

WORLD IN BRIEF

Associated Press

Feds: Coast Guard lieutenant compiled lengthy hit list of lawmakers

WASHINGTON — A Coast Guard lieutenant who was arrested last week is a “domestic terrorist” who drafted an email discussing biological attacks and had what appeared to be a hit list that included prominent Democrats and media figures, prosecutors said in court papers.

Christopher Paul Hasson is due to appear today in federal court in Maryland after his arrest on gun and drug offenses, but prosecutors say those charges are the “proverbial tip of the iceberg.”

“The defendant is a domestic terrorist, bent on committing acts dangerous to human life that are intended to affect governmental conduct,” prosecutors wrote in court papers.

Hasson, who works at the Coast Guard’s headquarters in Washington, has espoused extremist views for years, according to prosecutors. Court papers detail a June 2017 draft email in which Hasson wrote that he was “dreaming of a way to kill almost every last person on the earth,” and pondering how he might be able to acquire anthrax and toxins to create botulism or a deadly influenza.

In the same email, Hasson described an “interesting idea” that included “biological attacks followed by attack on food supply” as well as a bombing and sniper attacks, according to court documents filed by prosecutors.

Fire guts ancient part of Bangladesh’s capital, killing 81

DHAKA, Bangladesh — A devastating fire raced through densely packed buildings in a centuries-old shopping district in Bangladesh’s capital, killing at least 81 people, officials and witnesses said.

The fire in Dhaka’s Chawkbazar area was mostly under control after more than 10 hours of frantic firefighting efforts. Some of the about 50 people injured were critically burned.

The district dating to the Mughal era 400 years ago is crammed with buildings separated by narrow alleys, with residences commonly above shops, restaurants or warehouses on the ground floors. Denizens of the Muslim-majority nation throng to Chawkbazar each year for traditional goods to celebrate iftar, when the daily fast is broken during Ramadan.

“I was talking to a customer, suddenly he shouted at me: ‘Fire! Fire!’” said Javed Hossain, a survivor who came to assess the damage to his grocery store Thursday afternoon. “I said ‘Oh, Allah,’ in a fraction of a second the fire caught my shop.”

Hossain’s brother took his hand and they leaped onto the street before the shop was engulfed in flames.

Pope demands bishops act now to end scourge of sex abuse

VATICAN CITY — Pope Francis warned church leaders summoned today to a landmark sex abuse prevention summit that the Catholic faithful are demanding more than just condemnation of the crimes of priests but concrete action to respond to the scandal.

Francis opened the four-day summit by telling the Catholic hierarchy that their own responsibility to deal effectively with priests who rape and molest children weighed on the proceedings.

“Listen to the cry of the young, who want justice,” and seize the opportunity to



Evan Agostini/Invision

Jussie Smollett, a cast member in the TV series ‘Empire,’ attends the Fox Networks Group 2018 programming presentation afterparty in New York.

‘Empire’ actor goes from victim to accused felon in 3 weeks

CHICAGO — Chicago Police Superintendent Eddie Johnson says “Empire” actor Jussie Smollett “took advantage of the pain and anger of racism to promote his career.”

Johnson ended a news conference today about the charges against Smollett by saying justice would be for the 36-year-old actor to apologize, admit what he did and “then be man enough to offer what he should offer up in terms of all the resources that were put into this.”

Smollett surrendered today at central booking on a charge of felony disorder conduct.

Police say Smollett, who is black and gay, paid \$3,500 to two brothers who are also black to help him stage a racist and homophobic attack against him on Jan. 29.

Johnson says investigators think Smollett had hoped that the fake attack would be captured by one of the city’s many security cameras, but that didn’t happen. He says the camera at the location where the attack happened wasn’t pointed in that direction.

President Donald Trump tweeted to Smollett: “What about MAGA and the tens of millions of people you insulted with your racist and dangerous comments! #MAGA.”

“transform this evil into a chance for understanding and purification,” Francis told the 190 leaders of bishops conferences and religious orders.

“The holy people of God are watching and expect not just simple and obvious condemnations, but efficient and concrete measures to be established,” he warned.

More than 30 years after the scandal first erupted in Ireland and Australia and 20 years after it hit the U.S., bishops and Catholic officials in many parts of Europe,

Latin America, Africa and Asia still either deny that clergy sex abuse exists in their regions or downplay the problem.

Advocates say US still separates migrant families needlessly

HOUSTON — Months after the Trump administration announced an end to its widescale separation of

migrant parents and children, the policy remains a heated issue in the courts and at the border as critics contend the government is still needlessly breaking up immigrant families.

The Texas Civil Rights Project released a report today that counts 272 separations at a single Texas courthouse since June, when President Donald Trump issued an executive order ending widespread separations amid public outrage.

The bulk of those cases

involve children who cross the U.S.-Mexico border with relatives other than their parents, such as grandparents, uncles and aunts, or adult siblings.

Thirty-eight cases involved a parent or legal guardian, the majority of whom had criminal convictions, the group said.

In a statement, U.S. Customs and Border Protection argued the group incorrectly categorized cases involving other relatives because the Homeland Security Act “does not make concessions for anyone other than a parent or legal guardian.” CBP includes the Border Patrol, which apprehends people entering the U.S. illegally.

Democrats prepare resolution against Trump’s declaration

WASHINGTON — House Democrats will file a resolution Friday aimed at blocking the national emergency declaration that President Donald Trump has issued to help finance his wall along the Southwest border, teeing up a clash over billions of dollars, immigration policy and the Constitution’s separation of powers.

Though the effort seems almost certain to ultimately fall short — perhaps to a Trump veto — the votes will let Democrats take a defiant stance against Trump that is sure to please liberal voters. They will also put some Republicans from swing districts and states in a difficult spot.

Formally introducing the measure sets up a vote by the full House likely by mid-March, perhaps as soon as next week, because of a timeline spelled out by law. Initial passage by the Democratic-run House seems assured.

The measure would then move to the Republican-controlled Senate, where there

may be enough GOP defections for approval. The law that spells out the rules for emergency declarations seems to require the Senate to address the issue too, but there’s never been a congressional effort to block one and some procedural uncertainties remain.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., seemed to predict approval, telling colleagues in a letter that her chamber will “move swiftly” to pass it and “the resolution will be referred to the Senate and then sent to the President’s desk.”

Trump-Kim summit crucial moment for Moon’s presidency

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korean President Moon Jae-in has staked his legacy on the stunning diplomatic progress he has forged with North Korea, as well as the behind-the-scenes orchestration of the U.S.-North Korean summits.

But following months of stalemate on North Korea nuclear talks, Moon’s presidency faces a crucial moment, with President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un set to meet for the second time next week.

Moon, a liberal who took office in May 2017, is desperate for a breakthrough so he can continue engagement with the North that has driven the three-way diplomacy but is now held back by tough U.S.-led sanctions against Pyongyang. There’s hope among Moon’s supporters that progress by Trump and Kim on the nuclear issue will allow the partial sanctions relief needed for the Koreans to resume joint economic projects that were shelved during previous standoffs.

But Moon may be disappointed in his push for quick sanctions relief.

Dear CANCER

I still have some chapters left to write, things I want to do yet. Feel free to take a vacation. I might do that, too.

Grateful to be here,
Ann

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