

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Saturday, Feb. 8

Chamberlain will be coming to Groton for a boys' basketball game. The C game will begin at 1:30 with the junior varsity around 2:45 p.m. and the varsity around 4:15 p.m. This is a make-up game for the game lost from the Pentagon.

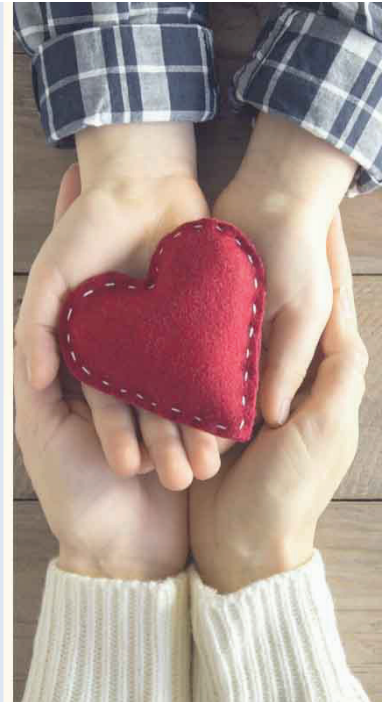
## Saturday, Feb. 1, 2020

**Boys NEC-DAK12 Clash at Madison**  
**6:30 p.m.: Groton Area vs. SF Christian**

Chicken Soup  
for the Soul

"DARKNESS  
CANNOT DRIVE  
OUT DARKNESS:  
ONLY LIGHT  
CAN DO THAT.  
HATE CANNOT  
DRIVE OUT  
HATE: ONLY  
LOVE CAN DO  
THAT."

-MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.



## NOTICE OF VACANCY MUNICIPALITY OF GROTON

The following offices will become vacant due to the expiration of the present term of office of the elected officer.

- Councilperson Ward 1 – 2 year term
- Councilperson Ward 1 – 1 year term
- Councilperson Ward 2 – 2 year term
- Councilperson Ward 3 – 2 year term

Circulation of nominating petitions may begin on January 31st, 2020, and petitions may be filed at City Hall located at 209 N Main, Groton, SD between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. central standard time not later than the 28th day of February, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.

## **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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## Hawkins paces Lady Tigers at Clark

Kaycie Hawkins had eight points and 10 rebounds as the Lady Tigers played at Clark/Willow Lake Tuesday evening. The Cyclone won, 50-35. The game was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Locke Electric and the South Dakota Army National Guard.

Clark/Willow Lake led at the quarterstops at 16-7, 30-20 and 45-27.

Alyssa Thaler led the scoring with 12 points while Brooke Gengerke had seven and Allyssa Locke and Trista Keith each had four points.

Charity Kabwe led the Cyclones with 11 points followed by Alicia Vig with seven, Jada Burke, Maggie Hovde and Jaycie Forbes each had six points, Kayla Jordan had five, Chayla Vig and Saylor Burke each had four points and Allison Kannegieter added a free throw.

Groton Area 13 of 45 two-pointers for 29 percent, two of 13 three-pointers for 15 percent and was three of eight from the line for 38 percent off of the Cyclones' 13 team fouls.

Clark/Willow Lake made 17 of 55 field goals for 31 percent and was 10 of 14 from the line off of Groton Area's 13 team fouls. Groton Area had 11 turnovers while Clark/Willow Lake had eight.

Locke and Thayer each had two of the team's six assists. Keith had four of the team's five steals.

The Cyclones won the junior varsity game, 44-20. Anna Fjeldheim and Emma Schinkel each had five points while adding two points apiece were Aspen Johnson, Marlee Tollifson, Shalyn Foertsch, Carly Guthmiller and Sydney Leicht.

The Lady Tigers are 3-7 on the season and will travel to Northwestern on Monday. Clark/Willow Lake is now 8-4 on the season.

- Paul Kosel

## South Dakota State Fair Announces Dustin Lynch to Play at 2020 State Fair

HURON, S.D. – The South Dakota State Fair and Legend Seeds are proud to announce modern country music, top of the charts artist, Dustin Lynch to perform at the State Fair grandstand on Saturday, September 5.

With a string of hits stretching back to 2012, a red hot live-performance reputation, and a fan-base that's growing exponentially, Dustin Lynch is one of the hottest acts in modern country music. And with his third album for Broken Bow Records –CURRENT MOOD–he's done flying under the radar. Lynch is currently hitting the charts with his single "Ridin' Roads" off his newest album – TULLAHOMA – released in January 2020.

"I'm a little nervous," Lynch admits with a laugh. "But the last thing I want for chapter three is 'Oh, this is just a new take on what we've heard for the last few years.' I hope people see a side of me they haven't seen yet."

Lynch's hits include "Ridin' Roads", "Mind Reader", "Good Girl", "Cowboys and Angels", "Small Town Boy", and "Hell of a Night".

Online, Lynch has also hit the number one spot on the iTunes Country Albums Chart while racking up three million track downloads, more than 245 million Spotify streams, and 113 million YouTube/VEVO views. His social-media following tops 2.5 million, and he's not connecting with those rabid fans through music alone. Lynch's own Stay Country clothing line puts his personal style in their hands, and national TV appearances have highlighted his good-natured charisma.

Meanwhile, those same fans have watched him become one of the most dynamic performers on the road. Cranking up massive crowds while opening for stadium-rocking icons like Luke Bryan, Florida Georgia Line, and Brad Paisley, Lynch has played for millions while developing an unparalleled onstage potency.

"Dustin Lynch brings an unbridled enthusiasm to his performances," said Peggy Besch, SD State Fairgrounds manager. "We're looking forward to having him bring that same vibrant energy to the stage at the State Fair."

Members of the media can download images [here](#).

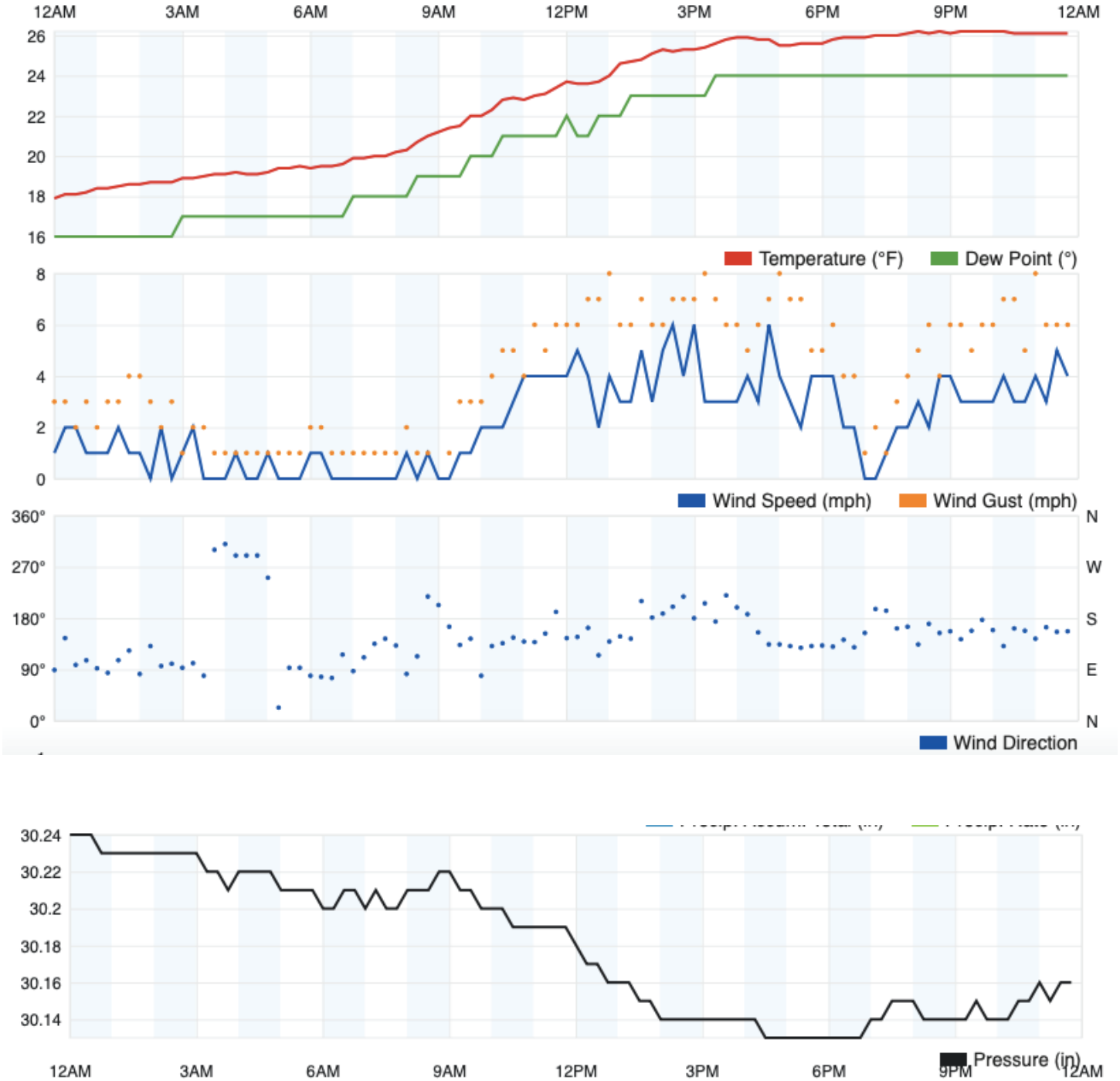
A pre-sale on VIP tickets will begin May 18, followed by backrest holders on June 8 and June 11 for Friends of the Fair. General public ticket sales will begin June 15.

The 2020 South Dakota State Fair will run from Thursday, September 3, through Monday, September 7. Channel Seeds Preview night will be Wednesday, September 2. This year's theme is "Perfect Vision of Fun." For more information on State Fair events, contact the Fair office at 800-529-0900, visit [www.sdstatefair.com](http://www.sdstatefair.com) or find them on Facebook or Twitter.

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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## Upcoming Events

### Thursday, January 30, 2020

4:00pm: Northeast Conference Wrestling at Britton-Hecla School

### Friday, January 31, 2020

Lewis and Clark Debate at Yankton High School

Boys Basketball hosts Clark/Willow Lake. (Combined Junior High Game at 5:15 p.m., followed by Junior Varsity game at 6:30 p.m. and then the varsity game.)

### Saturday, February 1, 2020

Boys Varsity Basketball Classic - DAK12 vs. NEC at Madison (Groton Area vs. SF Christian at 6:30 p.m.)

Lewis and Clark Debate at Yankton

10:00am: Groton Wrestling Tournament

### Monday, February 3, 2020

6:00 p.m.: Combined 7th/8th grade boys basketball hosts Redfield

6:00 p.m.: Junior High Wrestling at Ipswich

6:30 p.m.: Girls' basketball at Northwestern - JV followed by varsity game

### Tuesday, February 4, 2020

5 p.m.: Boys 7th and 8th grade games at GHS Gym vs. Langford

Doubleheader basketball game hosts Langford Area. Girls JV at 4 p.m., Boys JV at 5 p.m., Girls' Varsity at 6:15 p.m. followed by the Boys Varsity.

### Wednesday, February 5, 2020

10:15 a.m.: MathCounts at Northern State University

### Thursday, February 6, 2020

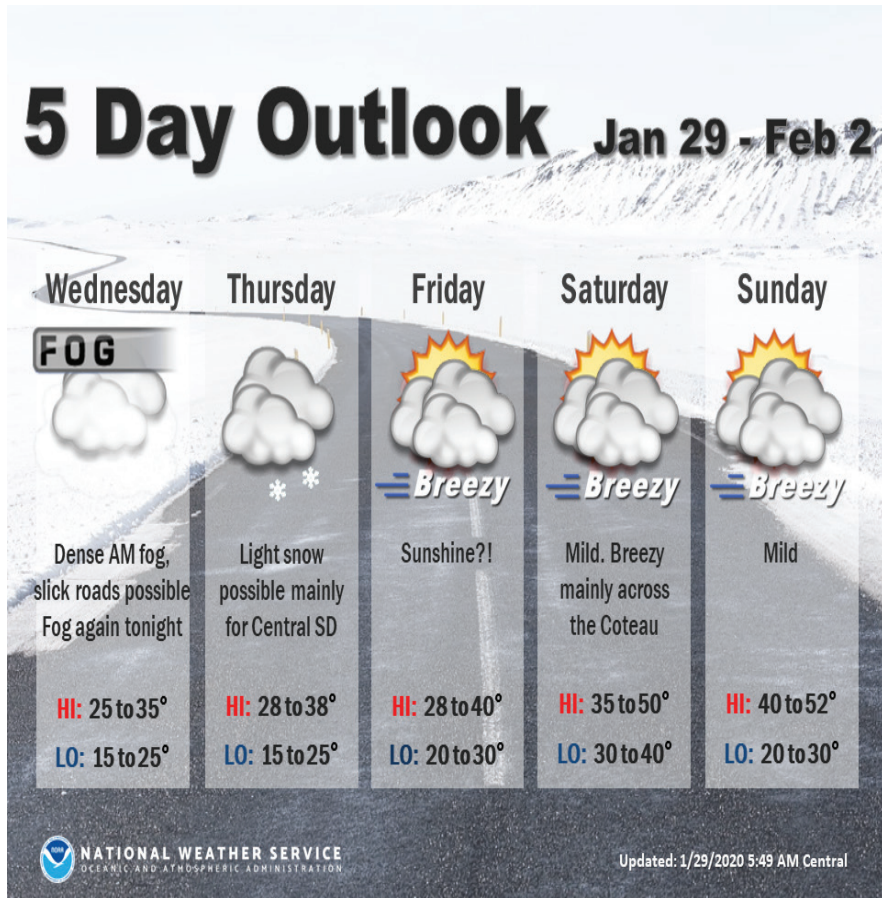
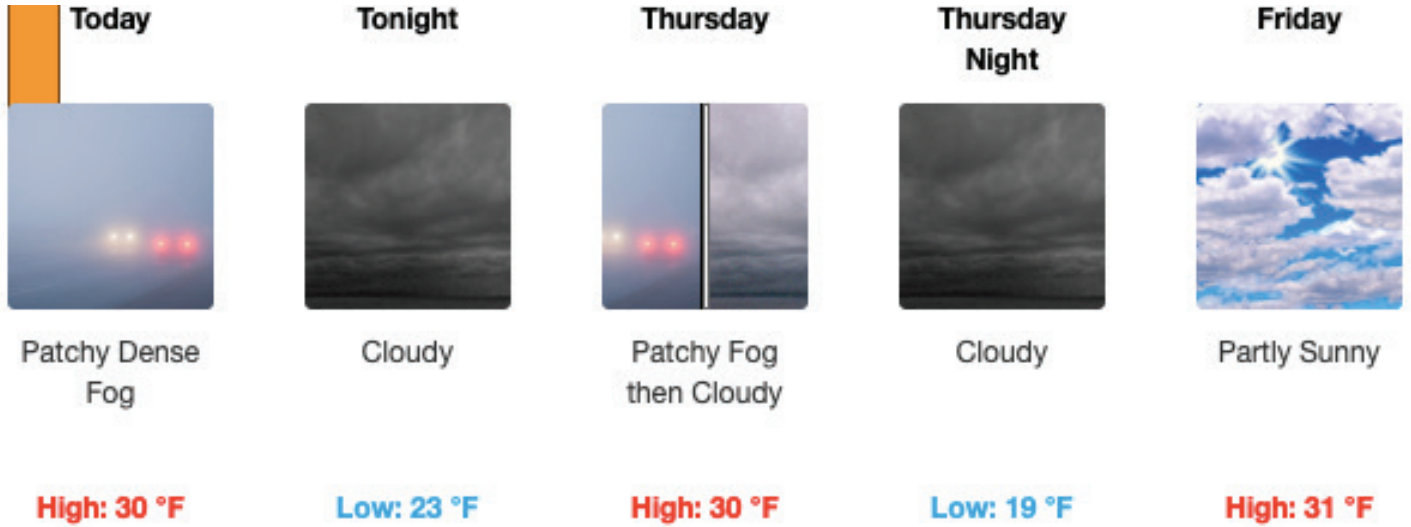
6:30 p.m.: Girls Basketball at Tiospa Zina (JV followed by varsity)

### Friday, February 7, 2020

Boys' Basketball hosts Tiospa Zina. 7th grade game at 3 p.m., 8th grade game at 4 p.m., junior varsity game at 6:30 p.m. followed by varsity game

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Travel with caution this morning where fog is a concern, as visibilities are reduced and roads potentially slick. After morning fog once again Thursday and then light afternoon/evening snow for some, sunshine may peek through the clouds Friday and milder air moves in for the weekend to melt some snow.

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## Today in Weather History

January 29, 2008: Arctic air combined with strong northwest winds of 20 to 40 mph to bring extreme wind chills to much of north central and northeast South Dakota. The extreme wind chills began in the morning hours of January 29th across all of the area. The wind chills improved across north central South Dakota by the evening and improved across northeast South Dakota during the morning hours of January 30th. The extreme wind chills ranged from 35 to 50 degrees below zero across the area. The extreme cold caused school delays and activity cancellations along with much discomfort to people and livestock. On Monday January 28th, the day before the extreme cold, a southerly flow brought very mild temperatures with some record highs set at several locations. Highs were in the 40s to the mid-50s across central and northeast South Dakota. When the Arctic front came through on January 28th, temperatures fell dramatically through the evening and early morning with below zero temperatures by Tuesday morning, January 29th. In fact, most locations across the area had a 40 to 55 degree temperature change from the 28th to the 29th.

1921: A small but intense windstorm resulted in the "Great Olympic Blowdown" in the Pacific Northwest. Hurricane force winds, funneled along the mountains, downed vast expanses of Douglas fir trees, and the storm destroyed eight billion board feet of timber. Winds at North Head WA gusted to 113 mph. On January 31, 1921, the International News Services reported from Aberdeen, Washington, "It is reported that thousands of dollars in damage was done to buildings and storms in Aberdeen and Hoquiam. The wind velocity was estimated at from 125 to 150 miles an hour. Four steel smokestack reaching almost 200 feet into the air were the first to collapse before the terrific onslaught of the gale. The giant chimneys crashed down on dwellings crushing them like houses of cardboard." 1947: On this date through the 30th, a fierce winter storm buried southern Wisconsin under two feet of snow. Strong northeasterly winds piled drifts up to 10 feet high in the Milwaukee area, shutting down the city for two days.

