Icy silence, frayed connections: Impeachment takes a toll

By LAURIE KELLMAN
Associated Press Writer
WASHINGTON (AP) — The most raucous committee in Congress sat stone-faced, barely speaking.
One by one, the members around the Judiciary Committee dais voted on the articles of impeachment against President Donald Trump. Then they bolted for the doors and the airports, in more than one case without a word.
The all-business iciness during those eight gavel-to-gavel minutes reflected the gravity of advancing articles of impeachment to the House floor for only the third time in American history.

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Associated Press
Icy silence, frayed connections: Impeachment takes a toll

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But it also told much of the story about impeachment’s toll on Congress, Washington and beyond. Ever since Trump’s July 25 phone call with Ukraine’s president sparked official proceedings against the president, impeachment has been a force that’s bent congressional business around, with severe strain.

No one feels sorry for Congress, and its members generally don’t feel sorry for themselves. But the wear-and-tear of impeachment is becoming clear in the emotional exchanges and frayed relationships left in its wake.

“I have a problem with this whole damn place. If you can figure out an exit strategy for me I’d appreciate that,” said Rep. Ken Buck, R-Colo., a member of the Judiciary panel, on Friday. “This is crazy. The whole thing is crazy,” he added of impeachment. “It will take some time to get over.”

“My gut is out. Compromise is out. There’s no celebrating or showboating from the House Judiciary Committee mark-up of the abuse and obstruction charges against Trump ignited the smoldering tension. There was no expectation that the articles would be substantially changed, but Trump’s allies pushed for amendments, each of which took hours to consider. Democrats, meanwhile, did not want to take final votes too late for Americans to see.

Just before midnight, Chairman Jerrold Nadler announced that the committee would not be voting on the impeachment articles until Friday morning — and after he banged his gavel, the microphones were switched off. Livid, Republicans leapt to their feet, yelling “unbelievable” and “sneaky” and talking of a “kangaroo court.”

Nadler walked out. “Chairman Nadler’s integrity is zero. His staff is zero,” fumed ranking Republican Rep. Doug Collins of Georgia. “This chairman has made himself irrelevant.” The personal stab at the powerful New York House veteran was unusual, as even the most mismatched pairs atop committees typically refrain from attacking each other in personal terms. It turns out that impeachment is not that Democratic morale-booster that some might have thought in the heady first days of the party’s House takeover this year, when Michigan Rep. Rashida Tlaib vowed to “impeach the mother—er” on her first day in office.

One Democrat involved in the impeachment investigation was so dispirited by it all that he decided this term will be his last.

“The countless hours I have spent in the investigation of Russian election interference and the impeachment inquiry have rendered my soul weary,” said Rep. Denny Heck, D-Wash., in his retirement announcement Dec. 4. “At times, it is as though there are no rules or boundaries. ... Civility is out. Compromise is out. All or nothing is in.”

There’s a long way to go before knowing which party benefits and which pays for impeachment in the 2020 elections, let alone which fares better in the eyes of history. But trust — by Americans toward Congress — seems to be suffering.

Cummings, she said, reminded her that people will know she was here for what’s expected to be the third presidential impeachment in American history. “It will matter,” she said.

But it will not have come for free. By the time Nadler gavelled the committee back into session Friday morning, the silences and swift proceedings suggested there was nothing left to say, let alone fight about. Nadler sat down, pulled out his cellphone and turned it off.

But the proceedings could be costly for both parties. A plurality of Americans — 44 percent — said they had no trust at all in the House impeachment proceedings, according to a Marist University poll conducted in December.

The poll also found that about 6 in 10 Americans said Democrats in Congress are more interested in bringing down Trump than pursuing the facts. Likewise, about 6 in 10 said Republicans in Congress are more interested in defending Trump than pursuing the facts.

With the stakes so high, emotions are, too. Dean, whose family has grown by two grandchildren since impeachment began in September, grew emotional Friday when she talked about the responsibility of weighing the president’s fate.

“I’ve been thinking about the broader horizon,” she said. The same week of Trump’s July phone call, she happened to talk on the floor of the House with Rep. Elijah Cummings of Maryland, the Oversight Committee Chairman who died in October.

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He gavelled the meeting and launched votes on both articles. During the roll call, Rep. Pramila Jayapal, D-Wash., voted aye while holding up a pocket-sized copy of the Constitution.

Collins delivered a scripted notice that he reserves the right to file dissenting views. Nadler dropped the gavel.

There was no celebrating or showboating from the Democrats.
Governor on refugees: 'The inn is not full in Minnesota'

By STEVE KARNOWSKI
Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Minnesota state government will continue to consent to refugee resettlement, Gov. Tim Walz said Friday, in response to a recent presidential executive order that requires consent from states and counties.

"The inn is not full in Minnesota," the Democratic governor said in a letter to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo just ahead of the Christmas holiday.

Walz also said he rejects the intent of the executive order and reserves the state’s right to challenge its requirements.

"Minnesota has a strong moral tradition of welcoming those who seek refuge," he wrote. "Our state has always stepped forward to help those who are fleeing desperate situations and need a safe place to call home. In keeping with this proud history, I offer my consent to continue refugee resettlement in the State of Minnesota."

Minnesota ranks sixth in the country for refugee arrivals since 2001, accepting over 43,000 individuals. The city of Minneapolis also responded to Trump’s order Friday when its mayor and city council approved a resolution affirming a pledge to be a welcoming city that strongly supports the resettlement of refugees. The resolution also affirmed the city’s opposition to the Trump administration’s cuts to the number of refugees admitted into the U.S. Under President Donald Trump’s executive order from September, state and local governments must consent to allowing refugee resettlement, giving governors, county boards and city governments the chance to decide how welcoming they will be.

Kandiyohi County in west-central Minnesota apparently became the state’s first county to consent last week, while others are still waiting to decide. In North Dakota, Burleigh County agreed Monday to accept no more than 25 refugees next year after initially signaling it would become what refugee resettlement groups believed would have been the first local government in the country to block refugees altogether. Burleigh is home to about 95,000 people and includes the capital city of Bismarck. The county board voted after North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum last month said his state would continue to receive refugees — as long as local jurisdictions agree.

Trump’s order said the administration was respecting communities that can’t take in refugees. He announced the change at the same time that his administration cut the number of refugees the U.S. would accept from 30,000 this year to 18,000 in 2020, the lowest level since Congress passed the Refugee Act of 1980. Three national resettlement groups have sued to block Trump’s order.

Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison announced late Friday afternoon that he has joined a coalition of 12 attorneys general — led by California, Illinois and Maryland — in filing an amicus brief in support of that lawsuit. He called the president’s order "illegal and immoral." The brief argues that the order violates the Refugee Act and interferes with each state’s prerogative to set statewide policy on resettlement.
Sen. Mitch McConnell files for seventh term in Kentucky

By BRUCE SCHREINER
Associated Press

FRANKFORT, Ky. (AP) — Touting his leadership role as an asset for Middle America, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell filed for reelection Friday as the Kentucky Republican seeks a seventh term next year.

McConnell, the longest-serving U.S. senator in Kentucky history, has tied himself closely to President Donald Trump as he prepares to defend himself against a host of Democrats wanting to unseat him.

McConnell noted that among the four congressional leaders — the top-ranking Republican and Democratic leaders in both chambers — he’s the only one from the U.S. heartland.

“What I do is look out for Middle America and, in particular, my favorite state in Middle America — Kentucky,” McConnell told reporters at the state Capitol.

Talking about issues that hit home for Kentuckians, McConnell touted his role in making hemp a legal crop, saying the versatile plant might someday “be like tobacco used to be” as a staple for bluegrass state farmers.

Kentucky has been at the national forefront of hemp’s comeback among growers and processors.

The senator said he has steered hundreds of millions of federal dollars to Kentucky to help combat opioid abuse in a state plagued by drug problems.

McConnell also has been a key ally of Trump in putting conservative judges on the federal bench.

As usual, McConnell has amassed a massive campaign fund, as has his highest-profile Democratic challenger, retired Marine combat pilot Amy McGrath, who narrowly lost a 2018 congressional race.

As the top-ranking Republican in Congress, McConnell is a lightning rod for Democrats across the country who want to see him ousted from the Senate.

McConnell downplayed the role Trump’s impeachment could have in next year’s elections.

“It seems like it may not play much of a role in the president’s reelection campaign,” McConnell told reporters.

“There’s considerable anecdotal evidence that in the battleground states, it’s not going over very well. The two articles of impeachment are pretty weak.”

McConnell later said that if impeachment isn’t popular in swing states, then “it’s probably not a popular move in Kentucky.”

Associated Press
Nearly $226M to restore open Gulf after 2010 BP oil spill

By JANET McCONNAUGHEY
Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Federal agencies have approved nearly $226 million for 18 projects to restore open ocean and marine habitats that were decimated in the Gulf of Mexico by the 2010 BP oil spill. The projects range from $52.6 million to study deep-sea habitats to $290,000 to find ways to keep sea turtles from swallowing or getting snagged on hooks or tangled in lines set out for miles along reefs.

They are described in a 490-page report released Tuesday.

The nonprofit Ocean Conservancy said it’s “the world’s first plan to restore the open ocean and deep-sea environment from a major oil disaster.”

“Ocean Conservancy welcomes this major conservation milestone for the Gulf of Mexico,” CEO Janis Searles Jones said in a news release.

The explosion April 20, 2010, on the Deepwater Horizon drilling rig killed 11 workers. There are varying estimates on how much oil was released. According to Ocean Conservancy, the well spewed 210 million gallons (795 million liters) of oil before it was capped 87 days later.

A federal judge tasked with determining how much oil went into the Gulf of Mexico for purposes of levying penalties ruled that 4 million barrels of oil — 168 million gallons — was released from the reservoir. Of that, 810,000 barrels of oil — 34 million gallons — was collected without touching the water and so 3.19 million barrels — nearly 134 million gallons — of oil were discharged into the Gulf. The judge said in his ruling that there was no precise way to know how much oil discharged into the Gulf.

The open ocean recovery plan was drawn up by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration with help from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The money is from BP’s $8.8 billion settlement for natural resources damage, said NOAA Deepwater Horizon program manager Rachel Sweeney.

The projects, expected to run two to 15 years, were chosen from about 1,600 submitted by the public, non-governmental organizations, as well as local, state and federal agencies.

