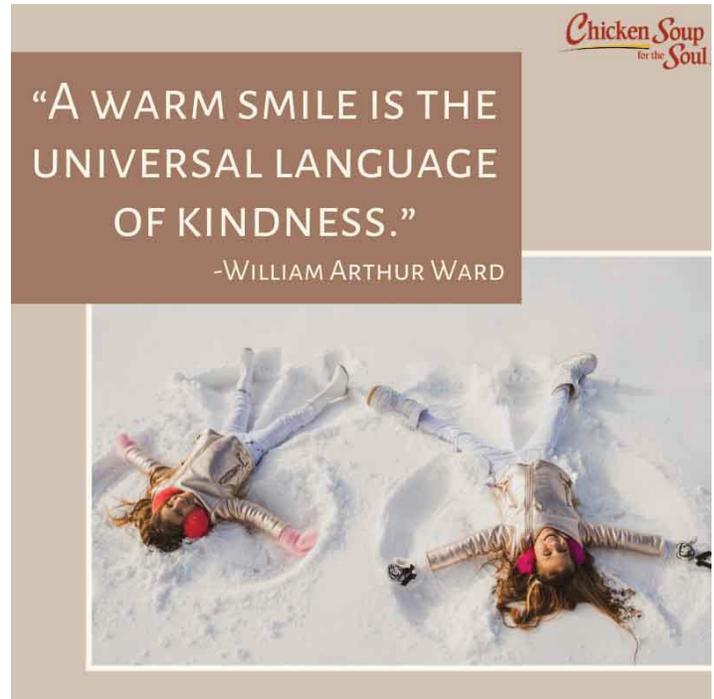


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# 2020

*Happy New Year!*

**Krueger Brothers Road Maintenance,  
Gravel & Dirt**

Dave: 397-8387 ~ Roger & Dan: 397-2618

**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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## CARD OF THANKS

We would like to thank everyone for their prayers, visits, love, and support. We appreciate all of you. Praise the lord for his strength -Glory to him ! We wish you a blessed 2020.

Love

Penny and Bill

## EMPLOYMENT

The Groton Area School District is accepting applications for the position of Certified Sign Language Interpreter. Applicants should complete and submit the certified staff application form along with a current cover letter, resume, and three letters of recommendation. All materials should be submitted to Joe Schwan, Superintendent PO Box 410 Groton, SD 57445. EOE

## Upcoming Events

### Thursday, January 9, 2020

6:00 p.m.: Wrestling at Redfield

Carnival of Silver Skates Costume Hand-outs, 4-8 p.m., St. John's Lutheran Church

### Friday, January 10, 2020

Basketball double header hosting Hamlin (Girls junior varsity at 4 p.m., Boys junior varsity at 5 p.m., Girls varsity at 6:30 p.m., Boys varsity to follow)

### Saturday, January 11, 2020

12:30 p.m.: Girls' Varsity Basketball Classic at Redfield. Groton Area vs. St. Francis Indian School

**CANCELLED:** Boys at Varsity Classic at the Sanford Pentagon

10 a.m.: Wrestling at Miller Tournament

### Sunday, January 12, 2020

2:00pm- 6:00pm: Open Gym at GHS Arena

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

### Monday, January 13, 2020

6 p.m.: Junior high basketball games at Warner. 7th grade at 6 p.m., 8th grade at 7 p.m.

6 p.m.: Junior high wrestling tournament in Groton

7 p.m.: School Board Meeting

### Tuesday, January 14, 2020

5:15 p.m.: Combined 7th/8th grade boys basketball game vs. Aberdeen Christian at the Aberdeen Civic Arena

6:30 p.m.: Boys' basketball game at Aberdeen Christian High School. Junior varsity at 6:30 p.m. followed by varsity game.

### Wednesday, January 15, 2020

8:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.: MathCounts at Aberdeen Simmons Middle School

### Thursday, January 16, 2020

6:30 p.m.: Girls' Basketball hosts Sisseton. JV game at 6:30 p.m. followed by varsity game.

### Friday, January 17, 2020

Silver Bowl Debate at Sioux Falls

No School - Faculty Inservice

6 p.m.: Boys' basketball at Sisseton. JV game at 6 p.m. followed by varsity game.

### Saturday, January 18, 2020

Silver Bowl Debate in Sioux Falls

10:00am: Basketball: Boys 7th/8th Jamboree @ Groton Area High School

10:00am: Wrestling: Varsity Tournament at Potter County (Gettysburg)

## The Life of Steve Lynn Sundberg

Steve Lynn Sundberg, 61, of Bismarck, passed away January 4, 2020.

A Celebration of Life will be held at 10:00 AM on Friday, January 10, 2020 at Weigel Funeral Home, Mandan, ND.

Steve was born June 9, 1958 to Edwin and Ardis (Paulson) Sundberg in Groton, SD where he was raised and educated. He attended the University of South Dakota and received his MBA degree.

On June 2, 1984 he married Carol Laine in Kintyre, ND.

Steve began his sales career at NCR Corporation in Sioux Falls, Fargo, and Bismarck. Then he worked as a financial advisor at Shearson Lehman Hutton in Bismarck. He returned to sales and worked at Rough Rider Industries in Bismarck. In 1993, he was hired as general manager at Sign Pro in Mandan, he became part owner with Terry Fleck & Larry Schmidt in 1994, then became co-owner with wife Carol, in 1995.

Steve had many hobbies including fishing, hunting, and riding motorcycle. He especially enjoyed watching his favorite football teams, the NDSU Bison and the Philadelphia Eagles.

Steve is survived by his ex-wife, friend, & business partner, Carol, Mandan ND; niece, Kirsten (Warren) Laird, and their daughters Sarah & Kensey, Thornton CO; nephew, Joshua Sundberg, Westminster CO; Carol's sister, Deborah (Bob) Weir, and their sons, Kaleb & Garret; Carol's sister, Karla Kuipers, and her daughters, Kristen & Lynde; Carol's brother, Steven (Pam) Laine, and their sons Eric, Bryce, Adam, daughter Kylee; and Carol's nephew, Dustin Laine.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Ed & Ardis Sundberg; brother, Paul Sundberg; sister-in-law, Darleen Sundberg; father-in-law, Carlo Laine; mother-in-law, Audrey Laine; brother-in-law, Richard Laine; brother-in-law, Dale Kuipers.

Go to [www.weigelfuneral.com](http://www.weigelfuneral.com) to sign the guestbook and share memories with his family.



## Cavaliers top Lady Tigers

Aberdeen Roncalli came to town Tuesday evening and handed the Lady Tigers a 56-14 loss in girls' basketball action. The game was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Allied Climate Professionals, Blocker Construction, Groton Dairy Queen, Jark Real Estate, John Sieh Agency, Milbrandt Enterprises and Tyson DeHoet Trucking.

Cold shooting by the Tigers resulted a few points being scored as Groton Area was six of 36 in shooting for 17 percent while Roncalli was 17 of 41 for 41 percent. The Tigers had 13 turnovers and the Cavaliers had four turnovers. Groton Area attempted one free throw off of Roncalli's eight team

fouls and Roncalli was 13 of 22 from the line off of Groton Area's 14 team fouls.

Alyssa Thaler had 12 points while Brooke Gengerke added two for the Tigers.

Abby Hanson led the Cavaliers with 13 points followed by Madelyn Bragg with 10, Mariah Winegar nine, Olivia Ulmer seven, Morgan Fiedler five, Elissa Hammerich four and Hannah Kuck and Jori Ewart each had three points.

The Cavaliers led at the quarterstops at 17-4, 25-7 and 43-9. Groton Area is 2-3 and Roncalli goes to 5-1.

Roncalli won the junior varsity game, 41-8. Marlee Tollifson had three points for Groton Area while Sydney Leicht and Nathalia Garcia each had two points and Anna Fjeldheim added a free throw. Madelyn Bragg led the Cavaliers with 21 points.



**Cousins Tricia Keith (21) and Allyssa Locke (11) dribble the ball around Roncalli's defense.** (Photos by Paul Kosel)

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**This  
Afternoon**



Cloudy and  
Breezy

**High: 16 °F**

**Tonight**



Cloudy and  
Breezy then  
Mostly Cloudy

**Low: 17 °F**

**Thursday**



Partly Sunny

**High: 25 °F**

**Thursday  
Night**



Mostly Cloudy

**Low: 0 °F**

**Friday**



Cold

**High: 6 °F**

**Today:** Highs 11 to 34°.

Lowest Wind Chills of -25 to 0°,  
slowly improving through the day

**BREEZY**

Southeast Winds increasing to  
15 to 25 mph, with stronger gusts

**Tonight:** Lows 9 to 24°.

\*\*Temperatures & coldest Wind Chills  
over northeastern SD & western MN



National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

**Cold &  
Breezy  
Today**

**Don't forget the winter  
weather gear!**

[www.weather.gov/abr](http://www.weather.gov/abr)

Created:  
1/8/2020 4:20 AM

Bundle up for the Cold and Breezy day ahead. The lowest wind chills ranging from -25 to 0 degrees will be this morning, coldest over far northeastern South Dakota and west central Minnesota. Expect southeast winds to increase to 15 to 25 mph with stronger gusts.

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## Today in Weather History

January 8, 2010: Arctic high pressure combined with strong northwest winds resulted in extreme wind chills from -35 to nearly 50 degrees below zero across central and northeast South Dakota. Some of the lowest wind chills included, -40 in Aberdeen; -41 in Watertown; -42 in Highmore; -43 in Leola and Faulkton; -44 in Eagle Butte, Herreid, and Gettysburg; and -47 in Bowdle. Several record lows were also tied or broken during the morning hours of the 8th, including, -22 degrees NW of Gann Valley and Victor; -23 degrees at Pierre and Sisseton; -24 degrees at Roscoe; and -34 degrees at Pollock.

1973: Georgia's worst ice storm since 1935 occurred on from the 7th through the 8th. Freezing rain and sleet began during the early morning hours on Sunday the 7th and ended in most areas during the day on Monday. Total damage was estimated at well over \$25 million. The electric power companies suffered losses estimated at \$5 million, and telephone companies had another \$2 million in damages. Some schools were closed for more than a week.

1953 - A severe icestorm in the northeastern U.S. produced up to four inches of ice in Pennsylvania, and two to three inches in southeastern New York State. In southern New England the ice coated a layer of snow up to 20 inches deep. The storm resulted in 31 deaths and 2.5 million dollars damage. (David Ludlum)

1973 - A severe icestorm struck Atlanta GA. The storm paralyzed the city closing schools and businesses, and damage from the storm was estimated at 25 million dollars. One to four inches of ice coated northern Georgia leaving 300,000 persons without electricity for up to a week. Between 7 PM and 9 PM on the 7th, 2.27 inches (liquid content) of freezing rain, sleet and snow coated Atlanta, as the temperature hovered at 32 degrees. (7th-8th) (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A winter storm moving out of the Southern Rockies into the Central Plains Region produced 14 inches of snow at Red River NM, and 17 inches in the Wolf Creek ski area of Colorado. Wichita KS was blanketed with seven inches of snow. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - A winter storm spread heavy snow across the northeastern U.S., with up to ten inches reported in southern New Jersey. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Strong northwesterly winds and bitterly cold temperatures prevailed in the north central U.S. Winds in the Great Lakes Region gusted to 58 mph at Chicago IL, and reached 63 mph at Niagara Falls NY. Squalls in western New York State produced 20 inches of snow at Barnes Corners and Lowville. Snow squalls in Upper Michigan produced 26 inches around Keweenaw. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - High winds plagued the northwestern U.S., with the state of Oregon hardest hit. Two persons were killed in Oregon, and nine others were injured, and the high winds downed fifty-five million board feet of timber, valued at more than twenty million dollars. Winds gusted to 90 mph near Pinehurst ID, and wind gusts reached 96 mph at Stevenson WA. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

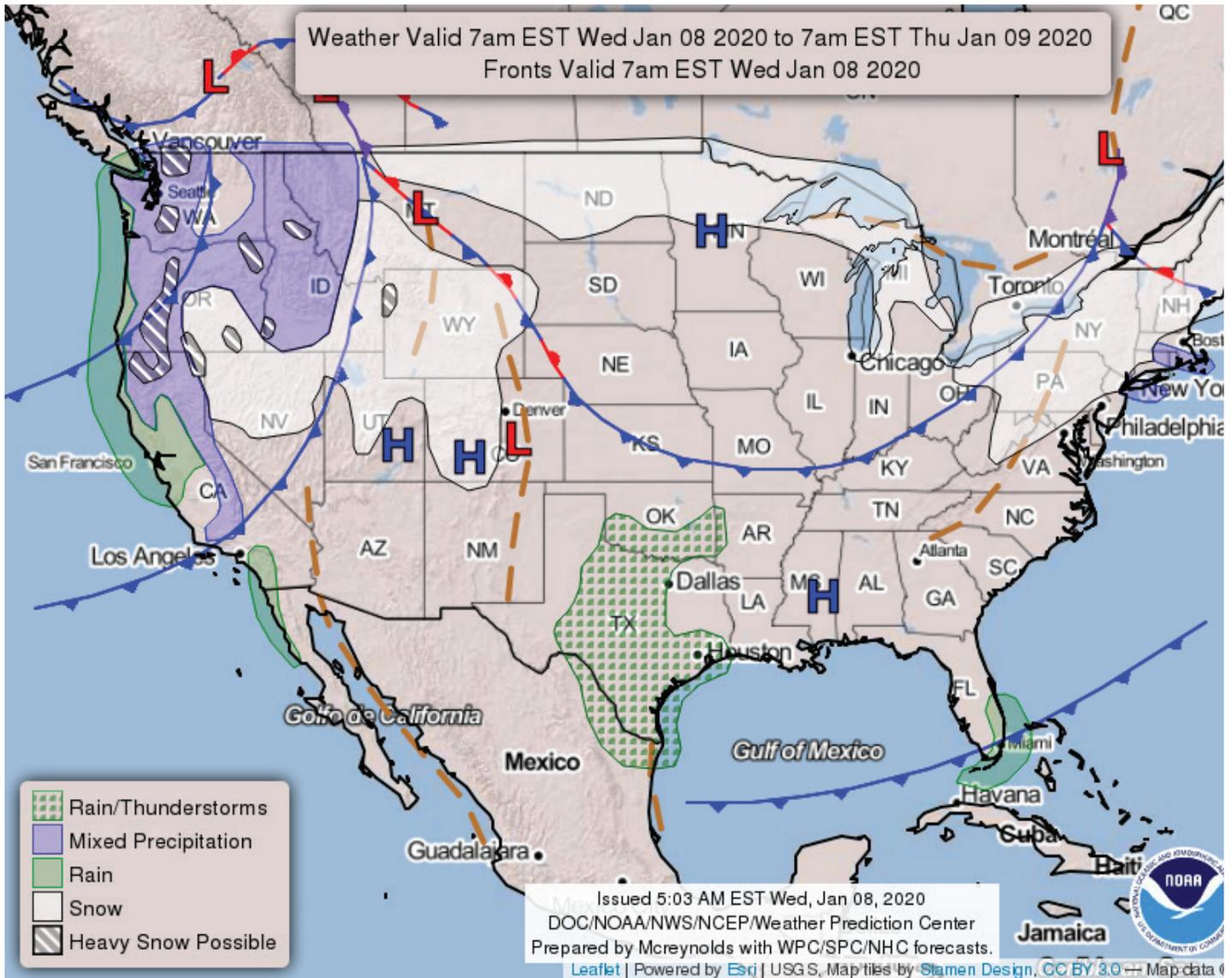
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

**High Temp:** 23 °F at 9:34 AM  
**Low Temp:** -2 °F at 10:27 PM  
**Wind:** 20 mph at 9:32 AM  
**Day Precip:**

**Record High:** 55° in 1963  
**Record Low:** -33° in 1912  
**Average High:** 22°F  
**Average Low:** 1°F  
**Average Precip in Jan.:** 0.13  
**Precip to date in Jan.:** 0.00  
**Average Precip to date:** 0.13  
**Precip Year to Date:** 0.00  
**Sunset Tonight:** 5:08 p.m.  
**Sunrise Tomorrow:** 8:13 a.m.



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## **FORGIVE WHO? FOR WHAT?**

Pope John Paul II was one of the most notable leaders of the Roman Catholic Church. In 1981 the Pope made a trip to a prison to speak with the man who tried to assassinate him and tell him that he forgave him. In 1984 the Pope appeared on the cover of TIME with the would-be assassin, shaking hands with him while his other arm was around his shoulders. Underneath the photo were the words "WHY FORGIVE?" in bold letters.

