

Groton Daily Independent

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“Dreams are often most profound when they seem the most crazy.”

-Sigmund Freud



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"From minor scratches to a complete rebuild . . . we can do it all"

NOW OPEN

Harris

Auto Body ABDN

225 Brown County Hwy 19 South
Aberdeen: 605/725-4900

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

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Help Wanted

Full-time and Part-time cook positions available at The Front Porch in Langford. Day and evening hours available. Apply in person or call 605-493-6570, ask for Suzie. (0411.0418)

Bridal Shower

A bridal shower for Holly Carlson, bride-to-be of Tyler Candor, will be held Saturday, April 28, 2018, from 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m., at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Groton.

Methodist parish to get new pastor in July

The Groton/Conde parish of the United Methodist Church will be getting a new pastor starting July 1, 2018. The current pastor, Thomas Carlson, has accepted a call to the Cresbard parish.

The new pastor coming in is Brandon Dunham, a Rapid City native, currently serving at the First United Methodist Church in Watertown. He has spent the past seven years in Brookings attending South Dakota State University for a degree in Hospitality Management and has been commuting to Watertown to work at First UMC where he is the Director of Worship and Ministry.

Dunham said, "Watertown was my first official church, not counting the internship with GracePoint Wesleyan in Brookings. As a church staff member your job always extends beyond the job description as did mine so I wore many hats. I was the Director of Worship and Ministries which meant I led our contemporary worship ministry team, led our Adult Discipleship programming, coordinated our Special Events and Local Outreach efforts, preached on occasion and anything else that was asked of me."

Becoming a pastor was not Dunham's first choice, but he was suddenly challenged with the question, "Why don't you become a pastor?" of which at the time, he had no answer. Here's how he said the got his start: "I have been very active in Ministry for a long time through youth groups, camps, and college ministries. As I was pursuing my undergraduate degree at South Dakota State I found myself facing the question "Why don't you become a pastor?" This question came from one of the high school boys I was leading, and I didn't have an answer. It's something I had thought of before and quickly dismissed, but I spent about a month in prayer and that's when I decided to reach out to others in the ministry. Things have moved quickly since I made that decision and I am reaffirmed each day that I have made the right move."

Pastor Dunham has a special interest in music. He expanded on his musical talents by saying, "I grew up playing the violin and began playing guitar my senior year of high school for a Youth Sunday. I have since been participating in and leading worship teams so I have made it my mission to learn everyone else's instruments as well. Guitar, bass, mandolin and ukulele are all fair, but piano and drums have been giving me troubles for the last couple years!"

Dunham is engaged to an Aberdeen native and plan to get married the week after she graduates from NSU in May 2019. He said, "I am recently engaged this last December to a beautiful lady from Aberdeen which has sparked the move north. Ashley Farrand and I knew each other from SDSU and she transferred back home to Aberdeen last year to finish her second major. She will graduate May of 2019 with degrees in Early Childhood Education and Art Education. In celebration we are getting married the following week!"

Dunham said his favorite part about working in the ministry is, "being able to do anything and everything I can to bring others into an encounter with our living God. I worship through the victories in the people I come into contact with."



Photo by Ashley Farrand

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Groton Area Third Quarter Honor Roll

Seniors

4.0 GPA: Jenifer Fjelstad, Alexis Gustafson, Madilyn Wright, Gia Gengerke, Alexandra Stange

3.99-3.50: Madison Sippel, Marshall Lane, Hattie Weismantel, Luke Thorson, Jackson Oliver, Anthony Sippel, Jessica Bjerke, Emma Donley

3.49-3.00: Brandon Keith, Brenna Johnson, Hunter Monson, Hannah Lewandowski, Tyler Iverson, Erika Herr, Mitchel Thurston

Juniors

4.0 GPA: AnneMarie Smith, Emily Thompson, Cassandra Townsend, Jillian Barton

3.99-3.50: Samantha Geffre, Alexis Simon, Ashley Garduno, Kaitlyn Anderson, Tylan Glover, Kaitlyn Kasube, Kylie Kassube, Samantha Menzia, Jennie Doeden

3.49-3.00: Taylor Holm, Micah Poor, Payton Maine, Miranda Hanson, Alexa Hickenbotham, James Cranford

Sophomores

4.0 GPA: Kaycie Hawkins, Nicole Marzahn

3.99-3.50: Kayla Jensen, Kaylin Kucker, Payton Colestock, Amelie Hartwig, Kya Jandel

3.49-3.00: Austin Jones, Indigo Rogers, Tadyn Glover, KaSandra Pappas, Caitlynn Barse, Benjamin Higgins, Madeline Schuelke

Freshmen

4.0 GPA: None

3.99-3.50: Isaac Smith, Erin Unzen, Grace Wambach, Sage Mortenson, Alexa Herr, Samantha Pappas, Alexis Hanten, Tanae Lipp, Trey Gengerke, Jasmine Gengerke

3.49-3.00: Tiara DeHoet, Regan Leicht, Hailey Monson, Grace Wiedrick, Alex Morris, Tessa Erdmann, Brooklyn Gilbert, Steven Paulson, Taryn Taylor, Dragr Monson, Dylan Krueger, Sarah Sippel, Braden Freeman, Connor Lehman, Alyssa Fordham, Chandler Larson

Eighth Graders

4.0 GPA: None

3.99-3.50: Allyssa Locke, Stella Meier, Madisen Bjerke, Riley Gengerke, Travis Townsend, Madeline Fliehs, Trista Keith, Julianna Kosel, Seth Johnson, Pierce Kettering, Kennedy Anderson, Jordan Bjerke, Macine McGannon, Jackson Cogley, Lane Krueger

3.49-3.00: Kansas Kroll, Hannah Gustafson, Kaden Kurtz, Megan Fliehs, Alexander Dutchuk, Rease Jandel, River Pardick

Seventh Graders

4.0 GPA: Cole Bisbee

3.99-3.50: Caleb Hanten, Jackson Dinger, Ethan Clark, Brooke Gengerke, Jacob Lewandowski, Aspen Johnson, Andrew Marzahn, Elliana Weismantel, Carter Barse, Jackson Bahr, Cadance Tullis

3.49-3.00: Kaleb Antonsen, Cole Simon, Marlee Tollifson, Gracie Traphagen, Shallyn Foertsch, Cade Larson, Sierra Ehresmann, Dylan Anderson, Porter Johnson, KayLynn Overacker, Shaylee Peterson

Sixth Graders

4.0 GPA: None

3.99-3.50: Emma Schinkel, Jaycie Lier, Dillon Abeln, Bradin Althoff, Emily Clark, Kyleigh Englund, Ashlyn Sperry, Claire Heinrich, Colby Dunker

3.49-3.00: Anna Fjeldheim, Holden Sippel, Lydia Meier, Karsyn Jangula, Lane Tietz, Sydney Leicht, Sara Menzia, Hannah Monson, Bryson Wambach, Jacob Zak, Faith Fliehs, Carly Guthmiller, Elijah Lich, Lexi Osterman, Anna Bisbee

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GROTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #06-6

School Board Meeting

April 23, 2018 – 7:00 PM – Groton Area Elementary Commons

AGENDA:

1. Call to Order with members present. Approve agenda as proposed or amended.

POTENTIAL CONFLICTS DISCLOSURE PURSUANT SDCL 23-3

OLD/CONTINUING BUSINESS:

1. Open Forum for Public Participation...in accordance with Board Policy & Guidelines.

2. Program Overview Presentations

a. Grades JK, K, and 1...A. Schuring, A. Gibbs, R. Swisher, J. Milbrandt, E. Eichler

3. School Board Committee Reports:

a. Building, Grounds, & Transportation: Clint Fjelstad, Merle Harder

b. Personnel, Policy, & Curriculum: Deb Gengerke, Kara Pharis

c. Negotiations: Steve Smith, Grant Rix, Marty Weismantel

4. Administrative Reports: (a) Superintendent's Report; (b) Principal's Reports; (c) Business Manager Report

NEW BUSINESS:

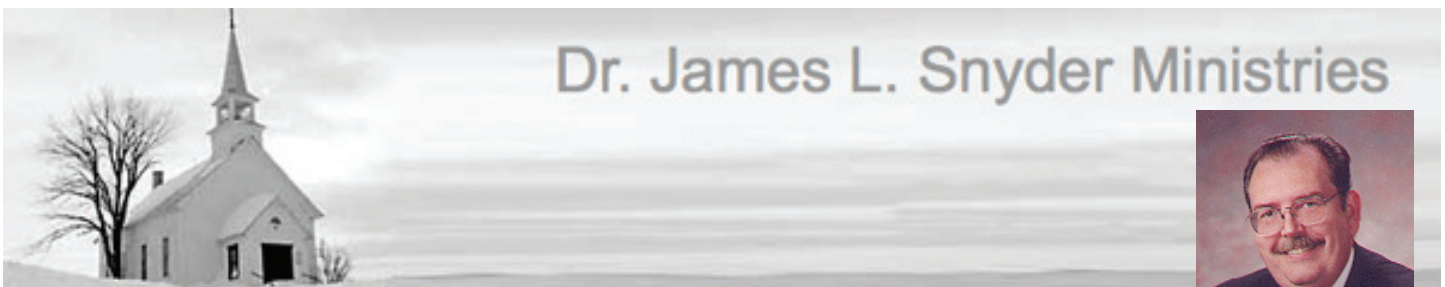
1. Approve managed print services provider beginning October 1, 2018.

2. Review 2017-2018 School Calendar following April 13 snow day.

3. Approve summer 2018 Drivers Education agreements for Shaun Wanner and Joel Guthmiller.

4. Executive session pursuant SDCL 1-25-2(1) for personnel and SDCL 1-25-2(4) for negotiations.

ADJOURN



How to Trick Summer into Coming Early

Just when you think summer has come, winter giggles and sticks her icy nose into my life.

Not being much of a fan of winter I can stand it for so long, but not as long as it's been this year. Either I'm getting old and cannot remember or this has been a very long winter. Shivering is not my favorite activity, although it's the only activity I get to do lately.

The Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage and I were talking; rather she was talking and I was listening. That is what makes us a great pair. She talks, I listen and our world goes rolling on.

What she was talking about was summer. "When," she asked, "will summer really get here?"

Of course, we can look at the calendar and pick out a date when summer is going to get here, but it is like playing the lottery, which I believe is rigged. I think picking the date of summer is rigged as well. I like to know who has rigged it because I would like to give them a piece of my wife's mind.

We talked a little bit about summer coming, when it is going to come and what we are going to do when summer actually gets here. She had a long list of activities she was anxious to jump into. Unfortunately for me, most of those activities were visiting thrift stores.

I often wonder why they are called "thrift" stores. When my wife goes, thriftiness goes out the window. She can bargain Scrooge out of his last dollar.

I know this and she was talking about the upcoming summer that her eyes were twinkling which meant only one thing. "Thrift stores, here I come."



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Unfortunately, we did not solve the problem concerning the weather. If you think about it, the weatherman who is paid to predict the weather cannot predict the weather accurately. Oh, for a job like that.

Soon the wife had to get up and do something in her craft room. I do not know what is in that craft room. I do not go in for fear of my life. She is very crafty and I am not going to second-guess anything in that room.

When she left I got to thinking about the upcoming summer. What in the world can we do to hurry summer along?

If it were up to me, winter would only be one month long and the rest of the time it would be summer. That is how I would parse things out. As you know, Mrs. Winter has a domineering spirit and wants to be here all the time, even when she is not welcome.

As I was thinking about this, I thought there must be some way we can trick Mr. Summer into coming earlier. After all, everybody can be tricked into something, whether they like it or not. I know I've been tricked into many things and it's hard to untrick yourself when you get tricked by someone like my wife.

Surely there something we can do to scam summer into coming a little earlier. I am sure Mr. Summer has its weaknesses like the rest of us. Our problem is to try to find that weakness. Once you find the weakness, then you are in control.

I thought of a few things but nothing seemed to stick in my mind. I am not used to thinking on my own and I was a little fearful of pulling in the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage to this "Think Tank" on an early summer.

Then a thought hit me. When I got up off the ground, for I am not accustomed for a thought to hit me, I sat back in my chair and smiled very broadly. I think I know what we can do. I believe I know how to trick good old Mr. Summer.

