

World News Roundup

Britain

Pledge to heal divisions

British PM claims Brexit mandate 'new majority'

LONDON, Dec 14, (AP) — Prime Minister **Boris Johnson** pledged Friday to heal Britain's divisions over Brexit after his gamble on early elections rewarded him with a commanding majority in Parliament and a new mandate to take his country out of the European Union at the end of January.

Johnson's promise to "get Brexit done" and widespread unease with the leadership style and socialist policies of opposition leader **Jeremy Corbyn** combined to give the ruling Conservative Party 365 seats in the House of Commons, its best performance since party icon **Margaret Thatcher's** last victory in 1987. Corbyn's Labour Party slumped to 203 seats, 59 fewer than it won two years ago, vote totals showed Friday.



Johnson

The results offer Johnson fresh momentum to push his EU withdrawal agreement through Parliament. Since taking office in July, he had led a minority government. After the House of Commons stalled his Brexit deal at the end of October, he called the election two years ahead of schedule in hopes of winning a clear majority.

Johnson also offered an olive branch to Britons who want to remain in the EU, saying he will respect their "warm feelings" and build a "new partnership" with the bloc as "friends and sovereign equals."

Speaking Friday outside 10 Downing Street, he pledged to end acrimony over Brexit and urged the country to "let the healing begin." He said he would work to repay voters' trust.

Key leaders in Europe, signaled that they, too, were willing to start anew. French President **Emmanuel Macron** said it was time to build a common future.

"I also want to tell our British friends and allies something very simple: By this general election, you have confirmed the choice made more than three years ago, but you are not leaving Europe," he said. "Our history, our geography, our values tie us beyond the twists and turns, difficulties or disappointments."

US President **Donald Trump** congratulated Johnson on "a tremendous victory," and said he looked forward to a new trade deal with Britain.

"It's going to be a great thing for the United States also, because it means a lot of trade, a tremendous amount of trade," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office. "They want to do business with us so badly."

The scale of Johnson's success marked a stinging defeat for **Corbyn**, who had promised to lead Labour to victory with the "biggest people-powered campaign our country has ever seen."

Instead, voters rejected his attempt to bridge divisions over Brexit by promising a second referendum on any deal with the EU.

Asia

China tightens info:

The Xinjiang regional government in China's far west is deleting data, destroying documents, tightening controls on information and holding high-level meetings in response to leaks of classified papers on its mass detention camps for Uighurs and other predominantly Muslim minorities, according to four people in contact with government employees there.

Top officials are deliberating how to respond to the leaks in meetings at the Chinese Communist Party's regional headquarters in Urumqi, Xinjiang's capital, some of the people said.

They spoke on condition of anonymity because of fears of retribution against themselves, family members and the government workers.

The meetings began days after The New York Times published last month a cache of internal speeches on Xinjiang by top leaders including Chinese President **Xi Jinping**.

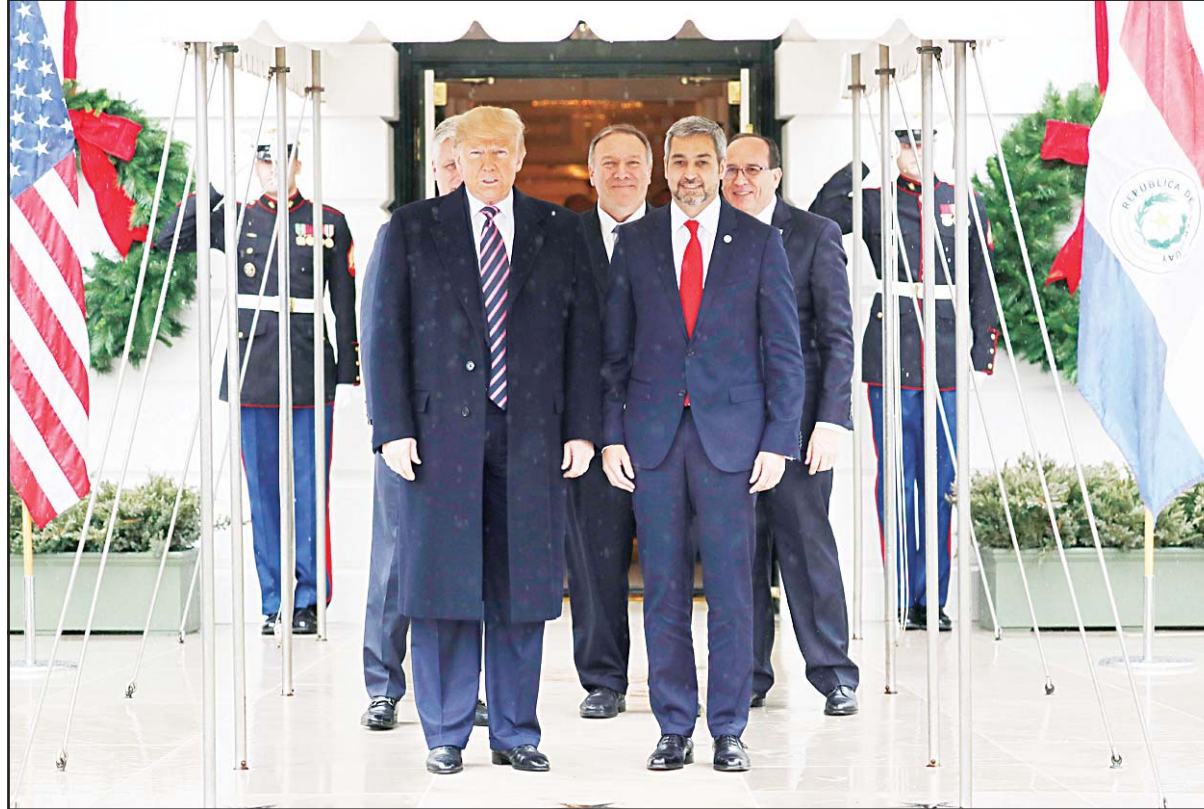
They continued after the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists worked with news organizations around the world including The Associated Press to publish secret guidelines for operating detention centers and instructions on how to use technology to target people.

