

**BRIEFLY**

**Retailers work to attract shoppers on Black Friday**

NEW YORK (AP) — Retailers worked hard to attract shoppers to stores on Black Friday, offering in-person deals meant to counter the ease of shopping by phone on Amazon.

A better economy and colder weather helped, to be sure. But stores have also tried to improve the store experience and offer better service. They've also made a big push toward offering store pickup for online orders, hoping to get people to pick up more items. But they're fighting a circumstance in which online leader Amazon is the first and only stop for many shoppers.

Still, Black Friday isn't what it used to be. It has morphed from a single day when people got up early to score doorbusters into a whole month of deals. That has thinned out the crowds. And brick-and-mortar stores face plenty of challenges.

With the jobless rate at a 17-year-low of 4.1 percent and consumer confidence stronger than a year ago, analysts project healthy sales increases for November and December. The National Retail Federation trade group expects sales for that period to at least match last year's rise of 3.6 percent and estimates online spending and other non-store sales will rise 11 to 15 percent.

**U.S. backtracks on closure of Palestinian office in D.C.**

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration backtracked Friday on its decision to order the Palestinians' office in Washington to close, instead saying it would merely impose limitations on the office that it expected would be lifted after 90 days.

Last week, U.S. officials said the Palestine Liberation Organization mission couldn't stay open because the Palestinians had violated a provision in U.S. law requiring the office to close if the Palestinians try to get the International Criminal Court to prosecute Israelis. The move triggered a major rift in U.S.-Palestinian relations that threatened to scuttle President Donald Trump's ambitious effort to broker Mideast peace before it ever got off the ground.

Yet the United States delayed shuttering the office for a week while saying it was working out the details with the Palestinians, before abruptly reversing course late Friday, as many Americans were enjoying a long Thanksgiving Day



Sara Wernimont, left, and Christina Wernimont, both of Dubuque, Iowa, look for deals at Theisen's Home-Farm-Auto in Dubuque, Iowa, on Friday.

weekend. State Department spokesman Edgar Vasquez said the U.S. had "advised the PLO Office to limit its activities to those related to achieving a lasting, comprehensive peace between the Israelis and Palestinians."

Vasquez said even those restrictions will be lifted after 90 days if the U.S. determines the Israelis and Palestinians are engaged in serious peace talks. The White House, in an effort led by Trump adviser and son-in-law Jared Kushner, has been preparing a comprehensive peace plan to present to both sides in the coming months.

**Trump tells Turkey: U.S. to stop arming Syrian Kurds**

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — The United States will cut off its supply of arms to Kurdish fighters in Syria, President Donald Trump told the Turkish president on Friday, in a move sure to please Turkey but further alienate Syrian Kurds who bore much of the fight against the Islamic State group.

In a phone call with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Trump said he'd "given clear instructions" that the Kurds will receive no more weapons — "and that this nonsense should have ended a long time ago," said Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu. The White House confirmed the move in a cryptic statement about the phone call that said Trump had informed the Turks of "pending adjustments to the military support provided to our partners on the ground in Syria."

The White House called the move "consistent with our previous policy" and noted the recent fall of Raqqa, once the Islamic State group's self-declared capital but recently liberated by a largely Kurdish force. The Trump administration announced in May it would start arming the Kurds in

anticipation of the fight to retake Raqqa.

The move could help ease strained tensions between the U.S. and Turkey, two NATO allies that have been sharply at odds about how best to wage the fight against IS. Turkey considers the Kurdish Syrian fighters, known by the initials YPG, to be terrorists. Yet the U.S. chose to partner with the YPG anyway, arguing that the battle-hardened Kurds were the most effective fighting force available.

**Tiger escapes from zoo, roams streets of Paris**

PARIS (AP) — Police in Paris say a tiger escaped from a circus in the city and roamed the streets of the French capital for "some time" before being killed.

Police said that the big cat was "neutralized" by a staff member from the circus near a bridge over the River Seine, about 1.24 miles from the Eiffel Tower.

Police authorities tweeted "all danger is over" alongside a tiger emoticon.

A Paris police official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, confirmed that the tiger had been loose for "some time" Friday but said there had been no reported injuries or casualties.