The plan includes $126.2 million to study habitats in deep water and water between 100 feet (30 meters) and more than 490 feet (150 meters) deep. That includes $35.9 million for high-resolution mapping and analysis and $52.6 million to analyze damaged and undamaged habitats at those depths, learning more about the corals. Another $20.7 million would manage and protect corals and $16.9 million would develop techniques to grow and transplant them.

The longest-running program would spend $5.7 million to create a sea turtle atlas indicating where and when species found in the Gulf would most likely be found, and how they use various habitats. It’s among six programs, totaling $18.9 million, for sea turtles. All five species found in the Gulf are threatened or endangered.

About $22.9 million is dedicated to four programs to protect whales and dolphins.

“We will develop and implement tools and techniques to reduce risks to marine mammals from vessel collisions, ocean noise, and human-caused and natural disasters,” Laurie Rounds, of NOAA’s Office of Habitat Conservation said during a news teleconference Tuesday.

Another $57.7 million would protect fish, including $30 million for a program to distribute and promote devices that let deep-sea fish released by anglers be returned gradually to the depths where they live.

When deepwater fish are brought rapidly to the surface, gases in their organs and tissues expand, which makes it hard for them to swim back down, making them easy prey, the report said.

“Supplying fishermen with the tools and knowledge to minimize barotrauma-related mortality would result in increased survival of fish released during recreational fishing activities,” it said.
Brazilians arrive in waves at the U.S.-Mexico border

CEDAR ATTANASIO and PHILIP MARCELO
Associated Press

EL PASO, Texas (AP) — Growing up along the U.S.-Mexico border, hotel clerk Joe Luis Rubio never thought he’d be trying to communicate in Portuguese on a daily basis.

But with hundreds of Brazilians crossing from Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, each week, the Motel 6 by the airport has become a stepping stone for thousands of the Portuguese speakers on a 6,000-mile (9,500 km) journey from Brazil to El Paso to America’s East Coast.

"Thank God for Google Translate or we’d be lost," says Rubio.

The quiet migration of around 17,000 Brazilians through a single U.S. city in the past year reveals a new frontier in the Trump administration’s effort to shutter legal avenues and create a pathway for people claiming fear of persecution. Like hundreds of thousands from Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala, known collectively as the Northern Triangle, Brazilians have been crossing the border here and applying for asylum.

Nationwide, some 18,000 Brazilians were apprehended in the fiscal year ending in October, a 600% increase from the previous high in 2016. Brazilians crossing in the El Paso Sector, which covers Southern New Mexico and West Texas, accounted for 95% of the apprehensions nationwide, according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

On Monday, acting CBP chief Mark Morgan vowed to try to shut down asylum for migrants from outside Spanish-speaking Central America and South America.

"We’re seeing, again, individuals from extraterritorial countries, extra-continental, come in from Brazil, Haiti, Africa," said Morgan.

He pledged to implement rules to bar migrants from those countries "with the same level of commitment that we came up with initiatives to address the issue making families wait in often dangerous Mexican border towns for months to apply for asylum, returning them to Mexico to await court hearings and a recent rule that effectively rejects nearly all asylum claims, regardless of merit.

The result has been a mishmash of pseudo deportations to countries where migrants have never lived and where they face barriers to work or access to basic social services.

Brazilian families are not held indefinitely in detention but instead released to Annunciation House, a network of shelters, where they can stay for a few days while they arrange flights to other cities in the U.S.

They’re often taken to the airport in a minivan driven by Phil Porter.

"It takes a lot for somebody to pack up and leave their country, especially when they’re family oriented," says Porter, 72, who esti-

Brazil plunged into its worst-ever recession in 2015 and 2016 and is headed toward its third consecutive year of roughly 1% growth. The economy’s persistent failure to gain steam means joblessness has remained stubbornly in the double-digits, with the most recent reading at 11.6%.

Adding underemployment, the figure more than doubles to almost one quarter of the work force, or 27 million people.

Massachusetts officials and community leaders say they’ve felt the surge in Brazilian migrants this past year, with more families seeking immigration services and enrolling their children in public school.

The state has the second largest population of Brazilians in the U.S. after Florida, according to 2015 U.S. Census data.

Recent immigrant Helison Alvarenga says he started working the day after ar-

he earned as a mechanic in Brazil.

"Things are in pretty bad shape in Brazil right now. The only way to have a better life in Brazil is to go to college, but college is very expensive," said Alvarenga, speaking in Portuguese through a translator.

The New England winter has also been tougher than he expected, he admits.

"It makes me homesick. I miss the warmth and the sun," he said. "If I won enough on a scratch ticket, I’d go back tomorrow."

Many coming from Brazil are petitioning for asylum, citing the country’s high unemployment and persistent corruption and violence, says Luciano Park, an immigration lawyer in Philadelphia, where they have family.

She said they spent four days in a Border Patrol tent before being released.

"It was miserable," she said. While stays at the Motel 6 are down, more migrants are staying for longer at Annunciation House, according to the shelter’s director, Ruben Garcia.

"One of the things that may have changed is we have Brazilians that don’t have some of the financial re-

sources that some of the Brazilians did a while back," Garcia said.

Women citing domestic violence reasons are also less likely to win their cases under tougher asylum rules imposed by the Trump administration.

"Before these were good cases," Park said. "But it’s just become tougher to argue." Tourist and student visas have been more difficult for Brazilians to get as more clamped for them in the recent economic downturn, says Francis Brink, an immigration lawyer in Orlando, Florida.

He has taken a few clients who were persecuted by the government because they tried to dodge detention by pretending to be a parent or a minor, often using IDs fraudulently obtained in Brazil. Homeland Security Investigations agents have been filing allegations of so-called "family fraud" by Brazilians at least a few times per month.

On a recent Tuesday, the Motel 6 is half empty, with only two Brazilian families staying there.

In room 127, a 42-year-old mother from Maranhão is in bed watching TV. She’s waiting with her 16-year-old son for a flight to Philadelphia, where they have family.

She said they spent four days in a Border Patrol tent detention camp before being released.

"I wish it was warmer," she said. While stays at the Motel 6 are down, more migrants are staying for longer at Annunciation House, according to the shelter’s director, Ruben Garcia.

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Associated Press

In this Wednesday, Dec. 4, 2019 photo Helison Alvarenga, of Brazil, second from left, sits with his mates he’s ferried around 200 Brazilians. "These are economic refugees."
A 13-year-old boy has been arrested in the fatal stabbing of a Barnard College student in a park near the school’s New York City campus, two law enforcement officials with knowledge of the investigation said Friday.

The boy was charged with murder in the slaying of 18-year-old freshman Tessa Majors and is expected to be tried as a juvenile delinquent in family court, said the people, who were not authorized to speak publicly about the case and did so on condition of anonymity.

As many as three attackers were involved, police have said, and the president of Barnard College said Majors was stabbed during an armed robbery.

Authorities on Thursday questioned two people who were later released, police said.

New York police spokesman Andrew Lava declined comment on the arrest of the boy but Police Commissioner Dermot Shea tweeted later that detectives “are making significant progress, and we will have major updates to announce very soon.”

Majors, from Charlottesville, Virginia, played in a rock band in New York and had told an editor from a newspaper internship in high school that she planned to take journalism classes in college.

Flowers and candles were left at a makeshift memorial and her family said in a statement Friday that they “are devastated by the senseless loss of our connected to Majors’ death. Police have since increased patrols around the another crime, in this case the alleged robbery, the people with knowledge of

The 13-year-old suspect in Majors’ death is charged with murder in the course of another crime, in this case the alleged robbery, the people with knowledge of

She sang and played bass guitar in the rock band Patient 0. In October, debut-

Majors graduated high school in May from the private St. Anne’s-Belfield School in Charlottesville, where Head of School David Layman said she was “a shining light in our community, a good friend, respected classmate, trusted teammate, and creative and passionate musician.”

Her father, Inman Majors, is the author of six novels and an English professor at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

“We are thankful for the incredible outpouring of love and support we have received from across the country,” the family statement said.

“...continue to work diligently on this case.”
Battle ahead: Scotland party leader vows independence push

By GREGORY KATZ
Associated Press
LONDON (AP) — Prime Minister Boris Johnson has won the majority he needs to push through Brexit, but he faces another big challenge from Scotland, where the independence-minded Scottish National Party and its leader Nicola Sturgeon have surged to a commanding position. Here is a look at the factors that will make this a vexing issue for Johnson.

WHO IS NICOLA STURGEON AND WHAT IS HER ROLE IN SCOTTISH POLITICS?
The dynamic Sturgeon, 49, is leader of the Scottish National Party, which dominates the political scene, and as such she is Scotland’s first minister. She took over the party’s top post in 2014 after it lost a hard-fought referendum on independence from the United Kingdom. Sturgeon has emerged as one of the most talented figures on Britain’s fractious political scene.
The daughter of an electrician and a dental nurse, she became a lawyer after graduating from the University of Glasgow and has earned a reputation for being well-prepared, witty and at ease with voters, and blunt when she needs to be. Independence for Scotland has long been her primary political goal. Opponents say she wishes to keep it afloat until a buyer for the airline, run by state-appointed administrators since it declared bankruptcy in 2017, can be found.

The Alitalia check-in area is empty at Rome’s Leonardo Da Vinci international airport, in Fiumicino, near Rome, Friday, Dec. 13, 2019.

By GIADA ZAMPANO
Associated Press
ROME (AP) — Hundreds of international and domestic flights in Italy were cancelled Friday as air transport workers held a nationwide strike to protest feared firings and salary cuts at troubled national carrier Alitalia.

Attempts to find a buyer for the airline, run by state-appointed administrators since it declared bankruptcy in 2017, fell apart last month.
The Italian government agreed to grant Alitalia a new 400 million euros ($445 million) to keep it afloat until a buyer can be found. Friday’s strike cancelled more than 350 Alitalia flights, and several flights by Air Italy, a private carrier based in Sarzina, unions say they want a mixture of state and private investment in Alitalia.

“We favor both a public and private investment in Alitalia, which would grant us more protection on the jobs’ side, and a private partner, which would bring the needed know-how to the company,” said Guido Barcucci, spokesman for the national Fill-Cgil union, which on Friday participated in the workers’ protests at Rome’s Fiumicino airport.

“Our request is that a new industrial plan is drafted for Alitalia, excluding cuts in the labor force or the workers’ salaries,” Barcucci added. Alitalia has not posted a profit for 15 years.

According to analysts’ estimates, it is losing 700,000 euros ($780,000) per day, as it struggles to cope with low cost competition on short-range routes and an inadequate long-range network.