Strangely, the Pope asked readers to "pray for my brother whom I have sincerely forgiven." Some condemned the Pope. Others agreed with the Pope. Still, others could not understand the reason the Pope did such a thing: offer to forgive him.

For most of us, forgiveness is not easy to do nor pleasant to think about. Some of us might even enjoy the resentment and anger that grows within us when we have been wronged. Some speak of their anger as a sign of strength and power. Yet?

Paul said?When we accept and understand God's mercy and forgiveness, He expects us to forgive others just as Jesus did to those who crucified Him. Furthermore, because God through the death of Jesus has forgiven us, He expects us to forgive others as our Savior has forgiven us. When we willingly forgive others, we begin to understand the cost of our salvation.

Prayer: Father, we pray for the willingness to forgive others who have wronged us even as our Savior willingly forgives us. May we show Your love by forgiving others. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Ephesians 4:32 Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

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## 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)
- 04/26/2020 Father/Daughter dance.
- 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 **AP** Associated Press

### Minnesota FBI head to help lead counterterrorism division

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — The head of the FBI's field office in Minnesota has been named assistant director of the agency's counterterrorism division, the FBI announced Wednesday.

Jill Sanborn has been the special agent in charge of the Minneapolis field office since 2018, where she has overseen operations in Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota. High-profile cases under her watch include the recovery of a pair of stolen ruby slippers that had been worn by Judy Garland during filming of "The Wizard of Oz."

Sanborn joined the FBI in 1998 and has spent most of her career working in counterterrorism. As an assistant special agent in charge of the Los Angeles field office, she led the investigation into the 2015 San Bernadino terror attack that killed 14 people. In 2016, she became section chief in the FBI's counterterrorism division and was responsible for overseeing all counterterrorism investigations overseas.

Sanborn has also served on the counterterrorism division's fly team and was deployed to Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Kenya and Pakistan. She has spent time on a detail to the CIA's Counterterrorism Center, and has also served as unit chief in the FBI's counterterrorism division.

Sanborn will report to FBI headquarters in mid-February. Her replacement in Minnesota has not been named.

### Corps trying to make more space for Missouri River runoff

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Despite more than doubling releases from its reservoir system, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers still doesn't expect to eliminate all the leftover water from last year's near record runoff that led to massive Missouri River flooding.

The Corps had been discharging about twice the normal winter amount from Gavins Point Dam — the southernmost in the six-dam system. The Corps said it was raising the discharge this month to 30,000 cubic feet (849.5 cubic meters) per second, an increase of more than 11%.

Until a seasonal decrease that began in November, the amount being released had been 80,000 cubic feet (2,265 cubic meters) per second for months, also more than twice the average.

Areas along the Missouri River and its tributaries in parts of Nebraska, Kansas, Iowa and Missouri were ravaged by floodwaters in the early spring. Heavy rains later in the year reflooded many areas that had been left unprotected because of levee failures.

John Remus, chief of the Corps' Missouri River management, told the Omaha World-Herald the reservoir system needs to make as much space as possible in light of the National Weather Service forecast for warmer than normal weather and higher than normal runoff in January and February.

The Corps normally doesn't release more during the winter because of the potential for ice jams and dams upriver, Remus told The Associated Press on Wednesday.

Once the river freezes over it essentially becomes a pipe, Remus said, limiting its capacity.

If you increase the releases and "burst the pipe you're dealing with ice jams and possibly ice dams" that cause flooding nearby, he said. "Our ability to release water goes practically to zero until that ice gets moved out somehow."

He cited for example a temporary cutback in the release at North Dakota's Garrison Reservoir last week because of river ice conditions to the south, near Bismarck.



**Jarrett Jones**

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The Corps will keep a wary eye on the ice and river flow upstream and raise the Gavins Point and other releases if it can, Remus said.

The Corps estimates 2020 runoff will reach 36.3 million acre-feet (44.8 cubic kilometers), ninth highest out of 122 years. The highest year was 2011 with 61 million acre-feet (75.2 cubic kilometers), followed by 2019, with 60.9 million acre-feet (75.1 cubic kilometers).

## Oglala president seeking federal help in dealing with meth

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The president of the Oglala Sioux Tribe is asking for federal help in dealing with methamphetamine use on the reservation that he says has contributed to homicides.

In a proclamation declaring a state of emergency, Julian Bear Runner says families on the Pine Ridge Reservation are living in a constant state of crisis and trauma due to drug use.

Bear Runner is requesting immediate assistance from the U.S. Department of the Interior and the Bureau of Indian Affairs Drug Task Force to help the tribe with meth prevention and intervention efforts.

Bear Runner wrote in his declaration that the reservation has had several homicides in the past few weeks that were directly related to meth use.

FBI spokesman Kevin Smith tells the Rapid City Journal he can't comment on Bear Runner's statement about the homicides being linked to meth since they are under investigation.

"We can say, however, that substance abuse, which includes an increasing amount of methamphetamine, is a significant factor in most of the violent criminal investigations our agents conduct on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation," Smith said.

## 2 men missing on Pine Ridge Reservation feared dead

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Officials say they fear the two men missing on the Pine Ridge Reservation may have died of exposure.

Robert "RJ" Kills Enemy Jr., 23, and Vincent Steve Little Dog, 25, are presumed dead, according to Oglala Sioux Tribe Department of Emergency Management director Steve Wilson.

The men have not had any contact with family or friends since they disappeared Dec. 27 north of Manderson, Wilson said.

Police say the two fled from an officer who tried to speak with them following a report of two intoxicated men walking around.

Multiple searches have been conducted with help from volunteers, tribal agencies, the Oglala Lakota County Sheriff's Office, the Martin Volunteer Fire Department and Pennington County Search and Rescue, the Rapid City Journal reported.

Searches have looked for the men by foot, horseback and with ATVs. They've also used drones and tracking and cadaver dogs, Wilson said. The search began in the area where the men were last seen and is making its way south toward Manderson.

"It's a lot of area to cover" and the snow left over from the blizzard is "not helping us in any way," Wilson said. "It's hard on our search crews, hard on our equipment."

## SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Mega Millions

25-40-41-52-56, Mega Ball: 21, Megaplier: 4

(twenty-five, forty, forty-one, fifty-two, fifty-six; Mega Ball: twenty-one; Megaplier: four)

Estimated jackpot: \$69 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$258 million

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## Tuesday's Scores By The Associated Press

### BOYS BASKETBALL

Bridgewater-Emery 54, Sanborn Central/Woonsocket 46  
Canistota 80, Mitchell Christian 20  
Dakota Valley 74, Sergeant Bluff-Luton, Iowa 68  
Deubrook 47, Deuel 43  
Freeman Academy/Marion 64, Oldham-Ramona/Rutland 50  
Gayville-Volin 59, Scotland 47  
Hanson 60, Parkston 55  
Harding County 79, Mott-Regent, N.D. 45  
Howard 70, Menno 32  
Ipswich 55, Northwestern 39  
Irene-Wakonda 52, Freeman 16  
Lennox 44, Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 43  
Parker 53, Bon Homme 29  
Potter County 71, Mobridge-Pollock 70  
Rapid City Stevens 74, Spearfish 56  
Sioux Falls O'Gorman 68, Pierre 33  
St. Thomas More 75, Belle Fourche 36  
Stanley County 65, Highmore-Harrold 62  
Sunshine Bible Academy 58, James Valley Christian 48  
Tiospa Zina Tribal 66, Redfield 55  
Vermillion 71, Tri-Valley 48  
Viborg-Hurley 61, Elk Point-Jefferson 39  
Western Christian, Iowa 51, Harrisburg 38  
Winner 68, Chamberlain 64  
Wolsey-Wessington 67, Miller 43  
Yankton 65, Sioux City, East, Iowa 63, OT

### GIRLS BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Christian 71, Iroquois 48  
Aberdeen Roncalli 56, Groton Area 14  
Bon Homme 45, Parker 37  
Bridgewater-Emery 59, Sanborn Central/Woonsocket 35  
Burke 38, Lyman 37  
Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 88, McLaughlin 64  
DeSmet 63, Clark/Willow Lake 54  
Faith 65, Timber Lake 60  
Flandreau 43, Castlewood 38  
Flasher, N.D. 47, Lemmon 35  
Freeman 52, Irene-Wakonda 48, OT  
Garretson 63, Dell Rapids St. Mary 53  
Hanson 56, Parkston 51  
Harrisburg 56, Western Christian, Iowa 48  
Highmore-Harrold 51, Stanley County 19  
Hitchcock-Tulare 63, Lake Preston 28  
Howard 54, Menno 48  
James Valley Christian 66, Sunshine Bible Academy 12  
Lennox 54, Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 40

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Madison 65, Arlington 49  
McCook Central/Montrose 58, Dell Rapids 45  
New Underwood 52, Rapid City Christian 46  
Newell 60, Wall 45  
Oldham-Ramona/Rutland 46, Freeman Academy/Marion 35  
Rapid City Stevens 75, Spearfish 32  
Red Cloud 53, Pine Ridge 39  
Redfield 66, Tiospa Zina Tribal 38  
Scotland 48, Gayville-Volin 35  
Sergeant Bluff-Luton, Iowa 52, Dakota Valley 35  
Sioux Falls O’Gorman 69, Pierre 34  
Sisseton 59, Webster 39  
St. Francis Indian 47, Bennett County 36  
Vermillion 60, Tri-Valley 55  
Waubay/Summit 51, Waverly-South Shore 29  
West Central 51, Watertown 37  
Wilmot 51, Leola/Frederick 17  
Winner 61, Chamberlain 23

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

## Missing Sioux Falls woman found dead; 19-year-old man held

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A 20-year-old woman who was abducted over the weekend has been found dead near Sioux Falls and a 19-year-old man identified as a “person of interest” in the case is in custody, police said Tuesday.

The body of Pasqalina Esen Badi was found Monday afternoon along a road just outside the Sioux Falls city limits, police said. Badi disappeared soon after leaving work at about 5 a.m. Sunday.

The man in custody was arrested on outstanding warrants including assaulting a law enforcement officer and fleeing from justice. Soon after police announced Tuesday they had found Badi’s body, they said they had issued a fresh warrant for the same suspect in a reported abduction attempt at about 3 a.m. Jan. 1.

In that case, a woman told police she was walking to her car when a man walked up and threatened her with a knife. She said he pushed her to the passenger’s seat and tried to drive away, before eventually running away.

Lt. Terry Matia said police believe the man in custody in Badi’s abduction may have approached another woman in the same area and around the same time as Badi was taken.

Matia did not say what may have caused Badi’s death. An autopsy is planned for this week.

Badi’s Facebook profile describes her as a native of Eritrea who graduated from Washington High School in Phoenix.

A GoFundMe page set up for Badi describes her as “always laughing, helping someone with advice, a shoulder to lean on. She was a hard worker, never missed a day of work. Her dream was to go to colleges to become a phlebotomist and she was working towards that goals before she was taken from us.”

The creator of the page, who identified herself as Badi’s cousin, declined an interview request from The Associated Press.

## Excerpts from recent South Dakota editorials

By The Associated Press undefined

**Rapid City Journal, Jan. 5**

### **Sen. Thune on impeachment, Russian meddling, hyper-partisanship**

Senator John Thune is not quick to criticize President Donald Trump or other Republican leaders, but that doesn't mean he always agrees with their policies.

Sen. Thune met with the Rapid City Journal editorial board this week. He said his place at the table as Majority Whip was most important at those times when he disagrees with Senate leaders or the administration.

"You try as a member of the leadership to be the best team player that you can," Thune said. "If the direction is crosswise with South Dakota, that's where I will make my stand. I think it is helpful to have a seat at the table where your voice is being heard. I can try to at least shape a policy before it is announced."

Some important areas where Sen. Thune has been at odds with others in his party have been on trade policies and agreements that have hurt South Dakota farmers.

"The new Japan deal is great for livestock. It is tailored after TPP (the Trans-Pacific Partnership) I wish we would have agreed to stay in that. It would have been a great deal for South Dakota," Thune said. "There are good things happening in the ag world. There are some bad things in the ag world — the weather we had last year and the trade impacts of the tariffs, especially with China — we're hoping the lenders are still willing to work with farmers for another year."

When it comes to impeachment, Thune said he wants a fair hearing of testimony from both sides.

"I think we have to make sure that both sides have an opportunity to be heard. That was lacking on the House side," Sen. Thune said. "Both sides will have an opportunity to make the case."

But Thune was quick to say he didn't want to see the process drag out with a Presidential election looming.

"There are a lot of people who view this process as one, time-consuming, two not going anywhere, and three not relevant to their daily lives and want to see it over," he said. "If you ask most people and give them the option between impeaching and removing the President or having voters decide in November, it is overwhelmingly in favor of letting the voters decide."

One instance where the Senator was most willing to break ranks with others in the GOP leadership was on what happened during the 2016 election. Some GOP leaders have signaled to constituents that Russia didn't interfere with the 2016 election — or at least they weren't the only country to do so. Thune sides with the Senate Intelligence Committee that plainly stated that Russia interfered in the electoral process and could again.

"It is important that we keep our elections clean. It was Russia that interfered in the 2016 election," Sen. Thune said. "Trying to change the narrative about that I don't think is constructive or helpful. We need to acknowledge that and make sure there is no further meddling going forward."

Sen. Thune also discussed how social media has encroached into the legislative process. Compromise is seen as a betrayal of the party by many partisan people and social media platforms allow them to take aim at legislators who work with someone across the aisle to get a bill passed. Thune pointed to his TRACED Act as an example of how the legislative process can work. He worked with Sen. Ed Markey (D-Massachusetts) to get the bill passed. But blocking unwanted robocalls isn't a partisan issue, so that bill sailed through the House and Senate and has been signed by the President. Bills with any partisan component don't fare as well.

"Social media has completely, dramatically changed the way things happen and business is done in politics," Thune said. "What you have to remember is that there is a small number of people who are on Twitter and a smaller amount who are actually paying attention to what is happening in politics. It is easy to get sucked into a myopic bubble and think that small group speaks for everyone."

He said the partisanship in politics isn't causing people to become more divided. Thune believes that the culture drives politics instead of the reverse.

"People say why is politics so divided?" he said. "To me, politics is downstream from the culture and not the other way around. What happens in politics is what is happening in the rest of the country. The tone is a lot less civil. There are fewer people who are willing to accept new information."

## **Aberdeen American News, Jan. 4** **SD's youth suicide problem is horrifying**

Add youth suicide to the list of topics that should be important to South Dakotans.

It's up there with methamphetamine addiction, education funding and our nursing home crisis.

Two of the issues — youth suicide and methamphetamine — seem especially difficult to deal with. Money won't hurt, but there's no way to know for sure whether it will help or what the best way to spend it is. That's why it's up to us to do the hard work.

You and me. Real people. Family. Friends. Neighbors.

Schools and educators have a role, but there's nothing that will trump the personal touch. Checking in. Asking questions, even if they are tough.

Plenty has been said and written about the state's anti-methamphetamine campaign and all of the problems the drug causes. More often overlooked is how big of a problem youth suicide is in South Dakota and across the nation.

Between 1999 and 2016, the rate of suicides in South Dakota increased 44.5%, according to Josh Clayton, state epidemiologist.

Suicides in South Dakota occur, on average, at a younger age than at the national average, he said. Rural areas also have higher suicide rates than urban areas across the country, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

From 2013 through 2017, death by suicide was the second-leading cause of death for people in South Dakota ages 10 to 39, according to the South Dakota Department of Health.

Those statistics should be alarming to all of us. They reflect a real and terrifying problem.

Our youngest citizens are struggling. Sometimes they don't know or can't see or comprehend how loved and cared for and valuable they are.

That needs to change. And the work is ours.

It's hard, because sometimes the warning signs of struggling are hard to see.

Let's start by acknowledging that being a pre-teen or teenager is tough. There is no escape in this day and age. With social media, bullies can track you down anywhere, even at home. The bombardment of bad news and violence is easy to find on every tablet and smartphone in every bedroom. Even the reminders that friends are out having fun while peers are at home feeling uninvited and excluded are hard to avoid because of constant Facebook and Instagram posts. These are dicey and difficult times.

Further complicating matters is that young people have a skewed view of time. Three months to a 13-year-old seems an eternity, a long time to deal with a painful problem. A 50-year-old likely processes that same amount of time differently, knowing things will get better sooner rather than later. That's the wisdom only age can offer.

