

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 1 of 59

- [1- Coming up on GDILIVE.COM](#)
- [2- District looking at \\$80,000 shortfall in FY2021](#)
- [3- Proposed 2020-21 School Calendar](#)
- [4- Superintendent report to Board of Education](#)
- [6- Elementary Principal Report](#)
- [7- MS/HS Principal Report](#)
- [8- Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs](#)
- [9- Upcoming Events](#)
- [10- Weather Pages](#)
- [13- Daily Devotional](#)
- [14- 2020 Groton Events](#)
- [15- News from the Associated Press](#)

“FAITH IS LIKE RADAR THAT
SEES THROUGH THE FOG.”

-CORRIE TEN BOOM



It's Girls' Basketball Action on GDILIVE.COM



**Roncalli
Cavaliers** VS



Groton Area Tigers

5:00 p.m. at Aberdeen Roncalli

C game sponsored by Olson Development

JV game sponsored by Private Donation

Varsity game sponsored by Locke Electric

and the S.D. Army National Guard

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

© 2019 Groton Daily Independent

District looking at \$80,000 shortfall in FY2021

Superintendent Joe Schwan reported to the board of education Monday night that with the reduction of 3.8 percent in Brown County ag valuation and the increase in state valuations resulting in a reduction in the mil levy, the Groton Area District will see a shortfall of \$80,000 in tax collections for FY2021. "It's a problem that we'll have to deal with," he said. He said there are three ways the district could address the situation. One is to increase utilization of capital outlay flexibility, another is to reduce general fund expenditures and the third is to opt out of the tax limits in the general fund.

Austin Fordham said that due to lack of numbers for the Jazz Band, he opened up the band to everyone and has created a flex band which seems to be working out quite well.

He reported that there are 27 students in fifth grade band and there are 41 in the high school band.

Fordham said an area of concern is scheduling and said that he lost a couple of students due to a conflict with schedules.

Dez Yeigh talked about the middle school band program. Three students were chosen for the Northwestern Music Festival. This was the first year Groton Area had nominated sixth graders. There are 23 students in sixth grade band - up from 20 from last year.

They are getting ready for the middle school talent show coming up later this year. Numbers are down in the junior high band, but she said the number should go up next year. Yeigh said they are playing harder to make up for the lack of numbers.

Cody Swanson reported there are 56 students in the senior high choir and 15 in the junior high choir. Two were chosen for the middle school all state choir. He reiterated that scheduling is an issue for all of the band and choir classes. Otherwise, he said, "All is great."

Lynette Grieve reported on physical education unit. She said that she was surprised by the number of students who don't know how to tumble. "There is so much going on in the family life and with activities," she said.

Brian Dolan, athletic director, thanked the school board for having him and his family as part of the Groton Area School. "Thank you for allowing us to be a part of your community," he said. He then went on to talk about the numbers in the various sports and he said that compared to other schools in the area, Groton Area is strong in numbers in most of the activities. He said that he is pleased with Avera coming over for athletic training and support. He said they are planning an athletic golf tournament June 5th to help offset the cost of the athletic training and support.

Janene Harry then took the school board members up to her art room to show them the various projects that they are doing.

Brian Schuring talked more about the physical education program. He said that he always stresses, "Play hard and have fun." He mentioned that they are starting pickle ball as that is an upcoming life-long sport.

Superintendent Joe Schwan reported that there are two "Stop the Bleed" kits in every room in both schools. He said that Patti Woods spearheaded it and it was a cool thing that the community did for the district.

Schwan reported that Jim Lane will be stepping down as the Robotics Coach after doing it for many years. The Robotics program now has a board and they will be looking for a new coach. The district has been donating \$5,700 a year to the program in lieu of paying the coach. Lane had requested that the funds be used for equipment instead of paying the coach.

Schwan reviewed the changes that have been made to the 2020-21 school year calendar. He is not ready for the final approval yet. He did note that the Native American holiday has been changed to an in-service day. The first day of school is proposed for August 25th. The February 2021 calendar has P-T conference on February 11th, Faculty Inservice on February 12th and No School for President's Day on February 15th. He said a lot of students are gone on vacations in February.

Business Manager Mike Weber showed the board a list of 100 school districts that are supplementing their general fund with the capital outlay funds. He also noted that all but three or four are also getting state aid. Groton Area is one of the districts not getting state aid.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 3 of 59

Middle/High School Principal Kristen Sombke reported that Don Donley was inducted into the SDTEA (S.D. Technical Education Association) Hall of Fame for 50 years of service. The Groton Area High School was awarded the "Program of the Year."

Superintendent Joe Schwan thanked the board members for their years of service in honor of South Dakota School Board Recognition Week.

Schwan reported on the bid specs for the lawn tractor/mower and said that the current attachments should work with the new proposed tractor bid specs.

The district was approved for a Clean Diesel Grant for up to \$21,500 for a new bus and bus #99 will be dismantled. The specs for the new bus will be the same as the bus purchased in 2017. The new bus would then be an activity bus with the current activity bus going out on a route.

The FY2019 audit was presented and accepted.

The fees for the 2020 summer driver's education program. It costs about \$225.69 per student for driver's ed and each student can get up to 154 miles. The fee has been \$250 since 2011 and the board decided to keep the rate at \$250 for this summer for district students and \$300 for out-of-district students.

Not yet approved school calendar proposal

2020-2021 Groton Area School District

Amended 2/10/2020

August 2020						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

August	
18 - Faculty Inservice	
19 - Open House/Picnic (5:00-7:30)	
19 - Faculty Inservice	
25 - 1st Day of School	

Student Contact: 5 ; Inservice: 2

January 2021						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

January	
1 - Christmas Break - NO SCHOOL	
4 - School Resumes	
15 - NCSEC Faculty Inservice - NO SCHOOL	

Student Contact: 19 ; Inservice: 1

September 2020						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

September	
4 - NO SCHOOL	
7 - Labor Day - NO SCHOOL	
21 - Homecoming Coronation (7:30)	
25 - Homecoming FB vs. Redfield	

Student Contact: 20; Inservice: 0

February 2021						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

February	
11 - Parent/Teacher Conferences - (1:30 - 8:30)	
12 - Faculty Inservice - NO SCHOOL	
15 - President's Day - NO SCHOOL	

Student Contact: 18; Inservice: 2

October 2020						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
			1	2	3	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

October	
8 - Parent/Teacher Conferences (1:30 - 8:30)	
9 - Lake Region Marching Festival	
9 - Faculty Inservice - NO SCHOOL	
22 - End of 1st Quarter (40)	

Student Contact: 21 ; Inservice: 2

March 2021						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

March	
10 - End of 3rd Quarter (45)	
18-19 - Spring Break - NO SCHOOL	

Student Contact: 21; Inservice: 0

November 2020						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

November	
11 - Veterans Day Program	
25-27 - Thanksgiving - NO SCHOOL	

Student Contact: 18 ; Inservice: 0

April 2021						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	

April	
2 - Good Friday - NO SCHOOL	
5 - Easter Monday - NO SCHOOL	
11 - Pops Concert (2:00 & 5:00)	
24 - PROM	
29 - Middle School Spring Concert (7:00)	

Student Contact: 20; Inservice: 0

December 2020						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

December	
10 - MS/HS Christmas Concert (7:00)	
22 - Elementary Christmas Concert (1:00)	
22 - Early Dismissal (2:00)	
22 - End of 1st Semester (40/80)	
23-31 Christmas Break - NO SCHOOL	

Student Contact: 16 ; Inservice: 0

May 2021						
Su	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

May	
4 - Elementary Spring Concert (7:00)	
6 - HS Concert/Awards Night (7:00)	
16 - Graduation (2:00)	
17 - End of 2nd Semester (44/89)	
18 - Faculty Inservice	
31 - Memorial Day	

Student Contact: 11 ; Inservice: 1

- Faculty Inservice
- No School
- Important Dates
- End of Quarter/Semester
- Early Dismissal

All make-up days will be added to the end of the school calendar.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 4 of 59

Superintendent's Report to the Groton Area School District 06-6 Board of Education

February 10, 2020

FY2021 Fiscal Issues. The fiscal situation for our general fund for FY2021 is not going to improve from where we are this year. According to a recent American News article, ag property valuations in Brown County are anticipated to drop 3.8% for tax year 2021. Additionally, due to the increase of property values statewide, it appears as though the general fund tax levies will also drop (HB1043). As of now, it appears that our general fund revenues will decrease by approximately \$80,000 in CY2021. Currently there are three ways that we could address a funding shortfall in the general fund: increase utilization of capital outlay flexibility, reduction of general fund expenditures, opt out of the tax limits in the general fund.

2020-2021 Robotics. Mr. Lane has expressed his intent to leave behind his role with the robotics program at the end of the school year. I met with the newly created robotics board last week. We discussed searching for a replacement for Jim and what transportation arrangements might look like for next year. I offered that we could utilize the district website and social media to begin seeking an individual looking to be part of this program.

2020-2021 School Calendar. I am still working on a couple of changes to the 2020-2021 school calendar that I think will make it a better calendar than what we looked at in January. I hope to bring a final proposal back to our March meeting for adoption.

HS Copier Issue. We've been having frequent copy machine breakdowns with our new machine at the MS/HS building. A & B has been on site on a regular basis searching for the problem, attempting repairs, ordering parts, etc. I've spoken with the sales team about the need for us to seek a more permanent solution to this issue. Our five year lease agreement with A & B began in October 2018.

BIT Risk Assessment. Next week, the state will be onsite to help us work through a cyber-risk assessment. It will include a review of policies, procedures, hardware, software, etc.

Teacher Job Fair. We will be attending the NSU teacher job fair on Friday, February 21. This event has become an annual project between the job placement office at NSU and the School of Education. Assuming the day is similar to what it has been previously, we will spend time with the teacher candidates answering their questions about school interview procedures and whatever other general questions they have. Following, there is a job fair in the NSU student center that will give us an opportunity to "sell" ourselves to teacher candidates and collect resumes.

Legislative Session. The final day of legislative session is March 12 (veto day is March 30). General fund revenue targets will be adopted by the Joint Appropriations committee by the end of this week.

HB1042. Revise the special education property tax levy for school districts and to revise the state aid to special education formula.

HB1043. Revise the property tax levies for the general fund of school districts and to revise the state aid to general education formula.

HB1064. Restrict certain vapor products.

HB1104. Limit the scope of medical information that may be required as a condition of participation in sanctioned activities.

HB1122. Require child abuse or neglect investigations upon the filing of truancy complaints.

HB1157. Provide for kindergarten enrollment options.

HB1175. Define dyslexia for the purposes of special education and related services.

HB1198. Repeal provisions regarding maximum taxes levied by the board of a school district for the capital outlay fund.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 5 of 59

HB1235. Revise provisions regarding immunizations.

HB1258. Provide for child safety accounts for students subject to certain safety incidents.

HB1263. Require that certain school district elections (Capital Outlay Certificates) occur in conjunction with the general election.

SB66. Provide for the creation of Oceti Sakowin charter schools.

SB76. Provide for the assessment of certain agricultural land as noncropland.

SB94. Revise provisions for taxes levied by the board of a school district for the capital outlay fund.

SB111. Exclude certain wind energy tax revenue from the state aid to general education formula.

SB142. Establish certain restrictions regarding the state subsidized dual credit program.

SB143. Establish certain restrictions regarding funds from the state subsidized dual credit program for certain students.

SB168. Limit the amount of other revenue that is counted as local effort in the state aid to general education formula.

SB170. Revise certain provisions regarding school district capital outlay funds.

ASBSD and SASD both keep lists of legislation that each group is tracking on their websites.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 6 of 59

Board Report
Elementary Principal
2/10/2020

Enrollment:

PS: 13
JK: 13
KG: 49
1st: 43
2nd: 43 (-1)
3rd: 39
4th: 48
5th: 45

Science Steve: Steven Rokusek with South Dakota Public Broadcasting will be coming to the elementary on Friday, February 28 in the afternoon. Lindsey DeHoet registered to win a Science Steve show during the TIE Conference in Rapid City and her name was selected.

South Dakota Comprehensive Needs Assessment: The team will be meeting this week to finish our comparisons between the qualitative and quantitative data. He also spend a good amount of time on SD STARS looking at Smarter Balanced test scores and demographics.

Teacher Observations: All of my informal observations have been completed with our continuing contract teachers. I have 6 remaining informal to do with our non-continuing contract teachers. I sent an email out today to all of our group A teachers reminding them they have to schedule a formal evaluations with me by no later than March 13.

Title 1 Level 3 Monitoring: The Groton district is part of a Federal Title Programs Level 3 monitoring this school year. This requires the district to complete a differentiated compliance monitoring (offsite). Specific documents are required to be uploaded to Title I SharePoint (<https://doe.sd.gov/title/basic.aspx>). I have already met with our Title staff, and we went over the document checklist. We have already updated our LEA Plan and Schoolwide Plan. We also had to update our parent engagement document and compact to better suit our School Wide status. A couple of documents needed to be completed to fulfill our ESL requirements.

OST: Students and staff will be going to the Dacotah Prairie Museum on Thursday around 1:30. The current exhibit at the museum is "Tree Houses: Look Who's Living in the Trees." This is a travelling exhibit from the Sciencenter of Ithaca, NY, featuring the word of trees. A number of different activities will be available for our students to take part in. No additional costs for families or students.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 7 of 59

Principal's Report

MS/HS Building

Mrs. Sombke

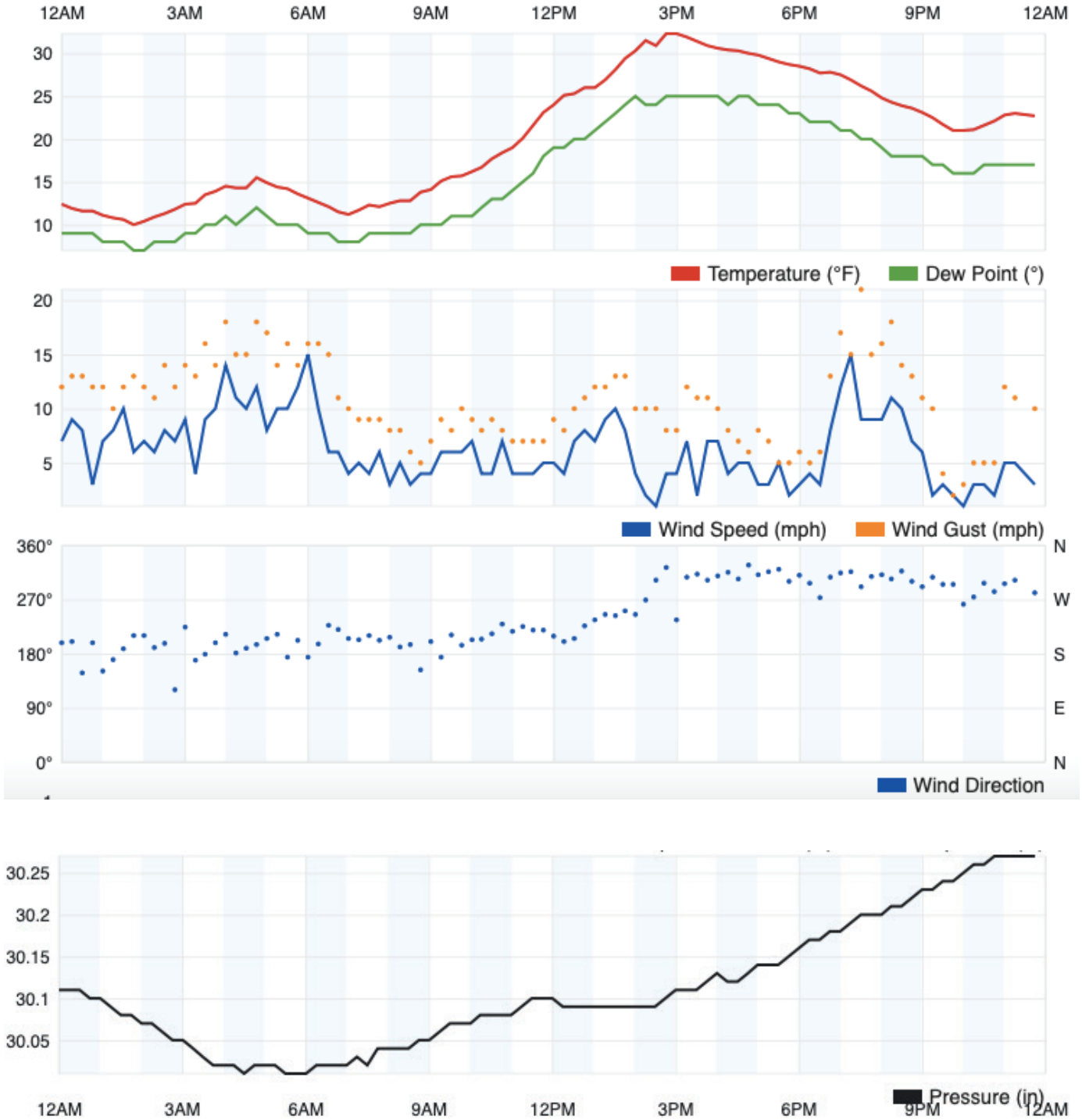
February 10, 2020

- 1) Parent Teacher Conferences, Thursday February 13th
 - Shortened Class schedule during the day; school dismissing at 1:15pm
 - Conferences will run from 1:30-8:30pm in the MS/HS Building
 - Parents are able to conference with teachers also by email or phone if unable to attend on Thursday
 - Bonus points are available for all students who parents attend conferences or complete conferences via phone or email
 - Parents do not need to conference if their child currently has an "A"
 - Half of the MS/HS Staff will break for supper at 5:00pm; the other half will break at 5:30pm
 - Parents are also able to contact their child's teacher to schedule a conference before or after the school day as well if unable to attend on Thursday
- 2) CTE Parent Survey
 - Parents will also have the opportunity to complete a short survey regarding the Groton Area CTE Programs
 - The survey's will be completed on the computer in the same format as the last conferences when parents completed the SDCNA survey
 - Bonus points to be used in the MS/HS Building will also be available again for students whose parents complete the CTE Parent survey
- 3) Spring Life Touch Pictures
 - Wednesday, February 12th is picture day
 - Envelopes will be passed out in English class on Tuesday, February 11th
 - Please see the office if you have questions or need an envelope
- 4) Spring Registration for Fall classes
 - Registration is now complete for students in grades 6-11 for next falls classes
 - Dual Credit: Presentation March 31st at 6:00pm by Tracia Hogue from SDSU
 - Tracia will present on all SDBOR Institutions and is a great resource regarding any questions for the following Universities: BHSU, DSU, NSU, SDSMT, SDSU and USD
 - Please see Mrs. Schwan with questions or to get more information regarding Dual Credit Registration, E-Learning Classes or Registration, and all local Class and Course Offerings
- 5) CONGRATULATIONS Mr. Donley!
 - Mr. Donley was inducted into the SDTEA Hall of Fame!
 - Groton Area High School was Awarded "Program of the Year"
 - Mr. Donley and Groton Area School were recognized on January 31st at the by Mr. Bret Johnson, SDTEA President

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 8 of 59

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 9 of 59

Upcoming Events

Tuesday, February 11, 2020

Junior High Boys Basketball at Ipswich. 7th grade at 4 p.m., 8th grade at 5 p.m.

Girls Basketball travels to Aberdeen Roncalli. C game at 5 p.m., followed by JV then Varsity

Wednesday, February 12, 2020

Small Group Music Contest at Northern State University

Thursday, February 13, 2020

1:30pm- 8:30pm Parent/Teacher Conferences at GHS Gymnasium, Groton Area Elementary School

Friday, February 14, 2020

Rushmore Challenge Debate at Harrisburg High School

NO SCHOOL - Faculty Inservice

Basketball Double Header at Warner. Girls JV at 4 p.m., Boys JV at 5:15 p.m., Girls Varsity at 6:30 p.m. followed by the Boys Varsity Game.

Saturday, February 15, 2020

Rushmore Challenge Debate at Harrisburg High School

10:00 a.m.: Junior High State Wrestling Tournament at Pierre High School

Basketball Doubleheader with Mobridge-Pollock coming to Groton Area. Girls JV at 2 p.m., Boys JV at 3 p.m., Girls Varsity at 4:30 p.m. followed by the Boys Varsity Game.

Sunday, February 16, 2020

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

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

Monday, February 17, 2020

President's Day - NO SCHOOL

Boys Basketball hosts Aberdeen Roncalli. C game at 5 p.m. followed by JV then Varsity.

Tuesday, February 18, 2020

Girls Varsity at Webster Area. JV game at 6:30 p.m. followed by Varsity Game.

7 pm.: City Council Meeting at Groton Community Center

Thursday, February 20, 2020

Girls Basketball hosts Milbank. C game at 5 p.m. followed by JV then Varsity

Friday, February 21, 2020

Boys Basketball at Milbank. C game at 5 p.m., followed by JV then Varsity.

