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Mayor Turner's former press secretary faces second criminal charge



Inside C2

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Trump voices 'rogue killers' theory for Khashoggi incident

ANKARA/WASHINGTON (Reuters) - U.S. President Donald Trump speculated on Monday that "rogue killers" may have been behind the disappearance of prominent Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi and dispatched Secretary of State Mike Pompeo to meet King Salman over the case.

Khashoggi, a U.S. resident, Washington Post columnist and leading critic of the powerful Saudi crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman, vanished after entering the Saudi consulate in Istanbul two weeks ago to get marriage documents. Turkish officials say they believe he was murdered there and his body removed.

Saudi Arabia is preparing a report that would say Khashoggi was killed as the result of an interrogation that went wrong, CNN reported on Monday, citing two unidentified sources. The Saudi government could not immediately be reached for comment on the CNN report. The New York Times, citing a person familiar with the Saudi plans, reported that Prince Mohammed bin Salman had approved an interrogation or rendition of Khashoggi back to Saudi Arabia. The Saudi government, it said, would shield the prince by blaming an intelligence official for the botched operation.

The case has provoked an international outcry against Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil exporter, with more media and business executives pulling out of a planned investment conference there this month.

While organizers said Monday the conference will go on, the Saudis canceled an annual diplomatic reception in Washington set for later this week.

Many members of the U.S. Congress, which has long had a testy relationship with Saudi Arabia, have issued strong criticism of the kingdom over the case.

Turkish authorities have an audio recording indicating

that Khashoggi was killed in the consulate, a Turkish official and a security source told Reuters, and have shared evidence with countries including Saudi Arabia and the United States. They provided no further details.

Saudi Arabia has strongly denied killing Khashoggi and has denounced such assertions as "lies", saying he left the building shortly after entering. "The king firmly denied any knowledge of it," Trump told reporters after speaking with King Salman. "He didn't really know, maybe - I don't want to get into his mind but it sounded to me - maybe these could have been rogue killers. Who knows?"

The U.S. president gave no evidence to support the theory.



Human rights activists hold pictures of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi during a protest outside the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul

Trump called his top diplomat on Sunday night and asked him to have face-to-face meetings with the Saudi leaders, according to State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert. "Determining what happened to Jamal Khashoggi is something of great importance to the president," she said.

Pompeo will go to Turkey from Saudi Arabia, the White House National Security Council said.

Turkish police investigators entered the Istanbul consulate late on Monday. A Turkish diplomatic source had earlier said a joint Turkish-Saudi team would search the building - the last place Khashoggi was seen before he vanished on Oct. 2. "It has been 13 days since the event, so surely proving some of the evidence might be difficult, but we believe we will obtain evidence," the Turkish official said.

Many U.S. mall owners say good riddance to Sears

NEW YORK (Reuters) - The real estate investment trusts that own the malls and shopping centers where many Sears stores are anchor tenants have waited years for the retailer's demise to renovate the sites and boost rent, although redevelopment costs may strain some plans.

Sears store is pictured with a sign indicating the store remains open during the ongoing redevelopment of the neighboring Granite Run Mall in Media, Pennsylvania, U.S., October 10, 2018.

REUTERS/Tom Hals

Most large U.S. malls are controlled by REITs. In recent years, the REITs have cut their exposure to Sears Holdings Corp, which filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy on Monday. Sears said it plans to close 142 stores.

Sears now accounts for less than 1.0 percent of many REITs' base rental income. Gaining control of vacated sites will be costly, while rebuilding the stores can run about \$10 million to \$12 million, or about \$100 per square foot, for each site.

But most REIT shares gained on Monday as investors focused on the potential benefits of a Sears bankruptcy.