Everybody is really invested in themselves to some degree. The same can be said for Mr. Summer. Why not convince him that he is not needed anymore in our life?

Get up in the morning when it's very cold, put on a coat, go outside and dance and sing and just enjoy the coldness of the weather. Maybe one song we could sing is, "I Don't Need Summer Anymore." Just pretend that we love the cold and the colder it is, the more we love it.

I don't think it would take long for Mr. Summer to get jealous of Mrs. Winter and want to come back as soon as he can. Nobody likes to be out flagged on anything particularly in this category.

I was sitting in my chair with a smile all over my face and my wife came in and said, "Why are you smiling?"

"I was just thinking," I said, "how nice it is on such a cold winter day to spend the time indoors with you."

She smiled and went back to her craft room. I guess it really does work.

I thought of one of my favorite Bible verses. "The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance" (2 Peter 3:9).

Even though I am very impatient about many things, like Mr. Summer, I am so thankful that God is patient toward me in all things.

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Doeden, Stange qualify for state

Two Groton Area tracksters have qualified for the state track meet at the first meet held of the season. Ipswich hosted the meet on Saturday with Jonathan Doeden taking first in the 110m hurdles and Harleigh Stange taking second in the long jump as both qualified for the state meet.

Boy's Division

110m Hurdles: 1, (SQ) Jonathan Doeden, 15.54; Darien Shabazz, 27.31; Paxton Bonn, 23.05.

300m Hurdles: Thomas Cranford, 48.62.

200m Dash: Trevor Harry, 27.33; Doug Heminger, 30.32; Thomas Cranford, 25.92; Jonathan Doeden, 25.06; Darien Shabazz, 30.10; Austin Jones, 26.61

100m Dash: Trevor Harry, 12.47; Doug Heminger, 13.33; Thomas Cranford, 11.69.

400m Dash: Doug Heminger, 1:07.95.

800m Run: Isaac Smith, 2:45.54; Mitchell Kones, 2:28.64.

1600m Run: Isaac Smith, 6:30.23; Mitchell Koens, 5:28.22.

400m Relay: 5, Groton (Doeden, Cranford, Jones, Shabazz), 47.86.

High Jump: 8, Austin Jones, 5-4.

Long Jump: 7, Jonathan Doeden, 19-11 1/2; Trevor Harry, 18-5 1/2; Paxton Bonn, 14-3.

Shot Put: Luke Thorson 40-10; Grady O'Neill, 37-3; Caleb Ferney, 37-2; Brodyn DeHoet, 34-4.

Discus: Luke Thorson, 109; Grady O'Neill, 100-11; Caleb Ferney, 106-8; Brodyn DeHoet, 106-8.

Girl's Division

100m Hurdles: Payton Maine, 18.92; Cassandra Townsend, 20.78.

300m Hurdles: Payton Maine, 55.87; Cassandra Townsend, 1:02.30.

200m Dash: Tiara DeHoet, 35.02; Jodi Hinman, 32.79; Desiree Blevins, 38.98.

400m Dash: Regan Leicht, 1:18.72.

800m Run: 8, Amelie Hartwig, 2:49.29.

1600m Run: Desiree Blevins, 7:17.61.

400m Relay: 4, Groton (Harleigh Stange, Payton Maine, Amelie Hartwig, Jodi Hinman), 56.84.

800m Relay: 6, Groton (Harleigh Stange, Payton Maine, Amelie Hartwig, Jodi Hinman), 2:01.26.

Discus: 2, Jessica Bjerke, 109-2; 7, Jennie Doeden, 99-6; Kacie Hawkins, 87-7; Chloe Daly, 65-0.

Shot Put: 5, Jessica Bjerke, 33-7 3/4; 7, Jennie Doeden, 32-6; Madison Sippel, 29-3 1/2; Taylor Holm, 30-10; Kacie Hawkins, 30-4 1/4; Chloe Daly, 26-10; Alexis Hanten, 23-0.

High Jump: Nicole Marzahn, 4-2.

Long Jump: 2, (SQ) Harleigh Stange, 16-11; Nicole Marzahn, 13-10; Jodi Hinman, 10-10 1/2; Tiara DeHoet, 11-1 1/2.

Triple Jump: 3, Harleigh Stange, 32-9 1/2; 8, Nicole Marzahn, 30-7.

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Today in Weather History

April 22, 1968: A late season snow storm affected most of South Dakota, with the heaviest snowfall measuring 18 inches at Eagle Butte. Also, localized icing damaged utility lines, and 40 mph winds caused localized blizzard conditions. Some calf losses were reported.

April 22, 1992: With a fresh blanket of snow from a recent snowstorm helping to keep the air cool the high temperature at Sioux Falls only reached 31 degrees. This cold temperature is the latest below freezing high temperature on record in Sioux Falls.

April 22, 2001: Heavy snow of 7 to 15 inches fell across much of central and northeast South Dakota from early on the 22nd to early on the 23rd. Some freezing rain also brought heavy icing in Buffalo, Eastern Lyman, and far southern Roberts counties resulting in some downed trees and branches along with some downed power lines. This late season snowstorm caused many travel problems along with some accidents. There were many vehicles in the ditch along Interstate-29 in Roberts County. Many schools and events were either canceled or delayed on the 22nd and 23rd. The heavy snow also caused problems with ranchers and their livestock with some calves lost in the storm. Around 9:30 am on the 23rd in Kennebec, the heavy snow resulted in the roof of the 40 by 64-foot feed and seed warehouse to collapse. Late season record snowfalls were set at Aberdeen and Pierre. Some snowfall amounts included 7 inches at Timber Lake and Leola, 8 inches at Eagle Butte, Mobridge and Aberdeen, 9 inches at Kennebec and Pollock, 10 inches at Gettysburg, Selby, Redfield, and Webster, and 11 inches at Onida, Mission Ridge, Hosmer, and Columbia. Locations with snowfall amounts of a foot or more included, 12 inches at Britton, Ree Heights, Highmore, Blunt, Seneca, and Pierre, 13 inches at Murdo, Presho, Miller, and Wilmot, 14 inches at Roy Lake and southwest of Harrold, and 15 inches at Saint Lawrence.

1883: A tornado outbreak from Louisiana to Kansas claimed the lives of at least 127 people and injured over 800 others. One of the tornadoes destroyed the town of Beauregard, Mississippi.

1978: Lightning sometimes strikes tents. In this case, a tent containing some sleeping Girl Scouts was hit by lightning as they were camping at DeGray Lake in Arkansas. Two of the Girl Scouts suffered minor burns.



1999: A one million dollar air charter Boeing 727 flew into large hail. Although the plane and its 66 occupants landed safely, the aircraft was declared a total loss.

2003: Tropical Storm Ana became the first Atlantic tropical storm since records began in 1871 to form during the month April. Maximum sustained winds reached 55 mph. Starting as a non-tropical area of low pressure on the 18th about 210 miles south-southwest of Bermuda, it was classified as a sub-tropical storm early on the 20th, it gained full tropical characteristics near 0000 UTC on the 21st, developing an "eye" feature.


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Sun Apr 22	Mon Apr 23	Tue Apr 24	Wed Apr 25	Thu Apr 26	Fri Apr 27	Sat Apr 28
65°F	69°F	55°F	62°F	56°F	60°F	63°F
38°F	43°F	32°F	40°F	33°F	36°F	49°F
S 16 MPH	S 7 MPH	NNE 17 MPH Precip 50%	W 11 MPH	NNW 19 MPH	W 10 MPH	SW 10 MPH



Beautiful Earth Day Today!

Today		Highs: 60s
Monday		Highs: 60s
Tuesday	 Chance	Highs: 50s

National Weather Service – Aberdeen, SD
weather.gov/Aberdeen
Graphic Created 4/22/2018 4:48 AM

Published on: 04/22/2018 at 4:51AM

The weather will be great for Earth Day and for any spring cleaning today, as temperatures will rise into the 60s.

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 58.4 F at 3:00 PM

Low Outside Temp: 37.6 F at 7:13 AM

Wind Chill:

High Gust: 26.0 Mph at 4:12 PM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 90° in 1990

Record Low: 15° in 2015

Average High: 61°F

Average Low: 34°F

Average Precip in April: 1.18

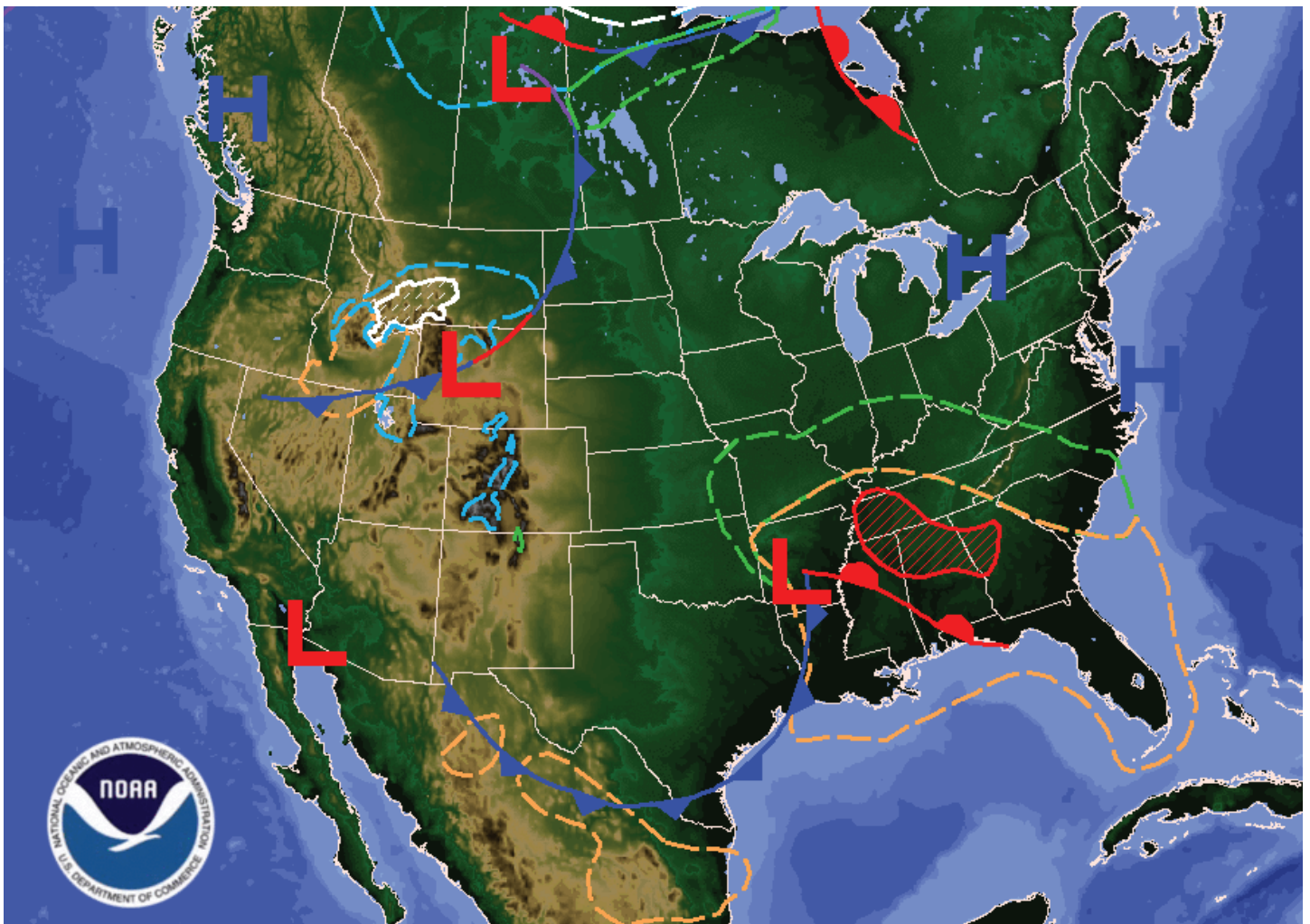
Precip to date in April: 0.61

Average Precip to date: 3.36

Precip Year to Date: 2.68

Sunset Tonight: 8:28 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:34 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Sun, Apr 22, 2018, issued 4:44 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Bann with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

Rain

Rain and T'Storms

Rain and Snow

Snow

Flash Flooding Possible (hatched)

Severe T'Storms Possible (hatched)

Freezing Rain Possible (hatched)

Heavy Snow Possible (hatched)

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"WINDS AND FLAMES" HIS SERVANTS

Missionary Rachel Smith was carefully telling the Christmas Story to a group of primitive headhunters in the jungles of Peru. With simplicity, she told the story of some men who were in the fields guarding their sheep when an angel suddenly appeared.