6:30pm: Elementary PAC Science Night at Groton Area Elementary School

Saturday, February 22, 2020

Basketball: Boys 7th/8th Jamboree at Britton-Hecla High School

10:00am: Wrestling: Varsity Regions at Sisseton

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 10 of 59

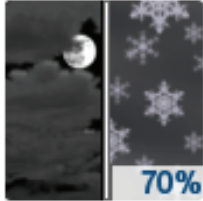
Today



Sunny

High: 29 °F

Tonight



Mostly Cloudy
then Snow
Likely

Low: 18 °F

Wednesday



Windy. Snow
then Partly
Sunny

High: 20 °F ↓

Wednesday
Night



Patchy
Blowing Snow
and Blustery
then Mostly
Clear


Low: -18 °F

Thursday



Cold

High: -2 °F



Changes Ahead

Arctic Blast Wednesday

TODAY
☀️
26 to 39°
24 to 30°

WEDNESDAY
☁️ ❄️ 🌪️
20s falling to -8°
-20 to -8°

THURSDAY
☀️
-6 to 13°
-18 to 5°

FRIDAY
☁️ ❄️
20 to 40°
10 to 25°

Travel Wednesday morning through the early evening will be affected by blowing snow mainly along and east of the James Valley.

Wind chills will dip between -20 and -40 F Wednesday night into Thursday morning.

NWS Aberdeen, SD
Updated: 2/11/2020 4:59 AM Central

Seasonable conditions expected today with downslope winds along the Coteau this afternoon and evening. An Arctic front barrels in on Wednesday bringing up to an inch of snow and strong north winds gusting as high as 40 to 50 mph. Blowing snow and reduced visibilities may cause hazardous travel mainly across the east on Wednesday.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 11 of 59

Today in Weather History

February 11, 2002: High winds of 35 to 45 mph gusting to 60 to 65 mph affected central and northeast South Dakota as well as west central Minnesota through the afternoon and into the evening hours. The high winds caused some spotty tree and roof damage along with a few power outages. A few downed power lines in Aberdeen resulted in a short power outage for some people. Also, a streetlight pole was knocked down in Aberdeen. Some wind gusts included 55 mph at Wheaton, 58 mph at McLaughlin, 59 mph at Pierre, 61 mph at Sisseton and Aberdeen, 62 mph at Mobridge, and 63 mph at Graceville, Minnesota.

1895: The low temperature was 11 degrees below zero at Moline, Illinois marking the last of a station record 16 consecutive days on which the low temperature was at or below zero. During the first 11 days of February, the highest temperature recorded at Moline was only 13 degrees above zero. Their current average high temperature for early February is in the lower 30s.

1935: Africa's lowest recorded temperature occurred on this date in 1935. A bitterly cold 11 degrees below zero was registered at the Atlas Mountains village of Ifrane, Morocco.

1983: Called the "Megalopolitan blockbuster snowstorm," this major snowstorm impacted the Mid-Atlantic and southern New England. Snowfall up to 25 inches fell at Allentown, Pennsylvania. Snowfall amount of 35 inches occurred in parts of the Blue Ridge Mountains of West Virginia at Glen Cary. Windsor Locks, Connecticut recorded a record 19 inches in 12 hours. A ship sunk off the Virginia/Maryland coast killing 33. There were 46 total storm-related fatalities. New 24-hour snowfall records were set in Philadelphia, Harrisburg, and Allentown Pennsylvania and Hartford Connecticut. Five inches of snow in one hour was recorded at Allentown and Hartford.

1899 - Perhaps the greatest of all arctic outbreaks commenced on this date. The temperature plunged to 61 degrees below zero in Montana. At the same time a "Great Eastern Blizzard" left a blanket of snow from Georgia to New Hampshire. The state of Virginia took the brunt of the storm, with snowfall totals averaging 30 to 40 inches. (David Ludlum)

1983 - The Middle Atlantic Coast States and southern New England were in the midst of a major snowstorm. In Pennsylvania, the storm produced 21 inches at Philadelphia, 24 inches at Harrisburg, and 25 inches at Allentown, establishing record 24 hour totals and single storm totals for those locations. New York City received 22 inches of snow, and 35 inches was reported at Glen Gary, located in the Blue Ridge Mountains of West Virginia. Windsor Locks CT received a record 19 inches of snow in 12 hours. The storm resulted in forty-six deaths, thirty-three of which occurred when a freighter capsized and sank off the Maryland/Virginia coast. Heavy snow was reported from northeastern Georgia to eastern Maine. (10th-12th) (Storm Data) (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Denver, CO, reported only their third occurrence of record of a thunderstorm in February. Ten cities in the north central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Huron SD reported February temperatures averaging 19 degrees above normal. Williston ND reported readings averaging 24 degrees above normal for the month. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Bitter cold air gripped the north central U.S. Morning lows of 35 degrees below zero at Aberdeen SD, Bismarck ND and International Falls MN were records for the date. Bemidji MN was, officially, the cold spot in the nation with a low of 39 degrees below zero, however, a reading of 42 degrees below zero was reported at Gettysburg SD. In the Northern High Plains Region, Baker MT warmed from 27 degrees below zero to 40 above. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - While much of the continental U.S. enjoyed sunshine and seasonable temperatures, a strong weather system over the Hawaiian Islands deluged Honolulu with 2.5 inches of rain. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - A winter storm produced up to ten inches of snow in Vermont, and up to nine inches of snow in Aroostook County of northeastern Maine. A three day snowstorm began to overspread Oregon, and the winter storm produced 29 inches of snow at Bennett Pass. Mild weather continued in the central U.S. La Crosse WI reported a record forty-seven consecutive days with temperatures above normal. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

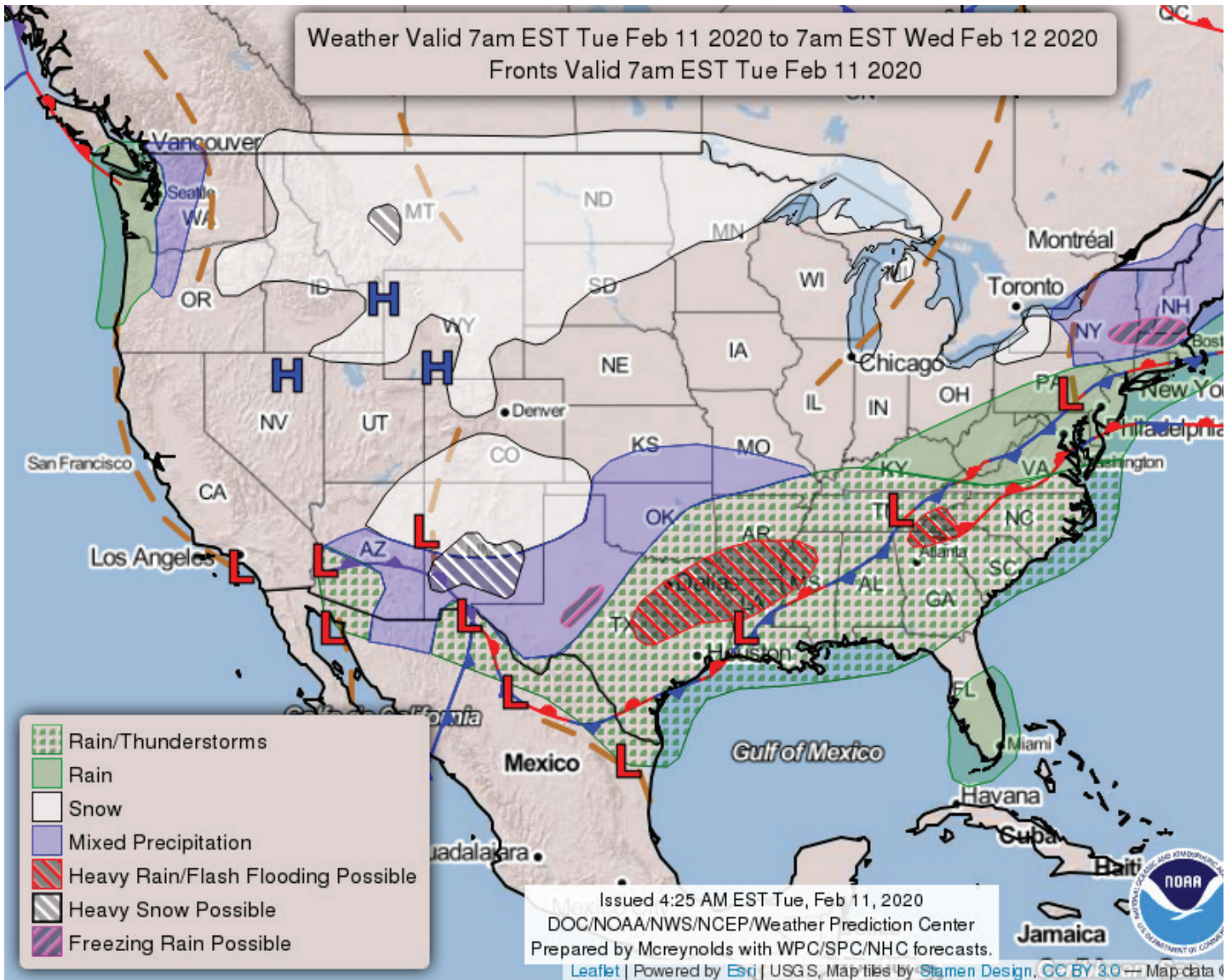
Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 12 of 59

Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 33 °F at 2:39 PM
Low Temp: 10 °F at 1:47 AM
Wind: 21 mph at 7:23 PM
Snow

Record High: 58° in 2005, 1987
Record Low: -35° in 1988
Average High: 27°F
Average Low: 6°F
Average Precip in Feb.: 0.16
Precip to date in Feb.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 0.63
Precip Year to Date: 0.35
Sunset Tonight: 5:55 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:40 a.m.



Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 13 of 59



IT'S ABOUT THE RIGHT CHOICE

Mountain climbing was a driving force in the life of Tim Hansel. On one of his expeditions he fell seventy feet and landed on his back and neck. The damage was severe and extensive. He fractured most of the vertebrae from his neck down his spine, crushed most of his discs, tore ligaments, and broke many ribs. It was a miracle that he survived.

Following his accident, after multiple surgeries and many consultations, he was given less than an 8 percent chance that he would ever walk again. But he refused to give up. He persevered, forced himself to walk, ride a bicycle and even play tennis. His experience with God led him to found Summit Express, a unique ministry to provide encouragement to others.

Throughout the remaining years of his life, he was never free from pain. Once, in desperation, he prayed "Lord, I feel almost dismembered this morning from outrageous pain. Here I am, with my desire to be agile and free, barely able to get out of my chair. Teach me to live in new ways, Oh Lord. Teach me and show me Your ways in the midst of this."

What gave him such trust in God? "The joy of the Lord is your strength."

Prayer: Lord, give us Your strength and power to overcome the trials and tragedies of life. May we trust in You, with faith, hope, and confidence to meet our every need. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Nehemiah 8:10 Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 14 of 59

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)

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 15 of 59

News from the Associated Press

Senate passes bill to offer driver's test in Spanish

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Senate has approved a bill that would allow the state to offer a written driver's license test in Spanish.

The legislation passed Monday now goes to the House for its consideration. The driving skills portion of the test would still be done in English.

The Argus Leader reports the bill's sponsor, Republican Sen. V.J. Smith, says the main argument from opponents is that test takers should know English. But, Smith says they can already use an interpreter at the exam, so they already don't need to know English.

Sen. Maggie Sutton opposed the bill.

"Driving is a privilege, not a right," the Sioux Falls Republican said.

Sutton said her grandmother spoke only Spanish when she arrived in the United States, learned English and became a U.S. citizen.

Sutton said she's also concerned that workers who don't learn English can be taken advantage of in the workplace.

Monday's Scores By The Associated Press

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL=

Aberdeen Christian 87, Potter County 59

Colman-Egan 56, Baltic 45

DeSmet 77, Castlewood 33

Ethan 76, Wagner 64

Herreid/Selby Area 67, Strasburg-Zeeland, N.D. 66

Lennox 63, Tri-Valley 57

Sunshine Bible Academy 54, Mitchell Christian 34

Waubay/Summit 50, Wilmot 20

Waverly-South Shore 70, Iroquois 43

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL=

Avon 57, Gregory 33

Canton 55, Centerville 46

Colman-Egan 45, Baltic 26

Edgemont 50, Oelrichs 44

Elkton-Lake Benton 50, Great Plains Lutheran 27

Estelline/Hendricks 36, Florence/Henry 32

Ethan 67, Wagner 40

Grant County, N.D. 69, Lemmon 59

Hitchcock-Tulare 56, Highmore-Harrold 48

Lyman 60, Chamberlain 53

Menno 54, Platte-Geddes 43

Mitchell Christian 61, Sunshine Bible Academy 22

Sisseton 59, Flandreau Indian 52

Timber Lake 55, Standing Rock, N.D. 46

Viborg-Hurley 62, Canistota 52

Waubay/Summit 48, Wilmot 35

Broton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 16 of 59

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

Brookings man fatally injured at Black Hills ski resort

LEAD, S.D. (AP) — Officials at a ski resort in the Black Hills say a man has died after he was injured on one of the slopes over the weekend.

The Lawrence County Sheriff's Office on Monday identified the victim as Trenton Hofer, 24, of Brookings. The death occurred at Terry Peak Ski Area near Lead on Saturday afternoon, according to resort spokeswoman Linda Derosier.

"The Terry Peak management and staff send their sincere condolences to the family and friends of this young man," Derosier said.

Dispatchers received a 911 call from the resort requesting an ambulance for a man who struck a tree. Hofer was pronounced dead at the scene.

Witnesses told investigators the accident occurred on the Gold Run. The Terry Peak website lists the Gold Run as one of six beginner ski trails on the 7,100-foot peak, the Rapid City Journal reported.

The fatal injury occurred on the eve of Terry Peak joining with the National Ski Areas Association's #RideAnotherDay campaign, which encourages skiers and snowboarders to slow down and be ready to avoid collisions.

Former Pine Ridge doctor sentenced for child sex abuse

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A former Indian Health Service pediatrician was sentenced Monday for sexually abusing Native American children while on the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota.

Stanley Patrick Weber, 71, of Spearfish was sentenced in federal court to five consecutive life sentences for five aggravated sexual abuse charges, the U.S. Attorney's Office said. Weber also was sentenced to 15 years on each of three counts of sexual abuse of a minor.

Weber was sentenced last year to 18 years in prison for similar crimes against boys on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation in Montana. His sentences in South Dakota all will be served consecutively to each other and also consecutive to his Montana sentence, the U.S. Attorney's Office said.

Weber also was ordered to pay \$800,000 in fines. The government says evidence at his trial showed that Weber sexually abused multiple Native American children between 1999 and 2011 while he was employed as an IHS pediatrician at Pine Ridge.

U.S. Attorney for South Dakota Ron Parsons said the sentence ensures that Weber "will never roam free again."

Ban on treatments for transgender kids fails in South Dakota

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Legislation aimed at stopping South Dakota physicians from providing puberty blockers and gender confirmation surgery to transgender children under 16 failed to get enough support Monday in a Senate committee.

A Republican-dominated Senate committee voted 5-2 to kill the proposal, likely ensuring the issue won't be considered by the Legislature again this year.

Proponents already had amended the bill to get rid of criminal charges for doctors who provide gender confirmation treatments, including puberty blockers, hormone therapy and surgery. But it would have allowed children to sue if they later regretted the treatments.

Conservative lawmakers in nearly a dozen other states, including South Carolina, Florida, Missouri, Colorado, Illinois, Kentucky and New Hampshire, are pushing similar proposals. The measure had gained the most traction in South Dakota, where the House recently passed it.

But some Republican senators and GOP Gov. Kristi Noem had expressed concerns and questioned whether the Legislature should be delving into the issue.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 17 of 59

LGBT advocates and Democrats argued that the proposal would have stopped children with gender dysphoria from receiving medically necessary health care that improves their mental health. They demonstrated outside the Capitol before Monday's Senate Health and Human Services Committee meeting.

Quincy Parke, a 17-year-old transgender teenager, testified before the committee and had one word to describe the feeling of seeing the bill die: "ecstatic."

"It's gone," Parke said. "I don't have to worry about it until next year."

Proponents of the bill maintained that the treatments are harmful.

Rep. Fred Deutsch, a Florence Republican who introduced the bill, said the testimony and debate had raised awareness about the potential side effects and highlighted the doubts of some doctors about the long-term mental health benefits of such treatments.

Parke said that Deutsch crafted the bill to "fuel confusion" about gender confirmation treatments.

Leading medical authorities, including the Endocrine Society and the World Professional Association for Transgender Health, do not recommend gender confirmation surgeries for children. For youths experiencing puberty and older adolescents, the Endocrine Society recommends that a team composed of expert medical and mental health professionals manages treatment, which can include puberty-blocking drugs or hormone therapy.

Keith Hansen, an endocrinologist with Sanford Health in South Dakota, said the health care network treated fewer than 20 minors with gender dysphoria in the state last year. He said children who receive gender confirmation treatments receive psychiatric counseling before and during the treatments.

The South Dakota State Medical Association opposed the bill, arguing it discriminated against transgender people and interfered with physicians' ability to administer necessary medical treatment.

Conservative lawmakers said they were reluctant to interfere in parental rights.

"With all due respect, my child's health care is not your decision to make," Kim Parke, the mother of Quincy, told the committee.

Deutsch said he would not be bringing the issue again this year, but he shared the bill and notes with lawmakers in other states, where similar legislation is being considered.

He said the governor had worked "behind the scenes" to oppose the bill.

"That's simply not accurate," said Kristin Wileman, Noem's spokeswoman, insisting that the governor never took a formal position on the bill.

In 2016, Deutsch brought a "bathroom bill" that would have forced transgender students to use restrooms labeled for their birth gender. It cleared the House and Senate before former Gov. Dennis Daugaard vetoed it.

Legislation aimed at restricting LGBT people has often found friendly ground in South Dakota. Republicans hold every statewide office and a super-majority in the Legislature.

Supporters from both sides crowded into the room where the committee met until they overflowed into the hallways. Lawmakers said they have heard more from constituents on this issue than any other this legislative session. Several legislators said most of the communication was in favor of the ban.

Dozens of advocates protested outside the Capitol on Monday, riding horses on the grounds, waving rainbow flags, and holding signs to support transgender people. They said that legislation aimed at LGBT people is a recurring issue in the state.

LGBT advocates said the bill has already caused damage. Lauren Stanley, an Episcopalian minister who works with youth from the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, said she has already heard from LGBT youth who felt targeted by the legislation, expressing anxiety and desires to hurt themselves.

But Quincy Parke is ready if a similar bill is brought again. "I've already stuck my neck out — why not do it again?" Parke said.

Buddhist monk recalls Thai soldier's rampage at temple

By EMILY SCHMALL and PREEYAPA T. KHUNSONG undefined

NAKHON RATCHASIMA, Thailand (AP) — A rogue soldier whose rampage left 29 people dead and dozens more injured in northeastern Thailand terrorized a Buddhist temple on his way to a shopping mall where he held people hostage in a nearly 16-hour siege.

The peaceful seclusion of the Wat Pa Sattharuam forest monastery was shattered Saturday when the soldier from a nearby army base, Sgt. Maj. Jakrapanth Thomma, 31, roared through in a stolen military jeep, fatally shooting nine people.

At the temple complex Tuesday, yellow police tape cordoned off the road to the back gate with dozens of red circles marking where bullet casings were found.

The temple complex had opened its back gate to devotees for Makha Bucha day, a holiday in the Theravada Buddhist tradition that honors Buddha ordaining some of his early followers.

Before Jakrapanth arrived at the temple, he had already fatally shot his commanding officer and the officer's mother-in-law, apparently over a land dispute, and killed a soldier and wounded two other guards to steal weapons from the Surathampithak military camp where he was stationed.

When Phra Manaswin, a 24-year-old monk, saw the military jeep drive past him and heard shots, he initially didn't think anything was amiss. As elsewhere in predominantly Buddhist Thailand, the monks and soldiers have lived peaceably as neighbors for decades. When the complex gates were open, soldiers, like other local residents, often drove through, taking advantage of the shortcut.

"I thought, 'why would a soldier do target practice inside a temple?'" Manaswin said, not thinking much of it and turning back to his work sweeping the grounds of dead leaves.

But Manaswin then saw the soldier park his jeep behind a small group of trees, load his weapons and aim at any vehicle that entered the complex through the back gate. Jakrapanth's victims at the temple included Rachanon Kanchanamethi, a 13-year-old boy riding a motorbike home.

Manaswin said the soldier shot at a woman and a child in a sedan, and an SUV full of people, all of whom were killed except for the front-seat passenger, who was shielded by the driver's slumped body. Jakrapanth's reign of terror lasted 10 minutes, Manaswin said.

Another monk taking a video of the shootings called police.

The operator said they were aware of a confrontation between a soldier and police.

"Yes, the soldier is here! He's inside the temple!" the monk replied.

Samrit Kuimeunwai, an 85-year-old nun, said she was with her dogs at her concrete hut, built 30 years ago by soldiers from the nearby base, when she heard the clattering of bullets on her zinc roof. She said Buddhist teachings helped her to remain calm.

"When he started firing, I was shocked at first but then I became conscious. After that, I started to pray extending love and kindness. Then I meditated," she said.

Samrit scrambled to safety at another nun's hut.

When police arrived, Jakrapanth met them with heavy fire. Manaswin ran to inform another monk to clear the prayer pavilion where devotees were meditating near the front gate, the direction the gunman was heading.

Preecha Kitsanoh, a police volunteer who responded to the shooting, knelt before Manaswin in the meditation pavilion on Monday night, thanking him for the warning that saved his life.

Kisanoh ran behind the front gate's concrete pillar as Jakrapanth tore through in his jeep, shooting all the way.

"I feel like I died and have been reborn," he said in tears.

Police Sgt. Maj. Peerasak Witthakanok said he rushed to the scene to discover that the gunman had fled, leaving a trail of bodies on the road.