Nationalization recently resurfaced as a likely option for the carrier, should the new loan fail to secure a buyer by the end of spring 2020.
ATHENS, Greece (AP) — A group of United Nations experts on arbitrary detention said Friday that despite some improvements, Greece was still in violation of certain international obligations in how and where people are imprisoned.

The U.N. Working Group on Arbitrary Detention presented a preliminary report following a visit to 20 detention facilities across the country between Dec. 2 and Dec. 13. It noted several areas of concern involving both the criminal justice system and migration.

A final report will be issued in several months. The group, which visited Greece following an invitation by the 6-month-old government, said it had enjoyed unrestricted access to facilities and full cooperation from Greek officials.

The group’s concerns included prison overcrowding, the non-segregation of suspects held in pre-trial detention from those already convicted, the access of asylum seekers to interpreters and legal help, and reports of arbitrary push-backs into Turkey of migrants attempting to cross the border into Greece.

Greek prisons have suffered from overcrowding for years. A recent change to the penal code reducing the length of prison sentences and encouraging the use of alternatives such as community service “are positive steps forward,” the group said. But it added that “there is still considerable scope for their implementation,” and noted that the conditions in prisons and police station holding cells “do not generally meet international standards.”

The preliminary findings criticized the widespread use of pre-trial detention. It also said that holding people awaiting trial together with convicts runs contrary to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and is “contrary to the presumption of innocence that all persons are entitled to prior to conviction.” Regarding push-backs, the group said it had received information from various sources, including lawyers and non-governmental groups, that some migrants attempting to enter Greece from Turkey “are arrested, detained in very poor conditions, and summarily returned across the Greece-Turkey land border” without being given the chance to apply for asylum.

6 to remain jailed in Denmark for alleged terror attack plot

COPENHAGEN, Denmark (AP) — Six people who were arrested as part of what Danish authorities alleged was an Islamist-inspired attack plot have been ordered held in pre-trial custody for four weeks.

The six people still jailed have pleaded not guilty to preliminary terror charge. If formally charged and convicted, they face potential life prison sentences, though in practice life sentences end up averaging 16 years in Denmark.

On Friday, the Copenhagen City Court remanded two men ages 24 and 25 to custody for allegedly trying to buy guns, silencers and ammunition that was “to be used in connection with one or several terror attacks in Denmark or abroad,” according to prosecutors.

The Copenhagen court on Thursday ordered two 21-year-old men and a 38-year-old woman to remain jailed for allegedly trying to produce one or several bombs with the explosive TATP, the prosecution said. TATP, or tri-acetone tri-peroxide, has been used in extremist attacks worldwide and has been nicknamed the “mother of Satan” because of its volatility.

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People take part in a street demonstration to show solidarity with judges facing increased political pressure from the country’s right-wing government in Warsaw, Poland, Sunday, Dec. 1, 2019. Associated Press

Libyan PM unfazed by commander’s zero hour Tripoli push

By NOHA ELHENNAWY
Associated Press
CAIRO (AP) — The prime minister of Libya’s U.N.-supported government Friday shrugged off threats by his rival, the commander of a self-styled army waging a months-long offensive to capture the capital Tripoli that the “zero hour” of the battle has begun.

Prime Minister Fayez Sarraj called on Libyans to rally around him in the defense of the nation.

Sarraj’s call came a day after Gen. Khalifa Hifter of the self-styled Libyan National Army declared a final, “decisive battle” to take Tripoli from Sarraj’s U.N.-supported government. “The zero hour has ticked,” Hifter said in a televised speech late Thursday.

Since 2015, war-torn Libya has been divided between two governments, one in the east and the other in the west, based in Tripoli and supported by the United Nations, as well as Italy, Turkey and Qatar. After nearly eight months of fighting, Khalifa’s forces have not taken Tripoli but have been held off on the city’s southern edges, instead laying siege on the Libyan capital. The stalemated fighting has so far left more than 1,000 people dead, mostly combatants. Tens of thousands of civilians have been displaced.

In a video posted on the Libyan government’s Facebook page, Sarraj dismissed Hifter’s claim about a new push as “lies” and “delusions” and said his forces have already “taught the invaders a lesson.”

“I call upon you to rally around the project of a civil state and to show faith in our right to build a state, based on institutions, the rule of law and liberties,” Sarraj said. “Libya can only end up as an oasis for freedom and democracy.”

Since the fighting erupted, Sarraj has portrayed himself as a democratic leader who strives to thwart his rival’s alleged attempts to instate a military dictatorship in Libya. Meanwhile, Hifter has argued that his military operation seeks to purge the capital of radical militias allied with Sarraj’s government.

The latest statements from Hifter and Sarraj come amid heightened tension between the two warring sides after Sarraj’s government signed a security arrangement and maritime deal with Turkey last month. Earlier this week, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said the agreement gives his country the right to send troops to Libya to fend off Hifter’s forces from Tripoli. The head of the EU’s delegation for relations with Maghreb Countries, Andrea Cozzolino, said Friday she was concerned about Hifter’s threats and warned that a new offensive would only lead “to more suffering for the Libyan civilian population, who have already paid a high price.”

Turkish gov’t defends law to ‘discipline’ judges, amid outcry

By VANESSA GERA
Associated Press
WARSAW, Poland (AP) — The prime minister of Libya’s U.N.-supported government Friday shrugged off threats by his rival, the commander of a self-styled army waging a months-long offensive to capture the capital Tripoli that the “zero hour” of the battle has begun.

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Another opioid crisis is raging through the developing world

By EMILY SCHMALL
CLAIRE GALOFARO
Associated Press

KAPURTHALA, India (AP) — Reports rolled in with escalating urgency — pills seized by the truckload, pills swallowed by schoolchildren, pills in the pockets of dead terrorists. These pills, the world has been told, are safer than the OxyContin, the Vicodin, the fentanyl that have wreaked so much devastation. But now they are the root of what the United Nations named “the other opioid crisis” — an epidemic featured in fewer headlines than the American one, as it rages through the most vulnerable countries on the planet.

Mass abuse of the opioid tramadol spans continents, from India to Africa to the Middle East, creating international havoc some experts blame on a loophole in narcotics regulation and a miscalculation of the drug’s danger. The manmade opioid was touted as able to relieve pain with little risk of abuse. Unlike other opioids, tramadol flowed freely around the world, unburdened by international controls that track most dangerous drugs.

But abuse is now so rampant some countries consumed by it are asking international authorities to intervene. Grunenthal, the German company that originally made the drug, is campaigning for the status quo, arguing international regulations make narcotics difficult to get in countries with disorganized health systems, and adding tramadol to the list would deprive patients in pain access to any opioid at all.

“Tramadol is available in war zones and impoverished nations because it is unregulated. But it is widely abused for the same exact reason. “It’s a really very complicated balance to strike.” Tramadol is not as deadly as other opioids and the crisis isn’t killing with the ferocity of America’s struggle with the drugs. Still, individual governments from the U.S. to Egypt to Ukraine have realized the drug’s dangers are not as limited as believed and worked to rein in the tramadol trade. The North Indian state of Punjab, the center of India’s opioid epidemic, was the latest to crack down. The pills were everywhere, as legitimate medication sold in pharmacies, but also illicit counterfeits hawked by street vendors.

This year, authorities seized hundreds of thousands of tablets; banned most pharmacy sales and shut down counterfeit pill factories, pushing the price from 35 cents for a 10-pack to $14. The government opened a network of treatment centers, fearing those who had become opioid addicted would resort to heroin out of desperation. Hordes of people rushed in to seek help in dealing with excruciating withdrawal. For some, tramadol had become as essential as food.

“If you don’t eat, you start to feel hungry. Similar is the case with not taking it,” said auto shop welder Deepak Arora, a gaunt 30-year-old who took 15 tablets daily, so much he had to steal from his family to pay for pills. “You are like a dead person.”

Jeffery Bawa, an officer with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, realized what was happening in 2016. Police began finding pills on terrorists, who trafficked it to fund their networks and take it to bolster their capacity for violence, Bawa said.

Most of it was coming from India. The country’s sprawling pharmaceutical industry is fueled by cheap generics. Pill factories produce knock-offs and ship them in bulk around the world, in doses far exceeding medical limits.

In 2017, law enforcement reported that $275 million worth of tramadol from India was confiscated on route to the Islamic State terror group. Authorities intercepted 600,000 tablets headed for Boko Haram. Another 3 million were found in a pickup truck in Niger, in boxes disguised with U.N. logos. The agency warned that tramadol was playing “a direct role in the destabilization of the region.” “We cannot let the situation get any further out of control,” that alert read.

### Afghan presidential candidate to allow ballot recount

Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — Afghanistan presidential candidate Abdullah Abdullah has announced Friday he has agreed to allow a ballot recount in provinces where his supporters had stopped the process for almost a month.

Abdullah, who serves as the country’s chief executive in a fragile national unity government with President Ashraf Ghani, addressed the media following a conference with supporters. He said he won’t accept any election result unless fake ballots are removed. The Afghan Election Commission tried to launch a ballot recount in November but Abdullah halted the attempt, saying he wouldn’t let his observers participate.

Afghanistan’s election and election complaint commissions had repeatedly requested that Abdullah’s supporters allow the ballot recount process to move forward and promised to release results based on valid ballots.

The Sept. 28 election has been mired in controversy. Rivals Ghani and Abdullah, are the top candidates. It wasn’t immediately clear if Abdullah would send any of his observers to take part in the recount process.

A date to announce preliminary election results was still not clear on Friday but if no candidate obtains more than 50% of the vote, a second round of voting will be held. Ghani and Abdullah head a fragile national unity government that was put together under U.S. pressure after both leaders claimed victory in Afghanistan’s last elections in 2014.
By SONIA PÉREZ D.
Associated Press
GUATEMALA CITY (AP) —

One by one, witnesses sat in the elegant wooden chair in Guatemala’s Congress in recent weeks to air their grievances against the U.N.-sponsored anti-graft commission that over the course of 12 years helped bring to justice hundreds of politicians, businesspeople, judges and others accused of corruption.

They have included relatives of a suspect complaining about a preventive prison order, even though he has been a fugitive from justice for six years, and allies of a man convicted of crimes against humanity during Guatemala’s bloody 1960-1996 civil war, a case in which the U.N. commission, known as Cicig for its initials in Spanish, was not even involved.

