold Beach OR was drenched with 7.94 inches of rain in 24 hours. Low pressure spread snow from the Upper Mississippi Valley to the Central Appalachians. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Gale force winds ushered cold air into the northeastern U.S., and produced snow squalls in the Lower Great Lakes Region. Winds gusted to 48 mph at Buffalo NY. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Heavy snow and high winds created blizzard conditions in northern New England. Snowfall totals in Maine ranged up to 31 inches, at Limestone. Presque Isle ME reported a record 30 inches of snow in 24 hours, along with wind gusts to 46 mph. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 29 °F at 1:42 PM

Low Temp: 2 °F at 3:11 AM

Wind: 20 mph at 1:25 PM

Day Rain: 0.00

Record High: 63° in 1941

Record Low: -18° in 1905, 1897

Average High: 30°F

Average Low: 10°F

Average Precip in Dec.: 0.04

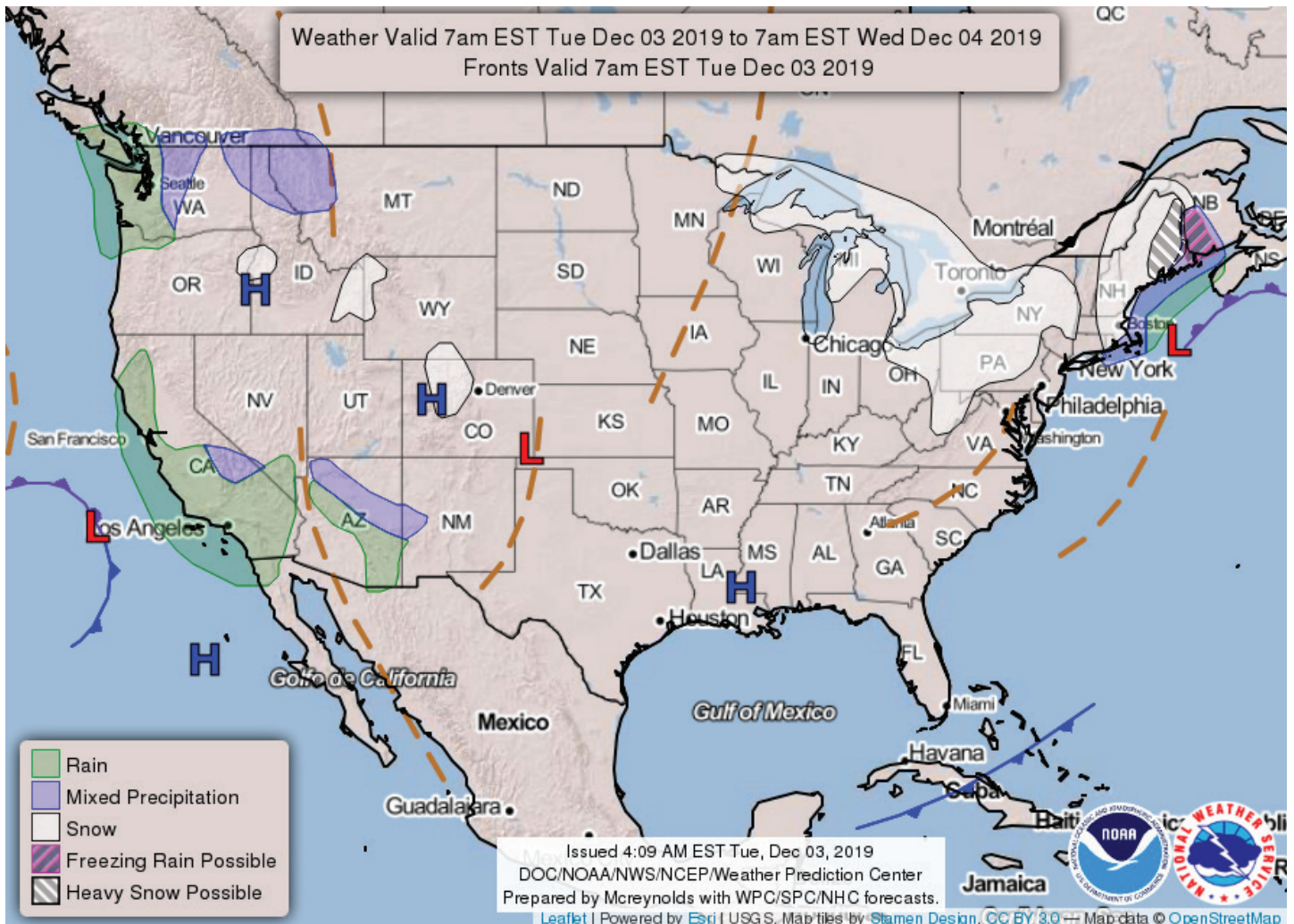
Precip to date in Dec.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 21.24

Precip Year to Date: 27.95

Sunset Tonight: 4:51 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:56 a.m.



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WHAT GIFT?

Joyce fell behind in her Christmas shopping and suddenly realized that she had neglected to purchase cards for her friends. Hurriedly, she ran to the "surprise" section of a large greeting card store and purchased 100 cards with a beautiful scene of a family gathered in front of a glowing fireplace enjoying its warmth.

Returning home she hastily signed each of the cards without reading the message. Several days later she was sitting with her husband reviewing the guest list for a family dinner. She decided to show him the card she had sent to their friends.

After looking at the picture, she opened the card and read the verse to Jason, her husband: "This card is sent to you to say, A lovely gift is on the way!" Quite a surprise!

God gave us a "star" to alert us that His "lovely gift" would be discovered in a manger – His son. All of the books of the Bible describe the Gift that He promised to send, tell us the reason for His gift, and what we can enjoy now and in the life to come because of His gift.

But, as with every gift, there are two parts: one is the giver and the other is the receiver. An angel rejoiced and proclaimed: "For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior which is Christ the Lord." That is God the Giver, giving. And, John said, "As many as received Him...to them He gave life." But that is our choice: the receiver - to accept God's gift, His Son.

Prayer: We thank You, Father, for the Gift of life You provided for each of us in Your Son. May we accept Your Gift in faith believing, that He came to save us. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: John 1:12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.

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2019 Groton SD Community Events

- 12/03/2019 – Christmas Open House 10am-4pm, James Valley Telecommunications
- 12/07/2019 – Santa Day 9am-12pm, Professional Management Services
- 12/07/2019 – Tour of Homes 4pm-7pm, Olive Grove Golf Course (Tickets available at Lori's Pharmacy, Groton Ford, Hair & Co (Aberdeen) and Vicki Walter (605) 380-0480)
- 12/19/2019 – Christmas Open House 10am-4pm, Wells Fargo Bank
- 12/20/2019 – Holiday Bake Sale & Open House 9am-4pm, Groton Community Transit
 - 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)

News from the Associated Press

Prosecutor: Sturgis man who planned murder is master of lies

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Prosecutors say a Sturgis man who planned and helped with the kidnapping, murder and burial of his ex-girlfriend went to great lengths to cover up the crime.

Thirty-year-old Jonathan Klinetobe appeared in state court in Rapid City Monday for the first day of his sentencing hearing. He could be sentenced to life without parole after pleading guilty to aiding and abetting first-degree manslaughter in the death of 22-year-old Jessica Rehfeld.

The Rapid City Journal reports Pennington County prosecutor Lara Roetzel called Klinetobe a master of lies and deception who recruited others and crafted complex stories to avoid being caught.

Rehfeld was fatally stabbed in May 2015 after she ended a relationship with Klinetobe.

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

Noem set to lay out proposed budget amid revenue dips

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Gov. Kristi Noem is about to offer her proposed budget for the next year amid some signs that revenue will be down.

The Republican governor delivers her budget address in Pierre on Tuesday. In just a few weeks, legislators will be in session to take up her proposals and hear from state agencies as they craft a final budget.

The state will be seeing less money as an internet access tax comes to an end. That will mean up to \$25 million less in revenue.

Overall state revenue is also running nearly \$4 million behind projections over the past four months.

No. 22 Washington shuts down South Dakota 75-55

By CHRIS TALBOTT Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — Things are about to get serious for the No. 22 Washington. Coach Mike Hopkins isn't sure his Huskies are ready.

Washington beat South Dakota 77-55 on Monday night in what was ultimately a fairly easy game.

After the game, Hopkins appeared tired. The kind of tired when you know No. 9 Gonzaga is coming to town on Sunday and you have one warmup game this week to get ready.

"I think as coaches you're not as optimistic as you'd like to be at this time of year," Hopkins said. "But I think the one thing I learned over time as an assistant for years is every coach is complaining about their team this time of year. That's why you play the preseason. You wish you could be perfect, but we're not. You've just got to get better."

The Huskies (6-1) took a step in that direction as their highly touted freshmen led the way again.

Jaden McDaniels scored 20 points and Isaiah Stewart added 16 points and 15 rebounds. The Huskies won their fourth straight game by defending the 3-point line against the nation's top long-distance shooting team, holding the Coyotes to just 17.4% from behind the arc.

South Dakota entered the game hitting 47.4% of its 3s and featured college basketball's best 3-point shooter, Tyler Hagedorn. The Coyotes hit just 4 of 23 and the Huskies held Hagedorn, who had hit 18 of 24 3s coming in, without a 3 on five attempts. South Dakota has lost three of four.

Washington held South Dakota scoreless for stretches of more than three minutes three times in the first half. The longest was 5:55 and helped the Huskies put together a 13-2 run late in the first half.

McDaniels started the run with a 3 and a turnaround jumper from the baseline, part of a run of 10 consecutive points for the freshman forward. He added a floater on a drive and a 17-foot jumper to end the run and put Washington up 32-23 at the break.

McDaniels' 15 points in the first half had a lot to do with that lead, and so did the Huskies' defense.

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They held the nation's top 3-point shooting team to 3 of 13 (23.1%) from behind the arc in the first half and 27.3% (9 of 33) overall.

Washington extended the run into the second half, scoring seven straight points to start the period, building a 39-23 lead on a pass from McDaniels to Stewart through traffic for a dunk on the fast break.

Stewart also played an important role on defense, directing his teammates to shooters while defending the paint in the low post.

"I have the eyes back there so I try to talk to my brothers out there, let them know when the shooter's coming through, who's in the high post," Stewart said.

Stanley Umude led South Dakota with 17 points, Cody Kelly scored 11 and Hagedorn had 10.

The Coyotes cut the Huskies' lead to four multiple times midway through the second half. But Stewart slammed home his own miss to make it 58-52 with 5:23 left and Washington pulled away from there, finishing the game on a 19-3 run.

Jamal Bey added 14 for the Huskies and Nahziah Carter had 12 points and nine rebounds.

"I thought there were some really good points, but I also thought there were some frustrating points," Hopkins said. "Getting the lead, then a couple bad shots, then breaking down defensively, we allowed (South Dakota comebacks) to happen. Then when the game started getting closer it looked like we lost our poise a little bit. That's what you get with youth."

DOMINANT D

No member of the Coyotes shot better than 50 percent in the team's most difficult shooting game of the season. Hagedorn and Umude, picked as the Summit League's preseason player of the year, missed 26 of their 37 combined shots and 10 of their 11 3s. The team made just 1 of 10 3-point attempts the second half.

"Defending the 3-point shot is a really, really important in college basketball," Hopkins said. "It's important for us. It's what we stress every day. It hasn't been great so far, but tonight it was pretty good."

BIG PICTURE

South Dakota: Picked to finish second in the Summit League, the Coyotes showed grit and skill against the Huskies. While it doesn't help the bottom line, the loss will help South Dakota when conference play begins.

Washington: South Dakota offered the Huskies something of a challenge, forcing them to defend the 3 and the paint. Troubling that Washington failed to dominate the smaller Coyotes early in the game. We'll see just how far the Huskies have come when No. 9 Gonzaga comes to town Sunday.

UP NEXT

South Dakota: The Coyotes return home to play NAIA Mount Marty on Friday after a stretch of four games on the road.

Washington: The Huskies continue a seven-game nonconference homestand with Eastern Washington on Wednesday, their last warmup before hosting No. 9 Gonzaga on Sunday.

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

Idaho community mourns 9 relatives killed in plane crash

By **STEPHEN GROVES AND KEITH RIDLER** Associated Press

STIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — When Jim Hansen boarded his company's single-engine aircraft for a pheasant-hunting trip to South Dakota, he brought along the same people he trusted with his business: his family.

Three generations of Hansen's clan ran a petroleum distribution business in Idaho Falls, Idaho, called Conrad & Bischoff. Hansen's sons, Jim Jr. and Kirk, had started in the company making deliveries and now oversaw operations across several states, in addition to their own endeavors that included a health products company. And Hansen's grandchildren worked in management.

The family headed back to Idaho on Saturday, but their plane crashed about a mile after takeoff from the Chamberlain airport, nine family members — from Hansen to his great-grandson Houston — died.

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They left behind burgeoning businesses that reached across several Western states.

Those killed were Jim Hansen Sr.; his sons, Jim Jr. and Kirk Hansen; Kirk Hansen's children Stockton and Logan; Kirk Hansen's sons-in-law, Kyle Naylor and Tyson Dennert; and Jim Hansen Jr.'s son Jake and grandson Houston were killed.

Kirk's son Josh, Jim Jr.'s son Matt and Jim Jr.'s son-in-law, Thomas Long, survived and were in stable condition Monday.

Family representative Jeff Walbom called the crash a "total tragedy" and described how their loss rippled through their Idaho community, from church to their businesses.

Jim Hansen Sr. bought a petroleum transportation company called Conrad & Bischoff in 1974. Walbom, who is the company's chief financial officer, said the elder Hansen instilled business-sense into his two sons. As a teenager, Kirk helped the family business by making long-distance deliveries in commercial trucks, according to a bio on one of their business websites.

Both brothers attended Brigham Young University-Idaho. They joined their father's company and expanded it to include gas stations across four Western states. Three of their sons who were in the crash also worked for the business.

Kirk and his brother also founded a wellness products marketing company called Kyani in 2007. That business had a charitable arm that built schools in several foreign countries.

The Hansens lived some 800 miles (1,290 kilometers) west of Chamberlain in Idaho Falls. Like most members of the city of 61,000 people in southeast Idaho, they belonged to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

People who knew the Hansens recalled their generosity. Brian Wood, owner of an Idaho Falls funeral home, posted on Facebook about how Kirk and Jim had helped pay funeral expenses for people in need.

When the plane crashed Saturday, the clan was returning home from Thunderstik Lodge, a pheasant-hunting lodge that sits on the bank of the Missouri River just a few miles from Chamberlain's airport. The outing had been an annual tradition for many years, said Walbom.

The area was under a winter storm warning with snow and cloud cover. Chamberlain City Engineer Greg Powell told The Argus Leader that the airport had issued two notices about ice and snow on the runway.

Federal Aviation Administration spokeswoman Elizabeth Isham Cory said small planes are not usually restricted from taking off during storms and that pilots are "the ultimate authority" for deciding whether to fly.

Federal investigators examined the crash site Monday and will be working throughout the week. National Transportation Safety Board spokesman Peter Knudson said no cause has been determined and that investigators would be reviewing the weather along with other factors. Storms in the region prevented investigators from reaching the site earlier.

The plane was not required to have a cockpit voice recorder or a flight data recorder, but investigators will study the wreckage and broadcasts from the plane's flight. The NTSB said it expected a preliminary report in about two weeks.

It's not clear who the pilot was, but Kirk Hansen had a private pilot certificate and his medical information was up to date with the FAA.

This story has been updated to correct the last name of one of the plane crash victims to Naylor, instead of Taylor.

Ridler reported from Boise, Idaho.

Embattled prosecutor confirms resignation plan, cites health

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Minnehaha County's embattled state's attorney confirms he plans to resign this week, citing health issues.

Aaron McGowan said in a statement to KELO.com News he developed a blood clot after knee replace-

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ment surgery on Oct. 18, and required more surgery on Nov. 1.

Questions have arisen about McGowan's leadership and fitness for office following lengthy absences from his job that were investigated by Attorney General Jason Ravnsborg at the request of Gov. Kristi Noem.

McGowan was absent for much of the summer and after returning in September said he would be leaving again for knee replacement surgery. The attorney general's report recounted incidents of drunkenness and unexplained absences. After the report was made public, McGowan apologized for the distraction of his personal struggles.

The Minnehaha County Commission will consider McGowan's resignation on Tuesday. His resignation would take effect Friday. The 45-year-old McGowan was first elected in 2008.

Midwest economy: November state-by-state glance

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

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

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

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

Arkansas: The state's overall index sank to 49.7 from October's 53.4. The components of the index were new orders at 47.8, production or sales at 43.4, delivery lead time at 56.4, inventories at 62.4, and employment at 38.4. "Over the past 12 months Arkansas' manufacturing sector has boosted hourly wages by 4.6%, fourth in the nine-state region. Both durable and nondurable goods are shedding jobs at a slightly negative pace," Goss said.

Iowa: The state's overall index slipped to 49.2 in November from October's 53.5. Components of the overall index were new orders at 46.8, production or sales at 43.7, delivery lead time at 61.9, employment at 37.9, and inventories at 55.5. "Over the past 12 months the state's manufacturing sector has lifted hourly wages by 3.2%, seventh in the nine-state region. Agriculture equipment manufacturers are adding jobs at a slow pace, while transportation equipment producers are losing jobs at a measured pace," Goss said.

Kansas: The overall Kansas index decreased to 51 in November from October's 54.6. Index components were new orders at 52.1, production or sales at 42.8, delivery lead time at 63.2, employment at 39.3, and inventories at 57.7. "Over the past 12 months the state's manufacturing sector has increased hourly wages by 2.3%, ninth in the nine-state region. Aerospace product and parts manufacturers are adding jobs at a solid pace, while food producers are experiencing flat job levels," Goss said.

Minnesota: The overall Minnesota index slipped to 50.9 from 51.3 in October. Index components were new orders at 47, production or sales at 52.9, delivery lead time at 61.8, inventories at 55.2, and employment at 37.7. "Over the past 12 months the state's manufacturing sector has lifted hourly wages by 5.6%, third in the nine-state region. Medical equipment producers are adding jobs at a solid pace, while food processors are shedding jobs," Goss said.

Missouri: The overall index for Missouri sank to 48.4 from October's 53.6. Index components were new orders at 46.7, production or sales at 43.9, delivery lead time at 59.8, inventories at 55.1, and employment at 37.6. "Over the past 12 months the state's manufacturing sector has boosted hourly wages by 2.4%, eighth in the nine-state region. While manufacturing job losses for November were noteworthy, metal products producers and computer and component manufacturers are adding jobs at a solid pace," Goss said.

Nebraska: The overall Nebraska index fell to 48.2 from October's 53.7. Index components were new orders at 44.6, production or sales at 44.3, delivery lead time at 61.1, inventories at 54.1, and employment at 36.9. "Over the past 12 months the state's manufacturing sector has lifted hourly wages by 3.8%, fifth in the nine-state region. Farm machinery manufacturers are shedding jobs, but at a slight pace, while food producers are adding jobs at a positive rate," Goss said.

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North Dakota: The overall index for North Dakota rose slightly to 50 from October's 49.7. Index components were new orders at 49.4, production or sales at 43.4, delivery lead time at 62.4, employment at 38.5, and inventories at 56.4. "Over the past 12 months the state's manufacturing sector has boosted hourly wages by 6.2%, second in the nine-state region. Durable goods manufacturers are adding jobs at a positive pace while nondurable goods producers are losing jobs at a slow pace," Goss said.

Oklahoma: The overall Oklahoma index for November sank to 47.8 from October's 48.7. Index components were new orders at 43.6, production or sales at 44.5, delivery lead time at 60.9, inventories at 53.6, and employment at 36.6. "Over the past 12 months the state's manufacturing sector has increased hourly wages by 3.5%, sixth in the nine-state region. Both durable and nondurable goods manufacturers are experiencing job losses," Goss said.

South Dakota: The overall index for South Dakota fell to 48.9 from October's 52.6. Index components were new orders at 37.5, production or sales at 43.9, delivery lead time at 61.7, inventories at 55, and employment at 46.6. "Over the past 12 months the state's manufacturing sector has lifted hourly wages by 8.7%, first in the nine-state region. Until November, both durable and nondurable goods manufacturers had been adding jobs at a solid pace," Goss said.

Survey suggests economy slowing in 9 Midwest, Plains states

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — A new monthly survey of business leaders suggests the economy is slowing down in nine Midwest and Plains states as the U.S. trade war with China continues, according to a report released Monday.

The overall index for the region slipped into negative territory at 48.6 in November from October's 52.6.

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

"Slow global growth and trade skirmishes and wars are negatively affecting growth among manufacturers in the region," said Creighton University economist Ernie Goss, who oversees the survey.

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

The regional trade numbers showed new export orders falling to 39.1 from October's 44.7. But imports increased to 52 in November from last month's 48.2 as supply managers bought additional items ahead of higher tariffs expected in the weeks ahead.

The region's employment index fell to 37.2 in November from October's 50 as some businesses struggled to find workers to hire. Goss said the availability of workers continues to constrain job growth in the region.

The confidence index, which measures sentiment about the next six months, improved to 52.9 in November from October's 47.3. Goss said business confidence will depend on the progress in trade talks with China and the passage of the nation's trade agreement with Canada and Mexico.

The wholesale price index, which measures inflation, increased to 65.7 in November from 57 in October. Goss said tariffs have had only a modest impact on inflation so far.

Driver who struck pedestrian arrested for drunken driving

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The driver of a vehicle that drove onto a Sioux Falls sidewalk and struck a person has been arrested.

Sioux Falls police say the pedestrian was taken to a local hospital Saturday with injuries that were not believed to be life threatening.

Authorities say the driver was arrested for driving while intoxicated and reckless driving.

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Trump calls Democrats impeachment push "unpatriotic"

By AAMER MADHANI and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — President Donald Trump criticized Democrats at the opening of a NATO leaders' meeting Tuesday, calling the impeachment push by his rivals "unpatriotic" and "a bad thing for our country."

Trump, who commented while meeting with NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg, has criticized Democrats for holding an impeachment hearing while he is abroad.

