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DECEMBER 18, 2020



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A 'GAME CHANGER FOR FRESNO,'
DYER SAYS »**

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LOCAL

SOUTHWEST AIRLINES ARRIVAL A 'GAME CHANGER FOR FRESNO,' DYER SAYS

December 16, 2020 | Jim Jakobs

The news quickly spread on social media after Southwest Airlines announced they would start service out of Fresno Yosemite International Airport in

“Landing Southwest Airlines is a game changer for Fresno in terms of economic development, as well as flexibility and convenience for leisure travel.”—Incoming Mayor-elect Jerry Dyer

the spring of 2021. “Landing Southwest Airlines is a game changer for Fresno in terms of economic development, as well as flexibility and convenience for leisure travel,” said Mayor-elect Jerry Dyer in a news release issued Wednesday morning. “I look forward to continuing our discussion with Southwest Airlines officials as destination airports are finalized.” Clovis Mayor Drew Bessinger said Southwest Airlines representatives met with him and other community leaders in November. “They looked at a region with 1-million people and the largest airport between San Francisco and LA, and the fact that we serve the 5th largest city in the state,” Bessinger said. “They certainly wouldn’t do it if they didn’t crunch the numbers and say ‘yes’ we can make this work.”

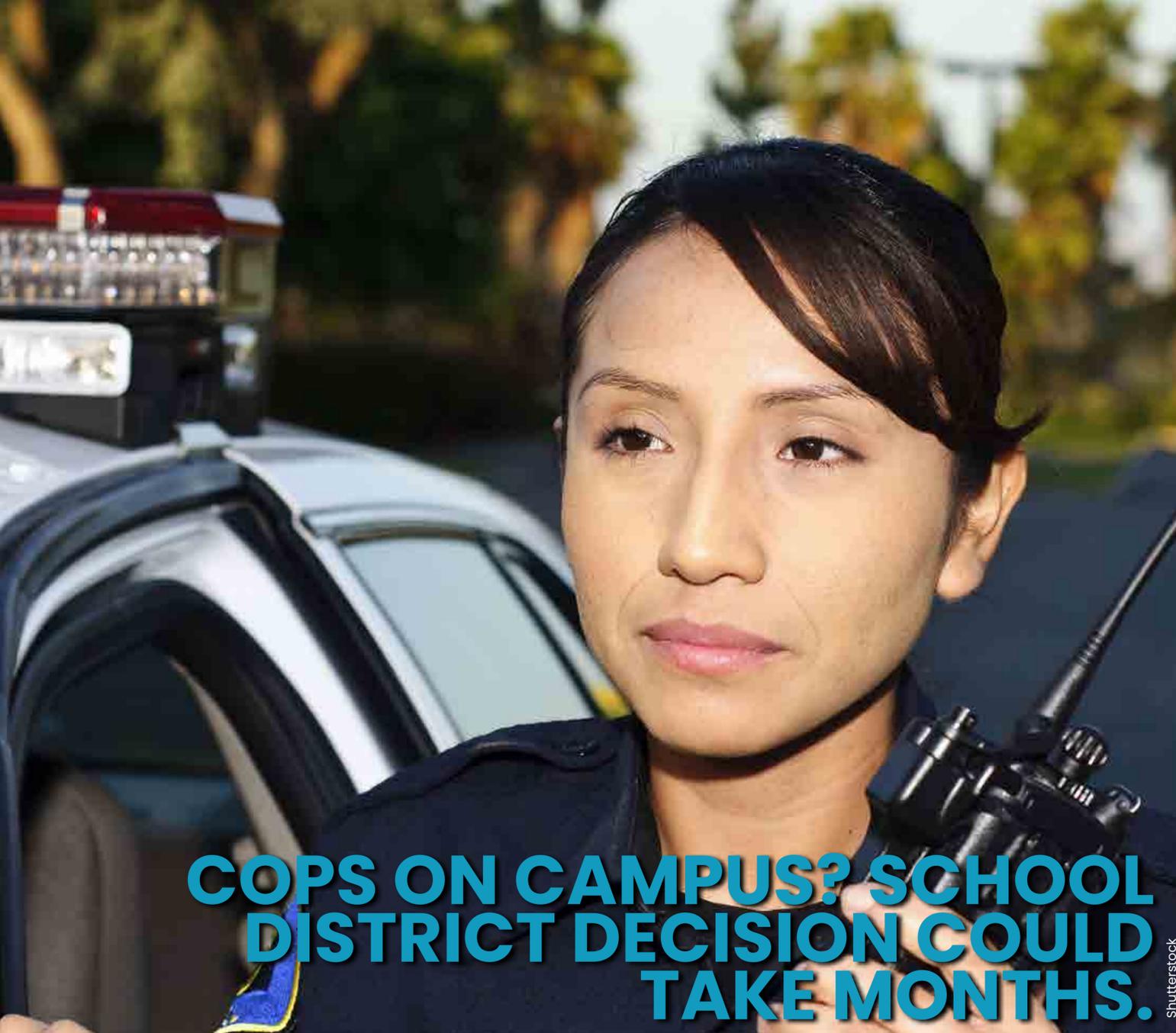
Bessinger also serves as police chief at the Fresno airport. “This is the best holiday present that Fresno could have imagined. Local travelers have been waiting patiently for quite some time for this announcement and Southwest service has been, by far, the most talked-about and requested amenity in the Central Valley,” said Mayor Lee Brand in a statement. Fresno City Council Member Mike Karbassi shared the news on his Facebook