"What did he look like?" asked one. "Just like a man," she answered. "Did he have feathers?" he asked. "No," she replied. "Then he could not fly and the story is not true," he shouted.

"Have you seen the missionary plane?" she asked. "Yes," came his reply. "Have you touched it?" she asked. "I have," he said. "Did it have feathers?" she wanted to know. "No," he admitted. "You see," she explained, "one need not have feathers to fly."

Immediately the questioner and the tribe went in to an intense discussion. After several moments they agreed that the Christmas Story could be true. God used an angel that first Christmas evening to be a messenger with the most important announcement ever made to man.

The Bible has much to say about angels and their actions but little about their appearance. In Psalm 104:4 we read that "He makes winds His messengers, flames of fire His servants."

These "messengers" - or angels - are sent by God to help and care for those who receive His salvation. The Lord will always meet the needs of His children through one way or another - even if it takes one of His angels.

Prayer: With grateful hearts, Father, we give You our thanks for Your unending care and constant protection. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 104:4 He makes winds his messengers, flames of fire his servants.

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2018 Groton SD Community Events

- Groton Lion's Club Bingo- Wednesday Nights 6:30pm at the Groton Legion (Year Round)
- 11/18/2017-3/31/2018 Groton Lion's Club Wheel of Meat- Saturday Nights 7pm at the Groton Legion (Fall/Winter Months)
- 1/27/2019 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm
- 3/24/2018 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 4/13/2018 Elementary School Carnival, 5 p.m.
- 5/5/2018 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday in May)
- 5/27/2018 Historic Trinity Church Pump Organ Concert.
- 5/28/2018 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Program at the Cemetery, Lunch to follow at the American Legion (Memorial Day)
- 6/14/2018 Transit Fundraiser (Middle Thursday in June)
- 6/15/2018 SDSU Golf at Olive Grove
- 6/16/2018 Triathlon (Saturday before Father's Day)
- 7/4/2018 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)
- 7/22/2018 Summer Fest (4th Sunday in July)
- 9/8/2018 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 10/6/2018 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 10/12/2018 Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/31/2018 Trunk or Treat (Halloween)
- 11/10/2018 Groton American Legion Post #39 Turkey Shoot (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
- 12/01/2018 Olive Grove Golf Course 2018 Holiday Party

- Best Ball Golf Tourney
- SDSU Golf Tourney
- Sunflower Golf Tourney
- Santa Claus Day
- Fireman's Stag
- Tour of Homes
- Crazy Dayz/Open Houses
- School Events

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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
07-08-16-21-26
(seven, eight, sixteen, twenty-one, twenty-six)
Estimated jackpot: \$76,000

Lotto America
10-12-16-25-46, Star Ball: 6, ASB: 4
(ten, twelve, sixteen, twenty-five, forty-six; Star Ball: six; ASB: four)
Estimated jackpot: \$3.61 million

Mega Millions
Estimated jackpot: \$96 million

Powerball
40-50-54-62-69, Powerball: 19, Power Play: 2
(forty, fifty, fifty-four, sixty-two, sixty-nine; Powerball: nineteen; Power Play: two)
Estimated jackpot: \$142 million

83-year-old Rapid City man sentenced in medical laser scheme

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — An 83-year-old Rapid City man convicted in a nearly \$17 million illegal medical laser scheme has been sentenced to 12 years in federal custody.

The Rapid City Journal reports Larry Lytle was sentenced on Friday. Judge Roberto Lange recommended that Lytle be evaluated for possible placement in a federal medical facility because of Lytle's age and health.

Lytle admitted to selling hundreds of QLasers from 2005 through 2015 that were purchased for about \$4,000 each.

Investigators said he placed veterinary labels on the bogus handheld devices to evade review by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. He and his co-conspirators claimed the devices could treat more than 200 medical conditions, including AIDS.

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

New Mitchell aquatic center nears completion

MITCHELL, S.D. (AP) — Construction for an \$8 million aquatic center in southeast South Dakota is under budget and nearing completion.

The Mitchell Recreation Center's new indoor aquatic center will be open for public viewing in June. Voters narrowly approved the facility in 2015, the Daily Republic reported.

"You can't explain to people how big it is," said City Councilman Jeff Smith after touring the construction area Monday.

The facility's interior needs about two more weeks of work until crews move on to the exterior, said Robin Miller, the founder of MSH, which is the architectural firm assigned to the project.

Miller also said the project is under budget. The city will pay for most of the center. The Mitchell Aquatic

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Club pledged \$1 million toward the project. Other funds will come from a tax on hotel and motel patrons. "It's such a beautiful job," said Councilwoman Susan Tjarks.

Five distinct pool areas fit inside the facility. The pool features an equal mix of recreation and competitive uses, and includes a dual chlorine-ultraviolet light water treatment system.

Crews are currently working on two large smart-glass window areas. The windows are connected to a sensor on the roof and will get darker as the sun gets brighter.

Miller expects the project to finish in less than two months.

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

South Dakota district downsizes staff amid \$1.5M deficit

LEAD, S.D. (AP) — A school district in western South Dakota is downsizing its staff as it prepares to face a \$1.5 million budget deficit.

The Lead-Deadwood School District is redistributing duties as six employees plan to retire or resign at the end of the school year, the Black Hills Pioneer reported.

"In light of the fact that we are \$1.5 million in the red going into the upcoming budget cycle, I think that this is an opportunity to save some money," said Superintendent Dan Leikvold. "There are at least four administrators that will be involved in that discussion quite heavily."

The district won't be hiring for some of the open positions, and instead will fill the responsibilities with existing staff members, said Leikvold.

For example, the district will be absorbing the assistant high school principal position. The district has also decided not to hire to fill a vacant English teacher position.

"We will have two full-time English teachers at the high school, with some staff taking on English teaching duties," Leikvold said.

The district also seeks to improve efficiency in staff scheduling, according to Leikvold.

The downsizing is in part a result of declining enrollment, which is anticipated to drop from the district's current level of 680 to 500 by 2025.

Information from: Black Hills Pioneer, <http://www.bhpioneer.com>

Syrian military pummels IS-held districts in Damascus

DAMASCUS, Syria (AP) — Syrian government forces used warplanes, helicopters and artillery on Sunday to pound districts of the capital held by the Islamic State group, in a bid to enforce an evacuation deal reached with the militants earlier in the week.

The militants agreed to give up their last pocket in southern Damascus on Friday but have yet to begin surrendering to government forces and relocating to IS-held areas elsewhere in the country.

State-run al-Ikhbariya TV showed thick gray smoke billowing from the IS-held Hajar al-Aswad neighborhood on Sunday, and government warplanes streaking overhead amid heavy bombardment of the area. Hundreds of IS fighters and allied militants are holed up in Hajar al-Aswad and the nearby Yarmouk Palestinian refugee camp.

Residents of Damascus reported hearing loud booms throughout the night and Sunday morning.

President Bashar Assad has escalated his military campaign to retake all remaining enclaves in the capital and surrounding areas. The IS-held areas in southern Damascus are the last holdouts, after rebels evacuated the eastern Ghouta suburbs following a fierce government offensive and an alleged poison gas attack in the town of Douma.

Chemical weapons inspectors collected samples from Douma on Saturday, two weeks after the suspected gas attack there prompted retaliatory strikes by Western powers on the Syrian government's chemical facilities.

The site visit, confirmed by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, will allow the

agency to proceed with an independent investigation to determine what chemicals, if any, were used in the April 7 attack that medical workers said killed more than 40 people. The OPCW mission is not mandated to apportion to blame for the attack.

Douma was the final target of the government's sweeping campaign to seize back control of eastern Ghouta from rebels after seven years of revolt. Militants gave up the town days after the alleged attack.

The Syrian government and its ally Russia denied responsibility for the suspected chemical attack.

Meanwhile, rebels have begun evacuating three towns in the eastern Qalamoun region in the Damascus countryside.

Al-Ikhbariya TV said that 35 buses left the towns of Ruhaiba, Jayroud, and al-Nasriya on Saturday carrying hundreds of rebels and their families to opposition-held territory in northern Syria.

The station said the evacuations would continue for three days.

Islamic State suicide bomber kills 48 in Afghan capital

By RAHIM FAIEZ, Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — A suicide bomber struck a voter registration center in the Afghan capital on Sunday, killing at least 48 people in an attack claimed by the Islamic State group.

Public Health Ministry spokesman Wahid Majro said another 112 people were wounded in Sunday's attack, updating an earlier toll. Gen. Daud Amin, the Kabul police chief, said the suicide bomber targeted civilians who had gathered to receive national identification cards.

The large explosion echoed across the city, shattering windows miles away from the attack site and damaging several nearby vehicles. Police blocked all roads to the blast site, with only ambulances allowed in. Local TV stations broadcast live footage of hundreds of distraught people gathered at nearby hospitals seeking word about loved ones.

The Islamic State group has claimed responsibility in a statement carried by its Aamaq news agency, saying it had targeted Shiite "apostates."

Afghanistan will hold parliamentary elections in October.

Last week, three police officers responsible for guarding voter registration centers in two Afghan provinces were killed by militants, according to authorities.

Afghan security forces have struggled to prevent attacks by the Islamic State affiliate as well as the more firmly established Taliban since the U.S. and NATO concluded their combat mission at the end of 2014. Both groups regularly launch attacks, with the Taliban usually targeting the government and security forces, and IS targeting the country's Shiite minority.

Both groups want to establish a harsh form of Islamic rule in Afghanistan, and are opposed to democratic elections.

Elsewhere in Afghanistan, at least five people were killed when their vehicle struck a roadside bomb in the northern Baghlan province. Zabihullah Shuja, spokesman for the provincial police chief, said four other people were wounded in Sunday's blast in Puli Khomri, the capital of the province.

The Taliban routinely target security forces and government officials with roadside bombs, which often end up killing civilians.

In the northern Balkh province, a district police chief died of his wounds after being shot Saturday during a gunbattle with insurgents, according to Sher Jan Durrani, spokesman for the provincial police chief. He said around a dozen insurgents were also killed in the battle, which is still underway.

Durrani identified the slain commander as Halim Khanjar, police chief for the Char Bolak district.

The Taliban claimed responsibility for the killing.

Associated Press writer Maamoun Youssef in Cairo contributed to this report.

China auto show highlights industry's electric ambitions

By JOE McDONALD, AP Business Writer

BEIJING (AP) — The biggest global auto show of the year showcases China's ambitions to become a leader in electric cars and the industry's multibillion-dollar scramble to roll out models that appeal to price-conscious but demanding Chinese drivers.

Auto China 2018, which opens this week, follows Beijing's decision to allow full foreign ownership of Chinese automakers in a move to make the industry more flexible as it promotes electrics.

The ruling Communist Party has transformed China into the biggest market for electrics with billions of dollars in subsidies to producers and buyers. Now, Beijing is winding down that support and shifting the financial burden to automakers with sales quotas that push them to develop models Chinese drivers want to buy.

That is reflected in the auto show lineup: Global and Chinese brands including General Motors Co., Volkswagen AG and Nissan Motor Co. plan to display dozens of electrics and hybrids, from luxurious SUVs to compacts priced as low as 152,000 yuan (\$24,000).

Communist leaders see electric cars as both a way to clean up smog-choked cities and a key ingredient in plans to transform China into a global competitor in an array of technology fields from robotics to solar power to biotech.

"Just in the last two or three years, China rose from being a very small player in the global EV market to be nearly 50 percent of sales in 2017," said Christopher Robinson, who follows the industry for Lux Research.

"It attracted nearly every automaker in the world," said Robinson.

Starting in 2019, automakers will be required to earn credits by selling electrics or else buy them from competitors. More stringent fuel efficiency standards will require a big share of each brand's sales to be non-gasoline models.

Global automakers say electrics should account for 35 to over 50 percent of their China sales by 2025.

"There is huge potential for vehicle electrification here," said Roland Krueger, chairman of Infiniti Motor Co., Nissan's luxury brand.