The Chinese government has long struggled with its 11-million-strong Uighur population, an ethnic



Xi

Turkic minority native to Xinjiang, and in recent years has detained 1 million or more Uighurs and other minorities in the camps. (AP)



US President Donald Trump welcomes Paraguay's President Mario Abdo Benitez to the White House on Dec 13 in Washington. Behind them is Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. (AP)

'Wild week' as Washington works amid impeachment

US President **Donald Trump** and House Speaker **Nancy Pelosi** don't see eye-to-eye on much these days, but in the throes of impeachment, they're in lockstep on the desire to close out the year by checking off items on their to-do lists.

As the uncertain politics of the effort to remove Trump from office collide with critical year-end legislative deadlines, Washington, for the first time in recent memory, appears intent on demonstrating its capacity to multitask. Lawmakers and White House officials are eager to project the image that they've been focused on anything but the polarizing proceedings that

are increasingly consuming their days and nights.

Even President **Donald Trump**, no stranger to unpredictability and drama, could only marvel at the week of Washington whiplash.

"This has been a wild week," he said Friday morning as he played host to the president of Paraguay in the Oval Office.

On Friday, as the House Judiciary Committee was taking the historic step of passing articles of impeachment against the president, Trump had counter-programming at the ready, announcing new progress on long-delayed negotiations with China

to tame an 18-month trade war.

"Take note @SpeakerPelosi — this is what real leadership looks like," tweeted White House Press Secretary **Stephanie Grisham**, highlighting the "phase-one" deal.

It was far from the first split-screen moment of the week.

In the span of one hour Tuesday, Pelosi held a press conference to announce articles of impeachment against the president — then swiftly

walked down the hall to announce a bipartisan deal to fulfill the president's top legislative priority of the year, the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement on trade. (AP)

Europe

Macron to push pension plan:

French President **Emmanuel Macron** remains determined to push ahead with an overhaul of the nation's pension system despite more than a week of nationwide strikes that paralyzed public transport in Paris, where stores and restaurants have seen eroding profits.

Yet, travelers from around the world have continued to visit the City of Light as the holiday season approaches, according to the Paris tourism office.

Speaking in Brussels, Macron said

Friday the "historic reform" aims at better equipping the country for 21st century challenges.

The changes, which include raising the

retirement age to 64 and ending special privileges for some workers, will make the pension system fairer and will keep it out of debt, he added.

It's too early to fully assess the strikes' impact on tourism and Paris businesses, tourism office director **Corinne Menegaux** told the Associated Press. Still, despite an initial slump in hotel reservations, bookings ahead of the "most important time of the year" — Christmas and the New Year — have continued to grow, she said.