page. “Terrific news for our city and region. Welcome to Fresno, Southwest Airlines. Great job airport staff including Director Kevin Meikle!” “Great news to end the 2020! Looking forward to taking @SouthwestAir flight in 2021,” tweeted City Council Member Esmeralda Sorria. “Access to all areas of the country through Southwest’s network will open up business opportunities that were unavailable to us previously,” said Lee Ann Eager, CEO of the Fresno County Economic Development Corporation. “This is exciting news that lets the world know that Fresno County is open for business and ready to “take off”.”

Southwest Airlines CEO Gary Kelly wasn’t shy when he spoke with Reuters recently about his airline’s future. The company plans to continue adding new markets to its network after announcing new destinations during the pandemic. Wednesday morning, the airline not only announced service out of Fresno, but said it will also fly in and out of Santa Barbara Airport. “We salute Southwest’s bold decision to enter one of the most vibrant and beautiful regions in California, bringing visitors to our sweeping coastline to experience our mild Mediterranean climate and distinctive Spanish-influenced architecture,” said Santa Barbara Mayor Cathy Murillo. “For our residents, our partnership with Southwest will energize the...

The cost of tickets was not a part of the November discussion. Meikle believes what’s going to happen is when Southwest arrives with their low fare schedule will send reverberations through the other airlines already at the airport.

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COPS ON CAMPUS? SCHOOL DISTRICT DECISION COULD TAKE MONTHS.

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December 16, 2020 | Nancy Price

Should police officers be employed to provide security on school campuses? Criticism of policing that grew after the death of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police on Memorial Day and subsequent rallies that called for the defunding of police departments have fueled discussions among trustees at Fresno's largest school district over the role of police officers at schools.

Fresno Unified employs Fresno city police and Fresno County sheriff's deputies as school resource and neighborhood school resource officers to provide campus security, including making arrests. But now

some trustees have argued that the district should consider not renewing those contracts, which continued even while schools were closed because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The School Board delayed renewing the contracts earlier this year to provide time to hear from school communities. The district is launching a two-pronged effort to examine the issue and provide recommendations to the board. At Wednesday's meeting, trustees will vote on a \$48,900 proposal for a research project to gauge how parents and school staff feel about having cops on campus. The survey project would...

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SONOGRAPHY HELPED SAVE HER LIFE. YEARS LATER, IT SAVED HER BABY. NOW SHE DOES THE SAME.

December 10, 2020 | Sponsored by Community Medical Centers

Robyn Nachtigall-Hill has known she wanted to be a sonographer since she was 12 and undergoing cancer treatment. In a unique twist of fate, the woman who helped save her life as a preteen is the same...

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CRMC



IS A MARIJUANA SHOP COMING TO YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD? FRESNO IS REVIEWING PROPOSALS.

December 16, 2020 | David Taub

More than 110 companies are vying to become the first legal retail marijuana dealers in the city of Fresno. But navigating the process and regulations can be "very complicated" one applicant said. "It does make it more costly and difficult to operate than if you like to just be open to some other type of retail business," said Lauren Fontein, founder of The Artist Tree. The company operates cannabis stores and delivery services in Los Angeles and is looking to expand.

The application period to operate cannabis businesses has closed. The city — through its Office of Cannabis Oversight — will now engage in a months-long process to award up to 14 applicants the right to open shop, something that California voters permitted in 2016...

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GV Wire/Tim Jakobs



STATE CALIFORNIA'S GROWTH RATE AT RECORD LOW AS MORE PEOPLE LEAVE

December 16, 2020 | AP News

California saw its slowest growth rate on record for the nation's most populous state, adding just 21,200 people during the year that ended in July, state officials said Wednesday. For the second straight year, more people left California than moved to the state, resulting in a net migration loss of 135,600 people. People left the state in similar numbers as they did last year, but far fewer people moved to California, especially from April to June, when the state was under a stay-at-home order because of the pandemic.