The Rev. David Zellmer is the retired bishop of South Dakota Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. He offered this take.

"All the training I've ever had, if (a young person is) in a crisis mode, you have to stay with them," he said. "Once you get them through that, then you've got a different animal."

The tough part for adults is striking the right balance. Expressing concern and care without being overbearing and annoying. Offering support and love without smothering.

The power people described as empaths have — the ability to sense how others are doing emotionally and mentally — is a valuable one, but not everybody has it. So then what? The best answer is to sincerely ask questions and offer support. Communicate clearly and exercise compassion.

Shy of anything else, at least keep this list of resources handy.

Are you struggling or do you know somebody who is? Here's a list to help:

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National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255 or chat online at [suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org).

Community resources helpline center: 211.

Local 24/7 crisis line: 605-229-1000.

National Alliance on Mental Health Helpline: 800-950-6264.

Never forget there are people who care.

## **Madison Daily Leader, Jan. 2**

### **A time to step up on teaching civics**

For generations, K-12 students have learned the fundamentals of how the United States government works. Typically, topics included the three branches of the federal government, responsibilities of each, elections and the role of American voters.

Some students yawned their way through such courses, often called "civics." To a degree, the functioning of government didn't change much and was taken for granted. Some observers believe high school graduates don't know enough about the functioning of government to fulfill their role as citizens.

The problem has grown in recent years, due to the deep political divide in America. It doesn't help when elected officials turn every topic into a Republican vs. Democrat issue, or call each other liars, or say press coverage is "fake" simply because it doesn't promote a political party line. The speed of falsehoods spread via social media is another factor.

While we believe the problem is probably at its worst today, there might be an argument for other time periods in American history, such as the bribery scandal during the Harding administration, corruption in the Nixon White House, or many others in the past 244 years.

Regardless, we believe civics education in schools needs a new emphasis. And so does John Roberts, Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. In his annual year-end report, Roberts said he intends to promote civic education this year, especially relating to the political independence of the judiciary.

Ramping up civics education may end up being just as hard as getting a bipartisan bill passed in Congress. Any changes in curriculum are likely to be criticized instantly by party loyalists, saying the changes would favor one party or another.

The difficulty of boosting civics education is still worth pursuing. And we hope schools throughout the country see the long-term national benefit of doing so.

## **Legislature invites Crow Creek leader to give Tribes address**

**By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press**

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota legislators have invited the Crow Creek Sioux tribal chairman to deliver the annual State of the Tribes address after some tribal leaders threatened to boycott a planned address by a member of Gov. Kristi Noem's cabinet.

Lawmakers on Monday invited Lester Thompson Jr. to deliver the address next week. Thompson hasn't responded yet.

The move is a switch from plans to have Secretary of Tribal Relations Dave Flute give it. The annual speech is supposed to promote cooperation between the state government and the tribes, but instead became a point of friction when tribal leaders objected to having a state employee give the speech.

Last week, some tribal leaders said they would hold their own event called the Great Sioux Nation Tribal address.

That event will still happen in Fort Pierre across the Missouri River from the Capitol, but has been re-scheduled for after the State of the Tribes address.

Lawmakers discussed having Flute give the address in a December meeting of the Legislature's Executive Board. For the past four years, a current tribal chairman or president has delivered the address, but legislators argued that Flute would be able to cover issues facing all tribes in South Dakota, rather than a single tribe. Flute previously served as chairman of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux and joined Noem's

cabinet last year.

Senate Majority Leader Kris Langer, R-Dell Rapids, said the Legislature does not have a formal protocol for choosing who to invite to give the address.

Noem has been at odds with several Indian tribes in the state over laws created in anticipation of construction of the Keystone XL pipeline. The governor is scheduled to meet with tribal leaders later this week to discuss legislation in the 2020 session that may affect tribes.

Cheyenne River Sioux Chairman Harold Frazier said that despite the dispute, "that doesn't mean we shouldn't keep trying to work together."

Senate Minority Leader Troy Heinert, D-Mission, said the dispute over the address revealed the need for better communication between tribal governments and the state. He said it has traditionally been an adversarial relationship, but credited both sides for working to open lines of communication. But episodes like this don't help, Heinert said.

"This hasn't been fun this week," he said. "I'm trying to put the toothpaste back in the tube."

## **SAB Biotherapeutics Announces Research Collaboration With CSL Behring**

SIoux FALLS, S.D.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Jan 7, 2020--

SAB Biotherapeutics (SAB), a clinical-stage biopharmaceutical development company advancing a new class of immunotherapies, today announced that it has entered into multiple collaboration and option agreements with global biotherapeutics leader CSL Behring. The collaborations will explore the possibility and the potential of new therapies to treat challenging autoimmune, infectious and idiopathic diseases by leveraging SAB's DiversitAb™ platform.

SAB has developed a unique platform, through advanced genetic engineering, to naturally and rapidly produce large amounts of human antibodies without using human donors.

The agreement includes a research program which will investigate a potential new source for human immunoglobulin G (IgG). Human IgG is currently used for a number of immunological and neurological diseases including Primary Immunodeficiency, Chronic Inflammatory Demyelinating Polyneuropathy (CIDP), Guillain-Barre Syndrome (GBS), Immune Thrombocytopenic Purpura (ITP), and Multifocal Motor Neuropathy (MMN).

CSL Behring is a leader in the global immunoglobulins market, which has grown substantially over the last five years. Key factors fueling market growth include an aging population, increased emphasis on the diagnosis and treatment of immune diseases, and its increased use in new indications.

"SAB Biotherapeutics has developed a very interesting and novel platform for the production of human immunoglobulins," said Dr. Andrew Nash, Senior Vice President, Research for CSL Behring. "CSL Behring is committed to the continuous development of innovative therapies that address unmet needs for patients with rare and serious diseases. This collaboration will provide both companies an opportunity to explore the potential of these new approaches to positively impact areas of need."

CSL Behring's R&D footprint includes more than 1,700 scientists across the globe with an R&D investment exceeding \$800 million in 2018 - 2019.

"We are excited that CSL Behring has chosen to work with SAB Biotherapeutics to explore new immunotherapies leveraging our technology platform," said Dr. Eddie J. Sullivan, president, CEO and co-founder of SAB Biotherapeutics. "We believe combining our unique human antibody development and production capabilities with CSL Behring's established immunoglobulin franchise and vast expertise in biopharmaceutical development will broaden therapeutic possibilities."

CSL Behring and SAB will share research program and related costs and plan to complete the initial phase in 2020. The collaboration may lead to subsequent development and commercialization agreements.

About SAB Biotherapeutics, Inc.

SAB Biotherapeutics, Inc. (SAB), headquartered in Sioux Falls, S.D. is a clinical-stage, biopharmaceutical development company advancing a new class of immunotherapies leveraging fully human polyclonal antibodies. Utilizing some of the most complex genetic engineering and antibody science in the world, SAB has developed the only platform that can rapidly produce natural, highly targeted, high-potency,

immunotherapies at commercial scale. The company is advancing programs in autoimmunity, infectious diseases, inflammation and exploratory oncology.

View source version on businesswire.com:<https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20200107005718/en/>

## Body of woman discovered along river in Pierre

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The body of a woman has been found along a river in Pierre, according to police. Dispatchers at Central South Dakota Communications received a 911 call Monday morning about the body discovered along the Missouri River about 250 yards from the Down's Marina Peninsula.

The woman has not been identified. And, no details were released on what may have caused her death. An autopsy will be done in Sioux Falls later this week, authorities said.

## EU chief warns UK must compromise to get Brexit trade deal

By JILL LAWLESS and RAF CASERT Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Three weeks before Britain is due to leave the European Union, the president of the European Commission warned Wednesday that the U.K. won't get the "highest quality access" to the European Union's market after Brexit unless it makes major concessions.

In a friendly but frank message to the U.K., Ursula von der Leyen said negotiating a new U.K.-EU trade deal will be tough. She also said the end-of-2020 deadline that British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has imposed on negotiations makes it "basically impossible" to strike a comprehensive new agreement in time.

Von der Leyen, who took over as head of the EU's executive branch on Dec. 1, met Johnson at 10 Downing Street in London on Wednesday for the first time since the British leader's election victory last month.

Johnson's Conservatives won a substantial parliamentary majority in Britain's Dec. 12 election, giving him the power to end more than three years of wrangling over Brexit and take the U.K. out of the EU on Jan. 31. It will be the first nation to ever leave the bloc, which currently has 28 members.

Britain's departure will be followed by a transition period in which the U.K.-EU relationship will remain largely unchanged while the two sides negotiate a new trade arrangement.

Johnson says the U.K. is seeking a wide-ranging free trade deal, but doesn't want to agree to keep all EU rules and standards.

Johnson's office said after the meeting that the U.K. wanted "a broad free trade agreement covering goods and services, and cooperation in other areas." But it said "any future partnership must not involve any kind of alignment" in which Britain would automatically follow EU rules.

That could cause problems. Speaking at the London School of Economics before her meeting with Johnson, von der Leyen warned that "without a level playing field on environment, labor, taxation and state aid, you cannot have the highest quality access to the world's largest single market."

"With every choice comes a consequence. With every decision comes a trade-off," she warned.

The EU worries that Britain plans to cut environmental and employment standards in order to position itself as a low-regulation, low-tax competitor to the bloc.

Johnson sought to allay those fears, telling von der Leyen the U.K. would continue to maintain high standards "in areas like workers' rights, animal welfare, agriculture and the environment," Downing St. said.

International trade agreements typically take years to complete, but Johnson has ruled out extending the post-Brexit transition period beyond the end of 2020, although the EU has offered to prolong it until 2022. Downing Street said Wednesday that "both British and EU citizens rightly expect negotiations on an ambitious free trade agreement to conclude on time."

Von der Leyen said the time frame was "very, very tight" and made it "basically impossible" to negotiate anything but a skeleton deal.

"The more divergence there is, the more distant the partnership has to be," she said. "And without an

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extension of the transition period beyond 2020, you cannot expect to agree on every single aspect of our new partnership. We will have to prioritize.”

The German EU chief — who studied in Britain in the 1970s and has proclaimed herself a friend and fan of Britain — did have some encouraging words for Johnson. She said the bloc was ready to strike a tariff-free and quota-free trade deal with Britain, and “a partnership that goes well beyond trade and is unprecedented in scope.”

She said the new relationship could encompass “everything from climate action to data protection, fisheries to energy, transport to space, financial services to security. And we are ready to work day and night to get as much of this done within the time frame we have.”

At the start of the meeting, Johnson noted that he and von der Leyen had attended the same Belgian school — the European School in Brussels, where both lived for a time as children. Johnson, 55, is six years younger than the EU chief.

Johnson’s election victory broke Britain’s political stalemate over Brexit. His 80-seat House of Commons majority means he has the votes to get his Brexit deal approved by lawmakers, something his predecessor Theresa May never achieved.

Johnson’s key Brexit bill was approved in principle last month and is expected to pass its final House of Commons hurdle on Thursday after three days of debate. It also must be approved by the European Parliament.

Von der Leyen said she did not anticipate a delay and expected the U.K. to leave the EU on Jan. 31. “This will be a tough and emotional day,” she said.

Raf Casert reported from Brussels.

Follow AP’s full coverage of Brexit and British politics at: <https://www.apnews.com/Brexit>

## Hollywood-backed Quibi thinks you’ll pay for its video bites

By MAE ANDERSON and RACHEL LERMAN AP Technology Writers

LAS VEGAS (AP) — A startup heavily backed by Hollywood is wagering that you’re ready to set aside YouTube and TikTok to watch star-studded short videos on your phone — for a price.

The company behind this billion-dollar bet is Quibi (KWIH-bee), which is preparing to offer movies, shows and other short form video designed for viewing in short bursts on mobile devices. It’s an enormous gamble, especially considering that several earlier efforts in mobile entertainment — most notably Verizon’s ill-fated Go90 service — fell flat.

Founded by former Disney studios chief and DreamWorks co-founder Jeffrey Katzenberg and helmed by former Hewlett Packard Enterprise CEO Meg Whitman, Quibi is heavy on big ideas and Hollywood muscle. It has backing from all the major movie studios and entertainment companies, \$1 billion invested in original programming, and star power in the form of creators and producers from Steven Spielberg to Chrissy Teigen.

Quibi plans to launch on April 6. It will charge \$5 a month for an ad-supported service, and \$8 a month for an ad-free version.

Company executives argued at CES that Quibi will offer the first entertainment platform designed exclusively for the phone. In an interview at CES, Katzenberg said it represents the first time “professional storytellers” have tackled the problem of delivering a high-quality viewing experience on mobile.

But the big question is whether a subscription service like Quibi can attract mobile viewers — particularly younger ones — already immersed in an ocean of free-to-watch short video on YouTube and other social-media services. It will also go up against roughly a half-dozen other paid streaming platforms from Netflix, Amazon Prime Video and Hulu to Disney Plus and upcoming services from WarnerMedia and NBC Universal.

During the keynote Quibi previewed shows including “Don’t Look Deeper,” a sci-fi show starring Don Cheadle and Emily Mortimer, and “#Freerayshawn” a crime thriller starring Laurence Fishburne as a cop

and executive produced by "Training Day" director Antoine Fuqua. Shows and movies, as well as other material like news and weather, are designed to be watched in "quick bites" of 10 minutes or less.

"Paid premium short form (video) has never been in the same sentence, it has never really been proven," said Seth Shapiro, managing partner at Pacific Strategy Partners. "That's the challenge." Among other things, he noted, it's already possible for people to watch those other services in the same quick bites Quibi plans.

Quibi executives at the CES gadget show in Las Vegas showed off technology on Wednesday designed to make video viewing on the phone easier. For instance, it will let you watch full-screen video whether you hold the phone upright or sideways.

Filmmakers deliver two edits to the company, one vertical, one horizontal, and Quibi stitches them together with one audio track. Some creators have incorporated that feature into their productions, as in one show in which horizontal viewing delivers a traditional picture — but turning the phone upright displays a view from the main character's phone camera.

Advertisers, at least, are on board. Quibi said it has sold out its \$150 million first-year advertising slots to blue-chip companies including Procter & Gamble, Anheuser Busch, General Mills, Google, T-Mobile and Walmart. Ads will appear before shows and aren't skippable.

Jeff Wlodarczak, principal analyst at Pivotal Research Group, says he understands why advertisers are flocking to the product. Millennials can be hard to reach, he said, and when a brand places ads on YouTube or Snapchat, they never quite know what kind of video they might end up next to.

Quibi offers a safe place for advertisers by delivering a known quantity "as opposed to people doing something stupid on YouTube," he said.

That advertising model will stick around, Whitman said. Quibi guarantees that all creators own their own intellectual property, and can repackage it and take it wherever else they want after seven years. It brought creators in, but it also means that Quibi needs both subscriber dollars and advertising revenue to stay afloat.

The company just closed on another \$400 million equity funding round from investors, Whitman said, and has a plan to be profitable "soon."

Others have tried short form content, mostly in ad-supported form. Facebook Watch features original shows with episodes as short as 12 or 13 minutes, but none have garnered much buzz or mainstream attention so far. Verizon pulled the plug on Go90 in 2018, roughly three years after it launched; several concurrent efforts have also shut down. Meanwhile, Netflix, Amazon and Hulu have all been experimenting with short-form offerings, many of them in comedy.

Quibi is "either brilliant or tone deaf," said Tim Hanlon, CEO of Vertere Group. "I just don't know what the answer is and I don't think anybody does."

Mae Anderson reported from New York.

## US, Iran step back from brink; Trump says Iran stands down

By ZEKE MILLER and DEB RIECHMANN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. and Iran stepped back from the brink of possible war Wednesday, as President Donald Trump indicated he would not respond militarily after no one was harmed in Iran's missile strike on two Iraqi bases housing U.S. troops.

Speaking from the White House, Trump seemed intent on deescalating the crisis, which reached a new height after he authorized the targeted killing last week of Gen. Qassem Soleimani, the head of Iran's elite Quds Force. Iran retaliated overnight with its most direct assault on America since the 1979 seizing of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, firing more than a dozen missiles from its territory at the U.S. installations.

Trump credited an early warning system "that worked very well" for the fact that no Americans or Iraqis were killed. He added that Americans should be "extremely grateful and happy" with the outcome.