The House Judiciary Committee has set a hearing on the constitutional grounds for Trump's possible impeachment on Wednesday just before he wraps up two days of meetings with NATO alliance members in London.

"I think it's very unpatriotic of the Democrats to put on a performance," Trump said. "I think it's a bad thing for our country."

Trump isn't the only one complaining. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, White House counsel Pat Cipollone and adviser Kellyanne Conway all have criticized the committee's timing.

Trump insists he's solely focused on scoring domestic and foreign policy wins, including revamping NATO so that allies spend more on defense. But he's often appeared consumed by the day-to-day battle against impeachment.

"I'm not even thinking about it," Trump insisted anew Tuesday.

Before the trip to London, Trump slammed "Do Nothing Democrats" for scheduling the hearing during the NATO meeting as "Not nice!"

He also said that during the flight he had read a newly issued Republican-prepared report on impeachment that called his decision to hold up military aid to Ukraine "entirely prudent."

Democrats contend Trump abused his presidential powers by holding up the aid to pressure Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to investigate former Vice President Joe Biden and his son.

But Trump was adamant that the cloud of impeachment wasn't undercutting his negotiating position on the international stage.

"I know most of the leaders," Trump said. "I get along with them. It's a hoax. The impeachment is a hoax. It's turned out to be a hoax. It's done for purely political gain. They're going to see whether or not they can do something in 2020 because otherwise they're going to lose."

Trump remained focused on his reelection campaign while in London, attending a hotel fundraiser with Americans living abroad to benefit the Trump Victory fund, the joint account of his campaign and the Republican National Committee. The fundraiser is bringing in \$3 million for the reelection effort, according to a Republican familiar with the event.

Trump also appeared to lower expectations before the Dec. 9 release of a Justice Department inspector general's report into the origins of the Russia investigation that bedeviled his first years in office.

Responding to a report that the inspector general concluded that the probe was properly founded, Trump said he was more focused on a separate report being prepared by U.S. Attorney John Durham, who was tapped by Attorney General Bill Barr to launch his own investigation.

"That's the one that people are really waiting for," Trump said.

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. HOUSE REPORT TO OUTLINE EVIDENCE FOR TRUMP IMPEACHMENT

The findings will lay the foundation for the House Judiciary Committee to assess potential articles of impeachment, presenting a history-making test of political judgment.

2. TRUMP BASHES DEMOCRATS, FRANCE AT NATO SUMMIT

The president criticizes Democrats in London, calling the impeachment push by his rivals "unpatriotic," and says French President Macron has insulted the NATO alliance.

3. NATO LEADERS GATHER FOR SUMMIT

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Trump and his NATO counterparts are gathering in London amid deep tensions as spats between leaders expose a lack of unity that risks undermining the military organization's credibility.

4. WHAT IRAN ACKNOWLEDGED

That security forces shot and killed what it described as "rioters" in multiple cities amid recent protests over the spike in government-set gasoline prices, a number Amnesty International put at more than 200.

5. WHY THE EVERGLADES MAY NEVER COME BACK

Nearly two decades and \$4 billion into a sweeping restoration program, new data about the pace of climate change raises questions about how much of the Florida park can ever be regained.

6. 'YOU JUST HIDE'

Residents of the Mexican border town of Villa Union describe how gunbattles between cartel gunmen and police left 22 people dead, and the town's buildings riddled with bullet holes.

7. WHERE RACIAL DIVIDE IS DECLINING

The racial gap in the U.S. criminal justice system narrows over 16 years largely thanks to a drop in drug crimes, but black people are still much more likely to be in prison than whites, a new study says.

8. VAPING INCREASING ON LAW ENFORCEMENT'S RADAR

Authorities across the country have seized at least a half-million marijuana vape cartridges and arrested more than 120 people in the last two years, AP finds.

9. WHO WON BIG AT GOTHAM AWARDS

Noah Baumbach's "Marriage Story" takes four awards, including best feature at the annual New York awards-season kickoff.

10. SEAHAWKS TAKE NFC WEST LEAD

Rashaad Penny scores two touchdowns and Seattle (10-2) built a big second-half lead before holding off the Minnesota Vikings 37-30.

Iran state TV says 'rioters' shot and killed amid protests

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iranian state television on Tuesday acknowledged security forces shot and killed what it described as "rioters" in multiple cities amid recent protests over the spike in government-set gasoline prices — the first time that authorities have offered any sort of accounting for the violence they used to put down the demonstrations.

Amnesty International believes the unrest and crackdown that followed, beginning in mid-November, killed at least 208 people. An Iranian judiciary official disputed the toll as "sheer lies," without offering any evidence to support his position.

Iran shut down internet access amid the unrest, blocking those inside the country from sharing their videos and information. It also limited the outside world's insight into the scale of the protests and the violence, though online videos have emerged purporting to show security forces shooting protesters.

The recent demonstrations over gasoline prices — while not drawing as many Iranians into the streets as the 2009 protests over the country's disputed presidential election — rapidly turned violent, faster than previous rallies.

That shows the widespread economic discontent gripping Iran since May 2018, when President Donald Trump imposed crushing sanctions after unilaterally withdrawing from Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers.

The demonstrations came after months of attacks across the Mideast that the U.S. blames on Tehran. Meanwhile, Iran has begun breaking the limits of the nuclear deal in hopes of pressuring Europe into finding a way for Tehran to sell its crude oil abroad despite American sanctions.

The state TV report alleged that some of those killed were "rioters who have attacked sensitive or military centers with firearms or knives or have taken hostages in some areas." The report described others killed as passers-by, security forces and peaceful protesters, without assigning blame for their deaths.

In one case, the report said security forces confronted a separatist group armed with "semi-heavy weap-

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ons" in the city of Mahshahr in Iran's southwestern Khuzestan province. The surrounding oil-rich province's Arab population long has complained of discrimination by Iran's central government and insurgent groups have attacked oil pipelines in the past there. Online videos purportedly from the area showed peaceful protests, as well as clashes between demonstrators and security forces.

"The marshes you see behind me and on the right are where hostile groups were hiding and shooting at the police, but praise to Allah, the armed forces deftly and vigilantly came to the field and foiled their plots," Mahshahr police chief Col. Reza Papi said in the report.

State TV also acknowledged that security forces confronted "rioters" in Tehran, as well as in the cities of Shiraz and Sirjan. It also mentioned Shahriar, a suburb of Tehran where Amnesty on Monday said there had been "dozens of deaths." It described the suburb as likely one of the areas with the highest toll of those killed in the unrest. Shahriar has seen heavy protests.

Amnesty offered no breakdown for the deaths elsewhere in the country, though it said "the real figure is likely to be higher."

Judiciary spokesman Gholamhossein Esmaili disputed Amnesty's death toll.

"I bluntly say that numbers and figures given by hostile groups are sheer lies," he told reporters on Tuesday. "Real statistics are seriously different from what they announce and numbers are far less than what they claim."

However, Esmaili — like every other Iranian official since the crackdown — offered no evidence to support his claim, nor any casualty information. A United Nations agency also has said it fears the unrest may have killed "a significant number of people."

He also said that the "majority of the detainees" from the protests had been released, without offering any numbers. One Iranian lawmaker previously said he thought that over 7,000 people had been arrested.

The demonstrations began after authorities raised minimum gasoline prices by 50% to 15,000 Iranian rials per liter. That's 12 cents a liter, or about 50 cents a gallon. After a monthly 60-liter quota, it costs 30,000 rials a liter. That's nearly 24 cents a liter or 90 cents a gallon. An average gallon of regular gas in the U.S. costs \$2.58 by comparison, according to AAA.

Cheap gasoline is practically considered a birthright in Iran, home to the world's fourth-largest crude oil reserves despite decades of economic woes since its 1979 Islamic Revolution. That disparity, especially given Iran's oil wealth, fueled the anger felt by demonstrators.

Already, Iranians have seen their savings chewed away by the rial's collapse from 32,000 to \$1 at the time of the 2015 nuclear accord to 127,000 to \$1 today. Daily staples also have risen in price.

Trump on Tuesday kept up the pressure while speaking to journalists in London, alleging without evidence that Iran was "killing perhaps thousands and thousands of people right now as we speak." The protests largely have subsided and no group has offered estimates that high.

"Not just small numbers — which are bad — (but) big numbers — which are really bad," Trump said, urging reporters to travel to Iran. "I think it's a terrible thing and I think the world has to be watching."

In Tehran, President Hassan Rouhani met with Yusuf bin Alawi, Oman's minister responsible for foreign affairs. Alawi last week met U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in Washington. Oman, a sultanate on the eastern edge of the Arabian Peninsula, has served as an interlocutor between Iran and the U.S. in the past.

The U.S. has "repeatedly offered proposals. Forget about their slogans that are mentioned in their speeches," Rouhani said, according to the presidency's website. "They have learned that this way is an incorrect way and reached nowhere."

Trump attacks French leader Macron over NATO comments

By LORNE COOK Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — U.S. President Donald Trump on Tuesday took aim at President Emmanuel Macron over the French leader's criticism of NATO, and criticized the other members of the military alliance for being too slow to beef up their defense budgets.

As prime ministers and presidents of the 29-member alliance converged on London for a summit mark-

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ing NATO's 70th birthday, Trump told reporters Macron's comments were "very nasty" when he lamented the "brain death" of the organization due in large part to a lack of U.S. leadership.

"Sometimes he'll say things that he shouldn't say," Trump said. "Sometimes I think he does things that are counterproductive for his own country."

During campaigning for the last election, Trump described NATO as "obsolete." He has since tempered his criticism somewhat.

Relations between the U.S. and France are particularly strained this week after The U.S. Trade Representative proposed introducing tariffs on \$2.4 billion in goods in retaliation for a French tax on global tech giants including Google, Amazon and Facebook. Trump and Macron are due to meet on the sidelines of the summit.

Discussing military funding, Trump noted that "a lot of countries haven't paid."

After Russia annexed the Crimean Peninsula in 2014, NATO countries halted their post-Cold War spending cuts and began increasing spending. They pledged to "move toward" spending 2% of GDP on their national defense budgets by 2024.

"You could make the case that they've been delinquent for 25-30 years," Trump said, after talks with NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg. He added that the figure of 2% "is a very low number, it really should be 4."

Stoltenberg, given the unenviable task of trying to hold NATO together as its leaders take pot shots at each other, said that "we're doing more together, North America and Europe, than we have done in many decades."

European allies and Canada are forecast by the end of this year to have increased defense spending by \$130 billion since 2016. NATO predicts they will be spending \$400 billion more by 2024.

The summit in London comes amid a series of spats between leaders that threatens to expose a lack of unity that could well undermine the military organization's credibility.

Macron insisted ahead of the meeting that the endless spending debate should be set aside so that NATO can focus on important strategic questions like who its enemies really are, how to improve ties with Russia and what to do with an unpredictable ally like Turkey.

In turn, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has lashed out at Macron, and the very public arguments bode ill for a summit hosted by British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who is deep into an electoral campaign and desperately wants to smooth things over.

Ankara raised the ire of its allies by invading northern Syria, and for buying Russian air defense systems with powerful computers aboard that suck up data and would compromise the military equipment of allies if they were stationed nearby.

Before heading to London, Erdogan suggested that Turkey might not back Poland and NATO's Baltic allies — Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania — should they require defending unless the allies support Turkish concerns about Syrian Kurdish fighters, which Ankara sees as terrorists.

That threat raises new questions about NATO's commitment to its collective defense clause — Article 5 — under which all allies vow to come to the aid of a member under attack. The clause has only ever been activated once, after the 9/11 attacks in the United States.

The two-day summit kicks off late Tuesday with receptions at Buckingham Palace and Downing Street. One short working session will be held at a golf resort in outer London on Wednesday. The aim is to issue a joint declaration — if the summit can survive the friendly fire.

Trump is due to hold separate talks with Macron, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen and Italian Premier Giuseppe Conte on the sidelines of the summit. Johnson is also set to host talks on Syria with Macron, Merkel and Erdogan later Tuesday.

Darlene Superville in London and Suzan Fraser in Ankara contributed to this report.

Greta Thunberg arrives by sail in Europe for climate talks

By BARRY HATTON and FRANK JORDANS Associated Press

LISBON, Portugal (AP) — Climate activist Greta Thunberg arrived Tuesday by catamaran in the port of Lisbon after a three-week voyage across the Atlantic Ocean from the United States.

The Swedish teen sailed to the Portuguese capital before heading to neighboring Spain to attend the U.N. Climate Change Conference taking place in Madrid.

Her arrival coincided with a new scientific report saying there is mounting evidence that the world is getting ever hotter.

Thunberg hitched a renewable-energy ride from the United States, joining an Australian family on their 48-foot (15-meter) yacht.

The white catamaran carrying Thunberg sailed slowly up the River Tagus under blue skies and a stiff breeze. Thunberg's father, Svante, was also on the boat as it approached the Lisbon quayside.

Chile's Environment Minister Carolina Schmidt, saluted Thunberg's role speaking out about the threat of climate change.

"She has been a leader that has been able to move and open hearts for many young people and many people all over the world," Schmidt said at the summit in Madrid.

"We need that tremendous force in order to increase climate action," she said.

Thunberg was due to be met in Lisbon by local dignitaries and other activists. Her representatives said they could not confirm when she would travel onward to the Spanish capital, 600 kilometers (370 miles) to the east.

She wanted a low-carbon form of transport to get to the climate meeting, which was switched at short notice to Spain from Chile due to unrest there.

The yacht, named La Vagabonde, leaves little or no carbon footprint when its sails are up, using solar panels and hydro-generators for electricity.

Meanwhile, a report by the U.N. weather agency released on the sidelines of the climate talks found that the current decade is likely to set a new 10-year temperature record.

Preliminary temperature measurements show the years from 2015 to 2019 and from 2010 to 2019 "are, respectively, almost certain to be the warmest five-year period and decade on record," the World Meteorological Organization said.

"Since the 1980s, each successive decade has been warmer than the last," the agency said.

While full-year figures aren't released until next March, 2019 is also expected to be the second or third warmest year since measurements began, with 2016 still holding the all-time temperature record, it said.

This year was hotter than average in most parts of the world, including the Arctic. "In contrast a large area of North America has been colder than the recent average," the U.N. said.

The World Meteorological Organization's annual report, which brings together data from numerous national weather agencies and research organizations, also highlighted the impacts of climate change including declining sea ice and rising sea levels, which reached their highest level this year since high-precision measurements began in 1993.

Jordans reported from Berlin.

Follow AP's climate coverage at <https://www.apnews.com/Climate>

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

How the gunfights in north Mexico that left 22 dead unfolded

By MARIA VERZA Associated Press

VILLA UNION, Mexico (AP) — When dozens of pickup trucks crowded with armed men and mounted machine guns roared into Villa Union, residents of the small town near the U.S. border began to realize they were the target of a military-style invasion. What followed were hours-long gunbattles between a company-sized unit (estimates of its size range from 70 to 150 men) and state police that left 22 people dead. At least 50 homes and buildings riddled with bullet holes.

In the aftermath, authorities found 25 abandoned vehicles, some with machine-gun turrets and welded armoring; many had professionally printed placards identifying them as drug cartel vehicles. At least four had .50 caliber mounted machine guns. Resident claimed there were at least twice that many pickups, with some escaping.

Residents, most of whom asked that their names not be used for fear of reprisals, described how the day of terror unfolded.

Saturday, Nov. 30, 10:00 a.m.

Residents of the town of 6,000 were still recovering from Thanksgiving, when hundreds of relatives return from the United States to join their families in a border version of the holiday many here refer to as Dia del Pavo, or Turkey Day. Local business owners were enjoying good sales this year. After a period of terror between 2010 and 2013, the old Zetas Cartel that had dominated the town had been weakened, and violence had dropped.

A local roast chicken stand began heating up the rotisserie Saturday for the day's business.

"Ever since Thursday night we had been having good sales; a lot of people showed up for Turkey Day," said an employee at a food stand in town's main square.

11:30 a.m.

Residents on the east side of Villa Union — the side closest to the border city of Nuevo Laredo where a splinter of the Zetas cartel had its base — started seeing convoys of pickup trucks rolling into town. At first, many saw the ammo vests the trucks' occupants were wearing and thought they were police or soldiers.

"My brother-in-law counted 50 trucks, but there were more on the other side of town," said one man.

One shop owner counted 20 trucks but stopped counting when he saw that some had Texas plates — or no plates at all. He knew that meant they weren't police. Others began seeing pickups with the letters "CDN" on their side. "CDN" stands for "Cartel del Noreste," or "Cartel of the Northeast," one of the splinter groups of the old Zetas.

11:45 a.m.

People began to hide.

The shop owner who noticed the Texas or absent license plates dove into his shop and hid behind the counter. The attackers descended from their vehicles with assault rifles and as soon as the shopkeeper closed his door, they began firing on the town hall.

"You don't know what to think at a moment like that, you just hide," said the shop owner. Outside, an ambulance and a police patrol truck were shot up; the truck caught fire and burned.

A block away from the town hall, a grandmother pulled her two grandchildren into an armoire to shield them as a hail of gunfire rang through the town. "It seemed like an eternity passed," she said.

Beside the town hall, the objective of the attack, parish priest Federico de los Santos was in his church along with a half-dozen parishioners when the gunfire began. They threw themselves to the ground as the bullets flew.

One young man who was walking down the street in the town's center when the gunfire broke out pounded on a food stall where the 71-year-old owner was starting to roast chicken. He banged until the owner let him in to take cover. They huddled inside.

"I'd never seen a shootout like that except in the movies," said the stall's owner.

12:00 p.m.

The attackers split into at least two groups, and headed toward the west side of town, apparently un-

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aware that army troops and state police had been dispatched from the nearest barracks to the west of Villa Union.

The attackers abducted three civilians: two local firefighter and an employee of the town's public works department. Two were later found dead.

The gunmen also abducted five young men, apparently intending to use the civilians as guides to escape along the dirt roads that circle the town.

12:30 p.m.

The cartel convoys ran into the state police and soldiers on the west side of town, with one especially fierce firefight breaking out near a gas station.

In the ensuing gunbattles, resident recorded the sound of repeated, sequential fire from assault rifles and the steady chatter of machine guns in long bursts. The gunfight lasted for an hour and a half and left four state police officers and at least nine attackers dead.

Saturday night

Police and soldiers combed the outskirts of Villa Union and nearby areas, sometimes using helicopters. Apparently not all the attackers were able to flee back east, toward Nuevo Laredo. Another gunbattle broke out and seven attackers were killed. Many were found to be wearing ammo or bulletproof vests, and camouflage clothing. The Zetas, and the Cartel of the Northeast, are known for using such military equipment.

Sunday

Reinforcements were rushed into the town. Four of the five missing youths turned up alive, apparently freed after guiding the attackers.

Residents began to sweep the shattered glass and bullet casings from the streets

The fifth missing youth, a boy of 15, also appeared alive but traumatized hours later. The attackers had left him far outside of town.

Over 500K pot vapes seized in 2 years as busts rise in US

By JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — As health officials scrutinize marijuana vaping, it's increasingly on law enforcement's radar, too.

From New York City to Nebraska farm country to California, authorities have seized at least 510,000 marijuana vape cartridges and arrested more than 120 people in the past two years, according to an Associated Press tally derived from interviews, court records, news accounts and official releases.

A Wisconsin mother, her two adult sons and five other people were charged this fall in what investigators describe as a black-market manufacturing operation that churned out thousands of cartridges a day packed with THC, the cannabis chemical that causes a high. In neighboring Minnesota, authorities said they found nearly 77,000 illicit pot cartridges in a man's suburban Minneapolis home and car in September.

An Alabama prosecutor has seen a spurt in pot vape cases in juvenile court. And in New York City, drug authorities say they've seized about 200,000 illegal cartridges just since this summer, often while investigating groups suspected of trafficking in traditional-form marijuana or other drugs.

"We're putting a lot more resources in pursuing these organizations," said Ray Donovan, the special agent in charge of the Drug Enforcement Administration's New York office. "This is where the market is going ... These criminal organizations are going to jump on whatever the business model is and try to take advantage and exploit that."

Fueled recently by alarm over a deadly lung illness that health officials have linked to illicit THC vaping, the pursuit of pot cartridges has added a new layer to drug enforcement while authorities are grappling with the opioid crisis and other drug issues.

In states with and without legal marijuana markets, drug investigators, highway patrols and local police departments have been adjusting to searching for a form of marijuana that comes in small packages, doesn't smell like pot and might look like legal nicotine vapes — or require discerning what's legal and not

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in states that allow marijuana use.

California officials seized 7,200 cartridges in October from a Los Angeles warehouse tied to a state-licensed company that made Kushy Punch-brand vapes. The state later revoked the company's license.

Kushy Punch has said the cartridges were old, unusable and not meant for distribution. The brand says it's looking for new manufacturing partners.

Meanwhile, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Narcotics Bureau may soon start tallying vape seizures when busting allegedly illegal pot dispensaries, Capt. Holly Francisco said.

Vaping rapidly gained ground in the past few years among marijuana users as a fast-acting and discreet alternative to smoking the drug. Thirty-three states have legalized marijuana at least for medicinal use, but bootleg vape "carts" — short for cartridges — have cropped up there and elsewhere, selling for roughly \$20 to \$50 apiece.

The illicit marijuana vape market nationwide is estimated at as much as \$2.5 billion this year — roughly equivalent to the market for legal pot cartridges, according to cannabis market researchers BDS Analytics and Arcview Market Research.

The lung-illness outbreak raised alarms about vaping as over 2,200 people fell ill and at least 47 died in the past nine months. Health officials have urged people to avoid vaping, particularly black-market products containing THC, which many of the sick said they had used.

Health officials announced last month that vitamin E acetate, sometimes used to thicken vaping fluid, is a "very strong culprit" as a cause of the illness.

To marijuana legalization advocates, the increased focus on black-market marijuana cartridges is an argument for legalizing and regulating the drug nationally in the name of safety.

"The solution to decreasing the risk associated with THC vapor products lies in continuing towards a legalized and regulated market, not increased criminalization and arrests," said NORML Executive Director Erik Altieri.

While the lung ailment has turned up the urgency around policing illegal pot vaping, it was already on some law enforcement leaders' minds.