Jakrapanth's rampage ended early Sunday at Terminal 21 Korat, a seven-story shopping mall in Nakhon Ratchasima city, when special forces fatally shot him. Buddhist monks, who have joined daily vigils since the shootings, will lead a prayer ceremony when the mall reopens Thursday.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 19 of 59

Manaswin, the monk, isn't convinced that the temple complex is now secure.

"It's really easy for this kind of situation to happen," he said. "We cannot tell whether it's a normal person or a criminal, we cannot judge from the exterior nowadays whether this is really an officer or civil servant or soldier. I am afraid but I'm mindful. But if we are careless, we might face this again."

China still mostly closed down as virus deaths pass 1,000

By JOE McDONALD Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — China remains mostly closed for business, as the daily death toll from a new virus topped 100 for the first time, pushing the total above 1,000.

Despite the official end of the extended Lunar New Year holiday, many remained at home on Tuesday with around 60 million people under virtual quarantine.

President Xi Jinping visited a health center to rally public morale amid little sign the outbreak is abating.

Authorities in Hong Kong evacuated people from an apartment block where four were found to be infected, raising fears the virus may be spreading through plumbing, similar to what happened in 2003's deadly SARS outbreak.

The Latest developments:

XI SEEKS TO BOOST MORALE

In a bid to boost morale, Xi visited a community health center in Beijing and expressed confidence in the "war against the disease."

Xi wore a surgical mask and had his temperature taken before expressing his thanks to health workers on behalf of the ruling Communist Party and government. "We will most definitely win this people's war," he said during his Monday visit, videos of which were repeated every hour Tuesday on state television's news channel.

Much of Xi's message was focused on calling for citizens to follow the party's dictates and aimed at minimizing the potentially massive economic impact of the outbreak.

His appearance came amid questioning of the government's handling of the crisis, particularly the failure of local officials in the worst-hit city of Wuhan to clarify the extent of the outbreak. Public anger has been inflamed over the death of a young doctor sickened by the virus who had been threatened along with seven others by police for warning of the potential for a major outbreak as early as December.

PROVINCIAL HEALTH OFFICIALS SACKED

With the death toll from the virus topping 1,000 and no end in sight, heads are beginning to roll among officials for mismanaging the crisis.

While no central government-level officials have lost their jobs, state media reported Tuesday that the top health officials in Hubei province, which surrounds the epicenter of Wuhan, have been relieved of their duties.

No specific reasons were given, although the province's initial response was deemed slow and ineffective. Speculation that higher-level cadres could be sacked has simmered, but doing so could spark political infighting and be a tacit admission that the Communist Party dropped the ball.

The virus outbreak has become the latest political challenge for the party and its leader, Xi, who despite accruing more political power than any Chinese leader since Mao Zedong, has struggled to handle crises on multiple fronts. Those include a sharply slowing domestic economy, the trade war with the U.S. and push-back on China's increasingly aggressive foreign policies.

Almost all of the deaths reported Monday were in Wuhan and surrounding cities. The number of newly confirmed cases fell slightly to 2,478 from 3,062 the day before, bringing the total to 42,638 on the Chinese mainland.

RISKS OF RESTARTING BUSINESS

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 20 of 59

The crossing of more grim thresholds is dimming optimism that the near-quarantine of some 60 million people and other disease control measures are working.

The restart of business poses a risk of further spreading the virus, but the country has little recourse, said Cong Liang, secretary general of the National Development and Reform Commission, China's main economic planning body.

"Without the reopening of businesses, in the short term, it will affect the supply of medical material and ... in the long run, it will affect the supply of all kinds of production and life materials and will make the control and prevention efforts on the front line unsustainable. The target of defeating the epidemic will not be reached," Cong said at a news conference.

With about 60 million people under virtual quarantine and rigid travel restrictions, any return to normalcy on a national level is still weeks or months away.

HONG KONG

In Hong Kong, authorities evacuated some residents of an apartment block after two cases among those living there raised suspicion that the virus may be spreading through the building's plumbing.

It was reminiscent of the SARS outbreak that killed hundreds in the semi-autonomous Chinese city. The biggest number of connected cases in that outbreak were in one apartment complex where the virus spread through sewage pipes.

Health officials called it a precautionary measure after a 62-year-old woman diagnosed with the virus Tuesday was found living 10 floors below a man who was earlier confirmed with the virus. The woman's son and daughter-in-law who live with her were among seven new cases reported Thursday, raising the city's total tally to 49.

The 34 households evacuated live vertically above or below the woman and share the same sewage system. A modified toilet drainage pipe in her unit may have helped spread the virus and officials are checking if any other units have made such alternations while they disinfect the building.

US SUSPENDS VISA SERVICES, EVACUEES SET TO LEAVE QUARANTINE

Among the growing number of travel restrictions, the U.S. said that, as of Monday, it is suspending regular visa services at the embassy in Beijing and consulates general in Chengdu, Guangzhou, Shanghai and Shenyang. The Consulate General in Wuhan has already been closed and its staff evacuated.

A presidential proclamation issued Feb. 2 already banned entry to the U.S. to foreigners or non-permanent residents who had been in China fewer than 14 days prior to their arrival. Exceptions were made for foreign diplomats, flight crew and family members of U.S. citizens or permanent residents.

Meanwhile, nearly 200 evacuees prepared Tuesday to end their two-week quarantine at a Southern California military base where they have been living since flying out of China.

None of those who flew into March Air Reserve Base has tested positive for the disease, health authorities said, although one evacuee at another base was found to have the highly infectious virus and was in hospital isolation.

The group, which includes children, arrived from China on Jan. 29, taking chartered flights from Wuhan.

There have been 13 confirmed cases in the United States, including seven in California, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other health officials.

More than 460 cases have been confirmed outside mainland China, including two deaths in Hong Kong and the Philippines. Of those, 135 are from a cruise ship quarantined in Yokohama, near Tokyo.

AP journalist Eileen Ng in Kuala Lumpur contributed to this report.

UN meeting ponders fast-track drugs, vaccines for new virus

By JAMEY KEATEN Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — The World Health Organization convened experts Tuesday to fast-track promising tests, drugs and vaccines to help slow the outbreak of a new virus that emerged in China that has killed more than 1,000 people and spread to two dozen other countries.

The new coronavirus was only identified late last year in the Chinese city of Wuhan and there are no licensed drugs or vaccines. Diagnostic tests have been developed by several laboratories, but there are no rapid tests available. More than 300 scientists were expected to dial in remotely to the two-day meeting in Geneva that began Tuesday.

To date, the virus has infected more than 43,000 people and has killed 1,007, with 99% of the cases found in China. Two dozen other countries have reported 393 cases of the virus, with one death in the Philippines.

WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said the epidemic was “very much an emergency” for China but also “one that holds a very grave threat for the rest of the world.” He said there was still a window of opportunity to shut down the outbreak.

At least 60 million people in central China are in a government-ordered lockdown aimed at halting the spread of the virus and health authorities around the world are racing to track down the contacts of infected people and isolate confirmed cases.

In Japan, more than 3,700 people remain quarantined aboard a cruise ship in Yokohama, south of Tokyo, after dozens of passengers and crew tested positive for the virus.

“It’s hard to believe that just two months ago, this virus — which has come to captivate the attention of media, financial markets and political leaders — was completely unknown to us,” said Tedros.

The U.N. health agency said there were still many critical but unanswered questions about the virus, including what animals it came from, how exactly it is spread between people and how best to treat infected patients.

“To defeat this outbreak, we need answers to all those questions and more,” Tedros said.

Experts say it could still be months or even years before any approved treatments or vaccines are developed.

Read all the AP stories about the coronavirus outbreak that emerged from China at <https://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak>.

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. DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL RACE DEEPLY UNSETTLED It may be up to New Hampshire to put some structure around the contest after the chaos in Iowa failed to winnow the race.

2. VIRUS DEATH TOLL ACCELERATES Fatalities in China from a new virus top 100 for the first time and pushes the total past 1,000 dead, authorities say.

3. ‘PEOPLE ARE IN DIRE NEED OF ANY SHELTER’ Hundreds of thousands of Syrians scramble to escape a swift and widening government offensive in the country’s only rebel bastion, Idlib province, with fewer places to run to in the last frontier.

4. AS THAI CITY MOURNS, QUESTIONS PERSIST Many are questioning the apparent security lapses that allowed a Thai soldier to steal the weapons he used to kill 29 people in a weekend shooting rampage.

5. TRUMP SHIFTS POSITIONS ON GUN POLICY His embrace of gun rights is a stark turn from earlier moments in his presidency when he toyed with the idea of pushing Congress to enact stricter gun laws.

6. RULING PARTY LOSING BADLY IN INDIA Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s Hindu nationalist party is facing a stunning defeat by a regional party in elections seen as a referendum on Modi’s policies such as a new national citizenship law.

7. IRAN REMEMBERS 1979 ISLAMIC REVOLUTION Hundreds of thousands across the Islamic Republic mark the anniversary amid some of the highest tensions ever between Tehran and the U.S. in the past four decades.

8. FEDS BRING NEW LAWSUITS OVER SANCTUARY POLICIES The Justice Department is challenging the state of New Jersey and the county that is home to the city of Seattle over so-called sanctuary policies that hinder federal immigration officers.

9. SAMBA GOES GLOBAL Foreign dancers are flocking to Rio de Janeiro's samba schools ahead of Carnival to learn the latest moves and trends.

10. WHAT BASEBALL IS CONSIDERING Expanding the playoffs to nearly half the teams and allowing higher-seeded wild-card teams to choose opponents.

Trump campaigns as a 2nd Amendment warrior

By AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — After the Parkland school shooting in Florida two years ago, President Donald Trump chided Republican lawmakers for being too “scared” of the National Rifle Association to tighten gun laws — then backed away from the idea.

After back-to-back mass shootings in Ohio and Texas in 2019, Trump embraced calls for “strong background checks” — only to backpedal once again.

Now, as he primes the pump on his 2020 reelection effort, Trump is going all-in on embracing the mantle of gun rights champion, a stark turn from earlier moments in his presidency when he toyed with the idea of pushing Congress to enact stricter gun laws.

There was no public discussion of tighter gun laws when Trump welcomed Parkland families to the White House for a private meeting on Monday, four days before the two-year anniversary of the rampage that left 17 dead. Instead, administration officials unveiled a website intended to help educators, parents and law enforcement address threats to school safety.

In recent weeks, Trump has repeatedly warned supporters at his rallies that Democrats “will take your guns away.” Last month, he labeled Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam a “whack job” as gun rights advocates protested the Democratic governor's moves to tighten gun laws in the aftermath of a mass shooting in Virginia Beach.

Drawing a straight line from gun rights to presidential politics, Trump tweeted that Democrats in the state “will take your guns away. Republicans will win Virginia in 2020. Thank you Dems!”

And on Monday night, as he came to the apex of an hourlong campaign speech in New Hampshire, Trump framed his supporters' Second Amendment right to bear arms as being as precious as the rights to privacy, free speech and religious freedom.

Campaign officials believe the effort could help put states like Minnesota, New Mexico and New Hampshire in play. For that to happen, Trump will need to draw even more rural and white men to the polls -- key groups that helped drive his 2016 surprise victory.

Trump's advisers believe his consistent efforts to spotlight his credentials as a Second Amendment warrior can help him draw a contrast with the eventual Democratic presidential nominee. The top tier of Democratic candidates have made bolstering gun restrictions a key part of their platforms.

Mike Bloomberg, a former New York City mayor, has poured millions of dollars from his own fortune into supporting a series of gun control advocacy groups. Former Vice President Joe Biden served as the Obama administration's point man on the president's failed push for sweeping gun reform laws following the Sandy Hook school shooting in Connecticut. Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, who got a D- grade from the NRA, has been knocked by fellow Democrats for not being tough enough on gun restrictions.

“Democrats have shown they don't respect the Second Amendment, which will be one of many contrasts drawn during the campaign,” Trump campaign spokesman Tim Murtaugh said.

After spending more than \$50 million in support of Trump's 2016 election victory, the NRA is likely to have less impact on this election cycle, said Robert Spitzer, a professor of political science at the State

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 23 of 59

University of New York-Cortland whose research focuses on American gun laws.

The powerful gun rights group has been mired in financial difficulties, internal strife within the organization's leadership, and probes by the New York attorney general's office that threaten the group's tax-exempt status.

Trump's joint campaign committees and the Republican national party committee had \$195 million in cash on hand at the close of 2019, making the NRA's money less significant this election cycle.

But with a hard gun-rights pitch, Trump appears to be strategizing that he could persuade some voters who have become disenchanted with politics to come back to the ballot box to vote for him.

"He really is doubling down not on the broadening of his base but for pushing for higher turnout among his people," Spitzer said. "One of the keys in 2016, but not the only one, was that turnout among rural white voters was a little higher than predicted. This pitch, he figures, will help him get there."

Trump and fellow Republicans are likely to face a deluge of spending from gun control advocates, who think their message will resonate with on-the-fence suburban voters.

Everytown for Gun Safety, an umbrella group of gun control advocacy organizations funded by Bloomberg, recently announced that it would spend \$60 million to beat gun rights proponents on the state and federal level in 2020.

The group has not said how much it would spend on the presidential race, but thus far has budgeted \$1.25 million to help reelect North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper and Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro, both Democrats. It also plans to spend some of that first tranche of money toward beating two Republican senators, Cory Gardner of Colorado and Martha McSally of Arizona.

Gun control advocates feel emboldened after the 2018 midterm elections in which more than 30 NRA-backed Republican candidates lost their races.

"His tactic has been to say incendiary things about guns to whip up the base, but he and the NRA haven't been able to pass any of the gun lobby's priority legislation — even with a Republican Congress for two years," said Shannon Watts, founder of Mom's Demand Action, part of the Everytown for Gun Safety coalition.

When Trump met with members of the group Stand with Parkland on Monday, administration officials highlighted the school safety website. Stand with Parkland backed the creation of the website — but it also has urged Congress to require universal background checks on gun purchases.

Asked if there was disappointment in the president backing away from taking on background checks, one Parkland parent who met with Trump, Max Schachter, said the president's efforts should not be minimized.

"Of course there is always more that can be done," said Schachter, whose 14-year-old son, Alex, was among the victims at Parkland. "But let's not let perfection be the enemy of good."

On the campaign trail, Trump's dire warnings about what might happen to American gun owners if a Democrat wins the White House have become a regular line in his speeches, reliably drawing boos and hisses for his to-be-determined opponent.

At a recent campaign rally in Iowa, Trump again turned his attention back to Virginia, where Democrats in November claimed majorities in both houses of the legislature and secured the first unified Democratic government in the commonwealth in 26 years.

"In the state of Virginia they want to take your guns away, can you believe it?" Trump said. "I love Virginia. Of all states, they want to take your guns away. The Democrats. Not going to happen."

He offered similar dark predictions to a friendly crowd last month in New Jersey, saying the gun control effort in Virginia was "just the beginning."

And on Monday night, he reassured New Hampshire supporters that his administration is "going to protect your Second Amendment, by the way."

Philippines notifies US of intent to end major security pact

By JIM GOMEZ Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — The Philippines notified the United States on Tuesday it would end a major security pact allowing American forces to train in the country, in the most serious threat under President Rodrigo Duterte to their 69-year treaty alliance.

Foreign Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. said in a tweet that Manila's notice of termination of the Visiting Forces Agreement was received by the deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Manila. The termination would take effect after 180 days unless both sides agree to keep it.

Locsin signed the notice on the order of Duterte, who has often criticized U.S. security policies while praising those of China and Russia despite the Philippine military's close historic ties with its American counterpart.

The U.S. Embassy in Manila acknowledged receipt of Manila's notice and said Washington "will carefully consider how best to move forward to advance our shared interests."

"This is a serious step with significant implications for the U.S.-Philippines alliance," the embassy said in a statement. "Our two countries enjoy a warm relationship, deeply rooted in history. We remain committed to the friendship between our two peoples."

In a Senate hearing last week, Locsin warned that abrogating the 1998 security accord with Washington would undermine Philippine security and foster aggression in the disputed South China Sea. U.S. military presence in the strategic waterway has been seen as a crucial counterweight to China, which claims virtually the entire sea.

Locsin proposed a review of the agreement to fix contentious issues, including criminal jurisdiction over erring American troops, instead of abrogating it. Philippine defense and military officials did not immediately issue any reaction to the government move.

Duterte threatened to terminate the security agreement after Washington reportedly canceled the U.S. visa of a loyal ally, Sen. Ronald dela Rosa, who was linked to human rights violations when he first enforced the president's deadly anti-drug crackdown as the national police chief in 2016.

Thousands of mostly poor suspects have been killed under the bloody campaign Duterte launched when he took office in mid-2016, alarming the U.S. and other Western governments and human rights watchdogs.

Duterte gave the U.S. a month to restore dela Rosa's visa, but U.S. officials have not publicly reacted to the Philippine leader's demand.

Duterte said in a speech late Monday that President Donald Trump has moved to save the agreement but added that he rejected the idea. He accused the U.S. of meddling in Philippine affairs, including seeking the release of opposition Sen. Leila de Lima, whom he has accused of involvement in illegal drugs. She has dismissed the allegation as a fabricated charge meant to muzzle dissent.

"America is very rude. They are so rude," Duterte said.

Locsin outlined in the Senate hearing what he said were the crucial security, trade and economic benefits the accord provides. The U.S. is a longtime treaty ally, a major trading partner and the largest development aid provider to the Philippines.

The accord, known by its acronym VFA, legally allows the entry of large numbers of American forces along with U.S. military ships and aircraft for joint training with Filipino troops. It specifies which country will have jurisdiction over American soldiers, who may be accused of crimes while in the Philippines, a sensitive issue in the former American colony.

A separate defense pact subsequently signed by the allies in 2014, the Enhanced Defense Cooperation Agreement, allows the extended stay of U.S. forces and authorizes them to build and maintain barracks and warehouses and store defense equipment and weapons inside five designated Philippine military camps.

A Filipino senator and former national police chief, Panfilo Lacson, said terminating the treaty would reduce the two allies' 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty "to a mere paper treaty as far as the U.S. is concerned."

Some Philippine senators have said the government decision to terminate the treaty, which the Senate ratified, should have the chamber's consent.

U.S. State Department Assistant Secretary R. Clarke Cooper said in a telephone news conference Monday

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 25 of 59

that abrogating the pact would put at risk more than 300 military engagements, including joint trainings, this year between the allies.

"All the engagements, all the freedom of navigation operations, all the exercises, all the joint training, having U.S. military personnel in port, on the ground, on the flight line, does require that we have a mechanism that allows that," he said. "That's why the VFA is so important."

Terminating the VFA would affect the joint exercises and other activities with U.S. forces "which the Philippine military and law enforcement agencies need to enhance their capabilities in countering threats to national security," Locsin said.

The U.S. provided more than \$550 million in security assistance to the Philippines from 2016 to 2019, Locsin said, adding that there may be a "chilling effect on our economic relations" if the Philippines draws down its security alliance with Washington.

American forces have provided intelligence, training and aid that allowed the Philippines to deal with human trafficking, cyberattacks, illegal narcotics and terrorism, Locsin said, citing how U.S. military assistance helped Filipino forces quell a disastrous siege by Islamic State group-aligned militants in southern Marawi city in 2017.

U.S. military presence in the South China Sea has also been a deterrent to aggressive actions in the disputed waters, Locsin said.

China, the Philippines, Vietnam and three other governments have rival claims in the strategic waterway.

Duterte first threatened to abrogate the VFA in late 2016 after a U.S. aid agency put on hold funds for anti-poverty projects in the Philippines. He has walked back on such threats but his government's action on Tuesday is the most serious indication of his intent to set back military ties with the U.S.

Aside from threatening to end the VFA, Duterte has said he will ban some critical U.S. senators from entering the Philippines.

Duterte has also barred Cabinet officials from traveling to the U.S. and turned down an invitation by Trump to join a special meeting the U.S. leader will host for leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in March in Las Vegas.

New Hampshire hopes to clarify unsettled Democratic contest

**By STEVE PEOPLES, KATHLEEN RONAYNE, THOMAS BEAUMONT and HUNTER WOODALL
Associated Press**

MANCHESTER, N.H. (AP) — Democrats are hoping that voters in New Hampshire will reset the party's presidential nomination fight on Tuesday and bring clarity to a young primary season that has been marred by deep dysfunction and doubt.

Since the chaotic Iowa caucuses failed to perform their traditional function of winnowing the race, it now falls to New Hampshire to begin culling the Democratic field, which still features almost a dozen candidates.

For Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, the vote is an opportunity to lock in dominance of the party's left flank. A repeat of his strong showing in Iowa could severely damage progressive rival Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, who faces the prospect of an embarrassing defeat on her near-home turf.

While Sanders marches forward, moderates are struggling to unite behind a candidate. After essentially tying with Sanders for first place in Iowa, Pete Buttigieg, the 38-year-old former mayor of South Bend, Indiana, begins his day as the centrist front-runner. But at least two other White House hopefuls — former Vice President Joe Biden and Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar — are competing for the same voters, a dynamic that could delay the nomination contest if it continues.

More than a year after Democrats began announcing their presidential candidacies, Democrats are struggling to coalesce behind a message or a messenger in their desperate quest to defeat President Donald Trump. That's raising the stakes of the New Hampshire primary as voters weigh whether candidates are too liberal, too moderate or too inexperienced — vulnerabilities that could play to Trump's advantage in the fall.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 26 of 59

During the final day of campaigning, many voters said they still hadn't made a final choice. University of New Hampshire pollster Andy Smith predicted that as many as 20% of voters would make up their mind on Election Day with twice as many deciding over the last three days.