California also had more deaths, which state officials said is most likely due to the pandemic. From 2017 to 2020, California would average about 4,800 additional deaths each year. But this year, California's deaths grew by 12,800 to

California also had more deaths, which state officials said is most likely due to the pandemic. From 2017 to 2020, California would average about 4,800 additional deaths each year. But this year, California's deaths grew by 12,800 to a total of 280,100.

a total of 280,100. The state reported a total of 6,163 coronavirus deaths on July 1, a number that has since grown to 21,481 as of Tuesday.

Still, when subtracting deaths from births, California added 156,600 people to its population naturally. Overall, the state's population grew 0.05%, down from 0.23% the prior year. Its total population now stands at 39.78 million people. The latest estimate came from the California Department of Finance and covers the change in population from July 1, 2019, to July 1, 2020.

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Recent high-profile departures include Tesla CEO Elon Musk, who moved to Texas, where tech giants Hewlett Packard and Oracle also intend to move their headquarters. Matt Frinzi, 68, moved from San Francisco to Reno, Nevada, on Tuesday. He had lived in California for 25 years but said he was tired of paying high income taxes and frustrated with the deterioration of his neighborhood. Nevada doesn't have a state income tax.

Recent high-profile departures include Tesla CEO Elon Musk, who moved to Texas, where tech giants Hewlett Packard and Oracle also intend to move their headquarters.

"I loved San Francisco when I moved here in 1996. I thought it was the premiere city in the United States. I wouldn't give you a nickel for it now," he said. "I think there is a quiet rebellion growing."



CALIFORNIA WANTS AMAZON TO ANSWER ON WAREHOUSE WORKER SAFETY DURING PANDEMIC

Shutterstock

December 14, 2020 | AP News

California Attorney General Xavier Becerra on Monday asked a judge to order Amazon to comply with subpoenas his office issued nearly four months ago as part of an investigation into how the company is protecting workers from the coronavirus at its facilities.

Becerra said the online sales giant hasn't provided enough information on its coronavirus safety steps and the status of infections and deaths at its shipping facilities across California. The attorney gener-

al is President-elect Joe Biden's pick to be the first Latino to lead the Health and Human Services Department.

"We're investigating because we got reports, information, complaints about conditions, incidents," Becerra said. While the investigation is ongoing, "we believe that it merits looking into Amazon's protocols, practices, based on information that we have received." The company did not immediately respond to a request for comment left through an email...

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MICROCHIP REUNITES CHIHUAHUA WITH OWNER. WAS MISSING 5 YEARS.

December 16, 2020 | AP News

POMONA — A Chihuahua dog named Sweet-Pea who went missing five years ago in Southern California has been found and is back home. The tiny dog was reunited with her owner on thanks to microchip identification, KNBC-TV reported Tuesday.

Sweet-Pea went missing in the city of Compton in 2015. The Inland Valley Humane Society found her about 30 miles away in the community of Covina. Sweet-Pea appeared to have been well-cared for during her long absence, KNBC-TV reported.

There were no immediate details disclosed about where the dog stayed while away from her owner. Having Sweet-Pea back "means the world to me..."

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Twitter/AlexVnews

CALIFORNIA SETS TEACHERS, FIRST RESPONDERS FOR NEXT VACCINES

December 17, 2020 | AP News

Teachers, first responders, and grocery and restaurant workers were among those recommended Wednesday to get the next round of scarce vaccines in California, as were florists and sawmill operators who fall into the same broad category of those deemed essential workers.

"We've got to figure who we're going to prioritize," said Dr. Oliver Brooks, co-chairman of a 16-member panel of medical experts recommending who makes the potential life-and-death cut after the first round of about 3 million vaccines began going this week to health care workers and those in long-term care facilities. They're divvying up the next round of...

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Kevin Lamarque/Pool via AP

BIDEN INTRODUCES EX-RIVAL BUTTIGIEG AS TRANSPORTATION PICK

December 16, 2020 | AP News

WILMINGTON, Del. — President-elect Joe Biden introduced Democratic primary rival Pete Buttigieg on Wednesday as his nominee for transportation secretary, calling the 38-year-old ex-mayor “a new voice, with new ideas determined to move past old politics.”

Biden hailed that and said that by the time he's done filling out his new administration's top positions, it will have more women and people of color than ever, promising “a Cabinet of barrier-breakers.”

Buttigieg, a former city leader of South Bend, Indiana, would also be the first openly gay person confirmed by the Senate to a Cabinet post. Biden hailed that and said that by the time he's done filling out his new administration's top positions, it will have more women and people of color than ever, promising “a Cabinet of barrier-breakers.”