2002: A major three-day winter storm blasted parts of Kansas and Missouri. A catastrophic ice storm occurred south of the snow area, with two inches of ice and snow accumulating in the Kansas City, Missouri area. Thousands of trees were felled by the storm, blocking roads, felling utility lines and causing fires. Two "Bicentennial Trees" which were estimated at being over 200 years old were badly damaged from this storm. After the 31st, 325,000 people were reportedly without power in Kansas City alone.

2008: A sharp cold front moved across Illinois during the day, producing a drastic temperature drop. Temperatures fell 20 to 40 degrees in just a couple hours, with areas from Springfield, Illinois to St. Louis, Missouri seeing temperatures fall as much as 50 degrees between noon and 6 pm. Temperatures in the mid-60s in central Illinois at midday on the 29th had fallen to near zero by the next morning.

1780 - On the coldest morning of a severe winter the mercury dipped to 16 degrees below zero at New York City, and reached 20 degrees below zero at Hartford CT. New York Harbor was frozen for five weeks, allowing a heavy cannon to be taken across the ice to fortify the British on Staten Island. (The Weather Channel)

1921 - A small but intense windstorm resulted in the "Great Olympic Blowdown" in the Pacific Northwest. Hurricane force winds, funneled along the mountains, downed vast expanses of Douglas fir trees, and the storm destroyed eight billion board feet of timber. Winds at North Head WA gusted to 113 mph. (David Ludlum)

1983 - A series of Pacific coast storms finally came to an end. The storms, attributed in part to the ocean current, "El Nino," produced ocean swells 15 to 20 feet high which ravaged the beaches of southern California. Much of the damage was to homes of movies stars in the exclusive Malibu Colony. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A strong storm moving out of the Central Rockies spread snow across the north central states, with up to eight inches of snow in Wisconsin, and produced wind gusts to 64 mph at Goodland KS. A thunderstorm produced three inches of snow in forty-five minutes at Owing Mills MD. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

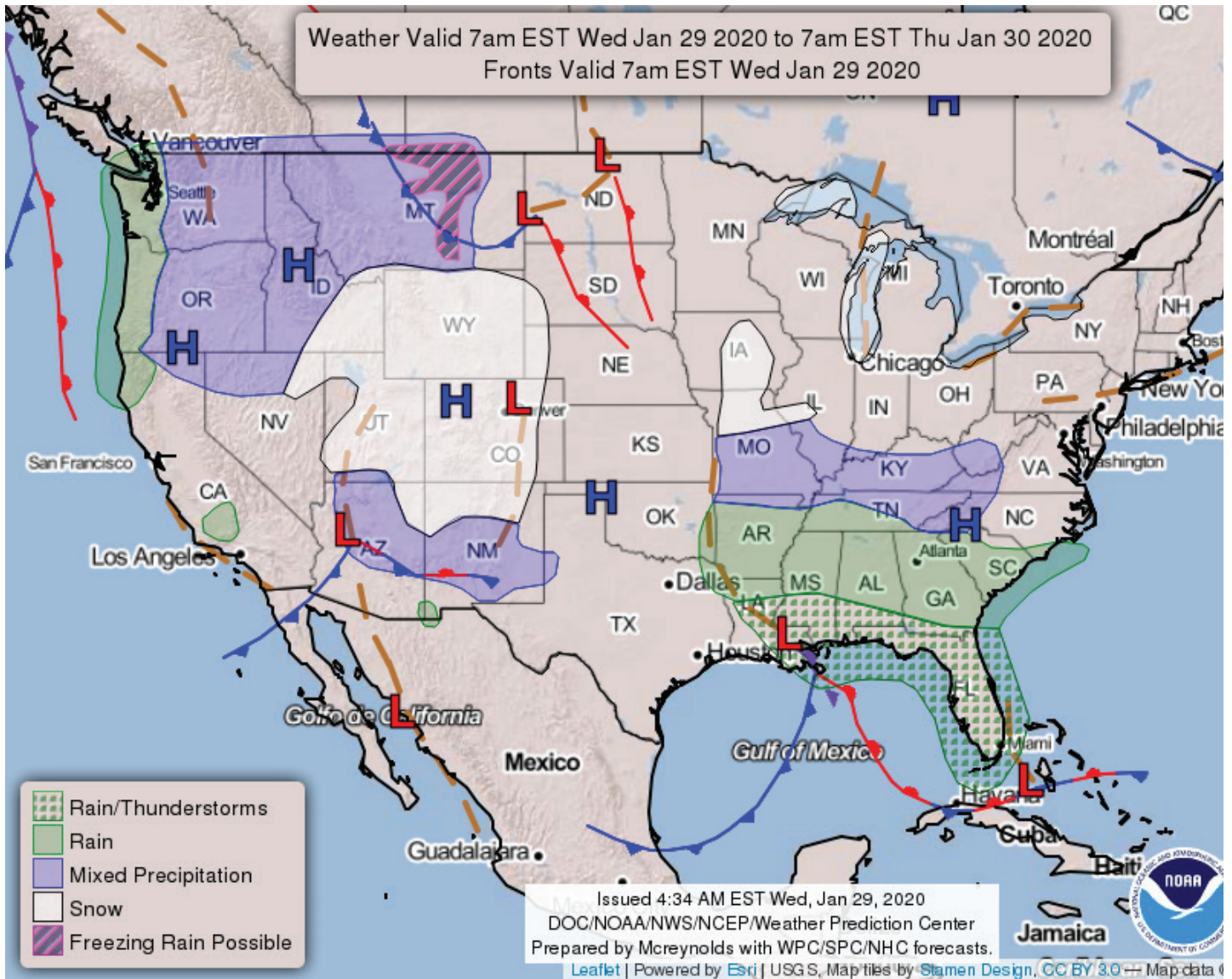
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

**High Temp: 26 °F at 8:00 PM**  
**Low Temp: 18 °F at 12:00 AM**  
**Wind: 8 mph at 12:53 PM**  
**Precip:**

**Record High: 58° in 1931**  
**Record Low: -32° in 1951**  
**Average High: 24°F**  
**Average Low: 2°F**  
**Average Precip in Jan.: 0.43**  
**Precip to date in Jan.: 0.35**  
**Average Precip to date: 0.43**  
**Precip Year to Date: 0.35**  
**Sunset Tonight: 5:36 p.m.**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:57 a.m.**





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## WHO'S ON THE LORD'S SIDE?

Years ago when Italy went to war, there was a shortage of soldiers. To find recruits, one captain went through the villages calling men to fight with him. Many joined him bringing their own weapons into combat.

One elderly lady was so moved by the sight that she got her broom, placed it on her shoulder, and began to march with the men into combat.

Many of the soldiers laughed at her. One looked at her and asked, "What good are you, old lady?"

"Not much," she replied, "but I want everyone to know whose side I'm on!"

Life requires many choices. But there is no more important choice for each of us than to let the world know whose side we are on. Joshua said, "So, honor the Lord and serve Him wholeheartedly." He challenged the people to declare their allegiance to God because He had proven His trustworthiness to them.

From the simple to the significant, we make many choices every day, each with an opportunity to show the world whose side we are on. Often we are willing to compromise our beliefs and values rather than to declare our allegiance to the Lord as one of His disciples. Rather than taking a clear position to honor God, we waffle and waiver because we fear being ridiculed and rebuked. If we love the Lord and want His peace and protection, His goodness and grace, we must be willing to "take our brooms" and declare our faith. We must listen to the Lord as He speaks to us through His Word and make the right choices.

Prayer: Lord, may we live our lives letting those around us see the depth of our commitment to You. Empower us with courage to prove to others that You are our Lord! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Joshua 24:15-15 But if you refuse to serve the Lord, then choose today whom you will serve. Would you prefer the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates? Or will it be the gods of the Amorites in whose land you now live? But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord."

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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
- 06/19/2020 SDSU Golf at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/04/2020 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)  
Groton Hosting State B American Legion Baseball Tournament
- 07/12/2020 Summer Fest/Car Show
- 07/31-08/04/2020 State American Legion Baseball Tournament in Groton
- 09/12/2020 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. (1st Sat. after Labor Day)
- 10/10/2020 Pumpkin Fest
- 10/31/2020 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat (Halloween)
- 11/14/2020 Groton American Legion Post #39 Annual Turkey Party (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)

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## News from the Associated Press

### SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Mega Millions

17-36-47-51-62, Mega Ball: 21, Megaplier: 3

(seventeen, thirty-six, forty-seven, fifty-one, sixty-two; Mega Ball: twenty-one; Megaplier: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$141 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$394 million

### Tuesday's Scores

By The Associated Press

BOYS BASKETBALL=

Aberdeen Central 61, Pierre 40

Aberdeen Christian 80, Herreid/Selby Area 51

Belle Fourche 83, Lead-Deadwood 32

Bon Homme 55, Alcester-Hudson 33

Britton-Hecla 54, Leola/Frederick 46

Canistota 70, Chester 39

Centerville 60, Tripp-Delmont/Armour 53

Chamberlain 74, Madison 72

Crazy Horse 56, Wakpala 38

Faith 71, Dupree 43

Flandreau 52, Garretson 49

Gayville-Volin 46, Menno 30

Gregory 61, Burke 51

Hamlin 51, Aberdeen Roncalli 35

Hanson 60, Sanborn Central/Woonsocket 50

Highmore-Harrold 79, James Valley Christian 67

Huron 60, Harrisburg 47

Kimball/White Lake 57, Colome 36

Lawton-Bronson, Iowa 75, Elk Point-Jefferson 63

McCook Central/Montrose 63, Freeman 49

Milbank 54, Deuel 51

Mobridge-Pollock 68, McLaughlin 51

Moorhead, Minn. 57, Watertown 43

New Underwood 57, Newell 40

Oelrichs 59, Hay Springs, Neb. 27

Parker 47, Irene-Wakonda 32

Parkston 55, Platte-Geddes 50

Pine Ridge 86, Little Wound 59

Red Cloud 69, Douglas 67

Sioux Falls Christian 88, Tea Area 57

Sioux Falls Washington 64, Brandon Valley 58, 2OT

St. Thomas More 69, Spearfish 37

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Sturgis Brown 72, Hill City 32  
Sully Buttes 69, Stanley County 58  
Tiospa Zina Tribal 65, Sisseton 48  
Todd County 73, Winner 60  
Vermillion 75, West Central 67  
Viborg-Hurley 53, Bridgewater-Emery 43  
Wagner 54, Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 50  
Wall 74, Hot Springs 57  
Waverly-South Shore 58, Webster 48  
Wilmot 59, Waubay/Summit 50  
Wolsey-Wessington 66, Sunshine Bible Academy 47  
GIRLS BASKETBALL=  
Aberdeen Central 55, Brookings 36  
Avon 36, Burke 24  
Belle Fourche 43, Lead-Deadwood 42  
Bison 50, Timber Lake 29  
Britton-Hecla 50, Leola/Frederick 35  
Castlewood 79, Deubrook 41  
Chamberlain 44, Madison 42  
Clark/Willow Lake 50, Groton Area 35  
DeSmet 50, Sioux Valley 36  
Deuel 48, Milbank 38  
Faulkton 62, Northwestern 27  
Florence/Henry 58, Lake Preston 40  
Gregory 62, Stanley County 24  
Hamlin 34, Aberdeen Roncalli 33  
Harrisburg 57, Huron 31  
Hill City 58, Sturgis Brown 32  
Irene-Wakonda 59, Parker 29  
Kimball/White Lake 65, Bon Homme 36  
Langford 56, Great Plains Lutheran 30  
Lower Brule 48, Mitchell Christian 30  
Menno 49, Gayville-Volin 36  
Mitchell 59, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 52  
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 66, Wagner 41  
Parkston 49, Platte-Geddes 37  
Red Cloud 80, Douglas 36  
Sanborn Central/Woonsocket 42, Hanson 39  
Sioux Falls Lincoln 65, South Sioux City, Neb. 45  
Sioux Falls O'Gorman 59, Tea Area 51  
St. Thomas More 66, Spearfish 40  
Tri-Valley 53, Canton 20  
Tripp-Delmont/Armour 44, Centerville 23  
Waubay/Summit 65, Wilmot 49  
West Central 48, Vermillion 35  
Wolsey-Wessington 53, Sunshine Bible Academy 15

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

## Man could face death penalty in SD woman's kidnap, killing

CANTON, S.D. (AP) — A 19-year-old man could face the death penalty if convicted in the killing of a 20-year-old woman who authorities say was abducted from a Sioux Falls Walmart parking lot, a prosecutor said Tuesday.

Amir Hasan Beaudion Jr. was arraigned Tuesday on 15 counts, including first-degree murder, aggravated kidnapping, rape and robbery, in the Jan. 5 abduction of Pasqalina Badi of Sioux Falls. Badi's body was found the next day along a gravel road in Lincoln County, and a preliminary autopsy determined she had been strangled.

A judge entered a not guilty plea on Beaudion's behalf, and bond was continued at \$1 million cash only.

Lincoln County State's Attorney Tom Wollman said the case may be eligible for the death penalty if there were aggravating factors in Badi's death, but he told The Associated Press he has not decided yet whether to pursue the death penalty.

"It's a capital case, and we believe it potentially meets the requirements," Wollman said at Tuesday's meeting of the Lincoln County commissioners, the Sioux Falls Argus Leader reported. "That's about all I can say right now. Based upon the charges, and if you look at the statutory scheme for the death penalty, we believe some of those aggravated circumstances may be present in this case."

A phone message left for Beaudion's public defender in the murder case, David Stuart, was not immediately returned Tuesday. Beaudion's next court appearance is set for Feb. 18.

Beaudion was arrested on Jan. 7 on charges related to a separate attempted New Year's Day kidnapping from a Hy-Vee parking lot, and had been considered the primary suspect in Badi's death. Wollman wouldn't comment on whether Beaudion and Badi knew each other.

## Bill to prevent SD cities from banning plastic bags advances

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A bill to prevent South Dakota cities from banning plastic bags and straws is advancing at the state Legislature.

The Senate Commerce and Energy Committee approved the bill on a 4-2 vote Tuesday. The measure now goes to the full Senate.

Committee members heard testimony about the impact the bill would have on businesses, the environment and people with disabilities, the Argus Leader reported.

The bill's sponsor, Republican John Wiik of Big Stone City, said prohibiting cities from banning plastic bags and straws is needed because South Dakota is one large, spread-out small town — and that what is good for one small city should be good for all cities in the state.

But Rebecca Turk of Dakota Rural Action argued that farmers and ranchers also have problems with plastic that blows into their fields. She said big cities don't want to be told what to do as much as small communities don't.

Brett Glirbas of Sioux Falls, who has cerebral palsy, told the committee that bans on plastic straws don't take into consideration residents with disabilities. Single-use plastic straws are safe and most cost-effective for people with disabilities to use, he said via interpretation by his mother. With his reflex, he said he could bite down on a metal straw and injure himself.

## House panel would jump tobacco age to 21; penalize buyers

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota House committee on Tuesday advanced a bill that would raise the age for purchasing tobacco products to 21, but the initiative has an unlikely opponent — the American Cancer Society.

The bill follows recent federal law that raised the age for purchasing cigarettes and other tobacco products in December.

While the federal law provides for stores to be fined or barred from selling tobacco for repeat violations, the proposed South Dakota law would punish the people who buy it or the clerks who sell it — by making

the offense a misdemeanor punishable by up to 30 days in jail.

David Benson, a lobbyist for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, testified against the bill because it doesn't target retailers. Penalizing underage people for buying tobacco hasn't reduced youth smoking, according to the organization.

Rep. Carl Perry, a Republican from Aberdeen, said he brought the bill after speaking with principals about smoking among students. He called the bill a "step" towards legislation that could be more comprehensive in addressing youth smoking in the future.

Others outright oppose the initiative. Rep. Tim Rounds, a Pierre Republican, said, "I think government is intruding enough in our adults' lives."

The bill will next be heard on the floor of the House.

Police: Man shot in Sioux Falls apartment dies; no arrests

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. undefined

A fight between two men earlier this month in Sioux Falls has turned deadly, police said Tuesday.

Police said the fight broke out in an apartment in Sioux Falls on Jan. 17. One man pulled a handgun and shot the other man twice. That man was taken to a hospital, where police say he died of his injuries last Friday.

Police identified the victim as 27-year-old Dakota Sun Bearheels of Sioux Falls. Police said they've made no arrests, and their investigation continues.

## South Dakota governor renews push for 'riot boosting' laws

By **STEPHEN GROVES** Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Republican Gov. Kristi Noem on Tuesday renewed her pitch for lawmakers to try again to pass laws against "riot boosting," despite opposition from Native American tribes who say Noem's proposal unfairly targets expected protests of the Keystone XL pipeline.

Noem sent a briefing packet to legislators along with a draft of the bill she plans to introduce. It would replace a law passed last year that was later blocked by a federal judge. It also revises anti-rioting laws on the books from previous years. The state eventually reached a settlement with the American Civil Liberties Union in which it agreed not to enforce parts of the laws.

"The responsibility I have as governor is that I'm keeping peace, and I'm protecting people and property," Noem told The Associated Press.

Noem circulated bill language to lawmakers and tribes in December. All five tribes that responded to the governor's office — the Rosebud Sioux, Crow Creek Sioux, Yankton Sioux, Cheyenne River Sioux, and Oglala Sioux — oppose the bill.

The ACLU also wrote the governor's office, asserting that it is "irrefutable" that both last year's and this year's legislation was sparked by the planned protests against the construction of the Keystone XL pipeline. The federal judge who blocked the law last year said it violated free speech rights in part because it targeted pipeline protests.

Noem said her new proposal applies to all future infrastructure projects in the state that might draw protests.

Several tribal leaders told the governor they are planning nothing more than peaceful protests and that the bill is unnecessary. They say the pipeline, which skirts tribal land in South Dakota, threatens their safety because of possible leaks that could contaminate drinking water. They are also concerned about a rise in crime by pipeline workers during its construction.

Rosebud Sioux Tribe President Rodney Bordeaux wrote in a letter to the governor's office that he disagrees with Noem's assertion that the bill doesn't infringe on free speech. He called the bill "overly broad" and "not constitutionally appropriate."

