

WORLD IN BRIEF

Associated Press

Sanders says he's running for president in 2020

WASHINGTON — Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, whose insurgent 2016 presidential campaign reshaped Democratic politics, announced today that he is running for president in 2020.

"Our campaign is not only about defeating Donald Trump," the 77-year-old self-described democratic socialist said in an email to supporters. "Our campaign is about transforming our country and creating a government based on the principles of economic, social, racial and environmental justice."

An enthusiastic progressive who embraces proposals ranging from Medicare for All to free college tuition, Sanders stunned the Democratic establishment in 2016 with his spirited challenge to Hillary Clinton. While she ultimately became the party's nominee, his campaign helped lay the groundwork for the leftward lurch that has dominated Democratic politics in the Trump era.

The question now for Sanders is whether he can stand out in a crowded field of Democratic presidential candidates who also embrace many of his policy ideas and are newer to the national political stage. That's far different from 2016, when he was Clinton's lone progressive adversary.

Still, there is no question that Sanders will be a formidable contender for the Democratic nomination. He won more than 13 million votes in 2016 and dozens of primaries and caucuses. He opens his campaign with a nationwide organization and a proven small-dollar fundraising effort.

Islamic State extremists still holding Syrian civilians

AL-OMAR OIL FIELD BASE, Syria — A spokesman for a U.S.-backed Syrian force fighting the Islamic State said today a military operation aimed at ousting the extremists from their last remaining area in eastern Syria will commence after separating or evacuating civilians holed up with them.

Mustafa Bali said if the remaining militants — estimated to be around 300 — surrendered, there would be no need for a fight.

The comments came as a Kurdish official and a Syria war monitor said that dozens of trucks arrived at the outskirts of the tiny enclave held by IS to bring out civilians remaining inside, believed to be in the hundreds.

Michel Bachelet, the U.N.'s human rights chief, said she is concerned about the condition of the some 200 families trapped in the last remaining area held by IS. The extremists are actively preventing civilians, including women and children, from leaving the area near the border with Iraq.



AP Photo/Andrew Harnik

Sen. Bernie Sanders speaks at a news conference last month on Capitol Hill in Washington.

The International Rescue Committee said Monday that more than 60 people have died in recent weeks after making their way out of the tiny area controlled by IS, most of them from exhaustion and malnutrition. They either died along the way or soon after arriving at a massive camp in northern Syria that is hosting those fleeing and evacuating the area in eastern Deir el-Zour province.

Report: White House pushed Saudi nuclear power plan

WASHINGTON — Senior White House officials pushed a project to share nuclear power technology with Saudi Arabia despite the objections of ethics and national security officials, according to a new congressional report citing whistleblowers within the administration.

Lawmakers from both parties have expressed concerns that Saudi Arabia could develop nuclear weapons if the U.S. technology were transferred without proper safeguards.

The Democratic-led House oversight committee opened an investigation today into the claims by several unnamed whistleblowers who said they witnessed "abnormal acts" in the White House regarding the proposal to build dozens of nuclear reactors across the Middle Eastern kingdom.

The report raises concerns about whether some in a White House marked by "chaos, dysfunction, and backbiting" sought to cir-

cumvent established national security procedures regarding nuclear power technology. It also comes as Trump son-in-law and senior adviser Jared Kushner is developing a Middle East peace plan that could include economic proposals for Saudi Arabia.

According to the report, the effort was pushed by former national security adviser Michael Flynn, who was fired in early 2017. NSC and ethics officials repeatedly warned that the actions of Flynn and one of his senior aides could run afoul of federal conflicts of interest law and statutes governing the transfer of nuclear technology to foreign powers.

Judge orders Stone to court over Instagram post

WASHINGTON — A federal judge today ordered Roger Stone to appear in court to consider whether to revoke his bail after the longtime Donald Trump confidant posted a photo on Instagram of the judge with what appeared to be crosshairs of a gun.

U.S. District Judge Amy Berman Jackson said Stone must show for a hearing Thursday afternoon and prove why she shouldn't modify or revoke his bail or implement a full gag order in his case.