The REITs have looked forward to a bankruptcy to remove the eyesore of many Sears stores. They also will be able to raise the rent in contracts sometimes

signed more than 20 years ago with extension options that kept leases very low. Shares of mall REITs have fallen in recent years as investors feared online shopping would eliminate the need for many brick-and-mortar stores and as rising interest rates add to funding costs. Besides Sears, retail bankruptcies such as Toys R Us and Bon-Ton Stores Inc created vacancies. But rents have risen in the best locations and a bankruptcy like Sears poses an opportunity for landlords to refresh their properties with new or better tenants, provided they win control of the sites during Chapter 11, which can be complicated.

"What they've always said to me, we certainly are happy to get back the boxes," said Haendel St. Juste, a REIT analyst at Mizuho Americas in New York.

Simon Property Group, the largest U.S. mall operator, has 59 Sears Holdings stores in its malls, the most of any REIT, but its exposure to the bankruptcy is "de minimis," he said.

Leases with new tenants could easily double or triple the rent Sears or Kmart now pay, the REITs say. Kmart merged with Sears in a 2005 deal. A Kmart that was demolished in Staten Island, New York, will result in rents 727 percent higher



FILE PHOTO: A store closing sale sign is posted next to a Sears logo in New Hyde Park, New York

when the new site opens with new tenants in 2020, Kimco Realty Corp said in a statement Monday, a sign of the upside the bankruptcy offers.

"It's not been a surprise but it's been frustrating that it's taken so long," David Bujnicki, in charge of investor relations and strategy at Kimco, said in an interview of the long-expected bankruptcy.



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Mayor Turner's former press secretary faces second criminal charge

By Mike Morris

Mayor Turner's former press secretary faces second criminal charge

By Mike Morris Updated 3:08 pm CDT, Monday, October 15, 2018

Mayor Sylvester Turner's former press secretary has been charged with abusing her official capacity by misusing her government computer, cell phone and email account for private purposes, according to a charging document filed by the Harris County District Attorney's office.

Darian Ward, who also was charged last July with refusing to turn over public records, "intentionally and knowingly" misused government property to "obtain a benefit" between March 22, 2014 and Nov. 15, 2017, states the charging document, which was filed Friday. The value of the alleged misuse was estimated to be at least \$750 and less than \$2,500.

The new charge is listed as a felony on the charging document, but the District Attorney's office said that is a typographical error and the charge is a Class A misdemeanor.

Ward, who resigned her city post in January, faces a fine of up to \$1,000, six months in jail or both under the misdemeanor records charge filed in July. She is

accused of failing to turn over roughly 5,000 pages of emails about personal business activities sent or received on her city of Houston email account in response to an open records request by a reporter. Ward's attorney, Chris Tritico, has said the emails were not public information and that his client did nothing wrong. Tritico could not immediately be reached for comment on the latest charge.



Darian Ward, Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner's former press secretary, during a July 24, 2018, appearance in a Harris County courtroom.



Snow, freezing temperatures, 60-mph wind gusts reported around Texas

Autumn quickly descended upon Texas Sunday and Monday, bringing drastic temperature drops, record lows, heavy rain and even snow to the Lone Star State.

The cold front's path through the state was rapid, but it didn't hit the whole state at once. Cities in the panhandle and North Texas were showing 30-degree temperatures Sunday while San Antonio, Houston, and other southern cities maintained their summery 70-90 degree temperatures, the National Weather Service said.

RELATED: Frigid winds, rain rush into San Antonio for fall's first taste of cold

weather

By Monday morning, even most of the South Texas cities reported 40-degree-plus temperature dips, according to the service. Corpus Christi experienced a 14-degree drop in just two minutes.

In the north part of the state, temperatures continued to drop. Multiple cities hit their first fall freezes, some warned of possible ice on highways, and Amarillo received snow, the weather service said.



There were drastic differences in temperatures across Texas cities as the cold front hit some parts of the state before others, according to the National Weather Service.