Oglala Sioux Tribe President Julian Bear Runner wrote that the legislation creates a "false narrative" that pipeline protests are violent and that such laws only worsen conflicts between the state and Native American tribes. After the "riot boosting" laws were passed last year, the Oglala Sioux Tribe banned Noem

from the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, a move they have since rescinded.

Noem said she met with representatives from some tribes before the session began to discuss the legislation, but that the tribes remain fundamentally opposed to the pipeline's construction. She said she has tried to foster cooperation with the tribes in other areas, including meth addiction and law enforcement.

Noem argues that her new proposal uses the "narrowest" definitions of "incitement to riot" to protect people and property while also protecting free speech, according to the memo she sent to lawmakers. It seeks to replace the law's current definition of "incitement to riot" that the judge found unconstitutional with language that would allow people to be prosecuted for "urging" a riot.

It includes "instigating, inciting, or directing" violence as examples of urging, but leaves out the word "threatening" that was included in an earlier draft. The governor argues that the proposal will pass what's known as the Brandenburg test for free speech, which stipulates that authorities can't prosecute speech unless the speech intends to cause a crime, is likely to cause it, and the crime is imminent.

Noem also wants to revive civil penalties for "riot-boosting," or inciting a riot. The law would make it possible for the state, counties or other municipalities to make people personally liable for rioting. The governor said that would make it possible for the state or counties to recoup damages from riots.

Last year, the Legislature passed the riot boosting act three days after it was introduced.

Several lawmakers said they will be taking more time to consider the governor's proposal this year, especially after the state had to pay \$145,000 in legal fees as part of the settlement with the ACLU.

## South Dakota's 2019 traffic deaths may be state's lowest

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Public safety officials say South Dakota may have recorded its lowest number of traffic deaths in state history.

So far, 102 traffic fatalities have been recorded for 2019, the South Dakota Department of Public Safety said Tuesday. Since the department began keeping records in 1947, the previous low was 111 fatalities in 2011.

Department of Public Safety Secretary Craig Price announced the preliminary numbers during a presentation at the House Transportation Committee meeting. While the final numbers may still change, officials believe 2019 will set a new record low.

Price said officials are encouraged to see that their safety measures and enforcement efforts are "having a big impact across South Dakota." But Price says "even one roadway death is too many," and that officials will continue working to drive the number of road deaths down.

Price says South Dakota's safety efforts are being helped by the public making better driving choices coupled with enhanced vehicle safety and road designs.

In 2018, South Dakota recorded 130 fatalities.

## What's next for the Keystone XL pipeline in South Dakota

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Plans for construction of the Keystone XL oil sands pipeline inched forward last week with several approvals at both the federal and state levels, but opponents in South Dakota say they haven't given up on preventing, or at least slowing, the pipeline's construction.

Plans for the \$8 billion project have been over a decade in the works. TC Energy, the Canadian company building the pipeline, plans to begin construction in South Dakota in August, according to a court filing in Montana that also spells out planned work in that state and Nebraska. The company plans to move equipment to construction sites starting in February and prep worker accommodation sites in March.

After the South Dakota Water Management Board approved five water permits for the pipeline's construction last week, Sara Rabern, a spokeswoman for TC Energy, said the company does not need any more permits from South Dakota agencies, but is working to "finalize" permits from other authorities.

The pipeline would stretch 1,200-miles (1,930-kilometers) from western Canada to Nebraska, where it

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would connect with other lines that go to Gulf Coast refineries. It would be capable of pumping 830,000 barrels (35 million gallons) of crude oil a day.

TC Energy says the project would provide a \$3.4 billion boost to the U.S. economy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from trains that transport oil. Opponents say that burning the tar sands oil will make climate change worse and worry that an oil spill could cause major environmental damage.

Legal battles still loom.

## WATER CROSSING PERMITS

The Army Corps of Engineers must approve TC Energy's plans to drill beneath three major rivers along the route, which include the Cheyenne River in South Dakota and the Missouri and Yellowstone rivers in Montana.

The approval for TC Energy to cross the Cheyenne River was suspended in August after TC Energy withdrew their notice for the project. But Michael Izard-Carroll, spokesman for the Army Corps of Engineers, said he expects TC Energy to file their notices this winter. The Corps in 2017 had given TC Energy the go-ahead for drilling under the Cheyenne River.

The Sierra Club, along with several conservation and landowner groups, is suing the Army Corps of Engineers in federal court in Montana. They argue that the Corps should be more stringent in their requirements for water crossing permits.

## SOUTH DAKOTA WATER PERMITS

The South Dakota Water Board's decision to approve the water permits for construction last week can be challenged in court. Several opponents who contested the permits have said they're weighing whether to continue.

Dakota Rural Action, a South Dakota conservation group, is also appealing a water permit granted to the town of Buffalo in the northwest of the state. The group alleges the town's water superintendent didn't disclose that a permit for a new well would be used for Keystone XL construction.

The permit hearings for the five wells the Water Board did approve were contentious and spanned nearly a dozen days over several months.

## SOUTH DAKOTA LEGISLATURE

The South Dakota Legislature will debate several bills that may affect Keystone XL.

The governor last year pushed and passed legislation that targeted potentially disruptive protests of the pipeline. But the American Civil Liberties Union successfully sued to block the so-called "riot-boosting" laws, and the state agreed in a settlement not to enforce parts of them.

Gov. Kristi Noem is planning to revisit the issue this year, with bills that she said would not infringe on free speech yet would provide for the punishment of people who urge the use of force or violence in protests.

Several Indian tribes in South Dakota, including the Rosebud Sioux, Crow Creek Sioux, Yankton Sioux, Cheyenne River Sioux, and Oglala Sioux, have written to the governor's office opposing the legislation.

"We do not anticipate anything other than peaceful and prayerful protests and gatherings," said Rosebud Sioux Tribe President Rodney Bordeaux in a letter to the governor.

Legislators are also proposing a bill that would force pipeline companies to pay into an emergency fund for spill cleanup. The bill has the backing of several legislators who are also tribal members.

## MNI WICONI EASEMENT

The Oglala Sioux Tribe is planning to argue to the Department of Interior that the pipeline needs to have permission, known as an easement, to pass a water pipeline called the Mni Wiconi Rural Water Supply Project in the western half of South Dakota. The water project is currently held in trust by the Bureau of Reclamation, meaning it grants the easements.

The Oglala Sioux Tribe Council has instructed the tribal president not to give permission for the pipeline to pass the water project.

The South Dakota Public Utility Commission ruled in 2015 that the tribe's permission wasn't necessary for the easement, and any legal argument otherwise should be decided in federal court.



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## No arrests, but suspect identified in Aberdeen shooting

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — Prosecutors say a suspect in a fatal shooting in Aberdeen has been interviewed, but forensics and autopsy results are still needed before an arrest can be made.

Brown County State's Attorney Chris White said the case is still being investigated.

Police found a man who had been shot multiple times early Saturday not far from the Northern State University campus. He was later pronounced dead at Avera St. Luke's Hospital, according to the Argus Leader.

White declined to identify the victim Monday since he hasn't met with the victim's family yet.

The Brown County Sheriff's Office and the South Dakota Division of Criminal Investigation are assisting in the investigation.

## Oglala Sioux Tribe to vote on marijuana, casino alcohol

OGLALA, S.D. (AP) — Oglala Sioux Tribe members will vote in March on whether marijuana should be legalized on the Pine Ridge Reservation and whether alcohol should be served in its casinos.

Voters will answer three separate questions on March 10. Should medical marijuana be available on the reservation and what about recreational marijuana? Also, should alcohol be sold at Prairie Wind Casino near Oglala and East Wind Casino near Martin?

The referendums require a majority of votes to pass and the decisions would be binding, meaning the tribal council must implement them, according to Elections Commission executive Sandra Old Horse.

The Rapid City Journal reports eligible voters are enrolled members of the Oglala Sioux Tribe who are at least 18 years old and have lived on the reservation for at least one year. Voting will take place at 20 sites on the reservation, and people must vote at a site within their district.

## Virus cases in China top SARS as evacuations begin

By KEN MORITSUGU Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — Countries began evacuating their citizens Wednesday from the Chinese city hardest-hit by a new virus that has now infected more people in China than were sickened in the country by SARS.

The number of confirmed cases jumped to 5,974, surpassing the 5,327 in mainland China during the SARS outbreak in 2002-2003.

The death toll rose to 132, which is still lower than the 348 people who were killed in China by SARS. Scientists say there are still many critical questions to be answered about the new virus, including just how transmissible and severe it is.

A Japanese flight that brought back evacuees from the city of Wuhan included four passengers with coughs and fevers. Two were diagnosed with pneumonia.

The three men and one woman were taken to a Tokyo hospital in separate ambulances for treatment and further medical checks. Another woman developed nausea at the airport and was also hospitalized.

It wasn't immediately known whether they were infected with the new type of coronavirus, which first appeared in Wuhan in December. Its symptoms, including cough and fever and in severe cases pneumonia, are similar to many other illnesses.

China's latest figures added 26 deaths, all but one in Hubei province and its capital, Wuhan. The number of cases rose 1,459 from the previous day, a smaller increase than the 1,771 new cases reported on Monday. More than 50 infections have been confirmed abroad.

The United Arab Emirates, home to long-haul carriers Emirates and Etihad, reported its first cases on Wednesday in members of a family who had come from Wuhan, the state-run news agency reported. It wasn't immediately clear how many family members were involved.

British Airways announced it was immediately suspending all flights to and from mainland China after the U.K. government warned against unnecessary travel to the country. BA said in a statement Wednesday that "we apologize to customers for the inconvenience, but the safety of our customers and crew is always

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our priority." The airline operates daily flights from London's Heathrow Airport to Shanghai and Beijing.

British health secretary Matt Hancock tweeted that "anyone who returns from Wuhan will be safely isolated for 14 days, with all necessary medical attention." The measures are a step up from what the country did during the devastating 2014 Ebola outbreak, when returning travelers from West Africa were asked to monitor themselves for symptoms.

Mark Woolhouse, a professor of infectious disease epidemiology at the University of Edinburgh, said the measures are justified for public health reasons.

"Those are the sorts of measures that will protect countries from the introduction of the virus and on-ward transmission," he said. "There's always a balance between the draconian measures of public health and what people might want to do, and obviously it's regrettable if people who turn out not to have the virus are quarantined unnecessarily."

The outbreak has also affected international sporting events, with the International Hockey Federation postponing Pro League games in China, and qualifiers for the Tokyo Olympics scheduled in February in soccer, basketball and boxing being moved outside of the country. With just 177 days before the summer games, Tokyo organizers are on edge over the outbreak's possible knock-on effects.

In Australia, health officials said the Chinese women's national soccer team was quarantined in the city of Brisbane over concerns it had passed through Wuhan a week ago.

The team will be kept in isolation in a hotel until Wednesday next week. None of the group of 32 players and staff has shown symptoms.

Chartered planes carrying evacuees home to Japan and the United States left Wuhan early Wednesday as other countries planned similar evacuations from areas China has shut down to try to contain the virus. The lockdown of 17 cities has trapped more than 50 million people in the most far-reaching disease control measures ever imposed.

A plane carrying Americans who had been in Wuhan left for Anchorage, Alaska, where they will be re-screened for the virus. U.S. hospitals are prepared to treat or quarantine people who may be infected. After departing Alaska, the plane is to fly to Ontario, California.

At the Tokyo airport, Takeo Aoyama, an employee at Nippon Steel Corp.'s subsidiary in Wuhan, told reporters he was relieved to be able to return home.

"We were feeling increasingly uneasy as the situation developed so rapidly and we were still in the city," Aoyama said, his voice muffled by a white surgical mask.

The Tokyo Metropolitan Government confirmed the condition of the four ill passengers after the flight of 206 Japanese evacuees arrived. They were taken in separate ambulances to a Tokyo hospital for treatment and further health checks.

All of the passengers had their temperatures checked before boarding and on the plane, and plans had been made for all of the evacuees to be treated and quarantined depending on their test results.

Among those remaining in Wuhan was Sara Platto, an Italian animal behavior researcher and veterinarian, and her son, Matteo.

"My son turned 12 on January 23, the first day of the lockdown in Wuhan. So he couldn't invite his friends over. We had a remote birthday celebration, with people 'visiting' him over Wechat," Platto said, referring to China's Twitter-like messaging app. "We called it the epidemic birthday."

Platto said there were 25 Italians stuck in Wuhan, some students, some very young, who stay in touch online for material and emotional support. She has used her scientific background to offer advice and debunk sensational false news, reminding friends to wash their hands and faces often.

As much as panic, people spending most of their times indoors have to deal with boredom.

Matteo usually has a very busy agenda between his school, sports, and volunteer work, but now "it's like suddenly everything has slowed down," Platto said. As with other international schools, classes are moving online until the all-clear is sounded.

"We have most of what we need for now. I think it's a serious situation, but we are not in zombie land," she said.

Several countries have confirmed cases of the virus, with most of them being Chinese visitors, people

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who visited Wuhan or family members in close contact to the sick. Japan's six confirmed cases include a tour bus driver who drove visiting groups from Wuhan. Germany says four workers at an auto parts company possibly were infected when a colleague from Shanghai visited.

Australia and New Zealand were the latest countries planning evacuations. Both countries also stepped up their travel advice to China, as did Britain.

Experts have feared travel during the Lunar New Year holiday would enable the further spread of the virus, and China expanded the holiday to keep people home, closing schools and offices to try to contain it.

Hong Kong was preparing to cut rail service from China at midnight.

Wuhan is building two hospitals in a matter of days to add 2,500 beds for treatment of patients with the virus.

The new virus is from the coronavirus family, which includes those that can cause the common cold as well as more serious illnesses such as SARS and MERS.

The source of the virus and the full extent of its spread are still unknown. However, the World Health Organization said most cases reported to date "have been milder, with around 20% of those infected experiencing severe illness."

Scientists say there are still many critical questions to be answered about the new virus, including just how transmissible it is. Although the Chinese health minister and others have suggested that the virus is spreading before people get symptoms, data to confirm that has not yet been shared widely beyond China.

"It's still unclear whether that takes place," said Malik Peiris, chair in virology at the University of Hong Kong. If such spread is occurring, however, that might explain why China has already exceeded the case numbers for SARS. "The fortunate thing about SARS, if there was anything fortunate, was that transmission did not take place before symptoms," he said. Peiris said that if it turns out that the new coronavirus can indeed be spread by people who don't show any symptoms, "a pandemic is a scenario that we have to consider."

Associated Press writers Christina Larson in Washington, D.C., and Jill Lawless and Maria Cheng in London contributed to this report.

## Post-Brexit talks gear up for fish fight between EU, UK

By RAF CASERT and DAVID KEYTON Associated Press

KILKEEL, Northern Ireland (AP) — When it comes to U.K.-European Union relations, there's nothing like slapping a fish around. After all, both sides have been contesting who rules their waves practically since the United Kingdom became a member in 1973.

So it's not so surprising that once the U.K. officially leaves the EU on Friday night, one of the first things the two sides will wrestle over during negotiations on their post-divorce relationship is the comparatively tiny fisheries industry.

"Perhaps in many ways, fisheries is the acid test of Brexit," said British politician and leading Brexiteer Nigel Farage.

Industry and financial services are much more important in sheer economic terms. But somehow fish and chips in Britain and sole meuniere on the continent stir much stronger emotions.

"For example, our car industry and chemicals industry alone are worth 20 times the value of the fishing industry," said Chris Davies, an English Liberal Democrat member of the European Parliament who is head of the EU's fisheries committee until he leaves on Friday.

"It is much more important, of course, to the economy in Britain as a whole that we get access for those products," Davies said.

But that doesn't ring right in Kilkeel, Northern Ireland, and other U.K. ports, where resentment runs deep against EU fishing policies that allow vessels from other nations in the bloc to catch stocks in rich British waters.

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"This fleet has been stymied now for, what, 30, 30-plus years, in terms of fish being taken off us and given to other member states. It has been a struggle," said Alan McCulla, CEO of the local ANIFPO fishing cooperative.

"Fishermen here have lost thousands of tonnes of fishing opportunities valued at millions of pounds," McCulla said.

Brexiters have thrived for years on similar words of perceived wrongdoing by faceless bureaucrats encroaching on age-old British sovereignty. And no one has done that more effectively than Farage, who has been driving the U.K. towards the EU's exit door for decades, mostly from inside the European Parliament itself — where he served as a British lawmaker for over two decades.

Farage knows how the briny whiff of the sea tugs at the nation's heartstrings.

"The greatness of Britain has always been what we've done on the seas, whether it's through the Royal Navy or through our merchant fleets," Farage said in an interview with The Associated Press. "So fisheries is actually — symbolically — very, very important."

Farage led a flotilla of fishing boats up the River Thames to Britain's Parliament in last-ditch campaigning before the Brexit referendum on June 23, 2016. It turned out that every bit helped, as British voters stunningly decided to leave the bloc by a narrow 52%-48 % margin.

Fish in waters off Britain were still abundant in the 1970s and fishing towns still thrived.

But for just about the duration of Britain's EU membership, fish stocks ranging from North Sea cod to English Channel sole have been in decline. And for British fishermen it was easy to point fingers at foreign fishing vessels and EU headquarters in Brussels. Every coastal EU nation wanted to catch as many fish as possible, despite dwindling stocks and scientific warnings about overfishing.

First, the EU forced boats to stay in port and restricted quotas, limiting access to fish. And when British fishermen then saw EU boats in their shared waters, anger came naturally.

The broad promise of Brexit always was to regain control, which many in the industry will feel when a 200-nautical mile zone is set for the U.K., instead of the current 12 miles.

"The U.K. should determine what level of access from EU boats is allowed in. It shouldn't be a free-for-all just because they've been there for years and years. The rules have changed, and we're taking back control of our own waters," said fisherman Brian Chambers.

Chambers, who owns the "Boy Paul" with his brother and mainly fishes off the coast of Ireland and the Isle of Man for crab and scallops, was among those voting to leave the EU.

Farage says Brexit could make sure that boom years lie ahead for Britain's 8,000 fishermen who net just under 1 billion euros (\$1.1 billion) worth of annual catches.

"If we get fisheries right, we will bring tens of thousands of jobs back to our coastal communities," he said.

However, the EU has already made it clear negotiations won't be that simple. Chief negotiator Michel Barnier's office has already informed diplomats from the 27 member states that "reciprocal access to fishing waters and resources should be maintained." That means pretty much looking for the status quo that U.K. fishermen hate so much.

And the EU can also play the history card.