**California mother, daughter killed in collision with bear**

SAN ANDREAS, Calif. (AP) — Authorities say a woman and her daughter were killed when the car she was driving struck a black bear in Northern California on Thanksgiving evening.

California Highway Patrol Sgt. Sean Fitzgerald says the 27-year-old woman was driving a Subaru Impreza on a rural road near San Andreas Thursday around 6 p.m. when a black bear came in front of the vehicle's path.

The bear was struck and killed, but the impact with the bear killed the unidentified driver and her 19-month daughter.

**Flynn may be moving to cooperate with Mueller's Russia probe**

WASHINGTON (AP) — In a move that could signal cooperation with the government, lawyers for former national security adviser Michael Flynn have told President Donald Trump's lawyers that they are no longer communicating with them about special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into Russian election interference.



Flynn

Flynn's legal team communicated the decision this week, said a person familiar with the move who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity to discuss an ongoing investigation. *The New York Times* first reported the decision.

The decision could be a sign that Flynn is moving to cooperate with Mueller's investigation or negotiate a deal for himself. In large criminal investigations, defense lawyers routinely share information with each other. But it can become unethical to continue such communication if one of the potential targets is looking to negotiate a deal with prosecutors.

Robert Kelner, a lawyer for Flynn, declined to comment, as did a lawyer for Flynn's son, Michael Flynn Jr., who has also come under investigation from Mueller's prosecutors.

Flynn was forced to resign as national security adviser in February after White House officials concluded that he had misled them about the nature of his contacts during the transition period with the Russian ambassador to the United States.

FBI agents interviewed Flynn in January about his communications with the ambassador, Sergey Kislyak. Days later,

Sally Yates, then acting attorney general, informed White House counsel Don McGahn that Flynn was in a compromised position and vulnerable to blackmail because of inaccurate public statements from the White House about Flynn's contacts with Kislyak.

Flynn was facing a Justice Department investigation over his foreign business dealings even before Mueller was appointed as special counsel in May to investigate potential coordination between the Trump campaign and Russia to influence the 2016 presidential election. Mueller has since inherited that investigation.

Flynn, a prominent Trump backer in the campaign, has been a key figure in Mueller's probe and of particular interest to Trump. Former FBI Director James Comey, for instance, said that Trump encouraged him to end an FBI investigation into Flynn during a private Oval Office meeting in February.

In addition to scrutinizing Flynn's contacts with Russia during the transition and campaign, Mueller has been investigating the retired U.S. Army lieutenant general's role in \$530,000 worth of lobbying work his now-defunct firm performed for a Turkish businessman during the final months of the 2016 presidential campaign.

Mueller announced his first charges in the investigation last month, including the guilty plea of a foreign-policy adviser to the campaign, George Papadopoulos, and the indictments of former campaign chairman Paul Manafort and business associate Rick Gates.

**Group asks web hosts to shut down 'ghost gun' sites**

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A gun control group founded by former U.S. Rep. Gabby Giffords asked two web hosting companies to shut down websites selling parts and machines that help make untraceable homemade firearms known as "ghost guns."

The Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence asked the providers that host GhostGunner.net and GhostGuns.com to disable the websites for violating the terms of service.

The sites sell kits, components and machines that help create homemade semi-automatic weapons. It's legal to build a gun in

a home or a workshop, and advances in 3-D printing and milling have made it easier to do so. The kits can be purchased legally for a few hundred dollars without the kind of background check required for traditional gun purchases.

Attorneys for the gun control advocacy group said the homemade weapons are increasingly being used in crimes and asked each of the companies to "invoke its policies to help stem the tide of this illegal, deadly behavior."

They argue that the hosting companies should invoke their ability to disable and terminate the

websites. The group argues that the two sites sell "the sort of products that have already caused scores of senseless deaths — and are likely to cause many more, unless taken off the market."

The gunman who killed his wife and four others in a rampage in Northern California earlier this month had been barred from having guns but built two semi-automatic rifles at home that he used in the shooting, authorities said. Federal officials are sounding the alarm about an increasing black market for homemade military-style semi-automatic rifles and handguns.



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