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Editor's Choice



People look at hot air balloons decorating a plaza, during a tourism event in Qianxinan



FILE PHOTO: A store closing sale sign is posted next to a Sears logo in New Hyde Park, New York



A woman stands next to an inflatable tank with U.S. President Donald Trump outside an art exhibition 'MonuMental' by the pseudonymous artist, Saint Hoax in downtown Beirut



A security official holds barriers during the arrival of Saudi officials at Saudi Arabia's consulate in Istanbul



North Korea's Ri Son Gwon, chairman of the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Country, crosses the concrete border to attend a meeting with South Korean Unification Minister Cho Myoung-gyon during at the truce village of Panmunjom



Alice Weidel of the anti-immigration party Alternative for Deutschland (AfD) reacts after the announcement of the first exit polls in the Bavarian state election in Mamming near Dingolfing, Germany, October 14, 2018. REUTERS/Wolfgang Rattay TPX IMAGES OF THE DAY



Tennis - Shanghai Masters - Men's Singles - Qi Zhong Tennis Center, Shanghai, China - October 14, 2018. Novak Djokovic of Serbia celebrates with the trophy after winning the final against Borna Coric of Croatia. REUTERS/Aly Song



North Korea's Ri Son Gwon, chairman of the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Country, shakes hands with South Korean Unification Minister Cho Myoung-gyon during their meeting at the truce village of Panmunjom

President Trump signs an executive order promoting job training at a Pledge to America's Workers event at the White House Thursday.

The executive order establishes a national council for U.S. workers and aims to equip students and workers with skills they need to thrive in the modern economy.

The council will help ensure Americans have access to affordable and relevant job training.

A number of company representatives at the event, including General Motors and Lockheed Martin, signed a pledge to help advance workforce development.

The president says the pledge will help provide nearly four million new job opportunities to American students workers over the next five years.

In the run-up to Thursday's announcement, R. Alexander Acosta, the labor secretary, announced \$150 million in funding pegged to a June 2017 executive order that was intended to strengthen apprenticeship programs targeting new industries, veterans and their spouses, women, people of color, and ex-offenders.

"It isn't as massive as I'd like to see, but there is a lot of activity going on now at the federal and state levels on apprenticeships and worker training," said Bob Lerman, a fellow at the nonpartisan Urban Institute who studies apprenticeship programs.

Mr. Trump will also convene an advisory panel of industry, union and corporate leaders to ensure that federal programs are more closely aligned to the labor demands of industry. In June, the Bureau of Labor Statistics estimated that there were 6.7 million job openings, with only 6.4 million workers available to fill them.

"Today, 23 companies and associations are pledging to expand apprenticeships. That's an interesting word for me to be saying, right? 'The Apprentice,'" Mr. Trump said at a White House signing ceremony.



President Donald Trump signs an executive order on Thursday in the Roosevelt Room of the White House.

"I never actually put that together until just now," he said, calling to his daughter Ivanka, who is working on the jobs initiative.

President Trump Signs Executive Order On Job Training

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



President Donald Trump holds up an Executive Order he signed that establishes a National Council for the American Worker, during a ceremony in the East Room of the White House in Washington, Thursday, July 19, 2018. (Photo/AP)

ship slots their organization planned to set aside. That number totaled about 500,000, according to two trade association representatives.

But earlier this week, aides to Mr. Trump, apparently disappointed with that number, expanded the definition of "career opportunities" to include many other initiatives, including retraining of workers inside companies for different jobs, continuing education programs and other measures intended to burnish worker skills.

Trade groups like the Aerospace Industry Association included new initiatives to create skills certification programs that would be portable from company to company.



Ivanka Trump has been working on President Trump's jobs initiative. (Photo/The New York Times)

The order creates a Council for the American Worker, led by the secretaries of commerce and labor, that will focus on consolidating existing federal programs and funding new job training initiatives, with a special concentration on expanding apprenticeship programs and retraining older workers without college degrees.

As part of the effort, companies and trade unions have committed to funding nearly four million slots for apprenticeships, retraining and continuing education programs over the next five years.