"European vessels have been fishing in those waters forever. The Vikings would have dragged a net behind their longboats when they came over 1,000 years ago," said Davies. "So, not surprisingly, the Dutch and the French and others are saying 'we want this to continue, historically, it's our right.'"

Furthermore, while Britons may have their fish-rich waters, the EU has an even richer consumer market.

"British fishermen are going to have to accept that so long as they are selling 70% of all the fish they catch into the European continental market, their bargaining power is not that great," Davies said.

Again, fishermen can already feel the squeeze. Even if they are revered and romanticized for being some of the last true hunters in Europe, many have long been squeezed out economically. As fish needed to be protected, they felt the politicians didn't protect them. The promise of Brexit gave them a new hope, but now the realities of hard-nosed negotiations set in.

The fear is that their desire to get better ownership of their fishing grounds might just become another pawn in the trade talks between both sides.

McCulla of the ANIFPO cooperative is trying to look at the bright side.

"I've no doubt that Europeans will still be able to fish in U.K. waters in the future," he said. "But the important difference is that they will have to have that access under the terms of U.K. PLC, not under the terms of Brussels. And in the future, Britannia will rule Britannia's waves."

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

Raf Casert reported from Brussels.

## Allies worry as US ponders cutting military forces in Africa

By CARLEY PETESCH Associated Press

DAKAR, Senegal (AP) — As extremist violence grows across Africa, the United States is considering reducing its military presence on the continent, a move that worries its international partners who are working to strengthen the fight in the tumultuous Sahel region.

The timing is especially critical in the Sahel, the vast arid region south of the Sahara Desert, where militants with links to al-Qaida and the Islamic State group have carried out increased attacks in the past six months. In Niger and Mali, soldiers have been ambushed and at times overpowered by hundreds of extremist gunmen on motorcycles. More than 500,000 people have been displaced by violence in Burkina Faso.

The pending decision is part of a worldwide review by Defense Secretary Mark Esper, who is looking for ways to tighten the focus on China and Russia.

"My aim is to free up time, money and manpower around the globe, where we currently are, so that I can direct it" toward Asia or return forces to the United States to improve combat readiness, Esper said Monday after meeting with French Defense Minister Florence Parly, who traveled to Washington to urge the U.S. not to reduce forces in the Sahel.

High-profile Republicans and Democrats have warned that such a decision would undermine national security. They argue that cuts in Africa could hand over influence on the booming continent of 1.2 billion people to China and Russia.

The commander of U.S. forces in Africa, Gen. Stephen Townsend, is scheduled to testify Thursday to the Senate Armed Services Committee about the role of American forces in Africa.

Talk of a possible troop reduction "is reinforcing a view in West Africa that the U.S. is not interested, that it does not see it as a strategic importance and that it is going to cut and run and abandon its African allies," Judd Devermont, director of the Center for Strategic and International Studies Africa Program, told The Associated Press.

The U.S. has about 6,000 personnel on the continent. In West Africa, the Africa Command's mandate is to advise and assist, whereas in East Africa, where most of the U.S. troops are located, forces also accompany African troops on missions.

More than 1,000 U.S. personnel are currently in the Sahel. The U.S. has also constructed a \$110 million drone base in northern Niger.

Nigeria's information minister, Lai Mohammed, urged the U.S. not to cut back, citing an increase in terrorism in Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Cameroon and Chad since the defeat of ISIS in Syria.

"So I think what we need now is more support," Mohammed told the AP. "I'm not talking in terms of physical soldiers, American soldiers. But I think we need more support. Otherwise we will inadvertently be strengthening the hand of the terrorists."

The looming U.S. decision comes as former colonizer France pledges more support than ever before to Sahel countries. France already has sent more than 200 additional troops to reinforce its already 4,500-strong operation in the Sahel, and French Chief of Staff François Lecointre says he will request even more troops.

The mission in the Sahel "is a classic case of burden sharing, where limited U.S. support leverages an immense effort carried out by France and Europe," Parly said, speaking alongside Esper on Monday at a

Pentagon news conference.

Parly joined top Portuguese, Swedish and Estonian military officials on a visit to Niger, Chad and Mali last week to discuss how to proceed with an international anti-terrorism coalition dubbed Takouba.

At a summit with West African leaders this month, French President Emmanuel Macron said he hopes to convince U.S. President Donald Trump that the fight against global extremism "is also at stake in this region."

West African leaders at the summit said they hoped the U.S. would maintain its military presence in West Africa.

The heads of state for the G5 Sahel, a group that includes Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, Mauritania and Chad, asked for a continuation of American and French military engagement in the region and "pleaded for a strengthening of the international presence alongside them," according to the closing statement for the summit.

The U.S. footprint in West Africa, where the cuts would most likely happen, is light compared to other regions. But the effect of its force presence, training programs, development aid and military assistance is important, leaders say.

Col. Thomas Geiser, deputy commander of special operations for the Africa Command, said the biggest risk is allowing al-Qaida affiliates and the Islamic State to expand "and potentially consolidate safe havens there."

He emphasized the need for a strengthened regional and multi-national approach to the violence and for more broad support of communities, saying African partners must lead efforts. But a regional security force assembled by the G5 Sahel has struggled to fund its efforts and end the violence.

The G5 Sahel force will now focus most of its efforts in the tri-border region between Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso, targeting Islamic State Grand Sahara, Parly said.

However, progress in the Sahel has been minimal, and the problems there need to be solved by those regional governments, the assistant secretary for the U.S. State Department's African affairs division, Tibor Nagy, said Monday during a telephone press briefing.

"The U.S. is actively involved through a number of programs in the Sahel region," Nagy said. "It takes political will to counter terrorism."

It is unclear also how the newly constructed drone air base in northern Niger will be affected. Last week, the U.S. handed over a C-130 hangar at Niger Air Base 201 to the Nigerien Air Force.

Col. Abdoul Kader Amirou, deputy chief of staff for the Nigerien Air Force, said the hangar will boost capabilities for the armed forces and "strengthen joint actions between the Nigerien and U.S. forces."

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Associated Press writers Robert Burns in Washington, Andy Drake in London and Thomas Adamson in Paris contributed to this report.

## Americans pass health test after being evacuated from China

By MARK THIESSEN Associated Press

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — A plane evacuating more than 200 Americans from a Chinese city at the center of a virus outbreak continued Wednesday on to Southern California after everyone aboard passed a health screening test in Anchorage, where the aircraft had stopped to refuel.

All 201 passengers had already been through two screenings in China and were screened twice more in Anchorage by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. One passenger received medical attention for a minor injury that happened before boarding the airplane in China, according to a news release from Alaska's Department of Health and Social Services.

The U.S. government chartered the plane to fly out diplomats from the U.S. Consulate in Wuhan, where the latest coronavirus outbreak started, and other Americans. The plane landed Tuesday night in Anchorage. The Americans will undergo additional health screenings in California and will be temporarily housed there for a period of time as they finish the repatriation process, the statement said.

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"For many of us directly involved, this has been a moving and uplifting experience," said Alaska's Chief Medical Officer Dr. Anne Zink. "The whole plane erupted in cheers when the crew said, 'Welcome home to the United States.'"

"This is the best possible outcome," added DHSS Commissioner Adam Crum. "We wish these passengers the best of luck as they complete their journeys home and I am deeply grateful to everyone who came together to assist us in helping with this repatriation effort."

The plane is now scheduled to land at March Air Reserve Base in California's Riverside County, instead of the original plan to go to Ontario International Airport in neighboring San Bernardino County.

Curt Hagman, an Ontario airport commissioner, said the Centers for Disease Control announced the diversion.

"We were prepared but the State Department decided to switch the flight" to the airbase, Hagman said.

Officials at the Ontario airport 35 miles (56 kilometers) east of Los Angeles had been readying facilities to receive and screen the repatriates and temporarily house them for up to two weeks — if the CDC determined that is necessary, said David Wert, spokesman for the county of San Bernardino.

Ontario International Airport was designated about a decade ago by the U.S. government to receive repatriated Americans in case of an emergency overseas, but it would have been the first time the facility was used for the purpose, Wert said.

Wuhan is the epicenter of a new virus that has sickened thousands and killed more than 100 people. China has cut off access to Wuhan and 16 other cities in Hubei province to prevent people from leaving and spreading the virus further. In addition to the United States, countries including Japan and South Korea have also planned evacuations. Symptoms of the virus include fever, cough, and in more severe cases shortness of breath or pneumonia.

The Americans aboard the white cargo plane with red and gold stripes left Wuhan before dawn Wednesday, China time. They arrived in Anchorage at the mostly desolate North Terminal just after 9:30 p.m. Tuesday, local time. The jetway was extended from the end of the terminal, but it also had no windows. Passengers were not visible. Media were held in a concourse between the airport's two terminals, about 100 yards (91.4 meters) from the plane. Airport workers were buzzing around the plane after it landed.

The passengers were isolated in the airport's international terminal, which lies mostly dormant in the winter months. The terminal is not connected to the larger and heavily used domestic flights terminal, and each has separate ventilation systems, said Jim Szczesniak, manager of the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport.

"In the wintertime, we have the ability and the luxury of not having any passenger traffic over there, so it's a perfect area for us to handle this kind of flight," he said.

Associated Press writers Matthew Lee in Washington and Amy Taxin in Santa Ana, California, contributed to this report.

## Question time: What's next in Trump's impeachment trial

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — With opening arguments wrapped up in President Donald Trump's impeachment trial, senators will now get a chance to ask questions. But the normally loquacious politicians will still have to keep silent, as their questions can only be submitted in writing.

The question-and-answer session, expected to last two days, will allow the lawyers on both sides to make their final points before the senators vote on whether to hear witnesses and, eventually, on whether to convict the president and remove him from office.

A look at the questions and answers:

SEEN, NOT HEARD

The senators must submit their questions to the presiding officer, Chief Justice John Roberts. He will then read them and request an answer.

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Senators must direct their question to either the House impeachment managers or the White House lawyers, not both, and senators cannot ask each other questions. Senators also cannot respond after their questions are answered.

The process keeps the senators silent, like a jury, as they decide whether to vote to convict the president.

When a senator has a question, a Senate page is expected to take the piece of paper from their desk to Roberts' seat at the head of the Senate. The senator must sign the piece of paper.

## BACK AND FORTH

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said Tuesday that the questions would alternate between Republicans and Democrats.

Senators on both sides have been coordinating with their leadership to ensure the questions are not duplicative. Sen. Kevin Cramer, R-N.D., said he'd been given a form on which to list his questions. Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., said he'd given his questions to Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer's office, just so they could figure out the "sequencing and avoiding duplication."

Durbin said that when he asked a question during the impeachment trial of President Bill Clinton, "it turned out six other people had the same idea. So we all joined in one question, and it was attributed to all of us."

## KEEP IT SHORT

Senators have up to 16 hours to ask questions, as they did in Clinton's trial. That should break down into two eight-hour days, with senators taking breaks after every 10 or 12 questions.

There is no official time limit for House impeachment managers or White House lawyers to respond, but both McConnell and Roberts urged brevity.

"During the question period of the Clinton trial, senators were thoughtful and brief with their questions, and the managers and counsel were succinct in their answers," McConnell said Tuesday. "I hope we can follow both of these examples."

Roberts asked the two sides to limit their answers to five minutes each. He noted that transcripts from the Clinton trial show that a similar request by Chief Justice William Rehnquist was met with laughter from within the chamber.

"Nonetheless, managers and counsel generally limited their responses accordingly," Roberts said.

## LAST-DITCH STRATEGY

Look for both sides to try to hone their final arguments with help from senators in their party.

Democrats are likely to ask friendly questions of the House impeachment managers, and Republicans to the White House. Those could be points that they felt weren't covered during the trial or arguments they want to emphasize.

That will be particularly helpful for House Democrats, who went first in the opening arguments and don't have a chance to rebut the White House's legal arguments.

Democratic officials working on the impeachment trial have been practicing and are eager to answer questions. They view the question-and-answer period as an opportunity to review the evidence and the facts, which they see as a positive for their side, said one of the officials, who requested anonymity to discuss preparations.

Republican and Democratic senators will also use their questions to poke holes in the others' arguments.

## QUESTION PREVIEWS

Senators of both parties previewed what they might ask.

Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del., said "an obvious question" is whether a transcript of a July call between Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is a full transcript. That call, in which Trump asks Zelenskyy to investigate Democrats, is at the heart of the House's impeachment case. The White House released a rough transcript of the call, but didn't make it clear what had been left out.

Cramer said he wants to ask House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff, D-Calif., the lead impeachment manager, why he didn't subpoena former national security adviser John Bolton. The House called Bolton to testify but never subpoenaed him when he didn't show up, a point that Republicans have used to argue against Bolton's testimony in the Senate.



Schiff has said they didn't subpoena Bolton because he had threatened a lengthy court fight. Bolton has now said he'd testify in the Senate, but most Republicans say they've heard enough.

## Israel headed for clash with ICC over West Bank settlements

By JOSEF FEDERMAN Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Emboldened by a supportive White House, Israel appears to be barreling toward a showdown with the international community over its half-century-old settlement enterprise in the West Bank.

With the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court poised to launch a war crimes probe of Israel's settlement policies, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday announced plans to move ahead with the potentially explosive annexation of large parts of the occupied West Bank, including dozens of Jewish settlements. He spoke in Washington as President Donald Trump unveiled a Mideast peace plan that matches Netanyahu's nationalistic stance and undercuts Palestinian ambitions.

This confluence of forces could make 2020 the year that finally provides clarity on the status of Israeli settlements and the viability of a two-state solution.

"History is knocking at the door," Israeli Defense Minister Naftali Bennett, a patron of the settler movement, said as he urged Netanyahu to immediately annex all of Israel's settlements and snuff out any hopes for Palestinian independence.

"Now the campaign is moving from the White House to the Cabinet room in Jerusalem," he said. "Take everything now."

The Palestinians want the West Bank as the core of a future independent state and see the settlements there — home to nearly 500,000 Israelis — as obstacles to their dream of independence. The international community backs this view and overwhelmingly considers the settlements to be illegal.

Since capturing the West Bank in the 1967 Middle East war, Israel has slowly and steadily expanded its settlements while stopping short of annexing the territory. The international community condemned the construction as illegal but has refrained from imposing sanctions or serious punishment.

This status quo began to change after Trump took office in early 2017. Surrounded by a team of advisers with close ties to the settlement movement, Trump took a more sympathetic line toward Israel and halted the automatic criticism of settlements of his predecessors. This resulted in a surge of Israeli construction plans that are just getting underway.

"Over the next year and certainly two years, we're going to see a sharp increase" in the settler population, said Baruch Gordon, director of West Bank Jewish Population Stats, a settler group. In its annual report, the group said the West Bank settler population grew last year to 463,353 people, in addition to some 300,000 settlers living in Israel-annexed east Jerusalem.

"We're here and we're not going anywhere," he said.

The major turning point for Israel was in November, when the U.S. declared that it did not consider settlements to be illegal. That landmark decision appears to have played a key role in Netanyahu's announcement that he plans to annex the Jordan Valley, a strategic area of the West Bank, and Israel's more than 100 settlements.

Ironically, this warm U.S. embrace could prove to be Netanyahu's undoing. Moving ahead with annexations is likely to trigger harsh international condemnations and possible legal action.

On Wednesday, a senior Israeli minister said a Cabinet vote to endorse annexation of parts of the West Bank will not take early next week, despite Netanyahu's pledge a day earlier to act quickly after the U.S. peace plan was released. Tourism Minister Yariv Levin told Israel Radio that the vote wasn't technically feasible because of various preparations, including "bringing the proposal before the attorney general and letting him consider the matter."

Last month, the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Fatou Bensouda, declared there is a "reasonable basis" to believe that settlement construction constitutes a war crime. Pending final approval from the court, she intends to open a formal investigation, a process that could cause deep embarrass-

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ment and discomfort for Israeli leaders.

Yuval Shany, an expert on international law at the Israel Democracy Institute, said annexation would "significantly" raise the risk of triggering prosecution at the ICC. Settlements are widely viewed as illegal based on the Geneva Convention principle that an occupying power is barred from transferring its population into war-won territories.

"That could be a relatively low-hanging fruit for the prosecutor to identify a specific act that is either part of the transfer or significantly aids and abets that transfer," he said.

While Israel does not accept the court's authority, Netanyahu appears to be taking the threat of prosecution seriously. He has launched harsh attacks against Bensouda and the court, saying the case against Israel is "pure anti-Semitism." He also has tried, with limited success, to rally international opposition to the ICC.

The Palestinians joined the ICC in 2015 after they were accepted as a nonmember state at the United Nations. They then asked the court to look into alleged Israeli crimes in the West Bank, Gaza and east Jerusalem, retroactive to 2014.

The year coincided with Israel's devastating war in the Gaza Strip. In her announcement last month, Bensouda said her probe would look at Israeli military practices as well as the actions of Hamas militants during the 2014 war, in addition to settlement activity.

Shany said Israel is much more vulnerable on the settlement issue than it is with regard to Gaza. Israel's military has mechanisms to investigate alleged wrongdoing by its troops, and despite criticism that this system is insufficient, it has a good chance of fending off the ICC. When it comes to settlements, however, Israel will have a difficult time defending its actions.

While the court would have a hard time prosecuting Israelis, it could issue arrest warrants that would make it difficult for Israeli officials to travel abroad. A case in the ICC would also be deeply embarrassing to the government, Shany said.

"The big white whale is the settlements," he said. "That would be a major PR disaster for the country."

## **GOP lacks votes to block Bolton, other impeachment witnesses**

**By ERIC TUCKER, ZEKE MILLER and LISA MASCARO Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's impeachment trial is shifting to questions from senators, a pivotal juncture as Republicans lack the votes to block witnesses and face a potential setback in their hope of ending the trial with a quick acquittal.

After Trump's defense team rested Tuesday with a plea to "end now," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell privately told senators he doesn't yet have the votes to brush back Democratic demands for witnesses now that revelations from John Bolton, the former national security adviser, have roiled the trial.

Bolton writes in a forthcoming book that Trump told him he wanted to withhold military aid from Ukraine until it helped with investigations into Democratic rival Joe Biden. That assertion, if true, would undercut a key defense argument and go to the heart of one of the two articles of impeachment against the president.

"I think Bolton probably has something to offer us," said Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska.

Not in Trump's view. "Why didn't John Bolton complain about this 'nonsense' a long time ago, when he was very publicly terminated," Trump tweeted shortly after midnight. "He said, not that it matters, NOTHING!"