"Historically, New Hampshire is known to shift late," he warned those with expectations.

New Hampshire's secretary of state predicated record-high turnout on Tuesday. If that doesn't happen, Democrats will confront the prospect of waning enthusiasm following weak turnout in Iowa last week and Trump's rising poll numbers.

Trump, campaigning in New Hampshire on Monday night, sought to inject chaos in the process. The Republican president suggested that conservative-leaning voters could affect the state's Democratic primary results, though only registered Democrats and voters not registered with either party can participate in New Hampshire's Democratic presidential primary.

"I hear a lot of Republicans tomorrow will vote for the weakest candidate possible of the Democrats," Trump said Monday. "My only problem is I'm trying to figure out who is their weakest candidate. I think they're all weak."

Another complication that could affect turnout: weather. Forecasts call for a light wintry mix or rain and snow in some parts of the state, which could make travel treacherous.

Biden — and the Democratic Party's establishment wing — may have the most to lose on Tuesday should the former two-term vice president underperform in a second consecutive primary election. Biden has earned the overwhelming share of endorsements from elected officials across the nation as party leaders seek a relatively "safe" nominee to run against Trump.

But the distance between Democratic voters and their party leaders appears to be growing.

After finishing in a distant fourth place in Iowa, Biden acknowledged he would likely "take a hit" in New Hampshire. The dark prediction during Friday's debate disappointed New Hampshire loyalists like state House Speaker Steve Shurtleff, who endorsed Biden less than a month ago but spoke about him over the weekend as if he were already eliminated from contention.

"I hope the vice president does well, and I hope he can move forward, but it's hard to say," Shurtleff said in an interview. "The sad thing for me personally is that he's such a terrific individual."

He noted that no Democrat has ever become the party's presidential nominee without finishing first or second in New Hampshire.

Biden's campaign, meanwhile, sought to cast New Hampshire as one small step in the path to the presidential nomination, with contests coming up soon in more diverse states that award more delegates like Nevada and South Carolina, where Biden hopes to retain his advantage among minority voters.

"We plan to be competitive, but the reality is we always said this was going to be a fight. We have to let this full process play out," Biden senior adviser Symone Sanders said. "Regardless of what happens on Tuesday, we plan to move forward."

The stakes were dire for Warren as well in a contest set just next door to her Massachusetts home. She has positioned herself as a mainstream alternative to Bernie Sanders but is suddenly looking up at him and Buttigieg as Klobuchar fights to peel away female support.

Warren sought to project confidence on Monday, telling reporters she's "been counted down and out for much of my life."

"You get knocked down," she said. "You get back up."

Buttigieg, young and with no governing experience beyond the mayor's office, is trying to emerge as the leading Biden alternative for his party's moderate wing. His team — with 75 paid staffers, 15 campaign offices scattered across 10 counties and roughly 300 trained volunteers leaders heading the get-out-the-vote teams -- has added volunteers since Iowa, aides said.

Buttigieg has aggressively courted moderate Democrats, independents and what he calls "future former Republicans" as he tries to cobble together a winning coalition, just as he did in Iowa, where he finished in a near tie with Sanders for the lead.

Kim Holman was one of 1,800 people who crowded into, and spilled out of, Elm Street Junior High

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 27 of 59

School's gym in Nashua over the weekend. She calls herself "super torn."

"I'm still kind of on the fence. I love Pete's energy and his passion," the 52-year-old personal trainer said. "It does make me a little nervous he's so new to politics."

In the days leading up to Tuesday's primary, Buttigieg has come under increasing attack from Biden and Klobuchar, who seized on his lack of experience. And from the left, Sanders attacked Buttigieg's reliance on big-dollar donors, which sparked jeers of "Wall Street Pete" from Sanders' supporters.

Buttigieg seemed unfazed by the attacks. He barely altered his stump speech as he crisscrossed the state, calling on voters to "turn the page" to a new generation of leadership.

Sanders, meanwhile, has been one of the only candidates to explicitly predict victory in New Hampshire, where he defeated Hillary Clinton by more than 20 percentage points four years ago.

Like Buttigieg, his confidence is connected to the strength of his organization. He proclaimed repeatedly in recent days that his team knocked on 150,000 doors on Saturday alone, a significant number given that the state expects fewer than 300,000 people to vote Tuesday in the Democratic primary.

Sanders spent the eve of the primary courting his most passionate supporters, young voters, at two college campuses. At a Monday night rally at an arena on the University of New Hampshire campus, a band pumped up the crowd with a cover of The Who's "My Generation," before Sanders and Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, a leading figure among young progressives, took the stage. The band The Strokes closed out the night before the audience of thousands.

"Brothers and sisters, we are making history in this campaign," Sanders declared at one event in Hudson.

Associated Press writer Will Weissert in Rochester, N.H., contributed to this report.

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

Big question as Weinstein trial winds down: Will he testify?

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and TOM HAYS Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Harvey Weinstein's lawyers are set to rest their defense case Tuesday, but not before answering the big question looming over his New York City rape trial: Will he take the risk of testifying?

So far, they say, Weinstein hasn't signaled he'll roll the dice. His last chance to declare his testimony comes Tuesday.

As he left court Monday, the once-powerful Hollywood boss declined to answer a reporter who asked if he was going to take the stand.

Doing so could be risky because prosecutors would be able to grill Weinstein on cross-examination about heinous allegations that jurors already heard about in vivid detail from six of his accusers.

Weinstein, 67, is charged with raping a woman in a Manhattan hotel room in 2013 and forcibly performing oral sex in 2006 on a different woman: film and TV production assistant Mimi Haley.

Prosecutors called other accusers as witnesses as part of an effort to show he has used the same tactics to victimize many women over the years.

Weinstein has maintained any sexual encounters were consensual.

The Associated Press has a policy of not publishing the names of people who allege sexual assault without their consent. It is withholding the name of the woman accusing Weinstein of raping her in 2013 because it isn't clear if she wishes to be identified publicly.

How Weinstein and his defense team feel the case is going could factor into his decision on whether to testify.

The trial has moved much more quickly than anyone involved expected. Jurors were initially told to expect six weeks of testimony. Now it's on pace for closing arguments by the end of the week, with deliberations to follow.

If he declines to testify, the judge will instruct jurors not to view that decision as a sign of guilt.

"I am not a fan of blowing the lead if I feel like we are already on a road to victory," said Brian Mc-

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 28 of 59

Monagle, a defense lawyer not involved in the case who helped secure a mistrial in Bill Cosby's first sexual assault trial in 2017.

"In some cases, it is an easy decision because the client either can't provide a credible explanation or you simply do not believe your client could survive cross examination because of any number of reasons."

Weinstein has been increasingly upbeat coming and going from court as the trial has worn on, though in front of jurors the once-powerful movie mogul has mostly been sitting quietly at the defense table, munching on mints, jotting notes and occasionally dozing off.

On Monday, after strong testimony from a defense witness who repudiated the account of one of Weinstein's accusers, his lawyer Arthur Aidala declared: "It was a great day for the defense today."

Claudia Salinas, a Mexican model and actress, took the stand to defend herself against accuser Lauren Marie Young's claim that she stood by and did nothing while Weinstein sexually assaulted Young at a Beverly Hills hotel in 2013.

"Never happened," Salinas told jurors.

Young, a model, testified last week that Salinas closed the door behind her and Weinstein as they went into the bathroom, where she alleges he stripped off his clothes, grabbed her breast and masturbated.

Once it was over, Young said she found Salinas standing outside the bathroom and shot her an evil look before leaving as quickly as she could.

"If I had done that, I would remember that," Salinas testified. "I would never close the door on anybody."

Salinas took the witness stand as the defense called witnesses for a third day after more than two weeks of prosecution testimony.

In some other high-profile sex crimes cases, defendants have skipped testifying.

For example, Cosby did not take the witness stand either time he was tried for drugging and molesting a woman at his suburban Philadelphia home. The second trial, in 2018, resulted in the comedian's conviction.

In another high-profile case, former Penn State assistant football coach Jerry Sandusky was eager to testify at his 2012 child sexual abuse. But that was before his adopted son lodged allegations of abuse against him as the trial was going on. If Sandusky had testified, prosecutors could've then called the son as a rebuttal witness.

"I tell my clients once you take the stand you have lost your shield, which is me, and you are on your own," said McMonagle, who was not involved in Sandusky case.

"In my experience as a prosecutor and defense attorney it is rare to see a client take the stand. The problem is, some jurors do hold that against you."

On Twitter, follow Michael Sisak at twitter.com/mikesisak and Tom Hays at <https://twitter.com/aptomhays>

Changing electorate could affect New Hampshire's primary

By HOLLY RAMER Associated Press

New Hampshire has been holding the first-in-the-nation presidential primary for 100 years, but a significant number of Tuesday's ballots could be cast by newcomers to that storied tradition.

New Hampshire has one of the nation's lowest percentages of native-born residents, with only a third of those age 25 and older having been born in the state. And one-fifth of the state's potential voters either resided somewhere else four years ago or were not old enough to vote, according to a recent analysis of demographic trends by the University of New Hampshire.

Those shifts challenge some of the presumptions about New Hampshire voters and could affect Tuesday's results, given that surveys suggest the newcomers and young voters are less conservative than the established residents.

"Many people think of New Hampshire as a place where people have lived for 10 generations and their ancestors signed the Constitution or Declaration of Independence, and, in fact, I know someone like that," said Ken Johnson, senior demographer at the UNH Carsey School of Public Policy. "But New Hampshire is one of the most mobile states in the country."

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 29 of 59

From 2016 to 2020, nearly 70,000 residents turned 18 and became eligible to vote, while 46,000 older residents died. During the same period, about 160,000 voting-age adults moved into the state, and about 150,000 moved out.

It's unknown how that churn will shake out on Election Day. But according to University of New Hampshire Survey Center polls, both young residents and recent migrants are less likely to identify themselves as conservative than established residents are. Of the three groups, young residents are the most likely to identify as liberals, but they're also the least likely to have registered to vote. Just 61% have done so, compared to 54% of migrants and 88% of established residents.

About 40% of the new residents in recent years came from Massachusetts, and an additional 30% came from other Northeastern states. About a quarter came from Southern or Western states, with the smallest share coming from the Midwest.

That small group included Martha Carlson, 48, who moved to Hollis from Chicago in 2018 and plans to register as a Democrat on Tuesday. Her husband is from Minnesota and likes his home state Sen. Amy Klobuchar, but Carlson said she is about 90% sure she'll vote for former South Bend, Indiana, Mayor Pete Buttigieg.

"He's moderate, and we're moderate people," she said.

Alyssa McKeon and her family moved to Hopkinton in 2018 from Salem, Massachusetts. She said that while she is excited about a number of the Democratic candidates, it was a "no-brainer" to decide to back Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren.

"I'm a planner myself, and I deeply appreciate her comprehensive plans and her approach to how to actually get it done," said McKeon, a 34-year-old registered Democrat who works for an education non-profit. "I understand it's going to take drastic changes to how we do business and how we finance things, and I think it's time for an overhaul."

No estimates are available regarding the racial makeup of the state's new voters, and the state remains far less diverse than the rest of the nation. Overall, minorities made up 8.7% of the adult population in 2018, a statistic to which critics of the primary point in arguing New Hampshire doesn't deserve its starring role in the presidential nominating process.

Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders' campaign is banking on trying to bring new voters to the polls and has shown a particular strength with young people. Other campaigns have made a concerted push in the state's college towns.

Ella Diers, who turned 18 in September, said she has been paying fairly close attention to the campaigns.

"I'm kinda leaning toward Pete Buttigieg. I like that he's not extreme," said Diers, of Concord. "I think he seems like just a very normal guy and not very polarizing to either side, which I think is important. He seems to have good values."

She's not a fan of President Donald Trump's and is eager to cast a vote toward ending his time in office.

"I'm pretty excited. I think it's pretty cool that I get to vote," she said. "It's definitely time for a change."

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

Mandela's release 30 years ago birthed a new South Africa

By **ANDREW MELDRUM** and **NQOBILE NTSHANGASE** Associated Press

CAPE TOWN, South Africa (AP) — Thirty years ago, Nelson Mandela was released from 27 years of imprisonment by South Africa's apartheid regime and instantly galvanized the country, and the world, to dismantle the brutal system of racial oppression.

Raising a clenched-fist salute and striding purposefully from the gates of Victor Verster prison, Mandela, then 71, made it clear he was committed to ending apartheid and establishing majority rule and rights for all in South Africa.

His release gave many South Africans their first view of Mandela because during his imprisonment the regime banned the publication of images of him and his speeches. And then, suddenly, he was everywhere.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 30 of 59

"Comrades and fellow South Africans, I greet you all in the name of peace, democracy and freedom for all," Mandela said hours after his release, speaking to throngs of supporters at Cape Town's City Hall.

On Tuesday, current President Cyril Ramaphosa, who held the microphone during Mandela's address, was set to speak to the country on the "speech that birthed a nation."

Just over four years after his release, Mandela was elected president in the country's first all-race elections, leading South Africa out of decades of violently imposed discrimination. Under his leadership, South Africa drafted and passed a constitution widely praised for upholding the rights of all, becoming one of the first to explicitly endorse gay rights.

A Truth and Reconciliation Commission took South Africa on a compelling, painful path to air the injustices perpetrated during the more than 40 years of apartheid rule.

Mandela, and South African President F.W. de Klerk, who freed him, won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993 "for their work to peacefully end apartheid and for laying the foundation for a new democratic South Africa."

Anglican archbishop Desmond Tutu, himself a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, marked the 30th anniversary of Mandela's release.

"Nelson Mandela emerged from prison to dazzle South Africa and the world with his warmth and human values," wrote Tutu and his wife, Leah, in a short statement. "Circumstances and priorities change over time, but good values don't go out of fashion. We miss him. Love and blessings."

Magnanimous, charismatic and inclusive during his one term as president which ended in 1999, Mandela led South Africa to a new era of democracy. In retirement he remained active in encouraging rights for all.

Today's South Africa is dogged by serious problems of inequality, poverty and violence, largely a result of the stubborn legacy of apartheid. Some South Africans have criticized Mandela for making too many compromises, especially to the white minority, which continues to enjoy prosperity.

Ramaphosa said Mandela's release "was a defining moment in our onward march toward democracy" in a statement to mark the anniversary.

But "inequality, especially as defined by race and gender, remains among the highest in the world. Unemployment is deepening and poverty is widespread. Violence, including the violence that men perpetrate against women, continues to ravage our communities," Ramaphosa said.

He urged all South Africans to take inspiration from Mandela's legacy to work together to help solve these problems.

Meldrum reported from Johannesburg.

China denies cybertheft following Equifax accusations

BEIJING (AP) — China denied involvement in any hacking activities on Tuesday after the United States indicted four members of the Chinese military for allegedly breaking into the computer networks of the Equifax credit reporting agency and stealing the personal information of tens of millions of people.

The Justice Department accused Beijing on Monday of engineering one of the biggest hacks in history targeting consumer data.

Foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said China was committed to "firmly oppose and combat cyberattacks of any kind," adding that it is a staunch defender of cybersecurity and its institutions "never engage in cybertheft of trade secrets."

Geng also turned the accusation back on the U.S., saying past events had shown Washington is "engaging in large-scale, organized and indiscriminate cyberstealing, spying and surveillance activities on foreign governments, enterprises and individuals."

"China is also a victim of this," Geng said.

The accusation is the latest against Chinese suspected of breaching the computer networks of American corporations, including steel manufacturers, a hotel chain and a health insurer. It comes as the Trump administration has warned against what it sees as the growing political and economic influence of China, and efforts by Beijing to collect data for financial and intelligence purposes and to steal research and in-

novation.

Even as President Donald Trump points to a preliminary trade pact with China as evidence of his ability to extract concessions from Beijing, members of his administration have been warning against cybersecurity and surveillance risks posed by China, especially as the tech giant Huawei seeks to become part of new, high-speed 5G wireless networks across the globe.

Experts and U.S. officials say the Equifax theft represents Beijing's interest in accumulating as much information about Americans as possible.

The data could be used by China to target U.S. government officials and ordinary citizens, including possible spies, and to find weaknesses and vulnerabilities that can be exploited — such as for purposes of blackmail. The FBI has not seen that happen yet in this case, but officials don't rule out it happening in future.

Spain searches for 67 missing at sea, rescues 119 others

By ARITZ PARRA Associated Press

MADRID (AP) — Spain on Tuesday resumed the search for 67 migrants missing from a boat trying to reach European shores a day after maritime authorities rescued 119 others from cold Mediterranean waters.

A spokeswoman with Spain's Maritime Rescue agency said the search for the missing rubber boat in the stretch of sea separating Spain from Morocco restarted with a rescue vessel and a plane.

A rescue charity alerted authorities Monday about the boat's departure from Moroccan shores, saying that 49 men, 13 women and 5 children were on board, the official said. She was not authorized to be named in media reports.

Also Monday, rescuers found two rubber boats in the Alborán Sea with 60 and 59 migrants from Africa. The migrants, including 26 women and five children, disembarked in Spain's southeastern city of Málaga and were all in good health, the spokeswoman said.

Refugees fleeing violence and migrants fleeing poverty look for a new life in Europe by setting off on dangerous trips by sea from African coasts.

Spain became the main entry point into Europe for migrants in 2018 but saw the number of arrivals halved last year to 26,168. Recently it has seen an uptick in the number of boats heading to the Canary Islands, which lie in the Atlantic Ocean off Africa's northeastern coast.

Morocco received 140 million euros (\$155 million) in European Union funds in 2019 to crack down on illegal migrant crossings.

Suicide bombing near military academy in Kabul kills 6

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — A suicide bomber targeting a military academy in the Afghan capital on Tuesday killed at least six people, including two civilians and four military personnel, the Interior Ministry said.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the bombing in Kabul, but both the Taliban and militants from the Islamic State group regularly stage attacks in the city, targeting Afghan forces.

Along with the six killed, 12 other people, including five civilians, were wounded in the attack, said Nasrat Rahimi, the Interior Ministry spokesman.

The attack happened at a police checkpoint near the entrance to the Marshal Fahim Military Academy, located on the outskirts of a western Kabul neighborhood, he said. Local TV channels showed images of Afghan security forces blocking off the main road leading to the blast site from far away.

The academy has been attacked in the past. Last May, a suicide bomber killed six people there. The school is sometimes called "Sandhurst in the Sand," in reference to the famous British school. It's named for Mohammed Fahim, the country's late vice president and a military commander of the Northern Alliance that fought the Taliban. It was inaugurated in 2013 and British troops in Afghanistan oversaw the establishing of the academy's officer school and training program.

The academy was also the site where U.S. Army Maj Gen. Harold J. Greene lost his life — the highest-

ranking U.S. military officer to be killed in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Greene, then deputy commander of NATO's transition force in the country, was shot and killed by an Afghan soldier in a so-called "insider attack" that was later claimed by the Taliban in August 2014.

The Taliban today control or hold sway over nearly half of Afghanistan and are at their highest since the 2001 U.S. invasion that ousted the Taliban who harbored the late al-Qaida terror network leader Osama bin Laden.

Iraqis wake up to snow for first time in over a decade

By SAMYA KULLAB Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraq's capital of Baghdad awoke on Tuesday to a sight not seen in over a decade — their city covered in snow.

It was a rare moment of respite during which residents took selfies and children played in parks, lobbing snowballs before the fluffy flakes disappeared and the white cover dissolved into grey puddles.

Iraq has grappled with months of unrest, beginning with an anti-government protest movement which engulfed the country in October, and the U.S. killing of a top Iranian general in Baghdad in early January, which brought the region close to war amid soaring U.S.-Iran tensions.

Over 500 people have died in the protests as security forces used live rounds and tear gas to disperse crowds in Baghdad and southern Iraq. The movement is entering a critical phase, after influential Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, who initially threw his weight behind demonstrators, withdrew it. Tensions have since seethed between protesters and al-Sadr's followers.

In the city's central Tahrir Square, the epicenter of the protest movement, protesters took a moment to observe the snowfall and dusted the flakes off their sit-in tents.

"Thank God it is snowing this morning," said Aymen Ahmed, a protester. "The atmosphere is beautiful ... the people are very happy because this is the first time snow falls in Iraq."

Annual snowfall is common in the mountainous northern region of Iraq, but very rare in Baghdad. The last time the capital saw snow was in 2008.

By midday, the snow had melted in most parts of the city. "It was a beautiful moment," said Mariam, another protester. She gave only her first name, fearing reprisals like most anti-government protesters.

"Now life goes back to normal."

Virus storytellers challenge China's official narrative

By JOHN LEICESTER and DAKE KANG Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — After nearly a week of roaming China's epidemic-struck city, filming the dead and the sickened in overwhelmed hospitals, the strain of being hounded by both the new virus and the country's dissent-quelling police started to tell.

Chen Qiushi looked haggard and disheveled in his online posts, an almost unrecognizable shadow of the energetic young man who had rolled into Wuhan on a self-assigned mission to tell its inhabitants' stories, just as authorities locked the city down almost three weeks ago.

Until he disappeared last week, the 34-year-old lawyer-turned-video blogger was one of the most visible pioneers in a small but dogged movement that is defying the ruling Communist Party's tightly policed monopoly on information.

