

# Groton Daily Independent

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## BATES TOWNSHIP ANNUAL MEETING NOTICE

Bates Township will hold its annual meeting and election on Tuesday, March 7th, 2017 at the home of the Clerk, 14523 409th Ave, Conde. Election of officers and business meeting will be held at 6:30 p.m. We will be receiving bids for road maintenance and gravel. Please mail bids to Betty Geist, Bates Township Clerk, 14523 409th Ave., Conde, SD 57434 prior to meeting date. Betty Geist, Township Clerk

**Open:** Recycling Trailer in Groton  
The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave.

**The cardboard/paper**  
recycling trailer at the school is **OPEN**

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## Sunday, March 5

**Catholic Parish:** Mass at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church at 9 a.m., then at St. Joseph in Turton at 11 a.m.

**United Methodist Parish:** Worship in Conde at 9 a.m., coffee fellowship time at 10 a.m. and worship in Groton at 11 a.m.

**Heaven Bound Ministries in Pierpont:** Worship at 10 a.m.

**Emmanuel Lutheran:** Worship with Milestones at 9 a.m., Sunday School at 10 a.m.

**St. John's Lutheran:** Worship with communion at 9 a.m., Sunday School at 10 a.m., Voters meeting at 10 a.m.

**Open Gym** for JH-8 from 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m., and for grades 6-12 from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

## Monday, March 6

**School Breakfast:** French toast sticks, links, fruit, juice, milk.

**School Lunch:** Chicken drummies, smile potato, fruit, carrots and dip, bread stick.

**Senior Menu:** Sloppy joe on wheat bun, oven roasted potatoes, mixed vegetables, crunchy cranberry salad.

School board public meeting, 7 p.m., Bristol Community Center

City Council Meeting, 7 p.m., Groton Community Center

**Emmanuel Lutheran:** Bible Study at 6:30 a.m.

## Tuesday, March 7

**School Breakfast:** Egg sausage biscuit, fruit, juice, milk.

**School Lunch:** Chili, corn bread, fruit, broccoli and dip.

**Senior Menu:** Sweet and sour pork, steamed rice, carrots and broccoli medley, fruit salad, whole wheat bread.



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## Geek Squad places fourth at state

The five Groton Tiger Robotics teams traveled to Mitchell Sat., Feb. 25 for the state VEX competition. The Geek Squad (including members Jacob Lewandowski , Andrew Marzahn, Dragar Monson and Isaac Smith) placed fourth at the competition, with the G-Force (Landon Marzahn, Tanner McGannon and Hunter Monson) placing 13th. The placings of the other GT Robotics teams were GAT Wrenches (18th), Galaxy (21st) and Gear Heads (24th). There were 31 teams participating in the tournament from Box Elder, Eureka, Harrisburg, Lead, Mitchell, Rapid City, Sioux Falls and Vermillion.

Four of Groton's teams made it to the playoff rounds. When Geek Squad qualified for the playoff rounds and it was time for them to choose a team with which to alliance, they chose the G-Force team. G-Force just happens to include the big brothers of two of the players—giving parents in attendance an extra thrill.

The next competition for GT Robotics will be the Create U.S. Open in Council Bluffs, IA April 6-8, 2017. Attending these robotics competitions is the biggest expense for the program, and why the group does multiple fundraising events each year. If you are interested in making a donation to GT Robotics or would like more information about the program, contact their volunteer coordinator, Jim Lane at 397-7013. GT Robotics would like to thank the Groton community for all their support.



**GDI Living**

25 Main St., Downtown Groton



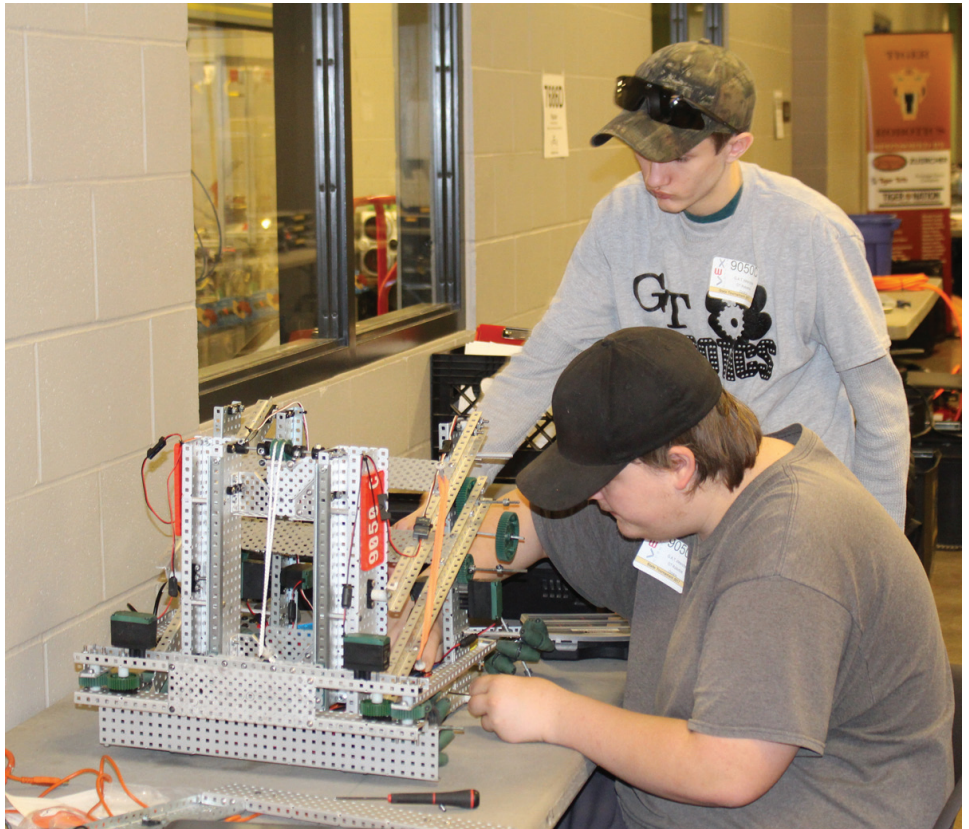
**Fitness**

Call or Text  
Paul at  
397-7460  
or Tina at  
397-7285  
for  
membership  
Information

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Noah Tullis and Tyler Iverson, from the G.A.T. Wrenches team making adjustments to their robot.



Jacob Lewandowski, from the Geek Squad team, working on their robot.

## GT Robotics Roster

**Geek Squad:** Dragr Monson, Isaac Smith, Andrew Marzahn, Jacob Lewandowski.

**G-Force:** Landon Marzahn, Hunter Monson, Tanner McGannon

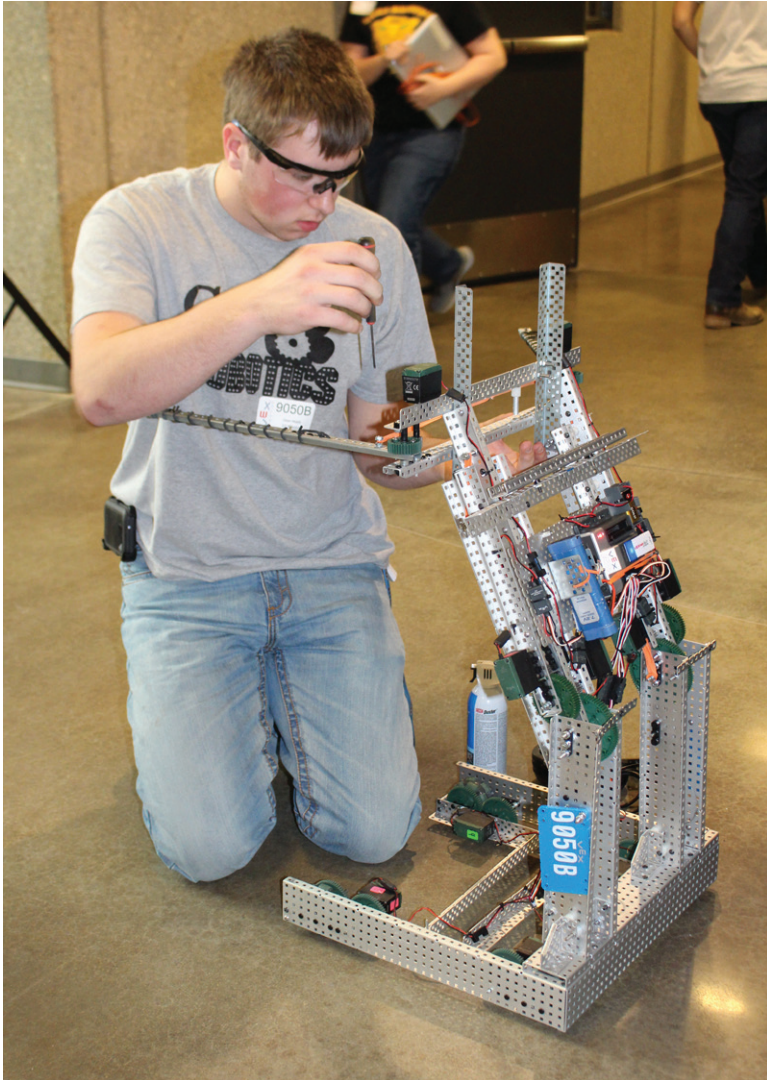
**G.A.T. Wrenches:** Noah Tullis, Thomas Cranford, Dan Feist, Tyler Iverson

**Gear Heads:** Trey Wright, Nathan Fjelstad, Micah Poor, Gabby Kramer, Jackson Dinger

**Galaxy:** Lee Williams, Travis Townsend, Alex Dutchuk, River Pardick.

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**Trey Wright working on his robot between matches.**



**Nathan Fjelstad and Trey Wright, from the Gear Heads team, concentrating during a competition.**

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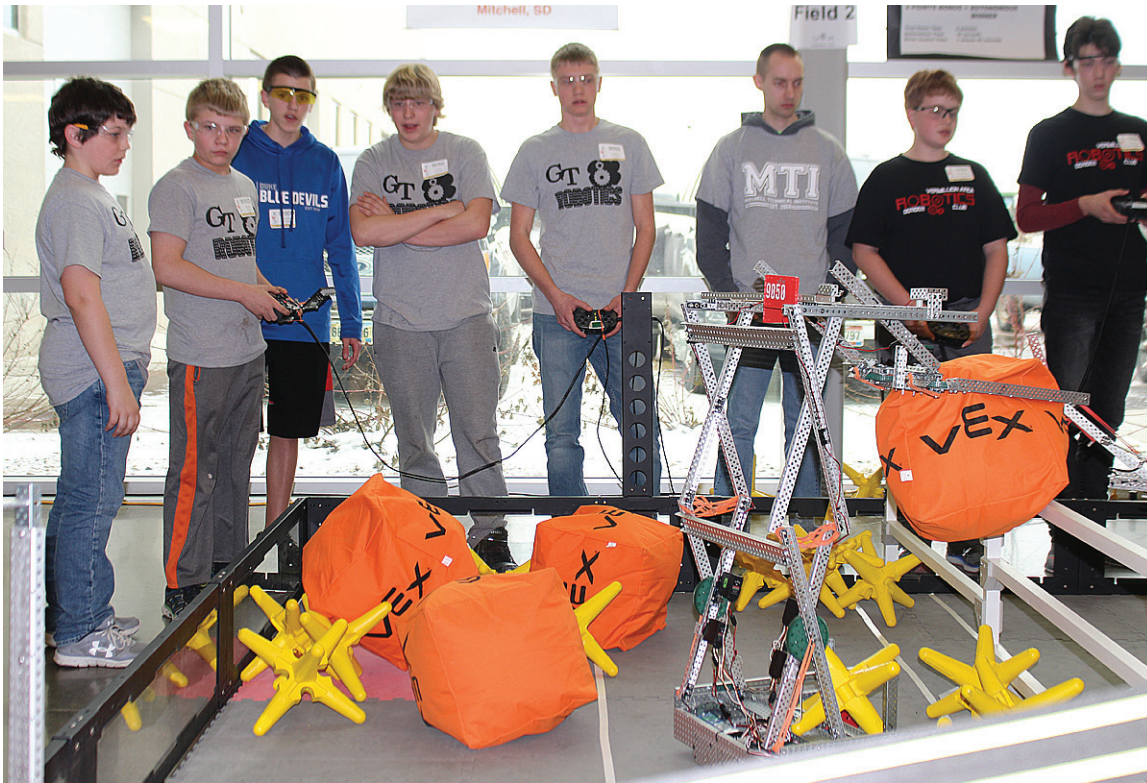
**The Groton Robotics Team Members at State: Front Row: Jacob Lewandowski, Andrew Marzahn, Tanner McGannon, Dragr Monson, Tyler Iverson, and Isaac Smith. Back Row: Advisor: Jim Lane, Landon Marzahn, Hunter Monson, Trey Wright, Nathan Fjelstad, and Noah Tullis.**



