

14 year old charged in stabbing death of student

● Majors, 18, was at Morningside Park on Dec. 11 when three teenagers tried to rob her

● One of the teens put her in a chokehold as the others rifled through her pockets

● A few days prior to the stabbing, the 14-year-old and two others robbed someone else of their cellphone at knifepoint

AFP | New York

A 14-year-old boy has been arrested and charged in the stabbing death of a New York university student, authorities said Saturday, in a case that is being closely watched due to its racial dynamics.

Tessa Majors, 18, a freshman at Barnard College, was attacked by three teens as she walked through Morningside Park on



Barnard College student Tessa Majors

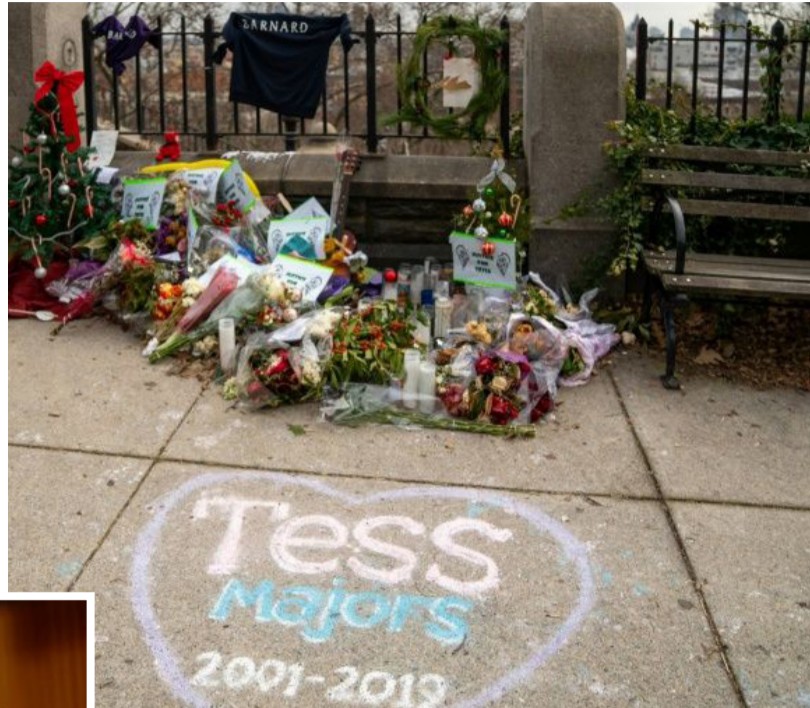
December 11.

The park separates the prestigious Barnard College and Columbia University from Harlem, the predominantly black neighborhood in Manhattan's northwest.

Majors, who was white, was



Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance briefs the press



A makeshift memorial for Tessa Majors, an 18-year-old Barnard College freshman killed in a stabbing attack in a park near her school, on December 26, 2019

found just outside the park bleeding heavily, the criminal complaint said. She had been stabbed multiple times in the chest and died at a hospital.

Rashaun Weaver, 14, who is black, was accused of stabbing Majors. He had been wanted for

several weeks and was arrested without incident Friday night.

Weaver will be tried as an adult on second-degree murder and robbery charges, Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance said.

"We are confident that

we have the person in custody who stabbed her, and that person will face justice in a court of law," New York police chief Dermot Shea told a news conference.

Vance said investigators have video and DNA evidence and suggested the suspect had incriminated himself on an audio recording.

A 13-year-old alleged accomplice was also charged but will be tried in juvenile court.

The events evoke memories of the 1989 "Central Park Five" case, when five black and Hispanic teens were wrongly convicted and sentenced to prison for the rape and assault of a white female jogger in the famous park.

Vance suggested the sensitivities of the latest case contributed, in part, to the delay in charging Weaver.

"We're dealing with a 14 year old and we will be very careful to safeguard all the rights that he has as we go forward with this case," he said.

"I want New Yorkers to know that we are recommitting today to fairness in this case, because only a fair process will result in true justice for Tessa Majors."

UK issues rare 'danger to life' warning over Storm Dennis

London

Storm Dennis swept across Britain on Sunday with the army drafted in to help deal with heavy flooding and high winds, officials warning it could be "life-threatening" in South Wales.