As a mom of teenagers, Ashley Rich knew several years ago that flavored-nicotine vaping had caught fire with youngsters. (Federal health officials consider it an epidemic.) As a prosecutor, she dreaded that illegal-drug vapes would surge next. "And that's exactly the trend that we're seeing," said Rich, the district attorney in Mobile County, Alabama, where marijuana remains broadly illegal.

Juvenile court pot vape possession cases have increased roughly threefold in the county in about a year, Rich said. Meanwhile, she's prosecuting two people charged in September with marijuana trafficking after a seizure of 1,971 THC vapes shipped from California. Rich said they were labeled with such flavors as banana, tangelo and Girl Scout cookie.

In Minnesota, authorities have noted a sizeable rise in illicit THC cartridges over the last three or four years, according to Brian Marquart of the state Department of Public Safety.

"It's been a challenge of training officers what to look for, what to do in their investigations, as well as educating the public as to what they may be purchasing if they're purchasing on the street," he said.

Minnesota allows medical marijuana sales, but like many states restricts them to registered patients and approved dispensaries.

Officers and prosecutors have had to ponder how criminal laws designed for plant-form marijuana apply to the small but concentrated cartridges, and how to sample as many as 77,000 of them for testing, Marquart said. That seizure, in the Twin Cities suburb of Coon Rapids, included "Dank" vapes, an underworld brand of sorts that has come up in the vaping illness investigation.

While some big busts stem from investigations and stings, others arise simply from traffic stops.

The Utah State Patrol has rolled up more than 39,000 THC cartridges this year. Indiana troopers said they netted 50,000 vapes, plus about 250 pounds (113 kilograms) of plant-form marijuana, in March after pulling over a truck near Indianapolis for a traffic infraction.

Indiana State Police spokesman Sgt. Matt Ames said THC cartridges have proliferated over the past year

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as neighboring Michigan and Illinois have agreed to legalize recreational weed.

"People are under the assumption now that marijuana is an accepted drug," Ames said, but "we are going to enforce the law of Indiana."

In New York City, a detective on a DEA-managed task force was staking out a Manhattan storage facility in July when he saw three men unload boxes from a truck, according to a court complaint. A search of the truck and a storage unit yielded 24,000 THC vapes and about 230 pounds (104 kg) of pot, according to the complaint and the DEA.

The men pleaded guilty this fall to felony marijuana possession and were sentenced to three years' probation. One of their lawyers, Tony Mirvis, called it "a fair and equitable resolution" for his client.

The DEA's Donovan expects pot vapes will remain a priority for black-market suppliers and the authorities who pursue them.

"That's not going to go away," he said.

Peltz is a member of AP's marijuana beat team. Follow AP's complete marijuana coverage: <https://ap-news.com/Marijuana>.

California Rep. Hunter plans to plead guilty, leave seat

By JULIE WATSON Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — For more than a year, California Rep. Duncan Hunter insisted that criminal charges against him and his wife were the result of a conspiracy of the "deep state" meant to drive the six-term Republican from office in the Democrat-dominated state.

But in a stunning turn of events, Hunter now says he plans to plead guilty to the misuse of campaign funds at a federal court hearing Tuesday in San Diego. Hunter, an early supporter of President Donald Trump, said in a TV interview that aired Monday that he is prepared to go to jail. He has not said exactly when he will resign.

The change in plea marks the second time this year a Republican congressman who was re-elected while indicted has later pleaded guilty to federal charges.

Hunter, 42, said a trial would be tough on his three children.

"I think it's time for them to live life outside the spotlight," he told San Diego TV station KUSI.

His wife Margaret Hunter also was charged in the case and in June accepted a plea deal that called for her to testify against her husband. The couple could have faced decades in prison before the plea deals. His wife faces up to five years in prison.

Federal prosecutors said the couple spent more than \$250,000 in campaign money for golf outings, family vacations to Italy and Hawaii, tequila shots and airline tickets for their pet rabbit.

Prosecutors also revealed Hunter spent some of the money on romantic relationships with lobbyists and congressional aides.

Hunter's departure will mark the end of a political dynasty in Southern California's most Republican district. He was elected in 2008 after his father represented the district for 28 years.

Until now, Hunter had resisted calls to resign, framing the charges as a political attack by prosecutors sympathetic to Democrat Hillary Clinton.

After his wife agreed to a plea deal, Hunter said "it's obvious that the Department of Justice went after her to get to me for political reasons."

Former federal attorney Jason Forge, who prosecuted California Rep. Randy "Duke" Cunningham in 2005 for one of the worst bribery scandals to ever bring down a federal lawmaker, said Hunter's outlandish denials ran out of gas.

He also was probably running out of money, Forge said. The couple had overdrawn their bank accounts more than 1,000 times, according to prosecutors.

"In terms of evidence against him, I view this as being an inevitable outcome that was apparent from the day the indictment came out with that level of detail," he said. "But looking at it from a political per-

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spective, it would seem to be a shocking result. He couldn't have been more aggressive in his denials." Hunter's plea sets up the prospects for a second special House election in California next year. Freshman Rep. Katie Hill, a rising Democratic star, resigned her Los Angeles-area seat in October after explicit photos of her were posted online.

Hunter narrowly survived a challenge in 2018 from Democrat Ammar Campa-Najjar, a political newcomer. The 30-year-old Campa-Najjar is running again and Republican contenders include former Rep. Darrell Issa and radio personality Carl DeMaio, a former San Diego city councilman.

In October, former four-term Republican Rep. Chris Collins of New York pleaded guilty in an insider trading case, a day after he resigned from Congress. He faces a maximum sentence of about four years in prison.

To save Everglades, guardians fight time -- and climate

By ALLEN G. BREED Associated Press

FLAMINGO, Florida (AP) — Grabbing a clump of vegetation to steady herself, Tiffany Troxler gingerly slides her feet along the makeshift boardwalk as she ventures out into the marsh. The boards sag, dipping her up to her knees in the tea-colored water.

"This is the treacherous part," the Florida International University researcher says. "The water levels are up."

To a layman, this patch of brown-green saw grass and button mangrove deep inside Everglades National Park looks healthy enough, but Troxler knows trouble lurks just beneath the murky surface. She points to a clump of grass: Beneath the water line, the soil has retreated about a foot, leaving the root mass exposed. It is evidence that the thick mat of peat supporting this ecosystem is collapsing — and research suggests encroaching sea water is to blame.

"You can think about these soils as your bank account," says Troxler, associate director of FIU's Sea Level Solutions Center. "In the condition that this marsh is right now, the outlook is not good."

Formed roughly 5,000 years ago, during a time of sea level rise, the Everglades once comprised an area twice the size of New Jersey.

"The miracle of the light pours over the green and brown expanse of saw grass and of water, shining and slow-moving below, the grass and water that is the meaning and the central fact of the Everglades of Florida," journalist and activist Marjory Stoneman Douglas famously wrote in 1947. "It is a river of grass."

But over the course of just the last century, about half of the Everglades' original footprint has been lost — plowed under or paved over, never to be recovered, so long as South Florida's 8 million human inhabitants claim it for their homes, livelihoods and recreation.

The glades have been sapped by canals and dams that remapped the landscape and altered animal habitats, polluted by upstream agricultural areas, transformed by invasive species. And now, rising sea levels — this time, caused by man — threaten to undo what it took nature millennia to build.

What survives is not so much a natural ecosystem, but a remnant, heavily dependent on — and at the mercy of — a network of more than 2,100 miles of canals, 2,000 miles of levees and hundreds of flood-gates, pump stations and other water-control structures.

What the Army Corps of Engineers calls a "highly managed system," others have sardonically labeled a "Disney Everglades."

Nearly two decades and \$4 billion into the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan, an ambitious federal-state program adopted in 2000, new data about the pace of climate change have called into question how much of the Everglades can ever be salvaged — and what that even means.

"I tend to think that everything can be saved," says Fred Sklar of the South Florida Water Management District, which monitors and runs much of the Everglades' infrastructure. "Restored is another question."

"Here are no lofty peaks seeking the sky, no mighty glaciers or rushing streams wearing away the up-lifted land," President Harry S. Truman said in a 1947 address dedicating Everglades National Park. "Here is land, tranquil in its quiet beauty, serving not as the source of water, but as the last receiver of it. To

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its natural abundance we owe the spectacular plant and animal life that distinguishes this place from all others in our country.”

At the center of it all was Lake Okeechobee, the Everglades’ 730-square-mile “liquid heart.”

Today, we understand that natural systems like the untouched Everglades provide enormous benefits — water filtration, nurseries for fish and other wildlife, protection from storm surges, even carbon sequestration. But to 19th-century Floridians, all that water — and the mosquitos and reptiles it harbored — represented an impediment to progress.

And so when Florida became a state in 1845, one of the Legislature’s first acts was to pass a resolution asking Congress to survey the “wholly valueless” Everglades “with a view to their reclamation.”

Beginning in earnest during the 1880s, a host of entities set about draining the swamp. They dug canals east and west from Lake Okeechobee, carrying nutrient-laden water that altered the salinity of coastal estuaries and caused toxic algae blooms. They seeded the wetlands from the air with a thirsty, paper-barked Australian tree called melaleuca. The vast custard apple forest that girded the lake’s southern shore was torched, burning so fiercely that it set the very earth on fire.

Peat soils that had accumulated over thousands of years dried up and blew away. The result: At the University of Florida Research Station in Belle Glade, a concrete marker driven through the organic soil down to the limestone substrate shows the ground has sunk 6 feet since 1924.

And still, the tinkering went on.

In the 1960s, the Corps began straightening the meandering, flood-prone Kissimmee River. Lined by wetlands so lush that they were known as “the Little Everglades,” the shallow, 130-mile river was what one wildlife expert called a “nursery ground for sport fishes.” By 1971, engineers had straightened the once free-flowing stream into a 56-mile, 30-foot-deep canal bureaucratically designated as the C-38.

But it was an event in 1928 that, as much as any, altered the Everglades’ course. That year, a hurricane overwhelmed the flimsy dike along Lake Okeechobee’s southern shore, causing a deluge that killed 3,000 people, most of them poor, black farmworkers. The resulting 143-mile, 30-foot-high Herbert Hoover Dike now nearly completely surrounds the lake, permanently severing its connection to the park.

The Corps’ primary mandate was to protect people, not the environment. As the narrator put it in the 1950s documentary “Waters of Destiny,” the agency saw itself as victorious in a war against nature:

“Water that once ran wild. Water that ruined the rich terrain. Water that took lives and land. Put disaster in the headlines and death upon the soil. Now, it just waits there. Calm, peaceful. Ready to do the bidding of man and his machines.”

Scientists estimate that more than 650 billion gallons of fresh water a year once flowed south into what is now Everglades National Park. Today, that flow is about 280 billion gallons.

Flash forward to the present day, when many of the same canals and levees and pumps that helped drain the Everglades are now being used to try to save them. Alongside the Everglades Agricultural Area, the 700,000-acre checkerboard of sugar cane and winter vegetable fields south of Lake Okeechobee, huge tracts are being converted to store and clean water for use when and where it is needed.

Perhaps the biggest step toward that end so far is the re-engineering of Tamiami Trail, the east-west highway that essentially has acted as a dike through the heart of the Everglades since the 1920s. Since 2013, workers have elevated 3.3 miles of the roadway, allowing water to flow freely into Shark River Slough, historically the deepest and wettest part of the Everglades.

“We’re starting to see the vegetation respond, and we’re getting more of those marsh grasses, more of those open water sloughs,” says Stephen Davis, senior ecologist with the Everglades Foundation. “I’m very confident that we can restore this ecosystem. And by restoration, I mean enhancing the functionality of what remains.”

“We’re on the threshold of seeing whether the previous 20 years of work will pay off,” says William Nuttle, a consultant with the University of Maryland’s Center for Environmental Science who began his career in the marshlands of South Florida.

But time is not on the Everglades’ side.

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Over the past decade, scientists began noticing an alarming trend in the wetlands near the park's southwest tip — "potholes" of open water filled with dead vegetation. Sea water, Nuttle says, was causing vast areas of once-healthy saw grass prairie "to unravel like a moth-eaten wool sweater."

A lack of fresh water from the north and the intrusion of sea water have boosted salinity levels in the marshes, Troxler and others say, which appears to be hindering plant growth.

Scientists are counting on mangroves and other more salt-tolerant plants to migrate inland into the saw grass plains, establishing a new, natural bulwark against climate change. But that change may already be outpacing nature's — and man's — ability to counter it: When the restoration plan was adopted in 2000, its authors were anticipating seas to rise only 6 inches by 2050. They've since already risen 5 inches.

In its most recent report to Congress, a panel of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine urged a sweeping reassessment of restoration projects, warning that the current work is lagging behind the pace of climate change and could take 65 years to complete at the current funding levels.

"At this pace of restoration, it is even more imperative that agencies anticipate and design for the Everglades of the future," they wrote.

Everglades National Park is home to a stunning array of wildlife.

There are more than 360 species of birds, including the great blue heron and the diminutive green variety, purple gallinules and roseate spoonbills, the white ibis and the black skimmer. It is said to be the only place in the world where freshwater alligators and saltwater crocodiles co-exist.

And then there are the non-native species that are throwing off nature's balance.

On a blisteringly hot late-October morning, wildlife biologist Ian Bartoszek, who heads the Conservancy of Southwest Florida's snake research and removal program, sloshes through a cypress swamp outside Naples.

Holding an H-shaped antenna aloft in his right hand, he listens as the signal from the device in his other hand steadily increases. "As the beeps get louder, the giant snake is getting closer," he says.

Of all the invasive species plaguing the Everglades, the Burmese python is the most high-profile and, arguably, the most intractable. No one is quite sure how a giant snake native to Southeast Asia found its way into the wilds of South Florida in the late 1970s, although many believe the first were escaped — or released — pets. Estimates of their population run into the hundreds of thousands, and they are voracious.

In 2015, Bartoszek's team captured a 31.5-pound female in the process of digesting a 35-pound fawn. In all, the conservancy and its research partners have documented the remains of 23 species of mammal and 43 species of birds in the pythons' bellies.

Scientists suspect the python is responsible for the disappearance of up to 99 percent of the marsh rabbits, raccoons and other small mammals in the national park.

Pythons can remain underwater for as long as a half-hour, and their black, brown and tan pattern helps them blend into both the marsh and higher sandy ground. All of which makes them almost impossible to find. So, since 2013, Bartoszek has been using pythons to catch pythons.

Every two weeks, he flies over the area, picking up the unique signal of radio transmitters surgically implanted into 25 snakes and plugging their coordinates into a spreadsheet. The hope is that these so-called "Judas snakes" will lead them to others, especially breeding-age females.

This day, they've picked up the signal of Python No. 21 — a 50-pound, 11-and-a-half-foot male named Johnny Rebel who has helped find 20 adult pythons, including eight females carrying approximately 560 developing eggs.

"He's an MVP," Bartoszek says with a grin. "Our most valuable python."

Bartoszek straps on a machete and, with a nod to Sherlock Holmes — "The game is afoot!" — plunges into the woods. Following deer paths, he and field technician Ian Easterling step over old barbed-wire fences and downed melaleuca trees as the receiver leads them deeper into the brush. The beeping intensifies.

"We're getting warmer," Bartoszek says. "This looks snaky right here. This is where I would be."

"I see a head here!" Bartoszek shouts a few moments later. "Confirm!"

"There's a snake moving here," Easterling replies. Diving into the undergrowth, Bartoszek does a double-

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take: "Hold on a second. ... There might be two pythons!"

Johnny, it seems, has found a girlfriend.

After catching their breath, he and Easterling plunge their heads into the thicket, where the fat reptile is coiled up — and staring right at Easterling. "Hi!" he says. "Don't strike out!"

Easterling grabs the tail as Bartoszek clamps a hand around the snake just behind the head. She is shedding, making it difficult to establish a grip.

"Here comes the pretzel move," he shouts as the giant reptile writhes, flopping against his thigh with a thud. With a deep groan, she lets go the contents of her digestive tract.

The fight is over.

Back in the lab, they weigh and measure their prize: nearly 14 feet long and just over 95 pounds. After putting her in a case and locking her in a storeroom, Bartoszek sifts through her droppings, finding bits of bone and what turn out to be the hooves of a white-tail deer — the primary prey of the Florida panther, an endangered native species.

"It feels like 'CSI Crime Scene' here in this lab sometimes," he says. "It's the smoking gun, what's going on out there in the Everglades."

In the past six years, the conservancy team has removed more than 500 pythons with a combined weight of about 13,000 pounds from a 50-mile-square area. Despite that success, Bartoszek thinks that total eradication of the Burmese python "is off the table."

"It seems to be adapting and evolving real time here in the Everglades ecosystem," he says. "It may be more appropriate to start referring to them as the Everglades python. Because they're ours now. They're here."

When the Everglades restoration plan was adopted in 2000, it aimed to turn back the clock to the pre-drainage wilderness of Douglas' imagination. But in the face of rising seas, along with fluctuating temperatures and rainfall distribution, experts agree there is no going back.

"Everglades restoration has always been an ambitious and complex endeavor," the National Academies of Sciences panel wrote. "Our current review emphasizes how it is also dynamic and the importance of focusing restoration on the future Everglades, rather than on the past Everglades."

Earlier this year, an interagency group that includes the Corps of Engineers and the National Park Service issued its latest Everglades System Status Report — and it was not cheery.

"Overall, the Florida Everglades is struggling to survive in the face of sustained pressure from human activities and the increasing impacts of climate change," the group wrote. "The poor to fair scores reflected in the report card indicate that the region's ecosystems are degraded and the anticipated ecological benefits of restoration are still to be realized."

Still, there are some hopeful signs.

Some adaptation is taking place. Scientists poking through the bellies of wood storks, an "indicator species" for Everglades restoration, have found evidence that they are feasting on the non-native African jewelfish. And the endangered Everglades snail kite is showing a fondness for an exotic species of the mollusk, another latecomer to the region.

Perhaps the most encouraging development of all is the ongoing \$578 million project to restore 40 square miles of the Kissimmee River Basin. Since the demolition of some of the dams, a portion of the river has found its old channel. The wetlands are returning, and so is the wildlife.

Thomas Van Lent, vice president of science and education at the Everglades Foundation, recently took a pontoon boat trip on a 2-mile section of the restored river.

"And there were snail kites everywhere," he says. "It's just amazing to see the effects."

His colleague Stephen Davis believes the plan can provide flood protection — and water for drinking and recreation — while restoring and preserving the Everglades' original functions.

"I think there are some that think restoration is like restoring an old automobile back to what it looked like and felt like historically," he says. "That's not the case with Everglades restoration."

In 2015, the Corps submitted its most recent report to Congress, estimating the total cost of restora-

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tion at \$16 billion — about twice the original projection. Unsurprisingly, that figure draws detractors who question such a large outlay being spent with no guarantee of success.

One recent steamy morning, Michael Todd Tillman watched as three massive pumps, running around the clock since spring, spewed water into the L-29 Canal beside the Tamiami Trail at a rate of 250 cubic feet per second.

"They're about to flood me out," says the airboat operator, whose family has a recreational camp inside the park.

Tillman says he understands what the engineers are trying to do, but wonders whether he and others could be losing a way of life based on someone's best guess.

"They made huge mistakes before," he says. "How do they know this is the right answer now?"

Whatever the final price tag, Nuttle says humans created this "hybrid ecosystem" and that it is up to humans to maintain it — for nature's sake, and for our own.

"We started in South Florida by declaring war on the ecosystem," he says. "It's not restoration that we're paying for; it's restitution."

Federica Narancio in Washington contributed to this report.

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Report: Blacks imprisoned more than whites, but gap narrows

By DON THOMPSON Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — Racial disparities have narrowed across the U.S. criminal justice system over 16 years, though blacks are still significantly more likely to be behind bars than whites, new federal figures show.

Racial gaps broadly declined in local jails, state prisons, and among people on probation and parole, according to the study released Tuesday by the nonpartisan Council on Criminal Justice.

The divide in state imprisonment rates dropped for all major crimes but was most pronounced for drug offenses — a key driving factor for the racial shift. Blacks were 15 times more likely than whites to be in state prisons for drug crimes in 2000, but that dropped to five times as likely by 2016, the most recent year available.

Many don't realize how much the racial gap has narrowed, not only in incarceration but in parole and probation, said Adam Gelb, president and chief executive of the politically diverse council that launched in July to seek solutions to problems in the criminal justice system.

"Most people think this is a bad problem that's getting worse," said Gelb, whose group has brought together governors of both parties, police officials and Black Lives Matter organizers. "It turns out it's a bad problem that's getting a little better, and for very complex reasons that we need to understand at a much deeper level."

Critics contend minorities' disproportionate involvement in the U.S. criminal justice system reflects systemic racial bias. Researchers have blamed prejudice by police, prosecutors, judges and juries; racial differences in crimes; and get-tough sentencing laws during the high crime era of the 1980s and '90s.

While racial inequity in arrests and incarcerations narrowed, the length of prison sentences increased across all crime types for black people and partially offset the benefits, according to the report co-authored by Georgia State University professor William Sabol, former director of the federal Bureau of Justice Statistics.

Among the other findings of the report, which is based on numbers from the bureau, the FBI and other national statistics:

— Nine African American men were in state prisons for every white inmate in 2000, which dropped to a still disparate six black men for every white man by 2016. The change mostly stemmed from a 30%

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decline in the black male imprisonment rate, largely driven by falling drug crimes.

— Six black women were imprisoned for every white inmate in 2000, which fell to two-to-one by 2016. Fewer black women were being incarcerated for drug crimes, while more white women were imprisoned for violent, property and drug crimes.

— The disparities between Hispanics and whites also shrank across all categories since 2000.

While falling drug crimes had a big impact on racial disparity the shift raises questions the study's authors couldn't answer.

For instance, the start of the study period comes after the crack cocaine epidemic waned and after crime rates dropped from their peak in the early 1990s.

"Something was going on here well before (marijuana) legalization started to happen in states and also before the opioid epidemic, which is much more recent," Gelb said. "Drug enforcement patterns started to change before both of those things. It's clear that somewhere along the way, societal attitudes toward drugs and drug enforcement started to change."

