

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Mail Highway Route Relief Driver

Position available for Highway Relief Driver  
Must be over 21, have a good driving record  
Able to lift 70 pounds.

Route is early mornings and late afternoons  
Mainly Saturdays and some week days  
Contact Dave Miller 605-397-8277 Leave Message

Thursday, May 10

10 a.m.: Girls golf at Madison

Friday, May 11

11 a.m.: Northeast Conference track at Webster

*"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**

**Open:** Recycling Trailer in Groton  
The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

## City Council Story Correction

Ethan Kranhold was hired as a Day Coach.

## New \$5 Buck Lunches!

**Crispy Chicken  
Salad  
Lunch**



**KC BBQ Bacon  
Cheeseburger  
Lunch**



Available  
11 a.m. to 4 p.m.



**Grill & Chill**

**US 12, Groton**



The boys soccer banquet was held Monday, April 30th. Coach Chance Strom gave out the following team awards.

- Tucker Carda – Spirit of the Game
  - Anthony Schinkel – Defensive MVP
  - Chandler Larson – Most Improved
  - Austin Jones – MVP
  - Hunter Schaller – Offensive MVP
  - Jackson Cogley – Rookie of the Year
  - Missing Grady O’Neill – Most Valuable Goalie
- (Photo by Chance Strom)

## The Groton HS Booster PAC Post-Prom Committee would like to thank the following businesses and organizations:

**For donations of \$100 or more:** Locke Electric, Groton American Legion Auxiliary, United Methodist Church Women, Groton Veterinary Clinic, James Valley Telecommunications, Roger and Darci Spanier, Poet Biorefining, Aberdeen Elks Lodge

**For donations \$26-\$50:** Kolker Law, Frost Construction, First State Bank, Diana Chapter OES No. 83, Groton Ford, Lori's Pharmacy, Milbrandt Enterprises, Wells Fargo, Harry Implement, Groton Chiropractic Clinic, Erickson Insurance Agency, Full Circle Ag, S & S Lumber, Marc and Franne Sippel, GDI News/Clean/Fit/Live.

**For Donations of \$25:** Columbia American Legion, Professional Management Services, Krueger Brothers Gravel & Dirt, Groton Kiwanis, Rix Farms.

**For Donations of Supplies and/or Services:** The Jungle, Circus Bar, Ken's Food Fair, Dollar General, A & S Hardware.

Without your generosity, this event would not happen.

## Thank You!



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Tom Hedrick of VanDiest Supply was one of the technicians working on the mosquito foggers at Wylie Park recently. Over 40 mosquito foggers from throughout the region were calibrated during the one day seminar. It is a requirement of the state that a mosquito fogger has to be properly calibrated for the chemical that is being used.



**Sun Dial Manor in Bristol  
is accepting applications for  
full time and part time CNA's.  
12 hr. shifts- days and nights  
(SIGN ON BONUS OFFERED)**

**DIETARY OPENINGS  
Full time cook, 8 hr. shifts  
(WITH SIGN ON BONUS)**

**Part time Dietary Tech**

**For more information,  
call 605-492-3615**

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## Today in Weather History

May 9, 1999: Torrential rains of two to five inches fell in Lyman County during the late evening hours which caused flash flooding on Medicine Creek. The KOA Campgrounds near Kennebec were flooded including the main facility. Several roads were also flooded and damaged along Medicine Creek. Storm total rainfall in Kennebec was 3.40 inches. Also, a weak F0 tornado touched down briefly three miles south of Reliance with no damage reported. Winds gusting to 70 mph knocked over a 4000-bushel holding bin near Revillo.

1918: An F4 tornado moved across Floyd, Chickasaw, and Winneshiek Counties in northeast Iowa from two miles north of Pearl Rock to Calmar. Two people died east of Calmar when the tornado was a mile wide. Losses in and near Calmar totaled \$250,000. Overall, this tornado killed seven people and injured 15 others.

1933: An estimated F4 tornado moved through Monroe, Cumberland, and Russell Counties in Kentucky along a 60-mile path. The town of Tompkinsville, KY was the hardest hit with 18 people killed. Overall, 36 people lost their lives.

1966: Record snows fell in the northeastern Ohio and western Pennsylvania, including 3.1 inches at Pittsburgh and 5.4 inches at Youngstown Ohio. Snow also extended across parts of New York State with eight inches reported in the southern Adirondacks.