Chinese sales of electrics and gasoline-electric hybrids rose 154 percent in the first quarter over a year earlier to 143,000 units, according to the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers. That compares with sales of just under 200,000 for all of last year in the United States, the No. 2 market.

GM plans to display five all-electric vehicles including a concept Buick SUV it says can travel 600 kilometers (375 miles) on one charge, plus a hybrid Cadillac XT5 28E.

The Detroit automaker, which vies with VW for the status of China's biggest brand, is launching 10 electrics or hybrids in China from in 2016 to 2020.

VW is due to launch 15 electrics and hybrids in the next two to three years as part of a 10 billion euro (\$12 billion) development plan announced in November.

Nissan is unveiling an electric model at the auto show designed for China and will display an updated version of its Leaf and an electric concept car.

The Japanese automaker also plans to develop a lower-priced electric with a local partner, state-owned Dongfeng Motor Co. Two more versions of that are to be sold under their jointly owned Venucia brand.

China's BYD Auto, the biggest global maker of electrics by volume with 2017 sales of 113,669 units, plans to unveil two new hybrid SUVs and an electric concept car. The company also plans to display nine other hybrid and plug-in electric models.

Infiniti plans to display a concept sedan, the Q Inspiration, that Krueger said will be the basis for future electric models.

The sleek Q Inspiration has no air-drawing engine, and thus no front grill — a change Krueger said was suggested by Chinese designers at Infiniti's Beijing studio.

The car has the roomier back seat that has become standard among luxury brands that want to appeal to Chinese customers who have a driver and ride in back.

"The first car is going to cater specifically to the needs of the Chinese market," said Krueger.

Ford Motor Co. has announced a "product onslaught" this month for China that includes at least 15

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electrified vehicles and 35 other models through 2025. Ford's first plug-in hybrid in China, the Mondeo Energi, went on sale last month.

Washington and other trading partners have been irked by the Chinese controls that required global automakers to work through state-owned local partners and imposed other restrictions.

Automakers complained joint ventures were cumbersome and expensive but complied because they gained access to a market that passed the United States in 2009 as the world's biggest.

Last year's sales of SUVs, sedans and minivans totaled 24.7 million units, compared with 17.2 million for the United States.

The Cabinet's planning agency announced last week Beijing will loosen those controls by allowing full foreign ownership in the industry, starting with electric vehicle producers this year. Limits for commercial vehicles would end in 2020 and for all passenger vehicles in 2022.

That would end a 50 percent cap on foreign ownership of an auto venture, a limit that required automakers to share technology with potential competitors, adding to President Donald Trump's trade complaints against Beijing.

"Now you're going to see the difference between the partners that you want and partners imposed on you," said Carlos Ghosn, chairman of the Renault-Nissan-Mitsubishi alliance.

Ghosn said his companies were happy with their Chinese partners. But he said with electrics, autonomous driving and other innovations give companies a new chance to consider a partnership or work independently.

"Every time there is a new opportunity we're going to consider, should we go with a partner? What are the advantages? Or should we go by ourselves?" said Ghosn. "This is a new freedom for carmakers, which is welcome."

Still, while electrics may be China's future, most brands lose money making them. Profits come from sales of SUVs that are wildly popular with Chinese drivers who see them as the safest option on the country's rough, chaotic roads.

First-quarter SUVs sales rose 11.3 percent over a year earlier to 2.6 million, or almost 45 percent of all auto sales, according to CAAM. Electrics accounted for just over 2 percent.

AP Business Writer Kelvin Chan in Hong Kong contributed to this report.

Road to N. Korea's denuclearization is littered with failure

By KIM TONG-HYUNG, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Bill Clinton offered oil and reactors. George W. Bush mixed threats and aid. Barack Obama stopped trying after a rocket launch.

While Seoul and Washington welcomed Pyongyang's declaration on Saturday to suspend further inter-continental ballistic missile tests and shut down its nuclear test site, the past is littered with failure.

A decades-long cycle of crises, stalemates and broken promises gave North Korea the room to build up a legitimate arsenal that now includes purported thermonuclear warheads and developmental ICBMs. The North's latest announcement stopped well short of suggesting it has any intention of giving that up.

South Korean President Moon Jae-in meets with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un on Friday to kick off a new round of high-stakes nuclear diplomacy with Pyongyang. The inter-Korean summit could set up more substantial discussions between Kim and President Donald Trump, who said he plans to meet the despot he previously called "Little Rocket Man" in May or June.

A look at previous negotiations with North Korea and how the currently planned talks between Seoul, Pyongyang and Washington took shape:

1994

The Clinton administration in October 1994 reached a major nuclear agreement with Pyongyang, ending months of war fears triggered by North Korea's threat to withdraw from the nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and convert its stockpile of nuclear fuel into bombs.

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Under the "Agreed Framework," North Korea halted construction of two reactors the United States believed were for nuclear weapons production in return for two alternative nuclear power reactors that could be used to provide electricity but not bomb fuel, and 500,000 metric tons of fuel oil annually for the North.

The deal was tested quickly. North Korea complained about delayed oil shipments and construction of the reactors, which were never delivered. The United States criticized the North's pursuit of ballistic missile capability, demonstrated in the launch of a two-stage rocket over Japan in 1998.

The Agreed Framework further lost political support in Washington with the inauguration of Bush, who in his first State of the Union address in January 2002 grouped North Korea with Iran and Iraq as parts of an "axis of evil."

The deal collapsed for good months later after U.S. officials confronted North Korea over a clandestine nuclear program using enriched uranium. Washington stopped the oil shipments and Pyongyang restarted its nuclear weapons program.

2005

Responding to Washington's toughened stance, North Korea announced in 2003 it obtained a nuclear device and would withdraw from the Nonproliferation Treaty.

This brought the United States back to the negotiating table with the North and the six-party talks also involving South Korea, China, Japan and Russia began in Beijing in August 2003.

After months of fiery negotiations, North Korea accepted a deal in September 2005 to end its nuclear weapons program in exchange for security, economic and energy benefits.

But the agreement was shaky from the start as it came just days after the U.S. Treasury Department ordered American banks to sever relations with a Macau bank accused of helping North Korea to launder money from drug trafficking and other illicit activities, which hampered Pyongyang's international financial transactions.

Disagreements between Washington and Pyongyang over the financial punishment of Banco Delta Asia temporarily derailed the six-nation talks. In October 2006, the North went on to conduct its first nuclear test detonation.

2007

North Korea agreed to resume the disarmament talks a few weeks after the nuclear test. In February 2007, the United States and the four other nations reached an agreement to provide North Korea with an aid package worth about \$400 million in return for the North disabling its nuclear facilities and re-allowing international inspectors into the country.

North Korea demolished the cooling tower at its Nyongbyon reactor site in June 2008. But in September, the North declared it will resume reprocessing plutonium, complaining that Washington wasn't fulfilling its promise to remove the country from the U.S. list of state sponsors of terrorism.

The Bush administration removed North Korea from the list in October after the country agreed to continue disabling its nuclear plant. However, a final attempt by Bush to complete an agreement to fully dismantle North Korea's nuclear weapons program collapsed in December when the North refused to accept U.S.-proposed verification methods.

The six-nation talks have stalled since then. The North conducted its second nuclear test in May 2009, months after Obama took office.

2012

Months after taking power following the death of his father, current North Korean leader Kim reached a deal with the Obama administration in February 2012 to suspend nuclear weapons and missile tests and uranium enrichment and to also allow international inspectors to monitor its nuclear activities in exchange for U.S. food aid.

The United States killed the deal in April when the North launched a long-range rocket it claimed was built for delivering satellites. The failed launch was seen by the outside world as a prohibited test of bal-

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listic missile technology.

The North criticized the United States of “overreacting” and launched another long-range rocket in December it said successfully delivered a satellite into space.

In 2013, Kim announced that his government would pursue a national “byungjin” policy aimed at simultaneously seeking nuclear development and economic growth. This was seen as a clean break from the North’s previous stance that mainly used the nuclear program as a bargaining chip to extract concessions from foreign governments, rather than for immediate military purposes.

2018

North Korea’s abrupt diplomatic outreach in recent months comes after a flurry of weapons tests that marked 2017, including the underground detonation of an alleged thermonuclear warhead and three launches of developmental ICBMs designed to strike the U.S. mainland.

Inter-Korean dialogue resumed after Kim in his New Year’s speech proposed talks with the South to reduce animosities and for the North to participate in February’s Winter Olympics in Pyongchang. North Korea sent hundreds of people to the games, including Kim’s sister, who expressed her brother’s desire to meet with Moon for a summit. South Korean officials later brokered a potential summit between Kim and Trump.

While South Korean and U.S. officials have said Kim is likely trying to save his broken economy from heavy sanctions, some analysts see him as entering the negotiations from a position of strength after having declared his nuclear force as complete in November last year.

Seoul has said Kim expressed genuine interest in dealing away his nuclear weapons. But North Korea for decades has been pushing a concept of “denuclearization” that bears no resemblance to the American definition, vowing to pursue nuclear development unless Washington removes its troops from the peninsula and the nuclear umbrella defending South Korea and Japan.

Some experts say Kim’s nuclear program is now too advanced to realistically expect a roll back to near zero.

“Kim will not offer CVID at the door,” said Koh Yu-hwan, a North Korea expert at Seoul’s Dongguk University who’s advising Moon on his summit with Kim. He was referring to an abbreviation for the “complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement” of the North’s nuclear weapons program.

“Everything depends on whether Trump can accept a deal that puts out the ‘early fire’ — taking away the North’s ICBMs and freezing and closing its known nuclear and missile production facilities — and leave the rest for future negotiations,” Koh said.

Follow Kim Tong-hyung on Twitter at @KimTongHyung.

Trump says he doesn’t think personal lawyer will ‘flip’

By JILL COLVIN, Associated Press

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — President Donald Trump said Saturday that he doesn’t expect Michael Cohen, his longtime personal lawyer and fixer, to “flip” as the government investigates Cohen’s business dealings.

Trump, in a series of tweets fired off from Florida on the morning of former first lady Barbara Bush’s funeral, accused The New York Times and one of its reporters of “going out of their way to destroy Michael Cohen and his relationship with me in the hope that he will ‘flip’” — a term that can mean cooperating with the government in exchange for leniency.

“Most people will flip if the Government lets them out of trouble,” even if “it means lying or making up stories,” Trump said, before adding: “Sorry, I don’t see Michael doing that despite the horrible Witch Hunt and the dishonest media!”

The FBI raided Cohen’s home, office and hotel room earlier this month looking for evidence of fraud as they conduct a criminal investigation. That included records related to payments Cohen made in 2016 to

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adult film star Stormy Daniels and former Playboy model Karen McDougal, both of whom allege having had sexual encounters with Trump, people familiar with the raid have told The Associated Press.

Prosecutors have said they're investigating Cohen's personal business dealings but haven't said what crime they believe he may have committed. Cohen's lawyers have called the raid an assault on attorney-client privilege and Trump has said it was "an attack on our country."

In the tweets, sent shortly after he arrived at one of his Florida golf courses, Trump accused the newspaper of using "non-existent 'sources'" in a Friday story about the relationship between Trump and Cohen, who has said he would "take a bullet" for his boss. The story quoted several people on the record.

Trump also lashed out personally at one of the story's writers, calling reporter Maggie Haberman "third rate" and claiming he has "nothing to do with" her. Trump later deleted and reposted the tweets correcting the spelling of Haberman's name.

Haberman is widely seen as one of the most diligent reporters covering the president and is known to speak with him often. The Times responded on Twitter, saying it stood by the story and praising Haberman, who was part of the team that just won a Pulitzer Prize for its reporting on Trump.

The tweets came as the rest of the country was preparing for the funeral of Mrs. Bush. The president chose not to go to the Houston service, but first lady Melania Trump attended. Trump tweeted that he would watch from Florida.

The president also fired off several other tweets on Saturday attacking the media and fired FBI director James Comey and announcing that he is considering offering a posthumous pardon to boxing's first black heavyweight champion more than 100 years after the late Jack Johnson was convicted by all-white jury of accompanying a white woman across state lines.