The nonpartisan Public Policy Institute of California reported a similar marked drop in the racial divide in arrest trends since the 1980s in the nation's most populous state but also found that black people are still far more likely to be arrested than whites.

That's partly because "there was such stark and eye-catching and disturbing disparity" in the first place, said institute researcher Magnus Lofstrom, who was not involved in the national study.

He said the disparity could be influenced by bias, economic factors or police concentrating on high crime areas that also have high minority populations. There has been a marked decrease in crime rates and a recent reduction in the severity of penalties, particularly for drug and property crimes, in states like California.

Impeachment shadows Trump on trip to NATO leaders meeting

By AAMER MADHANI and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — President Donald Trump kicks off a two-day whirlwind of meetings with NATO alliance members, but his focus appears to remain centered on the impeachment inquiry playing out at home.

Before departing for London to meet Tuesday with other leaders from the 29-member alliance, Trump accused Democrats of trying to embarrass him by scheduling this week's impeachment hearing while he'll be abroad with NATO leaders.

Trump, who arrived in London late Monday, called the trip "one of the most important journeys that we make as president" before he departed Washington and said Democrats had long known about it.

He was back to lashing out at Democrats minutes after landing in London late Monday night, touting a Republican impeachment report calling Trump's decision to hold up military aid to Ukraine "entirely prudent." Democrats contend that Trump abused presidential powers by holding up the aid to pressure Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to investigate former Vice President Joe Biden and his son.

"Prior to landing I read the Republicans Report on the Impeachment Hoax. Great job! Radical Left has NO CASE," Trump tweeted. "Read the Transcripts. Shouldn't even be allowed. Can we go to Supreme Court to stop?"

Trump's trip comes amid ongoing quarrels over defense spending by NATO allies and widespread anxiety over the American president's commitment to the alliance.

He has a busy schedule over this two days at the leaders' conference, including scheduled one-on-one meetings with French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen and Italian Premier Giuseppe Conte. He'll also attend tea with Prince Charles and his wife Camilla, the duchess of Cornwall. Queen Elizabeth II and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson will host Trump and the other NATO leaders at back-to-back receptions Tuesday evening.

Trump is also scheduled to squeeze in a campaign fundraiser with American expatriate supporters that

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is expected to raise \$3 million for his reelection effort and the Republican National Committee.

Trump's meeting with Macron on Tuesday comes after Robert Lighthizer, the chief U.S. trade representative, recommended \$2.4 billion in new tariffs on French cheese, sparkling wine and other products. The call for new duties came after his office completed a five-month investigation that concluded that a French digital services tax unfairly discriminates against U.S. tech companies, including Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon.

The president said his trip would be focused on "fighting for the American people." But in the more than two months that the impeachment inquiry has been underway, he has constantly drifted back to what he frames as the Democrats' unfair effort to overturn the results of his 2016 election.

The House Judiciary Committee is scheduled to hold a hearing Wednesday on the constitutional grounds for impeachment before Trump wraps up at the NATO meeting.

Trump, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, White House counsel Pat Cipollone and presidential counselor Kellyanne Conway all complained about the timing, with Pompeo saying the hearings would "distract America's president from his important mission overseas."

Trump insists he's solely focused on scoring domestic and foreign policy wins, including revamping NATO so that allies spend more on defense. But he's often appeared consumed by the day-to-day battle against impeachment.

In recent days he's repeatedly lashed out about the "impeachment hoax" and the "scam" inquiry, even delving into impeachment at a ceremony to celebrate NCAA athletes and at last week's annual turkey pardon.

White House aides say the summit offers Trump an opportunity to counter the impeachment narrative in Washington and demonstrate to voters that he's keeping a business-as-usual approach while Democrats concentrate on the probe.

But soon after Air Force One departed, Trump took to Twitter to slam "Do Nothing Democrats" for scheduling the hearing during the NATO meeting as "Not nice!"

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, in Madrid for a U.N. conference on climate change, declined to comment on the impeachment inquiry: "When we travel abroad, we don't talk about the president in a negative way. We save that for home."

Trump is only the fourth U.S. president in history to face an impeachment inquiry. The gravity of impeachment is likely to play into the calculus of how other global leaders engage the president going forward, in the view of some analysts.

"In one sense impeachment is weakening his hand diplomatically," said Ted Galen Carpenter, a senior fellow for defense and foreign policy studies at the Cato Institute in Washington. "For a normal president, it would be seen as a substantial problem. For Donald Trump, he's going to try to blow right through it and act as if that's not a relevant factor."

The NATO leaders meeting is a complicated backdrop for Trump to make his first extended overseas visit—he made a quick Thanksgiving visit to U.S. troops in Afghanistan—since Democrats launched the impeachment inquiry.

Trump has repeatedly criticized fellow NATO members and complained that too few nations are on track to meet the alliance goal of spending at least 2% of GDP on defense by 2024. Macron recently lamented that a lack of U.S. leadership was causing the "brain death" of the alliance.

Trump's former national security adviser John Bolton has said the president could move to leave the alliance if he wins reelection.

Biden, who has warned that a second Trump term could mean NATO's effective dissolution, jokingly said Monday that he'd "say a prayer" as the president heads to London.

"There's time for redemption," Biden told reporters as he campaigned in Emmetsburg, Iowa. "But so far he's treated NATO like it's a protection racket."

In the leadup to the summit, White House aides sought to soften Trump's past criticism of member nations as deadbeats.

White House officials noted that before Trump took office only four NATO members had reached the 2%

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benchmark set in 2014. Now nine countries have reached the threshold, according to the White House. Eighteen of the 29 members of the alliance are projected to meet the 2% threshold by 2024.

Trump isn't the first U.S. president to attend a NATO summit with impeachment looming. In June 1974, Richard Nixon faced criticism when he headed to Brussels as NATO commemorated its 25th anniversary. He met with fellow alliance leaders and tried to convey a message that he remained fully in power even as the Watergate investigation gained steam. By summer's end, Nixon had resigned.

In contrast, Trump heads to the NATO gathering confident that there aren't the votes needed in the Republican-controlled Senate to convict him should the House vote to impeach him. Even so, he still might not be able to resist throwing attention back to the impeachment inquiry in Washington.

"While Nixon remained determined to rise above the swirl of impeachment and pretend he wasn't distracted, Trump can't help himself," said Derek Chollet, executive vice president for security and defense policy at the German Marshall Fund of the United States. "Moreover, for Trump, being in charge hardly means projecting steady confidence – it means proving that he can keep everyone off-balance and nervous about what's coming next."

Associated Press writers Kevin Freking and Darlene Superville in Washington and Bill Barrow in Emmetsburg, Iowa, contributed to this report.

Follow the AP's Aamer Madhani on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/AamerISmad>

Congress pushes ahead on Trump impeachment with nation split

By **LISA MASCARO** and **MARY CLARE JALONICK** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House is plunging into a landmark impeachment week, with Democrats who once hoped to sway Republicans now facing the prospect of an ever-hardening partisan split over the question of removing President Donald Trump from office.

Lawmakers were getting their first look at the House Intelligence Committee's impeachment report Monday night behind closed doors, and Chairman Adam Schiff said on MSNBC that it will be released Tuesday. The findings are expected to forcefully make the Democrats' case that Trump engaged in what Schiff calls impeachable "wrongdoing and misconduct" in pressuring Ukraine to investigate Democrats and Joe Biden while withholding military aid to the ally.

For Republicans offering an early rebuttal ahead of the report's public release, the proceedings are simply a "hoax," with Trump insisting he did nothing wrong and his GOP allies in line behind him. Trump tweeted his daily complaints about it all and then added a suggestive, if impractical, question: "Can we go to Supreme Court to stop?"

With the Judiciary Committee set to launch its first hearing Wednesday, the impeachment proceedings are presenting a historic test of political judgment in a case that is dividing Congress and the country.

Departing for a NATO meeting in London, Trump criticized the House for pushing forward Monday with proceedings while he was heading overseas, a breach of political decorum that traditionally leaves partisan differences at the water's edge.

He predicted Republicans would actually benefit from the entire impeachment effort against him, though "it's a disgrace for our country."

For the Democrats, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi faces a critical moment of her leadership as she steers the process ahead after resisting the impeachment inquiry through the summer, warning it was too divisive for the country and required bipartisan support.

Speaking to reporters at the international climate conference in Madrid, Pelosi declined to engage with impeachment questions. "When we travel abroad, we don't talk about the president in a negative way," she said. "We save that for home."

Possible grounds for impeachment are focused on whether Trump abused his office as he pressed Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in a July 25 phone call to launch investigations into Trump's political

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rivals. At the time, Trump was withholding \$400 million in military aid, jeopardizing key support as Ukraine faced an aggressive Russia at its border.

The report, which the Intelligence panel will vote on Tuesday, also is expected to include evidence the Democrats say suggests obstruction of Congress, based on Trump's instructions for his administration to defy subpoenas for documents and testimony.

The next step comes when the Judiciary Committee gavels open its own hearing with legal experts to assess the findings and consider potential articles of impeachment ahead of a possible vote by the full House by Christmas. That would presumably send it to the Senate for a trial in January.

The Democratic majority on the Intelligence Committee says its report, compiled after weeks of testimony from current and former diplomats and administration officials, will speak for itself in laying out the president's actions toward Ukraine.

Republicans pre-empted the report's public release with their own 123-page rebuttal.

In it, they claim there's no evidence Trump pressured Zelenskyy. Instead, they say Democrats just want to undo the 2016 election. Republicans dismiss witness testimony of a shadow diplomacy being run by Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani, and they rely on the president's insistence that he was merely concerned about "corruption" in Ukraine — though the White House transcript of Trump's phone call with Zelenskyy never mentions the word.

"They are trying to impeach President Trump because some unelected bureaucrats chafed at an elected President's 'outside the beltway' approach to diplomacy," according to the report from Republican Reps. Devin Nunes of California, Jim Jordan of Ohio and Michael McCaul of Texas.

Rep. Jim Jordan, R-Ohio, appeared to be the only lawmaker who viewed the Democratic report Monday evening when it became available behind closed doors for members of the intelligence panel. He said it was "long."

Jordan declined to discuss details, but said it's the same "lame case" Democrats presented throughout impeachment hearings.

"The president did nothing wrong," Jordan said. "The facts are on our side."

Trump on Monday pointed to Zelenskyy's recent comments as proof he did nothing wrong. The Ukrainian president said in an interview he never talked to Trump "from the position of a quid pro quo," but he didn't say Trump did nothing wrong. In fact, he had strong criticism for Trump's actions in the Time magazine interview.

With Ukraine at war with Russia, he said, its partners "can't go blocking anything for us."

Schiff said the GOP response was intended for an audience of one, Trump, whose actions are "outside the law and constitution."

The finished Intelligence Committee report sets up the week's cascading actions.

Democrats could begin drafting articles of impeachment against the president in a matter of days, with voting in the Judiciary Committee next week.

Republicans on the committee, led by Rep. Doug Collins of Georgia, plan to use procedural moves to stall the process and portray the inquiry as unfair to the president.

The White House declined an invitation to participate, with Counsel Pat Cipollone denouncing the proceedings as a "baseless and highly partisan inquiry" in a letter to Judiciary Chairman Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y.

Trump had previously suggested that he might be willing to offer written testimony under certain conditions, though aides suggested they did not anticipate Democrats would ever agree to them.

Cipollone's letter of nonparticipation applied only to the Wednesday hearing, and he demanded more information from Democrats on how they intended to conduct further hearings before Trump would decide whether to participate.

Nadler said Monday if the president really thought his call with Ukraine was "perfect," as he repeatedly says, he would "provide exculpatory information that refutes the overwhelming evidence of his abuse of power."

House rules provide the president and his attorneys the right to cross-examine witnesses and review

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evidence before the committee, but little ability to bring forward witnesses of their own.

Asked why not have his lawyers participate, Trump said Monday: "Because the whole thing is a hoax. Everybody knows it."

Associated Press writers Zeke Miller and Jill Colvin contributed to this report.

Powerful typhoon rips off roofs, floods parts of Philippines

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — A powerful typhoon was blowing across the Philippines on Tuesday after slamming ashore overnight in an eastern province, damaging houses and an airport and knocking out power after tens of thousands of people fled for safer ground.

Typhoon Kammuri blew into Gubat town in Sorsogon province before midnight then barreled westward through Quezon province Tuesday morning, ripping off roofs, knocking out power and flooding low-lying villages. It had maximum sustained winds of 155 kilometers (96 miles) per hour and gusts of up to 235 kph (146 miles) as it headed toward a cluster of island provinces and coastal regions lying south of Manila.

There were no immediate reports of deaths or injuries.

Kammuri's pounding rain and wind damaged the airport in Legazpi city in Albay province, collapsing a portion of its ceiling, scattering chairs at the arrival and departure areas and shattering glass panes. Parts of the city were flooded, according to local news reports.

Manila's international airport was closing during the storm's peak, expected at midday to afternoon in the capital region, before the typhoon blows out to sea later in the day.

Officials warned of storm surges and prolonged heavy rain. More than 100,000 residents evacuated before the typhoon made landfall, abandoning homes in coastal and low-lying areas prone to flash floods and landslides, the Office of Civil Defense said.

The coast guard suspended sea travel in the northeast, stranding more than 6,000 travelers along with thousands of cargo ships and smaller watercraft in the archipelago nation.

The Philippines canceled a tennis match in the Southeast Asian Games after rains drenched an outdoor court. Organizers said wind surfing competitions have also been postponed and other events would be delayed if needed for safety but there was no plan to extend the 11-day games which opened Saturday.

Albay province is home to the Mount Mayon volcano, which is famous for its near-perfect cone and has erupted about 50 times in the last 500 years. Its last significant eruption was in early 2018 and prompted tens of thousands of people to evacuate nearby villages.

The Philippines is battered by about 20 typhoons and tropical storms each year and has frequent earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, making the archipelago of more than 100 million people one of the world's most disaster-prone nations.

Rosenstein said he was 'horrified' at how Comey was fired

By ERIC TUCKER, MICHAEL BALSAMO and COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein told the FBI he was "angry, ashamed, horrified and embarrassed" at the way James Comey was fired as FBI director, according to records released Monday.

Rosenstein was interviewed by FBI agents several weeks after Comey's firing as part of special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into ties between Donald Trump's 2016 presidential campaign and Russia. An FBI summary of that interview was among roughly 300 pages of documents released as part of public records lawsuits brought by BuzzFeed News and CNN.

The records also include summaries of FBI interviews of key Trump associates, including Hope Hicks, Corey Lewandowski and Michael Cohen. They provide additional insight into Mueller's two-year investigation, which shadowed the first part of Trump's presidency and preceded an ongoing impeachment inquiry centered on his efforts to press Ukraine for investigations of political rival Joe Biden.

Hicks described efforts to prepare for media scrutiny of a 2016 Trump Tower meeting between Russians

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and the president's oldest son. Lewandowski told investigators the president prodded him to tell then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions to make an announcement that the scope of the Russia investigation had been limited to future election interference.

And Cohen, who is now serving a three-year prison sentence for campaign finance violations and lying to Congress, told investigators he advised Trump's personal lawyer that there was more detail about a proposed deal for a Trump Tower in Moscow than what he had shared with lawmakers.

Cohen said the lawyer, Jay Sekulow, told him that it was not necessary to elaborate or provide additional details and to "stay on message" and to "not contradict Trump," the FBI said.

Cohen also said he "vaguely recalled" telling Sekulow about a call he had "with a woman from the Kremlin," and said Sekulow's response was "in line with 'so what' and the deal never happened," according to the FBI document.

Sekulow told The Associated Press on Monday night that Cohen's statements were false and that Cohen never told him anything about any call with a woman from Russia.

Rosenstein, who left his Justice Department post last spring, was interviewed about his role in Comey's May 2017 firing. Rosenstein wrote a memo harshly criticizing Comey for his handling of the Hillary Clinton email investigation, a document held up by the White House as justification for his firing.

Rosenstein said he was asked during a White House meeting one day before Comey's firing to produce a memo laying out his concerns with the FBI chief. He said he knew when he left the office that day that Comey would be fired, though he said he did not expect for his memo to be immediately released, and was surprised by the portrayal in the media that the termination was his idea instead of the White House's, according to the FBI document. Rosenstein also said his goal in writing the memo was not to get Comey fired.

He said he expected Comey would be contacted by either Trump or Sessions so a meeting could be scheduled and he could be fired in person. Comey instead learned of his firing from television while speaking with agents in Los Angeles.

When he learned of how Comey was fired, he was "angry, ashamed, horrified and embarrassed. It was also humiliating for Comey," an FBI agent wrote of Rosenstein's reaction.

At one point during the interview, as Rosenstein was describing how he had "always liked Jim Comey" but disagreed with his decisions in the Clinton case, the deputy attorney general "paused a moment, appearing to have been overcome by emotion, but quickly recovered and apologized," according to the FBI.

Schools, offices close as long-lived storm clobbers US East

By MARY ESCH Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — A seemingly endless winter storm that hindered travel across most of the country over the long holiday weekend is delivering a last wallop as it swoops through the Northeast, dumping heavy snow, shuttering hundreds of schools and bedeviling commuters in the region Monday.

The storm dropped more than a foot of snow on parts of the region late Sunday and Monday and could bring 10 to 24 inches (25 to 60 centimeters) total by Tuesday from Pennsylvania to Maine, forecasters said. Heavy snow was also expected in the Appalachian Mountains down to Tennessee and North Carolina.

Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker urged drivers to use caution during the Tuesday morning commute when the storm was expected to be at its height with snow falling at 1 to 2 inches an hour in some places. Boston Mayor Marty Walsh said city schools were canceling classes and afterschool activities Tuesday.

"It's moving very slowly, so the snow is just going to continue through the day," National Weather Service meteorologist Jennifer Vogt said Monday.

By Monday afternoon, the storm had dropped 27 inches of snow in rural Delanson, New York, 25 miles (40 kilometers) northwest of Albany — the highest snow total in the Northeast so far. Forecasters predict accumulations near 30 inches by Tuesday morning in parts of Vermont's Green Mountains.

The same storm has pummeled the U.S. for days as it moved cross country, dumping heavy snow from California to the Midwest and inundating other areas with rain.

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Gov. Andrew Cuomo declared a state of emergency Monday for seven counties in eastern New York and assigned 300 National Guard members to assist with snow removal. State police had responded to more than 740 storm-related crashes statewide since the snow started falling.

"We're tough, we've seen it all, we can handle it all," Cuomo said at a storm briefing before urging people to stay off the roads. He told nonessential state employees to stay home.

But some workers had no choice but to trudge through knee-high snow and brush off their cars before heading out on the slushy roads.

"I just hate driving in snow," Kaia Jansson said as she raked snow off her car in Albany. "It's always a mess and it's cold and not fun."

In Nashua, New Hampshire, Alana Kirkpatrick didn't enjoy her 5 a.m. "workout," which consisted of removing heaps of snow from her car.

"Why do I still live in New England?" she said.

Hundreds of schools were closed in advance of the region's first significant storm of the season, a nor'easter so named because the winds typically come from the northeast.

"It's going to be a long, difficult storm," New Hampshire Gov. Chris Sununu said.

At least four counties closed schools Monday in West Virginia, where 2 inches to a foot of snow was forecast. Closer to the heavily populated, coastal Interstate 95 corridor, a wintry mix was more likely. The National Park Service said parts of the Blue Ridge Parkway in North Carolina and U.S. 441 through Great Smoky Mountains National Park were closed because of heavy snow predictions.

In New Jersey, Gov. Phil Murphy said Monday at a news conference that the worst was still ahead. He closed state government for nonessential workers at noon.

Only 3 inches of snow was forecast for New York City, where schools were expected to remain open, and 5 inches for Philadelphia.

The National Weather Service on Monday predicted that the Boston area could get 7 inches of snow with lower amounts to the south and into Rhode Island and Connecticut. Communities north of Boston could see a foot in the storm expected to reach its peak Tuesday morning, snarling the morning commute.

Rowe in western Massachusetts received 16 inches of snow from the storm that started Sunday night.

More than 780 flights into or out of the U.S. were canceled Monday, with more than 5,600 delays, according to the flight tracking site FlightAware. Airports in the New York and Boston areas accounted for many of them. There were 950 cancellations and 8,800 delays on Sunday.

The storm also caused major traffic disruptions. Tractor-trailers were banned or lower speed limits put in place on stretches of highway in New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

New York, where a bus carrying about 30 people collided with a tractor-trailer late Monday, also posted lower speed limits on some highways.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo said there were some injuries in the crash but that they don't appear to be life-threatening.

Many buses from New York City to Pennsylvania and upstate destinations such as Ithaca and Binghamton were canceled.

A commuter ferry on its way to Boston, where it was rainy and windy Monday morning, hit a wave and listed heavily, sending some passengers to the floor. No injuries were reported.

The trouble began in the East on Sunday as the storm moved out of the Midwest after days of pummeling parts of the U.S.

Duluth, Minnesota, is still cleaning up more than 21 inches of snow that dropped over the weekend. Major highways reopened in Wyoming and Colorado after blizzard conditions and drifting snow blocked them.

Associated Press writers Michael Hill in Albany, New York, and Jeff McMillan in New York contributed to this story.

Amnesty says at least 208 killed in Iran protests, crackdown

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — At least 208 people in Iran have been killed amid protests over sharply rising gasoline prices and a subsequent crackdown by security forces, Amnesty International said Monday, as one government official acknowledged telling police to shoot demonstrators.

Iran has yet to release any nationwide statistics over the unrest that gripped the Islamic Republic beginning Nov. 15 with minimum prices for government-subsidized gasoline rising by 50%. Iran's mission to the United Nations disputed Amnesty's findings early Tuesday, though it offered no evidence to support its claim.

Iran shut down internet access amid the unrest, blocking those inside the country from sharing their videos and information, as well as limiting the outside world from knowing the scale of the protests and violence. The restoration of the internet in recent days across much of the country has seen other videos surface.

"We've seen over 200 people killed in a very swift time, in under a week," said Mansoureh Mills, an Iran researcher at Amnesty. "It's something pretty unprecedented event in the history of the human rights violations in the Islamic Republic."