**Travis Townsend and River Pardick watching their autonomous robot.**

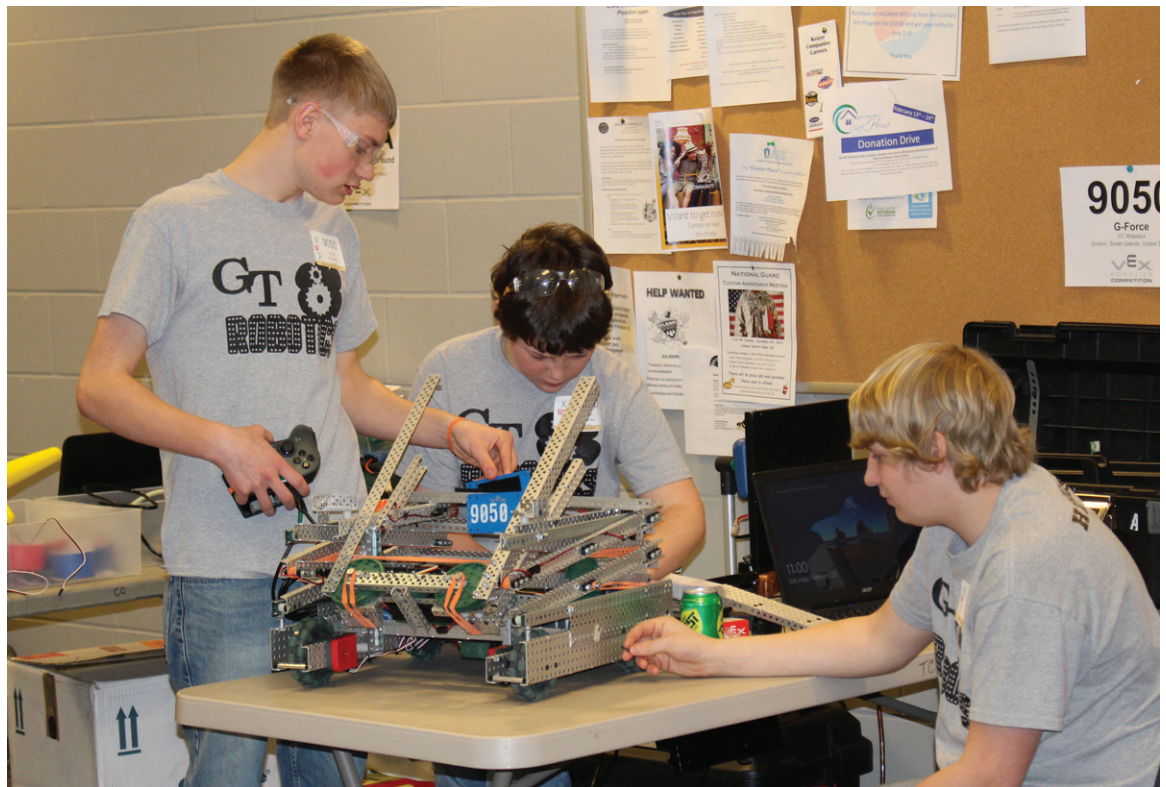
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Tanner McGannon, Dragr Monson, Isaac Smith, Hunter Monson and Landon Marzahn. G-Force and Geek Squad aligned together in the quarterfinals match.

Landon Marzahn, Tanner McGannon and Hunter Monson of the G-Force team working on their robot between matches.



## Today in Weather History

March 5, 1966: The historic blizzard of 1966, which started on March 2, comes to an end in the Dakotas. North Dakota saw severe livestock losses with an estimated 18,500 cattle, 7,500 sheep, and 600 hogs killed. On a farm in eastern North Dakota, 7,000 turkeys perished. The total loss of livestock was estimated at near \$4 million dollars. In South Dakota, an estimated 50,000 cattle, 46,000 sheep, and 1,800 hogs were killed. Most of the deaths occurred in the central and northern central part of the state.

1894: The low temperature of 36 degrees at San Diego, California on this day was their lowest on record for March.

1959: Near blizzard conditions occurred over northern and central Oklahoma. Up to seven inches of snow fell, and winds up to 50 mph created snow drifts 4 to 8 feet deep. In Edmond, a bus slid off the road into a ditch and overturned, injuring 16 people.

1966: A plane crashes near Mount Fuji in Japan after encountering severe turbulence. The pilot veered a few miles off course to give the passengers a better view of Mount Fuji when it tremendous wind gusts. All 124 people on board the aircraft were killed.

1972: Palm Springs, California recorded a high of 100 degrees, the earliest the city has ever hit the century mark.

1989: A F2 tornado killed one person and injured six others in Heard County, Georgia. A stronger, F3 tornado injured 23 persons and caused more than \$5 million dollars damage around Grantville, Georgia.

2007: The morning temperature dropped to 51 degrees below zero at Key Lake, Saskatchewan Canada.

1960 - Eastern Massachusetts greatest March snowstorm of record began to abate. The storm produced record 24 hour snowfall totals of 27.2 inches at Blue Hill Observatory, 17.7 inches at Worcester, and 16.6 inches at Boston. Winds gusted to 70 mph. (3rd-5th) (The Weather Channel)

1962 - A tremendous storm raged along the Atlantic coast. The great Atlantic storm caused more than 200 million dollars property damage from Florida to New England. Winds along the Middle Atlantic Coast reached 70 mph raising forty foot waves, and as much as 33 inches of snow blanketed the

mountains of Virginia. The Virginia shoreline was rearranged by historic tidal flooding caused by the combination of the long stretch of strong onshore winds and the Spring Tides. (David Ludlum)

1987 - A storm in the western U.S. produced heavy rain and high winds in California. Up to six inches of rain soaked the San Francisco Bay area in 24 hours, and winds gusted to 100 mph at the Wheeler Ridge Pumping Plant near the Tehachapi Mountains. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)



**livestream**

**Upcoming Event**

**Monday, March 6**








**7:00 p.m.**

**Groton City Council Meeting**

**gdilive.com**

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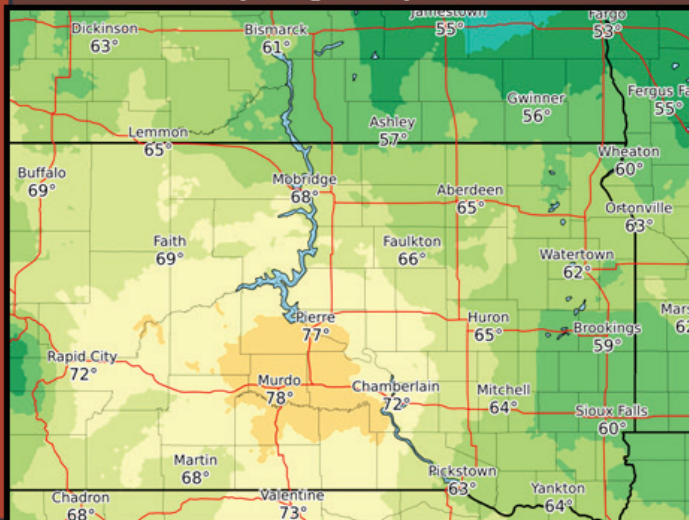
Today	Tonight	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday
						
Mostly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy then Slight Chance Rain and Windy	Chance Rain/Snow and Windy then Partly Cloudy and Breezy	Sunny and Windy	Mostly Clear and Blustery then Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny
High: 65 °F	Low: 42 °F	High: 55 °F	Low: 26 °F	High: 41 °F	Low: 18 °F	High: 40 °F

## Very High/Extreme Fire Danger This Afternoon

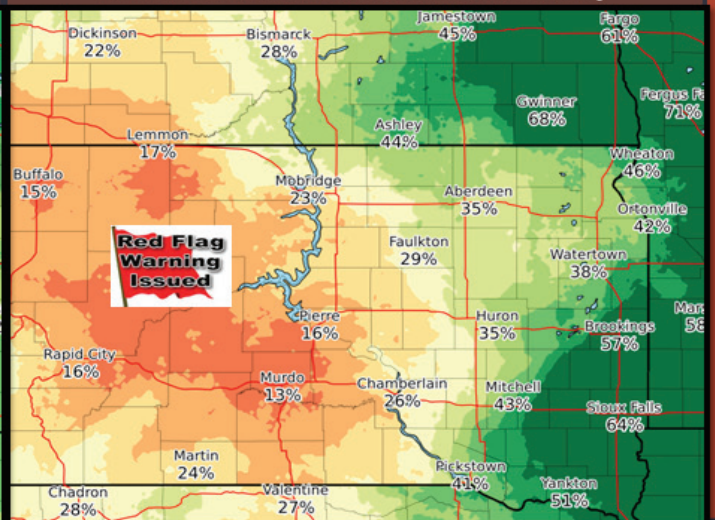
- Extreme fire danger over central South Dakota this afternoon.
- Much above normal temperatures today.
- Outlook for Monday – High potential for very strong afternoon winds.



Today's High Temperatures



Minimum Afternoon Relative Humidity



weather.gov/Aberdeen National Weather Service Aberdeen @NWSAberdeen Updated: 3/5/2017 4:20 AM Central

Published on: 03/05/2017 at 4:25AM

Very dry conditions, combined with warm afternoon temperatures and very low relative humidity will promote very high to extreme fire danger this afternoon over central and western South Dakota. Temperatures will be quite a bit above normal this afternoon.



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## Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 54.0 F at 2:58 PM

Low Outside Temp: 24.4 F at 6:32 AM

High Gust: 33.0 Mph at 5:09 PM

Rain: 0.00

## Today's Info

Record High: 74° in 2000

Record Low: -22 in 1919

Average High: 35°F

Average Low: 15°F

Average Precip in March.: 0.14

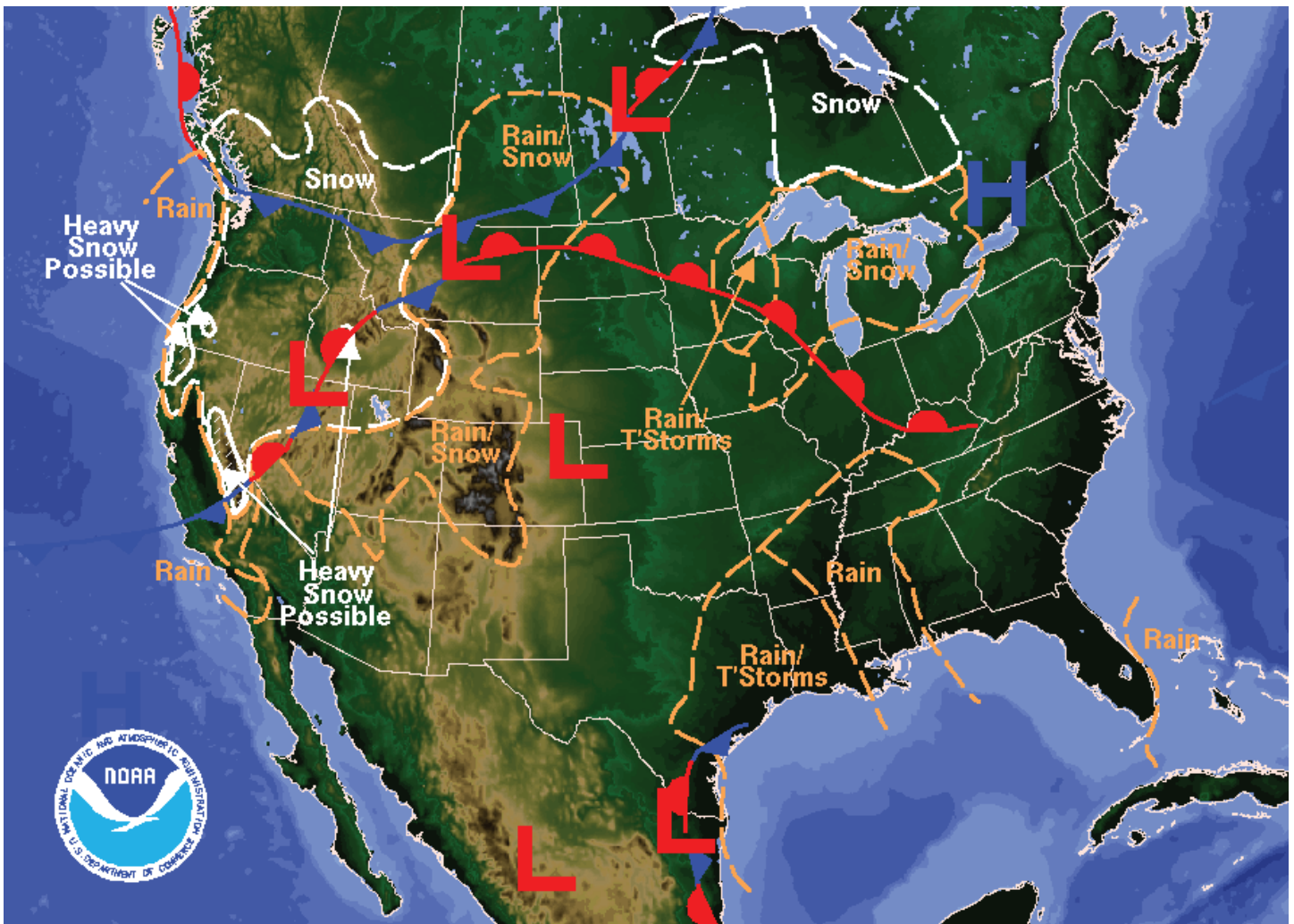
Precip to date in March.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 1.16

Precip Year to Date: 0.00

Sunset Tonight: 6:26 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:02 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Sun, Mar 05, 2017, issued 3:43 AM EST  
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center  
Prepared by Reinhart based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

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## RIGHT FOR GOD'S PLAN

Charlie Brown was sitting behind his desk holding his head between his hands, as his elbows kept them in place. With a worried look on his face he moaned, "The moment I set foot on the steps of life, they took one look at me and said, "You're not right for the part!"

