

Trump: ‘I can’t tell you when’ government will reopen

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said Tuesday that parts of the federal government will stay closed until Democrats agree to put up more walls along the U.S.-Mexico border to deter criminal elements. He said he’s open to calling the wall something else as long as he ends up with an actual wall.

In a Christmas Day appearance in the Oval Office, Trump issued a lengthy defense of his desire for a wall, saying it’s the only way to stop drugs and human traffickers from entering the country. In a nod to the political stakes he’s facing, Trump said he wants the wall by “election time” in 2020.

The promise of a border wall was a central component of Trump’s presidential campaign.

“I can’t tell you when the government’s going to be open. I can tell you it’s not going to be open until we have a wall or fence, whatever they’d like to call it,” Trump said, referring to Democrats who staunchly oppose walling off the border.

“I’ll call it whatever they want, but it’s all the same thing,” he told reporters after participating in a holiday video conference with representatives from all five branches of the military stationed in Alaska, Bahrain, Guam and Qatar.

Trump offers holiday greetings to U.S. troops

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Tuesday wished U.S. troops stationed around the country and the globe a merry Christmas.

“I know it’s a great sacrifice for you to be away from your families, but I want you to know that every American family is eternally grateful to you, and we’re holding you close in our hearts, thoughts and prayers,” Trump said. “We love what you do and love your work. Amazing people.”

Trump spoke by video conference to members of all five branches of the U.S. military.

The president was spending a rare Christmas in Washington because of a stalemate with Congress over government funding that left several departments and agencies shuttered since the weekend, affecting the livelihoods of some 800,000 federal employees.

Trump usually spends Christmas at his Florida estate. He scrapped plans to travel to Palm Beach because of the shutdown.

U.S. says 2nd Guatemalan child dies in immigration custody

HOUSTON (AP) — An 8-year-old boy from Guatemala died in government custody in New Mexico early Tuesday, U.S. immigration authorities said, marking the second death of an immigrant child in detention this month.

The death came during an ongoing dispute over border security and with a partial government shutdown underway over President Donald Trump’s request for border wall funding.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection said the boy showed “signs of potential illness” on Monday and was taken with his father to a hospital in Alamogordo, New Mexico, where he was diagnosed with a cold and a fever. The boy was prescribed amoxicillin and ibuprofen and released Monday afternoon after being held 90 minutes for observation, the agency said.

The boy was returned to the hospital Monday evening with nausea and vomiting and died there just after mid-

night, CBP said.

CBP has not yet confirmed when or where the father and son entered the United States or how long they were detained, saying only in its statement that the boy had been “previously apprehended” by its agents.

Indonesia tsunami survivors remain jittery as deaths hit 429

SUMUR, Indonesia (AP) — Panicked residents, police and soldiers in this remote fishing village clobbered by a devastating weekend tsu-

nami ran to higher ground Tuesday, shouting “Water is coming! Water is coming!” and reciting verses from the Quran as emergency messages were broadcast over mosque speakers.

It proved to be a false alarm, but a similar frenzy broke out in Tanjung Lesung, another tsunami-stricken area located hours away, as unsettled survivors of the disaster remained traumatized by a tragedy that killed more than 420 people and left thousands homeless.

Meanwhile, Christmas celebrations were replaced by somber prayers, as church leaders called on Christians across Indonesia, the world’s

most populous Muslim nation, to pray for tsunami victims.

Unlike other tsunamis that have hit disaster-prone Indonesia following large earthquakes, Saturday’s big waves blasted ashore at night without warning. The eruption of Anak Krakatau, or Child of Krakatoa, a volcano in the Sunda Strait, is believed to have created a landslide on the volcano’s slope, displacing a large volume of water that slammed into the islands of Java and Sumatra.

People in Sumur village, which has been slow to receive aid due to roads being cut off, remained stunned by how quickly

the tsunami hit. The beach, located just a few kilometers from the tourist island of Umang near Java’s western tip, is popular for snorkeling and other water activities. The tsunami decimated the area, ripping houses from their foundations and bulldozing concrete buildings.

Trump confuses with claims of new border wall

HOUSTON (AP) — President Donald Trump’s claims over Christmas that he had awarded 115 miles of new border wall construction

in Texas appear to confuse work that’s already funded and underway.

Trump tweeted on Monday, “I am in the Oval Office & just gave out a 115 mile long contract for another large section of the Wall in Texas.”

He reiterated on Tuesday that he’s moving forward on construction, even as the government remains partially shut down over his insistence that Congress approve more money for a border wall.

Neither the White House nor the Department of Homeland Security responded to follow-up questions on Monday or Tuesday.

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