Cicig won plaudits at home and abroad for its work, hand-in-hand with Guatemalan prosecutors, to bring corruption cases against hundreds of the country’s powerful and privileged, including two ex-presidents and then-sitting President Otto Pérez Molina, who remains behind bars. But after its investigations touched the inner circle of current President Jimmy Morales and the president himself, he shut the commission down and it ceased functioning Sept. 3, when its mandate ran out without being renewed.

Human rights groups warned at the time of a possible backlash against those who carried out the corruption investigations, and those worries appear to have been born out in the congressional Truth Commission launched days later, tasked with compiling a report on Cicig’s activities. Critics say it seeks to discredit and undermine the commission’s work and derail ongoing prosecutions even as many of Cicig’s most high-profile investigations are set to see trial in 2020. And they fear it could be used to bring charges against investigators, judges and prosecutors whose efforts put the bigwigs behind bars.

Juan Ramón Lau, the congressman presiding over the commission, said it has heard from more than 200 people who say they were victimized by Cicig and about 40 are expected to appear before it wraps up. He defended the commission, saying its mission is for “the truth to be known about what Cicig did.”

But Iván Velásquez, a Colombian lawyer who led Cicig for years, argued that the body violates the principle of separation of powers and “constitutes an illegal interference by the legislative branch” into independent entities.

“The ultimate goal of the commission ... is to disrupt the [legal] cases that are under way,” Velásquez said. U.N. deputy spokesman Farhan Haq said Secretary-General Antonio Guterres believes Cicig “made a decisive contribution to strengthen the rule of law as well as strengthen investigation and prosecution capacities in Guatemala over its 12 years of operation.”

He added that Guterres thanked Cicig workers for “their professionalism and commitment to assist in the cause of justice. He also trusts that efforts to fight impunity will continue” in Guatemala.

Vale-commissioned report says no warning before dam collapse

By DIANE JEANTET
Associated Press
RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — A company-commissioned study released Thursday on a deadly dam break in Brazil found that none of the structure’s monitoring systems gave warning of the collapse that killed at least 257 people — though other experts have said the disaster could have been prevented.

The report released by the mining giant Vale said that “none of the monitoring devices detected precursors to failure” ahead of the Jan. 25 disaster in the city of Brumadinho.

The collapse killed at least 257 people, with 13 people still missing. It unleashed a torrent of thick reddish-brown mud that destroyed houses, roads and trees and contaminated nearby rivers.

It prompted a wave of criticism of the mining company and of industry regulators.

A report released by congressional investigators in October recommended charges against the company and several senior executives, and the case remains under investigation by prosecutors.

The authors of the 81-page Vale-commissioned study also concluded that dam collapses are “rarely due to one cause” and listed several contributing factors, from design and construction of the structure, to water management issues and intense rainfall.

The Vale-commissioned report states that there were no “apparent signs of distress prior to failure,” a crucial point about the possible responsibility of the firm.

“The Vale-commissioned report states that there were no ‘apparent signs of distress prior to failure,’” a crucial point about the possible responsibility of the firm,” said Lavite, who found very serious issues of drainage in the year prior to the failure and in the few days before as well,” said Lavite, who traveled to the mining site in Brumadinho. She said parliamentary inquiries had also found that prior signs of possible failures had appeared. “It is clear they don’t want to acknowledge any warning signs,” she said.

In this Jan. 28, 2019 file photo, firefighters watch the body of a person they pulled from the mud, as it is lifted up and taken away by a helicopter days after a dam collapse in Brumadinho, Brazil.

Associated Press
The Casino at The Ritz-Carlton, Aruba
Win a FERRARI 488 SPIDER or $250,000 CASH!

PALM BEACH — The big day is here! It's the grand finale of the campaign ‘DEAL OR WHEEL’ and on December 14th, 2019 a lucky winner will walk away with a FERRARI 488 SPIDER or $250,000 CASH at The Casino at The Ritz-Carlton, Aruba.

At the beginning of the year The Casino at The Ritz-Carlton, Aruba made history during the launch of their campaign where they announced the grand prize to be a Ferrari 488 Spider. In October, they announced an additional option to this campaign where the lucky winner could choose between the Ferrari 488 Spider or $250,000 cash. The magnitude of the campaign is something historic in the Caribbean, where a casino gives their players the opportunity to win a sports car or a cash prize of $250,000.

All visitors of the Casino still have the chance to be a winner until 8PM. To participate is easy. You must be a member of the VIP Club. If you are not a member yet hurry up you are still in time to sign up. For every 80 points accumulated on slot machines or $40 win in table games you will receive a raffle ticket. At exactly 9PM, 5 finalist will be selected from the 'raffle pool' which will complete the total of 20 finalist competing for the Grand Finale.

The lucky winner of the Ferrari 488 Spider or $250,000 cash will be selected at midnight at The Casino at The Ritz-Carlton, Aruba. The grand event will begin at 8PM with entertainment by one of Aruba’s most popular bands Buleria. There’s also a special menu available at Divi Lounge.

All guests are enthusiastically waiting to see if they are the lucky winners of a luxury car or the cash prize. The Casino at The Ritz-Carlton, Aruba is happy with the positive response they have been receiving throughout the campaign, and they are preparing a tremendous campaign for 2020. The Casino at The Ritz-Carlton, Aruba is known for their high-quality of service and guarantees a unique vacation experience. They also offer the best Tier Program with exclusive benefits on the island for their loyal clients.

For more information on how to participate pass by the VIP Desk at The Casino at The Ritz-Carlton, Aruba or call 527-2276/ 527-2277 and they will be happy to assist you.

Aruba to Me

ORANJESTAD – Aruba Today likes to welcome readers to participate in our newspaper. You can see that in our Honored Guest-publications, specials like on Valentine’s Day and on other occasions. Throughout the year you are always welcome to send us your vacation picture(s) together with completing the sentence: Aruba to me is …….. (Email: news@arubatoday.com)

For today’s newspaper we received a great picture from Makayla Mackey. She wrote: 

Aruba to me is…. Home!

Makayla send us a great picture to show us how much fun they have when vacationing on the island. The two ladies on the picture have been coming to the island for more than 30 times and have been honored as Distinguished Visitors. They are all posing with a special sign meaning “Got Bills”.
NEW IN THE MARKET!! Your Own Beach Villa with a Backyard of Green Tranquility

Azure Beach Residences The Villas

EAGLE BEACH — Sometimes everything comes together. You’re looking for this special family place while vacationing or you are a local resident who wishes a secure and comfortable house within a serviced residence to enjoy your retirement. You’d also like to make an investment that brings you a profit and at the same time you want to deal with a trustworthy and secure company. Azure Beach Residences has all of the above under one roof. New offering by the successful Pering Group: The Villas.

Developer Pering Group’s quality is already visible with Azure Beach Residences [sold for 90 % already] at Eagle Beach and Harbour House Condominiums (sales going beyond expectations) in Oranjestad. Now their newest product is The Villas with the same formula: a quality product for a good price, a trustworthy developer and a prime location. Take a look at this hot opportunity: only six fantastic villas on the border of a bird sanctuary and opposite the white-sand Eagle Beach.

The Villas are designed in modern architecture with panoramic windows where the green environment from the bird sanctuary (Bubali Plas) can flow freely inside. That is the feel you get with the Azure Villas. Just behind the condominium towers we have found this quiet space where you can have your family’s second home or enjoy your well-deserved retirement. Big benefit: you will not only have a villa with four bedrooms and three bathrooms, but also an option for an annex that has one bedroom and one bathroom which can be rented out to cover your villa’s expenses. Your own private pool is optional too.

A private house within the frame of a residence

Picture this: in the morning the kids are playing in their rooms while you take your coffee outside to the patio to enjoy the birds singing in the lush greens that surround you. After breakfast you gather your stuff to walk to the residence pools or cross the street to jump into the Caribbean Sea. This is no movie, this is for real. You are in paradise, you own your own villa and you have a decent return-on-investment. Not to be forgotten: you can make use of all facilities and services that are offered by Azure Beach Residences and there is 24-hours security. Best of it all is that the prices are very reasonable, especially when compared to similar offerings in the market.

Upgraded Environment

The environment of Azure Beach Residences and the Azure Villas will be improved as the government is extending the Linear Park, a lovely paved route that eventually connects the length of the island’s west coast from the Airport to Arashi Beach. The trail is lined with trees for shade and offers secure space for walkers, runners and cyclers. All together you will be assured to have your perfect picture here.

Are you curious? Azure Beach Residences welcomes you to step in and hear more about this great opportunity! Hear us out and see for yourself. □

WINNING POINTS

• Closed gated community with all amenities Azure Beach Residences has to offer
• Spacious villa with lots of light coming in and full privacy PLUS the annex can be rented out
• Your backyard is the Bubali Bird Sanctuary and the white-sand Eagle Beach on the opposite side of the street
• New walk-run-cycle trail and park right by the front of the property
• Well-priced in comparison with equally sized offerings
• Developer with a trustworthy image and proven track record of success

For more information you can visit the website: http://www.azure-aruba.com.
The sales office is open every week day from 9 AM - 5 PM, Saturdays 10 AM - 1 PM.
ORANJESTAD — Every year on Christmas day many fortunate children get one or more presents. But did you know there are many children who don’t get any presents on Christmas day? Santa’s Cause wants to make sure every child in Aruba gets a present on Christmas day.

Santa’s Cause Aruba is a charity project with the purpose of giving a minimum of 100 less fortunate children (ages 0-12) a gift on Christmas day. The idea started in 2018 with a group of Aruban students in The Netherlands who felt the need to do something for the children in need on their island. A total of 200 children were able to receive a gift and also they managed to hand out baskets with goods to 20 families in need. Due to this success they are doing it this year once again. To make this possible they will need all the help they can get from the community.

How can you help?
Become a godparent
As a godparent you will be given the age and gender of the child (ren) to whom you will have to buy a gift.
Donate money
Every dollar will help! With the donations they receive, new toys will be bought for the less fortunate children in Aruba.

Donate products for the baskets
Canned food, sugar, rice, cereal, powdered milk, hygiene products, baby products, diapers and cleaning products are welcome to support the families.

The deadline for the donations is December 19th, 2019. Drop off locations are: Lindy Boutique, MOSSA, Arashi Beach Shack, Jona’s Best Snacks and Beautybar by Alice. To join this great cause just send a message on the Facebook page Santa’s Cause Aruba or Instagram santascausearuba2019.

On behalf of the management & PR team, Santa’s Cause Aruba would like to thank you in advance for your help. Your contribution will make many children and parents happy this Christmas.
Aruba to Me Christmas Vibes

ORANJESTAD – We would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island this Christmas season.