Not so for the Christian!

Paul, writing to the Ephesians said, "When you believed in Christ who called you, He identified you as His own by giving you the Holy Spirit." That's God's guarantee that we belong to Him and that He has a unique plan for our lives and we are just "right for the part."

When the Holy Spirit comes into our lives it is the beginning of a new way of living because we have become "new creations" through Christ Jesus. We know that "old things have passed away and all things have become new!" And whatever "part" God has for us is one that meets His needs not ours. If we accept that "part" we will certainly be able to fulfill that "part" for His glory on earth.

We must always remember that the power of the Holy Spirit is at work in our lives now – transforming us into the likeness of Christ right now. Often we look at the "end product" – being with God in the Kingdom of Heaven. We must always remember that His power is at work in us at this very moment. And when we look back and see where we were, and look forward and know where we will be, we know He has a "part" for us.

Prayer: We pray, Lord, that we will be patient with You as You are with us as You shape us and mold us and work with us until we are "right for our part." In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Ephesians 1:13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.

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## News from the Associated Press

### SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) \_ These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Saturday:

Dakota Cash

08-22-24-26-35

(eight, twenty-two, twenty-four, twenty-six, thirty-five)

Estimated jackpot: \$22,000

Hot Lotto

02-16-40-44-46, Hot Ball: 18

(two, sixteen, forty, forty-four, forty-six; Hot Ball: eighteen)

Estimated jackpot: \$4.44 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$94 million

Powerball

02-18-19-22-63, Powerball: 19, Power Play: 3

(two, eighteen, nineteen, twenty-two, sixty-three; Powerball: nineteen; Power Play: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$68 million

### South Dakota beats Western Illinois 78-69 in overtime

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Matt Mooney scored 24 points and Tyler Flack added 19, including the go-ahead 3-point play in overtime, to lead No. 1 seed South Dakota to a 78-69 win over eighth-seeded Western Illinois in the Summit League Tournament quarterfinal on Saturday.

Flack got the opening bucket of the extra period and converted the free throw after being fouled to put South Dakota on top for good, 71-68 with 4:27 to play.

Western Illinois, which forced overtime with a 3-pointer from C.J. Duff at the end of regulation, was held to a single free throw in the extra period, missing all nine of its shots over the final five minutes as South Dakota steadily pulled away.

Trey Dickerson had 10 points for South Dakota (22-10), which will play either No. 4 seed South Dakota State or fifth-seeded Denver on Monday.

Garret Covington led Western Illinois (8-20) with 25 points, Duff finished with 12 and Brandon Gilbeck had 11 plus five blocks to set a single-season school record of 85.

### Saturday's Scores

By The Associated Press

BOYS' BASKETBALL

District 5B Championship: Castlewood 56, Arlington 50, OT

### Man pleads guilty to failing help boy who died of abuse

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota man has pleaded guilty to failing to help an abused boy, then concealing his death from authorities.

Forty-four-year-old Mitchell Wisecarver admitted in federal court Friday that he knew his wife, Lori Wisecarver, had been physically abusing 2-year-old Jayden Locke after they brought the child into their Pine Ridge home in 2014. The boy died months later.

An autopsy showed he died from "multiple blunt trauma injury," including bleeding in the brain and intestines. He also had burn-like injuries and bruises.

The Rapid City Journal reports (<http://bit.ly/2lr1wPp>) that Mitchell Wisecarver pleaded guilty to misprision of a felony. He faces up to three years in prison.

Forty-three-year-old Lori Wisecarver pleaded guilty last month to second-degree murder. She faces up to life in prison at her May sentencing.

Information from: Rapid City Journal, <http://www.rapidcityjournal.com>

## 1 dead after apartment fire in Yankton

YANKTON, S.D. (AP) — One person has died after an apartment fire in Yankton.

Officials say the fire call came in at about 8 p.m. Friday at an apartment in the southeast part of Yankton. Officials from the South Dakota Fire Marshal's Office and the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives are assisting with the investigation.

A cause of the fire hasn't been released.

Three families were also displaced. They are being assisted by the American Red Cross.

## US Marshals seek help locating fugitive deemed as dangerous

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The U.S. Marshals Service is seeking the public's help in finding a fugitive who missed a recent court appearance.

The Marshals Service says 24-year-old Abdirhman Ahmad Noor is considered armed and dangerous and he should not be approached.

He has been free on bond on two counts of attempted murder and two counts of aggravated assault, but missed a court date on Tuesday. The charges stem from a July shooting in Aberdeen.

The Marshals Service says Noor's whereabouts are currently unknown. There is a reward of up to \$1,500 for information leading directly to his arrest. Tipsters can remain anonymous.

## Ethan girls basketball players surpass 1,000 points

ETHAN, S.D. (AP) — Three seniors on the No. 1 Ethan girls basketball team have surpassed 1,000 career points this season.

Head coach Tom Young told The Mitchell Daily Republic (<http://bit.ly/2lfXtUu>) that he hasn't seen such a milestone in his 25 years of coaching.

"It's pretty rare. I don't think I've had a team with two 1,000-point-scorers," Young said. "It's a testament to their work ethic, because you don't score 1,000 points without putting a lot of time in the gym."

Young said the three players, Kacey Bartscher, Rachel Hawkins and Ellie Hohn, began playing the sport as sophomores or younger. He credited each player's team-first mentality.

"The biggest thing about these girls is they don't care who scores," Young said. "I don't know if I've seen a selfish play by any of them. They look for each other, they set each other up and they make each other better."

Hawkins, a 5-foot-8 guard, was the first to achieve the milestone at a Jan. 6 game, and was followed by 5-foot-11 forward Hohn on Jan. 17. Most recently, Bartscher, a 5-foot-9 guard, achieved the 1,000 mark on Feb. 3.

The three players gave credit to their teammates for their 1,000 point accomplishment.

"We give a lot of credit to the rest of our team, not just the starters, but the younger girls, because they push us every day in practice," Hawkins said. "We wouldn't be where we are without them."

Bartscher, Hawkins and Hohn said they have received interest from college coaches and will decide their college plans after the season.

"The goal is always to go as far as we can, but we just want to be playing our best basketball," Hawkins said. "If we play our best basketball and lose, then at least we know we went down playing as hard as we could."

Information from: The Daily Republic, <http://www.mitchellrepublic.com>

## Resident works to redevelop tornado-ravaged town of Delmont

DELMONT, S.D. (AP) — A man leading the charge to redevelop the tornado-ravaged town of Delmont is starting with two of the town's longstanding staples, the Onion House and the Delmont Steakhouse and Lounge.

Leo Holzbauer is leading the redevelopment of the town damaged by a tornado on Mother's Day 2015, The Mitchell Daily Republic (<http://bit.ly/2ISAaRX>) reported.

"(Delmont) will bounce back if you work at it," Holzbauer said. "If you don't do anything, nothing's going to happen because it'll get left."

The South Dakota State Historical Society recently announced that the Delmont Historical Society has received a \$20,000 matching grant for structural and roof repair on the Onion House's dome tower. The Historical Society must match the \$20,000, bringing the total to \$40,000. The total cost to renovate the Onion House is \$48,000.

Holzbauer said the Historical Society will raise the remaining \$28,000 through fundraisers and community donations. He's confident the project can be completed.

"When the weather's good, we'll start on it," Holzbauer said. "The city of Delmont needed that to keep some of its identity and we're really working at that."

Holzbauer bought the Delmont Steakhouse and Lounge in September 2015. It has been closed for about a year. He's offering the business to anyone who can run it with a clean environment for five years.

Holzbauer said at the end of the five-year partnership he will give the business to its next owners for free.

Information from: The Daily Republic, <http://www.mitchellrepublic.com>

## Trump accuses Obama of tapping his phones, invokes Watergate

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE and JULIE PACE, Associated Press

PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — President Donald Trump is accusing former President Barack Obama of ordering Trump's telephones tapped during last year's election, but Trump isn't offering any evidence even as he makes politically charged references to Watergate, Nixon and McCarthyism.

An Obama spokesman said the assertion being made against the former president was "simply false." Lawmakers from both parties called on Trump to offer proof and to say publicly what he knows.

In a series of morning tweets Saturday, Trump suggested Obama was behind a politically motivated plot to upend his campaign. He compared the alleged events to "Nixon/Watergate" and "McCarthyism!" And he called Obama a "Bad (or sick) guy."

The Watergate break-in during the Nixon administration led to President Richard Nixon's resignation and the conviction of several aides. Republican Sen. Joe McCarthy's reckless and unsupported charges of communist infiltration in federal government during the 1950s gave rise to the term "McCarthyism."

After Trump's well-received speech to Congress on Tuesday, the tweets reflected the president's growing frustration with the swirling allegations about his advisers' ties to Russia, which are under FBI investigation, and his team's inability to overcome them. Trump lashed out at his senior team during an Oval Office meeting Friday, according to one White House official.

The White House did not respond to questions about what prompted the president's accusations that Obama had tapped his phones. Presidents cannot legally order wiretaps against U.S. citizens. Obtaining wiretaps would require officials at the Justice Department to seek permission from the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court, which is shrouded in secrecy.

Trump said Saturday morning he had "just found out" the information, though it was unclear whether he was referring to a briefing, a conversation or a media report. The president has in the past tweeted about unsubstantiated and provocative reports he reads on blogs or conservative websites.

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The morning tweets stand out, even for the perpetually piqued Trump, given the gravity of the charge and the strikingly personal attack on the former president. Trump spoke as recently as last month about how much he likes Obama and how much they get along, despite their differences.

In his morning tweets, Trump said the wiretapping occurred in October at Trump Tower, the New York skyscraper where he ran his campaign and transition. He also maintains a residence there.

"How low has President Obama gone to tapp my phones during the very sacred election process. This is Nixon/Watergate. Bad (or sick) guy!" he tweeted, misspelling 'tap.'

Obama spokesman Kevin Lewis said a "cardinal rule" of the Obama administration was that no White House official ever interfered in Justice Department investigations, which are supposed to be conducted free of political influence.

"As part of that practice, neither President Obama nor any White House official ever ordered surveillance on any U.S. citizen," Lewis said, adding that "any suggestion otherwise is simply false."

Rep. Adam Schiff of California, the senior Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, said in a statement that Trump was making "the most outlandish and destructive claims without providing a scintilla of evidence to support them."

Sen. Ben Sasse, R-Neb., urged Trump to explain what he knows about the wiretapping allegations, "ideally to the full public, and at a bare minimum to the U.S. Senate."

Trump has been trailed for months by questions about his campaign's ties to Russia. The questions have been compounded by U.S. intelligence agencies' assessment that Russia interfered with the election to help Trump triumph over Hillary Clinton, along with disclosures about his aides' contacts with a Russian official.

Those disclosures have already cost retired Gen. Michael Flynn his job as national security adviser and prompted calls from Democrats for Attorney General Jeff Sessions to resign.

On Thursday, Sessions recused himself from the FBI probe after acknowledging he did not disclose his campaign-season contacts with Russia's ambassador to the United States when asked during his confirmation proceedings. Sessions, a U.S. senator at the time, was Trump's earliest Senate supporter.

The Sessions revelations deepened the president's anger over what he sees as his team's inability to get ahead of the Russia allegations. In the Oval Office meeting Friday shortly before departing for Florida, he angrily told senior advisers that what had the potential to be a good week following his address to Congress had been overtaken by the Russia controversy, according to a White House official who insisted on anonymity in order to discuss the private meeting.

The president's allegations may be related to anonymously sourced reports in British media and blogs, and on conservative-leaning U.S. websites, including Breitbart News. Those reports claimed that U.S. officials had obtained a warrant under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act to review contacts between computers at a Russian bank and Trump's New York headquarters.

The Associated Press has not confirmed these contacts or the investigation into them. Trump's chief strategist Steve Bannon is a former executive chairman of Breitbart News.

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Pace reported from Washington. Associated Press writers Kathleen Hennessey and Jeff Horwitz in Washington contributed to this report.

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Follow Darlene Superville at <http://twitter.com/dsupervilleap> and Julie Pace at <http://twitter.com/jpaceDC>

## Indian Sikh reports being shot in arm; police seek suspect

KENT, Wash. (AP) — Police in a Seattle suburb say they are seeking a white gunman after an Indian Sikh man reported he was shot in the arm and told to "go back to your own country."

India's foreign minister said on Twitter early Sunday that the victim is identified as Deep Rai and that he told police he was working in his driveway on Friday when the unidentified man approached him.