While not drawing as many Iranians into the streets as those protesting the disputed 2009 presidential election, the gasoline price demonstrations rapidly turned violent faster than any previous rallies. That shows the widespread economic discontent gripping the country since May 2018, when President Donald Trump imposed crushing sanctions after unilaterally withdrawing from Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers.

Since the summer, tensions across the Mideast have spiked with attacks the U.S. blames on Tehran. Iran, meanwhile, began to break the deal's centrifuges, enrichment and stockpile limitations with hopes of pressuring Europe to offer it a way to sell crude oil abroad despite Washington's sanctions.

In a statement Monday, Amnesty said there had been "dozens of deaths" in the Tehran suburb of Shahriar, likely one of the areas with the highest toll of those killed in the unrest. Shahriar had seen heavy protests.

Amnesty offered no breakdown for the deaths elsewhere in the country, though it said "the real figure is likely to be higher." Mills said there was a "general environment of fear inside of Iran at the moment."

"The authorities have been threatening families, some have been forced to sign undertakings that they won't speak to the media," she said. "Families have been forced to bury their loved ones at night under heavy security presence."

Authorities also have been visiting hospitals, looking for patients with gunshot wounds or other injuries from the unrest, Mills said. She alleged authorities then immediately detain those with the suspicious wounds.

Iran's U.N. mission in New York called Amnesty's findings "unsubstantiated," without elaborating.

"A number of exile groups (and media networks) have either taken credit for instigating both ordinary people to protest and riots, or have encouraged lawlessness and vandalism, or both," said Alireza Miryousefi, a spokesman at the mission.

The demonstrations began after authorities raised minimum gasoline prices by 50% to 15,000 rials per liter. That's 12 cents a liter, or about 50 cents a gallon. After a monthly 60-liter quota, it costs 30,000 rials a liter. That's nearly 24 cents a liter or 90 cents a gallon. An average gallon of regular gas in the U.S. costs \$2.58 by comparison, according to AAA.

Cheap gasoline is practically considered a birthright in Iran, home to the world's fourth-largest crude oil reserves despite decades of economic woes since its 1979 Islamic Revolution. Gasoline there remains among the cheapest in the world, in part to help keep costs low for its underemployed, who often drive taxis to make ends meet.

Iran's per capita gross domestic product, often used as a rough sense of a nation's standard of living, is just over \$6,000, compared with over \$62,000 in the U.S., according to the World Bank. That disparity, especially given Iran's oil wealth, fueled the anger felt by demonstrators.

Already, Iranians have seen their savings chewed away by the rial's collapse from 32,000 to \$1 at the time of the 2015 nuclear accord to 126,000 to \$1 today. Daily staples also have risen in price.

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The scale of the demonstrations also remains unclear. One Iranian lawmaker said he thought that over 7,000 people had been arrested, although Iran's top prosecutor disputed the figure without offering his own. Meanwhile, a long-detained opposition leader in Iran compared the recent crackdown of protesters to soldiers of the shah gunning down demonstrators in an event that led to the Islamic Revolution, raising the rhetorical stakes of the unrest.

On Twitter, Iranian lawmakers have expressed their anger over the lack of information, although the microblogging website remains otherwise banned in the country.

"In addition to the selective portrayal of destruction of public property, (state-run) Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting should show a few protesters being shot," lawmaker Mahmoud Sadeghi of Tehran wrote sarcastically.

Meanwhile, the governor of a Tehran suburb that saw demonstrations openly acknowledged in a video interview with the state-owned IRAN newspaper that she ordered police to shoot protesters if they stormed her offices. Shahr-e Quds Gov. Leila Vaseghi also said she sent text messages to citizens telling them not to join the "rioters" and that there was a "possibility of a shooting" if they did.

"I had told (the police): 'Shoot at anybody who crosses the gate of the governor office,'" Vaseghi said in the interview.

Patriotism is the theme of Christmas at the White House

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Melania Trump is celebrating American patriotism at the White House this Christmas, incorporating red and blue into the traditional holiday green, adding a timeline of American design, innovation and architecture and studding a Christmas tree with her family's annual ornament, the American flag.

The traditional gingerbread White House shares its stage with American landmarks including the Statue of Liberty and Golden Gate Bridge.

"It is with great joy that our family welcomes you to the White House this holiday season as we celebrate the Spirit of America," President Donald Trump, the first lady and their son, Barron, say in the signed introduction to a souvenir book visitors will receive as a holiday keepsake. "We hope you enjoy our tribute to the traditions, customs and history that make our nation great."

The White House previewed the decorations for journalists on Monday before Trump and the first lady departed for London. Journalists were also admitted to the grounds of the Naval Observatory, the official residence for Vice President Mike Pence and his wife, Karen, to see the Christmas decorations there.

The East Colonnade of the White House is lined with double rows of see-through panels etched with more than 60 examples of American design, innovation and architecture, ranging from the Woolworth Building in New York City to the Space Needle in Seattle.

A tree dedicated to Gold Star families that lost an immediate relative during military service stands at the beginning of the hallway while a tree decorated with the Trump family ornament — an American flag this year — glistens at the end of the colonnade.

East Room decorations are inspired by the U.S. flag and feature gilded eagle Christmas tree toppers, mirrored stars and red and blue ribbons. In the State Dining Room, at the opposite end of the hallway, the decor continues to showcase American design.

The gingerbread White House, built from 200 pounds (90 kilograms) of gingerbread and slathered in 25 pounds (11 kilograms) of royal icing and 35 pounds (16 kilograms) of chocolate, showcases the South Portico, including a staircase made using angel hair, fettucine and spaghetti.

The popular display also features models of some of the nation's most famous landmarks, including Mount Rushmore, St. Louis' Gateway Arch, the Alamo, the Liberty Bell and the Statue of Liberty, along with the Golden Gate Bridge and the Space Needle.

The Blue Room is again commanded by a towering tree, a 18 ½-foot Douglas fir from a Pennsylvania farm, decorated with flowers representing every state and territory. The Red Room is decorated with games, including trees made of White House playing cards bearing the president and first lady's signatures.

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It's meant to highlight her "Be Best" youth initiative and serve as a reminder of the kindness, respect and teamwork needed to play together.

Mrs. Trump continued her tradition of hanging wreaths on the mansion's exterior windows, 106 in all.

Late Sunday, she teased her Twitter followers with a minute-long video sneak peek of some of the decorations as she walked through the State Floor of the White House to put finishing touches on the displays.

More than 225 volunteers flew in from around the country to help decorate the White House during Thanksgiving weekend.

Decorations in the public areas of the White House include 58 Christmas trees, more than 2,500 strands of light, more than 800 feet (244 meters) of garland and more than 15,000 bows.

At the Naval Observatory, more than 40 volunteers decorated Pence's residence using 2,100 feet (640 meters) of garland and white lights, more than 160 red velvet bows and seven trees from a farm in Belvidere, New Jersey, to create a Victorian-themed Christmas.

Mrs. Pence said the theme "showcases the rich history of the residence and highlights the beauty of the special landmark that we are blessed to call home."

Eleven white stockings with red cuffs hang from the fireplace mantle in the dining room: one each for Pence and his wife, their three children, their daughter-in-law, two soon-to-be sons-in-law and pets Harley (a dog), Hazel (a cat) and Marlon Bundo (a rabbit).

The Pences also have a 70-pound (32 kilogram) gingerbread replica of their government-provided home on display.

Mrs. Pence, a watercolor artist, designed the family Christmas card showing the entrance to the house decorated with garland and a red bow, and a wreath on the white front door.

Follow Darlene Superville on Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/dsupervilleap>

Lawsuit: Ex-Cardinal McCarrick abused boy in Newark in 1990s

By DAVID PORTER Associated Press

NEWARK, N.J. (AP) — Former Roman Catholic Cardinal Theodore McCarrick abused a teenage boy in the 1990s when he was leader of the Archdiocese of Newark, according to a lawsuit filed under a newly enacted New Jersey law that gives accusers more time to make legal claims.

Another lawsuit filed by two of six sisters alleges that a now-deceased priest who had previously worked for the archdiocese abused them and their siblings for nearly 10 years after he was transferred to Pennsylvania.

"This is a momentous day for our family because we can finally move forward in our search for justice," one of the sisters, Patty Fortney-Julius, said at a news conference Monday.

A law that was passed by New Jersey in the spring and went into effect Sunday allows child sex abuse victims to sue until they turn 55, or within seven years of their first realization the abuse caused them harm. The previous limit was two years.

Victims who were previously barred from suing because they didn't act during the allotted time period now have a two-year window to file claims.

Both lawsuits announced Monday seek unspecified punitive damages.

Fortney-Julius and her sisters allege the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Newark knew that Augustine Giella had abused children well before their abuse began in the early 1980s, after his transfer to the Harrisburg diocese.

Her sister, Lara Fortney-McKeever, recalled through tears Monday how Giella came to her fifth grade classroom seeking volunteers for jobs around the rectory.

"I quickly raised my hand," she said. "That is the day I have regretted for over three decades, and it will haunt me for the rest of my life. I introduced this monster to my entire family, and it shattered us."

In an emailed statement, the Newark archdiocese said it "will continue to cooperate and work with victims, their legal representatives and law enforcement authorities in an ongoing effort to resolve allegations

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made and bring closure to victims.”

The Diocese of Harrisburg said in an emailed statement that it hadn't received the complaint yet and deferred comment.

“The Fortney family, as well as all survivors of child abuse, have access to professional therapy and counseling services, at no cost to them, through the Diocese,” the statement said. “The Diocese of Harrisburg will continue to do all we can to support survivors of child sexual abuse and to ensure all youth in our care are safe.”

The sisters' accounts were among hundreds in last year's investigation on clergy sexual abuse conducted by a Pennsylvania grand jury that provided impetus for New Jersey legislators to act this year.

Since 2018, 15 states and the District of Columbia have revised their laws to extend or suspend statute of limitations on child sex abuse claims, and New Jersey is one of several states to create so-called lookback windows for lawsuits. The Fortney sisters sued in New Jersey because Pennsylvania lawmakers passed legislation without a lookback provision in November.

McCarrick, who also served as archbishop of Washington, D.C., and was one of the highest-ranking, most visible Catholic Church officials in the United States, was defrocked in February at age 89 after a church investigation determined he sexually abused minors, as well as adult seminarians.

In a lawsuit filed Monday, John Bellocchio alleges McCarrick sexually assaulted him when he was 14 and McCarrick was visiting Bellocchio's parish in Hackensack, New Jersey. Bellocchio's attorney, Jeff Anderson, said his client's lawsuit is the first to name McCarrick as a defendant.

It also names the Newark archdiocese as a defendant, but not Vatican officials. It does, however, allege Vatican officials were aware of McCarrick's behavior yet continued to promote him to ever higher positions.

“He never would have been able to do the things he did and rise up the ranks the way he did without their complicity or consent, implied or otherwise,” Bellocchio, now 37, said at a news conference.

Anderson said that McCarrick is living at a friary in Kansas but that he will seek to take a statement from him “as soon as possible, given his age.”

The Associated Press was unable to immediately find a contact for McCarrick or a representative who could comment on his behalf.

The AP does not typically name people alleging sexual abuse unless they provide their consent. The plaintiffs in these lawsuits have come forward publicly, and the sisters testified this year at the New Jersey Statehouse.

This story has been corrected to show that the number of states to change their laws is 15, not about two dozen, and to show that Pennsylvania passed its legislation in November, not December.

Vigil for London stabbing victims as politicians trade blame

By JILL LAWLESS and DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and main opposition Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn paused Monday to honor the two people killed in the London Bridge attack, then went back to trading blame for the security failings that allowed a man who had been jailed for terrorist crimes to go on a violent rampage in the heart of London.

Usman Khan stabbed two people to death and injured three others Friday before being shot and killed by police on the bridge. Two of the injured remain hospitalized in stable condition.

Politicians, who are campaigning ahead of Britain's Dec. 12 election, immediately sought to deflect blame for the first fatal attack in London since 2017. Johnson accused Labour of being soft on terrorism and vowed to end the early release of inmates convicted of terrorist crimes. He said it was “repulsive that individuals as dangerous as this man” could be freed.

Corbyn blamed years of cuts to the police, prison and parole services by Conservative governments left the system unable to monitor offenders.

He said the tragedy raised “enormous questions” about how the attacker's state of mind had been

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evaluated, and "what supervision and monitoring he was under" after leaving prison.

Political dignitaries, city officials, friends of the victims and Londoners who had never met them attended a vigil outside London's medieval Guildhall to remember Jack Merritt and Saskia Jones, who died in the attack, and to honor members of the emergency services and bystanders who fought the attacker with fists, fire extinguishers and even a narwhal tusk.

Mayor Sadiq Khan said people should "take hope from the heroism of ordinary Londoners and emergency services who ran toward danger, risking their lives to help people they didn't even know."

Former University of Cambridge students Jones, 23, and Merritt, 25, were fatally stabbed by the 28-year-old attacker at an event run by the Cambridge-based prisoner rehabilitation program Learning Together. Merritt worked for the program and Jones was a volunteer.

Usman Khan was attending the event at London's Fishmongers' Hall and had returned for the afternoon session when he started stabbing people. Police believe he acted alone.

He was pursued onto London Bridge and restrained by staff from the venue and others from the conference, including former inmates. Police opened fire after he flashed what looked like a suicide vest. It turned out to be fake.

Toby Williamson, chief executive of Fishmongers' Hall, paid tribute to staff who tried to help the wounded and fight off the attacker. Williamson said one staffer, a kitchen worker he identified as Lukasz, pulled a 5-foot (1.5 meter) narwhal tusk from the wall and charged at Khan, allowing others to escape.

Williamson told Sky News that Lukasz, wielding the tusk, fought one-on-one with Khan for about a minute and suffered cuts on his arm, but didn't "flinch for a moment." However, Williamson said in later interviews that Lukasz fought the attacker off with a pole while a different man brandished the tusk.

The attack has pushed security to the top of the agenda in the election campaign.

Johnson, a Conservative, blamed legal changes made by a previous Labour government for the fact that Khan was freed from prison a year ago after serving half of a 16-year sentence for terrorist offenses.

Khan was arrested in 2010 and admitted to being part of an al-Qaida-inspired plot to set up a terrorist training camp in Pakistan. He was given an "indeterminate" sentence in 2012 that specified he could only be released when he was judged not to be a danger to the public. He appealed, and the sentence was fixed at 16 years. Like many British inmates, he was released after serving half that time.

Opposition parties blamed years of public spending cuts by the Conservatives, who have been in power since 2010. Khan was on probation, subject to restrictions on his movement and wearing an electronic tag when he launched his attack.

Philip Lee, a former Conservative justice minister who quit the party and joined the opposition Liberal Democrats, accused the prime minister of "misleading and lying" with his simplistic depiction of the problem.

"The solutions to this are complex," he said.

"Everybody, right-minded people, want to see people like Usman Khan locked up and kept away from broader society, but to do that you have got to have the prison places, you have got to have the capacity to make the right decisions."

British authorities are investigating whether Usman Khan lapsed back into radicalization after his release, or deceived people into thinking he had left extremism behind

Khan spent time at HMP Whitemoor, a maximum-security prison where Learning Together runs courses for inmates. The Daily Telegraph reported Monday that he was featured as a success story on Learning Together's website. The site appears to have been removed since the attack.

Johnson said the case showed that some criminals are beyond rehabilitation.

"There are unquestionably some cases which are just too tough to crack and alas he appears to have been one of them," he said during a campaign visit to Southampton on England's south coast.

But Ian Acheson, a criminologist who led a government-commissioned review into Islamic extremism in British prisons, said U.K. deradicalization programs were ineffective and overstretched authorities were ill-equipped to deal with extremists determined to play the system.

"This disaster is one that was created in the Treasury," Acheson told the BBC. "At the heart of this is

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the destruction of the prison and probations service through crazy failed ideological and austerity cuts.” After the attack, authorities scrambled to review the cases of 74 other people who had been jailed for terrorism and released in similar circumstances to Khan.

As part of that review, a 34-year-old man was arrested in Stoke-on-Trent, central England, and sent back to prison for violating his release conditions.

Merritt’s family also cautioned against knee-jerk responses. His relatives said he “would not want this terrible, isolated incident to be used as a pretext by the government for introducing even more draconian sentences on prisoners, or for detaining people in prison for longer than necessary.”

In an emotional article in The Guardian newspaper, David Merritt said his son “would be seething at his death, and his life, being used to perpetuate an agenda of hate that he gave his everything fighting against.”

“Jack believed in the inherent goodness of humanity, and felt a deep social responsibility to protect that,” he wrote. “Through us all, Jack marches on.”

Now Roquefort: US eyes tariffs on \$2.4B in French imports

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration is proposing tariffs on up to \$2.4 billion worth of French imports — including Roquefort cheese, handbags, lipstick and sparkling wine — in retaliation for France’s tax on American tech giants like Google, Amazon and Facebook.

The Office of the U.S. Trade Representative charged Monday that France’s new digital services tax discriminates against U.S. companies. The trade office will accept public comments on the tariffs, which could hit 100%, through Jan. 6 and hold a hearing Jan. 7.

The French tax is designed to prevent tech companies from dodging taxes by putting headquarters in low-tax European Union countries. It imposes a 3% annual levy on French revenues of digital companies with yearly global sales worth more than 750 million euros (\$830 million) and French revenue exceeding 25 million euros.

The U.S. also criticized the French tax for targeting companies’ revenue, not their profits, and for being retroactive.

The decision to pursue tariffs “sends a clear signal that the United States will take action against digital tax regimes that discriminate or otherwise impose undue burdens on U.S. companies,” U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer said.

His agency investigated the French tax under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 — the same provision the Trump administration used last year to probe China’s technology policies, leading to tariffs on more than \$360 billion worth of Chinese imports in the biggest trade war since the 1930s.

Lighthizer warned that the U.S. is also exploring whether to pursue Section 301 investigations into digital taxes introduced by Austria, Italy and Turkey.

The decision to target France got bipartisan endorsement from Iowa Republican Sen. Chuck Grassley and Oregon Democratic Sen. Ron Wyden. In a joint statement, they assailed the French digital tax as “unreasonable, protectionist and discriminatory.”

The tech trade group ITI said it welcomed the administration’s decision and urged continued negotiations on international taxes under the auspices of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

The tariff announcement is likely to increase tension between the United States and Europe. The U.S. is already readying tariffs on \$7.5 billion in EU imports over illegal subsidies for the European aircraft giant Airbus. The World Trade Organization on Monday gave the U.S. a greenlight to impose those levies, ruling that the EU had not complied with an order to end the subsidies.

And in another reminder that Washington’s trade conflicts extend well beyond a 16-month standoff with China, President Donald Trump on Monday pledge to slap tariffs on steel and aluminum from Brazil and Argentina.

Both South American nations were among a group of U.S. allies that Trump exempted from steel and aluminum tariffs in March 2018. The American president’s threat to reverse that decision and impose the

metals tariffs is the latest example of his mercurial approach to trade policy.

Trump accused the countries of manipulating their currencies lower to make their exports less expensive in world markets and gain an unfair trade advantage.

But the countries' weak currencies reflect their weak economies. Brazil is contending with double-digit unemployment and economic stagnation after two years of deep recession. Argentina is battling an economic crisis marked by runaway inflation, huge debts and widespread poverty.

Kemp expected to pick newcomer to succeed Isakson in Senate

By BEN NADLER and ANDREW TAYLOR Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Georgia's governor is expected to appoint a wealthy business executive to replace an outgoing U.S. senator, according to a GOP political consultant, bypassing President Donald Trump's preferred pick and betting instead that a moderate woman can garner enough support to hold onto the seat next year.

Brian Kemp's choice of Kelly Loeffler, a political newcomer, defies fellow Republicans who had pushed him to choose Rep. Doug Collins, one of Trump's staunchest defenders in Congress. Loeffler will fill the seat of retiring Sen. Johnny Isakson, who is stepping down because of health issues.

The consultant spoke Monday to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity because Kemp has yet to publicly announce the decision, which comes after weeks of speculation over his choice for a Senate seat Democrats are hoping to win in 2020.

Trump made clear that he preferred Collins to Loeffler but he has resigned himself to the pick, according to a person familiar with his thinking who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Loeffler, co-owner of the Atlanta Dream professional women's basketball franchise, will have to defend the seat next November as Republicans battle to maintain control of the Senate and the White House.

Collins has publicly left open the door to running against her.

Loeffler is the CEO of financial services firm Bakkt, which offers a regulated market for Bitcoin. She was previously an executive at Intercontinental Exchange, a behemoth founded by her husband that owns the New York Stock Exchange. Bakkt is a subsidiary of Intercontinental Exchange.

The Senate seat will be up for grabs again in November 2020 in an open-to-all special election for the final two years of Isakson's term. Also on the ballot will be Republican Sen. David Perdue, another vocal Trump defender. With both of Georgia's GOP-held Senate seats on the ballot alongside Trump in 2020, the race is raising the state's profile as a political battleground where Republicans still dominate but Democrats have made substantial inroads in recent elections.

A Loeffler victory in 2020 would make her the first woman elected to the Senate from Georgia.

Kemp's selection of Loeffler was first reported by the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. News of the choice set off infighting among Republicans almost immediately, with several conservative groups and Trump allies attacking Loeffler for being a political novice and appearing too moderate.

The debate centers on who can best help the GOP position itself for success next year in Georgia.

"This is a strategic effort on (Kemp's) part to diversify the party but also to reclaim some ground in metro Atlanta with college-educated white women," said Brian Robinson, a Republican political adviser in Georgia who served as communications director under former Gov. Nathan Deal.

In bypassing Collins, who would have brought instant name recognition and a ready-built campaign cof-fer, Kemp risked angering Trump and triggering a Collins challenge to his appointee. And Kemp is keenly aware that a single tweet from the president could be the difference between victory and defeat for Loeffler. Such a tweet was credited with helping Kemp pull off an upset victory in last year's GOP primary for Georgia governor.