1990: The 1990 Machilipatnam Cyclone was the worst disaster to affect Southern India since the 1977 Andhra Pradesh cyclone. This category four on the Saffir-Simpson scale had a severe impact on India, with over 967 people reported having been killed. Over 100,000 animals also died in the cyclone with the total cost of damages to crops estimated at over \$600 million (1990 USD).

1995: An F3 tornado produced \$10 million in damages along its 40-mile path across central Illinois. The tornado caused significant damage in Cantrall where three homes were destroyed, 10 had significant damage, and 11 had minor damage. The roof and interior of a grade school suffered extensive damage. The tornado passed about 2 miles southeast of the new NWS Office in Lincoln, Illinois.


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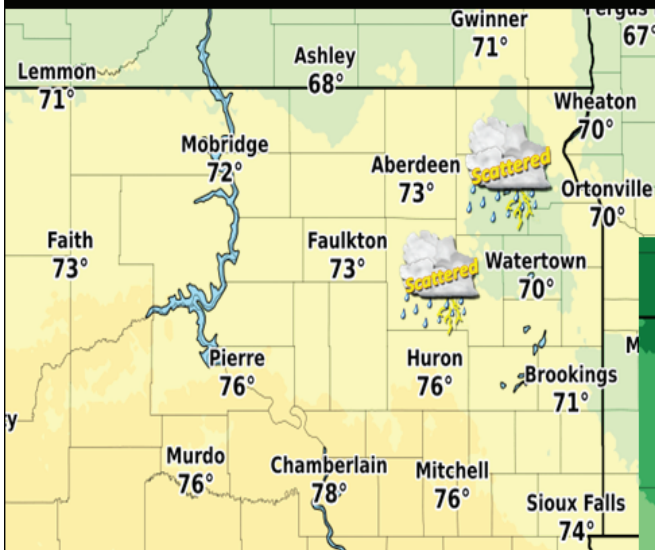
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Tue May 8	Wed May 9	Thu May 10	Fri May 11	Sat May 12	Sun May 13	Mon May 14
75°F	73°F	60°F	59°F	60°F	69°F	75°F
50°F	42°F	42°F	40°F	41°F	43°F	58°F
SE 10 MPH	NNW 14 MPH	NNE 13 MPH	ENE 14 MPH	NNE 15 MPH	NW 11 MPH	W 10 MPH
Precip 50%	Precip 20%	Precip 40%	Precip 50%	Precip 20%		

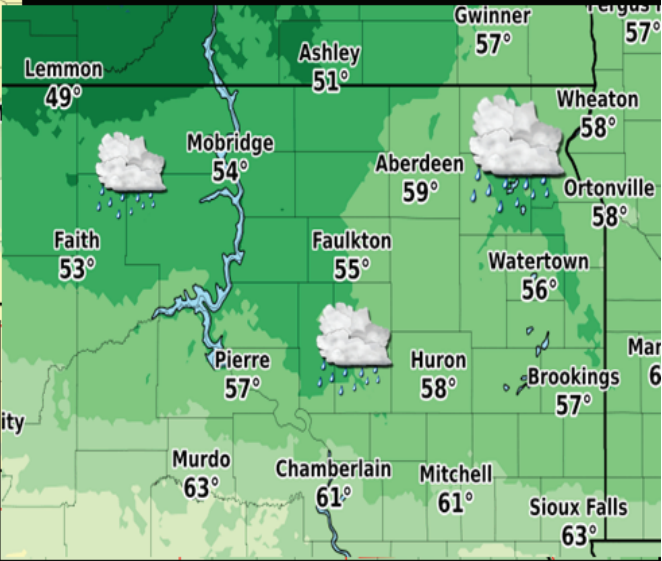


## Mild Today, Cooler Thursday







< Highs Today



Highs Thursday >



National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD



Published on: 05/09/2018 at 4:58AM

Temperatures will be mild today, with scattered showers and thunderstorms possible across the eastern part of the area. No severe weather is expected. Cooler air will move in on Thursday, along with another chance for rain.



