

WORLD IN BRIEF

FAA: Increase in sick leave causing flight delays

NEW YORK — The Federal Aviation Administration reported delays in air travel today because of a “slight increase in sick leave” at two East Coast air traffic control facilities.

The delays come as a partial government shutdown threatens to undermine the nation’s air travel system. Air traffic controllers and airport security agents have been working without pay since the federal shutdown began in December, but high absentee rates raise the possibility of long airport lines, or even worse.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo wrote a letter to Trump today saying the shutdown is impacting safety and security at airports and putting travelers at risk.

FAA spokesman Gregory Martin said the agency has augmented staffing, rerouted traffic and increased spacing between planes as needed.

The staffing problems were at air traffic centers in Jacksonville, Florida and a Washington D.C. center that controls high-altitude air traffic over seven states.

Both parties feel urgency after Senate fails to end shutdown

WASHINGTON — Republican and Democratic leaders hunted today for a way to halt the 35-day partial government shutdown, but remained at odds over President Donald Trump’s demand that any compromise include money for his coveted border wall.

Senators were talking with increased urgency



Roger Stone speaks in December in Washington.

AP Photo/Jose Luis Magana

Trump confidant Stone arrested, faces obstruction charge

WASHINGTON — Authorities arrested Roger Stone, a confidant of President Donald Trump, before dawn today in a criminal case that revealed that senior members of the Trump campaign sought to benefit from the release of hacked emails damaging to Hillary Clinton.

The seven-count indictment against Stone, a self-proclaimed “dirty trickster” with a long history with Trump, is the first criminal case in months from special counsel Robert Mueller. Stone appeared at court in shackles later in the morning and was released on a \$250,000 bond. He did not enter a plea.

The indictment provides the most detail to date about how Trump campaign associates in the summer of 2016 actively sought the disclosure of emails the U.S. says were hacked by Russia, then provided to the anti-secrecy website WikiLeaks. It alleges that unidentified senior Trump campaign officials contacted Stone to ask when stolen emails relating to Clinton might be disclosed.

The indictment does not charge Stone with conspiring with WikiLeaks or with the Russian officers Mueller says hacked the emails. Instead it mirrors other Mueller cases

in alleging cover-ups and deception, accusing Stone of lying to Congress about WikiLeaks, tampering with witnesses and obstructing the probe into whether the Trump campaign coordinated with Kremlin to tip the election.

Some of those false statements were made to the House intelligence committee, prosecutors allege.

The criminal case brings Mueller’s investigation into the president’s inner circle, but it does not accuse the president of any wrongdoing or reveal whether he had advance knowledge of the WikiLeaks trove.

plan, even though Republicans control the chamber 53-47. Six Republicans backed the Democratic plan, including freshman Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah, who’s clashed periodically with the president.

Deep freeze grips Upper Midwest, more bitter cold is expected

BISMARCK, N.D. — An arctic wave has wrapped parts of the Midwest in numbing cold, sending temperatures plunging and prompting officials to close schools today, but forecasters say the worst may be yet to come.

Cold weather advisories were in effect from North Dakota to Ohio, with dangerously cold wind chills that could dip to as low as 45 below zero in northern Wisconsin and Minnesota and to 35 below in parts of northern Illinois and Iowa.

The bitter cold caused administrators in Wisconsin’s largest school district to cancel classes, meaning nearly 78,000 students in Milwaukee Public Schools were told to stay home today. High temperatures in the area were expected to reach just 2 degrees with a wind chill of minus 23.

The wind chill, which describes the effect of wind and cold temperatures on exposed skin, is of more concern because frostbite can occur within minutes. Schools also closed because of the cold in western Michigan, northern Illinois and other parts of Wisconsin.

Even harsher weather is expected next week. Bitter cold as bad — if not worse — than the 2014 polar vortex outbreak is expected, as frigid air escapes the Arctic in two icy excursions into Canada and the continental U.S.

after Thursday’s defeat of competing proposals from Trump and the Democrats. The bipartisan talks provided a glimmer of hope that some agreement could be reached to temporarily

halt the longest-ever closure of federal agencies.

Pressure is building among both parties to reopen agencies immediately and pay hundreds of thousands of beleaguered

federal workers while bargainers hunt for a deal.

But the idea has not been endorsed by Trump, who says any short-term deal must include a large down-payment for a bor-

der wall — an idea Pelosi and Schumer immediately rejected.

In an embarrassment to Trump, the Democratic proposal got two more votes Thursday than the GOP

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