

CBS denies former CEO Les Moonves \$120M severance

NEW YORK (AP) — CBS announced Monday that former CEO Les Moonves will not receive his \$120 million severance package after the board of directors concluded he violated company policy and was uncooperative with an investigation into sexual misconduct allegations.

The decision, which came after a five-month outside investigation, capped the downfall of one of television’s most influential figures, the biggest entertainment powerbroker to see his career derailed amid the #MeToo movement against sexual misconduct.

A lawyer for Moonves said the board’s conclusion “are without merit” but did not say whether the former CEO would challenge it in arbitration.

“This is an important reminder that harassment happens everywhere, and that in this moment, even someone who has been perceived as untouchable will be held accountable,” said Fatima Goss Graves, a co-founder of the Time’s Up Legal Defense Fund, which provides legal assistance to victims of assault, harassment or abuse. “I hope other corporations are learning that lesson.”

Run-up to Flynn sentencing tinged with drama

WASHINGTON (AP) — Michael Flynn may have given extraordinary cooperation to prosecutors, but the run-up to his sentencing hearing Tuesday has exposed raw tensions over an FBI interview in which the former national security adviser lied about his Russian contacts.

Flynn’s lawyers have suggested that investigators discouraged him from having an attorney present during the January 2017 interview and never informed him it was a crime to lie. Prosecutors shot back, “He does not need to be warned it is a crime to lie to federal agents to know the importance of telling them the truth.”

The mere insinuation of underhanded tactics was startling given the seemingly productive relationship between the two sides, and it was especially striking since prosecutors with special counsel Robert Mueller’s office have praised Flynn’s cooperation and recommended against prison time. The defense arguments spurred speculation that Flynn may be trying to get sympathy from President Donald Trump or may be playing to a judge known for a zero-tolerance view of government misconduct.

“It’s an attempt, I think, to perhaps characterize Flynn as a victim or perhaps to make him look sympathetic in the eyes of a judge — and, at the same time, to portray the special counsel in a negative light,” said former federal prosecutor Jimmy Gurule, a University of Notre Dame law school professor.

Until the dueling memos were filed last week, the sentencing hearing for Flynn — who pleaded guilty to lying about a conversation during the transition period with the then-Russian ambassador — was expected to be devoid of the drama characterizing other of Mueller’s cases.

GOP waits on Trump as clock ticks toward partial shutdown

WASHINGTON (AP) — The fight over President Donald Trump’s \$5 billion wall funds deepened Monday, threatening a partial government shutdown in a standoff that has become increasingly common in Washington.

It wasn’t always like this, with Congress and the White House at a crisis over government funding. The House and Senate used to pass annual appropriation bills, and the president signed

them into law. But in recent years the shutdown scenario has become so routine that it raises the question: Have shutdowns as a negotiating tool lost their punch?

Monday brought few signs of progress. A partial shutdown that could occur at midnight Friday risks disrupting government operations and leaving hundreds of thousands of federal employees furloughed or working without pay over the holiday season. Costs would be likely in the billions of dollars.

Exiting a Senate Republican leadership meeting late Monday, Sen. John Thune of South Dakota said, “It looks like it probably is going

to have to build for a few days here before there’s a solution.”

Russia social media influence efforts ongoing, report says

WASHINGTON (AP) — Russia’s sweeping political disinformation campaign on U.S. social media was more far-reaching than originally thought, with troll farms working to discourage black voters and “blur the lines between reality and fiction” to help elect Donald Trump in 2016, according to reports

released Monday by the Senate intelligence committee.

And the campaign didn’t end with Trump’s ascent to the White House. Troll farms are still working to stoke racial and political passions in America at a time of high political discord.

The two studies are the most comprehensive picture yet of the Russian interference campaigns on American social media. They add to the portrait investigators have been building since 2017 on Russia’s influence — though Trump has equivocated on whether the interference actually happened.

Facebook, Google and Twitter declined to comment

on the specifics of the reports.

The reports were compiled by the cybersecurity firm New Knowledge and by the Computational Propaganda Research Project, a study by researchers at the University of Oxford and Graphika, a social media analysis firm.

Google plans \$1 billion expansion in New York

(AP) — Silicon Valley is becoming Silicon Nation. Google announced Monday it will spend more than \$1 billion to build a new

office complex in New York City that will allow the internet search giant to double the number of people it employs there.

It is the tech industry’s latest major expansion beyond the Seattle-San Francisco Bay corridor. It follows recent steps by Amazon and Apple to set up large operations well outside their home turf.

Tech companies are “coming to the realization that the Bay Area, which has traditionally been the major center of tech activity in the U.S., is getting expensive and crowded,” said Andrew Bartels, principal analyst at Forrester Research.

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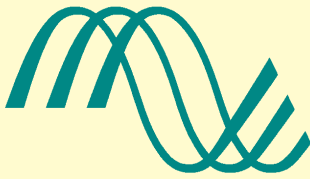
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