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is ....... And send us your picture with text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com. We will publish your vacation memory in our newspaper and online. Isn’t that a special way to keep your holiday memories alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to the Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc., for promotional purposes without compensation.

Last but not least: check out our website and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.
Lamar Jackson finishes off an ugly stereotype

By PAUL NEWBERRY
AP Sports Columnist

Surely Lamar Jackson has put that ugly stereotype to rest, once and for all. Let’s hope we never hear again how some dynamic young African-American quarterback would be better off at another position because — wink, wink — he’s just not cut out to read defenses or up to the mental challenge. That narrative has largely changed in the NFL — though, obviously, not completely.

With his 23rd birthday still a few weeks away, Jackson had already answered all the doubters but put an exclamation point on a season for the ages with another dynamic performance Thursday night, leading the Baltimore Ravens to a 42-21 victory over the New York Jets.

Continued on Page 22
Americans rally late, trail by only 3 in Presidents Cup

By DOUG FERGUSON
AP Golf Writer

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP) - Americans rallied late, trail by only 3 in Presidents Cup.

Dustin Johnson and Matt Parziale rallied from 2 down with birdies on the final two holes to win matches. Gary Woodland and Rickie Fowler won two more matches in the opening session at Royal Melbourne Golf Club in Melbourne, Friday, Dec. 13, 2019.

Even so, the Americans felt momentum shifting.

“We dug ourselves out of what could have been a big hole,” Thomas said.

The match tied going to the 18th, Thomas drove into light rough on the right, and Woods followed with a great shot that landed near the hole and rolled out 18 feet. Hideki Matsuyama missed his 25-foot speedy birdie chance, and Thomas had the last putt for the win.

“We were both screaming,” Woods said. “It was a phenomenal moment, and it was priceless. So I’m glad we were able to experience it together.”

Equally important was Cantlay, who second shot into the par-5 15th set up birdie to square the match. Xander Schauffele gave him a chance at the winner with an approach into 15 feet on the final hole, and Cantlay knocked it in. That was the first point.

Julie Ertz named U.S. Soccer women’s player of the year

By ANNE M. PETERSON
AP Soccer Writer

Julie Ertz was named the U.S. Soccer women’s Player of the Year on Friday for the second time.

Ertz, a versatile midfielder who also won the award in 2017, was on the U.S. team that won World Cup championships in 2015 and again this summer in France.

Ertz, who played a more defensive role in 2015, scored her first World Cup goal this summer during a group-stage victory over Chile. The goal came on a leaping, twisting header which she celebrated by blowing a kiss to the crowd in Paris.

“It’s been a whirlwind of a year and one that I’m extremely grateful for,” Ertz said in a statement. “My team lifted me up in so many ways and our experiences on and off the field in 2019 just encapsulate the love I have for the National Team and for wearing this crest and what it represents.”

The 27-year-old, who was named Young Player of the Year in 2012, has 93 career appearances with the senior U.S. team and started 22 matches this year, most on the team. She has 20 career goals with the national team.

Ertz also plays for the Chicago Red Stars of the National Women’s Soccer League.

With the Red Stars, she started in 14 games at midfielder and center back. Chicago finished in second place in the league standings and went to the NWSL title game but fell to North Carolina.

“Julie was such a critical part of our success this summer,” said former U.S. coach Jill Ellis, who stepped down following the World Cup.

“It’s wonderful that she’s being recognized in this way. She’s always a consummate professional regardless of the environment. Whether it’s in training, National Team games or in the NWSL, she always brings a level of professionalism, effort and talent.”

The women’s Player of the Year award is determined by a vote of national team coaches and players, select media members, NWSL and select college coaches, U.S. Soccer board members and others.
DETROIT (AP) — Robby Fabbri scored twice on fortuitous bounces off the same Winnipeg player, and the Detroit Red Wings snapped a 12-game winless streak with a 5-2 victory over the Winnipeg Jets on Thursday night.

Detroit scored on the power play later in the first period when Fabbri’s go-ahead goal caught Tuukka Rask offbalance. The Jets successfully killed two power plays by the Red Wings, who had been 0-10-2 in their previous 12 and had dropped 10 in a row in regulation.

Fabbri was set up in front of the net by a high shot from合计on Hellebuyck and past Hellebuyck. A few seconds prior, Fabbri was set up in the slot by a shot by Brett Pesce.

While trying to recover, Beaulieu let the puck get past him at the Detroit blue line. Then, after chasing it down in the neutral zone, he let the puck slip away from his control — right into the path of Helm.

The Jets killed a trip to recover, Beaulieu skated right into linesman Greg Devorski, and at that point, Helm was gone. Beaulieu said he could see Connors Hellebuyck with a wrist shot to make it 1-0. Kyle Connor scored twice for the Jets.

Detroit center Robby Fabbri, left, celebrates his goal with Patrik Nemeth (22) in the second period of an NHL hockey game against the Winnipeg Jets, Thursday, Dec. 12, 2019, in Detroit.
Jackson, Ravens beat Jets 42-21 to clinch AFC North title

By DAVID GINSBURG AP Sport Writer

BALTIMORE (AP) — Only minutes removed from watching his team roll to its 10th consecutive victory, coach John Harbaugh showed up to the postgame news conference wearing a white hat proclaiming Baltimore to be AFC North champions.

No small accomplishment, winning that tough division two years in a row.

“We’re very proud of that,” Harbaugh said. “It’s our first goal. Not our top goal.”

Indeed. After Lamar Jackson ran and passed the Ravens past the New York Jets 42-21 on Thursday night, the then-11-1 club put the feeling of just about everyone associated with the team that owns the best record in the NFL.

“The NORTH IS NOT ENOUGH,” yelled the sentiment in capital letters on a jersey. Yes, the Ravens have another division title after they clinched a playoff berth four days earlier in Buffalo.

With a victory next week in Cleveland, the Ravens will be assured the top seed in the AFC, a distinction that comes with home-field advantage leading up to the Super Bowl.

Super Bowl. That’s the target. Victories in December are merely steps in that direction.

“We just have to keep it going,” Jackson said. “The job is not over,” safety Earl Thomas said. “We got a couple more goals in front of us.”

Jackson threw five touchdown passes and scurried into the NFL record book. He’s only started 21 games as a professional, yet Jackson looks like he’s been doing it forever.

“I’m thinking in the back of my mind sooner or later he’s going to have a young, second-year growing pains game,” veteran guard Marshal Yanda said. “And the kid keeps playing winning football.”

Baltimore (12-2) took control with touchdowns on its first three possessions and Jackson made it 28-7 in the third quarter with a 24-yard scoring pass to rookie Marquise Brown following a turnover by New York (5-9).

Jackson ran for 86 yards (on eight carries) to break Michael Vick’s single-season record for a quarterback (1,039 for Atlanta in 2006). Jackson has 1,108 yards rushing.

On this night, however, Jackson did most of the damage with his right arm. He completed 15 of 23 passes for 212 yards and increased his NFL-leading total of touchdown passes to 33, tying the franchise season record set by Vinny Testaverde in 1996.

After Jackson’s pass to Brown, many in the crowd of 70,545 chanted “MVP! MVP!” There was a reprise of the mantra late in the third quarter when Jackson hit Seth Roberts for a 33-yard touchdown. The Ravens are now 8-1 in the third quarter when Jackson is in the game.

Jackson celebrated the first down by dancing downfield with his arm pointing toward the New York goal line. Not once throughout his exceptional performance did Jackson show any sign of being slowed by a quadriceps injury that made headlines in the days leading up to the game.

The Jets, meanwhile, hardly looked like a team that had won four of their previous five games. Sam Darnold threw two touchdown passes to Jamison Crowder but the second-year quarterback also tossed an interception and lost a fumble.

The first turnover ruined a potential scoring drive near the end of the first half and the latter miscue immediately preceded Jackson’s TD pass to Brown.

“When we got our opportunities, we had to score touchdowns,” coach Adam Gase said. “We just didn’t do it.”

Jackson broke Vick’s rushing mark on Baltimore’s opening possession while guiding the Ravens on an 84-yard march. The dual-threat quarterback ran three times for 27 yards and completed all three of his passes for 41 yards before Ingram ran in from the New York 6.

Jackson supplanted Vick into the record book with a 5-yard run from the Jets 11.

It was more of the same on Baltimore’s second drive. A 9-yard run by Ingram and a 25-yard impromptu jaunt out of the pocket by Jackson preceded a 5-yard touchdown pass to rookie Miles Boykin.

Darnold threw a 4-yard touchdown pass to get New York to 13-7 before the Ravens rolled to their third TD in three possessions. A 43-yard pass interference penalty against the Jets set up a 1-yard touchdown pass to Andrews, and Ingram tacked on a 2-point conversion.

INJURIES

Jets: WR Jeff Smith hurt his ankle. ... Before the game, New York placed TE Ryan Griffin (ankle) on IR. ... S Jamal Adams (ankle) and CB Brian Poole (concussion) were inactive.

Ravens: OT Ronnie Stanley (concussion) was inactive.

UP NEXT

Jets: Another game against an AFC North foe looms Sunday for New York at home against the Pittsburgh Steelers.

Ravens: The last team to beat Baltimore was the Browns, 40-25 on Sept. 29. 
By JIMMY GOLEN
AP Sports Writer
BOSTON (AP) — Joel Embiid answered the criticism from a couple of Hall of Famers in the most productive way possible. After Shaquille O’Neal and Charles Barkley said Embiid wasn’t playing up to his potential, the 76ers center conceded that they were probably right. Then he produced one of his best games of the year: a season-high 38 points along with 13 rebounds in a 115-109 victory over the Boston Celtics on Thursday night.

“All of the stuff he has been dealing with he handled like an adult, with humility. And he responded in a dramatic way,” Philadelphia coach Brett Brown said. “He was dominant, was a leader and one of his best games as a Sixer.”

Embiid scored 16 points in the final 15 seconds, helping Philadelphia leading by four in a nine-point deficit. With Philadelphia coach Brett Brown saying. “He was dominant, was a leader and one of his best games as a Sixer.”

Associated Press

Former NBA Commissioner Stern has emergency brain surgery

By BRIAN MAHONEY
AP Basketball Writer
NEW YORK (AP) — Former NBA Commissioner David Stern had emergency surgery after suffering a brain hemorrhage while having lunch not far from league headquarters.