"I am sorry to know about the attack on Deep Rai, a U.S. national of Indian origin," Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj said. He added that he had spoken with the father of the victim.

Rai told police in the Seattle suburb of Kent that the shooter is a 6-foot-tall, white man with a stocky build,

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according to The Seattle Times. He said the man was wearing a mask covering the lower half of his face.

South Asians have been on edge after a deadly shooting in a suburban Kansas City bar that the FBI is investigating as a hate crime. Authorities said witnesses to the shooting, which left an Indian man dead and another wounded, reported the suspect yelled "get out of my country" before he opened fire.

In suburban Seattle, Rai told police the suspect said he should go back to his homeland and the two got into an argument, according to The Seattle Times. The paper said the victim told police the man then shot him in the arm.

Sikhs have previously been the target of attacks in the U.S. After the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, the backlash that hit Muslims around the country expanded to include those of the Sikh faith, the men often identified by a turban and a long beard.

Male observant Sikhs often cover their heads with turbans, which are considered sacred, and refrain from shaving their beards. The faith comes from South Asia's Punjab region.

In 2012, a man shot and killed six Sikh worshippers and wounded four others at a Sikh temple near Milwaukee before killing himself.

Police told the newspaper that the agency has contacted the FBI and other law enforcement agencies about the case.

"We're early on in our investigation," Kent Police Chief Ken Thomas said Saturday. "We are treating this as a very serious incident."

Jasmit Singh, a leader of the Sikh community in the nearby suburb of Renton, said he had been told Rai was released from the hospital, the Times reported.

"He is just very shaken up, both him and his family," Singh told the newspaper. "We're all kind of at a loss in terms of what's going on right now, this is just bringing it home. The climate of hate that has been created doesn't distinguish between anyone."

Information from: The Seattle Times, <http://www.seattletimes.com>

## Berry helps No. 5 Tar Heels beat No. 17 Blue Devils 90-83

By AARON BEARD, AP Basketball Writer

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. (AP) — Joel Berry II and his North Carolina teammates had already wrapped up an Atlantic Coast Conference regular-season title and a No. 1 seed in next week's tournament before tipping off against rival Duke.

Still, the fifth-ranked Tar Heels wanted to fight their way to a strong finish — the kind they hope can help propel them to another deep postseason run.

Berry scored 28 points, including a critical late-game burst of seven straight for his team, and UNC held off No. 17 Duke 90-83 on Saturday night.

The Tar Heels (26-6, 14-4) were coming off a loss at Virginia, but avenged last month's defeat to the rival Blue Devils (23-8, 11-7) to close the regular season.

Sound familiar? It should. The Tar Heels did exactly that last year in the final week of the regular season, then rolled to their first ACC Tournament title since 2008 and pushed all the way to the NCAA championship game.

"I think our guys did a great job of just focusing in on the game today and not worrying about (how) if we lose, we're still the ACC champs," Berry said, adding: "This gives us a little confidence going into the ACC Tournament, just like last year."

Isaiah Hicks scored 21 points for the Tar Heels, who battled through a nearly shot-for-shot fight with their fiercest rival to finish unbeaten at home. The game featured 24 lead changes and 14 ties before UNC finally pushed ahead for good in the final six minutes, with its final margin the biggest lead for either team all night.

"You saw a game where a lot of guys played well," Duke coach Mike Krzyzewski said. "And that's it. Sometimes, it's not nuclear science here. It's that easy."

Berry shot 9 of 14 and made all five of his 3-pointers to offset a tougher shooting night for leading scorer

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and ACC player of the year candidate Justin Jackson.

"You know what? Big-time players have got to make big-time plays in big-time games," UNC coach Roy Williams said.

Berry had 19 points by halftime.

"He got in a groove early. We had a couple miscommunications on the defensive end that got him those open shots," Duke's Matt Jones said, adding: "You can't let a good player get in their comfort zone."

Luke Kennard, another league player of the year contender, finished with 28 points to lead the Blue Devils.  
BIG PICTURE

Duke: The Blue Devils were playing to secure a top-four seed in the ACC Tournament and the double-round bye that comes with it. The nation's preseason No. 1-ranked team instead ended up with the No. 5 seed and a single-round bye in Brooklyn.

North Carolina: The Tar Heels had clinched the ACC Tournament's No. 1 seed last weekend and earned the outright regular-season title with No. 8 Louisville's home win against No. 19 Notre Dame earlier Saturday. This win closed out UNC's first perfect record at the Smith Center since 2011.

ALLEN'S NIGHT

Duke's Grayson Allen finished with 14 points, though he missed three free throws in the final 3½ minutes as Berry and the Tar Heels made their move.

Already the subject of every-play scrutiny following a series of tripping incidents, Allen also received a technical foul for hitting defender Brandon Robinson in the head with an elbow while being fouled on a first-half drive. Allen was booed loudly every time he touched the ball all night.

LIKE MIKE

The game also drew former UNC and NBA great Michael Jordan, who appeared at halftime with North Carolina football coach Larry Fedora to announce a Jordan Brand apparel deal with the program.

TIP-INS

Duke: Shot 54 percent in the first half but 37 percent after halftime. ... The Blue Devils made 28 of 35 free throws. ... Duke went 7 of 19 on 3-pointers after making 13 of 27 in the first meeting. ... Duke freshman Jayson Tatum had 13 points on 4-for-13 shooting.

UNC: The Tar Heels shot 51 percent and finished with a 15-5 edge in second-chance points. ... Jackson scored 15 points on 6-for-17 shooting while going just 1 of 7 on 3-point tries — though his only make came during the Tar Heels' game-clinching burst. ... Hicks, who sat out the first meeting due to a hamstring injury, had a game-high nine rebounds.

UP NEXT

Duke: The Blue Devils will open play in the ACC Tournament in Wednesday's second round.

North Carolina: The Tar Heels will open play in the ACC Tournament in Thursday's quarterfinals.

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Follow Aaron Beard on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/aaronbeardap>

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## China trims 2017 growth target, warns against trade controls

By JOE McDONALD, AP Business Writer

BEIJING (AP) — China's top economic official trimmed the country's growth target and warned Sunday of dangers from global pressure for trade controls as Beijing tries to build a consumer-driven economy and reduce reliance on exports and investment.

In a speech to the national legislature, Premier Li Keqiang promised more steps to cut surplus steel production that is straining trade relations with Washington and Europe. He pledged equal treatment for foreign companies, apparently responding to complaints Beijing is trying to squeeze them out of technology and other promising markets.

Li's report set the growth target for the world's second-largest economy at "around 6.5 percent or higher,



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if possible." That is down from last year's 6.7 percent expansion but, if achieved, would be among the world's strongest, reflecting confidence efforts to create new industries are gaining traction.

The premier called for attention to the risks of China's surging debt levels, which economists see as a rising threat to growth.

Li announced no major initiatives, but that was widely expected as the ruling Communist Party tries to avoid shocks ahead of a congress late this year at which President Xi Jinping is due to be given a second five-year term as leader. Analysts expect Chinese leaders to use the legislative meeting to emphasize reducing financial risks and keeping growth stable.

At a time of demands in the United States and Europe for trade controls, Li warned China faces "more complicated and graver situations" at home and abroad.

"Both the de-globalization trend and protectionism are growing," Li said. "There are many uncertainties about the direction of the major economies' policies and their spillover effects, and the factors that could cause instability and uncertainty are visibly increasing."

Chinese leaders have publicly defended free trade in response to President Donald Trump's promises to raise duties on Chinese goods, though Beijing's trading partners complain China is the most closed major economy.

China "may be adversely affected" if Trump goes ahead with "tough policies," but the impact should be limited, said economist Song Lifang at Renmin University in Beijing.

"With China's domestic economy still in the phase of transformation, the tasks for China's economic growth are arduous but with great potential," said Song.

Growth has cooled steadily since 2010 as communist leaders try to develop a consumer-driven economy and reduce reliance on trade, heavy industry and investment.

The latest growth target is in line with those reforms and efforts to create a "moderately prosperous society," Li said.

Chinese leaders have tried to downplay the significance of the growth target and shift focus to improvements in incomes, consumer spending and other factors. But the target is closely watched as a forecast of economic performance, which has repercussions throughout Asia, where China is the biggest trading partner for all its neighbors.

Li acknowledged concerns about the rising dangers of debt, though he said the financial system is stable.

"We must be fully alert to the buildup of risks related to non-performing assets, bond defaults, shadow banking and Internet finance," said Li.

Banking and securities regulators already have said their priority this year is reducing risk and watching financial industries more closely following a 2015 stock price collapse and warnings investors are engaged in a dangerous new bout of speculative trading.

Beijing's reliance on repeated infusions of credit to prop up growth since the 2008 global crisis has driven up debt, prompting concern it could trigger a banking crisis or drag on the economy.

Total debt owed by local Chinese governments, companies and households has soared from the equivalent of 150 percent of annual economic output before 2008 to about 260 percent. Regulators have begun trying to hammer out deals to reduce debt loads at state companies but private sector economists say they need to move faster.

Economists have warned setting a growth target too high could force Beijing to resort to stimulus spending, setting back efforts to reduce reliance on investment and debt.

Sunday's report calls for creating 11 million new jobs, an increase from last year's target of 10 million in a possible sign of increased official optimism.

Li promised to eliminate 50 million metric tons of steel production capacity. That would help to reduce the flood of Chinese exports that is depressing global prices and prompting complaints by Washington and Europe that thousands of jobs are in danger.

Li also promised to eliminate 150 million tons of coal production capacity. He didn't mention other industries such as aluminum in which China's trading partners complain excess capacity supported by government subsidies is distorting global markets.

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Li promised "equal opportunities" and "fair rules" to private companies in the state-dominated economy. He promised changes including cutting taxes for the smallest businesses and simplifying the process of registering up a private company.

Party leaders have pledged repeatedly to give entrepreneurs, who create most of China's new jobs and wealth, a bigger economic role. But reform advocates complain state companies still control industries from banking to telecoms to energy and benefit from monopolies, low-cost bank loans and other favors.

Li also promised foreign companies equal treatment with their Chinese counterparts under a government development strategy dubbed "China Manufacturing 2025."

That follows complaints by U.S. and European business groups that Beijing appears to be trying to squeeze foreign companies out of promising markets including software and other technology.

Turning to political affairs, Li warned Beijing would not tolerate any movement by self-ruled Taiwan's popularly elected government toward formal independence.

"We will resolutely oppose and contain separatist activities for Taiwan independence," he said.

A spokesman for the finance ministry told The Associated Press that spending on China's military, the world's second-highest after the United States, would rise 7 percent this year to 1.044 trillion yuan (\$151 billion), marking the smallest percentage annual growth rate this century. However, unlike in previous years, the defense budget figure was not released in the documents distributed to journalists.

Beijing's military spending has grown by double digits almost every for most of the past two decades.

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Associated Press researcher Yu Bing contributed to this report.

## Rule change could make Abe longest-serving leader in Japan

By KEN MORITSUGU, Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Japan's ruling party approved a change in party rules Sunday that could pave the way for Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to become the country's longest-serving leader in the post-World War II era.

It is a remarkable turnaround for Abe, who lasted only a year during an earlier stint as prime minister, and in a country that had six prime ministers in the six years before Abe returned to office in December 2012.

Analysts say that Japan's 62-year-old leader learned from his first term in office, when he focused on divisive issues such as constitutional revision and patriotic education that contributed to his early downfall. This time, he has made an expansionary economic policy with a catchy name, "Abenomics," front and center at election time.

"The interesting thing is that formerly Abe did not seem to be interested in economic policy," said Yu Uchiyama, a professor of politics at Tokyo University.

He said that Abe, a conservative, had been more interested in things like constitutional change. "But right after he got power for the second time, he did not put forth such a right-wing agenda. Instead he introduced and emphasized the economic issue."

That doesn't mean Abe has given up on goals such as revising the constitution, which was drafted by a U.S.-led occupation force after World War II. However, Abe needs to win over a reluctant public — any amendment requires approval by two-thirds of the legislature and a national referendum — and that will take time.

"The constitution represents the shape of our country, and it should describe Japan's ideal future," Abe told the annual convention of his Liberal Democratic Party. He said the LDP will take the lead in promoting discussion over details of a revision.

The party on Sunday rubber stamped a decision by its leaders last fall to allow the head of the party to run for a third 3-year term, rather than be limited to two. In Japan's parliamentary system, the ruling party leader generally becomes the prime minister. The change would allow Abe to stay until 2021, if he can maintain the support of his party and voters, rather than step down in September 2018.

Abe, now in his fifth year in office, is Japan's sixth longest serving prime minister since 1945. The record-holder is Eisaku Sato, who led the country for more than seven years from 1964 to 1972. He is also the

brother of Abe's grandfather, Nobusuke Kishi, who was prime minister from 1957 to 1960. If Abe can hold on, he would surpass Sato in August 2020.

Uchiyama said that Abe has maintained his hold on power in part by taking advantage of electoral and administrative reforms that strengthened the prime minister's control of both his party and the bureaucracy.