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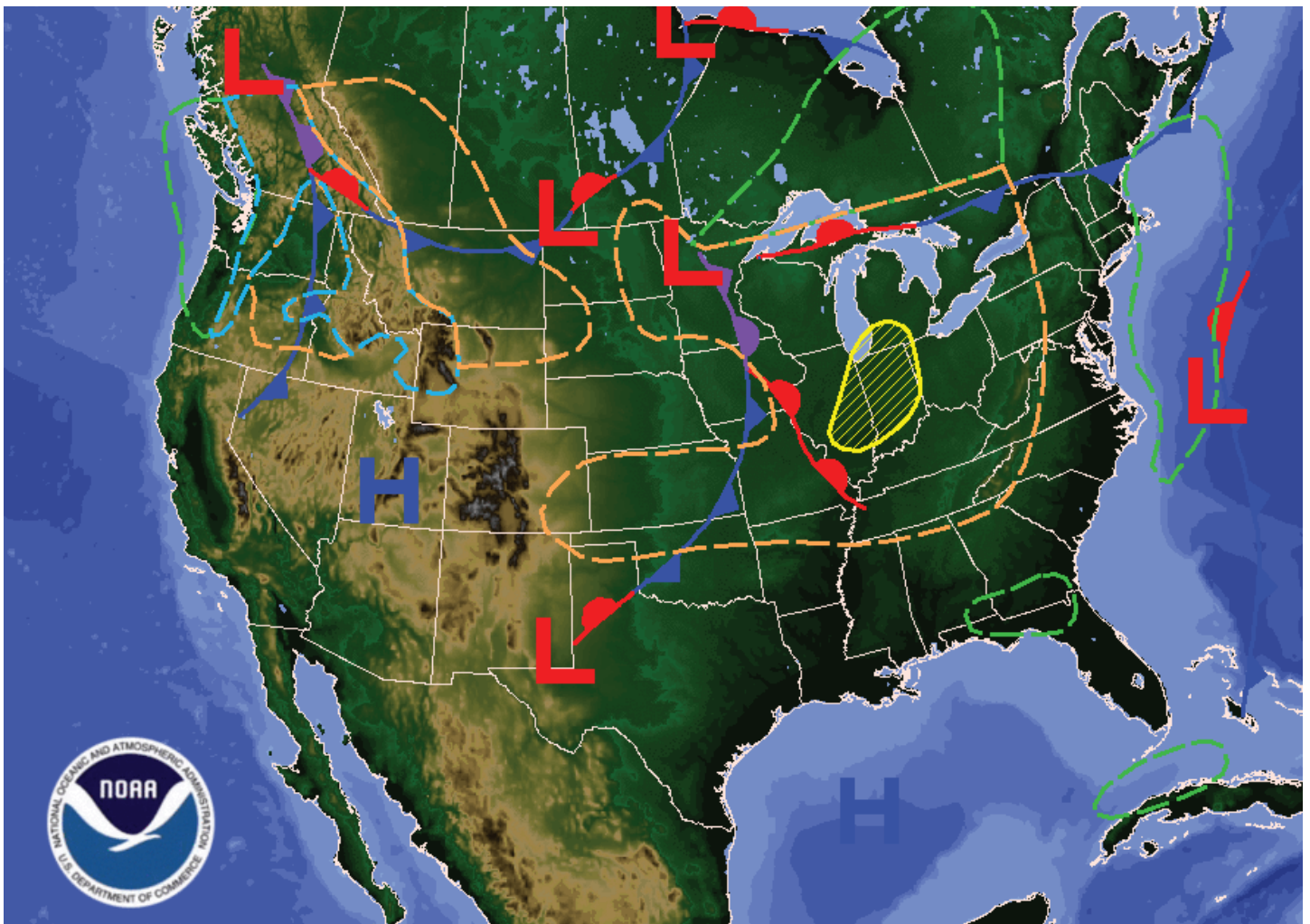
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## Yesterday's Weather

**High Outside Temp: 77.1 F at 3:49 PM**  
**Low Outside Temp: 57.2 F at 6:50 AM**  
**Wind Chill:**  
**High Gust: 28.0 Mph at 12:13 AM**  
**Precip: 0.00**

## Today's Info

**Record High: 93° in 1992**  
**Record Low: 21° in 1966**  
**Average High: 67°F**  
**Average Low: 42°F**  
**Average Precip in May: 0.92**  
**Precip to date in May: 0.58**  
**Average Precip to date: 4.95**  
**Precip Year to Date: 3.26**  
**Sunset Tonight: 8:50 p.m.**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:09 a.m.**



### Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Wed, May 09, 2018, issued 4:40 AM EDT  
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center  
Prepared by McCreynolds with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

Rain	Flash Flooding Possible (hatched)
Rain and T'Storms	Severe T'Storms Possible (hatched)
Rain and Snow	Freezing Rain Possible (hatched)
Snow	Heavy Snow Possible (hatched)

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## STAY FOCUSED

"Rivers and streams are crooked because they follow the line of least resistance." True of flowing water and true of most of us.