The uncertainty about witnesses arises days before crucial votes on the issue. In a Senate split 53-47 in favor of Republicans, at least four GOP senators must join all Democrats to reach the 51 votes required to call witnesses, decide whom to call or do nearly anything else in the trial. Several Republicans apparently are ready to join Democrats in calling witnesses.

The two days set aside for questions, Wednesday and Thursday, also allow each side more time to win over any undecided senators pondering the witness issue. In the meantime, all will have the opportunity to grill both the House Democrats prosecuting the case and the Republican president's defense team.

Held to submitting written questions to be read by Chief Justice John Roberts, senators are expected to dig into the big themes of the trial — among them whether what Trump did or may have done rises to the level of "high crimes and misdemeanors" — as well as pointed and partisan attacks on each side's case.

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Trump faces charges from Democrats that he abused his power like no other president, jeopardizing U.S.-Ukraine relations by using the military aid as leverage while the vulnerable ally battled Russia. Democrats say Trump then obstructed their probe in a way that threatens the nation's three-branch system of checks and balances.

The president's legal team tried to lock up its case Tuesday and convince GOP senators that the president was right to ask Ukraine for investigations of Biden and his son Hunter and was well within his power to block the aid. They said he was not bound to abide by the congressional investigation.

Trump complained anew at a Tuesday night rally in Wildwood, New Jersey, charging that "congressional Democrats are obsessed with demented hoaxes, crazy witch hunts and deranged partisan crusades."

Trump attorney Jay Sekulow addressed the Bolton controversy head-on in closing arguments by dismissing the former national security adviser's manuscript as "inadmissible." Attorney Alan Dershowitz, the Harvard scholar, said earlier that even if Bolton's story is true the actions don't rise to an impeachable offense.

Senate Republicans spent considerable time in private discussing how to deal with Bolton's manuscript without extending the proceedings or jeopardizing the president's expected acquittal. That effort lost steam as Democrats showed no interest, Minority Leader Chuck Schumer saying, "We're not bargaining with them."

GOP senators were warned that if they agree to call Bolton or try to access his manuscript, the White House will block him, likely sparking a weeklong court battle over executive privilege and national security.

Nonetheless, Sen. Mitt Romney of Utah and Susan Collins of Maine appeared to be backed by others in the move to seek more testimony.

Some Republicans including Sen. Pat Toomey want reciprocity -- bringing in Bolton or another Democratic witness in exchange for one from the GOP side. Some Republicans want to hear from Biden and his son, who was on the board of a Ukrainian gas company when his father was vice president.

Those swaps, though, seem likely to fail as most Republican senators don't want to call Bolton and most Democrats would rather avoid dragging the Bidens further into the impeachment proceedings. The Bidens were a focus of defense arguments though no evidence of wrongdoing has emerged.

"I don't know that the manuscript would make any difference in the outcome of the trial," said Roy Blunt of Missouri, a member of GOP leadership. And some Republicans said they simply don't trust Bolton's word. Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky called Bolton "disgruntled" and seeking to make money off his time at the White house.

But John Kelly, Trump's former White House chief of staff, told an audience in Sarasota, Florida, that he believes Bolton.

White House officials privately acknowledge that they are essentially powerless to block the book's publication but could sue after the fact if they believe it violated the confidentiality agreement Bolton signed.

Trump and his lawyers have argued repeatedly that Democrats are using impeachment to try to undo the results of the last presidential election and drive Trump from office.

"What they are asking you do is to throw out a successful president on the eve of an election," said White House counsel Pat Cipollone.

Democrats, meanwhile, say Trump's refusal to allow administration officials to testify only reinforces that the White House is hiding evidence. The White House has had Bolton's manuscript for about a month, according to a letter from Bolton's attorney.

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Associated Press writers Alan Fram, Mary Clare Jalonick, Andrew Taylor, Matthew Daly, Laurie Kellman and Padmananda Rama 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. WHETHER TO CALL WITNESSES ROILS TRUMP'S TRIAL The impeachment trial is shifting to questions

from senators, a pivotal juncture as Republicans lack the votes for now to block witnesses — potentially scuttling plans for a quick acquittal.

2. **CASES OF NEW VIRUS TOP TOTAL FOR SARS** China, with 5,974 cases of new virus, has more infections than it did during the SARS outbreak, but the death toll is still lower.

3. **WHAT MIGHT NOT HAVE SAVED KOBE BRYANT HELICOPTER** The aircraft carrying the retired NBA superstar didn't have a recommended warning system to alert the pilot he was too close to land, but it's not clear it would have averted the crash, authorities say.

4. **ISRAELI CABINET POSTPONES VOTE ON WEST BANK ANNEXATION** The declaration by an Israeli minister comes despite Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's pledge to act quickly after the U.S. released a peace plan rejected by the Palestinians.

5. **TRUMP TO SIGN BIG TRADE DEAL** Trade experts say the impact of the new agreement with Canada and Mexico will be modest, but it dials down tensions that have contributed to slowing economic growth globally.

6. **'A BUILDING OF LOVE'** A South Carolina minister plans to convert a building once owned by the Ku Klux Klan into a shrine of reconciliation.

7. **ALLIES FEAR CHANGES TO AFRICAN POLICY** As extremist violence increases across Africa, the U.S. is considering reducing its military presence on the continent.

8. **WEINSTEIN FACING MORE ACCUSERS** Two one-time aspiring actresses, Tarale Wulff and Dawn Dunning, are next up as witnesses at the sexual assault trial of the disgraced Hollywood mogul.

9. **NO FISH STORY** Britain and the European Union are parting ways this week and one of the first issues to address is what will happen to the fishing grounds they shared.

10. **'THE WORLD'S BIGGEST STAGE'** Eclectic acts and controversy during the Super Bowl halftime show have drawn nearly as much attention as the NFL championship game itself.

## Syrian troops capture key town in rebel-held Idlib province

By **ALBERT AJI** and **BASSEM MROUE** Associated Press

DAMASCUS, Syria (AP) — Syrian government forces captured one of the largest and most strategic rebel-held towns in the country's northwest, the Syrian military and opposition activists said Wednesday, part of a Russian-backed military assault that has displaced hundreds of thousands of people fleeing to safer areas.

The town of Maaret al-Numan in Idlib province, which had been in rebel hands since 2012, sits on the highway linking Damascus with Aleppo and is considered critical to President Bashar Assad's forces. The town is now largely empty as a result of intense bombardment in recent weeks.

Its capture is the latest in a series of military triumphs for Assad. His forces have retaken control of most of the country from rebel fighters, largely because of blanket air support from Russia, which helped turn the tide in the nearly nine-year civil war.

Syria's nearly nine-year conflict left more than 400,000 people dead and displaced half of Syria's population, including more than 5 million who are refugees, mostly in neighboring countries.

An exception has been Idlib province, in the northwestern corner of the country near the Turkish border, which is held by opposition fighters and is dominated by al-Qaida-linked militants. The province is home to some 3 million people, many of them internally displaced.

Syrian government forces have been on the offensive for more than a month in Idlib province, the last rebel stronghold in the country. But in recent days, the government captured more than a dozen villages in the area as the insurgents' defenses began to crumble.

"Our armed forces continued operations in southern parts of Idlib with the aim of putting an end to crimes committed by terrorist groups," said army spokesman Brig. Gen. Ali Mayhoub. He listed more than a dozen villages and towns captured, including Maaret al-Numan.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an opposition war monitor, said insurgents withdrew from the town late on Tuesday. Syrian troops had left a road west of the town opened apparently to give a chance for insurgents to pull out and to avoid street battles inside the town.

Amid intense airstrikes and heavy bombardment, trucks loaded with displaced people from areas surrounding Maaret al-Numan, including Jabal al-Zawiya, headed toward areas near the Turkish border, already bursting with internally displaced people.

"Only God knows where our destination will be, where we will find a house. We do not know anything, maybe we will sleep in the car," said one woman who was among those fleeing with her family on Tuesday. She declined to give her name, fearing for her safety.

The Syrian Response Coordination Group, a relief group active in northwestern Syria reported that until the end of December more than 216,000 people fled their homes in Idlib. In a new release, the group said that 167,000 fled since the beginning of January bringing the total number to more than 383,000 people.

Farther north, government forces began an offensive on the western suburbs of Aleppo in an attempt to push insurgents away from Syria's largest city. Rebels have rained artillery and mortar shells down on Aleppo in recent days.

Maaret al-Numan sits on the highway linking Damascus with Aleppo, once Syria's main commercial hub. With the town's fall, government forces are now closer to retaking the critical north-south highway.

In August, Syrian troops captured another town along the highway, Khan Sheikhoun. Now that Syrian troops are in control of Maaret al-Numan, their next target is likely to be Saraqeb, which would become the last major town on the M5 highway that remains outside government control.

Mroue reported from Beirut.

## Confined at home, Chinese get creative to beat boredom

By PENNY YI WANG Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — Chinese around the country confined to their apartments either by choice or by order are making the best of the situation as cities remain in lockdown in a desperate bid to contain a new, dangerous virus.

A couple from Shantou, a coastal city in Guangdong province, recreated a childhood game at home for their children.

In video posted on Douyin, a popular Chinese social media platform, the mom pretends to be a street vendor selling hoops made of cardboard paper. The children throw the hoops to score prizes laid out on the ground. It is a popular game usually played outdoor at Chinese New Year celebrations, but this year is different.

"Many travel plans and outdoor activities were canceled. A lot of people are strictly limiting their needs of going outside," said Ouyang, the father. "Staying home is boring. So we decided to play this game at home with our kids and record a short clip of it."

A woman who goes by screen name Liang Jinjin lives in Yichang in Hubei province, a city not too far from the outbreak epicenter of Wuhan and one of several places where public transportation and traffic with the outside world have been blocked off. In her collection of videos, she sips water from a giant glass to her own reflection in the mirror and drinks from a coconut with a TV background showing animation of a beach. In another clip, she makes a tiny snowman with ice from her freezer.

"During the outbreak, everyone is nervous and staying at home spontaneously. But staying home is very boring, so this video of me 'traveling' at home is to hope that everyone can face the epidemic with positivity and optimism," she said.

Schools around China have delayed the start of spring semester due to the outbreak. So university student Wei Zikai turned his living room into a badminton court.

Others took to the social media to show off their skills like playing word games with Apple's virtual assistant Siri, pretending to be fishing from a small bucket in their room, and playing billiard using chopsticks and cherry tomatoes and longan, a tropical fruit, for balls.

On Monday night, residents of some Wuhan high-rise apartment buildings joined together, at least in spirit, from their balconies and windows to sing the national anthem and other songs.

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The anthem's refrain, "Qilai, qilai, qilai!" or "Rise up, rise up, rise up!" echoed between the towers of skyscrapers in the city of 11 million, where streets have grown eerily quiet as families try to avoid contact with others who might be infected.

Others shouted "Wuhan, fight!" echoing the chants heard from protesters in Hong Kong, where anti-government demonstrations have stretched on for months.

The death toll from the virus has topped 100 and more than 4,500 have fallen ill. More than 50 million people in Wuhan and nearby cities are being kept in place in the most far-reaching disease control measures ever imposed.

## From marching bands to The Boss to Lady Gaga at halftime

By **BARRY WILNER AP Pro Football Writer**

MIAMI (AP) — Regardless of your musical tastes, it seems the Super Bowl halftime show has gone there. From marching bands to New Orleans jazz, from Latin and Caribbean vibes to Motown. From classic rock to country, pop to hip hop and rap.

From the sublime (Tony Bennett) to the ridiculous (Janet Jackson's "uncovering"), and from Michael Jackson's moonwalks to U2's majestic remembrance of the 9/11 victims, the halftime presentations have drawn nearly as much attention as the NFL championship game itself.

It's certain to do so again on Feb. 2 when Jennifer Lopez and Shakira headline.

"You kind of tune in to the Super Bowl to be surprised," says Peter O'Reilly, the NFL's senior vice president of events, "in terms of what can happen, whether it's the renditions of the national anthem and 'America The Beautiful,' the pregame, halftime. ... Ultimately game day is about moments, creating moments that pull people together and that they talk about forever."

Those moments range from Bono opening his jacket in New Orleans as the names of the 9/11 victims were displayed in the Superdome to Lady Gaga coming down from the roof of the stadium in Houston. From the Stones and The Boss rocking ballparks to Bruno Mars making not one, but two star turns.

"They are kind of creating those signature moments people remember," O'Reilly said, "that kind of add and build on what is the power of the Super Bowl as an unofficial national holiday."

Entertainers don't necessarily have to be football fans to strive to get the gig. Mick and Keith prefer the English kind of football to the NFL's version. Justin Timberlake sponsors a PGA Tour event and fundraiser.

What these acts unquestionably recognize is the massive audience — and spotlight — at their command for about 12 minutes. Maroon 5, which headlined last year's halftime show, tuned up for it by appearing at the Pro Football Hall of Fame's induction concert the previous August.

So artists are eager to perform, even though they don't get paid; the NFL does handle all production costs and expenses for the acts, with Jay-Z's Roc Nation now involved. Adam Levine certainly isn't the first singer to campaign for the job he and his band got last February in Atlanta.

"Ever since I saw Diana Ross fly off into the sky at the halftime show, I dreamed of performing at the Super Bowl," Lopez said when introduced as the co-headliner this year. "And now it's made even more special not only because it's the NFL's 100th season, but also because I am performing with a fellow Latina. I can't wait to show what us girls can do on the world's biggest stage."

At one time, the halftime show seemed to have a local flavor. There was the "Tribute to Mardi Gras" in 1970; "A Salute to the '60s and Motown" in 1982; "Salute to Hollywood's 100th Anniversary" in 1987; and "Rockin' Country Sunday" in 1994 in Atlanta.

Now, the emphasis is on, well, megastars regardless of genre.

"At its core, the Super Bowl draws such a broad audience," says Mark Quenzel, the league's senior vice president of programming and productions. "It really is that opportunity for the intersection of sports and entertainment to bring these two together in a way interesting to a lot of fans. That also makes it a challenge. Who is going to do the show that is the most interesting to 200 million people?"

"The Super Bowl is the biggest single-day sporting event and it deserves that kind of entertainment."

So while there are such musical giants as Taylor Swift, Garth Brooks, Kendrick Lamar and Metallica who have not done the show — yet — the NFL hasn't exactly been missing the mark in the last decade with the likes of Timberlake, Beyonce, Madonna, Lady Gaga, Katy Perry and Red Hot Chili Peppers.

"I love my job," Bruce Springsteen said in 2019 when he brought the E Street Band to Tampa. "We come out and inspire; that's part of what we do. If they throw the money at us, then we keep that, too. But we do come out to inspire. And it was just like, 'Well, this is the year.'"

Perhaps the most difficult part of putting together the concert is not booking a big name. The NFL usually has determined who it will approach months before the regular season begins; league planners have been looking at the 2021 Tampa Super Bowl for several months.

Rather, it's the logistics of staging the show without slowing down the teams heading into the second half; not damaging the field; keeping the massive audience entertained; and satisfying the entertainers' needs.

"We work with the artists an amazing amount of time," Quenzel says. "We want them to do a show they are comfortable with. A show the majority of the 200 million people watching will know the songs they are singing. And we know the level of artists we are talking about, most people have seen them in some shape or form doing a performance. We are not introducing these artists to the audience.

"We want them doing what the audiences have never seen before. These performances are driven by the artists. Our job is to pull it all together — in 12 minutes, by the way."

## Two more accusers set to testify against Harvey Weinstein

By TOM HAYS and MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — One says Harvey Weinstein raped her after she let her guard down by telling herself he was only a "dirty old man." The other claims he offered movie roles to her in exchange for joining in a threesome with him.

The one-time aspiring actresses, Tarale Wulff and Dawn Dunning, are expected to describe those experiences from the 2000s with the disgraced movie mogul when they take the witness stand Wednesday at a New York City rape trial seen as a milestone for the #MeToo movement.

Prosecutors are using the two so-called "Molineux" witnesses to bolster their case against Weinstein. The judge has allowed them to testify about "prior bad acts" that didn't result in criminal charges because of the statute of limitations and other legal issues.

Weinstein, 67, is charged with forcing oral sex on then-"Project Runway" production assistant Mimi Haley in 2006 and raping another aspiring actress in 2013, who could testify later this week. He's insisted any sexual encounters were consensual and zeroed in on his accusers' continued contact with him after the alleged assaults.

The Associated Press does not typically identify people who say they have been victims of sexual assault, unless they agree to be named or gone public with their stories as Haley, Wulff, Dunning and "Sopranos" actress Annabella Sciorra have done.

Wulff met Weinstein in 2005 while working as a cocktail waitress at a members-only lounge at Cipriani's, one of his favorite Manhattan haunts. Even after he cornered her in a hallway and started masterbating, she convinced herself Weinstein "was simply a dirty old man" and decided to take up his offer to read for potential acting roles, prosecutor Meghan Hast said in her opening statement.

After Wulff read, Hast said, a driver took her to Weinstein's apartment. There, the much bigger and heavier Weinstein pushed her onto a bed and raped her, the prosecutor said.

Dunning alleges Weinstein fondled her genitals during a business meeting in his hotel suite in 2004 and on another occasion offered her three small movie roles, but only if she had three-way sex with he and his assistant.

"Dawn tried to laugh it off, make a joke of it, but the defendant got angry," Hast said. "This is how the industry works," he screamed at her. "How do you think other actresses got ahead?"

Hast said Dunning then fled.

Jurors so far have heard a tearful Haley say how she tried to fight off Weinstein before he sexually as-

saulted her. Last week, Sciorra testified that Weinstein overpowered and raped her after barging into her apartment in the mid-1990s.

On Tuesday, it was Elizabeth Entin, Haley's former roommate, who took stand to corroborate Haley's testimony. Before the alleged attack in Weinstein's Soho apartment, Entin said, the friends viewed Weinstein as a "pathetic old man" for pursuing Haley, and were amused when her pet Chihuahua, Peanut, once chased him around their own apartment in the East Village.

When a reporter asked Weinstein as he left the courtroom if he was afraid of Chihuahuas, he smiled and responded: "Do I look like I'm afraid of Chihuahuas?"