On Monday, Stone posted a photo of Jackson with what appeared to be crosshairs near her head. Later in the day, Stone and his attorneys filed a notice with the court that they recognized the "photograph and com-

ment today was improper and should not have been posted."

Stone said the photo was "misinterpreted" and that it was "a random photo taken from the Internet." He dismissed any suggestion that he was trying to threaten the judge as "categorically false."

The political operative and self-described dirty trickster has pleaded not guilty to charges he lied to Congress, engaged in witness tampering and obstructed a congressional investigation into possible coordination between Russia and Trump's 2016 presidential campaign.

Strike 2: West Virginia teachers walk out again

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — Nearly a year to the day after West Virginia teachers went on a strike that launched a national "Red4Ed" movement, they're doing it again.

Teachers and school support workers lined streets outside schools with picket signs and packed the state Capitol for the first day of a walkout today over complicated education legislation that they view as lacking their input and as retaliation for last year's strike.

How long this one goes on will be a day-to-day decision, leaders of three unions for teachers and school service workers said at a news conference Monday.

The 2018 walkout was followed by strikes in Kentucky, Oklahoma, Arizona, Washington state, and more recently, Los Angeles and Denver. Teachers in Oakland, California, have authorized a strike starting Thursday.

Nearly all of West Virginia's 55 counties called off public school classes today.

3 children among 4 found dead after west Michigan shooting

OLON TOWNSHIP, Mich. — Three children and a woman were found dead of apparent gunshot wounds at a home in western Michigan.

Kent County Sheriff Michelle LaJoye-Young says authorities responded Monday to a property near Cedar Springs, a community about 30 miles north of Grand Rapids. Someone discovered the bodies and called 911.

The three children were elementary school-aged and younger, LaJoye-Young said. Authorities are still confirming the victims' identities.

LaJoye-Young called the scene "a horrific thing to be called to" and said "my heart goes out to the families involved here and the community."

Authorities don't believe there is a shooter at large.

CLASSIFIEDS

NOTICES

- Special Notices.....104
- Public Notices.....107
- Announcements.....110

PERSONALS

- Lost & Found.....181
- Personals.....184
- Fund-raisers.....188

AUTOMOTIVE

- Antiques/Classic Vehicles.....201
- Automobiles.....204
- SUVs/Trucks.....207-210
- 4WD.....213
- Vans.....216
- ATVs/Motorcycles.....219
- Truck/Auto Parts.....222
- Detailing.....225
- Tires & Wheels.....228

MARINE

- Boats for Sale.....251
- Boating Parts & Accessories.....254
- Boats Wanted.....257
- Boat Trailers.....260
- Marine Supplies & Equip.....266
- Boat/RV Storage.....269

RVs & Trailers

- RVs & Travel Trailers.....301-307
- Campers, Utility Trailers.....310-313

REAL ESTATE

- Open Houses.....501
- For Sale.....504-513
- Lots & Acreage.....516
- Income Property.....519
- Manufactured Homes.....522
- Commercial Property.....525
- Real Estate Wanted.....531

RENTALS

- Properties for Rent.....601-613
- Rooms & Roommates.....616
- Commercial Rental.....619
- Vacation Rentals.....622
- Storage Space.....628
- Wanted to Rent.....634
- RV/Mobile Home Space.....637

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

- Business Opportunities.....643
- Business for Sale.....644

HELP WANTED

- Help Wanted.....651
- Work Wanted.....652

SERVICES

- Childcare/Adult Care.....661
- Services.....664

PETS/LIVESTOCK

- Animal Boarding.....701
- Feed-Hay-Grain.....704
- Pets & Supplies.....710
- Horses & Tack.....713

MISCELLANEOUS

- Fuel, Heating & Firewood.....807
- Furniture & HH Goods.....810
- TV & Electronics.....811
- Antiques & Collectibles.....813
- Jewelry.....814
- Arts & Crafts.....816

APPLIANCES & EQUIP.

- Tools & Heavy Equipment.....851
- Lawn & Garden Equipment.....854
- Appliances.....860
- Medical Equip. & Supply.....866
- Farm Equipment.....923

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