Being "steadfast" or committed in our devotion to God is crucial. We are not worth very much to our Savior if He is not our Lord. And if He is the Lord of our lives others will see His influence in all that we do.

Unfortunately, many who profess to be followers of the Lord are not consistent in their witness for Him - they are not "steadfast." When in church they do as others do and when they are away from the church they do whatever is convenient. A psychologist might classify them as having a "split-personality." Like a river or stream, they "follow the line of least resistance."

David did not follow the "line of least resistance." He clearly declared his commitment to God when he wrote, "My heart is steadfast, O God!" He did not leave any room to roam or waver in his willingness to walk with and be faithful to His Lord. He did not stray when life became a struggle or run in defeat when times became difficult. He was one who was "steadfast" and can be seen turning his troubles into triumph when he trusted the Lord.

Those around us need to see us as being "steadfast" in the Lord. We need to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, our feet planted in His Word, our ears open to hear His voice, our hearts filled with His compassion and our eyes fixed on His path and our minds centered on doing His will.

Prayer: Lord, it is possible for us to be "steadfast" if we are willing to "stand fast" in our commitment to You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 108:1 My heart, O God, is steadfast; I will sing and make music with all my soul.



## 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
- 4/13/2019 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 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

## News from the Associated Press

### SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Mega Millions

08-15-39-64-67, Mega Ball: 13, Megaplier: 2

(eight, fifteen, thirty-nine, sixty-four, sixty-seven; Mega Ball: thirteen; Megaplier: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$40 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$233 million

### Police: Maryland man fatally shot 3 before killing self

BROOKEVILLE, Md. (AP) — A man held his wife against her will, followed her to a neighboring Maryland home and fatally shot three people before killing himself, police said.

The wife of 41-year-old Christopher Wilson Snyder fled to the Brookeville residence where Mary Ann Olson lived on Monday, The Washington Post reported . Snyder's wife told investigators she had been held against her will by Snyder during the weekend and found the opportunity to escape to her neighbor's home.

Investigators believe this caused Snyder to go to the neighbor's residence and open fire. The victims have been identified as Danny Lee Murphy, 70, of Brandon, South Dakota, Craig Harold Shotwell, 54 and Olson, 66.

All three had no connection to Snyder and were simply in the wrong place at the wrong time, police said. Murphy was visiting the residence and Shotwell was performing work there.

Three other adults who had also been at the home at the time of the shooting had escaped unharmed, police said.

Afterward, Snyder is believed to have retreated to his home, where police negotiators attempted to coax him into surrendering for hours. Officers eventually forced their way into the home at 11 p.m.

"Did they just break in the front door?" Snyder asked a negotiator over the phone before hanging up and fatally shooting himself, police said.

Montgomery County Police Chief J. Thomas Manger said Snyder was known to police, and that they've "had a number of contacts with this suspect in the past over a number of different issues."

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives told the newspaper that Snyder had a federal license to be a firearm's dealer under the name Black Widow.

Snyder was divorced from a former wife in March 2017. His current wife, who fled to Olson's home, did not respond to the newspaper's request for comment.

### Fire destroys South Dakota ammo plant; no injuries reported

BOX ELDER, S.D. (AP) — A fire erupted Tuesday at a South Dakota ammunition plant where more than 2 million rounds of ammunition were stored, destroying the facility and prompting evacuations because of initial fears of exploding bullets.

The blaze was reported around 10:40 a.m. at the Ultramax Ammunition company in Box Elder, a city just east of Rapid City. No injuries have been reported, and firefighters for a time decided to stay back and allow the facility to burn. Authorities don't know what caused the fire.

Pennington County Fire Administrator Jerome Harvey said firefighters had moved closer to the building later Tuesday.

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Rapid City Fire Department spokesman Lt. Jim Bussell warned that smoke was still a hazard near the facility, which at one point was engulfed in flames and billowing black smoke. He said ammunition also continued to burn in a metal shipping container.

"I would say that the main threat has ceased," Bussell said late Tuesday afternoon. "There's still some danger with regard to the materials burning and ammunition still going off within that shipping container."