Menegaux pointed to difficulties getting to and from airports. The city has put in place additional airport shuttles as the strikes wear on. Still, foreign tourists have continued to visit the city and explore its sites on foot, she said. (AP)



Macron



Menegaux

Including all vehicles in its showrooms

Mutawa Alkazi Launches the Strongest Maintenance Offer on GAC Vehicles



“ 25% discounts on spare parts, free windscreen wipers and 25-point check ”

Mutawa Alkazi Co., the exclusive and authorized distributor and dealership of GAC MOTORS vehicles in Kuwait, has launched its latest maintenance offer under the slogan "GAC Service Center: Safety, Quality, Speed and Care".

The new offer includes 25% discounts on spare parts, free new windscreen wipers, 25-point interior check, car wash and a chance to win a valuable gift.

Mutawa Alkazi announced in a press release that the offer applies to all GAC vehicles in its showrooms, pointing out that its service centers are noted for their speed in receiving and delivering the car, carrying out 25-minute highly efficient checks and maintenance with a view to saving the customer's precious time.

It added that the company provides separate lounges for men and ladies, with free Wi-Fi and the best entertainment appliances while customers watch the servicing of their cars.

Service centers are open to customers without prior appointment 12 hours daily, with 84% of the cars being serviced and delivered to the customer the same day.

Using the best quality paints and equipment with highly skilled engineers, Mutawa Alkazi confirmed the availability of spare parts for all its cars at the best prices compared to those of its competitors in the local market.

Seeking to help customers carry on their normal business, the company provides daily, monthly and annual car rental at low rates to owners of cars under maintenance. It stressed that its team is keen on delivering the new cars as quickly as possible at the highest professional standards in the industry.

With more than 60 years of history, Mutawa Alkazi emphasized its continuous offers and campaigns to meet the tastes of all segments of the Kuwaiti market. It pointed out that its team is ready to receive customers in its showrooms and service centers on weekdays from 8:30 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. and on Fridays from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. This comes as part of its efforts to introduce customers to the special features of GAC cars, offering them the opportunity to test-drive vehicles, and ascertain their efficiency and performance as well as having fast repairs on their cars.

In its endeavor to meet all customers' requirement, Mutawa Alkazi offers the best



after-sale services and prices to build a distinctive long-term relationship with them. Mutawa Alkazi invites all those interested to visit its showrooms, take advantage of its offers and learn about the merits of GAC cars.

It pointed out that it offers its customers an 11-year warranty, free 5-year service including free oil and filter, free traffic registration and free thermal tinting.

As part of its keenness to boost its footprint in the local market, Mutawa Alkazi offers financing facilities in cooperation with local banks and finance companies.



Subcontinent

Abe postpones India trip: Japanese Prime Minister **Shinzo Abe** on Friday postponed traveling for a summit with India's leader in the violence-wracked northeast, where two people have been killed in ongoing protests over a new law that grants citizenship based on religion and excludes Muslims.

Nearly 10,000 protesters held a day-long hunger strike on Friday in Guwahati, the capital of India's northeastern state of Assam, the morning after rioters defied an overnight curfew and police fatally shot two demonstrators and injured 24 others.

Abe was scheduled to travel to Assam and Manipur states on Sunday for a three-day trip to discuss security and economic ties with Indian Prime Minister **Narendra Modi**. (AP)



Abe

Pakistan lawyers strike: Pakistani lawyers went on strike Friday, demanding authorities release dozens of their colleagues arrested after storming a hospital this week in the eastern city of Lahore and beating up doctors and medical staff there.

Three patients at the cardiology hospital died when physicians and medics left them unattended for several hours Wednesday to escape the mob of about 500 lawyers who had descended on the facility. Police used tear gas and eventually brought the situation under control but much of the hospital was trashed.

The lawyers claim they were enraged by alleged misbehavior by some of the doctors at the state-owned hospital toward one of their colleagues last month.

Authorities on Thursday raised charges of treason against 250 of the lawyers. (AP)

Insider attack kills 9: At least one member of an Afghan militia opened fire on his fellow militiamen early Saturday, killing nine, in what the country's interior ministry called an insider attack.

The Taliban however claimed the attack was actually a coordinated insurgent assault on the checkpoint where the shooting took place, killing over two dozen militiamen, according to Taliban spokesman **Zabihullah Mujahid**.

There was no immediate explanation for the discrepancy, but the Taliban often exaggerate their claims.

Details were sketchy and investigators were still looking into the attack in central Ghazni province's Karabagh district, said Interior Ministry spokesman **Fawad Aman**. The number of attackers was also not immediately clear.

Afghan militias operate in remote regions and are under the command of the country's National Security Forces, which suffers near daily Taliban attacks.

The Taliban now control or hold sway over half the country. (AP)