The league had no update on his condition Friday. The 77-year-old Stern underwent the operation at Mount Sinai St. Luke’s Hospital after he was stricken at a midtown Manhattan restaurant.

Stern serves exactly 30 years as the NBA’s longest-tenured commissioner before Adam Silver succeeded him on Feb. 1, 2014.

By JIMMY GOLEN
AP Sports Writer
BOSTON (AP) — Joel Embiid has 38 points, 13 boards, Sixers beat Celtics 115-109

The league made the announcement about Stern in a statement, saying its thoughts were with him and his family. Stern has remained affiliated with the league, holding the title of commissioner emeritus. He has remained active in his other interests, such as sports technology.

The league was staging a regular-season game in Mexico City between Dallas and Detroit on Thursday night when it revealed the news about Stern. Support for Stern has come from across the game. Hall of Famer Magic Johnson tweeted that he and wife Cookie were praying “for my good friend who helped save my life.”

Johnson announced he was retiring because of the AIDS virus in 1991 but returned the following year at the All-Star Game with Stern’s backing. Johnson would later rejoin the league with Stern’s support, even while some players voiced concern about playing against him for health reasons.

Stern has stayed busy after leaving as commissioner, traveling overseas on the league’s behalf, doing public speaking and consulting. He was inducted to the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in 2014. Stern oversaw the addition of seven franchises and the creation of the WNBA and NBA Development League, now called the G League, which will have a franchise in Mexico starting with the 2020-21 season.

Former NBA Commissioner Stern has emergency brain surgery

In this Wednesday, May 15, 2013 file photo, NBA Commissioner David Stern takes a question from a reporter during a news conference following an NBA Board of Governors meeting in Dallas.
Ravens
Continued from Page 17

For the third time this season, Jackson threw five touchdown passes in a game, giving him team-record tying 33 on the season with just six interceptions. His snarky assessment after that first five-TD game still applies today: “Not bad for a running back.”

That, of course, was a not-so-subtle jab at those who believed Jackson would never pan out as an NFL quarterback, most famously voiced by former NFL executive Bill Polian, who said leading up to the 2018 draft that Jackson was better suited to play receiver. Others tabbed him as a future running back.

“Exceptional athlete, exceptional ability to make you miss, exceptional acceleration, exceptional instinct with the ball in his hand and that’s rare for wide receivers,” Polian said. “Clearly, clearly not the thrower that the other (top quarterback prospects) are. The accuracy isn’t there.”

Never mind that Jackson threw for more than 9,000 yards during his three seasons at Louisville, with 69 touchdowns and only 27 interceptions. Never mind that he ran for more than 4,000 yards and 50 TDs with the Cardinals. Never mind that he won the Heisman Trophy as a sophomore.

Now, that’s not to imply Polian and others were blinded by racism in their assessment of Jackson. Certainly, scouts and general managers have badly misjudged quarterbacks — white and black — over the years.

Joe Montana was a third-round pick who went on to capture four Super Bowl titles. Tom Brady lasted until the sixth round of the draft, and all he’s done is win a record six rings. But there is one big difference between Jackson and those underrated quarterbacks who came before him.

No one was calling on Montana or Brady to switch positions. They weren’t subjected to that most reliable of racist tropes: the black quarterback who is only successful because of his superior athletic skills, while white quarterbacks are lauded for their mental ability and work ethic.

Jackson undoubtedly faced that perception when he entered the draft after his junior season at Louisville.

Four quarterbacks — all of them white — went in the first 10 picks. Jackson lasted until the very last pick of the first round, No. 32 overall.

While the Ravens certainly deserve credit for trading up to get him, let’s not forget they already had made another pick in the opening round, selecting tight end Hayden Hurst at No. 25.

Hurst has made just four starts his first two years in the league. Jackson is already the face of the franchise — and, one could argue, the entire league. After blowing through the Jets, he hung around afterward to sign jerseys for three of their players, the ultimate sign of respect from an opponent.

“I’m enjoying it,” Jackson said. “I love the game. I’ve got a great group of guys and coaching staff with me. I couldn’t wish to be anywhere else.”

Let’s be clear: Times have certainly changed since NFL teams essentially refused to let a black man hold down the most prominent spot on the field.

In all likelihood, Jackson will become the third African-American quarterback to win the MVP award in the past five years, following Cam Newton and Patrick Mahomes. Last season, there were a record five black quarterbacks starting in the playoffs. This year, Kyler Murray was the No. 1 overall pick and became one of 10 African-Americans to start regularly for their teams.

For sure, the racial stereotype is on life support.

It’s past time to finish it off. Jackson is certainly doing his part. In addition to his stellar passing night against the Jets, he broke Michael Vick’s record for rushing yards in a season by a quarterback with 1,103.

That led to a marvelous on-field interview with Fox after the game, as Jackson stood alongside teammate Mark Ingram.

Cardinals release veteran linebacker Terrell Suggs

By DAVID BRANDT
AP Sports Writer

TEMPE, Ariz. (AP) — The Arizona Cardinals have released veteran linebacker Terrell Suggs with three games remaining in a disappointing season for both the player and the team.

The 37-year-old Suggs had some good moments for the Cardinals early in the year but his production diminished in recent weeks. He’s played in all 13 games and has 35 tackles, including eight for a loss and 5 1/2 sacks.

Suggs, who played in high school in the Phoenix area and in college at Arizona State, signed with the Cardinals during the offseason after playing 16 seasons with the Baltimore Ravens.

The Cardinals have lost six straight games and have a 3-9-1 record.

Cardinals coach Kliff Kingsbury said the decision to release Suggs was mutual between the player and organization and the Cardinals wanted him to have a chance to land with a team that’s in play-off contention. “There was disappointment that we didn’t win more games,” Kingsbury said Friday.

“As the season’s gone on, out of playoff contention, we wanted to see what we have with some younger players. We felt like it was the best move for both parties.”

The 6-foot-3, 265-pound Suggs is a seven-time Pro Bowl selection and two-time All-Pro.

“We have such great respect for him,” Kingsbury said.

“He was phenomenal in our building, work ethic, energy, the juice he brought every day, the professionalism was through the roof. We wanted to give him the opportunity to find a fit if it’s out there.”

“Kingsbury said the team wants to use some younger linebackers in the final three games, including Haason Reddick, who moved from inside to outside linebacker, where Suggs played.

The Cardinals host the Cleveland Browns on Sunday. 

In this Dec. 1, 2019 file photo, Arizona Cardinals outside linebacker Terrell Suggs (56) lines up against the Los Angeles Rams during the first half of an NFL football game in Glendale, Ariz. Associated Press
Olympic mile, 800-meter champion Peter Snell dead at 80

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — Three-time Olympic champion and world mile record-holder Peter Snell has died in Dallas. He was aged 80.

Snell, who is regarded as one of the greatest middle-distance runners, won the 800 meters at the 1960 Rome Olympics aged 21, and the 800-1,500 double at the 1964 Tokyo Games. He was the first man since 1920 to win the 800 and 1,500 at the same Olympics. No male athlete has done so since.

Snell also won two Commonwealth Games gold medals in the 880 yards and mile at Perth in 1962. He twice held the mile world record, and held world records in the 800 meters, 880 yards, 1,000 meters, and the 4x1-mile relay.

Snell’s death was confirmed by family friend and New Zealand sports historian Ron Palenski, who heads New Zealand’s Sport Hall of Fame.

“It is very sad news, a grievous loss for New Zealand,” Palenski said. “In terms of track and field, he is probably the greatest athlete New Zealand has had.”

Snell was coached by Arthur Lydiard, an innovator who was regarded as one of the world’s finest coaches of middle and long-distance athletes. Lydiard also coached Murray Halberg to win the 5,000 meters at Rome in 1960.

Snell was the best miler of his generation, at a time when the mile was the blue ribbon event of world athletics. He began immediately after Roger Bannister’s epoch-making sub-four-minute mile and while the glow of that achievement still suffused the sport, in his physique he was unlike milers of the time: Snell was strong and powerful — more like a 400-meter runner — and not like the mostly lithe athletes who vied for world supremacy over the mile.

His stride was so powerful he often scarred the tracks on which he ran, kicking up puffs of debris, especially on grass or cinder tracks. Lydiard’s training — based on massive mileage mostly on the road rather than the track — gave him enormous stamina but he also had unusual speed.

Snell’s friend and training partner, Olympic marathon bronze medalist Barry Magee said “there will never be another New Zealand athlete like him.”

“He won three Olympic gold medals, two Commonwealth Games gold medals, and broke seven world records. He was the best-conditioned athlete of his time.”

Snell’s wife, Miki, said he died suddenly at his home in Dallas around noon on Thursday. He had been suffering from a heart ailment and required a pacemaker for several years.

Snell’s athletics career was relatively short. He retired in 1965 to pursue educational opportunities in the United States.

Snell graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in human performance from the University of California, Davis, and later with a Ph.D. in exercise physiology from Washington State University.

He became a research fellow at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center in 1981, later becoming director of the university’s Human Performance Center.

Snell was knighted by New Zealand in 2009. A statue in his honor stands at Cooks Gardens, Whanganui, near his birthplace of Opunake, where he broke the mile world record for the first time in 1962.
Norway’s Telenor drops Huawei for Ericsson in 5G contract

By KELVIN CHAN
AP Business Writer

LONDON (AP) — Norway’s biggest wireless carrier, Telenor, on Friday chose Sweden’s Ericsson to supply part of its new 5G network, ending its cooperation with Chinese tech giant Huawei after a decade.

The company signaled it would gradually remove Huawei equipment as it upgrades radio gear for the next generation of mobile networks, in a move likely to please the U.S., which has been lobbying European allies to sideline the Chinese company over cyberespionage concerns.

The company “carried out an extensive security evaluation” in its selection process, alongside considering factors such as technical quality, commercial terms and the ability to innovate and modernize, Telenor Group CEO Sigve Brekke said.

“Based on the comprehensive and holistic evaluation, we have decided to introduce a new partner for this important technology shift in Norway,” Brekke said.

Telenor, which is moving away from Huawei a decade after they started collaborating, said it will continue to use its existing equipment from the Chinese company as it transitions to the new network over the next four to five years. It has already chosen Ericsson and Finland’s Nokia to build the 5G network’s core.

Telenor has mobile operations in Nordic countries but also in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Thailand, Malaysia and Myanmar. Huawei declined to comment. Ericsson did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

European mobile phone companies are facing tough business decisions as they find themselves caught in the middle of a geopolitical battle over Huawei.