Democrats, meanwhile, hope to capitalize on dissatisfaction with Washington and break the GOP's hold on the Deep South. They're spending big in Georgia in the hopes that demographic changes making the state less rural and more diverse could help them deliver an upset in November.

Democrat Matt Lieberman, the son of former U.S. senator and vice presidential candidate Joe Lieberman,

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has announced a bid for the seat, and several other Democrats are mulling potential bids.

In September, Kemp took the unusual step of opening an online application process for the Isakson Senate seat and asked everyone from congressmen to ordinary Georgians to apply.

The governor's office was soon flooded with hundreds of applications. Many were sincere. Others, like one submitted for Kermit the Frog, were not.

Loeffler submitted her application just hours before the online portal was closed, prompting speculation that she may have done so at Kemp's urging.

Other top Republicans who applied include Collins, former congressman Jack Kingston, state House Speaker Pro Tempore Jan Jones and former Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price.

Taylor reported from Washington. Associated Press reporter Zeke Miller in London contributed to this story.

Student in custody after shooting at Milwaukee-area school

By **GRETCHEN EHLKE and IVAN MORENO** Associated Press

MILWAUKEE (AP) — A police officer shot an armed male student in a classroom at a suburban Milwaukee high school Monday morning after the teenager pointed a gun at officers, a police chief said.

Officers performed life-saving measures on the 17-year-old Waukesha South High School student, who is in custody and in stable condition, and no officers or other students were injured, Waukesha Police Chief Russell Jack said.

The shooting happened after another student told a school resource officer that a classmate had a handgun around 10:17 a.m., Jack said. He said the resource officer went to the classroom to confront the teen and move other students in the room to safety. Authorities have not said if other students were in the classroom during the ensuing standoff, and Jack did not immediately respond to an email seeking clarity.

Waukesha police and sheriff's deputies soon arrived at the school and tried to de-escalate the situation to no avail.

"The suspect would not remove his hands from his pocket and continued to ignore officers' commands," Jack said. "The suspect removed his handgun from his waistband and pointed it at the officers. An officer was forced to discharge his firearm, striking the suspect."

The officer who shot the student is an 11-year veteran of the Waukesha Police Department, Jack said.

Police have not said whether the student ever fired his weapon. Police said the shooting was an isolated incident and that they are not seeking any other suspects.

Andrew Oresick, 16, told the Journal Sentinel that he was outside his Spanish class hanging posters with other students and their teacher when they heard a commotion.

"These kids start running out from the classroom directly across from us, and one of them goes: 'He's got a gun,'" Oresick recalled. He said their Spanish teacher immediately got them into the classroom.

Parents gathered outside and hugged students as they streamed out of the school about 18 miles (30 kilometers) west of Milwaukee. Some students said they took cover under desks and teachers barricaded doors when a drill was announced. They told reporters outside the school that they knew it wasn't a drill when they heard two or three gunshots.

"It was just really scary," Alexis Grady, a senior, told the Journal Sentinel.

Waukesha North High School was placed on lockdown after a report Monday afternoon that a student had a firearm, Waukesha police said. The school resource officer determined it was possible the student was inside the school. Additional officers responded and determined the student was no longer on school property.

Officers went to the 15-year-old boy's home. He was taken into custody without incident and a facsimile firearm was found hidden in the home, police said. No one was hurt.

School shootings have occasionally shone a spotlight on the response by guards and school resource officers. Armed school resource officers have rarely prevented a school shooting.

Last year, armed guards at three high-profile school shootings — Marshall County High School in Ben-

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ton, Kentucky; Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida; and Santa Fe High School in Texas — were unable to stop the rampage.

In Parkland, the school's resource officer remained outside rather than enter the building to engage the shooter and try to end the attack.

Gun-rights advocates believe having more armed educators and law enforcement in schools will help stop a shooter in his tracks. Gun-control advocates contend that arming teachers and having more guns in a school will do little to prevent school shootings and that such moves could put kids at greater risk.

An estimated 43% of public schools have an armed law enforcement officer on-site, according to a survey by the National Center for Education Statistics. The survey covered the 2015-16 school year, the most recent year surveyed. That figure doesn't include schools with armed private security guards or teachers and administrators who carry firearms.

Associated Press writers Lisa Marie Pane contributed from Boise, Idaho, and Jeff Baenen from Minneapolis.

Chicago mayor fires city's top cop over 'ethical lapses'

By SOPHIA TAREEN Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot fired the city's retiring police superintendent Monday, citing "ethical lapses" that included telling lies about a recent incident in which Eddie Johnson was found asleep at the wheel of his car after having drinks.

Named to the job in the wake of a police shooting that killed a black teenager, Johnson was dismissed after the mayor reviewed an inspector general's report and video evidence related to the night in mid-October when officers discovered him unconscious in his SUV at a stop sign. He initially blamed his failure to take his blood pressure medication and said he had a few drinks with dinner earlier in the evening.

The officers did not conduct any sobriety tests and let their boss drive home. It was unclear if they would be disciplined.

Johnson "engaged in a series of actions that are intolerable for any leader or position of trust, particularly the head of the Chicago Police Department," the mayor said. His conduct was "not only unbecoming but demonstrates a series of ethical lapses and flawed decision-making."

Lightfoot said the police chief of the nation's third-largest city repeatedly lied about the events that unfolded the night of Oct. 16 and morning of Oct. 17.

"What he portrayed to me, what he portrayed to the public was fundamentally different than what the facts show," she said. The underlying conduct "warranted this significant and serious action of relieving him of his role."

At a hastily called news conference, the mayor declined to offer details "out of deference" to Johnson's family and the ongoing investigation.

"While at some point, the inspector general's report may become public and those details may be revealed, I don't feel like it is appropriate or fair to Mr. Johnson's wife or children to do so at this time," Lightfoot said.

Former Los Angeles Police Chief Charlie Beck, who was already named interim superintendent in Chicago, was to take over the department of 13,500 officers immediately, Lightfoot said.

A Chicago police spokesman did not immediately return messages seeking comment from Johnson, who in more than 30 years with the department held almost every rank on the force. He declined to discuss his firing with a Sun-Times reporter who came to his South Side home.

In October, Johnson called for the department's internal affairs division to investigate the incident, saying he wanted the public to be confident that both he and the officers acted properly. He said he felt lightheaded while driving home, pulled over and fell asleep. Earlier in his tenure, he was hospitalized for a blood clot and kidney transplant.

Before he officially announced his retirement in November, Johnson told reporters he had been toying with the idea for some time, denying that it had anything to do with the incident. He said he did not care

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about making it to April as police chief, when his pension was to become fully vested at the superintendent's salary, which is about \$260,000 a year. Days later, he appeared with Lightfoot at an emotional news conference commemorating his long career, an appearance that Lightfoot said Monday she now regretted.

"This department has to be about creating a culture of integrity and accountability, and that's what we're going to do," Lightfoot said.

A city spokeswoman declined to discuss the status of Johnson's pension, citing the investigation.

Johnson, 59, was named superintendent in 2016 by then-Mayor Rahm Emanuel, who had fired Superintendent Garry McCarthy after the release of the now-infamous video showing officer Jason Van Dyke shooting teenager Laquan McDonald. At the time, Emanuel was scrambling to restore public confidence.

Eschewing the recommendations of his police board that conducted a national search, Emanuel settled on Johnson, a native Chicagoan and interim superintendent who had not even applied for the job. An African American who spent his early childhood living in one of the city's most notorious public housing projects, the soft-spoken Johnson was a popular choice with the rank-and-file who felt they could trust him far more than McCarthy, a brash outsider who spent most of his career in New York.

Johnson took over the department as the city grappled with a spike in already high violent crime. By the end of the year, the number of dead totaled nearly 800 — or 300 more than just the year before.

He presided over an effort to hire more officers that increased the size of the force by about 1,000. Under his leadership, police also expanded the use of technology, including installing more surveillance cameras and embarking on the largest rollout of police body cameras in the country.

As the McDonald case advanced through the courts, Johnson looked for ways to restore public confidence that had been shattered by allegations that police engaged in a cover-up. The video was withheld from the public for months.

Questions about Johnson's willingness to cover for fellow officers arose after media reports that, as a deputy chief, he agreed after watching the video that the shooting was justified.

In a blistering report, the Justice Department found a long history in the police force of racial bias and excessive force by officers. That led to wholesale changes in the way officers are investigated and last year the implementation of a settlement known as a federal consent decree, which calls for more community policing, better officer training and requiring paperwork every time officers point a gun at someone, even if they don't fire.

Johnson largely enjoyed support from the public and his department, partly because he was willing to show his human side. He became emotional when he faced reporters to talk about the shooting death of a longtime commander and close friend. He showed anger when he announced the arrest of actor Jussie Smollett, casting what he said was Smollett's staged racist attack as an attack on Chicago itself. And the city rooted for him when he had a kidney transplant — a kidney he said was donated by his son.

Associated Press writers Don Babwin and Kathleen Foody contributed to this report.

Follow Sophia Tareen on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/sophiatareen>.

Trump campaign to stop giving credentials to Bloomberg News

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — President Donald Trump's campaign said Monday it will no longer give credentials to Bloomberg News reporters to cover campaign events because of coverage "biases," an accusation that the news organization rejects.

The decision comes a week after the news service's founder, billionaire Michael Bloomberg, announced he was seeking the Democratic nomination for president. And Bloomberg News, which the former New York City mayor founded in 1990, said it would not investigate him or his Democratic rivals but would continue to probe the Trump administration, as the sitting government.

Trump campaign manager Brad Parscale called it a troubling decision to "formalize preferential reporting

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policies." He said Bloomberg reporters would no longer be credentialed to cover campaign events until the policy is rescinded.

"As President Trump's campaign, we are accustomed to unfair reporting practices, but most news organizations don't announce their biases so publicly," Parscale said.

Bloomberg Editor-in-Chief John Micklethwait said the accusation of bias couldn't be further from the truth.

"We have covered Donald Trump fairly and in an unbiased way since he became a candidate in 2015 and will continue to do so despite the restrictions imposed by the Trump campaign," he said.

The Trump campaign's action illustrates the difficult position Bloomberg's candidacy has imposed on the news organization.

By saying reporters could not investigate Bloomberg or his Democratic rivals, some critics have said this would prevent the news organization from doing in-depth reporting on the campaign. Bloomberg officials say it's a position they've navigated before when he was mayor.

"This is my nightmare come true," said Kathy Kiely, a University of Missouri journalism professor who quit as Bloomberg political director when he was considering a run for the 2016 presidential nomination.

Journalists at Bloomberg would have been better served if he had made clear that he was stepping away from his company for the campaign and said that he — and any candidate for president — was fair game for any kind of stories that Bloomberg News reporters could dig up, she said.

"It's unfortunate that this is creating a perception that this is how journalism works, that journalists are manipulated by their bosses," she said.

In a memo sent to staff members following Bloomberg's announcement, Micklethwait said he would continue the organization's policy of not investigating Bloomberg, his family or his foundation, and "will extend the same policy to his rivals in the Democratic primaries."

If Bloomberg was chosen as the candidate against Trump, the policy as it affects the president will be reevaluated, he said at the time.

Dean Baquet, executive editor of The New York Times, also criticized the Trump campaign's move.

"Bloomberg News is one of the largest and most influential news organizations in the world," Baquet said. "We condemn any action that keeps quality news media from reporting fairly and accurately on the presidency and the leadership of the country."

Trump's potential Democratic rival in the 2020 contest, former Vice President Joe Biden, also panned the Trump campaign's position as he campaigned Monday in Iowa.

"It's really dangerous when you start saying to any press outlet that you can't cover me, you can't be credentialed, you can't get on the bus or you can't come to the White House," Biden said on his campaign bus.

He posed a hypothetical — if such practices were acceptable — about the relationship between Democrats and Trump's preferred cable news network. "Would any Democrat have Fox cover them in the White House?" he said. "Come on. You can't do that. You gotta be big boys here. It's the nature of the beast."

Associated Press writer Bill Barrow in Algona, Iowa, contributed to this report.

California Rep. Hunter to plead guilty to corruption charge

By JULIE WATSON Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — California Rep. Duncan Hunter said he plans to plead guilty to misusing campaign funds and is prepared to go to jail, a stunning turn of events for the six-term Republican who had steadfastly denied wrongdoing and claimed he was the victim of a political witch hunt.

Hunter said in an interview that aired Monday that he will change his not guilty plea at a federal court hearing Tuesday. He said he wants to protect his three children from going through a trial.

His wife Margaret Hunter also was charged in the case and in June accepted a plea deal that called for her to testify against her husband.

"I think it would be really tough for them," he told San Diego TV station KUSI. "It's hard enough being

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the kids of a public figure. I think it's time for them to live life outside the spotlight."

Hunter, who was re-elected last year after being indicted and was campaigning for a seventh term next year, indicated he will leave office but didn't say when.

An early supporter of President Donald Trump, Hunter said he will plead guilty to one count of misuse of campaign funds. Federal prosecutors charged he and his wife with 60 criminal counts, saying they spent more than \$250,000 in campaign money for golf outings, plane tickets and a family vacation to Italy. They also said the money went to household items and airline tickets for their pet rabbit.

Prosecutors revealed salacious details about the congressman's lifestyle, saying some money was used by Hunter to further romantic relationships with lobbyists and congressional aides.

Hunter, 42, said he will accept whatever sentence the judge gives. The couple could have faced decades in prison before the plea deals. His wife faces up to five years in prison.

"I think it's important that people know I did make mistakes. I did not properly monitor or account for my campaign money," he said. "Whatever my time in custody is, I will take that hit. My only hope is that the judge does not sentence my wife to jail. I think my kids need a mom in the home."

Hunter's plea sets up the prospects for a second special House election in California next year. Freshman Rep. Katie Hill, a rising Democratic star, resigned her Los Angeles-area seat in October after explicit photos of her were posted online.

Hunter represents the 50th Congressional District, which covers eastern San Diego County and a small part of Riverside County. It is the most Republican district in Southern California, an area now nearly devoid of GOP representation.

Hunter narrowly survived a challenge in 2018 from Democrat Ammar Campa-Najjar, a political unknown. The 30-year-old Campa-Najjar is running again and Republican contenders include former Rep. Darrell Issa and radio personality Carl DeMaio, a former San Diego city councilman.

All three applauded Hunter's decision to plead guilty.

Hunter is the second Republican congressman this year to plead guilty to federal charges. In October, former four-term Rep. Chris Collins of New York pleaded guilty in an insider trading case and resigned. He faces a maximum sentence of about four years in prison.

Hunter's departure will mark the end of a political dynasty in which he and his father represented the district for nearly 40 years. Duncan Hunter Sr. was elected to the seat in 1980 and held it until his son won in 2008.

Until now, Hunter had resisted calls to resign, calling the charges a politically motivated attempt to drive him from office in a state where Democrats are in the majority. Following his indictment in August 2018 he said the charges were brought by prosecutors who attended a fundraiser for Hillary Clinton.

After his wife agreed to a plea deal, Hunter said "it's obvious that the Department of Justice went after her to get to me for political reasons."

Hunter was the first Marine combat veteran elected to Congress after deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. He said he will continue to fight for veterans, but he did not say in what capacity.

"Going forward, life throws challenges at you, that's what life does, and I think the most important thing is to just keep your head down, shut up and face those challenges head on and that's what I'll be doing," he said.

Associated Press writer Elliot Spagat in San Diego contributed to this report.

Jimmy Carter hospitalized for urinary tract infection

AMERICUS, Ga. (AP) — Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter was admitted to a south Georgia hospital over the weekend for treatment of a urinary tract infection, a spokeswoman said Monday.

Deanna Congileo, a spokeswoman for The Carter Center, said in a statement that the 95-year-old former president was admitted to Phoebe Sumter Medical Center in Americus over the weekend.

"He is feeling better and looks forward to returning home soon. We will issue a statement when he is

released for further rest and recovery at home," she added.

Carter has overcome several health challenges in recent years.

He was diagnosed with melanoma in 2015, announcing that the cancer had spread to other parts of his body. After partial removal of his liver, treatment for brain lesions, radiation and immunotherapy, he said he was cancer-free.

A fall last spring required him to get hip replacement surgery.

Then on Oct. 6, he hit his head in another fall and received 14 stitches, but still traveled to Nashville, Tennessee, to help build a Habitat for Humanity home shortly thereafter. He fractured his pelvis in another fall later that month and was briefly hospitalized.

Last Wednesday, Carter was released from Emory University Hospital in Atlanta after recovering from surgery to relieve pressure on his brain caused by bleeding from a fall.

WTO panel: EU fails to end illegal subsidies for Airbus

By JAMEY KEATEN Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — A World Trade Organization panel ruled Monday that the European Union has not complied with an order to end illegal subsidies for plane-maker Airbus, which prompted the Trump administration to impose tariffs on nearly \$7.5 billion worth of EU goods in October.

In its ruling, a WTO compliance panel found that the EU had not taken sufficient steps to end harm to Boeing, the major rival to Europe's Airbus. The EU is expected to appeal, though the United States is on the cusp of preventing the WTO's appeals court — the Appellate Body — from ruling on any new appeals.

U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer on Monday welcomed the WTO ruling.

"Strong action is needed to convince the EU that its interests lie in eliminating these market-distorting subsidies now and in the future, so that our industries can compete on a level playing field," Lighthizer said in a statement.

Responding to Monday's ruling, the EU's executive commission faulted the panel for making a "number of serious legal errors in its assessment of EU compliance," and said its recommended ways of compliance would be "very problematic for a larger part of the WTO membership."

"The European Commission will decide on its course of action in light of this assessment, including the possibility of bringing an appeal in order to have these legal errors corrected," it said in a statement.

The commission also alluded to a decision expected next year by a WTO arbitrator in a case of illegal U.S. government support for Chicago-based Boeing, which could give the EU authorization to slap tariffs on U.S. goods.

The Airbus case centers on so-called launch aid from the EU that WTO judges ruled had impeded sales for aircraft from Boeing in the twin-aisle and very large aircraft markets.

In May last year, the Appellate Body agreed that the EU and four of its member states — Britain, France, Germany and Spain — had failed to abide by an earlier compliance panel ruling. The EU insisted in subsequent arguments that the subsidies had been lifted, and that proper steps were taken to remove the subsidies' harmful impact on Boeing.

The panel found that the EU had failed to show that it had succeeded in withdrawing French, German, Spanish and British subsidies for the A380 superjumbo, or German and British subsidies for the A350XWB widebody jet.

A final resolution could be made more difficult because the WTO's appellate body, which has final say in trade dispute cases, is set to become unable to hear new cases starting next week.

Under WTO rules, the Appellate Body must have at least three members, and the terms of two of its three members are set to expire Dec. 11. The United States has singlehandedly blocked any new appointments, alleging that the body's members have overstepped WTO rules and draw excessive salaries and perks, among other things.

It is unclear whether the Appellate Body's three members will continue to work on outstanding cases after the two terms expire. Sometimes, its judges work on pending cases even after their terms expire.

In a statement, Airbus called on the United States to "immediately reduce" the \$7.5 billion in tariffs "by around \$2 billion," arguing that it was directly linked to finding that loans for the development of Airbus' A380 superjumbo "no longer have an impact on Boeing sales and that therefore the value of the lost sales no longer exists."

Airbus didn't explain how it reached that estimate either in its statement or follow-up email messages. Lighthizer's office said that "nothing in today's report" from the WTO suggests that "U.S. countermeasures should be reduced by \$2 billion."

Boeing called Monday's ruling "a complete loss for Airbus and its government sponsors." In a statement, Boeing said the decision confirmed that "billions of euros of illegal government subsidies to Airbus continue to harm the U.S. aerospace industry."

The WTO's dispute settlement understanding, a sort of rulebook for resolving disputes, said that parties in dispute cases need to ensure full implementation of rulings before any WTO go-ahead for lifting of authorized tariffs, and that there can be no "second arbitration" such as in the case of the \$7.5 billion arbitration award given to the United States.

In its ruling, the compliance panel said the EU and four member states "failed to implement the recommendations and rulings" of a lower WTO panel to conform with the trade body's rules.

AP Economics Writer Paul Wiseman and AP Airlines Writer David Koenig contributed to this report.

Prince Andrew's accuser asks UK public for support

By GREGORY KATZ Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Prince Andrew suffered fresh scrutiny Monday night when the woman who says she was a trafficking victim made to have sex with him when she was 17 asked the British public to support her quest for justice.

Virginia Roberts Giuffre told BBC Panorama that people "should not accept this as being OK."

Giuffre's first UK television interview on the topic describes how she says she was trafficked by notorious sex offender Jeffrey Epstein beginning in 2001 and ordered to have sex with Andrew three times, including once in London.

"This is not some sordid sex story. This is a story of being trafficked, this is a story of abuse and this is a story of your guys' royalty," Giuffre tells the program.

Andrew, 59, has categorically denied having sex with Giuffre and apologized for his association with Epstein, who died in prison in August in what New York City officials said was a suicide.

The disgraced prince has stepped down from royal duties "for the foreseeable future" because of his friendship with Epstein and the allegations of sexual wrongdoing with an underage girl. He says he is willing to cooperate with appropriate law enforcement inquiries if required to do so.

The scandal is one of the worst to have gripped the royal household in recent decades and has severely tarnished the reputation of Andrew, one of Queen Elizabeth II's four children.

U.S. law enforcement agencies have not commented publicly on whether his actions are being investigated. British police looked into Giuffre's claim, made in 2015, that she was trafficked into England to have sex with Andrew but did not launch a full-scale investigation.

Andrew tried to contain the damage by giving a televised interview on the topic in November, but it backfired because he did not express concern for Epstein's victims and because he defended his friendship with Epstein as "honorable."

The televised documentary broadcast Monday night painted a detailed portrait of how Epstein abused dozens of young women at his luxury properties in the Caribbean and New York and quoted Giuffre's account of being ordered to have sex with Andrew on three occasions.

Giuffre, now 35, described how she says she was recruited by Ghislaine Maxwell to give Epstein massages when she was working as a locker room attendant at Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate in Palm Beach, FL. and later taken to London to meet Andrew.

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Maxwell has denied any wrongdoing.