Jeff Kingston, a Japan expert at Temple University's Japan campus in Tokyo, called Abe the most powerful prime minister in the postwar era.

"There has been an incredible concentration and centralization of power in the prime minister's office under Abe, unlike his predecessors, where power was widely distributed and the prime minister was one among many," he said.

Still, given public opinion, Kingston gave Abe only a 50-50 chance of achieving constitutional revision: "Polls suggest he has got a long battle to get the public with him."

A third term would also give Abe more time to try to resolve a thorny territorial dispute with Russia that has kept the two countries from signing a peace treaty to end World War II hostilities.

Associated Press writers Kaori Hitomi and Mari Yamaguchi contributed to this report.

## Trump supporters declare pride in president, slam opponents

By The Associated Press

From Colorado's state Capitol to Trump Tower in New York and the Washington Monument, groups of hundreds of people rallied for President Donald Trump on Saturday, waving "Deplorables for Trump" signs and even carrying a life-size cutout of the president.

Chelsea Thomas, an accountant from Thornton, Colorado, brought her family to the March 4 Trump rally in Denver — and the life-size cardboard cutout of Trump. She said the family has taken it with them on camping trips, boat rides and a country music festival.

"It's nice to be surrounded by people who share your morals and opinions," said Thomas, as her son walked back and forth across the grass with a Trump flag.

Many in the crowd held American flags or wore red, white and blue and held signs with messages like "Veterans before Refugees."

Police in Berkeley, California, say 10 people were arrested after Trump supporters and counter-protesters clashed during a rally that turned violent and left seven people injured. None of the injured was hospitalized.

A dagger, metal pipes, bats, pieces of lumber and bricks were confiscated, police said.

Six people protesting the rally in St. Paul, Minnesota, were arrested on felony riot charges after they lit fireworks inside the Minnesota State Capitol and fled, police said. About 400 people attended the event, and about 50 showed up to protest it.

In Nashville, two people were arrested as protesters clashed with Trump supporters at the Tennessee Capitol. In Olympia, Washington, the state patrol says four demonstrators were arrested at a rally in support of Trump, KOMO-TV reported. Authorities did not say if the people arrested were pro-Trump or anti-Trump. The station reports that the demonstrators are accused of assaulting a police officer.

Near Mar-a-Lago, the Palm Beach Post reported that people on both sides exchanged profanity. Trump's motorcade briefly stopped so he could wave at supporters.

In Ohio, Trump supporter Margaret Howe, 57, of Pataskala, said she increasingly fears civil war.

"We did not want to have something like this happen," she said, adding, "We came out today because Trump deserves to see he still has people for him. It's just all sad."

A group of counter protesters gathered nearby, separated from the rally by police tape. They chanted "No Trump. No KKK. No fascist USA" and held signs with messages like "Your vote was a hate crime."

Hundreds gathered in rallies on both ends of Pennsylvania to show support for Trump.

Supporters waved signs and flags and listened to speeches during Saturday's "Spirit of America" rally in Bensalem's Neshaminy State Park in eastern Pennsylvania's Bucks County.

"They love their country and they love what Donald Trump represents, which is about making America

first," organizer Jim Worthington said.

In northwestern Pennsylvania, the Erie Times-News reported that about 100 people gathered at a square in downtown Erie for a similar demonstration. "We've got to get the whole country united behind this man," said Richard Brozell, 75, who along with his wife braved the mid-20s temperatures and stiff wind chill to attend

In Augusta, Maine, more than 100 people turned out for the event that was supposed to last three hours, but ended early because of freezing temperatures.

In Miami, supporters continued a rally while sipping espressos outside a Cuban restaurant, the Miami Herald reported.

At a North Carolina rally, speakers said the dishonest media and left wing politicians were bordering on sedition in their opposition to the Republican president. Some men were seen walking through the Raleigh crowd carrying a Trump flag as well as a Confederate flag. Gathered just behind the rally was a handful of protesters, some of whom blew air horns in an attempt to disrupt the event.

"We're gonna take our country back and we're gonna establish borders and have legal immigration and law and order," said Cherie Francis, of Cary, North Carolina.

In Indianapolis, about 30 Trump supporters rallied at the Indiana Statehouse in Indianapolis to denounce what they see as unfair treatment of the Republican. A local organizer, 61-year-old Patty Collins, of Indianapolis, said Trump's critics "aren't giving him a chance."

Trump supporters turned out Saturday in Phoenix. Media outlets reported that several hundred people participated in the Phoenix event held on a lawn at the State Capitol.

In Texas, Austin police say about 300 people rallied in support of Trump in a gathering outside the Capitol during rain. Organizer Jennifer Drabbant said there have been so many protests against Trump that she and others wanted to show there are people who support him.

Scores of people have rallied in Virginia Beach, Virginia, in a show of support for Trump. The Virginian-Pilot reports around 200 Trump backers showed up Saturday for the event at a park. Some held American flags and others wore "Make America Great Again" hats and Trump T-shirts.

In Lansing, Michigan, about 200 Trump supporters rallied on one side of the state Capitol while 100 critics gathered on another side.

"Agree with President Trump or not, he is our president, and I think what I see happening in D.C. and with the Democrats — it can't stand," said Gary Taylor, 60.

## **Pence criticizes AP for publishing his wife's email address**

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Vice President Mike Pence is criticizing The Associated Press for listing his wife's email address in a story about his frequent resistance to public records requests while Indiana's governor.

In a tweet Saturday, Pence said that by publishing the personal AOL address of his wife, Karen, the AP "violated her privacy and our security." The vice president posted a letter his counsel sent to Gary Pruitt, the AP's president and CEO.

On Friday, the AP reported the Pences used their AOL accounts to conduct official business since at least 2013.

Lauren Easton, the AP's director of media relations, said in a statement: "AP removed the email address from subsequent stories after learning Mrs. Pence still used the account. The AP stands by its story, which addresses important transparency issues."

## **Plane believed to be Syrian crashes near Turkey-Syria border**

ISTANBUL (AP) — Turkish officials said that an aircraft believed to belong to the Syrian military crashed near the Turkey-Syria border Saturday, with the Syrian opposition claiming to Turkish media they were responsible for shooting the plane down.

Prime Minister Binali Yildirim told reporters that "we have information that a MIG model plane belonging to the Syrian regime" had crashed near the town of Samandag in Hatay province.

Hatay governor Erdal Ata told state-run Anadolu news agency that rescue teams had arrived at the wreck-

age and reported that the cockpit was empty, confirming earlier reports by local villagers who claimed to have observed the pilots ejecting.

Ata added that there had been no airspace violation and no intervention by Turkish forces.

Syrian helicopters were shot down for violating Turkish airspace in 2013 and 2015, and a Syrian MIG jet was shot down in 2014 for the same violation. A Russian military plane was similarly shot down by Turkey for violating airspace in 2015, leading to months of tension between Ankara and Moscow.

Syrian opposition military group Ahrar al-Sham claimed it shot down the plane Saturday. The group's spokesman, Ahmed Karali, told Anadolu that it was shot down by a 23 millimeter anti-aircraft gun as it was bombing the countryside in the northwestern Syrian town of Idlib.

Turkish media said earlier that local villagers had called authorities to report the crash at around 6:30 p.m. (1530 GMT; 10:30 EST).

## US police agencies with their own DNA databases stir debate

By MICHAEL BALSAMO, Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Dozens of police departments around the U.S. are amassing their own DNA databases to track criminals, a move critics say is a way around regulations governing state and national databases that restrict who can provide genetic samples and how long that information is held.

The local agencies create the rules for their databases, in some cases allowing samples to be taken from children or from people never arrested for a crime. Police chiefs say having their own collections helps them solve cases faster because they can avoid the backlogs that plague state and federal repositories.

Frederick Harran, the public safety director in Bensalem Township, Pennsylvania, was an early adopter of a local database. Since it was created in 2010, he said robberies and burglaries have been gone down due to arrests made because of the DNA collection.

Harran said the Pennsylvania state lab takes up to 18 months to process DNA taken from a burglary scene but with the local database authorities go through a private lab and get results within a month. He said he uses money from assets seized from criminals to pay for the private lab work.

"If they are burglarizing and we don't get them identified in 18 to 24 months, they have two years to keep committing crimes," he said.

DNA is found in cells and provides a genetic blueprint unique to each person. Blood, saliva, semen, hair, and skin are among the biological clues a criminal might leave at a crime scene and investigators need only a few cells to create a profile.

Police typically get a DNA sample by swabbing the inside of a person's mouth. That sample can then be compared against others in a database to see if a match occurs.

Some police departments collect samples from people who are never arrested or convicted of crimes, though in all such cases the person is supposed to voluntarily comply and not be coerced or threatened.

State and federal authorities typically require a conviction, arrest or warrant before a sample is entered into their collections.

"The local databases have very, very little regulations and very few limits, and the law just hasn't caught up to them," said Jason Kreig, a law professor at the University of Arizona who has studied the issue. "Everything with the local DNA databases is skirting the spirit of the regulations."

It's unclear how many police departments maintain their own DNA databanks because they are subject to no state or federal oversight, but police in California, Florida, Connecticut and Pennsylvania have spoken publicly about their local databases. Harran said he knows of about 60 departments using local databases.

In San Diego, in addition to voluntary samples taken from adults, police officers are allowed to take samples from juveniles who aren't arrested or convicted as long as they are for investigative purposes and the children sign a consent form. After the sample is taken, a police officer is required to contact the child's parent or legal guardian to tell them a DNA swab was collected.

The American Civil Liberties Union filed a lawsuit against San Diego last month alleging the policy "purports to sideswipe" restrictions implemented by a California state law that bars those samples from being

entered into the state's DNA database.

When police officers take DNA samples from children without a court order, "it's hard to imagine it's anything other than coerced or involuntary," said Bardis Vakili, an ACLU attorney who is spearheading the lawsuit.

"I think they are trying to avoid transparency and engage in forms of surveillance," he said. "We don't know what's done other than it goes into their lab and is kept in a database."

A San Diego police spokesman declined to comment on the lawsuit and wouldn't provide additional information about the department's policy.

San Diego, the nation's eighth-largest city, has about 1.4 million people and a very large database, while Branford, Connecticut, population 28,000, has just 500 samples in its collection.

Still, Chief Daniel Halloran said the database has helped solve crimes and eliminate other people as suspects. The department has implemented strict guidelines to ensure samples are voluntary and they do not take samples from juveniles, he said.

"It's not like we're pulling over motorists and asking them for DNA," Halloran said. "There has to be some sort of correlation to a crime."

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Follow Michael Balsamo on Twitter @MikeBalsamo1.

## **Somalia: 110 dead from hunger in past 48 hours in drought**

**By ABDI GULED, Associated Press**

MOGADISHU, Somalia (AP) — Somalia's prime minister said Saturday that 110 people have died from hunger in the past 48 hours in a single region — the first death toll announced in a severe drought threatening millions of people across the country.

Somalia's government declared the drought a national disaster on Tuesday. The United Nations estimates that 5 million people in this Horn of Africa nation need aid, amid warnings of a full-blown famine.

Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khairi spoke during a meeting with the Somali National Drought Committee. The death toll he announced is from the Bay region in the southwest part of the country alone.

Somalia was one of four regions singled out by the U.N. secretary-general last month in a \$4.4 billion aid appeal to avert catastrophic hunger and famine, along with northeast Nigeria, South Sudan and Yemen. All are connected by a thread of violent conflict, the U.N. chief said.

The U.N. humanitarian coordinator, Stephen O'Brien, was expected to visit Somalia in the next few days.

Thousands have been streaming into Somalia's capital, Mogadishu, in search of food aid, overwhelming local and international aid agencies. Over 7,000 internally displaced people checked into one feeding center recently.

The drought is the first crisis for Somalia's newly elected Somali-American leader, President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed. Previous droughts and a quarter-century of conflict, including ongoing attacks by extremist group al-Shabab, have left the country fragile. Mohamed has appealed to the international community and Somalia's diaspora of 2 million people for help.

About 363,000 acutely malnourished children in Somalia "need urgent treatment and nutrition support, including 71,000 who are severely malnourished," the U.S. Agency for International Development's Famine Early Warning Systems Network has warned.

Because of a lack of clean water in many areas, there is the additional threat of cholera and other diseases, U.N. experts say. Some deaths from cholera already have been reported.

The government has said the widespread hunger "makes people vulnerable to exploitation, human rights abuses and to criminal and terrorist networks."

The U.N. humanitarian appeal for 2017 for Somalia is \$864 million to provide assistance to 3.9 million people. But the U.N. World Food Program recently requested an additional \$26 million plan to respond to the drought.

## Immigration courts: record number of cases, many problems

By KATE BRUMBACK, Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Everyone was in place for the hearing in Atlanta immigration court: the Guinean man hoping to stay in the U.S., his attorney, a prosecutor, a translator and the judge. But because of some missing paperwork, it was all for nothing.

When the government attorney said he hadn't received the case file, Judge J. Dan Pelletier rescheduled the proceeding. Everybody would have to come back another day.