Follow Colvin on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/colvinj>

Mnuchin expresses optimism trade standoffs can be resolved

By PAUL WISEMAN and MARTIN CRUTSINGER, AP Economics Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) — The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank repeatedly warned at their meetings this week that intensifying trade tensions could jeopardize a healthy global economic expansion.

But U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin expressed cautious optimism Saturday that countries could settle their differences without a trade war.

Mnuchin met during the past three days with financial officials from China, Japan and Europe over a series of punitive tariffs unveiled by the Trump administration against China and other trading partners.

In a session with reporters, Mnuchin refused to say how close the United States was to resolving the various trade disputes, but he did say progress had been made.

The United States and China are on the brink of what would be the biggest trade dispute since World War II. Each has proposed imposing tariffs of \$50 billion on each other's products; President Donald Trump is looking to impose tariffs up to \$100 billion more on Chinese goods.

In a speech earlier this month, Chinese President Xi Jinping vowed to open China's market wider to foreign companies, raising hopes the dispute with Washington could be resolved. Mnuchin said he discussed Xi's proposals with Chinese officials. "We are cautiously optimistic," Mnuchin told reporters, saying that he may soon travel to Beijing for further talks.

The Commerce Ministry in Beijing said Sunday that China welcomes a visit from the U.S. to Beijing to discuss trade issues and confirms it has "received information" regarding Washington's interest in such a trip.

Trade tensions dominated the three days of talks among top finance officials attending meetings of the Group of 20 major economies, the 189-nation International Monetary Fund and its sister lending agency, the World Bank.

The officials roundly criticized Trump's get-tough approach to trade, a reversal of seven decades of U.S. support for increasing freedom in global commerce. In his speech to the IMF's policy committee Saturday, Yi Gang, the head of China's central bank, said that global growth could be hurt by "an escalation of trade

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frictions caused by unilateral actions," an obvious reference to America's threatened tariffs against China.

Mnuchin insisted that the United States was not trying to provoke a global trade war but seeking to protect American jobs from unfair competition. "The president has been very clear on what our objectives are," Mnuchin said. "We are looking for reciprocal treatment. This is not about protectionism."

There were signs of conciliation. The U.S. dropped its objection to the first increase in the World Bank's capital resources since 2010, clearing the way for the bank's board to OK a \$13 billion increase in its capacity to make loans to poor countries. The move was tied to a package of reforms the U.S. had sought.

Both the World Bank and IMF held meetings of their policy committees on Saturday. In a closing communique, the IMF expressed concern that the rising trade tensions could dim what at the moment are bright prospects for the global economy, which is expected to grow this year at the fastest pace since 2011.

"Trade tensions are not to the benefit of anyone," said Lesetja Kganyago, who leads the policymaking committee and is governor of the South African Reserve Bank. "If there is a trade conflict, there could never be winners. We could all only be losers."

On Friday, Mnuchin had called on the IMF to do more to police countries running large trade surpluses, a role that has traditionally been left to the Geneva-based World Trade Organization. The final IMF communique did state: "We will work together to reduce excessive global imbalances in a way that supports global growth." The communique did not spell out how this would be accomplished.

Romney must compete in primary for Senate seat

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST and JULIAN HATTEM, Associated Press

WEST VALLEY CITY, Utah (AP) — Mitt Romney was forced into a Republican primary in his bid for U.S. Senate in Utah after losing a nomination battle Saturday at the state's far-right-leaning GOP convention.

Romney remains the heavy favorite overall to replace long-serving Sen. Orrin Hatch in November and said he was ready to keep campaigning hard.

If he had won the party delegate vote at the convention, he would have bypassed a primary altogether. Instead, he was edged out by state lawmaker Mike Kennedy, who got 51 percent of the vote to Romney's 49 percent.

GOP voters will decide between the two in a June 26 primary.

Romney previously secured his spot on the primary ballot by gathering 28,000 voter signatures but said Saturday that choice was partly to blame for his loss.

Gathering signatures to make the ballot is unpopular among many conservative delegates in the state who say it dilutes their ability to choose a candidate.

The issue prompted hours of debate, shouting and booing at the convention.

Romney, 71, went up against 11 other candidates at the convention, including one dressed as Abraham Lincoln, complete with vest and bow tie. Some candidates questioned Romney's past criticism of President Donald Trump.

Romney pushed back against critics who said he's an interloper in Utah politics by referring to his role in staging the 2002 Winter Olympics in Utah.

"Some people I've spoken with have said this is a David vs. Goliath race, but they're wrong," Romney said in his speech. "I'm not Goliath. Washington, D.C., is Goliath."

Kennedy, a doctor and lawyer, framed himself as an underdog taking on the "Romney machine." At one point, he pitched in to sweep up tiny paper American flags that had been shot from a confetti cannon hours before.

Delegate Matt Murdoch, 28, said he voted for Kennedy because he's a family doctor serving many of his neighbors in Alpine, south of Salt Lake City.

Stay-at-home mother Michelle Cluff said she liked Romney's experience and believes he is ready to get to work as a senator.

Romney was governor of Massachusetts from 2003 to 2007. While in office he signed legislation that

greatly expanded access to health care through state-level subsidies and individual mandates to purchase insurance, much like Obamacare.

Romney asked for delegates' votes after spending two months on the campaign trail visiting dairy farms, taking selfies with college students and making stump speeches in small towns.

After his failed 2012 presidential campaign, he moved to Utah, where he gained popularity after running as the first Mormon presidential nominee of a major political party.

He's worked to keep the focus on state issues rather than his history of well-documented feuds with Trump, whom he called a "con-man" and a phony during the 2016 race. Trump fired back that Romney "choked like a dog" during his own White House run.

The two men have shown signs of making peace, and Romney has accepted Trump's endorsement for Senate. But Romney said Saturday he hasn't decided whether he'll endorse the president's 2020 re-election bid.

Laughter, tears as former first lady Barbara Bush remembered

By JUAN A. LOZANO, Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — Barbara Bush was remembered as the "first lady of the Greatest Generation" during a funeral Saturday attended by four former U.S. presidents and hundreds of other people who filled a Houston church with laughter as much as tears, with many recalling her quick wit and devotion to family.

Former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush joked that his mother called her style of raising him and his siblings "a benevolent dictatorship" — but honestly, it wasn't always benevolent." She was widely admired for her plainspoken style during her husband George H.W. Bush's presidency and was known as "The Enforcer" in her high-powered family.

Jeb Bush said he could feel her presence Saturday inside the nation's largest Episcopal church and that she would likely have given him advice: "Jeb, keep it short. Don't drag this out," he said to chuckles. He met her expectations with a speech lasting about seven minutes.

He choked up at one point while addressing the roughly 1,500 people seated inside St. Martin's Episcopal Church, where his parents regularly worshipped, when saying his mother — known for her self-deprecating remarks about her wrinkles and white-gray hair — was "beautiful" until the very end.

His father, a prolific writer of love letters to his wife, laughed when his son read a letter from their wedding anniversary in 1994. It began: "Will you marry me? Oops! I forgot we did that, 49 years ago." But when his son continued reading, about how his father grew happier each year spent with his wife, his father closed his eyes and cried. Jeb Bush later hugged his father and kissed him on the cheek.

Presidential historian Jon Meacham, who wrote a 2015 biography on the former president, recalled during his eulogy Barbara Bush's devotion to her husband of 73 years, noting he was the "only boy she ever kissed." Theirs was the longest marriage of any presidential couple.

Meacham said Barbara Bush was also known for bringing awareness to AIDS patients and for her work promoting literacy, which her husband subtly honored Saturday by wearing socks printed with blue, red and yellow books.

"Barbara Bush was the first lady of the Greatest Generation," Meacham said, a nod to the generation that fought in World War II.

The couple's family, including their five children, 17 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren, played prominent roles in the service. Granddaughters offered readings, some of their voices shaky with emotion, while their eight grandsons were pallbearers.

The Bush family was seated in front of the church. Nearby, two other former presidents — Bill Clinton and Barack Obama — along with their wives and current first lady Melania Trump were seated in the same pew.

A eulogy was also given by Barbara Bush's longtime friend, Susan Baker, wife of former Secretary of State James A. Baker III. She said Bush — the wife of the nation's 41st president and mother of the 43rd — was "the secret sauce of this extraordinary family."

As the funeral ended, George H.W. Bush was pushed in his wheelchair by another son, former President

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George W. Bush, as they followed the casket out of the church's cavernous sanctuary, which had been adorned with sprays of yellow garden roses, yellow snap dragons and antique hydrangeas.

They stopped along the way to shake hands as mourners sang "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee," which Barbara Bush had requested as the final song. She died on Tuesday, with her husband by her side, at their home in Houston. She was 92.

Barbara Bush was buried Saturday afternoon at her husband's presidential library at Texas A&M University in College Station, about 100 miles (161 kilometers) northwest of Houston. The burial site is in a gated plot surrounded by trees and near a creek where the couple's 3-year-old daughter Robin is buried. She died of leukemia in 1953.

"It was a very brief but poignant and beautiful ending to a very moving and incredible day. It would have been exactly what Barbara Bush wanted," family spokesman Jim McGrath said.

Hundreds of people lined both sides of the street near the campus as the funeral procession passed on a gray, cloudy day. Flags were flown at half-staff.

Other guests at the invitation-only funeral included former Rep. Gabby Giffords and her husband, retired astronaut Mark Kelly, and professional golfer Phil Mickelson, along with Karl Rove and other former White House staff members.

Melania Trump said in a statement it was an honor to give her respects to a "fearless" first lady, adding: "Today the world paid tribute to a woman of indisputable character and grace." President Donald Trump didn't attend to avoid security disruptions, according to the White House, but he released a statement saying his thoughts were with the family.

Former President Jimmy Carter and his wife, Rosalynn, also didn't attend because he was traveling overseas and she was recovering from surgery, according to the Carter Center.

On Friday, more than 6,200 people visited the Houston church during a public viewing. Many of the women wore the former first lady's favorite color, blue, and her trademark pearl necklaces.

George H.W. Bush was so moved by how many people lined up Friday to pay their final respects to his wife that he decided to go. From his wheelchair, he spent about 15 minutes shaking hands with people who had come.

Associated Press journalists John L. Mone and Mark Humphrey in College Station, Texas, and Julie Watson in San Diego, contributed to this report.

Man killed in random knife attack at California steakhouse

By AMANDA LEE MYERS, Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A homeless man who randomly stabbed a patron in a crowded Southern California restaurant to death as he was holding his daughter was reported just a few hours earlier for disruptive behavior, but police ultimately determined he was not a threat, authorities said Saturday.

Jamal Jackson, 49, is facing a first-degree murder charge in the death of 35-year-old Anthony Mele. He was being held in Ventura County jail on a \$1.5 million bail. It was unclear if Jackson, who is also a convicted felon, had an attorney to speak on his behalf.

Mele and his wife were eating dinner with their 5-year-old daughter Wednesday at Aloha Steakhouse in the seaside city of Ventura. The girl was sitting on her father's lap when prosecutors say Jackson walked up and stabbed Mele in the neck.

Prosecutor Richard Simon said customers and a restaurant employee followed Jackson out of the restaurant, even though he still had the knife. They kept track of him until Ventura police arrived and arrested him.

Mele was taken to a hospital and died Thursday after being taken off life support.

"It's horrible," Simon said. "You don't think you're going to be killed when you go out to dinner at a nice restaurant with your family and you didn't do anything."

Simon said the two men had not interacted before the attack.

"He was just sitting there with his daughter in his lap," Simon said. "You're not supposed to die that way."

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Mele's loved ones started a GoFundMe page to help raise money for a funeral and to support his wife and daughter.

Mele's Facebook page was filled with photos of his daughter and said he was a manager at an AT&T store.

Police confirmed that a bystander reported a man — who turned out to be Jackson — for disruptive behavior several hours before the stabbing.

According to the bystander, a man was yelling on the promenade not far from the beachside restaurant about three hours before the attack.

Patrol officers were out on other calls so command center staff monitored the man via a pier security camera system for more than 20 minutes before deciding he didn't seem to be a threat, police said.

Police are asking anyone who spoke with Jackson during that time to contact investigators in the city 70 miles (113 kilometers) northwest of Los Angeles.

Jackson also had half a dozen contacts with police in Ventura since the beginning of the year, including an arrest after a physical fight at a park, said Commander Tom Higgins.