Breaking down in tears, Giuffre described the humiliating aftermath of being made to have sex with Andrew at a townhouse in London after a night out at the exclusive Tramp nightclub. She said she was told to dance with him by Maxwell, Epstein's girlfriend at the time.

"It was horrible and this guy was sweating all over me," she said. "His sweat was like it was raining basically everywhere, I was just like grossed out from it, but I knew I had to keep him happy because that's what Jeffrey and Ghislaine (Maxwell) would have expected from me."

She said that Maxwell told her she would have to do for Andrew what she had done for Epstein, meaning she would have to have sex with the prince.

"That just made me sick," Giuffre said.

"There was a bath," she said. "It started there, then went into the bedroom. It didn't last very long, the whole procedure. It was disgusting."

She said: "He got up and he said 'Thanks'. I sat there in bed, just horrified and ashamed and felt dirty."

Giuffre said she felt trapped: "It was a wicked time in my life. It was a really scary time in my life. I had just been abused by a member of the royal family ... Yeah, I didn't have chains, but these powerful people were my chains."

She admitted that her memory was foggy at time and that she might have some dates and place wrong but insisted she was certain of the key facts.

In his recent interview, Andrew said he had never met Giuffre. He said he had a medical condition that prevented him from sweating.

Epstein was a wealthy financier with many powerful friends. He was in prison on sex trafficking charges when he died.

Trump administration quietly releases Lebanon military aid

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration has quietly released more than \$100 million in military assistance to Lebanon after months of unexplained delay that led some lawmakers to compare it to the aid for Ukraine at the center of the impeachment inquiry.

The \$105 million in Foreign Military Financing funds for the Lebanese Armed Forces was released just before the Thanksgiving holiday and lawmakers were notified of the step on Monday, according to two congressional staffers and an administration official.

All three spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly to the matter.

The money had languished in limbo at the Office of Management and Budget since September although it had already won congressional approval and had overwhelming support from the Pentagon, State Department and National Security Council. The White House has yet to offer any explanation for the delay despite repeated queries from Congress.

Lawmakers such as Rep. Eliot Engel, the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee and Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn., had been pressing the administration since October to either release the funds or explain why it was being withheld. The State Department had notified Congress on Sept. 5 that the money would be spent.

Earlier this month, the delay came up in impeachment testimony by David Hale, the No. 3 official in the State Department, according to the transcript of the closed-door hearing. Hale described growing consternation among diplomats about the delay.

The White House and the Office of Management and Budget have declined to comment on the matter. The State Department had offered only a cryptic response to queries, defending the assistance but also calling for Lebanese authorities to implement economic reforms and rein in corruption.

As with the Ukraine assistance, OMB did not explain the delay. However, unlike Ukraine, there has been no suggestion that President Donald Trump is seeking "a favor" from Lebanon in exchange for the aid,

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according to officials familiar with the matter.

The delay had frustrated the national security community, which believes the assistance that pays for U.S.-made military equipment for the Lebanese army is essential, particularly as Lebanon reels from financial chaos and mass protests."

The aid is intended to help counter Iran's influence in Lebanon, which is highlighted by the presence of the Iranian-supported Shiite Hezbollah movement in the government and the group's militias, officials have said.

"Holding the money weakened the Lebanese military just at the moment that they were holding the country together," Sen. Murphy said in response to the release. "There's literally nothing in the Middle East this White House can't screw up."

Rep. Ted Deutch, D-Fla., who joined Engel in demanding an explanation for the delay, said he was "pleased to see this critical aid finally resuming. Our assistance is crucial to help Lebanon counter Iran-backed Hezbollah and other groups threatening the region."

Some pro-Israel members of Congress have sought to defund the Lebanese military, arguing that it has been compromised by Hezbollah, which the U.S. designates as a "foreign terrorist organization." Republican Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas has long advocated cutting the assistance and is expected to introduce legislation that would bar such aid as long as Hezbollah is part of Lebanon's government.

The Pentagon and State Department reject that view, saying the army is the only independent Lebanese institution capable of resisting Hezbollah.

Mexican border town gripped by fear after gunbattle kills 22

By MARIA VERZA Associated Press

VILLA UNION, Mexico (AP) — A small town near the U.S.-Mexico border began cleaning up Monday, gripped by fear after the killing of 22 people in a ferocious weekend gunbattle between drug cartel members and security forces.

A 72-year-old woman living near Villa Union's city hall recounted how she huddled with two of her grandchildren inside an armoire during the shooting.

The street in front of her home was littered with shell casings, and her walls and door were pocked with bullet holes.

"I'm still trembling," she said, speaking on condition of anonymity out of fear for her safety. "We've never seen anything like this. It was as if they just wanted to sow terror."

Around midday Saturday, armed men in a convoy of dozens of vehicles arrived in Villa Union and began shooting up city hall. Many of the vehicles were emblazoned with the cartel's initials — CDN, for Cartel del Noreste, or Northeast Cartel — as were the attackers' bulletproof vests.

Coahuila Gov. Miguel Riquelme said state security forces arrived within an hour and surrounded the town, about 35 miles (60 kilometers) southwest of Eagle Pass, Texas.

Sixteen gunmen were killed, along with four state police officers and two civilians, he said.

On Monday morning, the town of about 6,000 people was strewn with burned-out vehicles, and the city hall's facade was so riddled with bullet holes it looked like a sieve.

Workers swept up glass and rubble out front and began to plaster over the holes, while others collected important documents. Broken glass covered the floor, a crucifix had fallen from a wall, furniture was destroyed, and portraits of local politicians were pierced by bullets.

Outside lay a burned SUV, a shot-up ambulance and a yellow school bus with CDN spray-painted on the side.

Shops nearby cleaned up rather than open for business. Despite the presence of soldiers and federal police patrolling the quiet streets, no one sent their children to school, and residents did not want to give their names for fear the gunmen could return.

"They wanted to send a message" to the state government, Riquelme told the Mexican network Radio Formula.

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He said the Northeast Cartel, based in nearby Tamaulipas state, has made 15 attempts to establish itself in Coahuila since he became governor two years ago.

"We have not permitted the entrance of these criminals in our entity," he said. "They thought they were going to enter, strike and exit, something that didn't happen."

The Northeast Cartel is an offshoot of the Zetas, a cartel with roots in elite military units. The Zetas long dominated Nuevo Laredo and Tamaulipas state and were known for military-style operations and grotesque violence intended to intimidate their enemies.

Villa Union is 12 miles (20 kilometers) from the town of Allende, the site of a 2011 massacre involving the Zetas in which officials say 70 died.

Villa Union residents wondered why their town was targeted with such fury. A woman who declined to give her name likened the attack to being in a war zone and said, "They caught us off guard."

The governor said that all hostages taken Saturday, including five minors, had been rescued. Cartel members had taken some locals with them as guides as they tried to make their escape along back roads.

Of the 25 vehicles seized, four carried .50-caliber machine guns. Dozens of homes were damaged.

On Monday afternoon, the family of a civil defense worker who was one of the two civilians killed in the shooting held a wake for the father of four children. Still terrified, all declined to speak or be identified. His widow said only, "He didn't do anything bad."

Mexico's homicide rate has increased to historically high levels this year. After a string of massacres, critics have charged that President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's government does not have a coherent security strategy.

López Obrador met on Monday with relatives of nine women and children, all dual U.S.-Mexican citizens, killed by gunmen from the Juarez cartel in the border state of Sonora on Nov. 4. Authorities said they have taken three suspects into custody in connection with the ambush.

The relatives expressed satisfaction with the meeting but said they want further investigation.

Brazil's Bolsonaro under fire after Trump slaps tariffs

By MAURICIO SAVARESE and DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

SAO PAULO (AP) — Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro's U.S.-focused foreign policy efforts suffered a severe setback on Monday when his American counterpart Donald Trump pledged to impose tariffs on steel and aluminum on the South American nation.

Trump initially leveled the threat by Twitter while accusing Brazil and neighboring Argentina, governed by U.S. allies Bolsonaro and Mauricio Macri, of manipulating their currencies and hurting American farmers.

Brazil's vice president denied the accusation, but Bolsonaro, who openly admires Trump, was reticent; the far-right politician said he could call Trump "if needed."

Argentina's production and labor minister, Dante Sica, said Trump's announcement caught policymakers by surprise.

Both South American nations were among a group of U.S. allies that Trump exempted from steel and aluminum tariffs in March 2018. The American president's threat to reverse that decision and impose the metals tariffs on Argentina and Brazil is another example of his mercurial approach to trade policy.

He also called on America's central bank to act to prevent other countries from devaluing their currencies.

"Brazil has really discounted. If you take a look at what's happened with their currency, they've devalued their currency very substantially by 10 percent. Argentina also," Trump said shortly before departing for a NATO conference in London. He did not provide specifics on the tariffs.

The stakes are high for Bolsonaro, who has made his relationship with Trump a cornerstone of his diplomacy and is called by both friends and foes "the Trump of the tropics."

While feuding publicly with other Western leaders, including the presidents of Germany and France, Bolsonaro has made several concessions to Trump in the expectation of reaping benefits. He has exempted American tourists from visas to visit Brazil, allowed the U.S. to launch satellites from Brazil and made it easier for Brazilians to buy American wheat and ethanol.

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In exchange, he received tepid U.S. support for Brazil's bid to enter the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, while Argentina has received full endorsement for membership.

"Brazil's president thought he had a big brother. Now he realizes he does not," said Carlos Melo, a political science professor at the Insper University in Sao Paulo. "His supporters might have to say that Trump was under pressure and there will be compensation later. But clearly this affects Bolsonaro. It is clear that international politics are about economic interests, not friendship."

Brazil is grappling with stubborn double-digit unemployment, and its economy is headed toward its third straight year of roughly 1% growth, following two years of deep recession.

Rubens Barbosa, a former Brazilian ambassador to Washington, told The Associated Press that Trump is "punishing Brazil's government and companies without a specific cause."

"This is an unfair relationship. Brazil is making gesture after gesture to support the U.S. in international forums, but the U.S. is not doing the same," Barbosa said.

Speaking at a business forum shortly after Trump's comments, Vice President Hamilton Mourão denied the country was manipulating its currency. He also said Brazil should discuss investment projects with China — a relationship initially shunned by the Bolsonaro administration that has lately grown warmer.

Brazil's economy, foreign affairs and agriculture ministries said in a joint statement they will "defend Brazil's trade interests and assure the flow of trade with the U.S."

Argentina, for its part, is mired in an economic crisis with rampant inflation, deep indebtedness, widespread poverty and a currency that has plunged under the leadership of Macri, who came to power in 2015 with promises to boost South America's second-largest economy. Macri was defeated in elections in October and will leave office next week. Argentina's President-elect Alberto Fernández will be inaugurated on Dec. 10.

"This was an unexpected topic, there was no signal toward our government, nor toward that of Brazil, nor the private sector, with respect to the changes," Argentina's Sica told reporters in Buenos Aires.

Both South American countries have benefited from the U.S. trade war with China, taking advantage of Chinese import taxes on U.S. farm products to export more agricultural goods to China.

Barbosa suggested Trump's failure to respond to Bolsonaro's attempts to improve ties could affect Brazil's decision on whether to buy 5G wireless technology from China's Huawei.

Trump has lobbied allies to avoid Huawei over worries its equipment might help Chinese electronic spying. The company denies that claim.

Trump's trade war with China hurt U.S. farmers after Beijing retaliated against levies on hundreds of billions of dollars of Chinese-made goods.

Businesses in the U.S. have delayed investments, sapping economic growth, because they don't know if the agreements Trump reaches with other countries will last or what countries or products he will target next.

After a brief spike in steel prices, U.S. steel producers have struggled since the Trump administration put tariffs into place last year. Domestic demand has slumped along with the energy sector as drillers pull back on purchases of steel pipe.

Darlene Superville reported from Washington. AP Economics writer Paul Wiseman in Washington and writer Debora Rey in Buenos Aires contributed to this story.

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Still on top: Cyber Monday sales on track to hit record

By JOSEPH PISANI AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Cyber Monday is still holding up as the biggest online shopping day of the year, even though many of the same deals have been available online for weeks and the name harks back to the days of dial-up modems.

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Shoppers are expected to spend a record \$9.4 billion on purchases made on their phones and computers Monday, up about 19% from last year's Cyber Monday, according to Adobe Analytics, which tracks transactions at 80 of the top 100 U.S. online stores.

The busiest time is expected to be in the hour before midnight, as people race to take advantage of discounts before they disappear.

Cyber Monday was created by retailers in 2005 to get people to shop online at a time when high-speed internet was rare and the iPhone didn't exist. The idea was to encourage people to shop at work, where faster connections made it easier to browse, when they returned from the Thanksgiving break.

"It's somewhat antiquated," said Rob Graf, vice president of strategy and insights at cloud computing company Salesforce, which tracks shopping behavior of the online stores that use its platform. "But retailers are still using it as a big milestone and driving heavy discounts."

At least one brand played up Cyber Monday's origins: Bonobos, the men's clothing seller owned by Walmart Inc., photographed models posing with clunky computers and black-and-white TVs for its site.

"Boot up the dial-up," one of its Cyber Monday ads said.

On average, retailers offered 30% off on Monday, the steepest discounts of the year, according to Salesforce.

Some have been offering deals for days. Amazon started offering Cyber Monday deals on Saturday, calling the three-day extravaganza "Cyber Monday Weekend."

Walmart kicked off online discounts for the holidays a week before Halloween. It was a way to combat the shortened holiday shopping season.

Thanksgiving is always celebrated on the fourth Thursday of November. This year, that was Nov. 28, cutting the typical time between Thanksgiving and Christmas by nearly a week, making it the shortest stretch between the two holidays since 2013.

Adobe said the bestselling toys on Cyber Monday were those related to the "Frozen 2" movie, "Paw Patrol" show and the LOL Surprise brand. TVs from Samsung and laptops by Apple were also hot sellers. And Amazon's devices, such as its voice activated Echo, did well, too.

Not all online shopping ended with a box being delivered. Despite frightful weather in parts of the U.S. this weekend, buying online and picking up in a store has become a popular option, growing 43% so far from last year.

"These services are breathing new life into physical stores," Adobe said. "And we expect growth to climb as we get closer to Christmas."

Bullock becomes 3rd governor to drop presidential campaign

By MICHELLE L. PRICE and MATT VOLZ Associated Press

HELENA, Mont. (AP) — Montana Gov. Steve Bullock ended his Democratic presidential campaign Monday, becoming the third Western governor boasting executive experience and a Washington-outsider appeal to flame out in the contest.

The campaigns of Bullock, Washington Gov. Jay Inslee and former Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper failed to gain momentum in a D.C.-centric race in which former Vice President Joe Biden and Sens. Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren dominated the polls for most of the past few months.

Bullock, a 53-year-old two-term governor and former attorney general, had the textbook resume for primary success in past presidential elections. He's a former labor lawyer and a gun owner whose governing record included expanding Medicaid in a red state. He touted across-the-aisle appeal, arguing he was the best bet to defeat President Donald Trump because he was the only Democratic candidate to win in a state that Trump won in 2016.

But instead of following Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush on the path from the governor's mansion to the White House, Bullock sputtered. The crowded 2020 race has centered on national debates around Trump and impeachment, and the Democratic National Committee imposed tougher polling and fundraising thresholds to make the debate stage. Those thresholds favored those

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with national name recognition and established online networks, making it tough for Bullock and other newcomers to the national scene to get a toehold.

Bullock was also hobbled by his late start, announcing his candidacy in May and joining nearly two dozen other Democratic candidates competing for attention and campaign donations.

He struggled to raise money and register in the polls, managing to meet qualification thresholds for only one DNC debate, in July.

"While there were many obstacles we could not have anticipated when entering this race, it has become clear that in this moment, I won't be able to break through to the top tier of this still-crowded field of candidates," Bullock said in a statement Monday.

The governor said that he ran to win back places Democrats have lost and end the influence of "dark money" in politics. Those concerns have not changed, he said, but he leaves the race "filled with gratitude and optimism, inspired and energized by the good people I've had the privilege of meeting over the course of the campaign."

Bullock flew to Iowa and notified his staff in person on Sunday that he was dropping out.

Unlike Hickenlooper, who dropped out in August to instead run for Senate, or Inslee, who decided to instead seek reelection, Bullock did not announce plans for another campaign.

Term limit laws prevent him from running for governor again in 2020, and he has repeatedly brushed off Democratic hopes that he'd instead run for Senate against first-term Republican Steve Daines. Bullock has said that he has no interest in the Senate seat and that there are already strong candidates running against Daines.

Bullock's spokeswoman, Galia Slayen, reiterated that Monday.

"While he plans to work hard to elect Democrats in the state and across the country in 2020, it will be in his capacity as a governor and a senior voice in the Democratic Party — not as a candidate for U.S. Senate," Slayen said in a statement.

Bullock had been exploring a presidential run since 2017, but he said he couldn't announce his candidacy until he had finished his work in Helena, where the state legislature was meeting.

He staked his presidential campaign on Iowa, and he made repeated trips to the state to campaign alongside prominent state Attorney General Tom Miller, the first statewide elected official in Iowa to endorse a 2020 candidate.

Bullock stuck strictly to his campaign message of needing to win back rural Trump voters, noting he won reelection the day that Trump carried his state by 20 percentage points. He also touted his history as a crusader to eliminate the influence of anonymous and foreign money in elections.

But he remained at the bottom of the polls and unfamiliar to many voters. His biggest national exposure appeared to come when he didn't make the cut for the first debate, resulting in a slate of news stories and an appearance on "The Late Night with Stephen Colbert."

Bullock was Montana's attorney general for a term before he became governor in 2013. Before that, he worked as an assistant attorney general, as an attorney in private practice in Helena and for law firms in New York and Washington, D.C.

Price reported from Las Vegas.

Catch up on the 2020 election campaign with AP experts on our weekly politics podcast, "Ground Game."

Correction: Plane Crash-South Dakota story

By The Associated Press undefined

In a story Dec. 1 about a South Dakota plane crash that killed nine people, The Associated Press reported the wrong last name for one of the victims. He is Kyle Naylor, not Kyle Taylor.

A corrected version of the story is below:

South Dakota airplane crash kills 9 in extended family

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A plane crash on a snowy afternoon in South Dakota killed nine members of an extended family from Idaho

By JAMES MacPHERSON

Associated Press

Nine members of an extended Idaho family died when their plane crashed in a South Dakota field as they were heading home after a hunting trip.

Travis Garza, president of the wellness company Kyani, said in a Facebook post Sunday that the crash near Chamberlain Saturday afternoon killed brothers and founders Jim and Kirk Hansen. Garza said the crash also killed their father, Jim Hansen Sr.; Kirk Hansen's children, Stockton and Logan; his sons-in-law, Kyle Naylor and Tyson Dennert; and Jim Hansen's son, Jake, and grandson, Houston.

Garza identified the injured as Kirk's son, Josh, and Jim's son, Matt, and son-in-law, Thomas Long. All three were hospitalized.

The Hansens were executives with Kyani, which markets nutritional, health and wellness products, as well as with petroleum products distributor Conrad & Bischoff and KJ's Super Stores.

East Idaho News, which first identified the victims, reported that the party had been on a hunting trip to South Dakota, one of the nation's top destinations for pheasants.

Brian Wood, owner of a funeral home in Idaho Falls, lamented the deaths on Facebook. He called the Hansens "pillars of our community" and wrote that they had offered many times over the years to help pay expenses for someone who might not be able to afford it.

"Our community has a dark cloud over it now," Wood wrote. "They will never know the many lives they touched."

Twelve people were aboard the Pilatus PC-12 bound for Idaho Falls when it crashed within a mile after takeoff in Chamberlain about 12:30 p.m. Saturday, National Transportation Safety Board spokesman Peter Knudson said.

Federal investigators — one from Washington, D.C., and two from the Chicago area — likely would reach the crash site on Monday, Knudson said. Local authorities were guarding the site on Sunday.

Chamberlain and parts of South Dakota were under a winter storm warning Saturday and Brule County emergency manager Katheryn Benton said planes were unable to land at Chamberlain at the time of the crash.

Weather will be among several factors investigators will review, although no cause for the crash has been determined, Knudson said.

Tech aims to predict problems on power lines before disaster

By BRIAN MELLEY Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — B. Don Russell wasn't thinking about preventing a wildfire when he developed a tool to detect power line problems before they cause equipment failures, blackouts or even deadly accidents.

The electrical engineering professor at Texas A&M University figured he might save a life if his creation could prevent someone from being electrocuted by a downed live wire.

But fire prevention may be his product's biggest selling point in California and other places that have experienced devastating wildland blazes blamed on electrical equipment.

"If we can find things when they start to fail, if we can find things that are in the process of degrading before a catastrophic event occurs, such as a downed line that might electrocute someone or a fire starting or even an outage for their customers, that's kind of the Holy Grail," Russell said.

The technology he bills as a one-of-a kind diagnostic tool called Distribution Fault Anticipation is now in use in Texas and being tested in California by Pacific Gas & Electric Co. and Southern California Edison. The utilities have been blamed for some of the most destructive and deadliest fires in California.

Texas A&M said the technology will also be tested in New Zealand and Australia, which is currently reeling from destructive wildfires.

The tool detects variations in electrical currents caused by deteriorating conditions or equipment and notifies utility operators so they can send a crew to fix the problems, Russell said.

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It can anticipate many problems in their early stages — sometimes years before they cause an outage — or direct a utility where to pre-emptively shut off circuits to prevent sparking wildfires, which utilities in California are now doing during fire conditions.

Before the technology was developed, electric companies often didn't know they had a problem until there was a failure or a customer called to report sparks on power lines or a loss of electricity.

"The assumption the utility has to make today is it's healthy until we get a call that says somebody's lights (are) out," Russell said. "By then the fire's started or the outage has happened or the person's electrocuted."

Pedernales Electric Cooperative Inc. that serves about 330,000 customers outside San Antonio and Austin, Texas, began implementing the system after successful tests that began in 2015. The utility serves areas so rural that before the technology was installed, electricity powering a pump on a well could have been off for days before being detected by a farmer.

The devices installed at substations are now trouble-shooting all kinds of problems, said Robert Peterson, principal engineer for the utility.