The sudden delay was just one example of the inefficiency witnessed by an Associated Press writer who observed hearings over two days in one of the nation's busiest immigration courts. And that case is one of more than half a million weighing down court dockets across the country as President Donald Trump steps up enforcement of immigration laws.

Even before Trump became president, the nation's immigration courts were burdened with a record number of pending cases, a shortage of judges and frequent bureaucratic breakdowns. Cases involving immigrants not in custody commonly take two years to resolve and sometimes as many as five.

The backlog and insufficient resources are problems stretching back at least a decade, said San Francisco Immigration Judge Dana Marks, speaking as the president of the National Association of Immigration Judges.

"It would be a shame if the mistakes of the past continue to be repeated," Marks said, citing previous attempts to ramp up enforcement without providing adequate resources to the courts.

Trump's recent executive orders and subsequent memos from Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly have focused on hiring more enforcement agents to find and detain people in the country illegally, but the administration has been largely silent on beefing up immigration courts.

The system includes 58 courts in 27 states. Their job is to decide whether noncitizens charged with violating immigration laws should be allowed to stay in the U.S. Immigration judges work for the Justice Department's Executive Office for Immigration Review, not the judicial branch.

People appearing in immigration court are generally considered to have the right to an attorney, but the court isn't required to provide one for free as in criminal cases. Rulings can be appealed to the Board of Immigration Appeals, and board decisions can be appealed to a federal appeals court.

Of 374 authorized immigration judge positions, 301 are filled. Fifty more candidates are in various stages of the hiring process, which typically takes about a year, said Kathryn Mattingly, a spokeswoman for the Executive Office for Immigration Review.

The office "constantly evaluates the need to shift its resources," Mattingly said, and is reviewing ways to maximize its efforts on "priority cases."

In all, more than 534,000 cases were pending before immigration courts nationwide in February, according to a recent memo from Kelly.

Advocates worry the Trump administration will increase the use of procedures that allow authorities to deport people without using the court system at all.

"Instead of actually trying to make the courts better, they just want to use them less, even though that obviously is deeply problematic from a due-process standpoint," said Omar Jadwat, director of the American Civil Liberties Union Immigrants' Rights Project.

The increased use of detention could also lead immigrants with valid claims for staying in the U.S. to accept deportation, just to avoid extended periods of time in detention, Jadwat said.

Ira Mehlman, spokesman for the Federation for American Immigration Reform, which pushes for strict immigration policies, said the greater threat of detention could deter people from coming to the U.S. or encourage some who are here to leave.

Mehlman agrees the system is broken, but said advocacy groups and lawyers who keep filing new motions and appeals are part of the problem.

"They understand that time works to their benefit and that the longer you can drag this out, the more bites at the apple you can get, the greater the likelihood that you can find some plausible reason for remaining here in the United States," he said.

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When asked if adding more cases to the backlog could threaten the due-process rights of noncitizens, Marks said it is the job of immigration judges to make sure that doesn't happen.

"But the pressures on the system certainly do allow more opportunities for errors to be made," she said. "You try to do your best to hear things fairly but also quickly, and there is always a tension between how you strike that balance."

Slowing down can be more efficient because people are less likely to appeal if they feel their cases have been fairly heard, Marks said. More careful consideration also means a case might be less likely to be overturned.

Symptoms of a broken system were on display when the AP visited the Atlanta court.

On the same day the Guinean man's hearing was delayed, in a courtroom down the hall, detainees filled two rows of benches while lawyers stood crammed into the corner waiting — some for several hours — for their clients to be called.

Two Haitian men appeared by video from a Georgia detention center nearly 200 miles away. They were among more than three dozen people on Judge Michael Baird's docket that morning. Neither had received a notice to appear in court, the document that initiates deportation proceedings.

Clearly frustrated, the judge dismissed the cases, noting that the same thing had happened in other cases for months. He also questioned the government attorneys' plan to appeal. Why, he asked, would they do that when it could take four to six months and cost taxpayers money? Why not simply refile the charges?

A few days earlier, Judge Earle Wilson had three cases on his calendar involving people seeking to have their deportation cases thrown out and their status changed to lawful permanent resident. But he told the lawyers and their clients he had time to hear only one.

As for the other two cases? He set new hearings for Feb. 28, 2018 — a year and a day later.

## Malaysia expels North Korean ambassador over Kim probe

By EILEEN NG, Associated Press

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP) — Malaysia said it expelled North Korea's ambassador on Saturday for refusing to apologize for his strong accusations over Malaysia's handling of the investigation into the killing of the North Korean leader's half brother.

Foreign Minister Anifah Aman said a notice was sent to the North Korean Embassy at around 6 p.m. declaring Ambassador Kang Chol persona non grata. The notice said Kang must leave Malaysia within 48 hours.

Earlier in the week, Malaysia demanded that North Korea formally apologize for Kang's accusations over the investigation into the Feb. 13 killing of Kim Jong Nam at Kuala Lumpur's airport, including that "the Malaysian government had something to hide and that Malaysia has colluded with outside powers to defame" North Korea, Anifah said in a statement.

He said that no apology had come and none appeared forthcoming, and that North Korean Embassy officials also failed to turn up for a meeting Saturday at the foreign ministry, so Malaysia decided to expel the ambassador.

"It should be made clear — Malaysia will react strongly against any insults made against it or any attempt to tarnish its reputation," Anifah said.

The death of Kim, the estranged half brother of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, has unleashed a diplomatic battle between Malaysia and North Korea. Authorities said Kim was killed within 20 minutes after two women smeared his face with VX, a banned nerve agent considered a weapon of mass destruction.

Kang's expulsion came just days after Malaysia said it would scrap visa-free entry for North Koreans and expressed concern over the use of the nerve agent. Anifah had said this was an "indication of the government's concern that Malaysia may have been used for illegal activities."

Earlier Saturday, a North Korean chemist deported from Malaysia accused police of threatening to kill his family unless he confessed to killing Kim. Ri Jong Chol, who was released after police said there was insufficient evidence to charge him, spoke to reporters in Beijing while on his way to Pyongyang.



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Ri said that he wasn't at the airport the day Kim was killed, but that police accused him of being a mas-termind and presented him with "fake evidence." He said they showed him a picture of his wife and two children, who were staying with him in Kuala Lumpur, and threatened to kill them.

"These men kept telling me to admit to the crime, and if not, my whole family would be killed, and you too won't be safe. If you accept everything, you can live a good life in Malaysia," Ri said. "This is when I realized that it was a trap ... they were plotting to tarnish my country's reputation."

Malaysia's national police chief, Khalid Abu Bakar, said he would hold a news conference on Tuesday to respond to Ri's comments.

Ri was detained four days after Kim died, but police never said what they believed his role in the attack was. Two women — one Indonesian, one Vietnamese — have been charged with murder in the case, although both reportedly say they were duped into thinking they were playing a harmless prank.

Malaysia is looking for seven other North Korean suspects, four of whom are believed to have left the country on the day of the killing. Three others, including an official at the North Korean Embassy and an employee of Air Koryo, North Korea's national carrier, are believed to still be in Malaysia.

On Friday, police issued an arrest warrant for the Air Koryo employee, Kim Uk Il, but didn't say why he is a suspect. Police say he arrived in Malaysia on Jan. 29, about two weeks before Kim was killed.

North Korea earlier had rejected Malaysia's autopsy finding that VX killed Kim. Ri Tong Il, a former North Korean deputy ambassador to the United Nations, said he probably died of a heart attack because he suffered from heart disease, diabetes and high blood pressure.

Malaysia's finding that VX killed Kim boosted speculation that North Korea orchestrated the attack. Experts say the oily poison was almost certainly produced in a sophisticated state weapons laboratory, and North Korea is widely believed to possess large quantities of chemical weapons, including VX.

North Korea is trying to retrieve Kim's body, but has not acknowledged that the victim is Kim Jong Un's half brother, as Malaysian government officials have confirmed.

Kim Jong Nam reportedly fell out of favor with his father, the late Kim Jong Il, in 2001, when he was caught trying to enter Japan on a false passport to visit Tokyo Disneyland.

## China says defense budget to rise by about 7 percent in 2017

By GERRY SHIH and CHRISTOPHER BODEEN, Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — China will raise its defense budget by about 7 percent this year, a government spokeswoman said Saturday, continuing a trend of lowered growth amid a slowing economy despite regional tensions over the South China Sea and other issues.

Total defense spending would account for about 1.3 percent of projected gross domestic product in 2017, said Fu Ying, spokeswoman for the legislature. She was speaking at a news conference on the eve of the opening of the body's annual session.

The precise figure will be provided by Premier Li Keqiang in his address to the National People's Congress on Sunday morning.

Fu reiterated China's contention that its military was purely for defense and constituted a force for stability in Asia.

"We advocate dialogue for peaceful resolutions, while at the same time, we need to possess the ability to defend our sovereignty and interests," Fu said. "The strengthening of Chinese capabilities benefits the preservation of peace and security in this region, and not the opposite."

Depending on the final figure, this year's budget could mark the third consecutive year of declines in defense spending growth rates, even while some outside observers say those figures don't account for all military spending. The budget grew by 7.6 percent last year and 10.1 percent in 2015.

That trend reflects "the new normal, an acknowledgement that Chinese growth is plateauing as a whole," said Alexander Neill, a senior fellow for Asia-Pacific security for the International Institute for Strategic Studies based in Singapore.

While the slowing economy may preclude a spending spree similar to past years, when growth rose by

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double-digit percentages each year, there's no doubt China will continue to add high-tech weaponry according to its long-term strategy, Neill said.

Seeking a more streamlined fighting force, China plans to complete the cutting of 300,000 military personnel by the end of the year, shifting the emphasis away from the land forces and toward the navy, air and rocket units.

Still, the increase of about 67 billion yuan (\$9.7 billion) would push the total defense budget past the 1 trillion yuan (\$145 billion) mark for the first time. The percentage increases do not track in U.S. dollar figures because of variations in the exchange rate.

China's defense budget is expected to rise to \$233 billion by 2020, almost twice what it was in 2010 and four times what Britain spends, according to a study released in December by IHS Jane's. By 2025, China would outspend all other states in the Asia-Pacific combined, the consultancy predicted.

The defense budget has for years been the world's second largest, although it still lags far behind the U.S. President Donald Trump has asked for a 10 percent increase in U.S. defense spending this year, adding \$54 billion to the budget that topped \$600 billion last year.

China points out that, as a developing country with a population of 1.37 billion, its defense spending per capita is a fraction of those of other nations. Fu also said the percentage of GDP China spends on defense is below the 2 percent the U.S. calls on NATO allies to spend.

The relatively modest spending increase reflects both China's steady, if not spectacular economic growth, and a security outlook that has changed little in recent years, said Tang Yonghong of the Institute of Taiwan Studies at Xiamen University in southeastern China.

"China's defense budget is formulated on the basis of its own needs and the domestic economic situation. Beijing isn't much concerned about the reaction from the international community," he said.

China has been spending heavily on technologies, allowing it to project power far from shore, including aircraft carriers, long-range bombers and its first overseas military base located in the East Africa nation of Djibouti.

Along with defending China's frontiers, the self-governing island of Taiwan remains a military priority for the 2.3 million-member People's Liberation Army, the world's largest standing military. Beijing has never renounced its vow to use force to take control of the island it considers its own territory, and tensions have risen since the election last year of independence-leaning Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen.

Beijing has also come under criticism for militarizing man-made islands in the South China Sea, which China claims virtually in its entirety.

Fu turned those accusations back on the U.S., saying the strategically vital waterway through which about \$5 trillion in trade passes each year was basically calm.

"As to how the situation develops in future, that depends on U.S. intentions. American actions in the South China Sea have a definite significance in terms of which way the winds blow," she said.

## Other mysterious deaths of North Korea's perceived enemies

By KIM TONG-HYUNG, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — An outcast from North Korea's ruling family was killed with a weapon believed to belong to North Korea's chemical arsenal and several North Koreans are wanted for questioning. But with Malaysia deporting the only North Korean it detained in the airport assassination of Kim Jong Nam, many in South Korea see the secretive, dictatorial regime in Pyongyang escaping punishment for another mysterious killing.

The government in Seoul and human rights groups say Pyongyang has for decades acted to silence its perceived enemies, sending assassins after South Korean government officials, North Korean defectors and anti-Pyongyang activists.

And yet North Korea often takes out the targets without leaving evidence that would indisputably prove its involvement, South Koreans say.

When suspicions were expressed, North Korea responded with silence or with wounded indignation.

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Some of the mysterious deaths suspected of being carried out by North Korea:

## DIPLOMAT IN RUSSIA

Choi (pronounced Chwey) Duk-kun, a South Korean diplomat stationed in the eastern Russian city of Vladivostok, just north of North Korea, was found dead in front of his apartment in 1996. He had head wounds, but his passport and money were still in his pockets.

South Korea is almost certain North Korea organized a hit job on the diplomat who had been monitoring the North.

The biggest evidence Seoul offers? He was stabbed with a sharp object on his right side, and investigators later found in his bloodstream traces of neostigmine bromide, a chemical that attacks the nervous system and was known to be frequently used by North Korean operatives.