He was also stopped on March 31 after a passer-by reported he was brandishing a knife. Police searched his bag and found a knife but there was no victim so no charge was filed, Higgins said.

Jackson has a lengthy rap sheet including charges in San Bernardino County, Higgins said, as well as convictions for burglary and unlawful sexual intercourse dating back to the 1990s.

The killing prompted the Ventura City Council to increase police patrols in the area and add staff members to monitor security cameras, among other measures.

"We are extremely disheartened and infuriated by this criminal attack," Mayor Neal Andrews said in a statement. "We will not tolerate this in our community. Nothing is more important than the safety of our visitors, residents and businesses."

If convicted, Jackson faces up to 55 years in prison.

Associated Press writer Amy Taxin in Santa Ana, California, contributed to this report.

Thousands sing 'Happy Birthday' to Queen Elizabeth II

By GREGORY KATZ, Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The audience at Royal Albert Hall got a rare treat Saturday — the chance to sing "Happy Birthday" to the longest reigning monarch in British history.

Queen Elizabeth II, with her eldest son Prince Charles at her side, waved to the crowd as they celebrated her 92nd birthday in song.

Charles got an enthusiastic response when he introduced her as: "Your majesty, mummy."

The queen took center stage after a varied pop concert featuring British singers Sting, Tom Jones and Jamie Cullum along with Australian star Kylie Minogue, long a fan favorite here.

Shaggy and Craig David also performed, and the festivities took a long stroll down memory lane, with audio from a speech Elizabeth made on her 21st birthday and video from her Golden Jubilee, when roughly 1 million people gathered outside Buckingham Palace to honor her.

She was flanked in the royal box by Charles, heir to the throne, and Prince William, next in the line of succession.

Prince Harry and fiancée Meghan Markle also attended, generating a roar of applause when they took their seats. The couple will wed May 19 at Windsor Castle.

Prince William's wife Kate, the Duchess of Cambridge, did not attend. She is expecting the couple's third child.

The queen's husband, Prince Philip, was also missing. He is recovering from hip replacement surgery.

The show featured contemporary tunes, but included songs from earlier eras, including selections from "My Fair Lady" — one of the queen's favorites — and a sentimental rendering of "Wonderful World."

Earlier in the day, honorary gun salutes were staged at Hyde Park, the Tower of London, a castle in Wales and the town of Windsor to mark the occasion.

The queen celebrates two birthdays every year: Her actual birthday on April 21, which she usually marks privately with her family, and her "official birthday" in the summer. That usually falls on the second Saturday in June, when she joins the Trooping the Color military parade in central London.

Elizabeth's real birthday this year came on the tails of the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting, which brought the leaders of the 53 Commonwealth countries together in England.

The queen has led the disparate group, made up of Britain and its former colonies, since she took the throne in 1952.

This story has been corrected to show that Saturday was the queen's actual birthday, not the "official" birthday she observes in June.

Mnuchin expresses optimism for resolution of trade fights

By MARTIN CRUTSINGER and PAUL WISEMAN, AP Economics Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) — Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin expressed cautious optimism Saturday over efforts to resolve trade tensions that have rattled financial markets and clouded the global economic outlook.

Mnuchin held a string of meetings over the past three days with financial officials from China, Japan and Europe over the punitive tariffs the administration has unveiled in an effort to fulfill President Donald Trump's campaign promise to reduce America's huge trade deficits.

In a session with reporters, Mnuchin refused to say how close the United States was to resolving the various trade disputes but did indicate progress was being made in the talks.

In his discussion with Chinese officials, Mnuchin said the two sides covered the proposals that Chinese President Xi Jinping has made to open the Chinese market. "We are cautiously optimistic," Mnuchin told reporters, saying that he may soon travel to Beijing for further talks with the Chinese.

The United States and China are on the brink of what would be the biggest trade dispute since World War II. The US and China have proposed imposing tariffs of \$50 billion on each others' products and Trump is looking to impose tariffs on up to \$100 billion more of Chinese goods.

The rising trade tensions dominated the three days of talks among top finance officials attending meetings of the Group of 20 major economies, the 189-nation International Monetary Fund and its sister lending agency, the World Bank.

The US get-tough trade approach was roundly criticized by many countries at the finance meetings but Mnuchin insisted that the United States was not trying to provoke a global trade war but simply achieving a more fair system for American workers.

"The president has been very clear on what our objectives are," Mnuchin said. "We are looking for reciprocal treatment. This is not about protectionism."

While the administration's America First approach rankled other nations, Mnuchin did announce a change in position with the World Bank, one of several multilateral institutions that Trump officials have criticized in the past. Last year, the administration said it was opposed to what would be the first increase in the World Bank's capital resources since 2010.

But on Saturday, Mnuchin said the United States had dropped its opposition and would support the increase as part of a package of lending reforms.

The proposal, which was approved late Saturday by the World Bank's policy committee, would provide the World Bank with a \$13 billion increase in lending resources. The increase in capital was tied to a package of World Bank reforms in how loans are awarded.

World Bank President Jim Yong Kim hailed the action as a demonstration of "renewed confidence in global cooperation."

Both the World Bank and IMF held meetings of their policy committees on Saturday. In a closing communique, the IMF expressed concerns that the rising trade tensions could dim what at the moment are bright prospects for the global economy, which is expected to grow this year at the fastest pace since 2011.

"Trade tensions are not to the benefit of anyone," said Lesetja Kganyago, who leads the policymaking

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committee and is governor of the South African Reserve Bank. "If there is a trade conflict, there could never be winners. We could all only be losers."

On Friday, Mnuchin had called on the IMF to do more to police countries running large trade surpluses, a role that has traditionally been left to the Geneva-based World Trade Organization. While many IMF member countries would object to such a broadening of the IMF's powers, the final communique did state, "We will work together to reduce excessive global imbalances in a way that supports global growth." The communique did not spell out how this would be accomplished.

The IMF communique did list a series of threats to the current global upturn and finance officials pledged to work cooperatively.

"Rising financial vulnerabilities, increasing trade and geopolitical tensions and historically high global debt threaten global growth prospects," the IMF communique said.

In his speech to the IMF's policy committee Saturday, Yi Gang, the head of China's central bank, said that global growth could be hurt by "an escalation of trade frictions caused by unilateral actions," an obvious reference to America's threatened tariffs against China.

Vive la France: Trump hosts glitzy White House state dinner

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Now it's President Donald Trump's turn to pull off the ultimate charm offensive.

Wined and dined on multiple state visits during his tour of Asia last year, Trump is paying it forward and celebrating nearly 250 years of U.S.-French relations by playing host to President Emmanuel Macron at a glitzy White House state dinner on Tuesday.

Months in the making, it's the first state visit and first big soiree of the Trump era in Washington.

"It sounds like what they're planning will be spectacular," said Jeremy Bernard, who was White House social secretary in 2014, the last time the U.S. feted a French president.

The White House has said little beyond the fact that dinner will be served, sticking to the tradition of trying to maintain an element of surprise for its guests.

In fact, Macron will break bread twice with Trump.

On Monday, the president and Melania Trump will dine privately with Macron and his wife, Brigitte, at Mount Vernon, the home of America's first president, George Washington, on the banks of the Potomac River in Virginia. The White House said the setting will serve as a reminder of France's "unique status" as America's first ally.

Trump ended his first year without receiving a foreign leader on a state visit, making him the first president in nearly 100 years to do so and heightening the stakes for Tuesday.

Dinner tickets are typically highly sought after by Washington's political and business elite. A few inklings of who's in and who's out already are known: Christine Lagarde, head of the International Monetary Fund, is in, as are House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., and Defense Secretary Jim Mattis. Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky was invited, but his office said he is unable to attend.

In a break with tradition, Trump invited no Democratic members of Congress or journalists, said a White House official who was not authorized to discuss the arrangements. But at least one Democrat will be in the crowd: the office of Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards confirmed his attendance.

Approximately 150 guests will take their seats in the State Dining Room on Tuesday, making for a more intimate affair than those held by President Barack Obama. Obama's guest lists numbered into the hundreds, requiring that the event be held in a tented pavilion erected on the South Lawn because no room in the White House can accommodate that many people.

Most of the responsibility for executing a flawless celebration falls to the first lady and her staff, including such key details as what is served (Trump likes wedge salads and chocolate cake) and poured into glasses (Trump wine?), who sits next to whom, who performs after dinner and what the decor looks like.

One big moment is the first glimpse of the first lady in her gown. Fashion details are kept secret until the first couple steps on to the North Portico on Tuesday night to welcome their dinner guests.

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Former first lady Michelle Obama often used state dinners to showcase the talent of up-and-coming designers. Some designers have cited Trump's politics in refusing to dress the current first lady, a former model. Still, a likely choice would be Dior, the French design house whose fashions Mrs. Trump often wears, or Herve Pierre, the French-American who designed her inaugural gown and other looks.

The last time a Republican president hosted his French counterpart was November 2007 when President George W. Bush welcomed the newly divorced Nicolas Sarkozy.

More than 100 guests feasted on lobster bisque, lamb with tomato fondue, green beans and sweet potato casserole, salad and dessert served in the State Dining Room. Among the guests were major league baseball pitcher Tom Glavine, Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer, French chef Guy Savoy and several Louisiana politicians.

After dinner, guests strolled down the hall to the East Room to watch performers in the roles of Washington and the Marquis de Lafayette, the Frenchman who served on Washington's staff in the Continental Army. Sarkozy toured Mount Vernon the following day.

When Macron's limousine first pulls up the White House driveway on Tuesday morning, Trump, the first lady, White House and administration officials, and hundreds of invited guests will be waiting on the South Lawn. The pomp-filled arrival ceremony is for the man who became the youngest president in French history when he was elected in 2017 at age 39 on his first run for office.

The visit also offers Macron his first Oval Office meeting and a joint White House news conference with Trump. There's also a State Department lunch hosted by Vice President Mike Pence before Macron and his wife arrive for the state dinner.

The Trump-Macron relationship appeared to get off to a bumpy start with a white-knuckler of a handshake when the political novices met for the first time at a NATO summit in Brussels last May. But Macron likely sealed the bond after Trump accepted his invitation to attend the annual Bastille Day military parade in the center of Paris in July. Macron and his wife also took Trump and the first lady on a tour of Napoleon's tomb and whisked them up into the Eiffel Tower for dinner overlooking the City of Light. The experience led Trump to order up a military parade for downtown Washington later this year.

But the two part company on some significant issues, including the Paris climate accord, which Trump withdrew the U.S. from last year, and the Iran-nuclear deal, another multinational agreement that Trump is itching to pull out of. The president did successfully rally Macron and British Prime Minister Theresa May, with whom Trump has sparred, to mount a joint military operation against Syria in response to an apparent chemical attack this month that killed Syrian civilians. Macron still worries about Trump's desire to remove U.S. troops from Syria.

An art lover who speaks good English, Macron is known to watch what he eats. Yet he told reporters at an agricultural fair in Paris in February that "I drink wine at lunch and dinner."

Discerning his tastes, including likes and dislikes, even allergies, is one of the first things the White House tries to pin down for all guests, said Bernard.

"You're really focused on making sure the guest feels special," he said.

Mrs. Trump's social secretary, Rickie Niceta, came aboard last year after two decades of event planning for a caterer whose clients included the White House, the State Department and several embassies, in addition to working on the past five presidential inaugurations, including Trump's. The first lady, who speaks French, also has experienced hands running the kitchen, pastry shop and florist's lair. All three women helped execute more than a dozen state dinners for Obama.

Trump owns hotels, including one near the White House, and knows about good hospitality.

Bernard recalled that, just as invitations were about to go out for the 2014 dinner for then-French President Francois Hollande, news broke that Hollande and his longtime girlfriend had abruptly split. Mrs. Obama's staff anxiously sought clarity on whether Hollande would bring another date.

He didn't, and Bernard dealt with the awkwardness of the situation by seating Hollande between the two Obamas.

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Associated Press writer Sylvie Corbet in Paris and AP News Researcher Randy Herschaft in New York contributed to this report.

Follow Darlene Superville on Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/dsupervilleap>

Pulitzer honoree is latest to win after leaving journalism

By SARAH RANKIN, Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — Ryan Kelly won a Pulitzer Prize this week for his photo of a car plowing into protesters at a white nationalist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia - an image he snapped on the final day of his newspaper job before leaving to work at a brewery.