"We've found tree branches on the line. Failing arrestors. Failing capacitors. Failing connections," Peterson said. "It's pretty amazing."

In California, the testing process has just begun and there are no results yet, according to PG&E and SoCal Edison.

In Southern California, the software is running on just 60 of Edison's 1,100 circuits in the utility's high-risk fire zone, which accounts for about a quarter of its total circuits.

It's just one of several tools the utility is testing to continue to modernize its system.

"There is no silver bullet," said Bill Chiu, managing director of grid modernization and resiliency at SoCal Edison. "This is really more of a preventive measure. ... The important point is this will be one of the suite of technology that will help us better assess the condition of the grid."

Chiu said the technology was not at the point where it could be used by the utility to determine where to shut off power when dangerous winds are forecast during dry conditions. He also said it won't pinpoint problems but can help dispatch crews closer to the source of equipment that needs to be fixed, saving time that would be wasted patrolling miles of power lines.

One question is whether the technology is economically feasible to deploy across tens of thousands of miles of power lines, Chiu said.

At an expense estimated between \$15,000 to \$20,000 per circuit, it could cost the utility \$22 million in its high-risk fire area and that doesn't include installation, operation and maintenance costs.

That's a fraction of what a moderate wildfire sparked by a utility could cost, Russell said.

PG&E, which is testing the technology in nine locations, was driven into bankruptcy protection this year while facing at least \$20 billion in losses from a series of deadly and destructive wildfires in 2017 and 2018.

SoCal Edison recently agreed to pay \$360 million to local governments to settle lawsuits over deadly wildfires sparked by its equipment during the last two years. That figure doesn't include lawsuits by thousands who lost their homes in those fires or family members of 21 people killed when a mudslide tore down a fire-scarred mountain. Two other people were never found.

Bluebonnet Electric Cooperative found the cost was feasible and has installed it on about a sixth of its circuits for the utility that has about 100,000 customers in Central Texas, said Eric Kocian, chief engineer and system operations officer.

While the system has helped proactively diagnose problems and detect the cause of outages, the university team that developed it can often find problems the utility's control room operators don't detect.

Pedernales Coop is working with an analytics company to streamline the analysis of the myriad information the software evaluates to find and fix problems in a day, Peterson said.

Russell said he never had a hint the device his research team created 15 years ago would have fire prevention applications until a series of bad wildfires in Texas in 2011. They were focused on keeping power systems safe and the lights on.

"It's obvious now in today's context of the drought that we've had in California and other places," Russell said. "Serendipitously, that's where we find ourselves today."

Dictionary.com chooses 'existential' as word of the year

By LEANNE ITALIE AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Climate change, gun violence, the very nature of democracy and an angsty little movie star called Forky helped propel "existential" to Dictionary.com's word of the year.

The choice reflects months of high-stakes threats and crises, real and pondered, across the news, the world and throughout 2019.

"In our data, it speaks to this sense of grappling with our survival, both literally and figuratively, that defined so much of the discourse," said John Kelly, senior research editor for the site, ahead of Monday's announcement.

The word earned top of mind awareness in sustained searches at Dictionary.com in the aftermath of wildfires and Hurricane Dorian, and mass shootings in Christchurch, New Zealand, and El Paso, Texas. It also reared itself in presidential politics and pop culture, including Forky the white plastic spork who was the breakout star of "Toy Story 4."

The soiled utensil is convinced his destiny is in the trash, until he embraces his purpose as a treasured toy of kindergartener Bonnie.

"Forky underscores how this sense of grappling can also inspire us to ask big questions about who we are, about our purpose," Kelly told The Associated Press.

Oxford Dictionaries picked "climate emergency" as its word of the year, noting usage evidence that reflects the "ethos, mood, or preoccupations of the passing year," the company said in a statement.

Dictionary.com crunches lookup and other data to decide which word to anoint each year. The site has been picking a word of the year since 2010.

Among search spikes for "existential" were those that occurred after both Democratic presidential contender Bernie Sanders and 16-year-old climate activist Greta Thunberg characterized climate change as an "existential" crisis, Kelly said.

Another spike occurred when former Vice President Joe Biden, also vying for the Democratic presidential nod, painted President Donald Trump as an "existential threat" to decency.

The word dates to 1685, deriving from Late Latin's "existentialis." Dictionary.com defines existential as "of or relating to existence" and "of, relating to, or characteristic of philosophical existentialism; concerned with the nature of human existence as determined by the individual's freely made choices."

Enter Martin Heidegger, Karl Jaspers, Gabriel Marcel and Jean-Paul Sartre, thinkers who molded and embraced existentialism, among other movements.

Climate, guns and the impeachment crisis for President Donald Trump were just a few areas that seemed to frame debate in existential terms. So did the Hong Kong protests, the Notre Dame fire, tensions between the United States and China, and Big Tech's privacy and fake news problems.

"We started to see existential in the dialogue beginning in January and all the way through the year," said Jennifer Steeves-Kiss, Dictionary.com's chief executive officer. "This is a consistent theme that we saw in our data, but it also was leveraged across many different important questions of our time."

As for Forky, his journey from disposable utensil to handmade toy points to the concept of "agency," Kelly said, referring to the power to direct our own existences. That, he said, affords us the "opportunity to turn existential threats into existential choices."

For banks, data on your spending habits could be a gold mine

By ANICK JESDANUN AP Technology Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — There's a powerful new player watching what you buy so it can tailor product offerings for you: the bank behind your credit or debit card.

For years, Google and Facebook have been showing ads based on your online behavior. Retailers from Amazon to Walgreens also regularly suction up your transaction history to steer future spending and hold your loyalty.

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Now banks, too, want to turn data they already have on your spending habits into extra revenue by identifying likely customers for retailers. Banks are increasingly aware that they could be sitting on a gold mine of information that can be used to predict — or sway — where you spend. Historically, such data has been used mostly for fraud protection.

Suppose you were to treat yourself to lunch on Cyber Monday, the busiest online shopping day of the year. If you order ahead at Chipotle — paying, of course, with your credit card — you might soon find your bank dangling 10% off lunch at Little Caesars. The bank would earn fees from the pizza joint, both for showing the offer and processing the payment.

Wells Fargo began customizing retail offers for individual customers on Nov. 21, joining Chase, Bank of America, PNC, SunTrust and a slew of smaller banks.

Unlike Google or Facebook, which try to infer what you're interested in buying based on your searches, web visits or likes, "banks have the secret weapon in that they actually know what we spend money on," said Silvio Tavares of the trade group CardLinx Association, whose members help broker purchase-related offers. "It's a better predictor of what we're going to spend on."

While banks say they're moving cautiously and being mindful of privacy concerns, it's not clear that consumers are fully aware of what their banks are up to.

Banks know many of our deepest, darkest secrets — that series of bills paid at a cancer clinic, for instance, or that big strip-club tab that you thought stayed in Vegas. A bank might suspect someone's adulterous affair long before the betrayed partner would.

"Ten years ago, your bank was like your psychiatrist or your minister — your bank kept secrets," said Ed Mierzwinski, a consumer advocate at the U.S. Public Interest Research Group. Now, he says, "they think they are the same as a department store or an online merchant."

The startup Cardlytics, one of the field's pioneers, runs the offer programs for Wells Fargo, Chase and other banks. Though these partnerships, Cardlytics says it gets insights on about \$2.8 trillion worth of annual consumer spending worldwide.

A Cardlytics rival named Augeo runs a similar program with other banks, which it declined to name. American Express has an in-house program for its cardholders. Visa targets offers on Uber's app for credits toward rides and food delivery.

Even though banks only know where you've shopped — and not specifically what you bought — they're often able to make educated guesses. After all, it's not likely you're at a liquor store for the potato chips.

The bank can then infer other things you may like. It would have a pretty good idea that you're about to travel if you've charged a flight or hotel stays. HSBC is looking into using that data to set up automatic alerts, so that it wouldn't decline your card use as fraudulent when you start charging for meals in Kathmandu or Karachi.

The next step is to make location-specific offers, perhaps for a car rental, as soon as you land. Marcos Meneguzzi, HSBC's U.S. head of cards and unsecured lending, said cardholders will welcome such offers, at least when they're relevant. But he warns that banks could easily overstep and lose their customers' trust.

Many of these efforts remain in their infancy, and it's not yet clear how well they'll catch on. The Cardlytics programs, for instance, don't push offers through notifications. You have to look for them in your banking app or website.

Abeer Bhatia, an executive with Chase's credit-card business, said commissions barely cover operational costs. To Chase, the program is more important for incentivizing rewards-conscious consumers to use its cards. If a Chase card gets you an extra 10% at Rite Aid, why pull out your Citi card?

As far as these companies are concerned, Americans have repeatedly demonstrated that they value freebies and discounts more than intangible privacy concerns.

"Consumers understand the banks are giving them ways to save money based on how they shop," said Scott Grimes, CEO and co-founder of Cardlytics.

But banks often don't explain clearly what they're doing with your data, even though they sometimes share your transactions with outside data companies such as Cardlytics to process offers. And many banks don't seek explicit consent, instead including these programs by reference in general agreements for the

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card or online banking.

"It's totally long, and people don't read that," said Saisattha Noomnual, a graduate student in Chicago who gets targeted offers through her Chase and Bank of America cards.

Under federal law, banks merely have to let you withdraw from marketing, or opt out. That's difficult to do if you're not aware it's happening.

Noomnual said she can only guess she gets more offers for Starbucks because she visits Starbucks a lot. She reasons that based on how well banks analyze her spending for fraud alerts. While she said she doesn't mind that, she wishes banks were more forthcoming.

Bank of America declined comment. Chase said it tries to keep disclosures simple and understandable without overwhelming consumers.

Banks insist they don't share personal information with other companies because they replace names with anonymous ID numbers. Privacy researchers, however, have shown that such data can be "de-anonymized" under the right conditions.

Privacy advocates worry that past transactions could come back to haunt you. Frequent visits to fast-food joints might flag you as a health risk, which could be a problem if your health insurer could pay to learn about that. Auto insurers might grow wary of cardholders who run up large bar tabs.

And ultimately, these targeted offers could inadvertently encourage people to overspend or double down on unhealthy habits such as fast food.

"Consumers aren't aware of the subtle nudges apps are giving them to buy, buy, buy," Mierzwinski said. "They are basically digging deep into your psyche and figuring out how to manipulate you."

New higher-speed Florida train has highest US death rate

By TERRY SPENCER Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — After Richard Branson announced his Virgin Group would partner with Brightline, Florida's new higher-speed passenger rail service, a train whisked the British billionaire, VIPs and journalists from Miami to West Palm Beach in just over an hour and then back, with no problems.

That was likely a great relief to railroad staff who have dealt with a higher than average number of deaths involving the sleek, neon-yellow trains, which travel at speeds of up to 79 mph (127 kph) through some of Florida's most densely populated cities.

The first death involving a Brightline train, which officially launched in January 2018, happened in July 2017 during test runs. Since then, 40 more have been killed — a rate of more than one a month and about one for every 29,000 miles (47,000 kilometers) the trains have traveled, according to an analysis of Federal Railroad Administration data by The Associated Press.

That's the worst per-mile death rate of the nation's 821 railroads.

None of Brightline's deaths were caused by crew error or faulty equipment, according to law enforcement and federal reports. The majority have been suicides, while most others involved impatient motorists, pedestrians or bicyclists who misjudged the trains' speed and ignored bells, gates or other warnings. Drugs, alcohol or both have been found in many victims' systems.

Brightline President Patrick Goddard said while the deaths are not the company's fault, he and his colleagues need to get the number under control.

"This is something we obsess about. ... It's tragic," said Goddard.

He said each death devastates Brightline's crew members and interrupts operations, sometimes for hours.

"There is nothing we would want more than for that number to go to zero," he said.

The company is working with suicide prevention groups and will experiment with infrared motion detectors and drones to patrol tracks. The drones will have cameras to spot people lingering, as those contemplating suicide often do, and speakers through which drone monitors can speak with them. The monitors also will alert police and warn engineers.

The company is also erecting fences and plant barriers in problem areas, putting up four-way gates at major road crossings and talking with cities about eliminating side-street crossings. Signs advertising

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suicide prevention hotlines will be posted.

"There are few railroads you will find who have done more to mitigate these types of issues," Goddard said.

Brightline, which is rebranding as Virgin Trains USA in partnership with Branson, runs about 17 trains each way daily between Miami and West Palm Beach — 67 miles (107 kilometers) — and plans to expand another 170 miles (274 kilometers) to Orlando by 2022. On that new segment, trains will reach speeds of 125 mph (200 kph) when they travel through less densely populated farmland. That same year it plans to open a line connecting Southern California and Las Vegas, with top speeds of 150 mph (240 kph). It hopes to add service in Texas and other states.

The Federal Railroad Administration had no direct comment on Brightline, saying in a statement that its "top priority is safety" and that it works closely with railroads to reduce fatalities. U.S. trains fatally strike more than 800 people annually, an average of about 2.5 daily. About 500 are suspected suicides.

The federal reports filed by Brightline and other railroads after each death usually describe the following scenario: The engineer spotted someone on the tracks, sounded the horn and hit the emergency brake, but the person was fatally struck. A full-speed Brightline train takes a quarter-mile to stop.

Local police reports are much more gruesome, particularly in their descriptions of what happens to a person hit by a train. The engineer and conductor, having seen the terror or despair on the victim's face, are often grief-stricken, detectives report. Several Brightline engineers and conductors have witnessed numerous deaths, some within weeks of each other.

Goddard said crew members get three days off after a fatality — more if requested — and can receive immediate counseling. Therapists are also being placed at worksites to make them readily available and group therapy sessions are being considered.

"Even though it is not their fault, they feel like it is ... and a lot of them suffer," Goddard said. The company declined to make an engineer available for comment.

Why Brightline has so many deaths is unclear; other area railroads haven't had nearly as many. The railroad shares tracks with Florida East Coast, a freight line that had one death for every 160,000 miles (258,000 kilometers) during the past two years, compared to Brightline's one death per 29,000 miles (47,000 kilometers).

The Tri-Rail commuter service that runs nearby had one death about every 110,000 miles (177,000 kilometers). Most other urban passenger lines nationwide average at least 100,000 miles per fatality, some many times that.

Psychologist Lanny Berman, who studies train suicides, said it's likely the velocity of Brightline's trains, their bright color and newness that attracts the suicidal.

"It would be noticed that it has faster speeds and that it is more lethal," said Berman, a former executive director of the American Association of Suicidology.

Even if suicides could be curtailed, it would do little to stop drivers, pedestrians and bicyclists who dash across the tracks trying to beat the train. Brightline wants tougher state penalties for driving around gates, hoping that will give pause.

"These people weren't thinking," Goddard said. "To save a couple of seconds, they died."

National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-273-8255

Asian shares slip after US stock tumble amid trade tensions

By YURI KAGEYAMA AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Asian shares slipped Tuesday, following a drop on Wall Street amid pessimism over U.S.-China trade tensions.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 lost 0.7% to 23,379.05. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 slid 2.0% to 6,725.30. South Korea's Kospi declined nearly 0.5% to 2,082.45. Hong Kong's Hang Seng fell 0.1% to 26,415.70, while the Shanghai Composite was down 0.1% at 2,872.74.

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Technology companies led a broad slide for stocks on Wall Street Monday, handing the market a downbeat start to the month after it notched strong gains in November.

Trade tensions flared after China retaliated for U.S. support of protesters in Hong Kong, putting investors in a selling mood. Asian regional markets are generally hurt by declines in trade and the slowdown in the Chinese economy that might cause.

Investors have been hoping that the world's two biggest economies can make progress toward at least staving off new tariffs scheduled for Dec. 15 on \$160 billion worth of Chinese products, including smartphones and laptops. The latest friction between Washington and Beijing could hamper that progress.

The S&P 500 index fell 0.9% to 3,113.87. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 1%, to 27,783.04. The Nasdaq lost 1.1%, to 8,567.99. The Russell 2000 index of smaller company stocks gave up 1%, to 1,607.58.

The negotiations to end the longstanding trade war could face a tougher path this month following a flareup over Hong Kong.

China said Monday it will suspend U.S. military ship and aircraft visits to the semi-autonomous territory. It also plans to sanction several American pro-democracy groups in retaliation for passage of legislation supporting months' long anti-government protests.

The law, signed last Wednesday by President Donald Trump, mandates sanctions on Chinese and Hong Kong officials who carry out human rights abuses and requires an annual review of the favorable trade status that Washington grants Hong Kong.

"Perhaps the market will now hold the champagne corks that it has been popping for months now in expectation that all is well," Rabobank said in a report.

ENERGY: Benchmark crude oil gained 22 cents to \$56.18 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It rose 79 cents to \$55.96 a barrel on Monday. Brent crude oil, the international standard, gained 18 cents to \$61.10 a barrel.

CURRENCIES: The dollar rose to 109.20 Japanese yen from 109.00 yen on Monday. The euro weakened to \$1.1077 from \$1.1080.

AP Business Writers Alex Veiga and Damian J. Troise contributed.

Today in History By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, Dec. 3, the 337th day of 2019. There are 28 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 3, 1979, 11 people were killed in a crush of fans at Cincinnati's Riverfront Coliseum, where the British rock group The Who was performing.

On this date:

In 1818, Illinois was admitted as the 21st state.

In 1828, Andrew Jackson was elected president of the United States by the Electoral College.

In 1960, the Lerner and Loewe musical "Camelot," starring Julie Andrews as Guenevere, Richard Burton as King Arthur and Robert Goulet as Lancelot, opened on Broadway.

In 1964, police arrested some 800 students at the University of California at Berkeley, one day after the students stormed the administration building and staged a massive sit-in.

In 1967, a surgical team in Cape Town, South Africa, led by Dr. Christiaan Barnard (BAHR'-nard) performed the first human heart transplant on Louis Washkansky, who lived 18 days with the donor organ, which came from Denise Darvall, a 25-year-old bank clerk who had died in a traffic accident.

In 1980, Bernadine Dohrn, a former leader of the radical Weather Underground, surrendered to authorities in Chicago after more than a decade as a fugitive.

In 1984, thousands of people died after a cloud of methyl isocyanate gas escaped from a pesticide plant

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operated by a Union Carbide subsidiary in Bhopal, India.

In 1991, radicals in Lebanon released American hostage Alann Steen, who'd been held captive nearly five years.

In 1992, the first telephone text message was sent by British engineer Neil Papworth, who transmitted the greeting "Merry Christmas" from his work computer in Newbury, Berkshire, to Vodafone executive Richard Jarvis' mobile phone. The Greek tanker Aegean Sea spilled more than 21 million gallons of crude oil when it ran aground off northwestern Spain.

In 1999, Tori Murden of the United States became the first woman to row across the Atlantic Ocean alone as she arrived at the French Caribbean island of Guadeloupe, 81 days after leaving the Canary Islands near the coast of Africa.

In 2001, in the wake of bombings that had killed 26 Israelis, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon declared a war on terror. Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge asked Americans to return to a high state of alert, citing threats of more terrorist attacks.

In 2002, thousands of personnel files released under a court order showed that the Archdiocese of Boston went to great lengths to hide priests accused of abuse, including clergy who'd allegedly snorted cocaine and had sex with girls aspiring to be nuns.

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama hosted a White House-sponsored jobs forum, where he said he'd heard many "exciting ideas" and proposals and expressed hope some could be put into action quickly. Pope Benedict XVI and visiting Russian President Dmitry Medvedev (dih-MEE'-tree med-VYEH'-dyev) agreed to upgrade Vatican-Kremlin ties to full diplomatic relations. Comcast and GE announced joint venture plans, with Comcast owning a 51 percent controlling stake in NBC Universal. British actor Richard Todd died in Little Humby, Lincolnshire, England, at age 90.

Five years ago: A Staten Island, New York, grand jury declined to indict police officer Daniel Pantaleo in the July 2014 chokehold death of Eric Garner, an unarmed black man stopped on suspicion of selling loose, untaxed cigarettes. Herman Badillo (bah-DEE'-yoh), a Bronx politician who was the first person born in Puerto Rico to become a U.S. congressman, died at age 85.

One year ago: President Donald Trump made it clear that he was closely watching those who turned on him in the Russia investigation; he tweeted that his former lawyer, who cut a deal with prosecutors, should go straight to prison, but Trump praised a key witness for having the "guts" not to testify against him. A casket containing the body of former President George H.W. Bush was flown from Texas to Washington to lie in state at the U.S. Capitol. At the U.N.'s annual climate summit in Poland, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres issued a dramatic appeal to world leaders to take global warming seriously, calling it "the most important issue we face." After a two-year chase, a NASA spacecraft arrived at the ancient asteroid Bennu, some 76 million miles from Earth; the goal is to grab gravel samples in 2020 for return to Earth in 2023.

Today's Birthdays: Movie director Jean-Luc Godard is 89. Singer Jaye P. Morgan is 88. Actor Nicolas Coster is 86. Actress Mary Alice is 78. Rock singer Ozzy Osbourne is 71. Rock singer Mickey Thomas is 70. Country musician Paul Gregg (Restless Heart) is 65. Actor Steven Culp is 64. Actress Daryl Hannah is 59. Actress Julianne Moore is 59. Olympic gold medal figure skater Katarina Witt is 54. Actor Brendan Fraser is 51. Singer Montell Jordan is 51. Actor Royale Watkins is 50. Actor Bruno Campos is 46. Actress Holly Marie Combs is 46. Actress Liza Lapira is 44. Actress Lauren Roman is 44. Pop-rock singer Daniel Bedingfield is 40. Actress/comedian Tiffany Haddish is 40. Actress Anna Chlumsky (KLUHM'-skee) is 39. Actress Jenna Dewan is 39. Actor Brian Bonsall is 38. Actress Dascha Polanco is 37. Pop/rock singer-songwriter Andy Grammer is 36. Americana musician Michael Calabrese (Lake Street Dive) is 35. Actress Amanda Seyfried is 34. Actor Michael Angarano is 32. Actor Jake T. Austin is 25.

Thought for Today: "Facing it, always facing it, that's the way to get through. Face it." — Joseph Conrad, Polish-born English novelist (born this date in 1857, died 1924).

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