Job training has emerged as one of the few coordinated policy initiatives generated in the West Wing with broad appeal across income and party lines. In part, that is because many labor and corporate leaders are struggling to expand their work force, and several top White House officials, including

Kevin Hassett, the chairman of Mr. Trump's Council of Economic Advisers, have made the issue a top priority.

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"It isn't as massive as I'd like to see, but there is a lot of activity going on now at the federal and state levels on apprenticeships and worker training," said Bob Lerman, a fellow at the nonpartisan Urban Institute who studies apprenticeship programs.

"Today, 23 companies and associations are pledging to expand apprenticeships. That's an interesting word for me to be saying, right? 'The Apprentice,'" Mr. Trump said at a White House signing ceremony.

White House staff members had initially asked participants to base their numerical pledges on the number of apprenticeship slots their organization planned to set aside. That number totaled about 500,000, according to two trade association representatives.

But earlier this week, aides to Mr. Trump, apparently disappointed with that number, expanded the definition of "career opportunities" to include many other initiatives, including retraining of workers inside companies for different jobs, continuing education programs and other measures intended to burnish worker skills.

Trade groups like the Aerospace Industry Association included new initiatives to create skills certification programs that would be portable from company to company. (Courtesy New York Times)



The President's Executive Order on job training.

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MIT And Qatari Researchers Are Working To Expose Fake News Sources Rather Than Dispute Fake Postings

New Tool Fights Fake News By Exposing Websites That Create It

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor



Many sites that generate fake news — disinformation masquerading as truth — share characteristics that distinguish them from journalistic outlets, according to researchers from MIT and the Qatar Computing Research Institute...

articles with a variety and high degree of these linguistic features, it can be easily inferred that they are more likely to publish unreliable “news”.

dium level of “factuality” about 65 percent of the time. It could predict right- or left-leaning bias about 70 percent of the time. While not perfect, it’s a big improvement over a raw guess (50 percent).

dozens of reporters who comprise NewsGuard’s staff. They hail from a range of news organizations, including New York Daily News and GQ.

NewsGuard

Restoring Trust & Accountability

To vet the sites, they use a checklist of nine criteria that typically denote trustworthiness. Sites that don’t clearly label advertising lose points, for example.

That’s why fighting disinfo piece-by-piece is like bailing a boat that’s filling up faster than buckets can handle.

FAKE NEWS

ones that debunk conspiracy theories and disinformation. According to experts in digital forensics from the International Institute of Cyber Security...

The research presented reveals the key features of fake news websites that may be less visible to verifiers, such as functional words, specific word patterns that give greater force to news content.

Among the features: specific patterns of so-called “function words” that give a more spoken feel to a news article, as opposed to the far more common “content words”.

NEWSGUARD WANTS TO FIGHT FAKE NEWS WITH HUMANS, NOT ALGORITHMS

Imagine you are scrolling through Facebook, you see an article that seems a little unusual, and you flag it. If Facebook’s algorithm has decided you’re trustworthy, the report then might go to the social network’s third-party fact checkers.

That’s one reason why a group of journalists and media executives are launching a tool called NewsGuard, a browser plug-in for Chrome and Microsoft Edge that transcends platforms...

cey Aldrich, the state librarian of Hawaii, said in a statement. ‘We’re trying to be the opposite of an algorithm.’



Brill and Crovitz launched NewsGuard in response to two dueling crises facing journalism: the declining trust in mainstream media, and the proliferation of fake news that masquerades as legitimate.



NewsGuard’s staff of nearly 40 reporters and dozens of freelancers are still working their way through 4,500 websites that they say account for 98 percent of the content shared online.



If a news site pumps out a lot of articles with a variety and high degree of these linguistic characteristics, you can safely infer that they’re more likely to be publishing “news” that, well, isn’t.

Advertisement for '2018 Houston Travel Shopping Guide' featuring a magazine cover with various travel tips and restaurant recommendations. Includes text: '請至本報社 免費取閱' and '已經'.

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