## **Pastor's fight against KKK becomes movie that may aid battle**

**By JEFFREY COLLINS Associated Press**

LAURENS, S.C. (AP) — Not many years ago in a small, rural South Carolina town stood The Redneck Shop — a racist emporium and Ku Klux Klan museum housed in an old theater, where white supremacist neo-Nazis gave heil-Hitler salutes and flaunted swastikas and Rebel flags.

That building, once the property of the Klan, now belongs to a black preacher and committed foe of racism who fought the group for more than 20 years. The Rev. David Kennedy plans to transform it into a shrine of reconciliation.

How Kennedy, whose great-great-uncle was lynched in the community, got ownership of the old Echo Theater building from an ex-Klansman — a man who once contemplated murdering Kennedy — is the subject of a movie that could end up raising funds for that transformation.

"It symbolizes right now in the shape it's in — hatred," Kennedy said. "But we hope we can turn it into a building of love."

A decade ago, the white supremacist store in Laurens was a place where one of the few shirts sold without an overt racial slur said, "If I had known this was going to happen I would have picked my own cotton." The World Famous Ku Klux Klan Museum with its racist meeting place was in the back.

The KKK had put the title in the name of a trusted member, Michael Burden. Burden says other Klan members once suggested that he kill Kennedy, and he considered it. Kennedy didn't know that when he saw Burden, hungry, poor and full of hate, and took him to a buffet to fill his stomach, then to a hotel so his family wouldn't have to sleep on the street.

Burden's girlfriend at the time kept urging him to leave the Klan and in 1997, he did. He also bestowed ownership of the old theater building upon Kennedy for \$1,000.

But there was a twist. Under the agreement, John Howard, who owned The Redneck Shop, would be allowed to stay and run his store as long as he lived.

Howard abandoned the store years ago, ignoring maintenance. Duct work and piping were ripped from the walls. He died in 2017, giving Kennedy complete control over the building.

Kennedy estimates it needs at least \$500,000 in repairs that must be done carefully because of the theater's age and historic location. That seems impossible for the minister whose New Beginning Missionary Baptist Church congregation meets in a converted gun store several miles west of Laurens.

But a movie may provide a Hollywood ending.

The story of the unlikely friendship between Kennedy and Burden has been made into a film called "Burden," scheduled for national release Feb. 28. Starring actor Forest Whitaker as Kennedy, it was shown at the 2018 Sundance Film Festival.

101 Studios, which produced it, has promised Kennedy it'll help repair and reopen the theater.

"The South cannot rid itself of its past. But we could rid ourselves of the Redneck Shop," Kennedy said.

The studio is getting companies to donate materials and time and is selling commemorative bricks that can be placed at the theater.

The movie's director, Andrew Heckler, first entered The Redneck Shop in the late 1990s after reading a short article about Kennedy's fight. He knew it had to be a movie and finished the screenplay in 2001, finally getting the green light from 101 Studios to make the film a few years ago.



"I knew this story would mean something to people. Three people in the middle of nowhere South Carolina did something that would be meaningful to all people," Heckler said. "There is a pathway for fighting hate. It's not easy. It's love, faith and not giving up."

Kennedy knows about not giving up. He protested when a South Carolina county refused to observe the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, and he helped lobby to remove the Confederate flag from the Statehouse dome. In his church office, he keeps a poster-size photo of a lynched black man swinging at the end of a rope. It is his great uncle, killed more than 100 years ago by a white mob in Laurens County.

Kennedy also has a photo of white people about 15 years ago in the back of the theater, wearing uniforms with a Nazi swastika and raising their arms and hands in a white power salute.

"Racism is a strange kind of organism. It is systemic. And it probably will not go away in our lifetimes," Kennedy said.

Burden and Kennedy remain friends, though not as close as they once were. Burden got married, turned his life around and now drives a truck across the country.

"When I changed my lifestyle I buried that guy," Burden said of his racist past.

Burden cautiously shares his story with those he thinks need to know that change is possible.

The movie named after him is a way to do that on a larger scale.

"I'm willing to go through this again," Burden said. "Am I happy about it? Some days yes, some days no."

Kennedy recently gave a tour of the theater to a few visiting reporters. Through the soft winter afternoon sunlight, faded two-story paintings of Nazi and U.S. flags can still be seen on a wall. A Confederate flag remains on the theater marquee.

The images are deteriorating, but they linger.

"Racism and hatred, they are both destructive and they have no future," Kennedy said. "But love, forgiveness and mercy will always have a future because they are constructive."

\_\_\_ Follow Jeffrey Collins on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/JSCollinsAP>

## Crash-warning device might not have saved Bryant helicopter

By **BRIAN MELLEY, DAVID KOENIG and BERNARD CONDON** Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The helicopter carrying Kobe Bryant didn't have a recommended warning system to alert the pilot he was too close to land but it's not clear it would have averted the crash that killed nine as the aircraft plummeted toward a fog-shrouded hillside, federal regulators and experts said.

Pilot Ara Zobayan had been climbing out of the clouds when the aircraft banked left and began a sudden and terrifying 1,200-foot (366-meter) descent that lasted nearly a minute.

"This is a pretty steep descent at high speed," Jennifer Homendy of the National Transportation Safety Board said Tuesday. "We know that this was a high-energy impact crash."

The aircraft was intact when it hit the ground, but the impact spread debris over more than 500 feet (150 meters). Remains of the final victims were recovered Tuesday and so far the remains of Bryant, Zobayan and two other passengers have been identified using fingerprints.

Determining what caused the crash will take months, but investigators may again recommend that to avoid future crashes helicopters carrying six or more passenger seats be equipped with a Terrain Awareness and Warning System (TAWS) that would have sounded an alarm if the aircraft was in danger of crashing.

The agency made that recommendation after a similar helicopter, a Sikorsky S-76A carrying workers to an offshore drilling ship, crashed in the Gulf of Mexico near Galveston, Texas, killing all 10 people on board in 2004.

The NTSB concluded if TAWS had been installed, pilots would have been warned in time to prevent hitting the water. The board recommended that the Federal Aviation Administration require the warning systems. Ten years later, the FAA eventually required such systems on air ambulances, but not other helicopters.

FAA officials had questioned whether the technology would work on helicopters, which fly lower and could trigger too many false alarms that might detract from safety.

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"Certainly, TAWS could have helped to provide information to the pilot on what terrain the pilot was flying in," Homendy said of the helicopter that was carrying Bryant.

Homendy also said it was too soon to say whether the pilot had control of the helicopter during the steep, high-speed descent, although she noted that "it wouldn't be a normal landing speed."

Bill English, investigator-in-charge of the agency's Major Investigations Division, said it's not clear yet whether "TAWS and this scenario are related to each other."

Helicopter pilot and aviation lawyer Brian Alexander said any collision warning system on aircraft going over mountainous terrain is welcome but the FAA recognizes they can sometimes do more harm if they are going off constantly and distracting the pilot. In any case, he added, it's not clear that one would have helped Bryant's pilot.

It "wouldn't necessarily have prevented the crash if this was a combination of a deteriorating weather situation and the pilot experiencing spatial disorientation," said Alexander of Kreindler & Kreindler. "Your body is sensing something that isn't happening. Another warning system screaming at you isn't going to help."

While TAWS was not installed on the helicopter flying Bryant, the aircraft did have a warning system using GPS, said pilot Kurt Deetz, who flew Bryant dozens of times in the chopper over a two-year period ending in 2017.

English said the agency is looking to document whether there was a GPS-based terrain avoidance system, but said it "doesn't look to be part of the scenario."

Zobayan, 50, was well-acquainted with the skies over Los Angeles and accustomed to flying Bryant and other celebrities.

He had spent thousands of hours ferrying passengers through one of the nation's busiest air spaces and training students how to fly a helicopter. Friends and colleagues described him as skilled, cool and collected, the very qualities you want in a pilot.

Zobayan had flown the day before the crash on a route with the same departure and destination — Orange County to Ventura County. But on Sunday, he had to divert because of heavy fog.

His decision to proceed in deteriorating visibility, though, has experts and fellow pilots wondering if he flew beyond the boundaries of good judgment and whether pressure to get his superstar client where he wanted to go played a role in the crash.

Jerry Kidrick, a retired Army colonel who flew helicopters in Iraq and now teaches at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Prescott, Arizona, said there can be pressure to fly VIPs despite poor conditions, a situation he experienced when flying military brass.

"The perceived pressure is, 'Man, if I don't go, they're going to find somebody who will fly this thing,'" Kidrick said.

The chartered Sikorsky S-76B plowed into a cloud-shrouded hillside as the retired NBA star was on his way to a youth basketball tournament in which his daughter Gianna was playing. Two of her teammates also were on the helicopter with parents.

NTSB investigators have said Zobayan asked for and received permission from air traffic controllers to proceed in the fog, which Homendy said was "very common." In his last radio transmission before the helicopter went down, he reported that he was climbing to avoid a cloud layer.

Investigators have not faulted his decision or determined why he made it. The FAA warns helicopter pilots that it is their job to decide whether to cancel a flight because of bad weather or other risks, and to have a backup plan in case weather worsens during the flight.

Randy Waldman, a Los Angeles helicopter flight instructor who viewed tracking data of the flight's path and saw a photo of the dense fog in the area at the time, speculated that Zobayan got disoriented in the clouds, a common danger for pilots.

He said Zobayan should have turned around or landed but may have felt the pressure to reach his destination, an occupational hazard for pilots often referred to as "got-to-get-there-itis" or "get-home-itis."

"Somebody who's a wealthy celebrity who can afford a helicopter to go places, the reason they take the helicopter is so they can get from A to B quickly with no hassle," Waldman said. "Anybody that flies

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for a living there's sort of an inherent pressure to get the job done because if too many times they go, 'No, I don't think I can fly, the weather's getting bad or it's too windy,' ... they're going to lose their job."

Deetz said he often flew Bryant to games at Staples Center, and never remembered the Lakers star or his assistants pressing him to fly in bad weather.

"There was never any pressure Kobe put on any pilot to get somewhere — never, never," Deetz said.

Deetz said that he flew with Zobayan a half-dozen times and that he was familiar with airspace and terrain around Los Angeles and knew "the back doors" -- alternative routes in case of trouble, such weather changes.

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"Helicopters are scary machines, but he really knew what he was doing," said Gary Johnson, vice president of airplane parts manufacturer Ace Clearwater Enterprises, who had flown with Zobayan about 30 times in roughly eight years. "I wouldn't do it unless he was the pilot."

Zobayan was chief pilot for the craft's owner, Island Express Helicopters. He also was a flight instructor, had more than 8,000 hours of flight time and had flown Bryant and other celebrities, including Kylie Jenner.

He even had a bit TV part when he and actor Lorenzo Lamas, a fellow pilot, flew the ex-girlfriend of comedian Andy Dick around in a chopper for an episode of "Celebrity Wife Swap."

Island Express has had three previous helicopter crashes since 1985, two of them fatal, according to the NTSB's accident database. All involved flights to or from the company's main destination of Santa Catalina Island, about 20 miles off the Southern California coast.

In 2008, three people were killed and three injured when an Island Express helicopter was destroyed as it came in for a landing on the island. Investigators said the chopper lost power, probably as a result of cracking in turbine blades inside the engine.

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Inclement weather has been cited as a cause of other deadly celebrity helicopter crashes.

Grammy-winning blues guitarist Stevie Ray Vaughan was among five people killed in 1990 when their helicopter slammed into a hill in dense fog after leaving a concert in Wisconsin. Music promoter Bill Graham and two others, including the pilot, were killed when the pilot ignored warnings not to fly in rain and fog and flew into power lines outside San Francisco in 1991.

On Tuesday, the last of the bodies and the wreckage were recovered from the weekend crash in Calabasas.

Fingerprints were used to confirm the identity of Bryant, 41; Zobayan; John Altobelli, 56; and Sarah Chester, 45. While the coroner has not identified five other victims, relatives and acquaintances have identified them as Bryant's 13-year-old daughter, Gianna; Sarah Chester's 13-year-old daughter, Payton; Altobelli's wife, Keri, and daughter, Alyssa; and Christina Mauser, who helped Bryant coach his daughter's team.

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Condon reported from New York and Koenig from Dallas. Associated Press writers Justin Pritchard, Robert Jablon, Christopher Weber and Stefanie Dazio in Los Angeles contributed to this story.

## Trump looks to sign trade deal, show wins during impeachment

By KEVIN FREKING and PAUL WISEMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is eager to show off a big policy win during his impeachment trial by signing into law a major rewrite of the rules of trade with Canada and Mexico.

Trump made renegotiating the North American Free Trade Agreement a priority during his 2016 campaign, although trade experts say the impact of the new U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement will be modest. He will sign the bill Wednesday.

Canada and Mexico already represent the top two export markets for U.S. goods. But the pact, along with the signing of a "phase one" agreement with China, dials down trade tensions that contributed to

slowing economic growth globally.

The leaders of the three nations signed the new pact in late 2018. Legislation implementing the USMCA received overwhelming, bipartisan support in Congress after several months of behind-the-scenes negotiations between Democratic lawmakers and the Trump administration.

Still, it appeared that prominent Democratic lawmakers were left off the White House guest list for Wednesday's event. The snub came after the Democratic-led House impeached Trump.

"The White House hasn't invited House Democrats to their USMCA signing ceremony. But we'll be well represented in the huge changes to the original USMCA draft that Democrats wrested out of the administration on labor, prescription drugs, environment and enforcement mechanisms," said Henry Connelly, a spokesman for House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

Trump showcases the agreement as a "a new model of trade for the 21st century." Speaking to supporters at a New Jersey rally on Tuesday night, Trump said: "Tomorrow we will replace the NAFTA nightmare, one of the worst trade deals ever in history."

NAFTA, which took effect in 1994, tore down trade barriers between the three North American countries and commerce between them surged. But Trump and other critics said NAFTA encouraged factories to leave the United States and relocate south of the border to take advantage of low-wage Mexican labor.

Trump threatened to leave NAFTA if he couldn't get a better deal, creating uncertainty over regional trade.

His trade negotiator, Robert Lighthizer, pressed for a revamped pact designed to bring factory jobs back to the United States. USMCA, for example, requires automakers to get 75% of their production content (up from 62.5% in NAFTA) from within North America to qualify for the pact's duty-free benefits. That means more auto content would have to come from North America, not imported more cheaply from China and elsewhere.

At least 40% of vehicles would also have to originate in places where workers earn at least \$16 an hour. That would benefit the United States and Canada — not Mexico, where auto assembly workers are paid a fraction of that amount.

The independent U.S. International Trade Commission last year calculated that USMCA would add 0.35%, or \$68 billion, to economic growth and generate 176,000 jobs over six years — not much of a change for a \$22 trillion economy with 152 million nonfarm jobs.

"It's a blip," said Syracuse University economist Mary Lovely, who studies trade. "The main thing is what it isn't: It isn't a continuation of uncertainty, and it isn't a major disruption" to business.

Critics include environmental groups concerned that the agreement does not address global warming. Some conservatives say the agreement will make cars and other products more expensive for consumers.

The president wasn't wasting any time highlighting the deal in battleground states that will determine who wins this year's presidential election. He will travel Thursday to Michigan, where some of the state's auto workers should benefit from a deal that encourages more manufacturing in the United States.

Trump wants to talk up a deal that about 4 in 5 Americans have heard little or nothing about. Indeed, while a third of the public approves of the deal and only 5% disapprove, a solid majority, 61%, have not formed an opinion, according to a recent poll conducted by Monmouth University.

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Associated Press writer Andrew Taylor contributed to this report.

## US beefs up screening of travelers for new virus from China

By LAURAN NEERGAARD and RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. health officials offered a reality check Tuesday about the scary new virus from China: They're expanding screenings of international travelers and taking other precautions but for now, they insist the risk to Americans is very low.

"At this point Americans should not worry for their own safety," Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar told reporters Tuesday.

China has confirmed more than 4,500 people with the respiratory illness, which in severe cases can

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cause pneumonia, with dozens more counted in other countries. In the U.S. so far, there are five confirmed patients, all of whom had traveled to the hardest-hit part of China — and no sign that they have spread the illness to anyone around them.

Still, “this is a very fast-moving, constantly changing situation,” Azar added.

Flanked by the government’s top infection specialists, Azar listed the biggest unanswered questions of the outbreak and tried to tamp down some of the fear and speculation provoked by China’s rising toll:

—How deadly is this new virus? China’s death toll has passed 100 but the first patients counted in an outbreak “are naturally the most severe cases” and “skew our understanding,” Azar cautioned. Over time, if doctors find many more people had just a mild, cold-like illness, the death rate will change.

—How easily does it spread? One way to measure that is an estimate of how many people could catch an infection from one contagious patient. Some reports have suggested that number might be between 1.5 and 3.5 for the new coronavirus, but Azar stressed it’s too soon to know. For comparison, one patient with measles could spread it to 12 to 18 others, he added.

—What about silent carriers? Reports from China suggest some people may have spread the virus before showing symptoms. And Germany on Tuesday said a man with the virus near Munich never traveled to China or had close contact with anyone showing symptoms. Instead, he may have been infected by a coworker from China who briefly visited for a company training session and didn’t report feeling ill until her flight home. Later authorities confirmed three additional cases from the German company, all connected to the first.

Some viruses, such as the flu, can spread before symptoms are obvious. But there’s no evidence it’s happened with the new virus in the U.S., where health officials are checking contacts of the sick. And epidemics are driven by the openly sick, said Dr. Anthony Fauci, infectious disease chief of the National Institutes of Health.

Still, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention wants to send its own scientists to visit China for a first-hand look try to answer those questions. On Tuesday, the World Health Organization said it hopes to send in international experts soon.

Without a vaccine or treatments, the world is depending on tried-and-true public health steps to tamp down the outbreak — finding the infected early and isolating them to stem the spread.

In the U.S., the CDC is beefing up its checks of incoming travelers. It already had been screening for illness among passengers arriving from the epicenter of China’s outbreak at five U.S. airports. But people who’ve visited other parts of China still may be arriving, with stops in other places first. Now, CDC is sending extra staff to other “quarantine stations” to screen arrivals at a total of 18 airports around the country and at two border crossings, in El Paso, Texas, and San Diego.

The State Department has also chartered a plane to evacuate diplomats from the U.S. Consulate in Wuhan, the city where the outbreak started, and some other Americans.

Asked if those evacuees would be quarantined, Azar said there will be doctors on the flight to check all the passengers so health officials can decide if additional steps are needed.