Wireless companies often prefer Huawei because of its reputation for cheap, reliable gear but U.S. officials are warning allies that the company can be used to facilitate spying by China’s communist leaders - allegations the company has consistently denied.

Superfast 5G networks and the new innovations they promise to bring, such as telemedicine and automated factories, will run heavily on software in the network “core,” which the U.S. says exposes them to greater security vulnerabilities.

In a win for Huawei, German carrier Telefonica Deutschland said this week that it chose Huawei and Finland’s Nokia to jointly supply equipment for the less-sensitive 5G radio network, with a decision on suppliers for the core due next year.

Telefonica Deutschland, Germany’s No. 2 wireless carrier, made its decision even though the government may tighten up 5G security guidelines.

The company added a caveat that Huawei’s participation was “subject to the successful safety certification of the technology and the companies in accordance with German legal provisions.”

Twitter brings back election labels for 2020 U.S. candidates

By BARBARA ORTUTAY
AP Technology Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Twitter is bringing back special labels to help users identify accounts and tweets from U.S. political candidates.

The company, which first used such labels for the midterm elections last year, said it is trying to provide users with original sources of information and prevent spoofed and fake accounts from fooling voters.

Many political candidates already have blue check marks to indicate that Twitter has confirmed that they are who they say they are.

The election labels go further and provide details such as what office a person is running for and where.

They will also carry a small ballot box icon. The labels will appear on candidates’ accounts and tweets, even if they are retweeted by someone else.

Twitter hopes its efforts will help people know when candidates are behind the words attributed to them.

Twitter, along with Facebook and other social media companies, has been under heavy scrutiny for allowing their services to be misused by malicious individuals and groups trying to influence elections around the world.

Facebook also verifies accounts for public figures and celebrities, while YouTube verifies official channels.

But they don’t go as far as adding election labels. Labels will be used only for general election candidates and will start appearing once candidates have won their parties’ primaries or have otherwise qualified for the general election ballot.

Twitter said it will apply the labels in House, Senate and gubernatorial races. Presidential candidates are not included in Twitter’s new policies.

The 2020 presidential candidates are already all verified and Twitter says if more join the race, they will get verified too.

The company says it won’t apply election labels to presidential candidates but may do so down the road.

Major presidential candidates already have blue check marks to indicate that Twitter has confirmed the accounts are legitimate.

Many candidates for House, Senate and gubernatorial races have them as well.

Twitter said Thursday it will verify additional accounts, even if candidates do not seek them, by working with the nonprofit, nonpartisan Ballotpedia.

Twitter said the verifications will happen on a rolling basis as candidates qualify for next year’s primaries.
Pound jumps on expected Tory win; trade talk lifts shares

By ELAINE KURTENBACH
Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — The British pound surged early Friday as exit polls indicated a resounding election victory for Prime Minister Boris Johnson’s Conservative Party, as talk of a China-U.S. trade deal buoyed share prices in Asia.

The British pound strengthened to $1.3468 from $1.3385 late Thursday as projections showed the conservatives likely to win a solid majority of seats in Parliament. That would alleviate uncertainty by giving Johnson more political capital to push for the United Kingdom’s departure from the 28-nation European Union by the end of January, according to a research note by Evercore analysts.

“This is the most positive near term outcome for markets,” Evercore analyst Krishna Guha wrote.

In Asia, Japan’s Nikkei 225 index jumped 2.5% to 24,758.56 and Hong Kong’s Hang Seng surged 2% to 27,542.92. The Shanghai Composite index added 1.2% to 2,951.73 and South Korea’s Kospi climbed 1.4% to 2,167.25. That followed new record highs for the S&P 500 and Nasdaq on Thursday after President Donald Trump said the U.S. was getting close to a “big deal” with China. Traders were also encouraged by a Wall Street Journal report saying Washington has offered to slash existing tariffs and cancel new ones set to kick in Sunday in exchange for more agricultural purchases and intellectual property protection.

“If we do see the tariffs removed, that’s saying, ‘OK, China must be agreeing to things or we must be right there,’” said Ben Phillips, chief investment officer at EventShares. “That’s why the market is looking at tariffs as the bellwether to a trade deal.”

Markets have been quick to react to headlines and remarks out of the Trump administration about the 16-month trade war.

The S&P 500 climbed 0.9% to 3,168.57 and is up about 0.5% from its last all-time closing high on Nov. 27. The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 0.8% to 28,132.05, while the Nasdaq gained 0.7% to 8,717.32.

T-Mobile CEO says if Sprint deal fails, prices may go up

By TALI ARBEL
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — T-Mobile CEO John Legere said if his company’s $26.5 billion deal to buy Sprint fails, it may have to raise prices to slow user growth and relieve stress on the T-Mobile network. He said that would be the “worst nightmare.”

Legere’s testimony came on the fourth day of a high-profile antitrust trial. Fourteen state attorneys general are suing to block the combination of T-Mobile and Sprint saying the deal would cost consumers billions.

The trial with the states is the most high-profile antitrust case in years and is considered a major hurdle for T-Mobile and Sprint. They have already cleared the merger. The Justice Department approved it after T-Mobile and Sprint agreed to set up satellite TV provider Dish as a new wireless competitor. The states say that’s not enough.

Legere’s testimony regarding T-Mobile’s potential pricing strategy Thursday stemmed from a September 2019 T-Mobile document that made projections about T-Mobile’s future as a standalone company in 2020.

A lawyer for the states, Glenn Pomerantz, laid out evidence that T-Mobile had options beyond acquiring Sprint that would let it obtain more spectrum, the airwaves that signals travel over and the lifeblood of a wireless network. Adding spectrum would shore up the network from the strain of its growing user base watching Netflix and uploading cat videos to Instagram.

Pomerantz presented an email Legere sent in June 2015 saying that a potential acquisition of Dish “super-charges” T-Mobile, the same language T-Mobile has used to describe its Sprint deal. Dish, like Sprint, has lots of spectrum, having spent $21 billion buying it. Legere said he liked the possibilities of that deal but that T-Mobile wasn’t able to complete it.

In this Dec. 5, 2019, file photo, trader Gregory Rowe, left, and specialist Michael Pisillo work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange.

In this Dec. 5, 2019, file photo, trader Gregory Rowe, left, and specialist Michael Pisillo work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange.

This combination of April 30, 2018, file photos shows signage for a Sprint store in New York’s Herald Square, top, and signage at a T-Mobile store in New York.
COMICS

Saturday 14 December 2019

Mutts

NO TWO SNOWFLAKES ARE THE SAME.

PROVE IT.

6 Chix

Do you see true love in my future?

Yes, eventually!

Plus you gotta have a bunch of twigs before you find it!

12/14

Blondie

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO GET RIGHT IN A CHRISTMAS CARD?

WHY ARE THERE NO PICTURES OF US?

HEY, OWN, I’M STILL WORKING ON IT.

Merry Christmas from Sunnies!

Mother Goose & Grimm

GRIMM, YOU STAINED THE RUG? I’M PUTTING YOU IN HOUSE ARREST!

Baby Blues

MOM, CAN WE HAVE PIZZA FOR DINNER?

SURE!

YAY!

WOW, I’M ON RECHARGE MODE!

Zits

MOM, I WAS HUNGRY FOR DINNER.

SORRY.

JEKENG, DID YOU CRACK YOUR PHONE AGAIN?

MOM, I KNOWN.

Conceptis Sudoku

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday’s puzzle answer

Blondie

6 Chix

Mother Goose & Grimm

Baby Blues

Zits
By MANUEL RUEDA
Associated Press
BOGOTA, Colombia (AP) — A famous Belgian carni-
val was removed from the
U.N.’s cultural heritage list
on Friday following com-
plaints that its most recent
dition contained blatant
displays of anti-Semitism.
The Aalst carnival was tak-
en off UNESCO’s Intangible
Cultural Heritage list dur-
ing a meeting in Colombia’s
capital city, becoming the
first cultural tradition strick-
en from the U.N.’s global
inventory of cultural prac-
tices.

The festival was criticized by
anti-discrimination groups af-
after this year’s edi-
tion included a float de-
picting Jews with sidecurls
and oversized noses atop
piles of money. A docu-
ment filed by UNESCO’s
secretariat said the event
go against the organiza-
tion’s principles, including
a clause stating that cul-
tural expressions included
in the list should foster re-
spect among communi-
ties.

“They can continue to do
the festival. We are not op-
posing that,” said Ernesto
Ottone, UNESCO’s assis-
tant director-general for
culture. “What we don’t
want is the brand of UNES-
CO on a festival that for
(some) may be humor, but
for us is mockery of some
communities.”

Belgium’s government re-
quested that the carnival
to be taken off the UNES-
CO list following several complaints by groups that
the event was permissive
of displays of anti-Semitism. Ottone said that town of-
ficials were warned several
times about anti-Semitic
symbolism in previous ver-
sions of the carnival but
failed to take actions that
would “draw a line” on
what kind of floats and dis-
plays were acceptable.

In an interview with the
Associated Press earlier this
month, Aalst Mayor Chris-
toph D’Haese said that the
town was fed up with “gro-
tesque complaints” over
the carnival. D’Haese add-
ed that it was not his job to
police humor.

“We are on a very danger-
ous slippery slope when
people will be able to de-
cide what can be laughed
at,” he said.

In this Sunday, Feb. 10, 2013 file photo, people celebrate
carnival during the yearly procession in Aalst, Belgium. Associated Press
Breast cancer risk from menopause hormones may last decades

By MARILYNN MARCHIONE
AP Chief Medical Writer
SAN ANTONIO (AP) —

Women who use certain types of hormones after menopause still have an increased risk of developing breast cancer nearly two decades after they stop taking the pills, long-term results from a big federal study suggest.

Although the risk is very small, doctors say a new generation of women entering menopause now may not be aware of landmark findings from 2002 that tied higher breast cancer rates to hormone pills combining estrogen and progestin.

“The message is probably not clear” that even short-term use may have lasting effects, said Dr. Rowan Chlebowski of Harbor-UCLA Medical Center in Torrance, Calif. He discussed the new results Friday at the San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium.

The results are from the Women’s Health Initiative, a federally funded study that tested pills that doctors long thought would help prevent heart disease, bone loss and other problems in women after menopause. More than 16,000 women ages 50 to 70 were given combination hormone or dummy pills for five to six years. The main part of the study was stopped in 2002 when researchers surprisingly saw more heart problems and breast cancers among hormone users. Women were advised to stop treatment but doctors have continued to study them and have information on about two-thirds.