Armed with smart phones and social media accounts, these citizen-journalists are telling their stories and those of others from Wuhan and other locked-down virus zones in Hubei province. The scale of this non-sanctioned storytelling is unprecedented in any previous major outbreak or disaster in China. It presents a challenge to the Communist Party, which wants to control the narrative of China, as it always has since taking power in 1949.

"It's very different from anything we have witnessed," said Maria Repnikova, a communications professor at Georgia State University who researches Chinese media.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 33 of 59

Never have so many Chinese, including victims and health care workers, used their phones to televise their experiences of a disaster, she said. That's partly because the more than 50 million people locked down in cities under quarantine are "really anxious and bored and their lives have pretty much stopped."

Official state media extol the Communist Party's massive efforts to build new hospitals in a flash, send in thousands of medical workers and ramp up production of face masks without detailing the underlying conditions that are driving these efforts.

Chen did just that in more than 100 posts from Wuhan over two weeks. He showed the sick crammed into hospital corridors and the struggles of residents to get treatment.

"Why am I here? I have stated that it's my duty to be a citizen-journalist," he said, filming himself with a selfie stick outside a train station. "What sort of a journalist are you if you don't dare rush to the front line in a disaster?"

A video posted Jan. 25 showed what Chen said was a body left under a blanket outside an emergency ward. Inside another hospital, he filmed a dead man propped up on a wheelchair, head hanging down and face deathly pale.

"What's wrong with him?" he asked a woman holding the man up with an arm across the chest.

"He has already passed," she said.

Chen's posts and vlogs, or video blogs, garnered millions of views — and police attention.

In an anguished video post near the end of his first week in Wuhan, he said police had called him, wanting to know where he was, and questioned his parents.

"I am scared," he said. "I have the virus in front of me, and on my back, I have the legal and administrative power of China."

His voice trembling with emotion and tears welling in his eyes, he vowed to continue "as long as I am alive in this city."

"Even death doesn't scare me!" he said. "So you think I'm scared of the Communist Party?"

Last week, Chen's posts dried up. His mother broke the silence with a video post in the small hours of Friday. She said Chen was unreachable and appealed for help in finding him.

Later that evening, his friend and well-known mixed martial artist Xu Xiaodong said in a live broadcast on YouTube that Chen had been forcibly quarantined for 14 days, considered the maximum incubation period for the virus. He said Chen had been healthy and showed no signs of infection.

On Sunday, Xu tweeted that despite pleading with authorities for a call with Chen, he and others haven't been able to get in touch.

Police also came knocking last week for Fang Bin, who has been posting videos from Wuhan hospitals, including footage of body bags piled in a minibus, waiting to be carted to a crematorium.

Fang, a seller of traditional Chinese clothing, filmed a testy exchange through the metal grill of his door with a group of four or five officers. The footage posted on YouTube offered a glimpse into how the security apparatus is working overtime to keep a lid on public anger about the spread of the virus.

"Why are there so many of you?" Fang asked. "If I open the door, you'll take me away!"

Chen re-posted that video on his Twitter feed — one of his last tweets before his disappearance.

The death of a Wuhan doctor last week focused attention on earlier attempts to suppress speech, and its consequences. Police had accused Dr. Li Wenliang of spreading rumors after he raised alarm in December about the outbreak. He succumbed to the virus, bringing an outpouring of grief, along with anger at authorities for how he had been treated.

Wuhan police referred a request for comment to Hubei provincial authorities. Repeated calls to the Hubei foreign affairs office rang unanswered, playing instead a pre-recorded message: "Don't believe rumors, don't spread rumors."

For Gao Fei, a migrant worker detained after criticizing Chinese President Xi Jinping over the virus outbreak, the doctor's death and Chen's disappearance are "a wake-up call for the Chinese people."

"The number one reason our government couldn't control this is because they always conceal the truth and block information from citizens," he said from his hometown in Hubei.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 34 of 59

Gao, a welder who had rushed home from southern China right before the lockdown, went to hospitals and drugstores and shared what he saw online. After tweeting that Xi's measures were against humanity, he was detained with drug users and a "rumormonger" who pointed out overcrowded hospitals.

He admires Chen's bravery and push for social progress. "He's the spine, the backbone of China," Gao said.

Since graduating from law school in 2007, Chen has worked as a waiter, hotel cleaner, voice actor, police reporter, and eventually, a TV host, launching a budding media career. He passed the bar in 2014 and began practicing in Beijing,

In 2018, Chen started a video blog on Douyin, the Chinese version of TikTok, and quickly amassed over a million fans for his legal commentary.

He ran into trouble last year after posting videos of pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong. Traveling to the semi-autonomous Chinese city, he attended both a patriotic pro-Beijing rally and a protest march, showing both sides to give his mainland audience a balanced perspective. In response, authorities shut down his Chinese social media accounts and called him back to the mainland.

From Wuhan, Chen has broadcast on YouTube and Twitter, which are blocked in China. Only people who use a virtual private network, or VPN, can see the videos. His YouTube page sports the motto: "Don't sing the praises of the wealthy and powerful, speak only for the common people."

Some of his posts were tinged with dark humor. Chen posed in a plastic bottle with its bottom cut off over his head, looking like a spaceman. He showed two men, one wearing a sanitary towel, the other incontinence pants, in lieu of sold-out face masks.

Others posts shouted defiance.

"Letting people speak cannot cause deaths," he tweeted on Jan. 28. "Not letting people speak can cause many deaths."

Leicester reported from Paris.

Thai army chief: Gunman wasn't treated fairly in land deal

By **BUSABA SIVASOMBOON** and **TASSANEE VEJPONGSA** Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — Thailand's army commander said Tuesday the soldier who killed 29 people in a shooting rampage had not been treated fairly in a land deal involving his commander and such arrangements would have to be halted.

The gunman killed his superior officer and the officer's mother-in-law, stole weapons and a vehicle and headed to a popular shopping mall in a northeastern city where he holed up for hours before security officers killed him.

Gen. Apirat Kongsompong said at a news conference at army headquarters in Bangkok that such arrangements would have to be halted.

"The perpetrator did not receive fair treatment from his superior and the relative," he said. "They were involved in a land purchase deal that had gone wrong. We will investigate further about who else is involved in the issue."

Sgt. Maj. Jakrapanth Thomma started his rampage Saturday by killing Col. Anantarote Krasae, his commanding officer in the 22nd Ammunition Battalion, and the officer's 63-year-old mother-in-law, a real estate dealer who marketed to local soldiers, at Anantarote's home.

The gunman then stole heavy weapons from an army camp and shot people at random from the stolen army vehicle en route to the Terminal 21 Korat mall in the city of Nakhon Ratchasima. He holed up in the airport-themed mall overnight before security forces cornered and killed him.

Apirat deflected criticism over how the army safeguards its weapons, describing the theft of arms as the criminal act of an individual.

He admitted to shortcomings in some military procedures, but said the gunman took advantage of his

military rank to confuse guards and gain access to the weapons.

Apirat said the security for arms depots is up to standard but will be reviewed.

Military affairs specialists have suggested systemic problems with security of army and police weapons, pointing to repeated leakage through theft and force.

The shooting raises serious questions about stockpile security, said Michael Picard, research director of GunPolicy.org who until recently was based in Bangkok.

"It is alarming if that's all it took — that one guy was tasked with guarding/monitoring a well-stocked armory," Picard wrote in an email interview. "It's possible that the assailant used his rank and knowledge of the base to bypass existent controls, but this still shows that the level of control over this base's armory was woefully insufficient in terms of manpower and access restriction."

Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha asked Cabinet members and civil servants to dress in black as an expression of sympathy for the shooting victims. He said King Maha Vajiralongkorn has offered royally sponsored funeral rites and cremations for all of the dead.

The death toll of 29 surpassed Thailand's last major attack on civilians, a 2015 bombing at a shrine in Bangkok killing 20 people that was allegedly carried out by human traffickers in retaliation for a crackdown on their network.

Some of the 58 wounded are still in critical condition.

Terminal 21 Korat will reopen Thursday with a Buddhist ceremony, building department administrator Amnuayphorn Sankong said.

Thai media reported two people had been arrested for making threats online to carry out similar shootings. One was a former soldier who told police he had been drunk and arguing with his girlfriend and the other was a 16-year-old who told police he posted a threat for fun, the Bangkok Post reported.

Both face charges of violating the Computer Crime Act, which is punishable by up to five years in prison, and causing public fear, which carried a one-month sentence.

Associated Press journalists Emily Schmall and Preeyapa T. Khunsong in Nakhon Ratchasima and Grant Peck in Bangkok contributed to this story.

Rohingya boat capsizes in Bay of Bengal; at least 16 dead

DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP) — An overcrowded boat carrying about 125 Rohingya refugees from Bangladeshi camps sank early Tuesday in the Bay of Bengal, leaving at least 16 dead, Bangladeshi officials said Tuesday.

The coast guard, navy divers and other rescuers recovered the bodies of 14 women, one child and a man after the wooden boat capsized off St. Martin's Island, the top elected official on the island told The Associated Press.

Noor Ahmed told AP by phone from the scene that some 62 refugees on the boat survived. They were wooed by traffickers to get on the boat from various points as it was heading for Malaysia, he said.

Iqbal Hossain, additional police superintendent in Cox's Bazar, said by phone the overcrowding of the boat had caused it to capsize and that it may have been carrying additional cargo as well.

Hossain said the bodies were sent to nearby Shah Porir island and the rescue operation was continuing. But he would not give an exact figure about how many still remained missing.

Traffickers usually lure refugees by promising a better life overseas. Many past attempts to travel illegally by boats were thwarted by coast guards.

More than 700,000 Rohingya Muslims fled to Bangladesh from neighboring Myanmar to flee a harsh crackdown by Myanmar's military since August 2017. Myanmar has long claimed the Rohingya are "Bengali" migrants from Bangladesh, even though their families have lived in the country for generations. Nearly all have been denied citizenship since 1982, effectively rendering them stateless.

Syrians scramble for refuge in last opposition frontier

By SARAH EL DEEB Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Throughout Syria's civil war, Maad al-Khalaf helped other Syrians find shelter in the opposition enclave in the northwest as they fled government military advances around the country. Now he's the one in need of refuge as a swift offensive overwhelmed his home village.

He joined hundreds of thousands in Idlib province scrambling to escape the widening, multi-front assault by President Bashar Assad's forces, squeezing into whatever structures they can find in a shrinking territory.

"There is no house of concrete or of mud or even a chicken coop that is not inhabited," the 41-year-old al-Khalaf said. "People are in dire need of any shelter. Even a tent sometimes is not available."

The son of a prominent landowning family in Qmenas, an ancient Aramaic village, al-Khalaf fled with his family of five to a nearby town as the bombs began to fall. Within three days, that was swept up in the offensive as well, so they ran farther — to a village near the Turkish border, 30 kilometers (18 miles) from the front line.

There, they now live in a tent on a piece of farmland donated by a relative. More relatives moved in as well. Winter wind sweeps through the new settlement, where 30 families huddle in 15 tents set up in the mud, sharing one toilet, one sink and a huge sense of relief that they are out of harm's way, at least for now.

Nearly a quarter of the 3 million people in Idlib and surrounding areas have surged north as Russian-backed government forces advanced in recent weeks, determined to capture the last remaining opposition-held territory. Terrified families piled on trucks and vehicles, sitting on top of mattresses and blankets, clogging sludgy rural roads in harrowing scenes of exodus that have been recurrent in Syria's conflict, now in its ninth year.

Around half the territory's population had already been displaced from other parts of Syria, so formal camps are full. People are setting up tents in farms or sheltering in half-constructed buildings with no windows or doors in temperatures below freezing.

Almost half of the 700,000 uprooted since Dec. 1 are children, the U.N. estimated. Schools have stopped, 26 immunization centers closed, threatening new outbreaks of diseases, and some 53 health facilities no longer operate, including three directly hit in airstrikes or shelling. More than 370 civilians were killed since December, according to the U.N.

While it may not be the biggest single wave of displacement — nearly a million were on the move after a government offensive a year ago — this may be the most dire.

"This is truly the worst humanitarian crisis because of lack of resources, the surge in displacement over short periods, weaker emergency responses and because shrinking areas outside of government control means a major problem in providing shelter," said Mohammed al-Shami, a coordinator for the area's Response Coordination Group, which works with U.N. agencies to assess needs.

For the millions who refuse to live under government rule, this is their last frontier with few places to run to.

Turkey, the opposition's last friend, is already home to 3.6 million refugees and won't open the concrete blast walls it erected along most of the border for a new wave.

In one swift move over just a few days, government troops captured more than 600 square kilometers (230 square miles). The forces' immediate goal seems to be to control the strategic highway running across Idlib and linking northern Syria to Damascus.

An opposition fighter said the government and Russia have adopted a typical "scorched earth campaign" that drove them from areas along the highway. He called opposition losses "catastrophic," speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss the military situation.

The rapid advances sparked rare clashes with Turkey, which has troops in the region to monitor a 2018 cease-fire deal. Turkey has sent in thousands of reinforcements, but the buildup didn't stop government advances, only deepening the panic among residents and their skepticism over Ankara's motives.

The opposition fighter said it remains "ambiguous" why Turkey has been unable to stop the government

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 37 of 59

troops.

Turkey says it has coordinated its deployment with Russia. Aron Lund, a Syria expert, wrote that Turkey may be seeking new leverage with Russia, which has "positioned itself as Idlib's kingmaker." Ultimately, he said, neither Moscow nor Ankara will want to let Idlib ruin their strategic relationship.

Russia, meanwhile, has thrown its weight behind Damascus' push. Nothing, including hospitals, has been spared.

Opposition activists said Russian warplanes were behind an airstrike on the main hospital in Ariha village in late January that killed at least 10 people. Moscow dismisses the allegations.

Dr. Tayseer, a surgeon there who was previously displaced from southern Syria, said that after one missile hit, he emerged from hiding in the basement to help; then a second and third missile struck. The hospital was destroyed, Tayseer was slightly injured, and his top anesthesiologist was mortally wounded.

Strikes on health facilities are always a precursor to clearing out the civilian population, said Tayseer, who asked that his full name not be used to protect his family. He moved to Idlib city and volunteered in hospitals there.

Repeated displacement, he said, is the fate of those who refuse government rule. "We are citizens without a nation. We are either displaced, killed, imprisoned or detained."

Over 100 villages and towns recently captured by the government are now ghost towns.

The U.N. estimates some 144,000 of the recently displaced moved to Turkish-administered Syrian areas to the north. Nearly 250 families traveled even further, to Raqqa in the Kurdish-controlled east.

A 36-year-old woman from Saraqeb fled with her family in the middle of the night soon before the town was captured. They went to Idlib city and found residents in a panic, fearing imminent attack and searching for places elsewhere to live.

Her family has found an apartment in the Turkish-administered town of Jarablus on the border. Expecting government forces to keep surging, she said her next move will be out of Syria.

"I can't take it. I will leave by any means," she said, asking to remain anonymous because she is from a well-known family.

Al-Khalaf works in Idlib city but keeps his family in the village. As he spoke by phone from his office to the AP, thuds of bombs and airstrikes could be heard.

Over the past years, al-Khalaf, once a senior government official before joining the opposition, used his local relations to build a network to find unused houses, warehouses and concrete shelters for the displaced flowing into the opposition enclave. He has used his contacts to find homes as part of his work with Violet, an organization offering emergency and aid services.

Now many of those he helped lodge are fleeing again. Al-Khalaf is constantly fielding calls from those seeking help.

Since mid-December, more than 6,000 requests have come into Violet's hotline, which coordinates accommodation and offers free transportation for the displaced and their furniture.

Finally, al-Khalaf had to use the hotline himself.

As he fled Qmenas, he had to decide what to leave behind: 19 jerry cans of newly pressed olive oil worth nearly \$600, electrical appliances, the furniture of his bedroom — "and the memories that come with it" — and his living room, where he had received many a guest from his network of friends.

His family packed lentils, rice, pickles and burghul and the children's books and school bags. His four children were top of their class but had to be pulled out of school to flee before grades came in.

Al-Khalaf fought back tears remembering his children's many questions: Why is it like this? Why did they leave home? And why is the Syrian army advancing?

"My (seven-year old) daughter asked why the rebels are not fighting back. Why is your phone ringing all the time, Baba?"

Associated Press writer Bassem Mroue in Beirut contributed to this report.

Justice Department brings new suits over sanctuary policies

By MICHAEL BALSAMO and COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Justice Department ratcheted up legal pressure Monday on local governments over “sanctuary” policies that hinder federal immigration officers, bringing two new lawsuits and launching a coordinated messaging campaign to highlight an election-year priority of President Donald Trump.

Declaring that law enforcement officers are being “put in harm’s way by these ideologically driven policies,” Attorney General William Barr said the Trump administration is suing the state of New Jersey and the county that is home to Seattle over immigration policies that offer protections to immigrants in the U.S. illegally.

The Justice Department said New Jersey is violating federal law by prohibiting state and local law enforcement from sharing information about inmates in the U.S. illegally. Washington state’s King County was hit with a lawsuit over a policy that prohibits the Department of Homeland Security from using the King County International Airport-Boeing Field for deportation flights.

“Today is a significant escalation in the federal government’s effort to confront the resistance of sanctuary cities,” Barr told an audience of officers at the National Sheriffs’ Association to roaring applause.

Some cities, like New York, have put laws in place that prohibit the sharing of information with immigration officials. Immigration officials have sent subpoenas to Denver and New York City over requests for information on immigrants about to be released from jail. In New York, Homeland Security suspended “trusted traveler” programs that speed their re-entry into the U.S. over a law that prohibits state officials from sharing motor vehicle data with immigration officers.

The attorney general said the Justice Department would be “robustly supporting” Homeland Security to use “all lawful means,” including federal subpoenas, to obtain information about suspects they are seeking to deport.

“These policies are textbook examples of misguided ideology triumphing over commonsense law enforcement, and it is the public and the police who pay the price,” Barr said.

The administration also sued the state of California to block a law that took effect Jan. 1 to ban new contracts with for-profit prison companies, including thousands of immigration detention beds that the federal government pays for in the state.

Trump has been trying since he took office to punish sanctuary cities. In 2017 Jeff Sessions, then attorney general, said such cities would not receive grant money unless they gave federal immigration authorities access to jails and provide advance notice when someone in the country illegally is about to be released from prison. A federal judge blocked the punishment from being enforced, and the cities got the money.

Federal authorities have tried lawsuits before, suing the state of California over its sanctuary law in 2018. A federal appeals court rejected the bulk of the administration’s lawsuit, though Barr said Monday he was hopeful the government would win before the Supreme Court.

That hasn’t stopped Trump from criticizing the policies and noting, in bloody detail, certain cases where immigrants in the U.S. illegally have committed crimes. On Monday, speaking to the nation’s governors, Trump said that it was essential the country comply with immigration enforcement requests.

“Jurisdictions that adopt sanctuary policies and instead release these criminals put all of Americans in harm’s way,” Trump said. “I know we have different policies, different feelings, different everything. But sanctuary cities are causing us a tremendous problem in this country. We have stone-cold killers that they don’t want to hand over to us and then they escape into communities and they cause, in some cases, tremendous havoc.”

But studies have shown immigrants are less likely to commit crime than U.S. citizens.

New Jersey Attorney General Gurbir Grewal said the Trump administration “is sacrificing public safety for political expedience” and that it is sad the Justice Department had “agreed to go along with this election-year stunt.”

In the run-up to the messaging campaign, a directive from Justice headquarters encouraging “robust local media engagement from every district” caused unease among some public affairs officials in the U.S. attorneys’ offices, according to interviews and to correspondence reviewed by The Associated Press.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 39 of 59

Some in jurisdictions that aren't home to sanctuary cities were reluctant to host events because they did not think the matter pertained to them. Others were concerned that a public announcement could agitate relations with local law enforcement agencies that depend on the cooperation of immigrant communities, according to people familiar with the matter who spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity.

But officials sent a note later reassuring districts they were under no obligation to hold a public event.

Some still did: Nebraska U.S. Attorney Joe Kelly held a news conference to highlight the benefits of local and state law enforcement agencies cooperating with the federal government to enforce immigration laws. Kelly said public safety can be jeopardized if local officials refuse to cooperate.

"Each year, many Americans fall victim to crimes committed by illegal aliens because certain officials choose to prioritize their own ideologies over their sworn obligation to uphold the law," Kelly said. "We don't have any of those problems here in the state of Nebraska."

In Chicago, federal prosecutors planned a tweet but no news conference. Others around the country published written statements voicing support timed to Barr's speech.

A joint statement by U.S. attorneys in New York criticized the state's new "green light" law that allows immigrants to get drivers licenses without legal status. "Our citizens, lawful permanent and temporary residents, visitors and undocumented immigrants deserve better, and so do those who serve and protect them," the statement read.

Barr also said Monday that federal officials were "meticulously reviewing the actions of certain district attorneys who have adopted policies of charging foreign nationals with lesser offenses for the express purpose of avoiding the federal immigration consequences of those nationals' criminal conduct."

Barr also highlighted a lawsuit filed a few weeks ago against California's governor and attorney general over a state law that took effect Jan. 1 to ban new contracts for for-profit prison companies, including thousands of immigration detention beds that the federal government pays for in the state. The lawsuit, filed in the Southern District of California, says law usurps the federal government's constitutional authority.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom defended the law Monday, saying for-profit detention facilities "contribute to over-incarceration, including those that incarcerate inmates, as well as those that detain immigrants and asylum seekers."