Trump, facing one of the greatest tests of his presidency, said Wednesday that Iran appeared to be

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"standing down" and said the U.S. response would be to put in place new economic sanctions "until Iran changes its behavior."

The strikes had pushed Tehran and Washington perilously close to all-out conflict and put the world's attention on Trump as he weighed whether to respond with more military force. The Republican president delivered his remarks surrounded by his national security advisers in the foyer of the White House. It came after a late-night tweet in which he insisted "All is well!" after the strikes.

Iran, for days, had promised to respond forcefully to Soleimani's killing, but its limited strike on two bases — one in the northern Iraqi city in Irbil and the other at Ain al-Asad in western Iraq — appeared to signal that it was also uninterested in a wider clash with the U.S. Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif tweeted that the country had "concluded proportionate measures in self-defense."

Trump, who is facing reelection in November, campaigned for president on a promise to keep the United States from engaging in "endless war."

Speaking Wednesday he said the United States is "ready to embrace peace with all who seek it."

Trump opened his remarks by reiterating his promise that "Iran will never be allowed to have a nuclear weapon," even as that country announced in the wake of Soleimani's killing that it would no longer comply with any of the 2015 nuclear deal's limits on enrichment that had been put in place to prevent it from building a nuclear device.

But he seized on the —at least temporary — moment of calm to call for new nuclear negotiations to replace the 2015 deal from which he withdrew the U.S., objecting that it didn't limit Iran's ballistic missile programs or constrain its regional proxy campaigns like those led by Soleimani.

The president spoke directly to Iran, saying, "We want you to have a future and a great future."

Trump also announced he would ask NATO to become "much more involved in the Middle East process." While he has frequently criticized NATO as obsolete and has encouraged participants to increase their military spending, Trump has sought to have the military alliance refocus its efforts on modern threats.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Russian President Vladimir Putin in a joint statement after a closed-door meeting on Mideast security had warned that the further use of force "would lead to a new cycle of instability and would eventually damage everyone's interests."

However, in the hours before the missile strikes, Trump warned the longtime U.S. foe, "If Iran does anything that they shouldn't be doing, they're going to be suffering the consequences, and very strongly."

And Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, speaking on Wednesday, said the strike was not necessarily the totality of Iran's response.

"Last night they received a slap," Khamenei said. "These military actions are not sufficient (for revenge). What is important is that the corrupt presence of America in this region comes to an end."

Soleimani's death last week in an American drone strike in Baghdad prompted angry calls for vengeance and drew massive crowds of Iranians to the streets to mourn him. Khamenei himself wept at the funeral in a sign of his bond with the commander.

The Iranians fired a total of 15 missiles in the latest strikes, two U.S. officials said. Ten hit the Ain al-Asad air base in Iraq's western Anbar province and one targeted a base in Irbil in Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdish region. Four failed, said the officials, who were not authorized to speak publicly about a military operation.

According to a U.S. official, early warning systems detected the missile launches and alarms sounded, giving personnel at the bases time to get to shelter. Officials also said that the U.S. was closely watching the region and communicating with allies, and was aware of preparations for the attack. It's unclear if any intelligence identified specific targets or was more general in the potential strike locations.

Two Iraqi security officials said a missile appeared to have struck a plane at Ain al-Asad, igniting a fire. There were no immediate reports of casualties from the attacks, according to the officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity as they had no permission to talk to journalists.

Ain al-Asad was first used by American forces after the 2003 U.S.-led invasion that toppled dictator Saddam Hussein, and it later was used by American troops in the fight against the Islamic State group. It

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houses about 1,500 U.S. and coalition forces. Trump visited it in December 2018, making his first presidential visit to troops in the region. Vice President Mike Pence visited both Ain al-Asad and Irbil in November. Democrats called on Trump avoid military escalation with Iran.

Rep. Eliot Engel, D-N.Y., the chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, said the administration needs to quickly "extricate us from what could lead into a full-fledged war with terrible casualties." Engel said he feared the situation "spirals out of control."

The fallout for Trump's order to kill Soleimani had been swift.

Iraq's Parliament voted to expel U.S. troops from Iraq, which would undermine efforts to fight Islamic State militants in the region and would strengthen Iran's influence in the Mideast.

The counterattack by Iran came as Trump and his top advisers were under pressure to disclose more details about the intelligence that led to the American strike that killed Soleimani.

Top Senate Democrats, citing "deep concern" about the lack of information coming from the Trump administration about the Iran operation, called on Defense Department officials to provide "regular briefings and documents" to Congress.

Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and the senators said in a letter Wednesday that the White House's classified War Powers notification to Congress was "generic, vague, and entirely inconsistent in its level of detail" compared with the norm.

They also registered their "grave concern" with Trump's comments on targeting Iranian cultural sites and asked for clarification. Members of Congress were to be briefed on the strike Wednesday afternoon in closed-door sessions on Capitol Hill.

Trump and top national security officials have justified the airstrike with general statements about the threat posed by Soleimani, who commanded proxy forces outside Iran and was responsible for the deaths of American troops in Iraq.

But the details have been scarce.

Soleimani was targeted while he was at an airport in Baghdad with Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, a veteran Iraqi militant, who also was killed.

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Associated Press writers Kevin Freking, Lolita Baldor, Darlene Superville Alan Fram and Padmananda Rama contributed to this report.

## Survey: US companies added 202,000 jobs in December

By JOSH BOAK AP ECONOMICS WRITER

BALTIMORE (AP) — U.S. companies added 202,000 jobs in December, led by robust hiring in construction, trade, transportation and utilities, according to a private survey.

Payroll processor ADP said Wednesday that the bulk of the hiring was among smaller and mid-sized businesses with fewer than 500 employees. Hiring in November was also revised upward to 124,000, a sign that the job market was stronger than past surveys initially suggested.

Construction firms added 37,000 jobs in December. The trade, transportation and utilities sector added a combined 78,000. Health care and social assistance accounted for 46,000 new jobs.

Still, not every industry is hiring. Manufacturers shed 7,000 workers. Leisure and hospitality lost 21,000 jobs last month.

It typically takes roughly 100,000 or so new jobs a month to absorb population growth and keep the unemployment rate from rising.

Friday's government employment report is expected to show an increase of 155,000 jobs with the unemployment rate holding at 3.5%. ADP's figures don't include government hiring and frequently diverge from the government's official report.

But Ian Shepherdson, chief economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics, said the ADP figure was solid enough that the government report might show gains of 190,000.

"If sustained, that's more than enough to push the unemployment rate down to new lows, and to add

upward pressure to wage growth," he said.

## Ukrainian airliner crashes in Iran, killing all 176 aboard

By **MOHAMMAD NASIRI, NASSER KARIMI and JON GAMBRELL** Associated Press

SHAHEDSHAHR, Iran (AP) — A Ukrainian airliner carrying 176 people crashed on the outskirts of Tehran during a takeoff attempt Wednesday hours after Iran launched its missile attack on U.S. forces, scattering flaming debris and passengers' belongings across farmland and killing everyone on board.

The Iranian military disputed any suggestion the plane had been blown out of the sky by a missile, and Iranian aviation authorities said they suspected a mechanical problem brought down the 3½-year-old Boeing 737. Ukrainian officials initially agreed but later backed away and declined to offer a cause while the investigation is going on.

The Ukraine International Airlines jet was en route to the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv with 167 passengers and nine crew members from several countries, authorities said. Ukraine Foreign Minister Vadym Prystaiko said they included 82 Iranians, 63 Canadians and 11 Ukrainians.

Many of the passengers were believed to be Iranian Canadians or international students making their way to Kyiv or, beyond that, to Toronto after visiting with family during the winter break. The manifest included several teenagers and children, some as young as 1 or 2.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskiy cut short a visit to Oman to return to Kyiv and said a team of Ukrainian experts would fly to Tehran to help investigate the crash.

"Our priority is to find the truth and everyone responsible for the tragedy," Zelenskiy wrote in a Facebook statement.

In Canada, where the crash ranked among the worst losses of life for Canadians in an aviation disaster, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said the country is "shocked and saddened," and he vowed the government will work to "ensure that this crash is thoroughly investigated and that Canadians' questions are answered."

Major world airlines Wednesday rerouted flights crossing the Middle East to avoid danger amid escalating tensions between the U.S. and Iran, and the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration barred American flights from certain Persian Gulf airspace, warning of the "potential for miscalculation or misidentification" of civilian aircraft.

The plane had been delayed from taking off from Tehran's Imam Khomeini International Airport by almost an hour. It never made it above 8,000 feet, crashing just minutes after takeoff, according to data from the flight-tracking website FlightRadar24.

Qassem Biniaz, a spokesman for Iran's Road and Transportation Ministry, said it appeared a fire erupted in one of its engines and the pilot lost control of the plane, according to the state-run IRNA news agency. The news report did not explain how Iranian authorities knew that.

The pilot apparently couldn't communicate with air-traffic controllers in Tehran in the last moments of the flight, according to Hassan Razaeifar, the head of the air crash investigation committee. He did not elaborate.

Ukraine International Airlines President Yevhen Dykhne, said the aircraft "was one of the best planes we had, with an amazing, reliable crew." In a statement, the airline went further, saying: "Given the crew's experience, error probability is minimal. We do not even consider such a chance."

Gen. Abolfazl Shekarchi, the spokesman of the Iranian armed forces, was quoted by the semiofficial Fars news agency as denying the plane has been brought down by a missile.

"The rumors about the plane are completely false and no military or political expert has confirmed it," he said. He said the rumors were "psychological warfare" by the government's opponents.

Authorities said they found the plane's so-called black boxes, which record cockpit conversations and instrument data.

In 1988, a U.S. Navy cruiser mistakenly shot down an Iranian passenger jet over the Persian Gulf, killing 290 people. Earlier this week, Iranian President Hassan Rouhani referred to that episode in responding to President Donald Trump's threat to attack 52 targets in Iran.

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"Those who refer to the number 52 should also remember the number 290," Rouhani tweeted. "Never threaten the Iranian nation."

The Ukrainian plane, fully loaded with fuel for its 2,300-kilometer (1,430-mile) flight, slammed into the ground near the town of Shahedshahr, causing fires that lit up the darkened fields before dawn.

Din Mohammad Qassem said he had been watching the news about the Iranian missile attack on U.S. troops in Iraq in revenge for the killing of Gen. Qassem Soleimani when he heard the crash.

"I heard a massive explosion and all the houses started to shake. There was fire everywhere," he said. "At first I thought (the Americans) have hit here with missiles and went in the basement as a shelter. After a while, I went out and saw a plane has crashed over there. Body parts were lying around everywhere."

The crash left a wide field of debris scattered across farmland, the dead lying among shattered pieces of the aircraft. Their possessions, including a child's cartoon-covered electric toothbrush, a stuffed animal, luggage and electronics, stretched everywhere.

Rescuers in masks shouted over the noise of hovering helicopters. They quickly realized there would be no survivors.

The Boeing 737-800 model that went down is an extremely common twin-engine jetliner used for short-to medium-range flights. Thousands are used by airlines around the world.

Introduced in the late 1990s, it is an older model than the Boeing 737 MAX, which has been grounded for nearly 10 months following two deadly crashes. The jet that went down on Wednesday last underwent routine maintenance on Monday, the airline said.

A number of 737-800 aircraft have been involved in deadly accidents over the years, including a FlyDubai crash in Russia in 2016 that killed 62 people and an Air India Express disaster in India in 2010 that left more than 150 dead.

The 737-800s have been the subject of inspections and repairs since last year, after airlines started reporting cracks in a part that keeps the wings attached to the fuselage.

While the cause of the crash remained unknown, the disaster could further damage Boeing's reputation, which has been battered by the 737 Max furor.

Boeing extended condolences to the victims' families and said it stands ready to assist. Boeing, like other airline manufacturers, typically helps in crash investigations. But that effort could be thwarted in this case by the U.S. sanctions imposed against Iran since Trump withdrew the United States from the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran.

Karimi reported from Tehran, Iran, and Gambrell from Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Associated Press writers Adam Schreck in Bangkok; Mehdi Fattahi in Tehran; Daria Litvinova in Moscow, Inna Varenysia and Dmytro Vlasov in Kyiv, Ukraine; Carlo Piovano in London and Rob Gilles in Toronto contributed to this report.

## Iranian leader calls missile attack a 'slap' at US bases

By **NASSER KARIMI, AMIR VAHDAT and JON GAMBRELL** Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Iran struck back at the United States early Wednesday for killing its most powerful military commander, firing a barrage of ballistic missiles at two Iraqi military bases that house American troops in what the Iranian supreme leader said was a "slap" against the U.S. military presence in the region.

The dramatic blast of more than a dozen missiles caused no casualties, however, and U.S. President Donald Trump said hours later that Iran "appears to be standing down."

It was a signal that both sides were stepping away from an immediate spiral of more direct exchanges that could throw the Middle East into great turmoil.

Speaking at the White House, Trump said the U.S. would impose new "punishing economic sanctions" on Iran to force it to stop its nuclear program and what he called its "hostilities" in the region. But he also said Washington was open to a deal with Tehran.

Iran, in turn, appeared to have calibrated its attack to avoid stoking further U.S. retaliation, giving some

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early warning to its Iraqi allies to avoid casualties.

"Last night they received a slap," Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said of the Americans in a speech after the missile strikes.

He made clear that Iran's actions were in response to the U.S. killing of Revolutionary Guard Gen. Qasem Soleimani, whose death last week in a drone strike in Baghdad prompted angry calls for vengeance and drew massive crowds of Iranians to the streets in mourning. Khamenei himself wept at the funeral in a sign of his bond with the commander.

"These military actions are not sufficient (for revenge). What is important is that the corrupt presence of America in this region comes to an end."

Satellite imagery showed at least five impact sites on the Ain al-Asad base in Iraq's western Anbar province, each leaving charred blast marks that damaged or destroyed buildings. One obliterated a structure in a row of buildings next to a line of helicopters, though none of the aircraft appeared damaged, according to the imagery provided by Planet Labs, Inc.

Iran's foreign minister tweeted that Tehran had taken and "concluded proportionate measures in self-defense," adding that Tehran did "not seek escalation" but would defend itself against further aggression.

Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi said he received notification from Iran just after midnight that its retaliation "was starting or would start soon" and would focus only on U.S. positions. The militaries of Finland and Lithuania, which had personnel at one of the targeted bases, said they received information about an imminent attack and had time to move to shelters or leave the base.

Iran's attacks "appeared designed for maximum domestic effect with minimum escalatory risk," said Henry Rome, analyst with Eurasia Group.

"For a president who wants to avoid a war in the Middle East during an election year, the Iranians have provided an off-ramp he will likely take," Rome said.

Tensions have risen steadily in the Middle East since Trump unilaterally withdrew America from Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers.

The Iranian attacks on the bases marked the first time in recent years that Iran has directly attacked U.S. positions rather than through proxies in the region.

Tehran and Washington have been at odds since Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution and the subsequent U.S. Embassy takeover and hostage crisis.

Adding to the chaos, a Ukrainian airplane with 176 people crashed after takeoff just outside Tehran on Wednesday morning, killing all on board, Iranian and Ukrainian officials said. Iran said mechanical issues were suspected, although Ukraine declined to offer a cause while an investigation continues.

The Boeing 737-800 had taken off from Imam Khomeini International Airport, bound for the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv. The plane carried 167 passengers and nine crew members. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Vadym Prystaiko said there were 82 Iranians, 63 Canadians and 11 Ukrainians on board — the Ukrainian nationals included two passengers and the nine crew. The rest were Swedish, Afghan, German and British nationals.

The U.S. Federation Aviation Administration earlier warned of a "potential for miscalculation or misidentification" for civilian aircraft in the Persian Gulf. The agency barred U.S. carriers from flying over areas of Iraqi, Iranian and some Persian Gulf countries.

The U.S. has been deploying more troops in the region. U.S. Gulf allies that host thousands of American troops are concerned about a direct conflict. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates have called for de-escalation.

"The situation is not currently a war situation," UAE Energy Minister Suhail Al-Mazrouei said, stressing that Iran is a neighbor and the last thing the country wants is more regional tension.

Iran's Revolutionary Guard warned the U.S. and its allies against retaliating over the missile attack.

"We are warning all American allies, who gave their bases to its terrorist army, that any territory that is the starting point of aggressive acts against Iran will be targeted," the Guard said in a statement carried by Iran's state-run IRNA news agency. It also threatened Israel.