The photographer has joined a growing list of journalists who have won the profession's highest honor on their way out the door of a once-thriving newspaper industry now destabilized and seriously weakened by the internet.

Kelly, 31, said he was burned out and looking for a better quality of life.

"Bad hours, bad pay, high stress, low job security ... it all just sort of built to me being ready to move on," said Kelly, who now works as digital and social media coordinator at Ardent Craft Ales in Richmond.

Like Kelly, other Pulitzer winners said deteriorating conditions in the industry drove them out.

Digital titans Facebook and Google have captured the majority of advertising that once supported local journalism, Craigslist has wreaked havoc on classifieds and free news outlets have proliferated online. Circulation has declined, and newspapers have slashed jobs and reduced benefits.

Rob Kuznia, a reporter for the Daily Breeze of Torrance, California, made headlines in 2015 for having left the paper by the time he won a Pulitzer for an investigation into widespread corruption in a school district.

Since then, the reporter who won with him, Rebecca Kimitich, also has departed for a public relations job.

"I was done. I just didn't have the fight in me anymore," said Kimitich, who had been a journalist for about 15 years.

Working at a local newspaper meant being asked to do more with less, she said.

But it also meant having less support, as the number of editors and copy editors - who examine stories closely for style, grammar, clarity and fairness - have diminished. She said she found herself constantly wracked with anxiety about possible errors in her stories.

"You're just on your own. That level of stress is really overwhelming, and it just takes a toll," she said.

According to an analysis from the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number of people employed in the newspaper publishing industry fell almost 60 percent between June 1990 and March 2016.

At the same time, the number of people employed in internet publishing and broadcasting rose from about 30,000 to nearly 198,000.

Laurie Garrett, a former Newsday reporter who won a Pulitzer for her reporting from what was then Zaire on an Ebola outbreak and has been honored with other top industry awards, echoed Kimitich's concerns about the dwindling ranks in newsrooms.

"What we've lost through years and years of budget cuts and corporate takeovers and stock market dividend-seeking and so on by the news industry ... we've lost that bench," she said.

Garrett said that when journalism was at its peak - in the 1980s and '90s, she thinks - the industry was able to hold leaders accountable. Now, some of that has fallen to activist groups like Black Lives Matter or other citizen organizations, and the media has missed important stories, she said.

"You hear the outcry all the time: Where's the media and why weren't they there?" she said.

Among the corporate takeovers in the past 10 years was the buyout of MediaNews Group, one of the country's largest newspaper chains that included the flagship Denver Post. A New York hedge fund, Alden Global Capital, acquired the company now operating as Digital First Media, and critics say it has gutted newsrooms while draining off profits.

The Post ran an editorial earlier this month criticizing its owner, saying, "When newsroom owners view profits as the only goal, quality, reliability and accountability suffer."

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Digital First Media also owns the Daily Breeze, where Kimitch and Kuznia worked.

Rob Byers, who worked for decades for what's now the Charleston Gazette-Mail including as its executive editor before being essentially laid off by new owners in March, said readership has a crucial role in keeping newspapers afloat.

"They need to be willing to pay for news," said Byers, who helped oversee reporter Eric Eyre's work on the flood of opioids pouring into West Virginia that won a 2017 Pulitzer Prize.

Newspapers like the Gazette-Mail play a crucial role in uncovering fraud and abuse in government and industry, he said.

"I think people underestimate how important (journalism) is to the country and kind of the way of life we have here," he said.

Israel's Lieberman blames Hamas over Gaza deaths

By **FARES AKRAM and KARIN LAUB, Associated Press**

JEBALIYA REFUGEE CAMP, Gaza Strip (AP) — Israel's defense minister said Saturday that Hamas leaders are the "only culprits" in continued bloodshed on the Gaza border, as the European Union and a top United Nations official made new demands to investigate shootings of unarmed Palestinians by Israeli soldiers, including the killing of a 14-year-old boy.

Avigdor Lieberman's comments on Twitter came a day after four Palestinians, including the teen, were shot and killed by Israeli army fire from across the border fence, according to Gaza health officials.

More than 150 Palestinians were wounded Friday, in the fourth round of weekly Hamas-led mass protests in the border area.

The teen, Mohammed Ayyoub, was about 150 meters (yards) from the fence when he was hit, Gaza photographer Abed Alhakeem Abu Rish told The Associated Press. He said that the boy was about to take cover when he was shot and fell to the ground, collapsing head first. The Israeli military says it is investigating the incident.

The latest deaths brought to 32 the number of Palestinians killed by Israeli troops in protests since late March. More than 1,600 have been wounded by live rounds in the past three weeks, according to the Gaza Health Ministry.

The rising Palestinian casualty toll signaled that Israel's military is sticking to its open-fire rules despite international criticism of the use of lethal force against unarmed protesters.

Israel has said it is defending its sovereign border, including Israeli communities on the other side. It has alleged that Hamas uses the protests as cover for attacks and for damaging the border fence.

Late Saturday, the military released photos and videos depicting what it has said it is trying to counter. In one image, young boys, under the cover of smoke, are seen charging the fence and uprooting part of it to allow for an infiltration.

The military said it had distributed leaflets warning the residents of Gaza to stay away from the fence but alleged that "the terror organizations in the Gaza Strip continue to exploit civilians, including many youth and children, while putting them in unnecessary danger."

Rights groups have said Israel's open-fire orders are unlawful because they effectively allow soldiers to open fire on unarmed demonstrators.

The marches are part of what organizers have billed as an escalating showdown with Israel, to culminate in a mass march on May 15.

The top Hamas leader, Ismail Haniyeh, said Friday that people should get ready for large crowds spilling across the border that day.

"Our people will outnumber the occupation and force it from our land," he said, referring to Israel.

The latest killings sparked new demands by a senior U.N. official and by the E.U. for an investigation.

Nikolay Mladenov, a top U.N. envoy in the region, said on Twitter that it is "outrageous to shoot at children."

The European Union urged the Israeli military to "refrain from using lethal force against unarmed protesters."

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Mohammed Ayyoub's father, Ibrahim, said Saturday that his son was killed in cold blood.

"Mohammed did not deserve to be executed," the 42-year-old said as mourners streamed to the family's shack in the Jebaliya refugee camp. "He was not holding a stone or a gun ... Mohammed was not running toward the fence."

The Israeli military said Saturday that all reports of fatal shootings by Israeli soldiers, including that of the teen "are thoroughly checked by the relevant command echelons," examined by a fact-finding "assessment mechanism" and findings transferred to the military advocate general.

Lieberman, the Israeli defense minister, said on Twitter that "the only culprits in the death of the ... boy in Gaza are Hamas leaders."

He said they are "cowardly leaders who hide behind women and children and send them forward as a human shield, so that they can continue to dig tunnels and carry out terrorist actions against" Israel.

Hamas says the protests are aimed at breaking a border blockade that was imposed by Israel and Egypt after the Islamic militant group overran Gaza in 2007, a year after winning Palestinian parliament elections.

The marches also press for a "right of return" of Palestinian refugees and their descendants to what is now Israel. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians fled or were forced from homes in the 1948 war over Israel's creation. Palestinians mark May 15, the anniversary of Israel's founding, as their "nakba," or catastrophe, to mourn their mass uprooting.

While Hamas and smaller Palestinian factions have taken a lead as organizers, the mass marches are also fueled by growing desperation among Gaza's 2 million residents.

The border blockade has trapped nearly all of them in the tiny coastal territory, gutted the economy and deepened poverty. Gaza residents typically get fewer than five hours of electricity per day, while unemployment has soared above 40 percent.

Laub reported from Jericho, West Bank.

Chemical weapons inspectors collect samples from Syria site

PHILIP ISSA, Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Chemical weapons inspectors collected samples from Syria's Douma on Saturday, two weeks after a suspected gas attack there followed by retaliatory strikes by Western powers on the Syrian government's chemical facilities.

The site visit, confirmed by the Organization of the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, would allow the agency to proceed with an independent investigation to determine what chemicals, if any, were used in the April 7 attack that medical workers said killed more than 40 people.

Douma was the final target of the government's sweeping campaign to seize back control of the eastern Ghouta suburbs of Damascus from rebels after seven years of revolt. Militants gave up the town days after the alleged attack.

The U.S., France, and Britain blamed the President Bashar Assad's government for the attack, and struck suspected Syrian chemical weapons facilities one week later.

The Syrian government and its ally Russia denied responsibility for the attack.

OPCW inspectors arrived in Damascus just hours before the April 15 strikes but were delayed from visiting the site until Saturday, leading Western officials and Syrian activists to accuse Russia and the Syrian government of staging a cover-up.

"I won't find any hope in my heart until the Assad regime is held accountable and eradicated from government in Syria," said Bilal Abou Salah, a Douma media activist who left the town after the government takeover. He said he feared Russian and Syrian government personnel destroyed potential evidence in the two weeks since the alleged attack.

The OPCW said in a statement that it visited "one of the sites" in Douma to collect samples for analysis at agency-designated laboratories, adding it would "consider future steps including another possible visit to Douma."

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It said the mission will draft a report based on the findings, "as well other information and materials collected by the team."

The OPCW mission is not mandated to apportion to blame for the attack.

A U.N. security team had scouted Douma on Tuesday to see if it was safe for weapons inspectors to visit. The team came under small arms and explosives fire, leading the agency to delay its mission.

Journalists visiting Douma the previous day, escorted by government minders, experienced no security issues.

Russian ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said the delays to the OPCW team were "unacceptable," in a statement Saturday.

Douma is just minutes away from Damascus, where the OPCW team is based.

Images emerging from Douma in the hours after the attack showed lifeless bodies collapsed in crowded rooms, some with foam around their noses and mouths.

Abou Salah entered one of the buildings affected by the alleged gas attack the following day and took footage of a yellow cylinder with a gas valve on the top floor. He said it had crashed through the roof and showed a gash in the ceiling where it purportedly came through.

His assertions could not be independently verified. But the cylinder looked like others identified by the international NGO Human Rights Watch at other locations of chlorine gas attacks attributed to the government in 2016.

Raed Saleh, the head of the Syrian Civil Defense search-and-rescue group, also known as the White Helmets, told The Associated Press on Wednesday that his organization had shared the coordinates of the graves of April 7 victims with the OPCW, so that inspectors could take biological samples.

Civil Defense workers evacuated Douma after the attack, fearing persecution by the security services of the government. The government says the group is a terrorist organization. The group, which operates in opposition areas only, maintains a strong position against Assad.

Thousands of people — rebels and civilians — left Douma on buses to north Syria in the days after the attack, believing they could not live under government authority after it retook the town. North Syria is divided between opposition, Turkish, and al-Qaida control.

The evacuations were the latest in a string of population transfers around the Syrian capital that have displaced more than 60,000 people as the government reconsolidates control after seven years of civil war.

U.N. officials and human rights groups say the evacuations amount to a forced population displacement that may be a war crime.

On Saturday, rebels began evacuating three towns in the eastern Qalamoun region in the Damascus countryside, state TV reported.

State-run Al-Ikhbariya TV said 35 buses left the towns of Ruhaiba, Jayroud, and al-Nasriya carrying hundreds of rebels and their families to opposition territory in north Syria.

The station said there could be 3,200 rebels leaving three towns on Saturday. It said the evacuations would continue for three days.

Syrian government forces will take over the towns once the departures are complete.

Associated Press writers Michael Corder in The Hague and James Heintz in Moscow contributed to this report.

New lynching memorial offers chance to remember, heal

By JAY REEVES and KIM CHANDLER, Associated Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — Elmore Bolling defied the odds against black men and built several successful businesses during the harsh era of Jim Crow segregation in the South. He had more money than a lot of whites, which his descendants believe was all it took to get him lynched in 1947.

He was shot to death by a white neighbor, according to news accounts at the time, and the shooter was never prosecuted.

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But Bolling's name is now listed among thousands on a new memorial for victims of hate-inspired lynchings that terrorized generations of U.S. blacks. Daughter Josephine Bolling McCall is anxious to see the monument, located about 20 miles from where her father was killed in rural Lowndes County.

The National Memorial for Peace and Justice, opening Thursday, is a project of the nonprofit Equal Justice Initiative, a legal advocacy group in Montgomery. The organization says the combined museum and memorial will be the nation's first site to document racial inequality in America from slavery through Jim Crow to the issues of today.