The timing of Choi's death was also suspicious. It came weeks after a North Korean submarine beached on South Korea's east coast. Twenty-two North Koreans were killed by South Korean forces or were later found dead, prompting the North to vow "hundredfold and thousand-fold" retaliation.

Choi's assailants were never caught. North Korea denied involvement and claimed it was framed by Seoul.

## MISSIONARIES IN CHINA

North Korea hates South Korean activists, many of them evangelical Christians, who smuggle out defectors and send anti-Pyongyang literature and Bibles into the North across the border from China.

South Korea believes Pyongyang killed at least one of them, Patrick Kim, a 46-year-old pastor who died in August 2011 after collapsing in the Chinese border city of Dandong.

South Korea said Kim was likely attacked by a North Korean agent using a poisoned needle. Investigators detected in Kim's body neostigmine bromide, the same chemical found in the diplomat in Vladivostok.

A day after Kim's attack, Kang (pronounced Gahng) Ho-bin, another South Korean missionary who helped defectors, was stabbed in the back with what officials believed was a poisoned needle in another Chinese city, Yangji.

The assailant wasn't captured. Kang survived the attack, but was killed in 2012 after his car collided with a bus in the Chinese city of Longjing.

There are suspicions that North Korea also assassinated Han Chung Ryeol, a Korean-Chinese pastor who was found dead in the Chinese county of Changbai last year with slash wounds to his neck.

## TURNCOATS IN THE SOUTH

South Korea almost immediately blamed the 1997 death of Lee Han-young, a nephew of one of the former wives of North Korea's second leader, Kim Jong Il, on North Korean agents sent on a revenge mission. But police failed to catch the assailants before they allegedly returned to the North.

Lee died of gunshot wounds after being attacked in front of his apartment near Seoul in 1997. According to his neighbors, Lee after the shooting said, "spy, spy," and held up two fingers, perhaps indicating the number of attackers. Police said a woman purporting to be a magazine reporter called the apartment to ask when Lee would be home before the attack.

Lee had defected through Switzerland in 1982, but Seoul kept his arrival secret until 1996, when his mother also fled the North. He had harshly criticized the country and his dictator uncle.

South Korean officials said that Lee's killing might have also been North Korea's way of sending a message to Hwang Jang-yop, a former North Korean Workers' Party secretary who defected to the South earlier in 1997.

Hwang, who once tutored Kim Jong Il and remains the highest-level North Korean to seek asylum in South Korea, survived what the South said was an assassination attempt by the North in 2010. He died six months after his would-be assailants were arrested, at the age of 87.

Follow Kim Tong-hyung on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/KimTongHyung](http://www.twitter.com/KimTongHyung)

## Officials: Man threatened Jewish centers to frame, harass ex

By COLLEEN LONG, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A former journalist fired for fabricating details in stories made at least eight of the scores of threats against Jewish institutions nationwide, including a bomb threat to the Anti-Defamation League, as part of a bizarre campaign to harass and frame his ex-girlfriend, federal officials said.

Juan Thompson was arrested in St. Louis and appeared there in federal court Friday on a cyberstalking charge. He answered questions and told the judge he had enough money to hire a lawyer.

A crowd of supporters who attended said Thompson had no criminal record. His lawyer didn't comment.

Federal officials have been investigating 122 bomb threats called in to Jewish organizations in three dozen states since Jan. 9 and a rash of vandalism at Jewish cemeteries.

A criminal complaint said Thompson started making threats Jan. 28 with an email to the Jewish History Museum in New York written from an account that made it appear as if it were being sent by an ex-girlfriend.

"Juan Thompson put 2 bombs in the History Museum set to go off Sunday," it said.

Authorities said he followed that up with similar messages to a Jewish school in Farmington Hills, Michigan, and to a school and community center in Manhattan.

In another round of emails and phone calls, he gave the woman's name, rather than his own, the court complaint said. The Council on American-Islamic Relations received an anonymous email saying the woman put a bomb in a Dallas Jewish center.

Thompson, who's black, then took to Twitter: "Know any good lawyers?" he wrote. "Need to stop this nasty/racist #whitegirl I dated who sent a bomb threat in my name." He later tweeted to the Secret Service: "I'm been (sic) tormented by an anti-Semite. She sent an antijewish bomb threat in my name. Help."

But police say it was a hoax created to make the woman look guilty. Thompson also made threats in which he identified the woman as the culprit, authorities said. It's unclear why Jewish organizations were targeted.

Republican President Donald Trump suggested in a meeting Tuesday with state attorneys general the threats against Jewish community centers may have been designed to make "others look bad," according to Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro. Trump also has condemned violence against Jewish organizations.

Thompson was fired from the online publication The Intercept last year after being accused of fabricating several quotes and creating fake email accounts to impersonate people, including the Intercept's editor-in-chief. One of the stories involved Dylann Roof, the white shooter of black worshippers at a Charleston, South Carolina, church.

Thompson had written that a cousin named Scott Roof claimed the gunman was angry that a love interest chose a black man over him. A review showed there was no cousin by that name. The story was retracted.

The Intercept wrote Friday it was "horrified" to learn of Thompson's arrest.

Thompson had been accused of bizarre behavior before.

Doyle Murphy, a reporter at the Riverfront Times, an alternative weekly in St. Louis, said he was subjected to social media harassment after writing about Thompson's troubled past in the fallout from his firing at The Intercept.

Murphy said Thompson set up anonymous accounts on Twitter and other social media posing as a woman who claimed she had been sexually assaulted by Murphy. Murphy said he contacted Twitter but every time one fake account was taken down a new one popped up. He said he contacted police but there was little they could do.

"It was a nightmare, and there's not a whole lot I could do about it," Murphy said.

The Federal Communications Commission said Friday it will grant an emergency waiver allowing Jewish community centers and their phone carriers to track the numbers of callers who make threats, even if the callers try to block the numbers. It said Democratic U.S. Sen. Charles Schumer had requested such a waiver earlier in the week.

According to the criminal complaint, Thompson and the ex-girlfriend, a social worker, broke up last sum-

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mer. The following day, her boss received an email purporting to be from a national news organization saying she'd been pulled over for drunken driving.

The harassment got worse, authorities said. She received an anonymous email with nude photos of herself and a threat to release them. Her company, a nonprofit that works to end homelessness, got faxes saying she was anti-Semitic. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children got a note saying she watched child porn.

Thompson's IP address was used for the emails, but he told police his computer had been hacked, the complaint said.

The ADL said Thompson had been on its radar since he fabricated the story about Roof. According to ADL research, Thompson also claimed he wanted to dismantle the system of "racial supremacy and greedy capitalism that is stacked against us." He said he was going to run for mayor of St. Louis to "fight back against Trumpian fascism and socio-economic terrorism."

FBI Director James Comey met with Jewish community leaders Friday to discuss the recent threats, the agency said.

University City, Missouri, police Lt. Fredrick Lemons told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch that detectives will question Thompson about the 154 headstones toppled last month at a Jewish cemetery there.

Associated Press writers Jim Salter in St. Louis, Michael Balsamo in Los Angeles and Jake Pearson and Verena Dobnik in New York contributed to this report.

## French candidate going it alone amid campaign defections

By ELAINE GANLEY, Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — The once promising presidential bid of French conservative Francois Fillon, already seriously hobbled by pending corruption charges, was coming unraveled Friday with the resignation of his campaign director and his campaign spokesman, adding momentum to a stream of defections and panicking his party.

Fillon appeared increasingly alone with the resignation of two key officials, and other high-profile supporters following them out. But he did not balk. He looked past the pressure, counting on a support rally planned for Sunday near the Eiffel Tower and tweeting a video plea for people to show up in force "to show everyone what the will of the militants of France looks like."

A poor showing at the support rally would impact Fillon's legitimacy, which has been based on his win in the primary held by conservatives and centrists.

As Fillon's fortunes fell, former Prime Minister Alain Juppe again was being mentioned as a potential Plan B for The Republicans party, which could find itself without a candidate as the April 23 first round of the presidential election nears. A runoff between the top two candidates is May 7. Juppe had refused filling in for Fillon in the past.

"Don't let anyone deprive you of your choice. I ask you to resist," Fillon said in his tweeted video, an apparent reference to the defections and behind-the-scenes maneuvering to replace him.

After Thierry Solere announced Friday he was bowing out as spokesman, becoming the most visible of Fillon's defectors so far, more severe woes were in store with the resignation of campaign director Patrick Stefanini.

A brief statement by the press office of Fillon's campaign said Stefanini presented his resignation Friday morning and that Fillon had accepted it. Critically, Stefanini is to stay on until the end of Sunday's rally, the statement said.

Financial prosecutors are investigating allegations that Fillon gave his wife and two of their children taxpayer-funded jobs they never performed. Fillon initially said he would step down if charged, but decided to maintain his candidacy even though he's been summoned to face charges on March 15.

His family members were paid more than 1 million euros (\$1.1 million) over a number of years for work as his parliamentary aides. It is legal in France to hire relatives for public jobs, if they actually work. Fillon

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insists his wife and children did.

Fillon is not the only candidate in the firing line of judicial investigators.

Far-right leader Marine Le Pen is at the center of several judicial inquiries along with her anti-immigration National Front party.

She has been summoned to appear next Friday before investigating judges in a case concerning her aides at the European Parliament. Le Pen has advised them she would refuse to show up during the campaign, her lawyer, Rodolphe Bosselut, said, confirming French press reports.

The European Parliament voted Thursday to lift her immunity in another case surrounding her tweets of gruesome images of the Islamic State group.

Unlike Fillon, Le Pen has not lost ground in polls, where she is vying for the top spot with an upstart independent centrist, Emmanuel Macron.

Fillon is struggling to survive. His campaign treasurer quit on Thursday, when three Republican lawmakers also announced they were withdrawing their support.

Other conservatives and centrists allied with them have resigned over the past two days, with some calling for the more moderate Juppe to return to the ring.

Juppe, the Bordeaux mayor, placed second in the conservative primary. After previous refusals to take Fillon's place The Republicans party candidate, he remained silent Friday.

Nadine Morano, a former minister who backed Fillon's candidacy, was among those making a U-turn Friday. Morano urged him to withdraw his bid and cancel the solidarity rally, which she claimed could overheat.

"I'm among those who use their energy trying to convince Francois Fillon to step down," Morano said. "I'm worried that the French will not let us reach the second round."

Jerome Chartier, Fillon's special adviser, is remaining faithful to the candidate even though his companion thinks a way out is needed.

"I've seen friends leave," Chartier said on BFM-TV. "In the toughest moments, you hope the sailors will pull the oars with the captain. I'm a sailor and I pull the oars with Captain Fillon."

Virginie Calmels, Chartier's partner and president of a conservative movement called DroiteLib, wants Fillon, Juppe and former French President Nicolas Sarkozy to meet and make a decision.

"The spectacle of this presidential campaign makes me sick. The violence of the public debate is unheard of," Calmels said in a statement.

While Fillon's popularity has nosedived in recent weeks, Juppe's is high enough to qualify for the second round of the election, according to an opinion poll published Friday.

In his tweeted video, Fillon said the election's stakes are higher than ever and that the contest involves a decision "between several conceptions of France and its future," the far-right or left.

Fillon used language in the video normally employed by Le Pen and her anti-immigration party, from "national sovereignty" to "vanquishing Islamic totalitarianism."

Le Pen, appearing at a town hall east of Paris on Friday, defended a topic which concerns her directly: the presumption of innocence.

"When (Fillon) declared that he would not be candidate if charged, I declared that this is an incoherent statement because in France, there is a principle named presumption of innocence," she said.

Samuel Petrequin in Paris and Chris Den Hond.in Vaudoue contributed.

## Deported Korean says Malaysia threatened to harm his family

By EILEEN NG, Associated Press

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP) — A North Korean chemist deported from Malaysia accused police of threatening to kill his family unless he confessed to the assassination of the half-brother of North Korea's leader, calling it a plot to tarnish his country's honor.

Ri Jong Chol spoke to reporters in Beijing early Saturday while on his way to Pyongyang. Malaysian au-

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thorities have said there's insufficient evidence to charge Ri over Kim Jong Nam's killing at Kuala Lumpur's airport on Feb. 13.

Ri was detained four days after the attack but police never said what they believed his role was. Two women — one Indonesian, one Vietnamese — have been charged with murder after police said they smeared Kim's face with VX, a banned nerve agent considered a weapon of mass destruction.

Ri said he wasn't at the airport the day Kim was killed but that police accused him of being a mastermind and presented him with "fake evidence." He said they showed him a picture of his wife and two children, who were staying with him in Kuala Lumpur, and threatened to kill them.

"These men kept telling me to admit to the crime, and if not, my whole family would be killed, and you too won't be safe. If you accept everything, you can live a good life in Malaysia," Ri said. "This is when I realized that it was a trap ... they were plotting to tarnish my country's reputation."

Police did not immediately respond to a request for comment Saturday.

Immigration Director-General Mustafar Ali said Friday that Ri has been blacklisted from re-entering Malaysia.