With an incubation period of anywhere from two to 14 days, travelers may arrive showing no symptoms. But CDC’s Dr. Nancy Messonnier said the screenings are an opportunity to educate travelers that if they start feeling sick — with a fever, cough or flu-like symptoms — after returning from an outbreak zone, they should contact their doctor. That’s exactly what the first U.S. patients did.

Azar said he has directed \$105 million to fight the outbreak. Among the next steps, the CDC developed a test for the virus and aims to make it usable by state health departments, to speed diagnosis of suspected cases. Research also is under way to develop a vaccine or treatment.

Airport screenings were initially done in New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago and Atlanta. That has been expanded to Anchorage, Alaska; Boston; Dallas; Detroit; El Paso, Texas; Honolulu; Houston, Miami, Minneapolis; Newark, New Jersey; Philadelphia; San Diego; Seattle; Washington, D.C. (Dulles); and San Juan, Puerto Rico.

AP Medical Writer Mike Stobbe in New York contributed to this report.

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.

## **Kobe Bryant helicopter lacked recommended safety device**

**By BRIAN MELLEY, DAVID KOENIG and BERNARD CONDON Associated Press**

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The helicopter carrying Kobe Bryant didn't have a recommended warning system to alert the pilot he was too close to land but it's not clear it would have averted the crash that killed nine because the pilot may have lost control as the aircraft plunged into a fog-shrouded mountain, federal investigators said Tuesday.

Pilot Ara Zobayan had been climbing out of the clouds when the aircraft banked left and began a sudden and terrifying 1,200-foot (366-meter) descent that lasted nearly a minute.

"This is a pretty steep descent at high speed," said Jennifer Homendy of the National Transportation Safety Board. "We know that this was a high-energy impact crash."

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Condon reported from New York and Koenig from Dallas. Associated Press writers Justin Pritchard, Robert Jablon, Christopher Weber and Stefanie Dazio in Los Angeles contributed to this story.

## Mag 7.7 quake hits between Cuba and Jamaica, but no injuries

By MICHAEL WEISSENSTEIN Associated Press

HAVANA (AP) — A powerful magnitude 7.7 earthquake struck in the Caribbean Sea between Jamaica and eastern Cuba on Tuesday, shaking a vast area from Mexico to Florida and beyond, but there were no reports of casualties or heavy damage.

The quake was centered 139 kilometers (86 miles) northwest of Montego Bay, Jamaica, and 140 kilometers (87 miles) west-southwest of Niquero, Cuba, according to the U.S. Geological Survey. It hit at 2:10 p.m. (1910 GMT) and the epicenter was a relatively shallow 10 kilometers (6 miles) beneath the surface.

Dr. Enrique Arango Arias, head of Cuba's National Seismological Service, told state media that there had been no serious damage or injuries reported on the island.

The Cayman Islands were rocked by several of the strong aftershocks that followed in the area, including one measured at magnitude 6.1. Water was cut off to much of Grand Cayman Island, and public schools were canceled for Wednesday.

Gov. Carlos Joaquín González of Mexico's Quintana Roo state, which is home to Cancun, Tulum and other popular beach resorts, said the earthquake was felt in multiple parts of the low-lying Caribbean state but there were no reports of damage or injuries.

The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center initially warned that the quake could generate waves 1 to 3 feet above normal in Cuba, Jamaica, the Cayman Islands, Honduras, Mexico and Belize, but issued a later message saying the danger had passed.

The quake was felt strongly in Santiago, the largest city in eastern Cuba, said Belkis Guerrero, who works in a Roman Catholic cultural center in the center of Santiago.

"We were all sitting and we felt the chairs move," she said. "We heard the noise of everything moving around."

She said there was no apparent damage in the heart of the colonial city.

"It felt very strong but it doesn't look like anything happened," she told The Associated Press.

It was also felt a little farther east at the U.S. Navy base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, on the southeastern coast of the island. There were no immediate reports of injuries or damages, said J. Overton, a spokesman for the installation, which has a total population of about 6,000 people.

Several South Florida buildings were evacuated as a precaution, according to city of Miami and Miami-Dade County officials. No injuries or road closures were reported. No shaking was felt at the Hard Rock stadium in Miami Gardens, which will host the Super Bowl on Sunday.

In the Cayman Islands, the quake left cracked roads and what appeared to be sewage spilling from cracked mains. There were no reports of injuries or more severe damage, said Kevin Morales, editor-in-chief of the Cayman Compass newspaper.

The islands experience so few earthquakes that newsroom staff were puzzled when it hit, he said.

"It was just like a big dump truck was rolling past," Morales said. "Then it continued and got more intense."

Dr. Stenette Davis, a psychiatrist at a Cayman Islands hospital, said he saw manhole covers blown off by the force of the quake, and sewage exploding into the street, but no more serious damage.

Claude Diedrick, 71, who owns a fencing business in Montego Bay, said he was sitting in his vehicle reading when the earth began to sway.

"It felt to me like I was on a bridge and like there were two or three heavy trucks and the bridge was



rocking but there were no trucks," he said.

He said he had seen no damage around his home in northern Jamaica.

Mexico's National Seismological Service reported that the quake was felt in five states including as far away as Veracruz, on the country's Gulf Coast.

\_\_\_\_\_ Associated Press writer Kate Chappell in Kingston, Jamaica, contributed to this report.

## **GOP lacks votes to block trial witnesses, McConnell concedes**

**By ERIC TUCKER, ZEKE MILLER and LISA MASCARO Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republicans lack the votes to block witnesses at President Donald Trump's impeachment trial, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell conceded late Tuesday, a potentially major hurdle for Trump's hopes to end the trial with a quick acquittal. Earlier, Trump's lawyers concluded his defense with a plea to move on.

Even after sitting through days and late nights of argument, several Republicans apparently are ready to join Democrats in considering in-person testimony from former National Security Adviser John Bolton and perhaps others.

Trump's lawyers made their closing case for a speedy acquittal Tuesday, but to no avail.

McConnell told colleagues in a private meeting that he did not yet have the votes to block Democrats from summoning witnesses. That outcome would prolong an election-year trial that Trump and his legal team had hoped was on track, as one lawyer said, to "end now, as soon as possible."

McConnell's statement, in a closed-door meeting of senators, was an acknowledgment of the extent to which revelations from Bolton have scrambled the trial's schedule and the desire for testimony. Bolton writes in a forthcoming book that Trump told him he wanted to withhold military aid from Ukraine until it helped with investigations into Democratic rival Joe Biden. That assertion, if true, would undercut a key defense argument and go to the heart of one major article of impeachment against the president.

Trump complained anew at a rally in Wildwood, New Jersey, focusing on Democrats rather than Republican senators.

"While we are creating jobs and killing terrorists, the congressional Democrats are obsessed with demented hoaxes, crazy witch hunts and deranged partisan crusades," he said.

There are still several days before any potential witness vote would be taken. A decision to call more witnesses would require 51 votes to pass. With a 53-47 majority, Republicans can only afford to lose three. If senators agree they want more witnesses they would then have to vote again on who to call.

McConnell convened the private meeting shortly after Trump's legal team concluded their arguments in the trial, arguing forcefully against the relevance of testimony from Bolton and insisting that nothing Trump had done amounted to an impeachable offense.

While scoffing at Bolton's book manuscript, Trump and the Republicans have strongly resisted summoning him to testify in person about what he saw and heard as Trump's top national security adviser.

A day after the defense team largely brushed past Bolton, attorney Jay Sekulow addressed the controversy head-on by dismissing the book — said to contradict a key defense argument about Trump's dealings with Ukraine — as "inadmissible."

"It is not a game of leaks and unsourced manuscripts," Sekulow said.

A night earlier Trump attorney Alan Dershowitz said that nothing in the manuscript — even if true — rises to the level of an impeachable offense. Sekulow also sought to undermine the credibility of Bolton's book by noting that Attorney General William Barr has disputed comments attributed to him by Bolton.

Senate Republicans spent considerable time in private discussing how to deal with Bolton's manuscript without extending the proceedings or jeopardizing the president's expected acquittal. Those lost steam, and Democrats showed no interest.

Chuck Schumer, the Senate's top Democrat, called a proposal for senators to be shown the manuscript in private, keeping Bolton out of public testimony, "absurd."

"We're not bargaining with them. We want four witnesses, and four sets of documents, then the truth

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will come out," Schumer said.

Senators are being warned that if they agree to call Bolton to testify or try to access his book manuscript, the White House will block him, beginning a weeks-long court battle over executive privilege and national security. That had seemed to leave the few senators, including Sen. Mitt Romney of Utah, Susan Collins of Maine and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, who have expressed a desire to hear new testimony without strong backing.

Also, other Republicans including Sen. Pat Toomey want reciprocity -- bring in Bolton or another Democratic witness in exchange for one from the GOP side. Some Republicans want to hear from Biden and his son, Hunter, who was on the board of a Ukrainian gas company when his father was vice president.

The Bidens were a focus of Trump defense arguments though no evidence of wrongdoing has emerged. The lawyers also delved into areas that Democrats see as outside the scope of impeachment, chastising former FBI Director James Comey and seizing on surveillance errors the FBI has acknowledged making in its Russian election interference probe.

Trump's attorneys argued that the Founding Fathers took care to make sure that impeachment was narrowly defined, with offenses clearly enumerated.

"The bar for impeachment cannot be set this low," Sekulow said. "Danger. Danger. Danger. These articles must be rejected. The Constitution requires it. Justice demands it."

Before consideration of witnesses, the case now moves toward written questions, with senators on both sides getting 16 hours to pose queries. By late in the week, they are expected to hold a vote on whether or not to hear from any witnesses.

"I don't know that the manuscript would make any difference in the outcome of the trial," said Roy Blunt of Missouri, a member of GOP leadership. And some Republicans said they simply don't trust Bolton's word. Rand Paul of Kentucky called Bolton "disgruntled" and seeking to make money off his time at the White house.

But John Kelly, Trump's former White House chief of staff, told an audience in Sarasota, Florida, that he believes Bolton.

White House officials privately acknowledge that they are essentially powerless to block the book's publication, but could sue after the fact if they believe it violated the confidentiality agreement Bolton signed against disclosing classified information.

Trump is charged with abusing his presidential power by asking Ukraine's leader to help investigate Biden at the same time his administration was withholding hundreds of millions of dollars in security aid. A second charge accuses Trump of obstructing Congress in its probe.

Trump and his lawyers have argued repeatedly that Democrats are using impeachment to try to undo the results of the last presidential election and drive Trump from office.

"What they are asking you to do is to throw out a successful president on the eve of an election, with no basis, and in violation of the Constitution," said White House Counsel Pat Cipollone. "Why not trust the American people with this decision? Why tear up their ballots?"

Democrats, meanwhile, say Trump's refusal to allow administration officials to testify only reinforces that the White House is hiding evidence. The White House has had Bolton's manuscript for about a month, according to a letter from Bolton's attorney.

No matter the vote on witnesses, acquittal still seems likely given that Republicans hold a majority in the Senate and conviction would require a two-thirds majority against Trump.

According to data compiled by C-SPAN, the House managers used just under 22 of their 24 hours over three days, while the White House team used almost 12 hours, or half their time.

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Associated Press writers Alan Fram, Mary Clare Jalonick, Andrew Taylor, Matthew Daly, Laurie Kellman and Padmananda Rama contributed to this report.

## Trump shores up support for newest GOP congressman in Jersey

By JONATHAN LEMIRE Associated Press

WILDWOOD, N.J. (AP) — Moving on several fronts toward shoring up support for his reelection bid, President Donald Trump capped off a busy Tuesday by heaping praise on the newest Republican member of Congress and savaging Democrats he said are engaged in “demented hoaxes” like his impeachment trial.

On the day his legal team wrapped up its opening arguments on the Senate floor, Trump spoke to an enthusiastic audience in New Jersey in support of Rep. Jeff Van Drew, who recently switched from the Democratic Party to the GOP after breaking ranks over impeachment.

“While we are creating jobs and killing terrorists, the congressional Democrats are obsessed with demented hoaxes, crazy witch hunts and deranged partisan crusades. That’s all they know how to do,” Trump said.

Trump’s visit to Democratic-leaning New Jersey generated a boisterous audience that lined the streets to greet him during a critical moment in his presidency. He called Van Drew on stage, saying, “Jeff had the guts to defy the left-wing fanatics in his own party.”

Trump highlighted the economy during much of his speech, noting that 7 million jobs have been created since his election. He also continued to boast of the U.S. drone strike in Baghdad that killed Iran’s most powerful general, Qassem Soleimani, on Jan. 3. He cited the strike while attacking his political rivals with language that was incendiary even for a Trump rally.

“We stopped him cold, yet Washington Democrats like crazy Bernie Sanders and nervous Nancy Pelosi, they opposed our actions to save American lives. They opposed it,” Trump asserted to a roar of boos.

Pelosi and other Democrats have questioned the strategy behind Trump’s order to kill Iran’s general, which was made without prior approval from Congress. They pointed to potential consequences of heightened tensions that could endanger U.S. troops and lead to war with Iran.

On Tuesday, Trump sought to push past the ongoing impeachment trial that has cast a shadow over the White House. Earlier in the day, he released a Middle East peace plan that was immediately met with skepticism that it would go anywhere without Palestinian buy-in. But Trump’s proposal was about more than how the plan would play out in the troubled region. It was also an effort to keep his promises to some of his most ardent supporters at home.

Trump’s strong pro-Israel position has brought him support from Zionist Jews and evangelical Christians. Trump enjoys robust support from evangelicals, and his first campaign event of 2020 was a speech to conservative Christians in Miami.

Minutes after Trump finished unveiling his plan, the president’s impeachment trial resumed at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue, where his legal team was wrapping up its defense presentation. Trump had demanded that his legal team use its three days to offer a robust televised defense of his actions and play not just to the 100 senators in the chamber but also to the millions watching at home.

Although Trump’s acquittal by the Republican-controlled Senate is all but assured, his team has tried to minimize the political damage. And the president is hoping to use impeachment to motivate his political base and independents disenchanted with impeachment to turn out in greater numbers this fall.

Jay Sekulow, one of his lawyers, used his time before the Senate to offer a greatest-hits list of attacks against Trump’s perceived foes — from ousted FBI agents to secret federal courts — and to highlight what he saw as politically driven maneuvering by the Democrats to oust the president.

“Danger, danger, danger,” he told senators. “That’s politics. You’re being called upon to remove the duly elected president of the United States. That’s what these articles of impeachment call for.”

White House counsel Pat Cipollone, also part of the defense, added: “What they are asking you to do is to throw out a successful president on the eve of an election, with no basis, and in violation of the Constitution.”

“Why not trust the American people with this decision? Why tear up their ballots?” Cipollone said. “The election is only months away. The American people are entitled to choose their president.”

While Trump’s lawyers argued that the Democrats were trying to undo the last election, the president’s focus on Tuesday night was on the next one. For his first rally since the Senate trial began, Trump was

traveling not to a 2020 battleground state but instead to the Democratic stronghold of New Jersey.

Remaining largely disciplined, Trump avoided the specifics of the impeachment trial and did not mention the name of his former national security adviser John Bolton, whom Democrats want to call as a witness in the case. But Trump mused at the rally about competing in New Jersey this election -- he lost by double-digit percentage points in 2016 — and polled the crowd about whether he should hold a rally at the state's famed Meadowland Sports Complex over the summer

The setting was atypical for Trump: a Jersey shore town where people camped out overnight on the beach to get a spot in line for the rally being held at a boardwalk convention center. Van Drew, who attended the rally, said Trump has helped restore the military and protect the economy. "Do we want to keep it that way?" he asked the crowd.

Follow Lemire on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/@JonLemire>

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

## AP analysis: NFL teams lost over \$500M to injuries in 2019

By TERESA M. WALKER and LARRY FENN Associated Press

NFL teams paid more than a half-billion dollars to Week 1 starters who missed games because of injuries this season and players who ended the year on injured reserve, according to an Associated Press study.

And the players sidelined the most in a league devoted more and more to speed: the fastest guys on the field, wide receivers.

While much of the recent focus has been on protecting high-priced quarterbacks and limiting head injuries — concussions were up slightly over last year — keeping wideouts and the defenders who try to stop them healthy has occupied most of the NFL's medical personnel. Cornerbacks and safeties were second and third on the list.

Kansas City Chiefs star Tyreek Hill missed four of the 567 games that 74 receivers were sidelined for in 2019, costing teams a position-high \$72 million, according to the AP's analysis of players on injured reserve at the end of the NFL's regular season along with time missed by opening-game starters. The estimated \$521 million spent on players checked by the AP doesn't include players who became starters after Week 1 and later missed games with injuries.

Patrick Mahomes' top target, Hill hurt his collarbone in the season opener, just days after signing a three-year, \$54 million contract extension. Fortunately for the Chiefs, he returned to form and helped lead them to the Super Bowl against San Francisco on Sunday. Asked about injuries for receivers, Hill said he's been hurt but never hit that hard by a defender.

"That's why you don't get tackled," the player nicknamed "Cheetah" and self-proclaimed fastest man in the NFL said Monday night. "You just got to learn how to juke better, baby, you know? That's why we put those offseason moments in, you know?"

The NFL keeps tweaking rules and tracking data from players in trying to keep them healthier. But concussions rose to 145 this year, 10 more than in 2018. The AP's analysis found concussions cost more in terms of salary and salary-cap hits on average, ahead of knee, neck and ankle injuries.

More than 60% of injuries this season came in the lower extremities, with knees No. 1, according to the injury information released by the NFL last Thursday. The league has a task force studying those injuries to better prevent them.

"This is a big deal this is not only from a player availability standpoint from a club perspective but from a player perspective," said Leigh Weiss, a physical therapist and the New York Giants' director of rehabilitation. "It's their ability to make a team, it's their ability to perform at the highest level, it's their ability to stay healthy, and that to us is paramount."

Some other findings from the study:

— Players making under \$1 million per year are more likely to land on injured reserve than those who

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make more. Of the 248 players in the AP database making \$1 million or less against the salary cap, 195 were put on IR (78.6%). For players making more than \$1 million, 137 of 325 were put on IR (42.2%).

— The San Francisco 49ers (15-3) are preparing for the Super Bowl despite leading the league in games missed due to injuries as counted by AP. The 49ers finished with 16 players on injured reserve, a group that includes running back Jerick McKinnon, who missed the entire season trying to recover from the torn right ACL that wiped out his 2018 season.