Associated Press writers Eric Tucker in Washington; Carolyn Thompson in Buffalo, New York; Ryan Tarinelli in Albany, New York; Martha Bellisle in Seattle; Michael Tarm in Chicago; Michael Catalini in Trenton, New Jersey; Cuneyt Dil in Sacramento, California; and Josh Funk in Omaha, Nebraska, contributed to this report.

What to watch in New Hampshire's primary on Tuesday night

By **NICHOLAS RICCARDI** Associated Press

The Democratic presidential race is deeply unsettled heading into the New Hampshire primary. It may be up to the state to put some structure around the chaotic contest, with Iowa being unable to declare a clear winner.

What to watch Tuesday night as the returns roll in:

IS THERE AN ENTHUSIASM GAP?

Fewer people voted in Iowa's caucuses last week than in 2016 and that has party operatives worried about voter enthusiasm going into November. Will New Hampshire's Democratic voters surge to the polls or also stay home?

New Hampshire's secretary of state has predicted a healthy 292,000 Democratic voters, which would be about 40,000 more than voted in 2016.

The turnout question hangs heavily over the field for two reasons. The start of Democratic voting in the long primary season coincides with a rise in anxiety among that party's voters about the presidential election and an increase in confidence among Republicans. Low turnout would be a sign of Democratic weakness at the ballot box, at least for now.

Second, the candidacy of Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders is premised on the theory that his ultra-liberal

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 40 of 59

platform will turn out new voters, but that didn't happen in Iowa. Whether more voters cast ballots in New Hampshire may carry big implications for Sanders' argument.

DOES A CLEAR ALTERNATIVE TO SANDERS EMERGE?

Sanders has consistently led the field in New Hampshire. He represents a neighboring state and won New Hampshire handily in 2016, and the state's policies allowing non-Democrats to vote in the primary works well with Sanders' base. Because he also did well in Iowa and is well positioned in Nevada, the next state to vote, more centrist Democrats are warning that Sanders could in position to blitz his way to the nomination.

Polls show a majority of Democratic voters want someone other than Sanders right now, but it's unclear who. The anti-Sanders vote is split among former Vice President Joe Biden, former South Bend, Indiana, Mayor Pete Buttigieg and Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar. And waiting for Super Tuesday states is former New York Mayor Mike Bloomberg, who's skipping the early states in favor of a massive ad campaign.

The best-case scenario for Sanders would be for all the moderate alternatives to emerge clustered behind him in New Hampshire, so no one could block him as the contest moves to a broader, and more diverse, set of states. The worst case, other than a loss, would be a single moderate candidate emerging with a clear mandate to take him on.

DOES WARREN HAVE A PLAN FOR ANOTHER POOR SHOWING?

One more top-tier Democratic candidate is competing in New Hampshire — Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren. Like Sanders, she represents a neighboring state, but unlike Sanders, she's been stuck in a sort of political purgatory — not in dire enough shape that there's speculation about the demise of her candidacy, but with few signs of momentum in a state where she was once viewed as a favorite.

What happens to Warren on Tuesday night? As a liberal, she potentially has been pulling votes from Sanders. Does she do well enough to continue into the later states and Super Tuesday? Or does she continue to muddle along even in the potentially friendly terrain of New Hampshire, raising fresh questions about her viability?

WHO GETS STUCK IN 4TH OR 5TH PLACE?

There aren't any participation trophies. Iowa's muddle didn't kill any candidacies, but it's not clear that will continue in New Hampshire. With five viable candidates competing in New Hampshire, it's inevitable some will disappoint.

There are risks for every candidate in the field. If Warren can't crack the top three next door to her home state, what are her chances going forward? Likewise, if Buttigieg, who saw a polling surge after his strong Iowa performance, drops while under scrutiny in New Hampshire, can he recover?

What about Biden, whose electability argument might take a huge hit with another disappointing finish? And, then, of course, there's Klobuchar, who's lurked in the polling basement for much of the primary and wants New Hampshire to convince voters she's the real deal.

IS THE KLOBUCHAR SURGE REAL?

Speaking of Klobuchar, New Hampshire is perhaps her last chance to show her viability.

Initially, Klobuchar was hoping for a surprise showing in Iowa. She performed better than expected, but not in the top tier, and the inconclusive vote count allowed her to carry forward in the next mostly white, independent-minded state on the calendar. But after New Hampshire, the primary moves to more diverse states where Klobuchar has yet to register in polls.

Klobuchar delivered a strong performance in Friday's debate in Manchester, reported raising more than \$3 million since then and drew big crowds in New Hampshire. Will that translate to votes Tuesday?

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

Thai soldier's deadly rampage reveals security lapses

By **EMILY SCHMALL** and **GRANT PECK** Associated Press

NAKHON RATCHASIMA, Thailand (AP) — As this Thai city mourns the 29 people killed in a weekend shooting rampage, many are questioning the apparent security lapses that allowed him to steal the weapons he used in the assault.

It's still unclear how the gunman, identified as Sgt. Maj. Jakrapanth Thomma, snatched three assault rifles and two machine guns from the base and escaped in a stolen military vehicle.

A junior officer at the base who said he often acquired ammunition from Jakrapanth's unit for his own unit's target practice said the shooter would have had to overpower soldiers guarding small armory depots to take the weapons and ammunition. The officer asked not to be identified because he was not authorized to speak to reporters.

The gunman's actions show "that the level of control over this base's armory was woefully insufficient in terms of manpower and access restriction," said Michael Picard, research director of GunPolicy.org.

After stealing the weapons, the gunman then headed for a shopping mall, firing along the way. He held off security forces for almost 16 hours while holed up in the shopping center.

Questions about military security carry a special sting in Thailand because just a few weeks ago the country's tough-talking army commander said in an interview that he had ordered all army units to take care of their weaponry.

The Bangkok Post quoted Gen. Apirat Kongsompong as saying that "all weapons must be kept under good care and ready for use." He stressed that the army "will never let ill-minded people steal them," referring to political opponents of the current government, led by former army commander Prayuth Chan-ocha.

On Tuesday, Apirat was due to address criticism of the operation at army headquarters in Bangkok.

In many past cases, guns have been quietly siphoned off by corrupt officials from police and army facilities.

The most disastrous weapons theft took place in Thailand's deep south in 2004, when Muslim separatist militants raided an army base, killed four soldiers and made off with about 400 assault rifles. Some of the weapons are believed to have been sent to Muslim militants in Indonesia's Aceh province, but most stayed with the Thai rebels, who have waged an insurgency that has claimed about 7,000 lives.

Wanwichit Boonprong, a professor at Thailand's Rangsit University who specializes in the country's military, said more controls were needed on weapons on military bases.

"The safety system in the buildings where they keep weapons are obsolete. They just lock the room with padlocks," he said. "With this kind of system, once someone gets in, he can easily grab a weapon."

Access to the main gate to Jakrapanth's military unit, the 22nd Ammunition Battalion, was restricted on Monday, but much of the rest of the sprawling base in rural Nakhon Ratchasima province was open to through traffic.

Some people have criticized the many hours it took for Thai security forces to end the siege at the mall, among them Khunpol Khanpakwan, who was outside a public hospital morgue Monday waiting to recover his daughter's body.

His daughter, Apiksanapa Khanpakwan, 45, was killed and her 17-year-old daughter wounded when special forces fatally shot the gunman.

Though Prime Minister Prayuth has said that security forces did not kill anyone, Khanpakwan said he was still awaiting his daughter's autopsy report to determine the source of the many shots that riddled her body.

Khanpakwan wondered how a force that boasted of safeguarding its military hardware was unable to stop a lone gunman from inflicting so much bloodshed.

"How could the authorities let a culprit run around killing people around the city? Just only one person," Khanpakwan said, adding that "they are equipped with weapons but couldn't do anything to him."

Anthony Davis, a security analyst who writes for the Jane's defense publications, said it was premature to judge the response to the siege.

"In the end, you have a professional military man with a large supply of ammunition holed up in a very large building with not much clear idea on the part of the security forces how many people are in his

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 42 of 59

reach," Davis said.

"It took a long time, but in a big building they couldn't risk storming in and killing a lot of people," he said.

Other concerns linger about how the worst mass shooting in Thai history was handled, particularly lapses in security.

On the night of the siege, a police perimeter kept bystanders only 100 meters from the shooting, within earshot of the automatic gunfire exploding in sudden bursts from a position security forces struggled to pinpoint.

The following morning, Thai special forces enlisted the help of a drone operator for a local TV news channel to locate the gunman. Camouflaged soldiers covered the 28-year-old man on all sides as they escorted him into the mall's basement, where authorities believed the gunman was hiding.

From there, the reporter maneuvered his thermal-sensing drone through shattered windows and into a supermarket's cold storage room, broadcasting images of Jakrapanth and several apparent hostages back to police.

That's when the sharpshooters' rain of fire at the gunman began and the rampage ended.

On Sunday evening, less than 10 hours later, a foreign reporter was able to walk into the mall through an unlocked door that was not behind police tape.

Peck reported from Bangkok. Associated Press Writer Preeyapa T. Khunsong contributed to this report.

AP Exclusive: NCAA, 2 conferences spend \$750,000 on lobbying

By BEN NUCKOLS AP Sports Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — As Congress considers whether to allow college athletes to receive endorsement money, the NCAA and its allies spent at least \$750,000 last year lobbying lawmakers to shape any reforms to the organization's liking.

The NCAA last fall said it would allow athletes to "benefit from the use of their name, image and likeness" and is crafting rules to put in place for its 1,100 member schools. But the organization has turned to Congress to step in as more and more states follow the lead of California, where a law set to take effect in 2023 clears the way for athletes to earn endorsement money.

Organizations representing athletes have no paid lobbyists, leading to concern among some reform advocates that the deep-pocketed NCAA is shaping the debate. The NCAA's pressure campaign comes as the Senate prepares for a committee hearing Tuesday on player compensation.

"The NCAA is going to fight for the status quo," said Ramogi Huma, executive director of the National College Players Association.

Rep. Mark Walker, a North Carolina Republican who introduced a bill last spring that would guarantee players the right to earn money from their name, image and likeness, told The Associated Press "there's no question" the NCAA's lobbying has been effective.

"The NCAA is already at a position of power," Walker said. "Otherwise you would have seen progress. ... There's been little to nothing done in this arena, and had the student-athlete had proper representation on the federal level, we'd be much further down this path than we are."

The NCAA spent \$450,000 last year on lobbying, according to disclosure forms reviewed by the AP. Of that total, \$240,000 went to an outside firm, Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, and \$210,000 went to its in-house lobbyists. That's the most the organization has spent on lobbying in any year since 2014. And it got some help from two of the Power Five conferences.

The Atlantic Coast Conference hired lobbyists last year for the first time, giving at least \$210,000 to the law firm DLA Piper and another lobbyist, Tom Korologos, to influence Congress on "legislative and regulatory proposals affecting intercollegiate athletes," disclosure forms show.

The Big 12 Conference has worked with lobbyist Kenny Hulshof, a former Republican congressman from Missouri, for several years, but it paid him less than \$5,000 per quarter before ramping up its spending last year, records show. In the last six months of 2019, the Big 12 paid Hulshof \$90,000 — some of it

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 43 of 59

specifically to address Walker's bill.

In total, the NCAA and the two conferences spent at least \$750,000 on lobbying last year.

The NCAA's ability to spend big on lobbying is a symptom of the larger problem, according to advocates for player compensation: a college sports system that generates \$14 billion a year from athletes who are compensated only in scholarships and other education-specific aid.

"The NCAA is a well-heeled organization and college athletes, not by accident, don't have the kind of organizational power or influence that the NCAA does," Sen. Chris Murphy, a Connecticut Democrat who supports giving players more earning power, told the AP. "You have to be more assiduous in soliciting the opinion of athletes than you do the NCAA."

The NCAA and its allies have a big reason to increase their spending: If Congress does nothing, athlete-friendly laws like the one in California will take effect around the country. Huma said 28 states are considering action to grant additional rights to college players.

Tom McMillen, president and CEO of the LEAD1 Association, a trade group for Division I athletic directors, shrugged off the influence of lobbying.

"You can have all the lobbyists in the world, but it doesn't really make a difference," he said. "This is a complicated process, getting something done through Congress in any kind of timely fashion."

While he is not a registered lobbyist, McMillen, an 11-year NBA veteran and former Democratic congressman from Maryland who wrote a book in 1992 on the corrupting influence of money on college sports, is an eloquent advocate for the NCAA's position. He said it's essential to have "guardrails" on player compensation.

A panel discussion last month at Georgetown University's law school was striking for the uniformity of participants' views on the subject. McMillen appeared alongside Donald Remy, the NCAA's chief legal counsel, and Amy Perko, CEO of the Knight Commission — a reform-minded nonprofit. All three agreed restrictions had to be placed on name, image and likeness compensation to avoid wrecking college sports as we know it.

"We are all committed to preserving the system of college athletics that exists nowhere else in the world," Remy said.

McMillen said if player compensation reform was not done properly, it could lead to the "full professionalization of our college campuses." Among the restrictions he said were necessary was a safeguard against players being paid exorbitant sums of money for endorsements or personal appearances, turning the compensation into "an end-around to pay athletes corruptly." Such deals could influence recruiting and destroy competitive balance, he said.

In a December meeting with Murphy and Sen. Mitt Romney, a Utah Republican, NCAA President Mark Emmert said "everyone agrees" schools shouldn't be able to use big endorsement deals to gain a recruiting advantage.

In fact, there's plenty of dissent on that subject. Advocates for athletes say there is plenty of corruption in recruiting already and that concerns about excessive money flowing to players are a stall tactic by the NCAA and its allies.

"In no other industry, in no other context on a college campus do we tell someone that we are going to curb your value," said Ricky Volante, CEO of the Professional Collegiate League, an upstart competitor to the NCAA that intends to pay salaries to college players.

Volante said he is concerned that no one is effectively countering the NCAA's messaging in Washington. The work falls mostly to the NCPA — which is funded in part by the United Steelworkers — and the Drake Group, a nonprofit that advocates for academic integrity in college sports and a frequent critic of the NCAA.

Those groups have a combined lobbying budget of zero dollars.

"The NCAA has a permanent office in D.C. They have millions of dollars they can spend on lobbying and that's a very tough thing to fight. They're a very powerful constituency," said David Ridpath, interim president of the Drake Group. "I think we're doing a pretty good job in Washington despite being the little engine that could."

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 44 of 59

Huma said the public has become increasingly antagonistic to the NCAA. A recent poll by AP-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found that about two-thirds of Americans support college players being permitted to earn money for endorsements.

"It was the same David-and-Goliath scenario in California, and the votes came in and there was unanimous, bipartisan support in our favor," he said. "I think there's a lot of power on being on the right side of history, the right side of public opinion, and I think that's what played out there."

This story has been corrected to show that the NCAA spent \$450,000, not \$690,000, on lobbying, because the money paid to outside lobbyists was counted on both the NCAA and the outside firm's disclosure forms.

Follow Ben Nuckols at <https://twitter.com/APBenNuckols>

More AP college sports: <https://apnews.com/apf-sports> and https://twitter.com/AP_Top25

US says Chinese military stole masses of Americans' data

By ERIC TUCKER and MICHAEL BALSAMO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Four members of the Chinese military have been charged with breaking into the computer networks of the Equifax credit reporting agency and stealing the personal information of tens of millions of Americans, the Justice Department said Monday, blaming Beijing for one of the largest hacks in history to target consumer data.

The hackers in the 2017 breach stole the personal information of roughly 145 million Americans, collecting names, addresses, Social Security and driver's license numbers and other data stored in the company's databases. The intrusion damaged the company's reputation and underscored China's increasingly aggressive and sophisticated intelligence-gathering methods.

"The scale of the theft was staggering," Attorney General William Barr said Monday in announcing the indictment. "This theft not only caused significant financial damage to Equifax, but invaded the privacy of many millions of Americans, and imposed substantial costs and burdens on them as they have had to take measures to protect against identity theft."

The case is the latest U.S. accusation against Chinese hackers suspected of breaching networks of American corporations, including steel manufacturers, a hotel chain and a health insurer. It comes as the Trump administration has warned against what it sees as the growing political and economic influence of China, and efforts by Beijing to collect data for financial and intelligence purposes and to steal research and innovation.

The indictment arrives at a delicate time in relations between Washington and Beijing. Even as President Donald Trump points to a preliminary trade pact with China as evidence of his ability to work with the Communist government, other members of his administration have been warning against cybersecurity and surveillance risks posed by China, especially as the tech giant Huawei seeks to become part of new, high-speed 5G wireless networks across the globe.

Experts and U.S. officials say the Equifax theft is consistent with the Chinese government's interest in accumulating as much information about Americans as possible.

The data can be used by China to target U.S. government officials and ordinary citizens, including possible spies, and to find weaknesses and vulnerabilities that can be exploited — such as for purposes of blackmail. The FBI has not seen that happen yet in this case, said Deputy Director David Bowdich, though he said it "doesn't mean it will or will not happen in the future."

"We have to be able to recognize that as a counterintelligence issue, not a cyber issue," Bill Evanina, the U.S. government's top counterintelligence official, said of the Equifax case.

The four accused hackers are suspected members of the People's Liberation Army, an arm of the Chinese military that was blamed in 2014 for a series of intrusions into American corporations.

Prosecutors say they exploited a software vulnerability to gain access to Equifax's computers, obtaining

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 45 of 59

log-in credentials that they used to navigate databases and review records. They also took steps to cover their tracks, the indictment says, wiping log files on a daily basis and routing traffic through about three dozen servers in nearly 20 countries.

Besides stealing personal information, the hackers also made off with some of the company's sensitive trade secrets, including database designs, law enforcement officials said.

Equifax, headquartered in Atlanta, maintains a massive repository of consumer information that it sells to businesses looking to verify identities or assess creditworthiness. All told, the indictment says, the company holds information on hundreds of millions of people in America and abroad.

None of the accused hackers is in U.S. custody. But officials nonetheless hope criminal charges can be a deterrent to foreign hackers and a warning to other countries that American law enforcement has the capability to pinpoint individual culprits. Even so, while China and the U.S. committed in 2015 to halt acts of cyber espionage against each other, the Equifax intrusion and others like it make clear that Beijing has continued its operations.

A spokesperson for the Chinese Embassy in Washington did not return an email seeking comment Monday.

The case resembles a 2014 indictment that accused five members of the PLA of hacking into American corporations to steal trade secrets. U.S. authorities also suspect China in the 2015 breach of the federal Office of Personnel Management and of intrusions into the Marriott hotel chain and health insurer Anthem.

Such hacks "seem to deliberately cast a wide net" so that Chinese intelligence analysts can get deep insight into the lives of Americans, said Ben Buchanan, a Georgetown University scholar and author of the upcoming book "The Hacker and the State."

"This could be especially useful for counterintelligence purposes, like tracking American spies posted to Beijing," Buchanan said.

Barr, who at an event last week warned of Beijing's aspirations of economic dominance, said Monday the U.S. has long "witnessed China's voracious appetite for the personal data of Americans."

"This kind of attack on American industry is of a piece with other Chinese illegal acquisitions of sensitive personal data," Barr said.

The criminal charges, which include conspiracy to commit computer fraud and conspiracy to commit economic espionage, were filed in federal court in Atlanta.

Equifax last year reached a \$700 million settlement over the data breach, with the bulk of the funds intended for consumers affected by it.

Equifax officials told the Government Accountability Office the company made many mistakes, including having an outdated list of computer systems administrators. The company didn't notice the intruders targeting its databases for more than six weeks. Hackers exploited a known security vulnerability that Equifax hadn't fixed.

While company stock has recovered, Equifax's reputation has not fully. The company was dragged in front of Congress no less than four times to explain what happened.

The company is about to start paying out claims on its \$700 million settlement, of which more claimants have opted in to getting a cash settlement than accept credit counseling. So many claims have been made for the cash that the lawyers suing Equifax and the Federal Trade Commission have warned claimants that the chance of getting the full cash value of the settlement was unlikely.

Associated Press writers Nick Jesdanun and Ken Sweet in New York and Frank Bajak in Boston contributed to this report.

How crucial is New Hampshire win? It depends on whom you ask

By WILL WEISSERT, KATHLEEN RONAYNE and BILL BARROW Associated Press

ROCHESTER, N.H. (AP) — In the waning hours before New Hampshire's first-in-the-nation primary voting begins, Democratic presidential candidates took varied approaches to the expectations game Monday as they look to advance deeper into what could be an extended nominating fight.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 46 of 59

Bernie Sanders showed the same confidence he displayed ahead of last week's Iowa caucuses, which ended with a split decision between the Vermont senator and former Mayor Pete Buttigieg of South Bend, Indiana. "If we win here tomorrow, I think we've got a path to victory for the Democratic nomination," Sanders declared in Rindge.

Former Vice President Joe Biden, once the national front-runner, tamped down expectations amid prospects of a second consecutive disappointment before the race turns to more racially diverse states he believes can restore his contender status. "This is just getting started," he told CBS.

Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren fell somewhere between those approaches, vowing to make a comeback but not predicting victory. "Look, I've been counted down and out for much of my life," Warren told reporters. "You get knocked down. You get back up."

Buttigieg and Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar, the biggest surprises of the 2020 contest so far, looked to extend their rides despite uncertainty about what's ahead for two campaigns with overwhelmingly white bases.

The scramble highlights a perilous point for Democrats as they look for a challenger to President Donald Trump in November. No would-be nominee has yet forged a strong coalition across the party's racial, ethnic and ideological factions. The situation is muddled further by the vote-tabulation melee in last week's Iowa caucuses that left both Sanders and Buttigieg claiming victory, even as neither reached 30% of the vote in a fractured field.