"In the American South, we don't talk about slavery. We don't have monuments and memorials that confront the legacy of lynching. We haven't really confronted the difficulties of segregation. And because of that, I think we are still burdened by that history," said EJI executive director Bryan Stevenson.

The site includes a memorial to the victims of 4,400 "terror lynchings" of black people in 800 U.S. counties from 1877 through 1950. All but about 300 were in the South, and prosecutions were rare in any of the cases. Stevenson said they emphasized the lynching era because he believes it's an aspect of the nation's racial history that's discussed the least.

"Most people in this country can't name a single African-American who was lynched between 1877 and 1950 even though thousands of African Americans were subjected to this violence," Stevenson said.

The organization said a common theme ran through the slayings, which it differentiates from extrajudicial killings in places that simply lacked courts: A desire to impose fear on minorities and maintain strict white control. Some lynchings drew huge crowds and were even photographed, yet authorities routinely ruled they were committed by "persons unknown."

McCall, 75, said her father's killing still hangs over her family. The memorial could help heal individual families and the nation by acknowledging the painful legacy of racial murders, she said.

"It's important that the people to whom the injustices have been given are actually being recognized and at least some measure — some measure — of relief is sought through discussion," said McCall.

Combined, the memorial and an accompanying museum a few miles away at the Equal Justice Initiative headquarters tell a story spanning slavery, racial segregation, violence and today's era of swollen prison populations. With nearly 7 million people behind bars or on parole or probation nationwide - a disproportionate number of them minorities - the NAACP says blacks are incarcerated at a rate five times that of whites.

E.M. Beck, who studied lynching for 30 years and has written books on the subject, said the memorial might actually understate the scope of lynching even though it lists thousands of victims.

"I think it's an underestimate because the number and amount of violence in early Reconstruction in the 1870s will probably never be known. There was just an incredible amount of violence taking place during that period of time," said Beck, sociology professor emeritus at the University of Georgia.

The memorial's design evokes the image of a racist hanging, featuring scores of dark metal columns suspended in the air from above. The rectangular structures, some of which lie flat on the ground and resemble graves, include the names of counties where lynchings occurred, plus dates and the names of the victims. The goal is for individual counties to claim the columns on the ground and erect their own memorials.

Not all lynchings were by hanging. The Equal Justice Initiative says it scoured old newspapers, archives and court documents to find the stories of victims who were gunned down, drowned, beaten and burned alive. The monument is a memorial to all of them, with room for names to be added as additional victims are identified.

The monument's April 26 opening will be marked by a two-day summit focusing on racial and social justice, to be followed by an April 27 concert featuring top acts including Common, Usher, the Dave Matthews Band and The Roots.

McCall plans to view the memorial with her five living siblings. She says they suffered more than she did, since she was only 5 when their father was slain.

A newspaper account from the time said the 39-year-old Bolling, who owned a store and trucking

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company and farmed, was shot seven times on a road near his store by a white man, Clarke Luckie, who claimed Bolling had insulted his wife during a phone call.

McCall, who researched the slaying extensively for a book about her father, said it's more likely that Luckie, a stockyard employee, resented her father, who had thousands of dollars in the bank, three tractor-trailer rigs and employed about 40 people.

"He was jealous and he filled him with bullets," she said.

Luckie was arrested, but a grand jury issued no indictment and no one was ever prosecuted. McCall believes the white people who controlled the county at the time purposely covered for the killer, who died decades ago.

One of Alabama's oldest black congregations, Old Ship A.M.E. Zion Church, sits across the street from the memorial. Its pastor plans to offer prayer and conversation to help visitors who are shaken by the experience of visiting the site.

Church members have mixed feelings about the memorial, she said. They want to acknowledge and honor the past, McFadden said, but some are wondering how they'll personally react to visiting the memorial the first time.

"It's something that needs to be talked about, that people need to explore. But it's also something that has the potential to shake people to the core," said Rev. Kathy Thomas McFadden.

This story corrects that concert will be held April 27, not April 26.

Hamas vows revenge for key member killed in Malaysia

By FARES AKRAM, Associated Press

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP) — Gaza's ruling Hamas militant group said Saturday that a man who was gunned down in Malaysia was an important member of the organization, accusing Israel of being behind the brazen killing.

Hamas said Palestinian engineer Fadi al-Batsh was a "loyal" member and a "scientist of Palestine's youth scholars." It gave no further details on his scientific accomplishments but said he had made "important contributions" and participated in international forums in the field of energy.

Hamas initially stopped short of blaming Israel, saying only that he had been "assassinated by the hand of treachery." But later its top leader accused Israel's Mossad spy agency intelligence of killing him and threatened retaliation.

Ismail Haniyeh told The Associated Press Saturday that based on previous assassinations "Mossad is not away from this disgraceful, terrible crime."

"There will be an unsettled account between us and it," Haniyeh said at the Gaza mourning tent, referring to Mossad. "We cannot give up on the blood of our sons, youths and scholars."

The Israeli government had no comment. But Israel has a long history of suspected targeting of wanted Palestinian militants in daring overseas operations around the globe and has been linked to other assassinations as well, though it has rarely publicly acknowledged them.

Malaysian police say the 34-year-old al-Batsh was gunned down early Saturday by two assailants who shot at least eight bullets from a motorbike as he was heading to a mosque for dawn prayers in Kuala Lumpur. It said closed-circuit television footage showed him targeted by assassins who had waited for him for almost 20 minutes.

Malaysia's deputy prime minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said the government was looking into the possibility of the involvement of "foreign agents" in his killing. He told local media that initial investigations showed the assailants were "white men" driving a powerful BMW 1100cc motorbike.

Besides his Hamas affiliation, al-Batsh was also a cousin of Khaled al-Batsh, a senior official in the Islamic Jihad militant group, who accused Mossad of the assassination, without providing evidence.

Though Hamas stressed al-Batsh's scientific background, the funeral service of the Islamic movement's militant wing suggested al-Batsh was actually one of its military commanders. At a mourning tent in the

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Gaza Strip, a banner described al-Batsh as a member of the military wing. Ten masked militants in camouflage uniforms stood in a line outside the tent in Jabaliya, the slain man's hometown, to greet mourners. The ceremony is typical for senior Hamas commanders.

Al-Batsh specialized in electrical and electronic engineering and worked at a Malaysian university. He had lived there with his family for the past eight years and was an imam at a local mosque.

He received his Ph.D degree from the University of Malaya in 2015 and was a senior lecturer at the British Malaysian Institute. His official biography said his research interests included power converters, power quality and renewable energy.

However, Israeli media reported that he was also deeply involved in the Hamas drone development project.

Israel and Hamas are bitter foes who have fought three wars since 2008. Tensions have risen in recent weeks with a series of mass protests along the Gaza border in which 32 Palestinians have been shot dead by Israeli troops since late March.

Hamas says the protests are aimed at breaking a crippling border blockade that was imposed by Israel and Egypt after the Islamic militant group overran Gaza in 2007, a year after winning Palestinian parliamentary elections. It says it also aims to assert the right of refugees to return to their former homes in Israel.

Israel accuses Hamas, which is sworn to Israel's destruction and has carried out dozens of deadly suicide bombings against it, of cynically exploiting Gaza civilians for its political aims by staging the protests and trying to carry out attacks under their cover.

Israel has used lethal force against unarmed protesters, but it says it is only targeting instigators who are trying to damage the border fence with explosives, firebombs and other means. However, the United Nations, the European Union and rights groups have questioned Israel's use of force when soldiers' lives are not in danger and the U.N. and E.U. have called for investigations.

Protests are aiming to culminate in a large border march on May 15, the 70th anniversary of Israel founding. The date is mourned by Palestinians as their "nakba," or catastrophe, when hundreds of thousands were uprooted in the 1948 Mideast war over Israel's creation.

Associated Press writer Eileen Ng in Kuala Lumpur contributed to this report.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Sunday, April 22, the 112th day of 2018. There are 253 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 22, 1898, with the United States and Spain on the verge of war, the U.S. Navy began blockading Cuban ports. Congress authorized creation of the 1st U.S. Volunteer Cavalry, also known as the "Rough Riders."

On this date:

In 1864, Congress authorized the use of the phrase "In God We Trust" on U.S. coins.

In 1889, the Oklahoma Land Rush began at noon as thousands of homesteaders staked claims.

In 1938, 45 workers were killed in a coal mine explosion at Keen Mountain in Buchanan County, Virginia.

In 1946, Harlan F. Stone, chief justice of the United States, died in Washington, D.C. at age 73.

In 1952, an atomic test in Nevada became the first nuclear explosion shown on live network television as a 31-kiloton bomb was dropped from a B-50 Superfortress.

In 1954, the publicly televised sessions of the Senate Army-McCarthy hearings began.

In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson opened the New York World's Fair.

In 1970, millions of Americans concerned about the environment observed the first "Earth Day."

In 1983, the West German news magazine Stern announced the discovery of 60 volumes of personal diaries purportedly written by Adolf Hitler; however, the diaries turned out to be a hoax.

In 1993, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum was dedicated in Washington, D.C. to honor victims of

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Nazi extermination.

In 1994, Richard M. Nixon, the 37th president of the United States, died at a New York hospital four days after suffering a stroke; he was 81.

In 2000, in a dramatic pre-dawn raid, armed immigration agents seized Elian Gonzalez, the Cuban boy at the center of a custody dispute, from his relatives' home in Miami; Elian was reunited with his father at Andrews Air Force Base near Washington.

Ten years ago: Hillary Rodham Clinton won the Pennsylvania Democratic primary, defeating Barack Obama and keeping her presidential hopes alive. At the close of a two-day North American summit in New Orleans, President George W. Bush chastised U.S. lawmakers for letting international trade deals falter and criticized Democratic presidential contenders for wanting to scrap or amend the vast North American free-trade zone. Singer-songwriter Paul Davis died in Meridian, Mississippi, a day after turning 60.

Five years ago: A seriously wounded Dzhokhar Tsarnaev (joh-HAHR' tsahr-NEYE'-ehv) was charged in his hospital room with bombing the Boston Marathon in a plot with his older brother, Tamerlan (TAM'-ehr-luhn), who died after a fierce gunbattle with police. Richie Havens, 72, the folk singer and guitarist who was the first performer at the 1969 Woodstock festival, died in Jersey City, New Jersey.

One year ago: From the Washington Monument to Germany's Brandenburg Gate and even to Greenland, scientists, students and research advocates rallied on Earth Day, conveying a global message about scientific freedom without political interference, the need for adequate spending for future breakthroughs and just the general value of scientific pursuits. A supply ship bearing the name of the late John Glenn arrived at the International Space Station. Erin Moran, the former child star who played Joanie Cunningham in the sitcoms "Happy Days" and "Joanie Loves Chachi," died in New Salisbury, Indiana; she was 56.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Charlotte Rae is 92. Actress Estelle Harris is 90. Actor Jack Nicholson is 81. Singer Mel Carter is 79. Author Janet Evanovich is 75. Country singer Cleve Francis is 73. Movie director John Waters is 72. Singer Peter Frampton is 68. Rock singer-musician Paul Carrack (Mike and the Mechanics; Squeeze) is 67. Actor Joseph Bottoms is 64. Actor Ryan Stiles is 59. Baseball manager Terry Francona is 59. Comedian Byron Allen is 57. Actor Chris Makepeace is 54. Rock musician Fletcher Dragge (DRAH'-guh) is 52. Actor Jeffrey Dean Morgan is 52. Actress Sheryl Lee is 51. Actress-talk show host Sherri Shepherd is 51. Country singer-musician Heath Wright (Ricochet) is 51. Country singer Kellie Coffey is 47. Actor Eric Mabius is 47. Actor Ingo Rademacher (RAH'-deh-mah-ker) is 47. Rock musician Shavo Odadjian (System of a Down) is 44. Rock singer-musician Daniel Johns (Silverchair) is 39. Actor Malcolm Barrett is 38. Actress Cassidy Freeman is 36. Actress Michelle Ryan is 34. Actress Amber Heard is 32. Singer-songwriter BC Jean (Alexander Jean) is 31.

Thought for Today: "Life is one long process of getting tired." — Samuel Butler, British author (1835-1902).