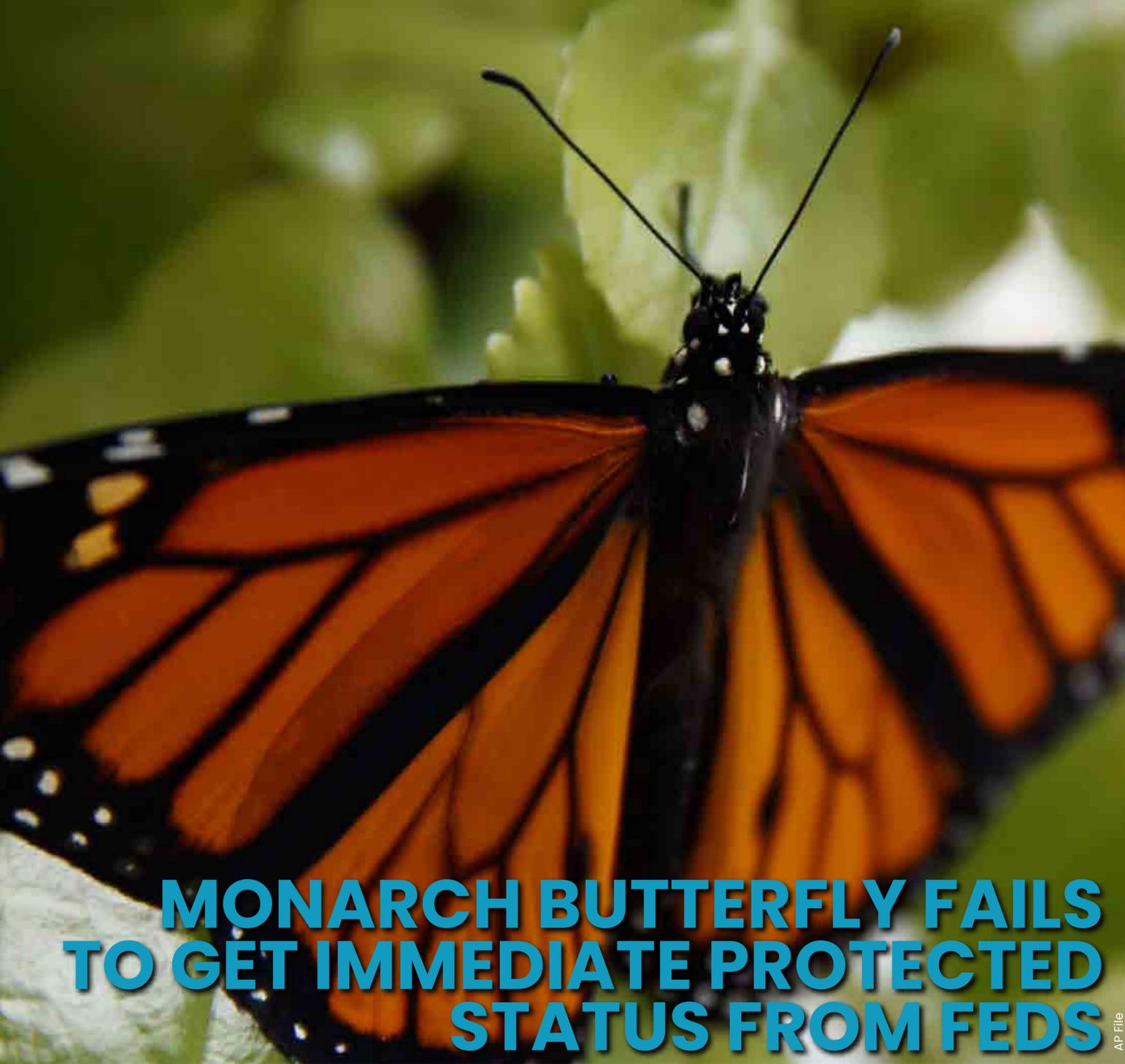
“We need someone who knows how to work with state, local, and federal agencies,” Biden said of Buttigieg, who has served as a Navy reserve intelligence officer. The nomination was applauded by union leaders, transportation industry officials, LGBTQ activists and Democratic lawmakers as a solid pick by Biden. Sen. Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, called Buttigieg “more than ready to finally address our nation's infrastructure crisis.” Sen. Michael Bennet, D-Colo., applauded Biden for tapping someone with “plenty of intellect, vision, and drive” to take a shot at modernizing America's crumbling transportation infrastructure. If confirmed, Buttigieg will have much on his plate right out of the gate. He'll be tasked with putting in place Biden's proposals to

spend billions making major infrastructure improvements and on retrofitting initiatives that can help the United States fight climate change. More immediately, the president-elect also wants to mandate mask-wearing on airplanes and public transportation systems to slow the spread of the coronavirus.