The government weather agency issued a rare red warning for the area, saying there was a risk of "significant impacts from flooding" that included a "danger to life from fast flowing water, extensive flooding to property and road closures".

Almost 200 flood warnings were in place early on Sunday, extending from Scotland's River Tweed to Cornwall in southwest England.

Winds of over 90 miles per hour (150 kilometres per hour) were recorded in Aberdaron, south Wales.

The Ministry of Defence had earlier deployed troops in West Yorkshire, northern England, which suffered badly



Troops have been deployed in West Yorkshire, northern England, which suffered badly from flooding caused by last weekend's Storm Ciara

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"Our armed forces are always ready to support local authorities and communities whenever they need it," said defence minister Ben Wallace.

British Airways and easyJet confirmed they had grounded flights, while two bodies were pulled from rough seas off the south England coast on Saturday as the storm barreled in.

One of the men is assumed to have been the subject of a search triggered when an LPG tanker reported that one of its crew was unaccounted for.

He was last seen several hours earlier.

Sri Lanka calls on US to reconsider barring army chief

AFP | Colombo

Sri Lanka yesterday said the US should reconsider its decision to refuse entry to the island's army chief over his alleged war crimes and warned that relations were being "unnecessarily complicated".

The US Friday said the travel ban for Lieutenant General Shavendra Silva and his family was imposed over what it called credible evidence of human rights violations in the 2009 finale to the civil war.

US ambassador Alaina Teplitz was summoned by Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister Dinesh Gunawardena on Sunday, officials said.

He said Colombo was "disappointed" with the decision, the first against a Sri Lankan military officer.

"The minister said this action unnecessarily complicates the US-Sri Lanka relationship," his office said in a statement



Washington barred Sri Lankan army chief Shavendra Silva over alleged war crimes linked to the ending of the civil war

shortly after the closed-door meeting.

Silva was unfairly barred on unverified allegations, Gunawardena added.

The foreign ministry quoted Teplitz as saying the US would continue its cooperation with Sri Lanka, including in defence, despite the ban on Silva.

Silva's appointment in August sparked international outrage because of his links to alleged war crimes, and the UN briefly

suspended the recruitment of Sri Lankan troops for peace-keeping duties.

Silva headed the army's 58th division in the final months of the battle against Tamil Tiger rebels. The military claimed victory in May 2009, but it also sparked allegations that up to 40,000 civilians were killed by troops.

There was no immediate comment from Teplitz or the US embassy in Colombo.

US denounces detention in Venezuela of Guaido's uncle

Washington

The US State Department on Saturday condemned the detention in Venezuela of an uncle of opposition leader Juan Guaido, saying the man was being held on "preposterous charges."

"The United States strongly condemns the detention of Juan Jose Marquez, uncle of interim President Juan Guaido, and demands his immediate release," said a statement from State Department spokesperson Morgan Ortugas.

Marquez was detained Tuesday at the international airport near Caracas while accompanying Guaido on his return trip from a three-week tour to several countries including the US aimed at building pressure on President Nicolas Maduro.

Snake coupling prompts partial closure of Florida city park

AFP | Washington

A city in Florida closed off part of a park after residents spotted dozens of snakes which had apparently gathered for their annual coupling.

"It appears they have congregated for mating," the City of Lakeland Parks and Recreation Department said on Facebook with a photo of one of the serpents seen in the park by Lake Hollingsworth, southwest of Orlando.

Officials on Thursday sealed off an area where the amorous reptiles had gathered for their pre-Valentine's Day tryst with caution tape.

"This is for the protection of



One resident said he saw around 25 Florida water snakes gather at a park in Lakeland, southwest of Orlando

They are generally found resting in tree limbs over water or basking on shorelines. They are an important part of the ecosystem and should not be disturbed

THE CITY OF LAKELAND PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

the public and the snakes," the department said.

One resident said he saw around 25 Florida water snakes gather at a park in Lakeland, southwest of Orlando

The slippery customers were identified as harmless native Florida water snakes.

"They are generally found resting in tree limbs over water or basking on shorelines. They are an important part of the ecosystem and should not be disturbed," the department said.

Resident Tim Newberry, whose Facebook photos of snakes in the park alerted city authorities, told 10News he saw about 25 that day.