The Iranians fired 15 missiles Wednesday, two U.S. officials said. Ten hit Ain al-Asad and one targeted

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a base in Irbil in Iraq's semi-autonomous Kurdish region. Four failed, said the officials, who were not authorized to speak publicly about a military operation.

"As we evaluate the situation and our response, we will take all necessary measures to protect and defend U.S. personnel, partners and allies in the region," said Jonathan Hoffman, an assistant to the U.S. defense secretary.

Two Iraqi security officials said a missile appeared to have hit a plane at Ain al-Asad, igniting a fire. There were no immediate reports of casualties from the attacks, according to the officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they did not have permission to talk to journalists.

Ain al-Asad was first used by American forces after the 2003 U.S.-led invasion that toppled dictator Saddam Hussein, and it later was used by American troops in the fight against the Islamic State group. It houses about 1,500 U.S. and coalition forces. Trump went there in December 2018, making his first presidential visit to troops in the region. Vice President Mike Pence also has visited.

As Iran reels from the loss of life in the plane crash, it is also contending with the aftermath of a deadly stampede Tuesday at Soleimani's funeral in his hometown of Kerman, killing 56 people and injuring more than 200. Shortly after Wednesday's missile attack, Soleimani's shroud-wrapped remains were lowered into the ground as mourners wailed at the grave site.

"We tell our enemies that we will retaliate, but if they take another action we will set ablaze the places that they like and are passionate about," Hossein Salami, who commands the Revolutionary Guard, told a crowd in Kerman.

The general's funeral procession in major cities spanning three days was an unprecedented honor for Soleimani, seen by Iranians as a national hero for his work leading the Guard's expeditionary Quds Force in the face of U.S. pressure.

The U.S. blames him for killing U.S. troops in Iraq. The Trump administration alleges he'd been plotting new attacks just before he was killed.

Many Sunni Muslims in the region, however, view him as a destabilizing figure who commanded dangerous and deadly Shiite proxy militias. Soleimani led forces supporting Syrian President Bashar Assad in that country's civil war.

Since his killing Jan. 3, Tehran has abandoned the remaining limits of its 2015 nuclear deal with world powers. In Iraq, lawmakers and pro-Iranian factions in parliament have voted to oust American troops from Iraqi territory.

Kuwait said Wednesday that its state-run KUNA news agency's Twitter account was hacked and posted a false story on U.S. troops withdrawing from the nation. The fake alert went out on its account, Kuwait said. More than 13,000 U.S. troops are stationed in Kuwait, with more now on the way.

Gambrell reported from Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Associated Press writers Aya Batrawy in Dubai, Matthew Lee, Lolita C. Baldor and Zeke Miller in Washington, Qassim Abdul-Zahra in Baghdad; Hussain al-Qatari in Kuwait City and Zeina Karam in Beirut contributed.

## Stabbings, shootings, assaults weigh on US Jewish youth

By LUIS ANDRES HENAO Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — When a man spewed anti-Semitic slurs and spat on her face, Shoshana Blum remembered her ancestors who survived the Holocaust, and instead of looking down - she defiantly stared at him eye to eye.

The 20-year-old junior at City College of New York left the subway in tears. But months after the attack, she continues to wear proudly the same Star of David necklace she wore that day, and on Sunday, she joined thousands of people in a solidarity march against a rise in anti-Semitism and acts of hate.

"It's important to stand strong in my Judaism," she said. "If this is what's happening when we're out being proud Jewish people, what's it going to be like if we're afraid and in hiding?"

Many young Jewish people in the United States say their generation never experienced this level of threat

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and are searching for ways to cope with an alarming string of recent anti-Semitic attacks across the country.

The "No Hate, No Fear" march on Sunday organized by New York's Jewish community came as a response to anti-Semitic violence, including the targeting of a kosher grocery in Jersey City, New Jersey, and a knife attack that injured five people at a Hanukkah celebration north of New York City.

"It's terrifying. We thought that anti-Semitism was a thing of the past. We learned about it but never thought we would live in it," said Rabbi Jon Leener, 31, who runs Base BKLYN, a home-based ministry that aims to reach out to millennials and Jews of all backgrounds. He attended Sunday's solidarity march and published a photo with his three-year-old son on his shoulders. They held a banner that read: "I love being Jewish because I love Shabbat."

"The idea that someone wants to hurt you, your family, your community just because you're Jewish is still hard to fully comprehend," he said.

In the past five years, Leener and his wife, Faith, have welcomed thousands of people into their home-based ministry rooted in openness. Minutes before a class or a Shabbat dinner, he always walked to the front door and unlocked it because the couple believes in a Judaism where no door is shut or locked, both literally and metaphorically.

"This is all changing now. After Pittsburgh, after Poway, after Halle (Germany), after Jersey City, after Monsey we no longer keep the door unlock(ed)," he recently said on Facebook.

Visitors now must buzz in and Leener installed a security camera for the front door.

"I'm angry that this is our new reality. I hate that anti-Semitism is changing how I practice and share my Judaism to the world," he said.

Anti-Semitic attacks rose worldwide by 13% in 2018 compared to the previous year, according to a report by Tel Aviv University's Kantor Center for the Study of Contemporary Jewry. The report recorded nearly 400 cases worldwide, with more than a quarter of the major violent cases taking place in the U.S.

The surge of fatal attacks on the Jewish community, including shooting rampages at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh in October 2018, and at a synagogue in Poway, California, in April, have caused consternation nationwide.

"After the stabbing in Monsey, I told my mom, 'This is crazy. He was arrested less than a mile from here, while we were at Shul (synagogue) and celebrating Hanukkah,'" said Blum, who was raised in Chabad-Lubavitch, an Orthodox Jewish Hasidic movement. "Jews are getting attacked. It's not far; it's not in Europe."

The first time that Blum witnessed hate against Jews she was seven. The victim was her father, Rabbi Yonah Blum, who was the head of Columbia University's Chabad House for 23 years. While they were walking hand-in-hand from synagogue near the campus, a man came up behind him yelling anti-Semitic slurs and slapped his black fedora and his skullcap off his head.

"I think Jews, we're very separated people when it comes to different topics, and different nationalities, but something that has been coming up since the (Monsey) attack, is that we all stand together," she said on a recent Friday as she prepared dinner and later lit the candles and recited a blessing in Hebrew to mark the start of the Jewish Sabbath.

Since the Dec. 10 fatal shootings at a Jewish grocery store in Jersey City, there have been 33 anti-Semitic incidents in the U.S., including 26 in New York and New Jersey alone, according to the Anti-Defamation League's Tracker of Anti-Semitic Incidents. The tracker compiles recent cases of anti-Jewish vandalism, harassment and assault reported to or detected by the group.

During a recent trip to a conference of young Jewish leaders in New York City, Hezzy Segal's mother advised him against wearing the yarmulke while riding the subway. The 16-year-old from Minnetonka, Minnesota, said that he still wore the Jewish skullcap that symbolizes his devotion to God. But in some areas of the city, he tucked it under his purple Minnesota Vikings snow hat.

"I've never been scared of being Jewish, but with the rise in anti-Semitism, I was more aware of it," he said. "It's sad, it's scary for all Jews."

Forty-five percent of teenagers feel that anti-Semitism is a problem for today's teens, according to the largest study of Jewish teens conducted in North America. The Jewish Education Project's GenZ Now Research Report included 18,000 respondents and was published in March 2019.

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"I've already been on my guard a lot," said Thando Mlauzi, 25, a UCLA junior, who is majoring in English. "One of my hopes and dreams is that we live in a world, in a society, where it doesn't matter that I'm black and Jewish," said Mlauzi, who converted to Judaism in 2018.

On a recent Friday, Alexandra Cohen, 29, chopped tomatoes before guests arrived for a Shabbat dinner in her studio apartment decorated with menorahs and flags of Israel, as well as sepia photos of her grandparents next to a colorful painting of the beach in Tel Aviv.

Cohen said that her connection to Judaism grew stronger after someone put an anti-Semitic message on the door of her dorm at Johns Hopkins University, and later when she traveled to Israel and joined advocacy organizations. She said she is combating the negative environment by exposing the positive side of Jewish life and contemporary Jewish society.

The Anti-Defamation League has worked on initiatives, including its "No Place for Hate" anti-bias, anti-bullying initiative, which is in place in schools. Another includes working with juvenile offenders who are involved in some of the incidents to understand what they did and why.

Reformed neo-Nazi Shannon Foley Martinez is part of a U.S. movement that helps people quit hate organizations. She feels she must spread the message that people can change their lives. She hopes her story is a warning to parents.

"People have preconceived notions of who they think violent white supremacists are," said Martinez, who at 15 became a skinhead who spouted white supremacist rhetoric, gave stiff-armed Nazi salutes and tagged walls with swastikas.

"I grew up in a family with two middle-class parents who have been married for 51 years, I was one of the smartest kids in my class, I was a championship athlete at one point of my life. I don't fit what people's ideas are of who is vulnerable to radicalize into these ideas," she said.

"My story is important because of that. We have to look at ourselves and our children and think: 'This could be my child. Am I actively and intentionally taking steps to not find resonance and find resistance to hate?'"

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## Commercial airlines reroute flights amid US-Iran tensions

By EMILY SCHMALL Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — Commercial airlines are rerouting flights throughout the Middle East to avoid potential danger during heightened tensions between the United States and Iran.

Jumbled schedules could effect as many as 15,000 passengers per day, lengthen flight times by an average of 30 to 90 minutes, and severely bruise the bottom line for airlines, industry analysts said.

There is anxiety that the conflict between the longtime foes could intensify following Iranian ballistic missile strikes Wednesday on two Iraqi bases that house U.S. troops. The attacks were retaliation for the U.S. killing of Iranian Revolutionary Guard Gen. Qassem Soleimani in a drone strike near Baghdad last week.

"In a war situation, the first casualty is always air transport," said Dubai-based aviation consult Mark Martin, pointing to airline bankruptcies during the Persian Gulf and Yugoslav wars.

At least 500 commercial flights travel through Iranian and Iraqi airspace daily, Martin said.

A Ukrainian passenger jet crashed shortly after taking off from Iran's capital Wednesday killing 167 passengers and nine crew members just hours after Iran's ballistic missile attack, but Iranian officials said they suspected a mechanical issue brought down the 3½-year-old Boeing 737-800 aircraft. Ukrainian officials initially agreed, but later backed away and declined to offer a cause while the investigation is ongoing.

Still, at least two Kazakh airlines — Air Astana and SCAT — were considering rerouting or canceling their flights over Iran following the crash, which killed all 176 passengers.

Poland's national carrier, PLL LOT, said Saturday that it was changing routes to bypass Iran's airspace.

A suite of other European carriers followed on Wednesday, and the restrictions were expected to "further

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depress" air travel between Iran and Western Europe, which saw strong growth after the Iran nuclear deal but a sharp dive when President Donald Trump pulled the U.S. out of the agreement and reimposed sanctions, according to the Sydney-based Center for Aviation consultancy.

Air France and Dutch carrier KLM both said Wednesday that they had suspended all flights over Iranian and Iraqi airspace indefinitely.

German airline Lufthansa and two of its subsidiaries also canceled flights to Iraq.

The Russian aviation agency, Rosaviatsia, issued an official recommendation for all Russian airlines to avoid flying over Iran, Iraq, the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman "due to existing risks for the safety of international civil flights."

Russia's biggest private airline, S7, said it would reroute its twice-a-week flight from the Siberian city of Novosibirsk to Dubai.

Asia-Pacific carriers, which operate many of the world's long-haul flights, were also expected to be hit hard by the ad hoc no-fly zone over Iran, Martin said.

Australian carrier Qantas said it was altering its London to Perth, Australia, route to avoid Iranian and Iraqi airspace until further notice. The longer route meant that Qantas would have to carry fewer passengers and more fuel to remain in the air for an extra 40 to 50 minutes.

Malaysia Airlines said that "due to recent events," its planes would avoid Iranian airspace.

Singapore Airlines also said that its flights to Europe would be re-routed to avoid Iran.

India's Directorate General of Civil Aviation advised Indian commercial carriers to avoid Iranian, Iraqi and Persian Gulf airspace.

"In light of the tensions within the Iranian airspace a decision to temporarily reroute flights of Air India and Air India Express overflying Iran has been taken," said Air India spokesman Dhananjay Kumar.

Travel times will increase by as much as 40 minutes for flights in the region, the airline said.

Buta Airways, an Azerbaijani low-cost carrier, said Wednesday that it was not planning to suspend or reroute daily flights between Baku, the country's capital, and Tehran.

In North America, Air Canada rerouted its flight from Toronto to Dubai through Egypt and Saudi Arabia to avoid traveling over Iraq.

The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration said it was barring American pilots and carriers from flying in areas of Iraqi, Iranian and some Persian Gulf airspace. The agency warned of the "potential for miscalculation or mis-identification" for civilian aircraft amid heightened tensions between the U.S. and Iran.

Such restrictions are often precautionary in nature to prevent civilian aircraft from being confused for ones engaged in armed conflict. The FAA said the restrictions were being issued due to "heightened military activities and increased political tensions in the Middle East, which present an inadvertent risk to U.S. civil aviation operations."

In the Middle East, United Arab Emirates-owned budget airline flydubai said it had canceled a scheduled flight Wednesday from Dubai to Baghdad but was continuing flights to Basra and Najaf. Etihad Airways, the second-largest airline in the UAE, continued to operate on a regular schedule, but asked travelers who want to change flights to contact the carrier.

Emirates airline flights between Dubai and Baghdad were canceled.

"The safety of our passengers, crew and aircraft is our number one priority and will not be compromised," Emirates said in a statement.

Qatar Airways, however, said its flights to Iraq were operating normally. "The safety of our passengers and employees is of the highest importance, and we continue to closely monitor developments in Iraq," the airline said in a statement.

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Associated Press writers Daria Litvinova in Moscow; Angela Charlton in Paris; Monika Scislowska in Warsaw, Poland; Rod McGuirk in Canberra, Australia; Frank Jordans in Berlin and Eileen Ng in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, contributed to this report.

## McConnell: 'No haggling' over impeachment trial terms

By LISA MASCARO, MARY CLARE JALONICK, ALAN FRAM and LAURIE KELLMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said Wednesday that he will launch President Donald Trump's impeachment trial on his terms, without any agreement on whether to call witnesses, when House Speaker Nancy Pelosi sends the abuse and obstruction articles to the Senate.

"There will be no haggling with the House over Senate procedure," said McConnell, R-Ky. "We will not cede our authority to try this impeachment. The House Democrats' turn is over."

The trial on abuse of power and obstruction of Congress charges passed by the House last month could begin as soon as this week if Pelosi, D-Calif., sends the articles of impeachment to the Senate.

But even as McConnell spoke from the Senate floor, Pelosi was giving no sense of her plans. In a closed-door meeting with the House Democratic caucus, she stuck to talking about Iran's ballistic missile attacks on bases in Iraq in retaliation for the Trump administration's killing of Iran's top general, according to several Democrats in the room.

Back on the Senate floor, Democratic leader Charles Schumer pressed on with his contention that any trial would be unfair unless senators could consider witnesses and documents connected to Trump's pressure campaign on Ukraine to investigate the family of Democratic rival Joe Biden.

"The evidence should inform arguments in a trial," said Schumer, D-N.Y. "Evidence should not be an afterthought."

McConnell announced Tuesday that he has support from the majority of senators to start a trial structured like the last one, against President Bill Clinton in 1999. Those proceedings also began without an agreement on witnesses.

"We have the votes," McConnell told reporters.

The contours of a Senate trial have been in dispute for weeks. Pelosi is delaying transmission of the articles as Democrats press for testimony from former national security adviser John Bolton and other new witnesses.

"Sadly, Leader McConnell has made clear that his loyalty is to the President and not the Constitution," Pelosi wrote to colleagues late Tuesday. She said the process he is outlining "is not only unfair but designed to deprive Senators and the American people of crucial documents and testimony."

Pelosi told House leaders in a private meeting Tuesday that she believed the strategy was working, according to those in that meeting. She called on McConnell to "immediately" reveal the details of his proposal.

"People are united," said Democratic Rep. Mike Thompson of California about the mood in the House caucus.

McConnell has resisted calling new witnesses and expects the trial to end with the GOP Senate majority voting to acquit the president of the charges, and without Trump's removal from office.

Schumer called McConnell's plan for the trial a "trap" and a "cover-up." He pledged to force votes anyway on Bolton and the others.