Trump, meanwhile, is eager to cast a shadow over the entire Democratic slate as he heads to Manchester for a Monday evening rally to continue his victory-and-vengeance tour following Senate votes that acquitted him on two impeachment charges. Trump lost New Hampshire in 2016 by fewer than 3,000 votes out of more than 743,000 cast, and the state is among several his reelection campaign believes it can flip in November.

Trump's supporters began lining up in New Hampshire on Sunday, and the crowd only grew despite freezing, wet weather. The president managed a similar scene in Iowa days ahead of the caucuses, drawing thousands of boisterous supporters who contrasted with a lower-than-expected caucus turnout for Democrats.

Against that backdrop, Biden insisted Monday that he remains well-positioned for the nomination and to defeat Trump in November. He pointed to endorsements from the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and Michigan's legislative black caucus that he's gotten since the Iowa caucuses. "I'm still leading nationally," Biden told CBS, referring to months of national polls. It's far from certain, though, that Biden will remain in such a position in the coming weeks.

Biden's fortunes could turn on voters like Pat Barrick, a 70-year-old independent who said she was once solidly with Biden but now is also considering Klobuchar, who finished just behind Biden in Iowa and has since seen a bounce in New Hampshire.

"He matches my values," Barrick said of Biden. "I just don't know if he can win."

Indeed, no Democrats have separated themselves from the pack.

Sanders and Buttigieg want to dent Biden's claims to national support. But Sanders, a democratic socialist, has little support from the party's center-left core, and some establishment figures openly fret about Sanders leading the ticket in November.

Buttigieg on Monday night keyed in on the Vermont senator's ambitious "Medicare for All" proposal as being among a slate of plans that are fiscally unmanageable.

Describing his own health care proposal as having "the virtue of being paid for" by repealing tax cuts enacted by Trump and imposing taxes on corporations that pay none, Buttigieg said, "While Sen. Sanders' ideals are certainly ideals I think most Americans share, at the end of the day we're going to have to explain how to get from here to there."

"And there's a hole in his proposals that amounts to \$25 trillion, bigger than the entire size of the American economy," Buttigieg told more than 500 people in swing-voting Milford.

At a packed Exeter town hall on Monday night, Klobuchar trumpeted her rising poll numbers and the \$3

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 47 of 59

million she has raised online since Friday's debate. She saved her best jabs, as she often does, for Trump and refused to go after any of the other Democrats by name.

"He blames Barack Obama. He blames the generals that he commands," Klobuchar said. "He blames the head of the Federal Reserve that he appointed. He blames the energy secretary that he nominated. He blames — this is one of my favorite ones — the entire Kingdom of Denmark. Who does that?"

Warren, meanwhile, has shown flashes of a broad coalition of voters, and she's added a relatively new argument in New Hampshire by pitching herself as the candidate who can best unify the party. She is looking to slice off chunks of Sanders' progressive base and Buttigieg's core of college-educated voters hungry for change. But she and Biden face a potential money crunch if donors are spooked by Tuesday's results.

Beyond New Hampshire, billionaire Michael Bloomberg continues plowing hundreds of millions of dollars into "Super Tuesday" states on March 3 while skipping the first four February contests. Bloomberg's centrist candidacy hinges largely on Biden underperforming and the proposition that neither Buttigieg nor Klobuchar can fill the gap. His campaign on Monday announced new staff investments in Utah and Colorado, bringing his national footprint to 2,100 staffers, with 18 states boasting at least 40 employees.

Despite the questions facing the Democratic field, New Hampshire Democratic Chairman Ray Buckley said he remains optimistic about their chances of toppling Trump, even going so far as to welcome the president's Monday visit.

"His ego can't stand the idea of something going on and he's not in the middle of it," Buckley told reporters. "It has backfired on him before, and I believe it's going to backfire on him this time."

Barrow reported from Atlanta. Associated Press writers Holly Ramer in Manchester, N.H., Thomas Beaumont in Milford, N.H., Hunter Woodall in Gilford, N.H., Michael Casey in Exeter, N.H., and Alexandra Jaffe in Des Moines, Iowa, contributed to this report.

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

AP source: MLB considering expanding playoffs to 14 teams

By RONALD BLUM AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Major League Baseball is considering expanding the playoffs to nearly half the 30 teams and allowing higher-seeded wild-card teams to choose opponents.

The playoffs would grow from 10 clubs to 14 under the plan, first reported Monday by the New York Post. There would be four wild cards in each league, up from two.

Details were confirmed by a person familiar with the proposal who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because MLB did not authorize any public comments. Another person, also speaking on condition of anonymity, said MLB has been looking at several plans.

Any proposal would have to be negotiated with the players' association. The current collective bargaining agreement runs through the 2021 season.

"Expanding the playoffs in a sensible way is something worth discussing when part of a much more comprehensive conversation about the current state of our game," union head Tony Clark said in a statement.

Only the division winner with the best regular-season record would advance directly to the Division Series under the plan. The two other division winners and wild-card teams would start in a best-of-three round.

The division winner with the second-best record would choose its opponent from among the three lowest-seeded wild-card teams. The division winner with the third-best record would then get to pick from among the remaining two wild cards. The top wild card would face whichever team is left over after the division winners make their choices.

The selections would be made on a televised show.

MLB long restricted its postseason to just the pennant winners facing each other in the World Series. Postseason teams doubled to four with the split of each league into two divisions in 1969, then to eight with the realignment to three divisions and the addition of a wild card in 1995, a year later than planned

due to a players' strike.

The postseason reached its current 10 with the addition of a second wild card and a wild-card round in 2012.

A postseason of 14 teams would mean 47% of franchises reach the playoffs, which could cause some clubs not to go into rebuilding mode. The players' association has criticized teams for what it calls "tanking."

Twelve of the 32 NFL teams (38%) reach the playoffs, along with 16 of 30 in the NBA (53%) and 16 of 31 in the NHL (52%), which expands to 32 franchises next season.

Expanded playoffs would create more content for broadcasters. MLB's contracts with ESPN and Turner run through 2021 and its deal with Fox goes through 2028.

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

Saints owner denies team had role in clergy sex abuse list

By JIM MUSTIAN Associated Press

The owner of the New Orleans Saints said Monday that the NFL team played no role in determining which priests would be named in the list of "credibly accused" clergy published by the area's Roman Catholic Church.

Gayle Benson, a devout Catholic who has donated millions of dollars to church causes, also said in a lengthy statement that she has never "contributed nor will ever make payments" to pay for legal settlements to the victims of clergy abuse.

"To suggest that I would offer money to the Catholic Church to pay for anything related to the clergy-molestation issue sickens me," she added. It was not clear who had made that suggestion.

The statement marked Benson's first remarks since The Associated Press reported last month about hundreds of confidential Saints emails that allegedly show team executives did behind-the-scenes public relations damage control amid the archdiocese's clergy abuse crisis — communications the Saints have gone to court to keep from being made public. A hearing is scheduled in New Orleans next week to determine whether they may be released.

Benson's statement acknowledged that Greg Bensele, the Saints' senior vice president of communications, helped the Archdiocese of New Orleans "prepare for the media" surrounding the November 2018 release of a list that named dozens of clergy members whom the church deemed "credibly accused" of sexually abusing children.

Benson, who inherited the Saints and New Orleans Pelicans following her husband's 2018 death, said Bensele urged the church to be "honest, complete and transparent."

"We are proud of the role we played and yes, in hindsight, we would help again to assist the Archdiocese in its ability to publish the list with the hope of taking this step to heal the community," Benson said.

Attorneys for about two dozen men suing the church have painted a different picture of the team's role, alleging in court filings that the confidential emails show executives joined in the church's "pattern and practice of concealing its crimes." The attorneys contend that included taking an active role in helping to shape the archdiocese's list of 57 credibly accused clergy, a roster an AP analysis found was undercounted by at least 20 names.

Plaintiffs attorneys John Denene and Richard Trahan said in a statement Monday that "it is obvious that Gayle Marie Benson has not read the e-mails the Saints are hiding from the public, or even re-read her own e-mails. If she had read them, she could never have made some of the false claims asserted in her statement today."

Pentagon: 109 troops suffer brain injuries from Iran strike

By LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The number of U.S. service members diagnosed with traumatic brain injuries has shot up to more than 100, the Pentagon said Monday, as more troops suffer the aftereffects of the Iranian ballistic missile attack early last month in Iraq.

The department said the latest total is 109 military members who have been treated for mild TBI, a significant increase over the 64 reported a little over a week ago.

The number of injuries has been steadily increasing since the Pentagon began releasing data on the injuries about a week after the Jan. 8 attack at al-Asad Air Base in Iraq. Pentagon officials have warned that the number would continue to change.

The department said 76 of the service members have returned to duty, while 26 are in Germany or the United States for treatment, and another seven are on their way from Iraq to Germany for evaluation and treatment.

Defense Secretary Mark Esper told Pentagon reporters more than a week ago that the department was studying ways to prevent brain injuries on the battlefield and to improve diagnosis and treatment.

Army Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said it's possible, in some cases, that symptoms of TBI from the Iranian missile attack won't become apparent for a year or two. He said the Army is in the early stages of diagnosis and therapy for the troops.

In a statement Monday, Pentagon press secretary Alyssa Farah credited medical professionals with provide care "which has enabled nearly 70 percent of those diagnosed to return to duty. We must continue to address physical and mental health together."

Gunman dead, 2 officers hurt in shooting at Arkansas Walmart

By ADRIAN SAINZ Associated Press

FORREST CITY, Ark. (AP) — Two police officers were wounded and a gunman was killed Monday morning in an exchange of gunfire at a Walmart store in eastern Arkansas, authorities said.

Forrest City Police Chief Deon Lee said one of the officers was taken to a hospital about 45 miles (70 kilometers) to the east in Memphis where he was in surgery, and the initial prognosis is "he's going to be OK."

The officers responded to the Forrest City Walmart after someone called police to report a man who was making threats and was "kind of talking out of his head," Lee said at a news conference Monday afternoon. Arkansas State Police Spokesman Bill Sadler said local authorities have identified the suspect as Bobby Joe Gibbs, 40, of Forrest City, though the state crime lab has yet not confirmed his identity.

Lee identified the injured officers as Lt. Eric Varner and Detective Eugene Watlington. Both are assigned to the criminal investigation department and neither was wearing a bullet-resistant vest, Lee said.

The mayor heaped praise on the officers.

"Due to their heroism and quick response, no civilians were injured," Forrest City Mayor Cedric Williams said.

Walmart spokesman Scott Pope said the company was helping with the police investigation. Walmart is based in Bentonville, Arkansas. Once the Arkansas State Police Criminal Investigation Division completes its investigation of the shooting, it will forward the case file to the local prosecutor to review the officers' use of deadly force.

Tammy Priddy, 57, works at Simmons Eye Center in the Walmart. She said she was preparing patient records for the day when she heard eight shots. She said she hid under a counter in the lab until the gunshots stopped.

"The first two shots kind of startled me, and then a coworker came in and said it was gunfire," Priddy said.

She and a coworker ran from the building and officers outside the Walmart ordered her to get as far away from the building as possible. She was not injured.

"I was too afraid to think of anything except to get to safety," she said. "We kept our minds straight to

where we were safe and we were able to get to safety.”

Police formed a perimeter with yellow crime scene tape around the Walmart parking lot after the shooting. Police cars with flashing lights blocked roads to the store. The store was closed and employees were sent home. A small strip mall and two gas stations saw no business Monday afternoon, as they were within the police perimeter.

Mary Martin, who said she was Gibbs’ aunt, went to the Walmart after she heard about the shooting. She said Gibbs didn’t have a job, but had previously worked as a DJ.

“He was a good person. He loved his family,” she said.

When asked about the description of Gibbs “talking out of his head” at the store, Martin responded: “That doesn’t sound like Bobby.”

It’s not the first time in recent months that a Walmart store has been the scene of a shooting. A man was injured in a shooting at a Walmart in Memphis earlier this month, three people were fatally shot at a Walmart in Duncan, Oklahoma, in November, and a gunman killed 22 people at a Walmart in El Paso, Texas, on Aug. 3.

The retailer came under criticism for having insufficient security at the El Paso store on that day and has since quietly expanded security at all its stores in the city to include an armed off-duty police officer and a security guard.

A spokeswoman for the company said in November that the hiring of off-duty officers in El Paso was not a blanket policy. It’s unclear what security measures were in place at the Forrest City store on Monday.

Associated Press writers Cedar Attanasio in El Paso, Texas, and Andrew DeMillo in Little Rock, Arkansas, contributed to this report.

Kobe Bryant’s widow expresses grief, anger in online post

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Vanessa Bryant expressed grief and anger in an Instagram post Monday as she copes with the deaths of her husband Kobe Bryant, their daughter Gigi and seven other people in a helicopter crash last month.

“My brain refuses to accept that both Kobe and Gigi are gone,” she wrote. “It’s like I’m trying to process Kobe being gone but my body refuses to accept my Gigi will never come back to me. It feels wrong. Why should I be able to wake up another day when my baby girl isn’t being able to have that opportunity?! I’m so mad. She had so much life to live.”

Bryant said she realizes she has to remain strong for her three surviving daughters, Natalia, Bianka and Capri.

“I know what I’m feeling is normal. It’s part of the grieving process. I just wanted to share in case there’s anyone out there that’s experienced a loss like this,” she wrote. “God I wish they were here and this nightmare would be over. Praying for all of the victims of this horrible tragedy. Please continue to pray for all.”

The social media post included a video feature from Slam Magazine about Kobe Bryant coaching their daughter Gianna’s basketball team.

Bryant was killed when the helicopter carrying him, his daughter and seven others crashed into a mountainside in Calabasas, California, while flying to a girls basketball tournament at his Mamba Sports Academy on Jan. 26.

A public memorial for Orange Coast College baseball coach John Altobelli, his wife, Keri, and daughter Alyssa was scheduled Monday. Also killed in the crash were pilot Ara Zobayan and Bryant friends Christina Mauser, Sarah Chester and her daughter Payton.

Bryant announced last week that a “celebration of life” memorial will be held on Feb. 24 at the Staples Center to honor her late husband and 13-year-old Gianna.

Trump's \$4.8 trillion budget proposal revisits rejected cuts

By ANDREW TAYLOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump unveiled a \$4.8 trillion election year budget plan on Monday that recycles deep, previously rejected cuts to domestic programs like food stamps, Medicaid, and housing as the recipe for wresting the federal budget back into balance.

Trump's fiscal 2021 plan promises the government's deficit will crest above \$1 trillion only for the current budget year before steadily decreasing to more manageable levels, but only by relying on optimistic economic projections, dramatically scaled-back military operations overseas, and proposed cuts to agency budgets that run directly opposite to two previous budget deals signed by Trump.

The budget "sets the course for a future of continued American dominance and prosperity," Trump said in a message accompanying the document.

"There is optimism that was not here before 63 million Americans asked me to work for them and drain the swamp," Trump said. "For decades, Washington elites told us that Americans had no choice but to accept stagnation, decay, and decline. We proved them wrong. Our economy is strong once more." In a White House appearance, Trump said, "

The plan had no chance even before Trump's impeachment scorched Washington. Its cuts to food stamps, farm subsidies, subsidized housing for the poor, Medicaid and student loans couldn't pass when Republicans controlled Congress, much less now with liberal House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., setting the agenda.

Trump's budget follows a familiar formula that exempts seniors from politically toxic cuts to Medicare and Social Security while targeting benefit safety net programs for the poor, domestic programs like clean energy and student loan subsidies. It again proposes to dramatically slash funding for overseas military operations to save \$567 billion over 10 years but adds \$1.5 trillion over the same time frame to make his 2017 tax cuts permanent law.

Trump's proposal would cut \$465 billion from Medicare providers such as hospitals, which prompted howls from Democrats such as former Vice President Joe Biden, who said it "eviscerates Medicare," while top Senate Democrat Chuck Schumer of New York said Trump is planning to "rip away health care from millions of Americans" with cuts to Medicare and the Medicaid health program for the poor.

Trump's GOP allies generally issued only faint praise if commenting at all. Senate Budget Committee Chairman Mike Enzi, R-Wyo., called it "just a list of suggestions" while top House Budget Committee Republican Steve Womack of Arkansas took aim at its rosy predictions of economic growth and lower interest rates, both of which help Trump's budget add up.

Trump's budget would also shred last year's hard-won budget deal between the White House and Pelosi by imposing an immediate 5% cut to non-defense agency budgets passed by Congress. Slashing cuts to the Environmental Protection Agency and taking about \$900 billion out of Medicaid over a decade are also nonstarters on Capitol Hill, but both the White House and Democrats are hopeful of progress this spring on prescription drug prices.

The Trump budget is a blueprint written under Washington rules as if he could enact it without congressional approval. It relies on rosy economic projections of 2.8% economic growth this year and 3% over the long term — in addition to fanciful claims of future cuts to domestic programs — to show that it is possible to bend the deficit curve in the right direction.

The economy grew by 2.1% last year and Congress spent much of the past decade reversing agency spending cuts imposed by a failed 2011 budget pact.

That sleight of hand enables Trump to promise to whittle down a \$1.08 trillion budget deficit for the ongoing budget year and a \$966 billion deficit gap in the 2021 fiscal year starting Oct. 1 to \$261 billion in 2030. Balance would come in 15 years.

The reality is that no one — Trump, the Democratic-controlled House or the GOP-held Senate — has any interest in tackling a chronic budget gap that forces the government to borrow 22 cents of every dollar it spends. The White House plan proposes \$4.4 trillion in spending cuts over the coming decade.

Trump's reelection campaign, meanwhile, is focused on the economy and the historically low jobless rate

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 52 of 59

while ignoring the government's red ink.

Ever since his days as a presidential candidate, Trump has been promising a health care plan. The budget repeats that promise but offers few details. It lays out a "health reform vision" that calls for better care at lower cost and protecting people with preexisting medical conditions.

Trump has also signed two broader budget deals worked out by Democrats and Republicans to get rid of spending cuts left over from a failed 2011 budget accord. The result has been eye-popping spending levels for defense — to about \$750 billion this year — and significant gains for domestic programs favored by Democrats. Trump's new budget essentially freezes defense at current levels while proposing a 3% military pay hike.

The White House hasn't done much to draw attention to this year's budget release, though Trump has revealed initiatives of interest to key 2020 battleground states, such as an increase to \$250 million to restore Florida's Everglades and a move to finally abandon a multibillion-dollar, never-used nuclear waste dump that's political poison in Nevada.

The Trump budget also promises a \$3 billion increase — to \$25 billion — for NASA in hopes of returning astronauts to the moon and on to Mars. It touts a beefed-up, 10-year, \$1 trillion infrastructure proposal, but \$800 billion of that comes through existing surface transportation programs. It contains a modest parental leave plan championed by first daughter Ivanka Trump and includes \$135 billion in savings over the coming decade as part of an unspecified set-aside to tackle the high cost of prescription drugs this year.

Trump's U.S.-Mexico border wall would receive a \$2 billion appropriation, more than provided by Congress but less than the \$8 billion requested last year. Trump has enough wall money on hand to build 1000 miles (1,600 kilometers) of wall, a senior administration official said, most of it obtained by exploiting his budget transfer powers. The official requested anonymity to discuss the budget before it is made public.

The reduced wall request could ease the way for action on appropriations bills in the GOP-held Senate, where a fight over last year's far larger wall request stalled work on the annual spending bills for months.

Trump has proposed modest adjustments to eligibility for Social Security disability benefits, and he's proposed cuts to Medicare providers such as hospitals, but the real cost driver of Medicare and Social Security is the ongoing retirement surge of the baby boom generation and health care costs that continue to outpace inflation.

With Medicare and Social Security largely off the table, Trump has instead focused on Medicaid, which provides care to more than 70 million poor and disabled people. President Barack Obama successfully expanded Medicaid when passing the Affordable Care Act a decade ago, but Trump has endorsed GOP plans — they failed spectacularly in the Senate two years ago — to dramatically curb the program.

Indeed, Trump's proposed cuts to Medicaid and subsidies for so-called Obamacare health insurance policies total almost \$1 trillion over 10 years, according to calculations by the liberal-leaning Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, whose president, Robert Greenstein, called the Trump plan "stunningly harsh."

Trump would also revive a plan, rejected by lawmakers in the past, to cut food stamp costs by providing much of the benefit as food shipments instead of cash. He's also proposing work requirements for safety net programs like Medicaid, food stamps, and federally subsidized housing.

Other cuts, outlined in an annual "Major Savings and Reforms" volume that's ignored every year, include eliminating heating subsidies for the poor and \$405 million worth of grants to boost community service work by senior citizens, along with plans to dramatically slash legal aid to the poor, the National Endowment for the Arts, and subsidies to states such as California saddled with high costs for jailing criminal migrants who enter the country illegally.

Oscars viewership plunges to record low

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Without a host or a great deal of pizzazz, ABC's telecast of the Academy Awards reached its smallest audience ever of 23.6 million viewers.

The Nielsen company said Sunday night's audience was down 20 percent from a year ago. The previous

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 53 of 59

low-water mark for the Oscars was the 26.5 million people who watched in 2018.

The Academy Awards honored "Parasite" as best picture. While that made history as the first-ever foreign language film to win the top award, it was clearly not an audience-grabber. The Oscars were held sooner in the year than usual, and that may have prevented the show from building buzz.