A phone number listed for Ultramax wasn't functioning. The company, which says on its website that it was created in 1986, calls itself a leading supplier in the ammunition industry.

Evacuations ordered for a nearby truck stop and other businesses were lifted a few hours after the fire erupted. No homes are in the immediate area, Bussell noted.

Some roads around nearby businesses were reopened Tuesday afternoon, though a stretch in front of the company remained closed because fire engines and other vehicles were working in the area.

Shawna Rames, an administrative assistant at a janitorial company about a half-mile drive from Ultramax, said she saw smoke, heard bullets going off and could smell the ammunition. Officials blocked the road to Rames' office, but employees there weren't evacuated, she said.

"I was more concerned about the fire department and the other personnel trying to battle it," Rames said. "It smelled like fireworks."

Bussell said experts from nearby Ellsworth Air Force Base were providing technical advice. Ellsworth tweeted that firefighters helped contain the flames while base explosive ordinance disposal officials provided "insight about possible explosive hazards."

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives will investigate because the building is an ATF-licensed facility.

## Anonymous benefactor buys sacred pipe at auction for Sioux

WORTHINGTON, Minn. (AP) — A clay pipe linked to the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862 and considered sacred by Native Americans in Minnesota is being returned to the Sioux people after being sold at auction.

The Lower Sioux Indian Community unsuccessfully tried to stop the sale. Minnesota Public Radio reports the pipe was auctioned in Boston on Saturday for \$40,000, nearly twice its estimated value.

Prairie Island Tribal Council President Shelley Buck says the buyer, who wishes to remain anonymous, wanted to return the relic, and that's being arranged.

The U.S.-Dakota War lasted six weeks and left hundreds of Sioux, settlers and soldiers dead. The pipe was a peace offering for a soldier from Sioux Chief White Dog, one of 38 Sioux hanged in Mankato on Dec. 26, 1862, for alleged war crimes.

Information from: Minnesota Public Radio News, <http://www.mprnews.org>

## Boy who challenged South Dakota policy will get to dance

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A 15-year-old South Dakota boy who sued when he was barred from competing on his high school's dance team will be allowed to dance this fall.

The South Dakota High School Activities Association board of directors voted unanimously Tuesday to allow boys to participate alongside girls in competitive dance events next school year.

The move allows Freddie Linden to join his school's dance team. Linden is a freshman at Dakota Valley High School in North Sioux City, South Dakota. He and his mother sued the activities association last month when he was barred from joining the girls' team.

The association's executive director, Dan Swartos, calls the board's action "a fair compromise."

Linden's attorney, Joshua Thompson of the Pacific Legal Foundation, says the group hopes the policy will be permanently rescinded.



## South Dakota tourism official: Take your vacation days

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota's top tourism official is encouraging residents to take their vacation days as the summer visitor season gets underway.

Tourism Secretary Jim Hagen said Tuesday that officials are optimistic about the summer, citing "sky-high" consumer confidence and increased interest in the department's website and newsletter.

Tourism is one of South Dakota's top industries. A study by Tourism Economics found that visitor spending in South Dakota reached \$3.9 billion in 2017, an increase of 1.2 percent from 2016.

Visitation to South Dakota remained steady at 13.9 million visitors, a slight increase from the previous year.

Gov. Dennis Daugaard says officials are updating interstate rest areas and that there will be three new welcome centers for travelers. He says South Dakota's hospitality, warmth and friendliness will continue attracting and surprising visitors.

## Rapid City police to wear body cameras by June

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Rapid City police will soon be equipped with body cameras after city officials approved a more than \$666,000 contract.

The Rapid City Council authorized Monday for the city Police Department to enter into a five-year contract with Arizona-based Axon for about 100 body cameras, the Rapid City Journal reported. The deal follows a three-month pilot project in which several police officers and sheriff's deputies tested different body camera manufacturers.

"Everybody that's working in a uniformed operational capacity will be wearing the body cameras," said Police Chief Karl Jegeris. "It's patrol. It's field services."

The department will use a \$300,000 Department of Justice grant to help offset \$150,000 of the cost over the next two years. The grant was awarded last year to the Police Department and the Pennington County Sheriff's Office to implement body camera technology.

The City Council also approved an additional five-year contract for dashcam technology Monday. The more than \$190,000 contract will switch the existing dashcam technology on the department's patrol cars from a different provider to Axon. The transition should be complete by summer 2019, Jegeris said.