"Whoever heard of a trial without witnesses and documents?" the New York Democrat said. He asked Trump what he has to hide. "Witnesses and documents: fair trial. No witnesses and documents: cover-up."

Republicans countered that Democrats rushed to impeach and then delayed the process. Pelosi has yet to choose House impeachment managers for the trial, a politically sensitive next step, with many lawmakers vying to be candidates.

The House impeached Trump last month on charges that he abused the power of his office by pressuring Ukraine's new leader to investigate Democrats, using as leverage \$400 million in military assistance that is critical for the ally as it counters Russia at its border.

The funding for Ukraine was eventually released but only after Congress intervened. Trump insists he did nothing wrong.

\_\_\_Associated Press writers Darlene Superville, Matthew Daly and Padmananda Rama contributed to this report.

## US allies see Mideast strategy vacuum that Putin can fill

By LORI HINNANT Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — He was the leader on the world stage, visiting troops stationed in a far-flung war zone for the holidays, shoring up alliances and economic deals in the Mideast, requesting a meeting with the German chancellor in his capital, portraying himself and his country as reliable partners in an increasingly uncertain world.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has had a busy week, stepping into the aftermath of the American drone strike that killed Iranian Gen. Qassem Soleimani. Putin's visit Tuesday to Syria was emblematic of a reality that has been playing out in recent months: The U.S. strategic position in the Middle East is a mystery to many of its allies, and Russia is more than ready to fill any vacuum.

The shift has, in many ways, left U.S. allies in a bind — or turning to Russia themselves in search of a partner.

Putin was the first world leader French President Emmanuel Macron spoke with just after learning about the drone strike on Friday. German Chancellor Angela Merkel, meanwhile, is traveling to the Kremlin to discuss the crisis in the Mideast.

Canada, Denmark and Germany moved their troops in Iraq to safety, as did NATO, which has forces stationed there as part of the international coalition against the Islamic State group. There was no sign that any had been warned by the Trump administration of the drone strike. Coalition activities froze, and NATO's secretary-general described the killing as "a U.S. decision. It is not a decision taken by either the global coalition nor NATO. But all allies are concerned about Iran's destabilizing activities in the region."

The base targeted in northern Iraq was filled with coalition troops.

Putin offered an alternative to perceived chaos.

"Unfortunately, the situation in the region we are in tends to escalate. But Turkey and Russia are demonstrating different examples — examples of cooperation for the sake of our nations and all of Europe," he said Wednesday in Turkey.

Israel, which has criticized the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran, has been quiet about the drone strike aside from a brief statement of praise from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, seemingly disinclined to escalate an already volatile situation between its closest ally and its sworn enemy. Trump's first face to face meeting with an ally came Monday with the Saudi deputy defense minister, Khalid bin Salman. But he didn't confirm it until a day later, after the prince revealed it in a tweet.

"We discussed Trade, Military, Oil Prices, Security, and Stability in the Middle East!" Trump tweeted.

The American president spoke by phone with Macron on Sunday and with Merkel on Tuesday.

Putin's travel plans have continued apace. His visit to Russian troops for the Orthodox Christmas came unannounced, as was his meeting with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, who owes his continued rule to a combination of Russian and Iranian intervention. The message was unmistakable.

"Even NATO's Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg, always ready to play along with the U.S., found it necessary to distance himself from the killing of the Iranian general by saying that the U.S. made this decision without NATO's involvement. So Washington's attempts to ex post facto shore up their European allies failed," Alexei Pushkov, lawmaker in Russia's upper house of parliament, wrote in a tweet Tuesday.

He added, "It's emblematic that right in the middle of a pre-war crisis around Iran Merkel is heading to talks with Putin and not Trump. There is no point in talks with Trump."

Defense Secretary Mark Esper refused to say whether Trump had warned allies before the strike: "I'm not going to get into the details of our consultations."

Stoltenberg said several U.S. briefers explained the "rationale" behind the Trump administration's decision to kill Soleimani, but he declined to provide details or timing.

Trump campaigned on an "America First" policy and long has said he wants to reduce U.S. involvement in foreign wars in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan.

But his decision to bomb pro-Iranian militias and then to kill Iran's best-known general in a missile strike outside Baghdad's airport caught Middle Eastern and European allies unaware and confused. Since then,

the U.S. also has given off conflicting signals on its intentions to exit Iraq even while it deploys more troops immediately for protection against a possible Iranian response.

Amelie de Montchalin, a top French diplomat, told lawmakers Wednesday that France's solidarity was based solely on the international coalition against the Islamic State group.

"This was a decision made by the United States without consulting France for national security reasons, and it's therefore an American initiative and it's their sole responsibility," Montchalin said.

The administration has held up Soleimani's death as a master stroke that eliminated a region-wide troublemaker and saved American lives. Trump insisted that the United States would leave Iraq eventually, but that the Iraqi people wanted American soldiers to remain: "At some point we want to get out but this isn't the right point."

Putin's trip to Turkey was planned a month ago, even if its timing this week was fortuitous. And his visit to Damascus was simply a continuation of the Kremlin's growing reach in the Mideast and the diminishing sway of the United States, said Marc Pierini, a former EU ambassador to Turkey and a visiting scholar at Carnegie Europe. Merkel's trip to the Kremlin was scheduled late last month, but Iran has always been the main topic on the agenda.

"Putin doesn't need to do much. He's just watching. Everything you've seen for the past year or so, since December 2018 when Trump first announced the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Syria, everything has gone the Kremlin's way. There's not much to do, there's nothing to activate. The Russian policy in that region has been to talk to everybody, to capitalize on an American vacuum," Pierini said.

The December 2018 announcement was widely criticized as an American abandonment of its Kurdish allies, who fought alongside U.S. forces against the Islamic State group in northeast Syria. After U.S. forces withdrew, Turkey launched an offensive and the Kurds turned to Russia and the Syrian government for protection. It was a Russian deal with Turkey that ended the invasion. What little presence the U.S. military retains in Syria depends heavily upon logistical support from its bases in Iraq, and the outgoing Iraqi prime minister said Tuesday that American forces must leave.

"We have no exit but this," said Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi, "otherwise we are speeding toward confrontation."

Daria Litvinova contributed from Moscow, Sylvie Corbet in Paris, and Lolita Baldor and Kevin Freking from Washington.

## **Puerto Ricans left homeless after biggest quake in century**

**By DANICA COTO Associated Press**

GUANICA, Puerto Rico (AP) — Cars, cots and plastic chairs became temporary beds for hundreds of families who lost their homes in southwest Puerto Rico as a flurry of earthquakes struck the island, one of them the strongest in a century.

The magnitude 6.4 quake that struck before dawn on Tuesday killed one person, injured nine others and knocked out power across the U.S. territory. More than 250,000 Puerto Ricans remained without water on Wednesday and another half a million without power, which also affected telecommunications.

In addition, more than 1,000 people were staying in government shelters in the island's southwest region as U.S. President Donald Trump declared an emergency and Puerto Rico Gov. Wanda Vázquez activated the National Guard.

The hardest hit municipality was the southwest coastal town of Guánica. More than 200 people had taken shelter in a gymnasium after a quake on Monday, only for the latest shake to damage that structure — forcing them to sleep outside.

Among them was 80-year-old Lupita Martínez, who sat in the dusty parking lot with her 96-year-old husband by her side. He was sleeping in a makeshift bed, a dark blue coat covering him.

"There's no power. There's no water. There is nothing. This is horrible," Martínez said.

The couple was alone, lamenting that their caretaker had disappeared and was not answering their calls.

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Like many Puerto Ricans affected by the quake, they had children in the U.S. mainland who urged them to move there, at least until the earth stops shaking.

While officials said it was too early to estimate the total damage caused by the string of quakes that began the night of Dec. 28, they said hundreds of homes and businesses in the southwest region were damaged or destroyed. Just in Guánica, a town of roughly 15,000 people, nearly 150 homes were affected by the quake, along with three schools, including one three-story structure whose first two floors were completely flattened.

In Guánica itself, "We are confronting a crisis worse than Hurricane Maria," said Mayor Santos Seda, referring to the 2017 storm that devastated the island. "I am asking for empathy from the federal government."

He said officials believe the homes of 700 families in his municipality are close to collapsing.

Tuesday's quake was the strongest to hit Puerto Rico since October 1918, when a magnitude 7.3 quake struck near the island's northwest coast, unleashing a tsunami and killing 116 people.

More than 950 quakes and aftershocks have been recorded in the area of Tuesday night's event since Dec. 31, though most were too weak to be felt, according to U.S. Geologic Survey.

The USGS said that while it's virtually certain there will be many aftershocks in the next week, the chance of a magnitude 6 quake -- similar to Tuesday's -- or stronger is around 22 percent.

In Guánica, some people dragged mattresses outside their homes or set up small tents.

Authorities were trying to figure out where to shelter them all as they handed out blankets, food and water to families gathered at the gymnasium for a second night in a row. Many had their belongings in large garbage bags as they sat haphazardly on unstable plastic chairs. Some slept. Others cradled their dogs and many simply stared listlessly into the distance. One elderly man spent an entire day in his wheelchair, refusing to lay down on a cot.

Meanwhile, a handful of people slept in their cars, in chairs or on the ground as cots ran out.

"Now I'm afraid of the house," said 49-year-old Lourdes Guilbe as she wiped away tears and confided that she felt overwhelmed caring for the nearly dozen relatives gathered around her, including her more than 90-year-old grandfather, who sat in a wheelchair wearing green pajamas and socks.

Guilbe said her home is cracked and her daughter's home collapsed, so they weren't sure where they would live in upcoming days.

Psychologists met with Guilbe and dozens of other people affected by the earthquakes, going door-to-door on Monday in affected neighborhoods and then visiting people in shelters on Tuesday. Among them was Dayleen Ortiz, who set up a speaker on the roof of her car to blast uplifting salsa music and provided crayons and paper to children and urged adults to shake their fears.

"There is a lot of uncertainty," she said. "We don't know if this is going to continue."

One young girl tapped Ortiz on her leg repeatedly: "I want to play beautician," she said.

Ortiz dug behind cases of water bottles, chairs and blankets in her car and produced eight small new nail polishes and the girl smiled wide. It's a trick the psychologist learned to entertain children after Hurricane Maria hit, causing an estimated 2,975 deaths and more than \$100 billion in estimated damage.

Reconstruction has been slow, and the earthquake was the newest blow to an island where thousands of people have been living under a blue tarps since the hurricane and the power grid remains fragile.

"I can't stand this," said 64-year-old Zenaida Rodríguez as she sat under a tree and the ground again rumbled. "Did you feel that?"

## Fears of Sanders win growing among Democratic establishment

By **STEVE PEOPLES** and **ALEXANDRA JAFFE** Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Increasingly alarmed that Bernie Sanders could become their party's presidential nominee, establishment-minded Democrats are warning primary voters that the self-described democratic socialist would struggle to defeat President Donald Trump and hurt the party's chances in premier House, Senate and governors' races.

The urgent warnings come as Sanders shows new signs of strength on the ground in the first two states

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on the presidential primary calendar, Iowa and New Hampshire, backed by a dominant fundraising operation. The Vermont senator has largely escaped close scrutiny over the last year as his rivals doubted the quirky 78-year-old's ability to win the nomination. But less than a month before Iowa's kickoff caucuses, the doubters are being forced to take Sanders seriously.

Former Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, previously a senior aide to President Barack Obama, warned Democrats that Sanders' status as a democratic socialist and his unwavering support for "Medicare for All" won't play well among swing voters in the states that matter most in 2020.

"You need a candidate with a message that can help us win swing voters in battleground states," Emanuel said in an interview. "The degree of difficulty dramatically increases under a Bernie Sanders candidacy. It just gets a lot harder."

The increasingly vocal concerns are coming from a number of political veterans tied to the Obama administration and the 2020 field's moderate wing, including those backing former Vice President Joe Biden, former South Bend, Indiana, Mayor Pete Buttigieg and Colorado Sen. Michael Bennet.

In some ways, the criticism is not surprising.

Sanders has spent decades fighting to transform the nation's political and economic systems, creating a long list of political adversaries along the way. Many people connected to Hillary Clinton, for example, still blame Sanders for not working hard enough to support her after their long and bitter presidential primary feud in 2016. Some Democrats still accuse him of not being enough of a team player.

Sanders' chief strategist Jeff Weaver dismissed the growing criticism as a reflection of the strength of his candidacy.

He raised more money than any other Democratic candidate in the last quarter — virtually all of it from small-dollar donors — and he's considered a legitimate contender to win Iowa and New Hampshire next month.

"People in establishment Washington are terrified of Bernie Sanders," Weaver said. "The truth of the matter is their centrist tacking over the years has led us to the place where someone like Donald Trump can get elected."

Less than four weeks before Iowa's Feb. 3 caucuses, Sanders' critics are making a concerted effort to turn up the volume.

The ranks of the concerned include many Democrats tasked with preserving the party's majority in the House and expanding its minority in the Senate and governors' mansions across the country.

California Rep. Ami Bera, a leader in the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee's "frontline" program to protect vulnerable House members this fall, warned that a Sanders nomination would force more than 40 Democratic candidates in competitive districts — most of which were carried by Trump four years ago — "to run away from the nominee."

Specifically, Bera cited Sanders' signature health care plan, which would replace the nation's private insurance system with a government-run Medicare for All system.

"You have to take Sen. Sanders seriously," said Bera, who has endorsed Biden. "Those are going to be tough positions for our members to run on."

Montana Sen. Jon Tester, who led the Senate Democrats' campaign arm the last time Trump was on the ballot, warned that Republicans "are really good at making elections about who's at the top of the ticket."

"I come from a state that's pretty damn red. There is no doubt that having 'socialist' ahead of 'Democrat' is not a positive thing in the state of Montana," Tester, who has not endorsed any 2020 candidate, said of Sanders. "He can overcome that, but I think it's something he's going to have to do."

Several Sanders critics noted that he has largely escaped intense scrutiny throughout the campaign, in part because some assumed that Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, another progressive firebrand, was a stronger candidate who would cannibalize his support. With Warren's candidacy struggling to maintain momentum, however, those assumptions are now being questioned.

"He has now emerged as somebody who's got the ability to win the nomination," said former Obama aide Ben LaBolt, who isn't aligned with any 2020 campaign but opposes Sanders.

LaBolt seized on what he called Sanders' short list of accomplishments over three decades in Congress.

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Over that time, the senator wrote just a handful of bills that ultimately became law.

"He's more concerned about shouting in the wilderness to make an ideological point than getting things done," said LaBolt, whose communications firm has done work for the health insurance industry's push to expand Obama's health care law, the Affordable Care Act, at the expense of Sanders' preferred Medicare for All plan.

Sanders' camp insists he's effected meaningful change in and out of Washington, pointing to accomplishments that include a resolution he authored last year to oppose U.S. involvement in the conflict in Yemen, which passed both chambers of Congress but was vetoed by Trump; working with former Sen. John McCain of Arizona to shape a sweeping veterans bill that became law in 2014; and helping to secure billions of dollars for community health centers as part of the 2009 Affordable Care Act.

Sanders is also facing lingering questions about his age, having suffered a heart attack late last year. He is the oldest candidate in the race, and, if elected, he would be the oldest president in U.S. history.

Former Colorado Sen. Gary Hart, who is supporting Bennet's underdog bid, was reluctant to single out any of the candidates for criticism. But he said Sanders wouldn't be the strongest nominee and suggested it was fair to take Sanders' age into account.

"I think health has become an issue, whether we like it or not," Hart, 83, said in an interview. "I'm older than Sen. Sanders, so I can say things like that. I think it's time for generational change."

Marshall Matz, who was a policy adviser for Sen. George McGovern's failed 1972 bid for president, was more direct in his warning for Democrats. If they nominate Sanders, he said, the party should expect the same landslide loss that McGovern suffered decades ago to President Richard Nixon.

"I think he would not just lose but would lose badly — and I don't think the country can afford that," Matz said, noting that McGovern generated large crowds and enthusiasm just as Sanders has.

Indeed, on the ground in Iowa, there are signs that Sanders is in a strong position as caucus day approaches.

Josh Kennedy, a 36-year-old Sanders supporter from West Branch, Iowa, said he had previously been curious about Warren but hadn't been impressed by her on the campaign trail. He's back on board with Sanders.

"You know exactly what you get with him," Kennedy said.

Sanders drew consistently large crowds as he crisscrossed the state over the New Year holiday. His campaign said he spoke to nearly 6,000 supporters across 16 events, with more than 1,300 people gathered for a Des Moines party on New Year's Eve.