"It was too predictable, too white and too boring," said Tom O'Neil, founder of Goldderby.com, a website devoted to awards show news.

The actors who took the four biggest prizes — Joaquin Phoenix, Renée Zellweger, Brad Pitt and Laura Dern — had also swept previous awards, so there were few surprises and few indelible moments, he said on Monday.

"The only suspense of the evening was for best picture, and the average viewer hadn't seen 'Parasite' or '1917,' so they weren't emotionally invested," O'Neil said.

For the second straight year, the Oscars went hostless, opening with a rousing production number from Janelle Monae and a crisp comic monologue with Steve Martin and Chris Rock. But a handful of critics felt the lack of host was a handicap this year.

Dominic Patten of Deadline said the show "bellowed out for a ringmaster to harness what soon became a lackluster circus."

"One thing a host can do is give the broadcast a shape and a voice when nothing else provides them," wrote James Poniewozik of The New York Times. "And this year's show seemed to feel the vacuum more, turning out a grab bag of emotional high points and perplexing uses of time."

Hank Stuever, critic for the Washington Post, said the show was too predictable. He called it "Oscar autopilot — three and a half hours of Hollywood cruising along at 35,000 feet. Viewers could be forgiven for nodding off for most of the flight."

"I missed having a host," Joy Behar said on "The View."

For much of the 2000s, the Oscars hovered between 35 and 45 million viewers, often the second most-watched television program of the year after the Super Bowl. As recently as 2015, the show reached 37.3 million viewers.

In defense of the motion picture academy, live television viewing in general has dropped significantly over the past few years with the explosion in streaming services. Still, the numbers have to be concerning.

Viewership for the Golden Globes (18.3 million) and Grammy Awards (18.7 million) were also off from 2019, but the drop was not as steep.

'Never happened': Model denies trapping Weinstein accuser

By TOM HAYS and MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — In the strongest defense testimony yet, a Mexican model on Monday denied a Harvey Weinstein accuser's claim that she stood by and did nothing while the once-powerful movie mogul sexually assaulted the woman at a Beverly Hills hotel in 2013.

"Never happened," Claudia Salinas told jurors Monday at Weinstein's rape trial in New York City, forcefully repudiating model Lauren Marie Young's testimony last week.

Young testified that Salinas closed the door behind her and Weinstein as they went into the bathroom, where she alleges he stripped off his clothes, grabbed her breast and masturbated. Once it was over, Young said she found Salinas standing outside the bathroom and shot her an evil look before leaving as quickly as she could.

"If I had done that, I would remember that," Salinas testified. "I would never close the door on anybody."

Salinas, now working as a social media influencer, took the witness stand as the defense called witnesses for a third day after more than two weeks of prosecution testimony. Among the prosecution witnesses were six women, including Young, who say the once-powerful Hollywood boss subjected them to vile sexual behavior.

"My name has been used in a disparaging way. Ms. Young's testimony that I've heard in the media is fictitious and flat out untrue," Salinas said in a statement sent to The Associated Press after she testified.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 54 of 59

"Under no circumstances would I ever have anything to do with an assault on a human being. This accusation was a vicious attack on my reputation."

The biggest remaining question at the landmark #MeToo trial is whether Weinstein will testify. Weinstein declined to answer a reporter's question about it as he left court on Monday, deferring to lawyer Arthur Aidala who declared: "It was a great day for the defense today."

Weinstein's lawyers say no decision has been made on whether he will take the stand.

Weinstein, 67, is charged with raping a woman in a Manhattan hotel room in 2013 and forcibly performing oral sex on a different woman in 2006, but other accusers, such as Young, were called as witnesses as part of a prosecution effort to show he has used the same tactics to victimize many women over the years.

Young's allegations were included in criminal charges filed against Weinstein in California on Jan. 6, just as his New York case was starting.

Weinstein has maintained any sexual encounters were consensual.

Salinas met Weinstein in 2003, she said, and appeared in his 2009 film "Crossing Over" with Harrison Ford. She said she never had a romantic relationship with Weinstein, adding that he had a "very strong personality" and "at times, he wasn't nice to me."

Salinas disputed other parts of Young's account, saying that while they did meet up at the hotel the night of the alleged assault, it wasn't because Weinstein wanted to see her.

Asked on cross-examination if she told investigators last year that it was possible Weinstein took Young to the hotel room, Salinas replied: "What's true is that I wasn't there in a bathroom scenario. It could have happened but it didn't mean I was there."

Jurors also heard Monday from the former roommate of the woman Weinstein is on trial for allegedly raping. Talita Maia said that the woman spoke highly of Weinstein and once called him her "spiritual soulmate."

Maia, a Brazilian actress who lived with the woman in the Los Angeles area, was with her on the New York trip and said nothing seemed amiss when they met Weinstein for breakfast after the alleged rape.

The accuser testified last week that she didn't tell anybody what happened but was "pretty shut down" at breakfast.

"Did she seem like herself to you?" Weinstein lawyer Donna Rotunno asked.

"Yes," Maia responded.

Maia said she was testifying in response to a defense subpoena, telling jurors: "I don't want to be here at all." On cross-examination, she testified the two women had a falling out in 2016, but added, "I don't hate her or anything like that."

The Associated Press has a policy of not publishing the names of sexual assault accusers without their consent. It is withholding name of the rape accuser because it isn't clear if she wishes to be identified publicly.

Maia said she and the woman met Weinstein at a Hollywood party a few months before the alleged rape and that she believed the woman and Weinstein were in a relationship at some point and had stayed friends afterward.

Maia said she initially didn't know who Weinstein was, but once she found out he was a Hollywood big-shot, she teased him by saying "that's why everybody is being so nice to you."

Maia said the woman she was summoned to testify about put her arm around Weinstein and said: "No. It's because he's so cute."

Associated Press writer Anthony McCartney in Los Angeles contributed to this report.

On Twitter, follow Tom Hays at twitter.com/aptomhays and Michael Sisak at twitter.com/mikesisak

For more coverage of Harvey Weinstein's trial, visit <http://apnews.com/HarveyWeinstein>

More businesses reopen in China, but many people stay home

By JOE McDONALD Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — More offices and stores in Beijing and other parts of China finally reopened Monday after the Lunar New Year break was extended to discourage travel and contain the new coronavirus, but many workers and shoppers appeared to stay home.

Public health authorities are watching closely to see whether the return to business worsens the spread of the virus, which has infected more than 40,000 people globally and killed over 900, with the vast majority of cases in China.

Even before the slow and cautious reopening, China on Monday reported a rise in new cases, dimming optimism that the near-quarantine of some 60 million people and other disease-control measures might be working.

Britain, meanwhile, declared the virus a "serious and imminent threat to public health" and said it would forcibly detain infected people if necessary. France tested scores of children and their parents after five British tourists contracted the virus at a ski resort.

The director-general of the World Health Organization said that the agency is still unable to predict where the outbreak is heading but that he believes there is still an opportunity to contain it.

"In recent days, we have seen some concerning instances of onward transmission from people with no travel history to China, like the cases reported in France yesterday and the U.K. today," said Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. "The detection of the small number of cases could be the spark that becomes a bigger fire, but for now, it's only a spark."

The latest developments:

CHINESE OFFICES, MARKETS START TO REOPEN

Zhang Peng, who works for a livestreaming company in Beijing, went to the office for the first time since the holiday, which was supposed to end on Jan. 30. The company checked employees for fever and handed out masks.

"I thought the situation is fairly good now," Zhang said. "I went to work by subway today and underwent various checks in the station. And my company did a good job of prevention and control."

Iris Ke, who works for an advertising company, said she plans to wait until next week to go back to the office.

"We just need to have a little more sense of self-protection," said Ke. "Life goes on anyway. How come we stop going outside or stop working simply because of fear of disease? We can't do that."

There were few signs of activity on the streets of Beijing. The capital's broad avenues were largely free of traffic, and thousands of rental bikes stood in long ranks with hardly a customer. Tourist attractions such as the Forbidden City remained closed, as did schools, and many people worked from home, hoping to avoid crowds.

Those shops and restaurants that did open found few customers.

At the Sanyuanli market in Beijing, the stalls were stocked with pork, mutton, seafood and vegetables and shoppers wore face masks.

"The number of customers here is down a lot, maybe by more than half," said Liu Ying, who sells walnuts, cashews and other specialties. "But you can see a lot of people calling in orders, so we're slowly getting busy again."

The Beijing city government told residential compounds in the capital to close their gates, check visitors for fever and record their identities. The government also warned people to strictly abide by regulations requiring wearing of masks in public and to avoid group activities.

CHINA'S DEATH TOLL RISES

The mainland death toll rose by 97 to 908 in the 24 hours through midnight Sunday, and 3,062 new cases were reported, government authorities said. That was up 15% from Saturday and broke a string of daily declines that the government had said showed that containment measures were succeeding.

More than 440 cases have been confirmed outside mainland China, including two deaths in Hong Kong

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 56 of 59

and the Philippines.

Chinese leader Xi Jinping, wearing a mask, visited a community health center in Beijing. He had his temperature taken and expressed thanks to the health workers on behalf of the Communist Party and government.

"We will most definitely win this people's war," he said.

MORE CASES ABOARD CRUISE SHIP

Japan said an additional 65 cases were found aboard a cruise ship quarantined in Yokohama, near Tokyo, raising the total to 135.

Health Minister Katsunobu Kato said the Japanese government was considering testing all 3,700 or so passengers and crew on the Diamond Princess, which would require them to remain aboard until results were available. Health authorities are scrambling to deliver medicine requested by more than 600 passengers.

"We are doing the utmost to keep everyone in good health," Kato said.

BRITAIN AND FRANCE ACT

Britain issued its "imminent threat" declaration after a British man who caught the virus in Singapore in January appeared linked to several other confirmed cases in Europe. Five Britons, including a 9-year-old boy, contracted the virus in the French Alpine ski town of Contamines-Montjoie after staying in the same chalet as the British man.

Jerome Salomon, head of France's national health agency, said that in the wake of the episode, 61 people, including many children who went to school with the boy, were tested and proved negative for the virus.

CHINESE INFLATION RISES

Consumer inflation spiked to an eight-year high of 5.4% in January over a year earlier, driven by a 4.4% rise in food costs, the government reported.

"It appears that supply disruptions and hoarding due to the coronavirus outbreak helped to keep food prices elevated during the week after Chinese New Year, when they would normally drop back," Julian Evans-Pritchard of Capital Economics said in a report.

China's central bank announced a 300 billion yuan (\$43 billion) fund to make low-interest loans to producers of medicine and medical supplies or other companies involved in fighting the virus.

Over the weekend, the government promised tax cuts and subsidies to farmers, supermarkets, producers of medical supplies and companies that contribute to anti-disease work.

HONG KONG ARTS FESTIVAL CANCELED

The Hong Kong Arts Festival canceled all of its more than 120 music, dance and drama performances, including two concerts by the Boston Symphony Orchestra. The festival was due to start this week and run through mid-March.

AP video journalist Liu Zheng and Associated Press Writers Mari Yamaguchi in Tokyo, Eileen Ng in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and Danica Kirka in London contributed to this report.

Voter registration error risks deportation for immigrants

By SOPHIA TAREEN Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — The day Margarita Del Pilar Fitzpatrick applied for an Illinois driver's license upended her life. When a clerk offered to register her to vote in 2005, the Peruvian citizen mistakenly accepted, leading to long legal battles and eventually deportation.

A decade and a half later, she struggles to find work at 52, is nearly homeless and hasn't seen two of her three American citizen daughters in years because of a secretary of state's office mishap.

"It has derailed our lives," she said in a phone interview from Lima. "Immigrants should not be put in this situation."

A handful of other immigrants could face a similar fate, or criminal charges, after a mistake in Illinois' automatic voter registration system allowed of hundreds of people who identified themselves as non-U.S. citizens to register. Sixteen cast ballots.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 57 of 59

The fiasco in a state with a reputation for election shenanigans triggered a partisan battle, infuriated voter advocacy groups and left immigrant rights activists doing damage control.

"It's disappointing because the situation could have been avoided," said Lawrence Benito, head of the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights. "They voluntarily told people they were noncitizens. It was not their fault."

Voting by noncitizens is forbidden by state and federal laws and is statistically rare. But President Donald Trump has repeatedly made unsubstantiated claims that millions voted illegally in 2016. His comments gave a political charge to the issue and put voting modernization efforts such as automatic registration in the spotlight.

"The political appearance is terrible," Jessica Levinson, a professor at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles, said of Illinois. "The political reality is people are looking for any potential sense of error when it comes to noncitizen voting to indicate that things like automatic voter registration give rise to fraud."

Illinois made headlines in 2017 when then-Gov. Bruce Rauner was among the first Republicans to sign automatic voter registration into law. The multi-faceted law focuses largely on the secretary of state's office, which issues driver's licenses.

A "programming error" wrongly sent data from more than 500 people to election officials, even though when asked if they were U.S. citizens, they hit "no" on an electronic keypad. Ultimately, 545 people were registered.

It's unclear whether some people were confused and mistakenly hit "no." About half of the voters appeared to be citizens. One was confirmed as a noncitizen with legal status to live in the U.S. Six others remain in question.

Whether that individual, or others yet to surface, could face criminal charges boils down the will of prosecutors.

Experts say there's little chance of charges being filed around Chicago, where the Cook County state's attorney is a Democrat. However, authorities in more conservative pockets might be more inclined to act. Election officials said they have not been contacted by law enforcement.

Stepped-up efforts to crack down on noncitizen voters have netted results elsewhere. In 2018, a federal task force in North Carolina uncovered voting violations that led to charges against 19 foreign nationals related to the 2016 election.

It can take years for a noncitizen's illegal vote to surface. Immigration authorities might not find out until an immigrant applies to adjust their status, like a green card holder seeking citizenship with a form that asks if the applicant has ever voted. An affirmative answer could disqualify the applicant and lead to deportation.

Two of the highest-profile cases, heard in the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals, also started with the Illinois secretary of state's office, which has since changed how clerks discuss voter registration.

Fitzpatrick presented both her Peruvian passport and U.S. green card when applying for a driver's license in 2005. She was confused by a clerk who said it was "up to you" if she wanted to register so she did. Then she voted, saying she did not learn it was illegal until applying for citizenship years later. The government moved to have her deported, which courts upheld. She was removed in 2017.

It was the opposite for Elizabeth Keathley, a Philippine citizen in the U.S. on a marriage visa. She applied for a driver's license and was sent a registration card. She voted in 2006. In processing her green card, immigration authorities discovered she had voted, and she was ordered removed. However, judges determined she did not falsely represent herself, allowing her to stay. She's since become a citizen, and her story was recounted in an off-Broadway play.

Keathley, 41, said the threat of being separated from her family was devastating, especially since her daughter was then an infant. She also lost her hospital job.

"Our lives were turned upside-down," said the Bloomington woman.

Chicago attorney Richard Hanus represented both women. He believed Illinois' error could work in their favor, since his clients did not misrepresent themselves as citizens.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 58 of 59

Illinois officials vowed to protect immigrants, including fighting subpoenas.

Some voter rights advocates say the state law contains a caveat that could help. It says if a registration is wrongly processed "that person shall not be found on that basis to have made a false claim to citizenship."

Noncitizen voting isn't common. A 2017 study by the Brennan Center for Justice found roughly 30 incidents of suspected noncitizen voting when it looked at election jurisdictions representing nearly 24 million votes in the 2016 general election.

Secretary of State Jesse White said his office takes full blame and issued letters to the people affected explaining that. Immigrant-rights advocates want additional protections.

White also countered any insinuation of intentional wrongdoing.

"This was an error, and there was no effort put forth to hide anything or 'to cook the books,' so to speak," White, a Democrat, said recently at a state Capitol hearing. He said the glitch, covering registrations from July 2018 through December 2019, was fixed.

Republicans have called for the system to be suspended after other registration glitches were made public. They've also pointed to issues with mistaken noncitizen voter registrations elsewhere, including California.

"The fundamental right to vote and the sanctity of our democracy is too important to bury our heads in the sand and trust that Illinois' state government has everything under control when it clearly does not," Illinois Republican Party Chairman Tim Schneider said after the error was made public last month.

Nearly 20 states have approved some form of automatic voter registration with the goal of increasing civic participation.

Aside from delays and technical issues, voter groups said repeated problems show Illinois has not done enough to safeguard the system.

The state has not "fully come to terms with the harm that can be caused with errors like this in our voting system," said Ami Gandhi with the Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights.

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

Today in History By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, Feb. 11, the 42nd day of 2020. There are 324 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Feb. 11, 1979, followers of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (hoh-MAY'-nee) seized power in Iran.

On this date:

In 1531, the Church of England grudgingly accepted King Henry VIII as its supreme head.

In 1861, President-elect Abraham Lincoln bade farewell to his adopted hometown of Springfield, Ill., as he headed to Washington for his inauguration.

In 1937, a six-week-old sit-down strike against General Motors ended, with the company agreeing to recognize the United Automobile Workers Union.

In 1945, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Soviet leader Josef Stalin signed the Yalta Agreement, in which Stalin agreed to declare war against Imperial Japan following Nazi Germany's capitulation.

In 1968, New York City's fourth and current Madison Square Garden, located on Manhattan's West Side at the site of what used to be the Pennsylvania Station building, opened with a "Salute to the USO" hosted by Bob Hope and Bing Crosby. (The same evening, the New York Rangers played their final game at the third Garden, tying the Detroit Red Wings 3-3.)

In 1975, Margaret Thatcher was elected leader of Britain's opposition Conservative Party.

In 1990, South African black activist Nelson Mandela was freed after 27 years in captivity.

In 2008, the Pentagon charged Khalid Sheikh Mohammed (HAH'-leed shayk moh-HAH'-med) and five other detainees at Guantanamo Bay with murder and war crimes in connection with the Sept. 11 attacks.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 11, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 224 ~ 59 of 59

In 2011, Egypt exploded with joy after pro-democracy protesters brought down President Hosni Mubarak, whose resignation ended three decades of authoritarian rule.

In 2012, pop singer Whitney Houston, 48, was found dead in a hotel room bathtub in Beverly Hills, California.

In 2013, with a few words in Latin, Pope Benedict XVI did what no pope had done in more than half a millennium: announced his resignation. The bombshell came during a routine morning meeting of Vatican cardinals. (The 85-year-old pontiff was succeeded by Pope Francis.)

In 2009, All-Star shortstop Miguel Tejada pleaded guilty to lying to Congress about steroids in baseball. (He was sentenced to a year's probation.) Rep. John Dingell, D-Mich., who first went to Congress in 1955, became the longest-serving member of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Ten years ago: Former President Bill Clinton had two stents inserted in one of his heart arteries after being hospitalized in New York with chest pains. Iranian security forces unleashed a crushing sweep against opposition protesters as President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad (ah-muh-DEE'-neh-zahd) used the 31st anniversary of the Islamic revolution to defy the West. British fashion designer Alexander McQueen, 40, was found dead in his London home.

Five years ago: Vowing that Islamic State forces were "going to lose," President Barack Obama urged Congress to authorize military action while ruling out large-scale U.S. ground combat operations reminiscent of Iraq and Afghanistan. Little League International stripped Jackie Robinson West of the national title after an investigation revealed it had falsified boundaries to field ineligible players; Mountain Ridge Little League was awarded the title. Longtime CBS News correspondent Bob Simon, 73, was killed in a car crash in New York. Hall of Fame basketball coach Jerry Tarkanian, 84, died in Las Vegas.

One year ago: Congressional negotiators reached agreement to prevent a government shutdown and finance construction of new barriers along the U.S.-Mexico border. Freshman Democratic Rep. Ilhan Omar of Minnesota apologized for tweets suggesting that members of Congress support Israel because they are being paid to do so; the tweets had brought bipartisan criticism. Robert Bowers, charged with gunning down 11 people at a Pittsburgh synagogue, pleaded not guilty to hate crimes and dozens of other counts. Denver schoolteachers went on strike for the first time in 25 years after failed negotiations with the school district over base pay; schools remained open with administrators and substitute teachers in classrooms. As baseball's Oakland Athletics began spring training workouts, first-round draft pick Kyler Murray announced that he would pursue a career in the NFL rather than in baseball; Murray had won college football's Heisman Trophy at Oklahoma.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Conrad Janis is 92. Gospel singer Jimmy Carter is 88. Fashion designer Mary Quant is 86. Actress Tina Louise is 82. Bandleader Sergio Mendes is 79. Actor Philip Anglim is 68. Former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush is 67. Actress Catherine Hickland is 64. Rock musician David Uosikkinen (aw-SIK'-ken-ihn) (The Hooters) is 64. Actress Carey Lowell is 59. Singer Sheryl Crow is 58. Former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin is 56. Actress Jennifer Aniston is 51. Actor Damian Lewis is 49. Actress Marisa Petroro is 48. Singer D'Angelo is 46. Actor Brice Beckham is 44. Rock M-C/vocalist Mike Shinoda (Linkin Park) is 43. Singer-actress Brandy is 41. Country musician Jon Jones (The Eli Young Band) is 40. Actor Matthew Lawrence is 40. Rhythm-and-blues singer Kelly Rowland is 39. Actress Natalie Dormer is 38. Singer Aubrey O'Day is 36. Actress Q'orianka (kohr-ee-AHN'-kuh) Kilcher is 30. Actor Taylor Lautner is 28.

Thought for Today: "We had better live as we think, otherwise we shall end up by thinking as we have lived." — Paul Bourget, French author (1852-1935).

Copyright 2020, The Associated Press. All rights reserved.