The NFC champs also were without injured receivers Trent Taylor and Jalen Hurd all year. San Francisco lost left tackle Joe Staley to a broken leg in Week 2 followed by right tackle Mike McGlinchey and fullback Kyle Juszczyk with knee injuries in early October.

"This whole season, ups and downs, we had injuries left and right," 49ers tight end George Kittle said. "We had guys step up when they needed to from (Justin) Skule to (Daniel) Brunskill — to our defense, (safety) Marcell (Harris), (linebacker Dre) Greenlaw. We had guys everywhere stepping up the entire season."

As for the Chiefs, their opponent on Sunday? Only five teams lost fewer games to injuries counted by the AP.

— The New York Jets finished the season with a league-high 21 players on injured reserve and had so many other injuries the organization is studying every step of the treatment and recovery process. Jets general manager Joe Douglas hopes 2019 was a "bit of anomaly."

"We are in the midst of that research," Douglas said. "We are doing a deep dive as far as what we can do to prevent this from happening again and what we need to implement to make sure that this amount of injuries doesn't happen."

— When it comes to salaries, the Philadelphia Eagles lost the most with millions unavailable due to games missed — even as they scrambled to a 9-7 finish and the NFC East title. They placed 11 players on injured reserve with the receiving group taking a big hit: DeSean Jackson missed 13 games with an abdomen injury, Alshon Jeffery missed seven with different foot injuries and Nelson Agholor sat out six with a hurt knee.

— Knees were the most costly injuries. Miami had offensive tackle Julien Davenport miss eight games with an injured knee that put him on injured reserve, though he returned. A knee injury cost cornerback Xavien Howard 11 games. The Dolphins didn't lose nearly as much in salary when undrafted rookie receiver Preston Williams hurt a knee in their first win of the season and missed the final eight games.

"You never want to see a guy go down and get injured like that, but he's such a talented player," Miami quarterback Ryan Fitzpatrick said of Williams. "He's got such a bright future."

— Quarterback and offensive tackle, usually two of the highest-paid positions on any team, have a higher average cost per position ahead of wide receiver from missing games. QB average cost from injuries: \$1,640,000; offensive tackle, \$1,230,000; wide receiver, \$883,000.

More AP NFL: <https://apnews.com/NFL> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_NFL](https://twitter.com/AP_NFL)

## Apple holiday season tops projections as iPhone bounces back

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE AP Technology Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Apple is still reaping huge profits from the iPhone while mining more money-making opportunities from the growing popularity of its smartwatch, digital services and wireless earbuds.

That combination produced a banner holiday season for a company whose fortunes appeared to be sliding just a year ago amid declining sales for the iPhone, its marquee product for the past decade.

Apple's fiscal first-quarter results, released Tuesday, provided the latest proof that the fears hanging over the consumer electronics icon might have been unfounded.

Apple's profit and revenue for the October-December period topped analysts' projections, providing another boost to a stock that has more than doubled in less than 13 months.

The shares surged more than 1% to \$322.14 in extended trading after the numbers came out. That's up from \$142 in January 2019 after Apple warned that consumers weren't buying as many new iPhones

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as they once were, especially in China, the company's biggest market outside the U.S. and Europe. China is also where Apple makes most of its iPhones and several other products.

If the shares move similarly in Wednesday's regular trading session, they will flirt with a new all-time high for the stock and further cement Apple's position as the most valuable company in the U.S., with a market value of \$1.4 trillion.

A deadly viral outbreak in China, which has curtailed travel and threatens the world economy, looms as a potential concern for Apple. But investors for now are focusing on what looks like an even more prosperous road ahead for a company that turned a \$55 billion profit in its past fiscal year.

In a conference call Tuesday, CEO Tim Cook said the coronavirus outbreak has already caused some of Apple's suppliers in China to delay reopening their factories closed for the Lunar New Year holiday from the end of this month until Feb. 10. And some stores in China selling Apple products already have temporarily closed or reduced their operating hours because fewer customers are shopping as virus worries escalate.

"The situation is emerging and we're still gathering lots of data points and monitoring it very closely," Cook said.

Apple got off to a fast start for fiscal 2020, with a first-quarter profit of \$22.2 billion, or \$4.99 per share, on revenue of \$91.8 billion. Analysts polled by FactSet had predicted earnings of \$4.54 per share on revenue of \$88.5 billion.

As usual, the iPhone remained Apple's marquee attraction. Boosted by the release of the iPhone 11 heading into the holiday season, the product generated sales of \$56 billion, an 8% increase from the previous year's disappointing showing.

Besides rolling out high-end phones with more cameras and a starting price of \$1,000, Apple sold a more basic model starting at \$700 — a \$50 drop from a comparable version released in 2018.

Apple's division that includes its app store, product warranties, music streaming and a new Netflix-like video service delivered revenue of \$12.7 billion, up 17% from the previous year. Apple is hoping its service division will produce revenue of at least \$50 billion this year, doubling its output in just four years.

The services division is feeding into all iPhones, iPads, Macs and other Apple products already being used, which the company said Tuesday now totals 1.5 billion devices, up by 100 million from the previous year.

"We see this as a powerful testament to the satisfaction, engagement and loyalty of our customers — and a great driver of our growth across the board," Cook said.

The Apple TV Plus video streaming service, which Apple launched amid great fanfare in October, is supposed to help that cause, but it may not be a huge contributor this year. That's because Apple is initially selling it for just \$5 per month to help drum up interest. That's less than half the price of Netflix's most popular plan.

What's more, Apple is giving away a free year of Apple TV Plus to anyone who buys a new iPhone or several other devices, a promotion that means tens of millions of people aren't paying anything for the service yet. Apple hasn't released subscription numbers for the video service.

Meanwhile, the Apple Watch, which the company began selling nearly five years ago, continued to gain new converts, and the latest version of its wireless earbuds, AirPods, emerged as a hot commodity during the holiday season.

Apple introduced the AirPods after removing the headphone jack from the iPhone in 2016, but the product picked up more momentum in October with a next-generation set designed to fit better in people's ears. That version, called AirPods Pro, proved so popular that Apple had trouble keeping it in stock. The AirPods Pro also cost more at \$250, compared with \$160 to \$200 for the previous models.

All those factors helped Apple's "wearables, home and accessories" category garner sales totaling \$10 billion in the past quarter, a 37% increase from the previous year. That prompted Cook to hail it as a "blow-out" quarter for the wearables and accessories division, which is now Apple's fastest growing category.

## **Palestinians angrily reject Trump Mideast peace plan**

**By MOHAMMED DARAGHMEH and FARES AKRAM Associated Press**

RAMALLAH, West Bank (AP) — Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas said “a thousand no’s” to the Mideast peace plan announced Tuesday by President Donald Trump, which strongly favors Israel.

The Palestinians remain committed to ending the Israeli occupation and establishing a state with its capital in east Jerusalem, Abbas said at a news conference in the West Bank city of Ramallah, where the Western-backed Palestinian Authority is headquartered.

“After the nonsense that we heard today we say a thousand no’s to the Deal of The Century,” he said.

The plan would create a Palestinian state in parts of the West Bank, but would allow Israel to annex its settlements in the occupied territory. The plan would allow the Palestinians to establish a capital on the outskirts of east Jerusalem but would leave most of the city under Israeli control.

“We will not kneel and we will not surrender,” Abbas said, adding that the Palestinians would resist the plan through “peaceful, popular means.”

The Islamic militant group Hamas rejected the “conspiracies” announced by the U.S. and Israel and said “all options are open” in responding to the Trump administration’s plan.

“We are certain that our Palestinian people will not let these conspiracies pass. So, all options are open. The (Israeli) occupation and the U.S. administration will bear the responsibility for what they did,” senior Hamas official Khalil al-Hayya said as he participated in one of several protests that broke out across the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip.

Protesters burned tires and pictures of President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Abbas held an emergency meeting with other Palestinian factions, including Hamas, to discuss a unified response to the plan. Abbas had rejected the deal before it was announced saying the U.S. was hopelessly biased toward Israel.

The Palestinians cut off all contacts with the Trump administration after it recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel more than two years ago and moved the embassy there.

Late on Tuesday, Palestinian protesters clashed with Israeli forces on the outskirts of Ramallah, near the Jewish settlement of Beit El.

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said Trump’s initiative “provides an occasion to re-launch the urgently needed efforts towards a negotiated and viable solution” to the conflict.

He said the EU would “study and assess the proposals put forward.” He reiterated the bloc’s commitment to a “negotiated and viable two-state solution that takes into account the legitimate aspirations of both the Palestinians and the Israelis, respecting all relevant U.N. resolutions and internationally agreed parameters.”

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said the United Nations supports two states living in peace and security within recognized borders, on the basis of the pre-1967 borders, according to his spokesman.

“The position of the United Nations on the two-state solution has been defined, throughout the years, by relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions by which the Secretariat is bound,” the spokesman, Stephane Dujarric, said.

Those resolutions call all Israeli settlements in the West Bank illegal and call for a solution based on borders before the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, with agreed land swaps.

Saudi Arabia said it appreciated the Trump administration’s efforts and encouraged the resumption of direct talks between Israel and the Palestinians “under the auspices of the United States.” The kingdom’s Foreign Ministry tweeted that it hoped to see the peace process move forward in order to reach “an agreement that achieves the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.”

Jordan, meanwhile, warned against any Israeli “annexation of Palestinian lands” and reaffirmed its commitment to the creation of a Palestinian state along the 1967 lines, which would include all the West Bank and Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem.

Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi warned of “the dangerous consequences of unilateral Israeli measures,

such as annexation of Palestinian lands.”

Egypt urged Israelis and Palestinians to “carefully study” the plan and said it appreciates the administration’s efforts.

The Egyptian Foreign Ministry said in a statement Tuesday that it favors a solution that restores all the “legitimate rights” of the Palestinian people through establishing an “independent and sovereign state on the occupied Palestinian territories.”

Jordan and Egypt are the only two Arab countries to have made peace with Israel.

Associated Press writer Mohammed Daraghmeh reported this story in Ramallah and AP writer Fares Akram reported from Gaza City, Gaza Strip. AP writers Samy Magdy in Cairo and Joseph Krauss in Jerusalem contributed to this report.

## Budget deficit to break \$1 trillion despite strong economy

By ANDREW TAYLOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — An annual congressional report says the U.S. budget deficit is likely to burst through the symbolic \$1 trillion barrier this year despite a healthy economy.

Tuesday’s Congressional Budget Office report follows a burst of new spending last year and the repeal in December of several taxes used to help finance the Affordable Care Act. Those have combined to deepen the government’s deficit spiral well on into the future, with trillion-dollar deficits likely for as far as the eye can see.

The annual CBO update of the government’s economic and fiscal health estimates a \$1 trillion deficit for the ongoing fiscal year, which would bring the red ink above \$1 trillion for the first time since 2012, when former President Barack Obama capped four consecutive years of \$1 trillion-plus budget deficits. The government, slated to spend \$4.6 trillion this year, would have to borrow 22 cents of every dollar it spends.

Most economists say the most relevant way to look at the deficit is to measure it against the size of the economy, with deficits at 3 percent or so of gross domestic product seen as sustainable. The latest report shows deficits averaging 4.8 percent of GDP over the course of the coming decade.

“As a result of those deficits, federal debt would rise each year, reaching a percentage of the nation’s output that is unprecedented in U.S. history,” the CBO report says.

Obama’s deficits came as the U.S. economy recovered from the deep recession of 2007-2009. The return of trillion-dollar deficit now comes as the economy is humming on all cylinders, with the CBO predicting that the jobless rate nationwide will average below 4 percent through at least 2022. The growth rate is predicted to hit average 2.2 percent this year.

“The economy’s performance makes the large and growing deficit all the more noteworthy,” said CBO Director Phillip Swagel. “Changes in fiscal policy must be made to address the budget situation, because our debt is growing on an unsustainable path.”

The government reported a \$984 billion deficit for the 2019 budget year. Cumulative deficits over the coming decade are expected to total \$13 trillion — a total that would have gone higher save for CBO’s belief that yields on Treasury notes will remain unusually low as the government refinances its \$23 trillion debt.

The recent surge in the deficit has followed passage of the 2017 Trump tax bill, which has failed to pay for itself with additional economic growth and revenues as promised by administration figures like Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin. The surge in deficits also follows a final rewrite last summer of a failed 2011 budget deal to increase spending of both defense and domestic programs.

Divided government isn’t helping the deficit picture as the Democratic-controlled House led the way in repealing \$377 billion worth of “Obamacare” tax hikes, including a so-called Cadillac tax on high-cost health plans. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., was also a driving force in last summer’s budget accord, which is scored at adding \$1.7 trillion to the deficit over the coming decade.

CBO holds a traditional view of economists that debt that’s too high has a “crowding out” effect on private sector investment in the economy and can lead to higher interest rates and maybe even a European-style



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debt crisis. But interest rates have remained low despite CBO's alarms and more liberal economists hold a much more dovish view of the effects of higher deficits on the economy.

The CBO report landed amid an intensifying presidential campaign in which concerns about the deficit are not really an issue. President Donald Trump has promised to leave Social Security pensions and Medicare benefits off the table as his administration seeks ways to blunt the political impact of the eye-popping deficit figures.

The administration's budget is being released next month but is likely to be largely ignored, especially as election-year politics take over.

## Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Jan. 29, the 29th day of 2020. There are 337 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 29, 2002, in his first State of the Union address, President George W. Bush said terrorists were still threatening America — and he warned of "an axis of evil" consisting of North Korea, Iran and Iraq.

On this date:

In 1820, King George III died at Windsor Castle at age 81; he was succeeded by his son, who became King George IV.

In 1856, Britain's Queen Victoria introduced the Victoria Cross to reward military acts of valor during the Crimean War.

In 1861, Kansas became the 34th state of the Union.

In 1936, the first inductees of baseball's Hall of Fame, including Ty Cobb and Babe Ruth, were named in Cooperstown, New York.

In 1963, the first charter members of the Pro Football Hall of Fame were named in Canton, Ohio (they were enshrined when the Hall opened in September 1963). Poet Robert Frost died in Boston at age 88.

In 1975, a bomb exploded inside the U.S. State Department in Washington, causing considerable damage, but injuring no one; the radical group Weather Underground claimed responsibility.

In 1979, President Jimmy Carter formally welcomed Chinese Vice Premier Deng Xiaoping (dung shah-oh-ping) to the White House, following the establishment of diplomatic relations.

In 1984, President Ronald Reagan announced in a nationally broadcast message that he and Vice President George H.W. Bush would seek re-election in the fall.

In 1995, the San Francisco 49ers became the first team in NFL history to win five Super Bowl titles, beating the San Diego Chargers, 49-26, in Super Bowl XXIX.

In 1998, a bomb rocked an abortion clinic in Birmingham, Alabama, killing security guard Robert Sanderson and critically injuring nurse Emily Lyons. (The bomber, Eric Rudolph, was captured in May 2003 and is serving a life sentence.)

In 2005, jetliners from China landed in rival Taiwan for the first time in 56 years. Serena Williams defeated Lindsay Davenport 2-6, 6-3, 6-0 in the Australian Open final.

In 2006, ABC "World News Tonight" co-anchor Bob Woodruff and a cameraman were seriously injured in a roadside bombing in Iraq.

Ten years ago: In a face-to-face confrontation, President Barack Obama chastised Republican lawmakers during a GOP event in Baltimore for opposing him on taxes, health care and the economic stimulus, while they accused him in turn of brushing off their ideas and driving up the national debt. A jury in Wichita, Kansas, swiftly convicted abortion opponent Scott Roeder (ROH'-dur) of murder in the shooting death of Dr. George Tiller, one of the only doctors to offer late-term abortions in the U.S. (Roeder was sentenced to life in prison.) Haitian authorities detained 10 U.S. Baptist missionaries who were transporting 33 children to a Dominican Republic orphanage, though as it turned out, most of the children had living parents; all of the Americans were later released.

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Five years ago: Nine Democrats joined 53 Republicans in passing a Senate bill to construct the Keystone XL oil pipeline in defiance of a presidential veto threat. Rod McKuen, whose music, verse and spoken-word recordings made him one of the best-selling poets in history, died at 81.

One year ago: The largest utility in the U.S., Pacific Gas & Electric, filed for bankruptcy as it faced billions of dollars in potential damages from wildfires in California. Actor Jussie Smollett from the TV show "Empire" told police he had been physically attacked in Chicago by men who shouted racial and homophobic slurs. (Investigators concluded that Smollett made a false report because he believed it would give his career a boost; he was charged with 16 felony counts related to making a false report, but the charges were dropped without any admission of guilt.) The FBI wrapped up its investigation into the deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history; it found that the high-stakes gambler who killed 58 country music fans in Las Vegas in 2017 sought notoriety, but that there was no "single or clear motivating factor."

Today's Birthdays: Writer-composer-lyricist Leslie Bricusse is 89. Feminist author Germaine Greer is 81. Actress Katharine Ross is 80. Feminist author Robin Morgan is 79. Actor Tom Selleck is 75. Rhythm-and-blues singer Bettye LaVette is 74. Actor Marc Singer is 72. Actress Ann Jillian is 70. Rock musician Louie Perez (Los Lobos) is 67. Rhythm-and-blues/funk singer Charlie Wilson is 67. Talk show host Oprah Winfrey is 66. Actor Terry Kinney is 66. Country singer Irlene Mandrell is 64. Actress Diane Delano is 63. Actress Judy Norton (TV: "The Waltons") is 62. Rock musician Johnny Spampinato is 61. Olympic gold-medal diver Greg Louganis is 60. Rock musician David Baynton-Power (James) is 59. Rock musician Eddie Jackson (Queensryche) is 59. Actor Nicholas Turturro is 58. Rock singer-musician Roddy Frame (Aztec Camera) is 56. Actor-director Edward Burns is 52. Actor Sam Trammell is 51. Actress Heather Graham is 50. Former House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., is 50. Actor Sharif Atkins is 45. Actress Sara Gilbert is 45. Actress Kelly Packard is 45. Actor Justin Hartley is 43. Actor Sam Jaeger is 43. Writer and TV personality Jedediah Bila is 41. Actor Andrew Keegan is 41. Actor Jason James Richter is 40. Blues musician Jonny Lang is 39. Pop-rock singer Adam Lambert (TV: "American Idol") is 38. Country singer Eric Paslay is 37.

Thought for Today: "Misquotations are the only quotations that are never misquoted." — Hesketh Pearson, British biographer (1887-1964).

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