The supporters turned out in rural areas as well.

Tracy Freese, chair of the Grundy County Democratic Party and a Sanders supporter, said she counted around 250 people at the Grundy Center Community Hall for Sanders last weekend, a number she called "incredible."

"To put that many people in a room, in a small red county, for Bernie was crazy on a Saturday," she said.

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Peoples reported from New York.

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Catch up on the 2020 election campaign with AP experts on our weekly politics podcast, "Ground Game."

## Fugitive tycoon Ghosn: Japan arrest was a plot

By ZEINA KARAM and SARAH EL DEEB Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Nissan's fugitive ex-boss, Carlos Ghosn, said Wednesday that his arrest in Japan, from which he escaped last month, was a plot against him and described his detention conditions as a "travesty" against human rights.

In his first appearance since his daring and improbable escape from Japan, Ghosn said during a 2 1/2-hour news conference in Beirut that the decision to flee "was the most difficult of my life."

He was due to stand trial for alleged financial misconduct at the automaker and on Wednesday again

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dismissed all allegations against him as untrue.

With big gestures and a five-part slide presentation projected behind him, Ghosn brought his case to global media and said that his thought before fleeing Japan was: "You are going to die in Japan or you are going to get out."

He quickly added, however, that he would not address the details of his escape, which has perplexed and embarrassed Japanese authorities.

Media reports have said that he left his Tokyo residence alone, skipping out on his \$14 million bail despite supposedly rigorous surveillance. He met two men at a hotel, and then took a bullet train to Osaka before boarding a private jet, hidden inside a musical equipment case. He flew to Istanbul and was then transferred onto another plane bound for Beirut, where he arrived Dec. 30.

Ghosn portrayed his arrest as a plot linked to a decline in the financial performance of Nissan. Ghosn had been in favor of merging Nissan with industry ally Renault, of which he was also chairman.

"Unfortunately there was no trust. And some of our Japanese friends thought that the only way to get rid of Renault in Nissan is to get rid of me," he told a room packed with journalists.

"I should never have been arrested in the first place," he said. "I'm not above the law and I welcome the opportunity for the truth to come out and have my name cleared."

In a swift reply, the Tokyo public prosecutor's office said: "Defendant Ghosn's allegations that the prosecution was conspired by Nissan and Public Prosecutors Office is categorically false and completely contrary to fact."

Ghosn said he would be ready to stand trial "anywhere where I think I can have a fair trial." He declined to say what country that might be.

Lebanon last week received an Interpol-issued wanted notice — a non-binding request to law enforcement agencies worldwide that they locate and provisionally arrest a fugitive.

Lebanon and Japan do not have an extradition treaty, and the Interpol notice does not require Lebanon to arrest him. Lebanese authorities have said Ghosn entered the country on a legal passport, casting doubt on the possibility they would hand him over to Japan.

At the request of the Japanese government, Interpol published the notice on its website Wednesday as Ghosn was giving his news conference. The notice previously was only sent to Interpol's member governments but not shared with the public.

Ghosn, who is Lebanese and also holds French and Brazilian passports, was to have gone on trial in Tokyo in April. In earlier statements, he has said he fled to avoid "political persecution" by a "rigged Japanese justice system." He also said that he alone organized his departure from Japan and that his wife, Carole, played no role.

On Tuesday, Tokyo prosecutors obtained an arrest warrant for Carole Ghosn on suspicion of perjury. That charge is not related to her husband's escape. Lebanon's justice minister said Tuesday that Lebanon has not received any request related to that warrant.

Japanese justice officials acknowledge that it's unclear whether the Ghosns can be brought back to Japan to face charges.

Ghosn's former employer, Nissan Motor Co., said it was still pursuing legal action against him despite his escape, adding that Ghosn engaged in serious misconduct while leading the Nissan-Renault-Mitsubishi alliance. Ghosn denies all the charges.

In France, meanwhile, Renault alerted French authorities after a company investigation found that Ghosn personally benefited from "an exchange worth 50,000 euros in the framework of a philanthropic accord signed with the Chateau of Versailles." Prosecutors are investigating but Ghosn is not charged with any wrongdoing in France.

Renault said in June that an internal audit with partner Nissan found 11 million euros (\$12 million) in questionable expenses at their Dutch-based holding linked to Ghosn. The two car makers recommended legal action in the Netherlands, where the alliance is based, and ordering Ghosn himself to reimburse the company for some of the expenses.

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Union members at Renault, which has seen its market value tumble over the past year, were unimpressed by Ghosn's performance Wednesday, saying "he did not produce any factual, verifiable evidence for his defense."

"The first people he must answer to are the Renault workers. ... What the Renault workers really ask for today is a real industrial project, an industrial project for the entire alliance, for Renault, Nissan and Mitsubishi," said union member Jean-Francois Pibouleau.

Earlier in the day, Tokyo prosecutors raided a Japanese lawyer's office that Ghosn had visited regularly before he fled. Japanese media reports said prosecutors had likely seized the computer to track down how Ghosn escaped and who might have helped him.

An hour before Wednesday's news conference, a Lebanese prosecutor said Ghosn will be summoned "in the coming hours" over a visit to Israel more than 10 years ago, according to the state-run National News Agency.

Two Lebanese lawyers had submitted a report to the Public Prosecutor's Office against Ghosn last week, saying he violated Lebanese law by visiting Israel. The two neighboring countries are technically in a state of war. Prosecutor Ghassan Khoury met with the two lawyers who filed the case on Wednesday and asked them to bring additional evidence, adding he would summon Ghosn in the coming hours. Ghosn visited Israel in 2008 for business.

\_\_\_ Associated Press writer Angela Charlton in Paris contributed to this report.

## 10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press undefined

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

1. IRAN ATTACKS US BASES IN IRAQ WITH MISSILES It was Iran's most brazen assault on America since the 1979 seizing of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran, and Iranian state TV says it was in revenge for the U.S. killing of Gen. Qassem Soleimani.

2. HIGH-STAKES DECISION LOOMS FOR TRUMP The president huddled with his national security advisers to weigh a response to Iran's missile attack and says he will address the nation this morning.

3. UKRAINIAN AIRPLANE CRASHES NEAR IRAN'S CAPITAL Iranian officials suspect a mechanical issue brought down the Boeing 737-800 aircraft, killing all 176 on board. Ukrainian officials initially agreed, but later backed away and declined to offer a cause.

4. COLORADO SENATOR CAUGHT IN MIDDLE OF IMPEACHMENT FIGHT But there are no signs that Republican Cory Gardner wants to anger his conservative base on impeachment, even in a Democratic-trending state.

5. DEMOCRATIC ESTABLISHMENT WARY OF SANDERS' SURGE The warnings come as the Vermont senator shows new signs of strength in the first two states on the presidential primary calendar, backed by a dominant fundraising performance.

6. GHOSN SET FOR 1st PUBLIC APPEARANCE AFTER ESCAPE The disgraced former chairman of Nissan is expected to speak to reporters in Beirut, more than a week after his dramatic escape from Japan ahead of his trial for alleged financial misconduct.

7. FIREPROOF HOMES NO MATCH FOR AUSTRALIAN WILDFIRES Some homes built with quarter-inch-thick reinforced glass, steel framing and rock retaining walls succumbed to flames that climbed as high as a 15-story building.

8. 'A CRISIS WORSE THAN HURRICANE MARIA' Hundreds of Puerto Ricans are homeless in the southwestern part of the U.S. territory after a flurry of earthquakes -- one of them the strongest in a century.

9. INVITATION TO IVANKA TRUMP DRAWS BACKLASH AT BIG TECH SHOW The nation's largest consumer electronics show hosted the U.S. president's daughter as a keynote speaker -- a choice that drew scorn from many women in technology.

10. NUMBERS GRIM FOR BLACK COACHES IN NFL Despite the Rooney Rule that encourages the hiring of minority candidates, just three head coaches are black, down from a peak of eight just a few years ago.

## Cancer group finds biggest one-year drop in U.S. death rate

By MIKE STOBBE AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Researchers on Wednesday reported the largest-ever one-year decline in the U.S. cancer death rate, a drop they credited to advances in lung-tumor treatments.

The overall cancer death rate has been falling about 1.5% a year since 1991. It fell 2.2% from 2016 to 2017, according to the new American Cancer Society report. That's the largest drop ever seen in national cancer statistics going back to 1930, said Rebecca Siegel, the lead author.

"It's absolutely driven by lung cancer," which accounts for about a quarter of all cancer deaths, she said. Take lung cancer out of the mix, and the 2017 rate drop is 1.4%, she added.

Government researchers previously reported a slightly lower drop in the cancer death rate for the same period. But the Cancer Society calculates the death rate differently, and on Wednesday said the decline was larger — and record-setting.

Most lung cancer cases are tied to smoking, and decades of declining smoking rates led to falling rates of lung cancer illnesses and deaths.

But the drop in deaths seems to have been accelerated by recent lung cancer treatment advances, Siegel said.

Experts mainly credit advances in treatment. Topping the list are refinements in surgery, better diagnostic scanning, and more precise use of radiation.

They also celebrate the impact of newer drugs. Genetic testing can now identify specific cancer cell mutations, which allow more targeted therapy using newer pharmaceuticals that are a step beyond traditional chemotherapy.

"It's an exciting time," said Dr. Jyoti Patel, a Northwestern University lung cancer expert.

Even patients with late-stage cancers are surviving for several years — rather than months — after treatment starts, she said. "That was very, very uncommon a decade ago," she said.

New immunotherapy drugs could accelerate the death rate decline, Patel said.

Cancer Society researchers also found:

- The overall cancer death rate fell by nearly 30% from 1991 through 2017.
- Death rates from one type of skin cancer dropped even more dramatically than lung cancer — falling 7% a year recently. That decline in melanoma patients is attributed to drugs that came on the market about nine years ago.
- Declines in the death rates from prostate, breast and colon cancer are slowing, for a range of reasons.
- The rising liver cancer death rate seems to have leveled off somewhat. That may be related to better treatment of hepatitis C infections, which are tied to about 25% of liver cancer cases, Siegel said.

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## Patients push limits for clues to chronic fatigue syndrome

By LAURAN NEERGAARD AP Medical Writer

BETHESDA, Md. (AP) — Researchers hooked Zach Ault to medical monitors as he slowly climbed onto a gym bike. An invisible disease is sidelining this once avid athlete and he knew the simple exercise would wipe him out -- but Ault was pedaling for science.

Chronic fatigue syndrome is one of medicine's most vexing mysteries. Now doctors at the National Institutes of Health are using volunteers like Ault for a unique study that pushes their limits in search of what's stealing all their energy.

"I've tried to exercise my way out of this multiple times and I've put myself in deeper pits every time," said Ault, 36, of Paducah, Kentucky, as he began a nearly two-week stint at the research-only hospital outside the nation's capital.

"Chronic fatigue is kind of like they took the stopper out of the energy reserve tank," and no amount of

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sleep replenishes it, he said.

Up to 2.5 million Americans are estimated to have what is known officially as ME/CFS -- it stands for "myalgic encephalomyelitis/chronic fatigue syndrome." Its hallmark is profound fatigue, lasting more than six months, that's made even worse by any type of exertion. Among other symptoms, patients also tend to have difficulty staying upright or cognitive trouble often described as a "brain fog."

Many go undiagnosed, misdiagnosed or dismissed by skeptical doctors. Decades after it was first recognized, scientists don't know what causes it. There are no approved treatments, or even tests to help diagnosis -- and no way to predict who will recover and who will have a severe case that leaves them debilitated, even bed-bound, for years.

"The ignorance about the condition just vastly dwarfs what we know about it," said Dr. Walter Koroshetz, director of NIH's National Institute for Neurological Disorders and Stroke, which is leading the research.

The NIH has more than doubled funding -- to more than \$14 million -- for scientists around the country to unravel the biology of ME/CFS since 2015, when the influential Institute of Medicine decried "a paucity of research."

Part of the trouble is that varied symptoms make it hard to compare patients. A patient advocacy group called Solve ME/CFS Initiative is preparing to open a registry where patients can send in medical information and blood and saliva samples to help scientists expand research.

And illustrating the desperation for answers, nearly 500 patients have called seeking to enroll in NIH's own study that is putting a few dozen under the microscope, with a barrage of sophisticated tests few hospitals can offer under one roof.

Like many such patients, Ault's disease struck following a run-of-the-mill infection in 2017. He'd been training for a half-marathon but after a little time off to recover, he tried to resume his runs and couldn't. His diagnosis came after months of tests for other explanations.

"His body had literally hijacked him and it wasn't going to allow him to push through," said Anne Ault, his wife.

Ault, a father of three, was missing his kids' sporting and school activities, even his nightly wrestle with his young son. He had to cut back his job, in the ministry, to half-days. When 16 hours of sleep a day made no difference, his wife, a pharmacist, hunted research opportunities.

Ault fit the bill for the NIH study, which is focusing on people who came down with the disease after an infection, of any sort, within five years. That initial infection is long gone but maybe, the body's normal reactions to illness went into a destructive tailspin.

"You're really capturing the disease at a specific point in time," in its crucial early stages, said Sadie Whittaker, scientific director for the Solve ME/CFS Initiative. "No one has studied such a very specific population to such depth before."

There are some clues. Earlier studies have found brain inflammation in patients, and nervous system abnormalities that might explain why they feel worse upright than lying down. The immune system seems to be on chronic alert. Then there's the energy drain. Just last month, Cornell University researchers reported that patients' key immune cells don't make energy properly.

The NIH study is looking for more clues. It starts with a week-plus hospitalization for blood and genetic tests, brain scans, a spinal tap, sleep tests, a check of gut bacteria. Scientists pore over the results before deciding who to invite back for a longer and more rigorous visit.

"Go as far as you can, work as hard as you can," NIH physical therapist Bart Drinkard told Ault as he climbed onto the exercise bike.

Cells, in particular little factories inside cells called mitochondria, use oxygen and nutrients to create energy. While Ault pedals, scientists can measure how his leg muscles use oxygen, and see if that's different than in a healthy person.

Afterward, doctors fit a special cap on Ault to track electrical activity in his brain, and then sent him to spend the night in an air-tight chamber. Pipes draw out the room's air for analysis. How much oxygen is used and carbon dioxide is produced tells how much energy Ault is using, minute by minute.

"We can calculate every molecule. It's the cleanest air we have in the hospital," said NIH's Kong Chen, a metabolism specialist. "We're figuring out how his body adjusts to an exercise load, or a stress load."

Researchers are clear: The study doesn't offer any treatments, although the hope is to find targets to eventually develop some. But Ault says it did help to learn about the disease and tricks to conserve his energy and pace himself "so I can try to stay as healthy as possible without such bad consequences."

"It's hard not knowing if I'm going to recover, if or when," he said. Until research has an answer, he'll "hope for the best but live for right now."

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.

## Philippines orders evacuation of Filipinos from Iraq, Iran

By JIM GOMEZ Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — The Philippine government has ordered the mandatory evacuation of Filipino workers from Iraq and Iran and is sending a coast guard vessel to the Middle East to ferry its citizens to safety in case hostilities between the United States and Iran worsen, officials said Wednesday.

The Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila said the government has raised the alert level in Iraq to the highest level, requiring Filipinos to leave the country due to escalating security risks. Filipinos can leave on their own or be escorted out with the help of their employers or the Philippine government, officials said.

Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III said Filipino workers should also move out of Iran and Lebanon, adding that the government was indefinitely banning Filipino workers from traveling to the three countries amid fears of more hostilities.

The Philippines, one of the world's leading labor providers, would face a gargantuan crisis if hostilities between the U.S. and Iran escalate and embroil other Middle Eastern countries that host large numbers of Filipino workers, such as Israel and Saudi Arabia.

"It will be a nightmare, but we are not helpless," Bello said at a news conference in Manila.

Other Asian nations with large populations of expatriate labor may weigh similar decisions after Iran fired missiles at two Iraqi bases housing U.S. forces in a major escalation of hostilities. The strikes were retaliation for last week's killing of Iran's top general in a U.S. drone attack in Baghdad.

India, which has a large number of workers in the Middle East, advised its citizens to avoid non-essential travel to Iraq. It also urged its nationals living in Iraq to remain alert and avoid travel within the country.

There are an estimated 15,000-17,000 Indians now in Iraq, mostly in the Kurdistan region, Basra, Najaf and Karbala. About 30,000-40,000 Indians visit Baghdad, Karbala, Najaf and Samarra each year for pilgrimages.