In the Primary, Biden Took a Shining to Buttigieg
During the Democratic presidential primary, Buttigieg was initially written off as the leader of a relatively small town competing against far more established figures. But Buttigieg zeroed in on a message of generational change to finish the first-in-the-nation Iowa caucuses in a virtual tie with Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders. Buttigieg's campaign stumbled, however, in appealing to Black voters who play a critical role in Democratic politics. As the primary moved into more diverse states such as South Carolina, Buttigieg faltered and quickly withdrew from the race. His relatively early backing of Biden ushered in a remarkably swift unification of the party around its ultimate nominee. In the primary, Biden took a shining to Buttigieg, who he said reminded him of his late son Beau Biden, a former Delaware attorney general who had urged his father to make a third run for the White House. Beau Biden died in 2015...

“We need someone who knows how to work with state, local, and federal agencies,” Biden said of Buttigieg, who has served as a Navy reserve intelligence officer.

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MONARCH BUTTERFLY FAILS TO GET IMMEDIATE PROTECTED STATUS FROM FEDS

December 16, 2020 | AP News

TRAVERSE CITY, Mich. — Federal officials on Tuesday declared the monarch butterfly “a candidate” for threatened or endangered status, but said no action would be taken for several years because of the many other species awaiting that designation.

Environmentalists said delaying that long could spell disaster for the beloved black-and-orange butterfly, once a common sight in backyard gardens, meadows and other landscapes now seeing its population

dwindling. The monarch’s status will be reviewed annually, said Charlie Wooley, head of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Great Lakes regional office. Emergency action could be taken earlier, but plans now call for proposing to list the monarch under the Endangered Species Act in 2024 unless its situation improves enough to make the step unnecessary.

The proposal would be followed by another year for public comment and development of a final rule...

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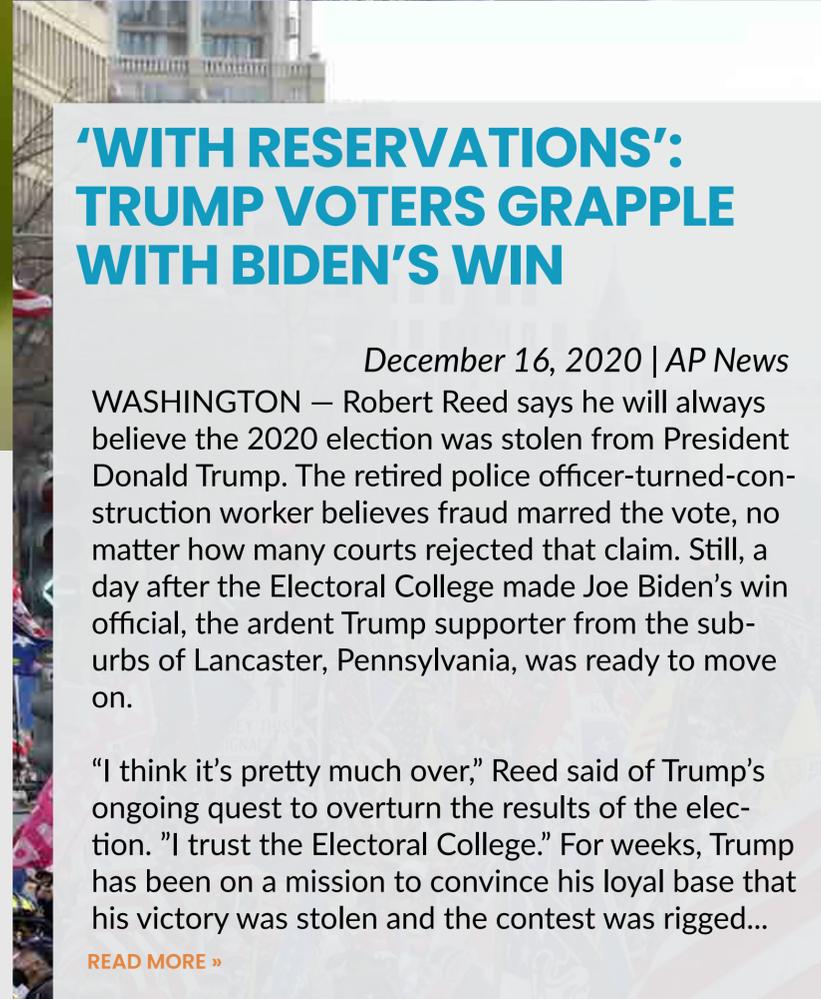
TOM CRUISE LAUNCHES EXPLETIVE-LADEN RANT OVER SOCIAL DISTANCING

December 16, 2020 | AP News

LONDON — Tom Cruise has launched an expletive-laden rant at colleagues on the set of his latest “Mission: Impossible” movie, after he reportedly spotted two workers failing to respect social distancing rules.