With roughly 19 years of follow-up, 572 breast cancers have occurred in women on hormones versus 431 among those on dummy pills. That worked out to a 29% greater risk of developing the disease for hormone takers.

Still, it was a difference of just 141 cases over many years, so women with severe hot flashes and other menopause symptoms may decide that the benefits of the pills outweigh their risks, doctors say. The advice remains to use the lowest possible dose for the shortest time.

Why might hormones raise breast risk?

“The hormones are stimulating the cells to grow” and it can take many years for a tumor to form and be detected, said Dr. C. Kent Osborne, a Baylor College of Medicine breast cancer expert.

Women are prescribed hormones in combination because taking estrogen alone raises the risk of uterine cancer. However, one-quarter of women over 50 no longer have a uterus and can take estrogen alone for menopause symptoms.

So the same study tested estrogen alone versus dummy pills in more than 10,000 such women, and the conclusion was opposite what was seen with combination hormones. Women on estrogen alone for seven years had a 23% lower risk of developing breast cancer up to 19 years later. There were 231 cases among them versus 289 in the placebo group.

These results contradict what some observational studies have found, though, and doctors do not recommend any hormone use to try to prevent disease because of the murky picture of risks and benefits.

The federal study only tested hormone pills; getting hormones through a patch or a vaginal ring may not carry the same risks or benefits.

Boeing’s crew capsule declared ready for 1st space flight

By MARCIA DUNN
AP Aerospace Writer
CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — Boeing’s Starliner crew capsule finally has a launch date for its first test flight to the International Space Station.

After an intensive review Thursday, NASA and Boeing managers agreed to a Dec. 20 liftoff. “Hopefully, we should all be getting an early Christmas present this year,” said Phil McAlister, director of NASA’s commercial spaceflight development.

Just a few technical issues remain to be completed, he noted.

No one will be aboard, just a mannequin named Rosie. Three astronauts will strap in for the second test flight of a Starliner sometime next year.

SpaceX also plans to launch astronauts for NASA next year. The company conducted a test flight without a crew back in March.

NASA turned to the two private companies in 2014 to ferry astronauts to and from the space station. Whether Boeing or SpaceX, it will be the first time U.S. astronauts rocket to orbit from home soil in nearly nine years.

The longer-than-anticipated hiatus stretches back to NASA’s last space shuttle flight in July 2011. NASA astronauts have been stuck riding Russian rockets in the interim.

United Launch Alliance’s Atlas V rocket will provide the Starliner’s lift from Cape Canaveral, a little before sunrise. The capsule will parachute into New Mexico on Dec. 28 to close out the flight.

In this May 6, 2010 file photo, a radiologist checks mammograms in Los Angeles.

In this Wednesday,Dec. 4, 2019 file photo, a Boeing Starliner spacecraft sits on a United Launch Alliance Atlas 5 rocket at Launch Complex 41 at the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Cape Canaveral, Fla.

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Associated Press
The closing decade was an ever-shifting parade of fashion

By LEANNE ITALIE
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Lady Gaga wore meat and Rihanna went naked, practically. Kate Middleton delivered royal wedding opulence and Billy Porter went viral in a tuxedo gown. There was the much-coveted Olivia Pope white coat, Lupita Nyong’o’s perfect powder blue Oscar gown and Karl Lagerfeld’s embrace of athleisure.

The closing decade was ever-shifting in fashion. The most special moments among fashion editors had Rihanna and Beyoncé top of mind as trendsetters, along with the Duchess of Cambridge, the Duchess of Sussex, Meghan Markle, and former first lady Michelle Obama.

Rachel Torgerson, senior fashion editor at Cosmopolitan, said it might seem easy to trace the decade of 2010 to 2020 fashion-wise. Lady Gaga’s raw meat dress in 2010 at the MTV Video Music Awards was a much talked about exception.

“More definitive moments came before — the grunge ’90s, the Paris Hilton-drenched early aughts,” Torgerson said. “But the truth is there were some majorly iconic sartorial in-between that changed us forever during this time.”

We’ll start with Rihanna.

“My jaw dropped to the floor when Rihanna sparkled onto the stage in an Adam Selman Swarovski crystal ‘naked dress’ to receive her CFDA style icon award,” said Joyann King, executive editorial director for Harper’s Bazaar.com. “It was as beautiful as it was dynamic and powerful,” People & Arts.

As style icons go, few had as much impact as Obama, who caused dresses and other attires to sell out simply by putting them on and was a big booster of both pansexual and diverse designers. Her choices often made headlines.

Lindsay Peoples Wagner, editor in chief of Teen Vogue, noted a particular Obama moment, this one by designer Tracy Reese, a rare African American woman among top designers. It was the pink sleeveless dress with specks of gold brocade that Obama wore for her speech at the Democratic National Convention in 2012.

“It was a historic moment of two iconic women coming together,” Peoples Wagner said. “I can still remember how the dress shimmered as she walked on that stage.”

Like Obama, Beyoncé served a heaping plate of style throughout the decade. There was her larger-than-life black hat and layered necklaces of Swarovski crystals, leather and gems in “Formation,” from her groundbreaking “Lemonade” visual album. For her September 2018 Vogue cover, she was photographed by Tyler Mitchell in a huge floral headdress by Phil John Perry for Rebel Rebel. It was stunning and also historic: Mitchell became the first black photographer to shoot a cover for the magazine. “The photos were so dynamic and powerful,” People & Arts.

This combination photo shows, Lupita Nyong’o at the Oscars, singer Lady Gaga wearing at the MTV Video Music Awards, Michelle Obama at the Democratic National Convention in Charlotte, Meghan Markle at St George’s Chapel at Windsor Castle and Rihanna at the 2014 CFDA Fashion Awards in New York on June 2, 2014. Associated Press

Rachel Torgerson, senior fashion editor for Glamour. “Both Kate and Cara changed the dynamic and powerful,” People & Arts.

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“Do all lovers feel they’re inventing something?” asks Heloise, a young woman experiencing romantic passion for the first time. It’s a beautiful line, but it’s also emblematic of the spirit of “Portrait of a Lady on Fire,” a film in which everything feels stunningly fresh, raw and new. And it’s all happening in the 18th century, to boot.

French director Celine Sciamma, known for far more gritty and contemporary films, has found a way to make a period film that feels so vital, at moments it seems it could spontaneously combust. Which is exactly what happens to Heloise’s dress at one point, a captivating and disturbing image that explains the title of this film. “Portrait of a Lady on Fire” is a story of unexpected passion between two women. But it’s more than that: the film explores this forbidden love against a larger backdrop of the possibilities for female self-fulfillment in the late 1700s, through the story of a young artist, Marianne.

Female artists of the time, Sciamma has explained, produced work that hangs in museums around the world — and yet the outside world knows very little about them. Sciamma, who won the best screenplay award for this film at Cannes, seeks to honor these forgotten women. It’s Marianne (a vibrant Noemie Merlant) that we meet first, the only woman traveling in a boatful of wordless sailors (virtually the only men who appear in the film.) When the wooden crate carrying her blank canvases falls into the ocean, she dives recklessly into the waves to retrieve it. Her canvases are her life.

Marianne arrives on a rocky beach (the craggy coast of Brittany, its wild beauty wonderfully captured here) and climbs a cliff to an isolated chateau.

Associated Press

Post offices to be named for Marilyn Monroe, Ritchie Valens

In this Sept. 9, 1954 file photo, Marilyn Monroe poses over the updraft of a New York subway grate while filming “The Seven Year Itch” New York.

Associated Press

News reported Thursday that the Van Nuys Civic Center postal depot will be renamed the Marilyn Monroe Post Office. The Pacoima post office will be named the Ritchie Valens Post Office Building. Democratic Rep. Tony Cardenas introduced the resolutions to rename the two facilities.

Monroe was raised in Van Nuys, attended Van Nuys High School and was discovered while she was working at Van Nuys Airport during World War II. She starred in films like “Some Like it Hot,” and “The Seven-Year Itch.” Monroe, whose real name was Norma Jean Baker, was 36 years old when she died of a drug overdose in 1962.

Valens attended San Fernando High School and was discovered in 1958 at the American Legion hall in Pacoima. His hits included “La Bamba,” an adaptation of a Mexican folk song. A film about his life with the same title was released in 1987.

Valens was 17 years old when he died in a plane crash in Iowa with two other rock stars in 1959.
Blue-collar character actor Danny Aiello has died at age 86

By MARK KENNEDY
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Danny Aiello, the blue-collar character actor whose long career playing tough guys included roles in “Fort Apache, the Bronx,” “Moonstruck” and “Once Upon a Time in America,” has died. He was 86.

Aiello (pronounced eye-YEL-o) died Thursday night after a brief illness, said his publicist, Tracey Miller, who runs Tracey Miller & Associates. "The family asks for privacy at this time," she said in a statement.

In a tweet, Cher mourned Aiello as a pizzeria operator in Spike Lee’s “Do the Right Thing” and the movie titled "Moonstruck." "Aiello rose to become president of the transit union. "I wanted to become a politician," he told a reporter in 1995.

Danny Aiello has died at age 86.

**Associated Press**

In this Friday, Oct. 7, 2011, file photo, actor Danny Aiello smiles while being photographed in New York.

### Grammar-winner Anderson .Paak supports hometown arts center

VENTURA, Calif. (AP) — Rapper and singer Anderson .Paak is lending his support to an arts center facing closure in his Southern California hometown of Oxnard. The Grammy-winner visited the Oxnard Performing Arts and Convention Center and urged his fans to donate to keep the city-owned facility open, the Ventura County Star reported Wednesday. His Brandon Anderson Foundation said donated money would be set aside for the center, but .Paak himself made no financial commitment. The 33-year-old said he wants to house his foundation at the center to create a space where people could record music, rehearse plays and have boxing matches.

"I want this to be a hub for creativity," .Paak said. "The city deserves it.

.Paak, an eclectic musician who blends funk, hip-hop and R&B, named his 2018 album "Oxnard." The performing arts center used to receive an annual $1 million subsidy from the city before officials announced it would shut down at the end of the year. Center board members said they are meeting with the city manager about the future, but the facility is not on the Tuesday agenda for the final City Council meeting of the year, the newspaper said.

**Associated Press**

In this Dec. 4, 2019 file photo, Anderson .Paak arrives at the world premiere of "Spies in Disguise" at the El Capitan Theatre in Los Angeles.
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