Malaysia is looking for seven other North Korean suspects, four of whom are believed to have left the country on the day of the killing. Three others, including an official at the North Korean Embassy and an employee of Air Koryo, North Korea's national carrier, are believed to still be in Malaysia.

Police on Friday issued an arrest warrant for the Air Koryo employee, Kim Uk Il, but didn't say why he is a suspect. Police say he arrived in Malaysia on Jan. 29, about two weeks before Kim was killed.

Kim's death has unleashed a diplomatic battle between Malaysia and North Korea. Malaysia said it was scraping visa-free entry for North Koreans, while the Foreign Ministry said it was "greatly concerned" about the use of the nerve agent.

Malaysia has not directly accused North Korea of being behind the killing, but the ministry statement came hours after a North Korean envoy rejected a Malaysian autopsy finding that VX killed Kim. Ri Tong Il, a former North Korean deputy ambassador to the United Nations, said that the man probably died of a heart attack because he suffered from heart disease, diabetes and high blood pressure.

He said that if VX had been used, others besides Kim would have been killed or sickened. Malaysian police have brushed off Ri's claim of a heart attack and insisted he was murdered.

The two female suspects at an airport terminal were caught on grainy surveillance video smearing what Malaysian authorities say was VX on his face and eyes, though both reportedly say they were duped into thinking they were playing a harmless prank.

Kim died within 20 minutes, authorities say. No bystanders reported falling ill.

Police said the women had been trained to go immediately to the bathroom and wash their hands. Police said the four North Korean suspects who had left the country put the VX liquid on the women's hands.

Police can't confirm whether the two women may have been given antidotes before the attack. An antidote, atropine, can be injected after exposure and is carried by medics in war zones where weapons of mass destruction are suspected.

Malaysia's finding that VX killed Kim boosted speculation that North Korea orchestrated the attack. Experts say the oily poison was almost certainly produced in a sophisticated state weapons laboratory, and North Korea is widely believed to possess large quantities of chemical weapons including VX.

North Korea is trying to retrieve Kim's body, but has not acknowledged that the victim is Kim Jong Un's half brother.

## Oh Snap! Silicon Valley school makes \$24M off of investment

By PAUL ELIAS, Associated Press

MOUNTAIN VIEW, Calif. (AP) — Bake sales and car washes?

Not for one Silicon Valley parochial high school that hit it big this week and, by doing so, highlighted anew gaping economic disparities in the region.

St. Francis High School in Mountain View parlayed a \$15,000 investment in the company that developed

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the Snapchat app into a windfall of at least \$24 million, capitalizing on a unique venture capital fund set up by the school's investment-savvy parents.

The fund paid off when Snap Inc. began selling shares to the public Thursday and the school sold about 1.4 million of the 2.1 million shares at \$17 each. It's holding the remaining 700,000 shares, which were valued at about \$19 million Friday.

"Silicon Valley is a pretty amazing place to live," school President Simon Chiu said. "This obviously couldn't have happened anywhere else."

St. Francis High School launched the fund in 1990 at the urging of two of the many venture capitalists with children attending the school. The fund's aim is to tag along with deep-pocketed investors when they make big bets on startup companies. The school takes a small sliver of a venture capitalist's bigger investment in a startup company.

Chiu and other educators say they know of no other school with a similar fundraising scheme.

Few, if any other schools, have that sort of advantage, said Stephen Andriole, a professor of business, accountancy and information systems at the Villanova School of Business in Pennsylvania.

"The only way to do this is through a personal relationship," he said. "The probability of success is quite low."

About 10 miles north, in East Palo Alto, educators are focused on raising graduation levels in a predominantly Latino community with high pockets of poverty. The city of about 30,000 just a few miles from Stanford University has succeeded in lowering a staggeringly high homicide rate in the early 1990s to the national average and income levels have risen to about \$48,000 for a family of four compared with \$120,000 in next-door Palo Alto. The median income in Mountain View is \$83,000.

But East Palo Alto still struggles with a dropout rate hovering about 50 percent annually.

"We don't have the bandwidth to follow the stock market," said Amika Guillaume, principal of the East Palo Alto Academy, which is in one of the poorest cities in Northern California. "It's tough enough keep kids on track to graduate."

Chiu declined to disclose the size of the school's venture fund, but he said it currently holds investments in about a dozen other companies. He said the money will be added to the school's endowment, which will double it, while administrators decide how to spend the infusion of cash.

Generally, the windfall will enable the school to offer scholarships, retain faculty and improve facilities, Chiu said. "I think everyone understands it's a pretty transformational event for our school," he said.

Before the Snap investment, the school's biggest profit from a single investment was \$2 million. Chiu also said the school has lost money on several investments.

The school's Snap saga began at the kitchen table of venture capitalist Barry Eggers.

Eggers said he came home from work one day in 2012 and found his children and their St. Francis schoolmates sitting at the kitchen table, giggling over the new Snapchat app, which allows users to easily exchange messages with videos and photographs. Best of all, the images automatically destruct after a few minutes.

Eggers researched the company and negotiated a \$500,000 investment with the company founders, including a \$15,000 contribution from the school.

"It all started at my kitchen table with my kids," Eggers said. "Only in Silicon Valley."

AP Technology Writer Barbara Ortutay in New York and AP writer Kristin J. Bender in San Francisco contributed to this story.

## Next in line to lead Russia probe: Rosenstein has respect

By ERIC TUCKER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Some Democrats worry the appointment of a Jeff Sessions subordinate to oversee an investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election won't be a clean enough break from the embattled attorney general.



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But the veteran prosecutor in line for the job may be uniquely politically palatable.

Rod Rosenstein, who faces his confirmation hearing next week for the role of deputy attorney general, was appointed top federal prosecutor in Maryland by George W. Bush and remained in the post for the entire Obama administration. That staying power, extraordinary for a position that routinely turns over with changes in the White House, lends weight to the reputation he's cultivated as an apolitical law enforcement official.

"He is so well-respected. He cannot be influenced, he cannot be bought, he cannot be pressured because of outside political forces," said Baltimore criminal defense attorney Steven Silverman, who has known Rosenstein for years.

Sessions recused himself from any Trump-Russia investigation Thursday after the Justice Department acknowledged he had spoken twice with the Russian ambassador last year and had failed to disclose the contacts during his Senate confirmation process. Sessions said he had not tried to mislead anyone but could have been more careful in his answers. He planned to file amended testimony on Monday, a Justice Department spokesman said.

The new attorney general's recusal handed authority for an investigation — for now — to his deputy, Dana Boente, another longtime federal prosecutor who has the post in an acting capacity. Boente was appointed U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia in 2015 by Barack Obama and was elevated to acting attorney general in January after Trump fired Obama holdover Sally Yates. When Sessions won confirmation, Boente stepped to the No. 2 position.

Once Rosenstein is confirmed, he'll take over responsibility for any probes touching the Trump campaign and Russian meddling.

He arrives at the Justice Department with experience in politically freighted investigations, having earlier in his career been part of the Clinton-era Whitewater independent investigation.

When he was a U.S. attorney, his office also led the leak prosecution of Thomas Drake, the former National Security Agency official who pleaded guilty to a minor misdemeanor after more serious charges of mishandling documents were dropped. He more recently oversaw the probe of James Cartwright, the former Joint Chiefs of Staff vice chairman who admitted making false statements during a separate leak investigation and was ultimately pardoned by Obama.

"It's hard to imagine a more challenging environment in which to come in as the deputy attorney general than what we have now," said Jason Weinstein, who served under Rosenstein in the U.S. attorney's office in Maryland. "Having said that, I can't imagine a better person for the job right now than Rod."

Regardless, the Sessions recusal did little to assuage demands from some Democrats that the investigation be placed in the hands of a special prosecutor.

Rep. Adam Schiff of California, the top Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, called the Sessions recusal "deeply inadequate" and said he was troubled by the number of Trump associates who he contended have either made misleading statements or concealed communications with Russia.

"I also think for the public to have confidence that any prosecutorial decision is made truly independent of the administration, that the extra remedy of a special counsel is really warranted here," Schiff said in an interview.

There is precedent for the selection of a special counsel by the Justice Department for especially sensitive investigations, though there's no indication yet that federal officials are planning to seek such an appointment.

One prominent example was in 2003, when the Bush Justice Department turned to Patrick Fitzgerald, then the top federal prosecutor in Chicago, to investigate who leaked the identity of Valerie Plame, a covert CIA officer. That appointment was made by James Comey, who at the time was deputy attorney general and now is director of the FBI.

"I think if the decision is made to bring someone in from the outside, it's not because the department can't do it and can't do it well," said Weinstein, now a Washington lawyer. "It's because in this politicized environment, the public's faith in the integrity of the investigation is so important and the department

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will want to bend over backward to put in place measures to ensure that the results of the investigation weren't questioned."

Follow Eric Tucker on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/etuckerAP>

## Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Sunday, March 5, the 64th day of 2017. There are 301 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On March 5, 1867, the Fenian Rebellion took place in Ireland as thousands of members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood launched an attempt at overthrowing British rule; the poorly-organized rising was swiftly put down by British and Irish authorities.

On this date:

In 1770, the Boston Massacre took place as British soldiers who'd been taunted by a crowd of colonists opened fire, killing five people.

In 1868, the U.S. Senate was organized into a Court of Impeachment to decide charges against President Andrew Johnson, who was later acquitted.

In 1927, "The Adventure of Shoscombe Old Place," the last Sherlock Holmes story by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, was published in the U.S. in Liberty Magazine.

In 1933, in German parliamentary elections, the Nazi Party won 44 percent of the vote; the Nazis joined with a conservative nationalist party to gain a slender majority in the Reichstag.

In 1946, Winston Churchill delivered his "Iron Curtain" speech at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri, in which he said: "From Stettin in the Baltic, to Trieste in the Adriatic, an 'iron curtain' has descended across the continent, allowing police governments to rule Eastern Europe."

In 1953, Soviet dictator Josef Stalin died after three decades in power. Composer Sergei Prokofiev died in Moscow at age 61.

In 1963, country music performers Patsy Cline, Cowboy Copas and Hawkshaw Hawkins died in the crash of their plane, a Piper Comanche, near Camden, Tennessee, along with pilot Randy Hughes (Cline's manager).

In 1966, BOAC Flight 911, a Boeing 707, crashed into Japan's Mount Fuji after breaking up in severe turbulence; all 124 people on board were killed.

In 1970, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons went into effect after 43 nations ratified it.

In 1977, President Jimmy Carter took questions from 42 telephone callers in 26 states on a network radio call-in program moderated by Walter Cronkite.

In 1982, comedian John Belushi was found dead of a drug overdose in a rented bungalow in Hollywood; he was 33.

In 1994, a jury in Pensacola, Florida, convicted anti-abortion activist Michael F. Griffin of first-degree murder in the shooting death of Dr. David Gunn; Griffin was immediately sentenced to life in prison.

Ten years ago: A suicide car bomber turned a Baghdad book market into a deadly inferno, killing some three dozen people. Nine U.S. soldiers died in two separate incidents north of Baghdad. President George W. Bush, facing criticism he was ignoring Latin America, said the U.S. would spend tens of millions of dollars to improve education, housing and health care across the region.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu (neh-ten-YAH'-hoo) met at the White House, where Obama urged pressure and diplomacy to prevent Iran from getting a nuclear bomb while Netanyahu emphasized his nation's right to a pre-emptive attack. Assailants waving the battle flag of al-Qaida gunned down 25 policemen in the western Iraqi town of Haditha. "Lipstick Killer" William Heirens (HY'-rehnz), 83, died in Chicago after serving more than six decades in prison.

One year ago: Bernie Sanders won Democratic caucuses in Kansas and Nebraska, while Hillary Clinton prevailed in Louisiana. Republican Ted Cruz won in Maine and Kansas while Donald Trump was victorious in Louisiana and Kentucky. Ray Tomlinson, 74, inventor of person-to-person email, died in Lincoln, Mas-

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sachusetts.

Today's Birthdays: Singer Harry Prime is 97. Actor Paul Sand is 85. Actor James B. Sikking is 83. Actor Dean Stockwell is 81. Actor Fred Williamson is 79. Actress Samantha Eggar is 78. Actor Michael Warren is 71. Actor Eddie Hodges is 70. Singer Eddy Grant is 69. Rock musician Alan Clark (Dire Straits) is 65. Actress-comedian Marsha Warfield is 63. Magician Penn Jillette is 62. Actress Adriana Barraza is 61. Rock singers Craig and Charlie Reid (The Proclaimers) are 55. Rock musician John Frusciante (froo-SHAN'-tee) is 47. Singer Rome is 47. Actor Kevin Connolly is 43. Actress Eva Mendes is 43. Actress Jill Ritchie is 43. Actress Jolene Blalock is 42. Model Niki Taylor is 42. Actress Kimberly McCullough is 39. Actress Karolina Wydra is 36. Singer-songwriter Amanda Shires is 35. Actress Dominique McElligott is 31. Actor Sterling Knight is 28. Actor Jake Lloyd is 28.

Thought for Today: "Freedom is not worth fighting for if it means no more than license for everyone to get as much as he can for himself." — Dorothy Canfield Fisher, American author and essayist (1879-1958).