In audio released by the Sun tabloid, the 58-year-old Hollywood star can be heard warning that anyone caught not following the rules to stay at least 6.5 feet away from others will be fired. “If I see you doing it again, you’re f—ing gone and if anyone on this crew does it, that’s it,” he is heard saying on the audio recorded during filming in Britain. “That’s it. No apologies.” During his outburst at Warner Bros. Studios in Leavesden, which is around 30 miles north...

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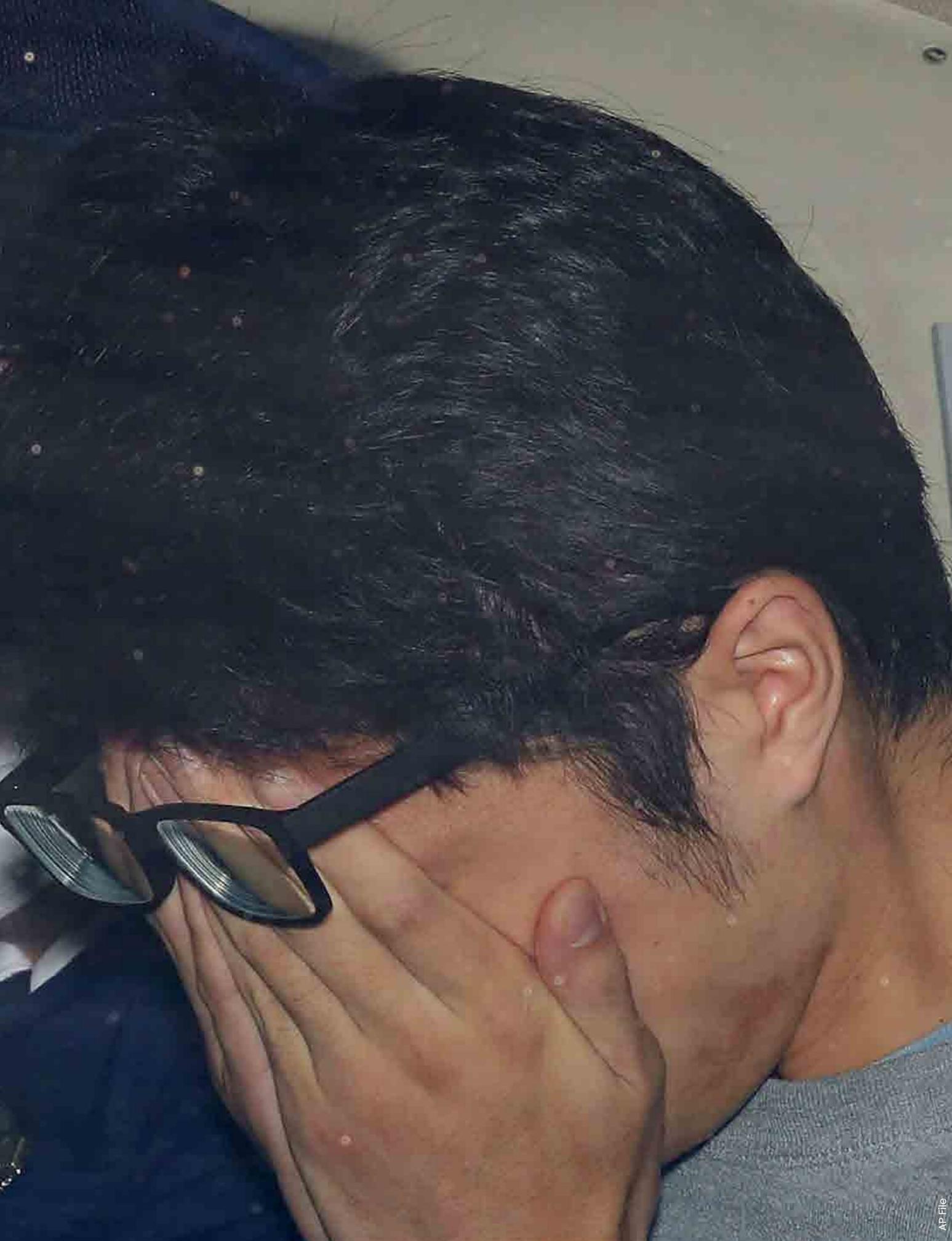
‘WITH RESERVATIONS’: TRUMP VOTERS GRAPPLE WITH BIDEN’S WIN

December 16, 2020 | AP News

WASHINGTON — Robert Reed says he will always believe the 2020 election was stolen from President Donald Trump. The retired police officer-turned-construction worker believes fraud marred the vote, no matter how many courts rejected that claim. Still, a day after the Electoral College made Joe Biden’s win official, the ardent Trump supporter from the suburbs of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, was ready to move on.

