

Budget talks resume amid pessimism over border differences

WASHINGTON (AP) — Politically freighted border security negotiations are teetering just days before a potential new government shutdown. The turmoil is testing the changed balance of power in Washington, with lawmakers engaged in a sparring match over immigration policy that is challenging their ability to reach any accord.

Republicans say Democratic demands to limit immigrant detentions by federal authorities are a deal breaker — eclipsing the border wall issue for now — and represent overreach by top Democrats like House Speaker Nancy Pelosi of California.

The two sides also remained separated over how much to spend on President Donald Trump's promised border wall. A Friday midnight deadline is looming to prevent a second partial government shutdown.

Lawmakers hoped to get the talks back on track at a meeting on Monday afternoon.

Clamor for ouster of top Democrats slows in Virginia

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — The clamor for the resignation of Virginia's top two politicians seemed to die down Monday, with some black community leaders forgiving Gov. Ralph Northam over the blackface furor and calling for a fair hearing for Lt. Gov. Justin Fairfax on the sexual assault allegations against him.

Over the past several days, practically the entire Democratic establishment rose up to demand fellow Democrats Northam and Fairfax immediately step down. But the tone changed markedly after the weekend.

A Democratic state lawmaker who had threatened to begin impeachment proceedings against Fairfax, Virginia's highest-ranking black politician, set the idea aside after running into resistance.

At the same time, several black clergy and civic leaders made clear they are willing to give both Northam and Attorney General Mark Herring a second chance, while urging due process for Fairfax. Herring, like Northam, has admitted putting on blackface in the 1980s.

Woman begins jail sentence for texting suicide conviction

TAUNTON, Mass. (AP) — A Massachusetts woman, who sent her suicidal boyfriend a barrage of text messages urging him to kill himself, was jailed Monday on an involuntary manslaughter conviction nearly five years after he died in a truck filled with toxic gas.

Michelle Carter, 22, was sentenced to 15 months in jail in 2017 for her role in the death of Conrad Roy III, but the judge allowed her to remain free while she appealed in state court. Massachusetts' highest court upheld her conviction last week, saying her actions caused Roy's death.

A lawyer for Carter had argued she should stay out of jail while her defense team takes her case to the U.S. Supreme Court. Her attorneys said in court documents that she has no prior criminal record, hasn't tried to flee, and has been receiving mental health treatment.

But a judge ruled Monday that she should start her sentence. Earlier in the day, Massachusetts' highest court denied an emergency motion filed by her lawyers to keep her out of jail.

Carter showed no emotion as she was taken into custody, though her shoulders sagged as she stood and prepared to be led away.

Bezos probe concludes mistress's brother was Enquirer source

WASHINGTON (AP) — Private investigators working for Jeff Bezos have concluded that the brother of the Amazon CEO's mistress leaked the couple's intimate text messages to the National Enquirer, a person familiar with the matter told The Associated Press on Monday.

The findings add to the intrigue surrounding the clash between the pro-Trump tabloid and the world's richest man. Bezos'

investigators have suggested the Enquirer's coverage of his affair was driven by dirty politics. Trump has been highly critical of Bezos over his ownership of The Washington Post and Amazon, and the Post's coverage of the White House.

The brother, Michael Sanchez, is a supporter of President Donald Trump and an acquaintance of Trump allies Roger Stone and Carter Page. He is also the manager of his sister, Lauren Sanchez, a former TV anchor. The investigators have not said how they think Michael Sanchez came into possession of his sister's intimate messages.

Fierce battles near final IS foothold in eastern Syria

BEIRUT (AP) — Islamic State group militants cornered in their last foothold in eastern Syria fought back with suicide car bombs, snipers and booby traps Monday, slowing Kurdish fighters advancing under the cover of U.S.-led coalition airstrikes, Kurdish news agencies said.

An Italian photographer was wounded in the clashes between the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces and the militants holed up in the village of Baghouz, near

the border with Iraq, an Italian news agency said.

No one knows exactly how many Islamic State fighters are still holding out in the sliver of territory under attack, although they are estimated to be in the hundreds. It is also unclear if civilians are still inside.

Venezuela's crisis hits standstill over emergency aid

CUCUTA, Colombia (AP) — Nearly three weeks after the Trump administration backed an all-out effort to overthrow Nicolas Mad-

uro, there is little sign the Venezuelan president is losing his grip on power.

Dozens of nations have recognized opposition leader Juan Guaido's claim to the presidency and the U.S. has tightened sanctions aimed at cutting off billions of dollars in oil revenue. But anti-Maduro street protests have come and gone, and military defections have failed to materialize.

With the U.S. virtually certain not to launch military action, Guaido is trying to regain momentum with an effort this week to move U.S. emergency food and medicine into Venezuela despite Maduro's pledge to block it.

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