Philippine officials have reported differing numbers of Filipinos in Iraq and Iran. The problem has been compounded by the huge numbers of Filipinos who have entered the countries illegally and avoided reporting their presence to Philippine Embassy officials.

Department of Labor records show that 2,191 Filipinos work in Iraq, some in U.S. facilities, while more than 1,180 others are based in Iran, including Filipino women married to Iranians.

There could be more than 2.1 million Filipinos across the Middle East, including many illegal workers, Bello said.

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte and top officials have been holding emergency meetings since the weekend to discuss evacuation plans.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said the plans include the possible deployment of one battalion each from the army and marines to secure and evacuate Filipinos in case of a major flareup of violence anywhere. Navy ships and three air force cargo aircraft were also being readied for possible deployment, the military said.

Duterte said late Tuesday that he has deployed a special envoy to get assurance from the leaders of Iraq and Iran that Filipinos would be spared in case of any major outbreak of violence.

"Just to get the assurance that my countrymen will have the egress just in case hell breaks loose," Duterte told reporters.

While evacuation plans were being finalized, Manila's coast guard said a new patrol vessel en route to the Philippines from France has instead been ordered to head to the Middle East in case Filipino workers need to be immediately extricated from any danger. The vessel can ferry up to 500 people at a time.

"In case of conflict, overseas Filipino workers will be brought to safer ports where they may be airlifted, as the need arises," the coast guard said, adding that an initial plan was for the Philippine vessel to temporarily stand by in Oman or Dubai.

About a tenth of the Philippines' more than 100 million people have worked abroad for decades, mostly as household help, construction workers, sailors and professionals, to escape grinding poverty and unemployment at home. They are hailed as heroes for sending huge incomes that keep Manila's economy afloat. Many have risked staying in Middle Eastern nations, where they face abuse and even death and often get caught up in violent turmoil, to provide for impoverished families back home.

## Family's fortress no match for rapacious Australian fires

By NICK PERRY Associated Press

BALMORAL, Australia (AP) — With flames climbing as high as a 15-story building and menacing his supposedly fireproof home on three sides, Justin Kam ran to the laundry room and opened the door. Inside was fire.

That's not supposed to happen, he thought.

It was clear his family's fortress had been breached and they were in mortal danger and needed to get out.

"Once the fire had penetrated the structure, that was the signal: Time to get out. You can't save it," he said. "Staying in any longer and we really would've been a statistic."

They escaped — just barely — but found themselves among 2,000 homeowners whose houses have burned down during what has been a catastrophic fire season Down Under, full of apocalyptic images that have focused the world's attention on climate change.

The blazes have killed at least 25 people, scorched an area twice the size of the U.S. state of Maryland and killed hundreds of millions of animals and birds. The fires are expected to flare up later this week when temperatures rise.

Kam and his wife, Helena Wong, had built their home in the New South Wales town of Balmoral with steel framing, reinforced glass so thick you would need a sledgehammer to break it and retaining walls made of rock, all to protect them from Australia's notorious wildfires.

Their defenses turned out to be no match for a rapacious fire so hot it evaporated their outdoor furniture, leaving behind ghostly imprints reminiscent of those after the atomic bombing of Hiroshima.

Justin and Helena had moved to their sleepy village of 400 people 20 years ago and thought they had found their slice of paradise. Their house overlooks a valley filled with eucalyptus trees. Kangaroos hop along their veranda, and a wombat dug a burrow under their deck. Helena began breeding rare chickens.

They knew the fires would come, and had successfully fought two before.

On Dec. 21, Justin was ready, watching the progress of the flames from his roof with binoculars. The couple and their 16-year-old son, Gabriel, who was on Christmas break from school, had been raking and wetting down the areas around the house. They had filled buckets, emptied gas cylinders, put on their smoke masks and left two vehicles running in the driveway, just in case.

But this fire was like nothing they had ever seen. A wall of flame came up the valley. A fireball rose 60 meters (200 feet) into the sky. The flames were so hot they were swirling, and not only moving with the wind, but also against it.

The family raced to douse embers on one side of the house only to find the flames approaching from a different direction.

"It operated like a military tactician," Justin said. "It would hit you from the front, and while you're oc-

cupied with that, it would turn around and hit you from the flanks.”

The fire killed a half-dozen lizards that took refuge in a pot of water and all of Helena’s chickens. When the flames burst into the house, they melted a champagne bottle, fusing it with some buckled porcelain and a sushi knife.

As the family members ran from their house, Helena’s shoes melted and embers landed on her shoulders. She believes they made it out by no more than 30 seconds. The back of their car had melted, so they jumped into their truck and drove up their driveway to the end of their street.

But there was nowhere to go from there. They were surrounded by flames.

After what might have been five minutes or 10, the fire front moved on and they drove to the fire station, where others were taking shelter.

Among them was Rosemary Doyle, whose own house had burned down. The fire station itself was under threat, and people began to pray, even the atheists among them. The power went out, and Doyle crawled out from the bathroom, thinking: Not today. Not yet. It’s not my time.

On Tuesday, Brendon O’Connor, the town’s volunteer fire captain, said that while the fire had moved on from Balmoral, where it burned down about 25 homes, he doesn’t know when it will stop.

“Either when the good Lord opens up the heavens and gives us weeks of rain, or it burns to the coastline,” he said. “They’re really the options. It really is too large to put out. Anything that we’re doing isn’t working.”

O’Connor on Tuesday attended the funeral for one of two volunteer firefighters killed by a falling tree while driving to Balmoral to help battle the blaze.

When Justin and Helena returned to their burned-out home, they found a piece of pink chalk and used it to write on their wall, “We’ll be back!”

But it will be a long struggle. They are finding it difficult to navigate through all the red tape, and they didn’t have insurance on their house. Justin, a woodworker who built all the family’s furniture, said that was because they had other financial priorities, such as school fees and looking after aging relatives.

“We had our plan in place, but still, it spanked us like little naughty children,” Justin said. “That’s Mother Nature for you.”

## Australian PM’s leadership criticized during wildfire crisis

By ROD McGUIRK Associated Press

CANBERRA, Australia (AP) — As his country burned, Australia’s prime minister was cursed and jeered out of a town, called an “idiot,” a “moron” and worse, and skewered at home and abroad for his dismissive response toward climate change.

Australia’s deadly wildfires have proven to be not just a crisis for the country, but a crisis for the country’s prime minister — one so grave that some have questioned whether his leadership can survive it.

The outpouring of frustration and rage from many Australians toward Prime Minister Scott Morrison’s lethargic wildfire response has been likened to the furious reaction of Americans toward President George W. Bush over his clumsy response to Hurricane Katrina. But whether Morrison’s missteps put him at risk of being ousted from power in Australia’s notoriously volatile government remains to be seen.

“I think it’s done lasting damage to his credibility as a leader that is going to hound him into the future,” said Sydney University political scientist Stewart Jackson. “The question’s going to be: Can Morrison recover from this?”

Morrison’s blunders began early in the disaster, which has so far killed at least 26 people and destroyed 2,000 homes. He came under withering criticism for secretly taking a family vacation to Hawaii last month as his hometown of Sydney was choking on smoke that wafted from distant incinerated eucalyptus forests.

His absence fueled criticism that his conservative government was ignoring the impacts of climate change at the end of a record hot and dry year in Australia. Weeks earlier, Australia was accused at a United Nations climate conference in Madrid of exploiting an accounting loophole to achieve its greenhouse gas reduction targets and of thwarting an international agreement on carbon markets.

The Hawaii vacation also created the appearance of Morrison fleeing the smoke and flames that thou-

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sands of ordinary Australians who bravely volunteer as firefighters were running toward. Those volunteers include high-profile Sydney fire truck driver Tony Abbott, a former prime minister whom Morrison as a power broker in their Liberal Party helped oust in 2015.

Protesters, outraged at Morrison's absence during the crisis and his inaction on climate change, surrounded his home in Sydney. Memes mocking the prime minister flooded social media. A local retailer began selling Hawaiian shirts bearing Morrison's face, with proceeds going toward firefighting efforts.

Under siege, Morrison announced he was cutting short his vacation to lead the government after two volunteer firefighters died protecting neighbors' homes. But the damage was done.

Jackson likened the Hawaii fiasco to Bush's decision to continue his vacation after Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans in 2005. The former U.S. president's reputation was wounded by his failure to respond faster.

"Bush was at least in the country, albeit flying over looking out the window," Jackson said, referring to an enduring image of the president surveying the damage in New Orleans far below Air Force One.

"Being overseas didn't help" Morrison, Jackson added.

Back from Hawaii, criticism of Morrison's clumsy leadership continued.

He was seen on video offering to shake the hand of a reluctant woman in the all-but-destroyed New South Wales township of Cobargo. When she did not take his hand, he used his left hand to draw her right hand forward and shook it with his right, leaving many Australians with the impression that all he cared about was a photo opportunity.

"You won't be getting any votes down here!" one local later shouted at him. "You are out!"

Morrison brushed off abuse by locals who complained of a lack of government support, arguing the insults were not meant as personal attacks.

"I don't take it personally," Morrison told reporters later. "I just see it as a sense of frustration and hurt and loss and anger that is out there about what is the ferocity of these natural disasters."

Critics argue he should take some of the feedback to heart.

His Liberal Party subsequently reacted to complaints of inaction by releasing a 50-second ad on social media that highlighted government contributions of firefighting assets and funding while showing Morrison inspecting fire-ravaged communities. But the ad was initially linked to the party website that prominently invited political donations. The link was removed after public outrage that the party would financially exploit the disaster.

Criticism of Morrison is not limited to Australia; international celebrities have also lobbed insults at him.

"Pity the poor #Australians, their country ablaze, and their rotten @ScottMorrisonMP saying, "This is not the time to talk about Climate Change. We have to grow our economy." What an idiot," entertainer Bette Midler tweeted. "What good is an economy in an uninhabitable country?"

Morrison accepts that human-caused climate change has worsened Australia's fire risk by extending wildfire seasons, increasing average temperatures and drying the landscape.

But during an interview on British television earlier this week, junior government lawmaker Craig Kelly ruled out any link between the wildfires and climate change, instead blaming the fires on drought and a lack of controlled burning to reduce the amount of fuel in the countryside. Back in Australia, Kelly's comments prompted even more anger, and Jackson said they created an impression that the government isn't listening to the prime minister.

The potential political ramifications for Morrison are severe. None of his four immediate predecessors, including Abbott, managed to serve a full term, being either elected out of office or replaced by their own parties in response to poor opinion polling.

Morrison promised before his government was reelected with a narrow majority in May to serve as prime minister for the full three-year term. And his party tightened its rules after voters voiced frustration that leaders were being chosen internally rather than in elections. But while the government has promised stable leadership, it could easily relax party rules again to oust Morrison if he became a political liability.

Jackson said that even if Morrison survives as leader, he faced hostility over his recent performance from unaligned legislators in the Senate, where the government does not hold the majority of seats needed

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to pass legislation.

Andrew Hughes, an Australian National University expert on marketing and politics, said Morrison regained some lost political ground on Monday by committing an extra 2 billion Australian dollars (\$1.4 billion) toward the fire recovery effort.

"He's been damaged for sure. Whether he's been permanently damaged to the point that it might actually hurt the party and his brand going forward — he can rebuild and he can repair the damage to his brand," Hughes said. "It is possible. But he'll need to shift that narrative away from how he was during these fires, when he seemed to be either absent or not engaged or not connected enough or not across the issues enough and not showing enough leadership."

## Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Jan. 8, the eighth day of 2020. There are 358 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 8, 1815, the last major engagement of the War of 1812 came to an end as U.S. forces defeated the British in the Battle of New Orleans, not having gotten word of the signing of a peace treaty.

On this date:

In 1918, President Woodrow Wilson outlined his Fourteen Points for lasting peace after World War I. Mississippi became the first state to ratify the 18th Amendment to the Constitution, which established Prohibition.

In 1935, rock-and-roll legend Elvis Presley was born in Tupelo, Mississippi.

In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson, in his State of the Union address, declared an "unconditional war on poverty in America."

In 1968, the Otis Redding single "(Sittin' On) The Dock of the Bay" was released on the Volt label almost a month after the singer's death in a plane crash.

In 1973, the Paris peace talks between the United States and North Vietnam resumed.

In 1982, American Telephone and Telegraph settled the Justice Department's antitrust lawsuit against it by agreeing to divest itself of the 22 Bell System companies.

In 1987, for the first time, the Dow Jones industrial average closed above 2,000, ending the day at 2,002.25.

In 1998, Ramzi Yousef (RAHM'-zee YOO'-sef), the mastermind of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, was sentenced in New York to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

In 2004, A U.S. Black Hawk medivac helicopter crashed near Fallujah, Iraq, killing all nine soldiers aboard.

In 2006, the first funerals were held in West Virginia for the 12 miners who'd died in the Sago (SAY'-goh) Mine disaster six days earlier.

In 2008, Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton powered to victory in New Hampshire's 2008 Democratic primary in a startling upset, defeating Sen. Barack Obama and resurrecting her bid for the White House; Sen. John McCain defeated his Republican rivals to move back into contention for the GOP nomination.

In 2011, U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, D-Ariz., was shot and critically wounded when a gunman opened fire as the congresswoman met with constituents in Tucson; six people were killed, 12 others also injured. (Gunman Jared Lee Loughner (LAWF'-nur) was sentenced in November 2012 to seven consecutive life sentences, plus 140 years.)

Ten years ago: Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab (OO'-mahr fah-ROOK' ahb-DOOL'-moo-TAH'-lahb), accused of trying to blow up a U.S. airliner on Christmas, appeared in federal court in Detroit; the judge entered a not-guilty plea on his behalf. (Abdulmutallab eventually pleaded guilty and is serving a life prison term.) Vice President Joe Biden's mother, Jean Biden, died in Wilmington, Delaware, at age 92.

Five years ago: Three dissidents were abruptly released in what a leading human rights advocate said was part of Cuba's deal with Washington to release 53 members of the island's political opposition. Sen.

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Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., a tenacious liberal whose election to the Senate in 1992 heralded a new era for women at the upper reaches of political power, announced she would not seek re-election. During a daylong meeting at the Denver airport, U.S. Olympic Committee board members chose Boston over Los Angeles, San Francisco and Washington, to bid for the 2024 Summer Olympics. Gospel singer Andrae Crouch, 72, died in Los Angeles.

One year ago: In a somber televised address, President Donald Trump urged congressional Democrats to fund his border wall and end the stalemate that had shut down much of the government for 18 days; the speech offered little in the way of concessions. Mayor Bill de Blasio said New York City would spend up to \$100 million per year to expand health care coverage to people without health insurance, including immigrants in the country illegally.

Today's Birthdays: Actor-comedian Larry Storch is 97. CBS newsman Charles Osgood is 87. Singer Shirley Bassey is 83. Game show host Bob Eubanks is 82. Country-gospel singer Cristy Lane is 80. Rhythm-and-blues singer Anthony Gourdin (Little Anthony and the Imperials) is 79. Actress Yvette Mimieux is 78. Singer Juanita Cowart Motley (The Marvelettes) is 76. Actress Kathleen Noone is 75. Rock musician Robby Krieger (The Doors) is 74. Movie director John McTiernan is 69. Actress Harriet Sansom Harris is 65. Actor Ron Cephas Jones is 63. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos is 62. Singer-songwriter Ron Sexsmith is 56. Actress Michelle Forbes is 55. Actress Maria Pitillo (pih-TIHL'-loh) is 54. Singer R. Kelly is 53. Rock musician Jeff Abercrombie (Fuel) is 51. Actress Ami Dolenz is 51. Reggae singer Sean Paul is 47. Actor Donnell Turner is 47. Country singer Tift Merritt is 45. Actress-rock singer Jenny Lewis is 44. Actress Amber Benson is 43. Actor Scott Whyte is 42. Singer-songwriter Erin McCarley is 41. Actress Sarah Polley is 41. Actress Rachel Nichols is 40. Actress Gaby Hoffman is 38. Rock musician Disashi Lumumbo-Kasongo (dih-SAH'-shee LUHM'-uhm-boh kuh-SAHN'-goh) (Gym Class Heroes) is 37. Actress Cynthia Erivo is 33. Actor Freddie Stroma is 33.

Thought for Today: "Anxiety never yet successfully bridged over any chasm." — Giovanni Ruffini, Italian writer (1807-1881).

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