“I think it’s pretty much over,” Reed said of Trump’s ongoing quest to overturn the results of the election. “I trust the Electoral College.” For weeks, Trump has been on a mission to convince his loyal base that his victory was stolen and the contest was rigged...

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WORLD

JAPAN 'TWITTER KILLER' SENTENCED TO DEATH FOR SERIAL MURDERS

December 15, 2020 | AP News

TOKYO — A Japanese court on Tuesday sentenced a man to death for killing and dismembering nine people, most of whom had posted suicidal thoughts on social media, in a case that shocked the country. The Tachikawa branch of the Tokyo District Court found Takahiro Shiraishi, known as the “Twitter killer,” guilty of killing, dismembering and storing the bodies of the victims in his apartment in Zama, near Tokyo.

Shiraishi, 30, pleaded guilty and said he would not appeal his death sentence. Police arrested Shiraishi in 2017 after finding the bodies of eight females and one male in cold-storage cases in his apartment. Investigators said Shiraishi approached the victims via Twitter, offering to

Police arrested Shiraishi in 2017 after finding the bodies of eight females and one male in cold-storage cases in his apartment.

assist them with their suicidal wishes. He killed the women, including teenagers, after raping them, and also killed a boyfriend of one of the

women to silence him, investigators said. On Twitter, Shiraishi used the name “Hangman,” promising to help his victims die and inviting them to his apartment. Although his defense lawyers argued that he assisted the victims’ suicidal wishes, Shiraishi later said he killed them without their consent.

In the ruling, presiding Judge Naokuni Yano said none of the victims agreed to be killed and that Shiraishi was fully responsible for their deaths, according to media reports. He said the crime

was extremely heinous and had caused fear and concern in a society where social media have become an indispensable part of everyday life, NHK public television reported. Japan’s suicide rate ranks among the world’s highest.

Following a recent decline, the number has climbed back

On Twitter, Shiraishi used the name “Hangman,” promising to help his victims die and inviting them to his apartment.

this year as people were hit by the effects of the pandemic. Japan’s crime rate is relatively low, but it has experienced some recent high-profile killings. In July 2016, a former employee of a home for the disabled allegedly killed 19 residents and injured more than 20 others.

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KENYAN MAN CHARGED WITH PLOTTING 9/11-STYLE ATTACK ON US

December 16, 2020 | AP News

NEW YORK — Federal authorities have unsealed an indictment charging a Kenyan man with trying to stage a 9/11-style attack on the United States on behalf of the terrorist organization al-Shabab.

Cholo Abdi Abdullah, 30, who was arrested in the Philippines in 2019, was transferred to U.S. custody Tuesday on charges that he conspired to hijack an aircraft and slam it into a building. He pleaded not guilty during a brief court appearance Wednesday and was ordered held without bond. A request for

comment was sent to his defense attorney. Prosecutors said Abdullah got flight training in the Philippines and obtained a pilot's license in preparation for an attack. "This case, which involved a plot to use an aircraft to kill innocent victims, reminds us of the deadly threat that radical Islamic terrorists continue to pose to our nation," Assistant Attorney General for National Security John Demers said in a statement. Acting Manhattan U.S. Attorney Audrey Strauss called it a "chilling callback to the horrific attacks of September 11, 2001." Abdullah...

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IRAN HANGS JOURNALIST WHO ENCOURAGED 2017 PROTESTS AGAINST REGIME

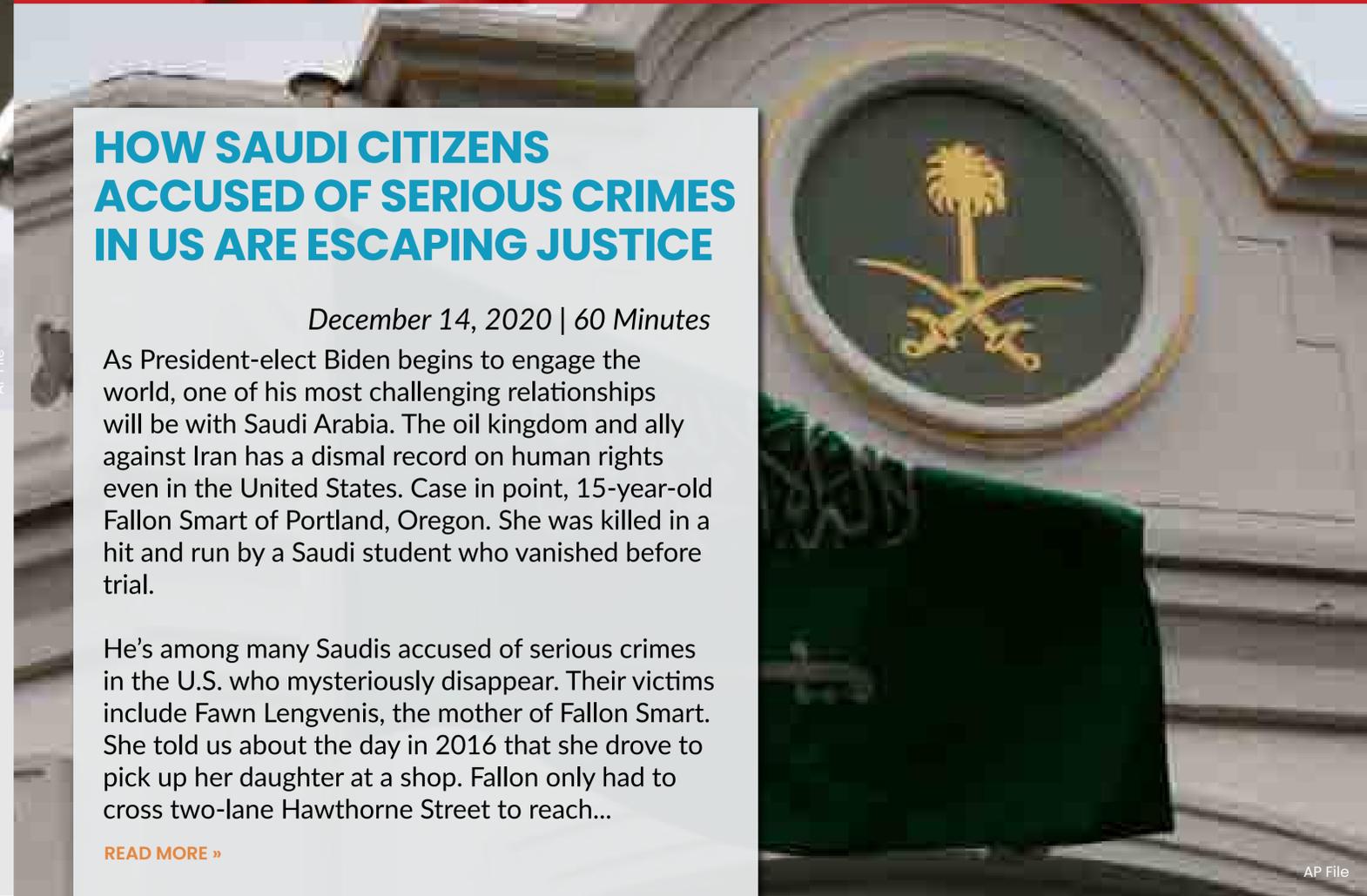
December 11, 2020 | AP News

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran on Saturday executed a once-exiled journalist over his online work that helped inspire nationwide economic protests in 2017, authorities said, just months after he returned to Tehran under mysterious circumstances. Iranian state television and the state-run IRNA news agency said that Ruhollah Zam, 47, was hanged early Saturday morning. The reports did not elaborate.

In June, a court sentenced Zam to death, saying he had been convicted of "corruption on Earth," a charge often used in cases involving espionage or attempts to overthrow Iran's government. Zam's website AmadNews and a channel he created on the popular messaging app Telegram had spread the...

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AP File



HOW SAUDI CITIZENS ACCUSED OF SERIOUS CRIMES IN US ARE ESCAPING JUSTICE

December 14, 2020 | 60 Minutes

As President-elect Biden begins to engage the world, one of his most challenging relationships will be with Saudi Arabia. The oil kingdom and ally against Iran has a dismal record on human rights even in the United States. Case in point, 15-year-old Fallon Smart of Portland, Oregon. She was killed in a hit and run by a Saudi student who vanished before trial.

He's among many Saudis accused of serious crimes in the U.S. who mysteriously disappear. Their victims include Fawn Lengvenis, the mother of Fallon Smart. She told us about the day in 2016 that she drove to pick up her daughter at a shop. Fallon only had to cross two-lane Hawthorne Street to reach...

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