The Police Department has been outlining its policy for body camera use over the past year.

Police worked with the American Civil Liberties Union, its community advisory committee and the public while crafting the policy, Jegeris said.

"I would call it a community inclusive policy," he said. "I think it's going to serve our community very well." Officers will begin wearing the body cameras by end of June.

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

## 3 men charged for drugs after girl's suicide to be in court

YANKTON, S.D. (AP) — Three men facing drug and other charges after a 17-year-old girl killed herself in Yankton are set to have court hearings this week.

The Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan reports court records say 18-year-old Andrew Johnson, 19-year-old Logan Huber and 20-year-old Logan Winder have status hearings scheduled Wednesday.

They face felony charges including methamphetamine possession. A 17-year-old juvenile was also arrested in connection to the case.

Yankton Police Chief Brian Paulsen says the arrestees stole three guns, including one used by the girl to kill herself. Authorities say she died last week of a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Paulsen said earlier that "ancillary charges" against several people were expected following the girl's suicide.

Information from: Yankton Press and Dakotan, <http://www.yankton.net/>

## **SD attorney general explains single-subject ballot question**

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley has released an explanation for a ballot question that would mandate that constitutional amendments encompass only one subject.

Jackley's office said Tuesday that the explanation of Constitutional Amendment Z has been filed with the Secretary of State's office. The proposed constitutional change will appear on the November ballot.

House Speaker Mark Mickelson, the sponsor, has said supporters want to make sure voters understand what they're voting for. Critics have questioned how the plan would work.

Republicans have pursued changes to South Dakota's ballot question system after the 2016 election season brought 10 questions and millions of dollars from out-of-state groups.

## **Appeals court clears way for food stamp figures' release**

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A federal appeals court decision has cleared the way for the U.S. Department of Agriculture to disclose food stamp revenues for stores participating in the federal program.

The Argus Leader reports a three-judge panel of the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals in St. Paul, Minnesota, ruled Tuesday that making public the payments wouldn't cause participating retailers competitive harm.

The ruling caps a seven-year legal struggle by the Argus Leader newspaper of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, to get the spending information. The panel upheld a lower court opinion that the sales figures wouldn't cause stores competitive harm.

A grocery trade group sought to block disclosure, arguing the numbers could be used to determine a store's total sales. Argus Leader News Director Cory Myers says taxpayers need to know where their money is spent.

Information from: Argus Leader, <http://www.argusleader.com>

## **Horse disease confirmed in second South Dakota animal**

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A debilitating disease commonly known as EHV-1 has been confirmed in a second horse in South Dakota.

The equine herpes virus is common among horses and can cause respiratory problems, abortions and neurological issues.

State Veterinarian Dustin Oedekoven (oh-duh-KOH'-vuhn) tells the Capital Journal that EHV-1 is not dangerous to people or to other livestock.

The first case in South Dakota this year was documented about three weeks ago in the Sioux Falls area.

The second case involved a horse in the Brookings area that had recently been in Nebraska.

Oedekoven says both horses have recovered.

Information from: Pierre Capital Journal, <http://www.capjournal.com>

## **Companies plan merger to form new uranium development firm**

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A company seeking to mine for uranium in South Dakota is merging with another uranium exploration and development company with properties in Wyoming, Utah and Colorado.

The Rapid City Journal reports Azarga Uranium Corp., through a subsidiary, is working for regulatory approval to mine at the southwest edge of South Dakota's Black Hills. The merger agreement is between Azarga and URZ Energy Corp., which is examining the uranium potential of the Gas Hills area in Wyoming.

URZ chief executive Glenn Catchpole will be chairman of the merged companies' board, while Azarga President and CEO Blake Steele will remain in his current role. Steele says the merger will position them to advance development of the South Dakota project.

Groundwater would be used to leach uranium deposits from rocks in a process known as "in situ" mining.

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

## Planned Sioux Falls mixed-use project bigger than expected

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The developer of a mixed-use parking ramp in downtown Sioux Falls says the project is going to be bigger than expected.

The Argus Leader reports that the facility called Village on the River was originally billed at 13 stories, including seven for the parking garage and the top six for a hotel.

Jeff Lamont, CEO of Lamont Companies and the lead developer, says two additional stories have been added to the plans. The extra floors will allow for an additional 100 hotel rooms, bringing the total number of rooms in the facility to 220.

Lamont says the project will house two separate hotel brands, which will be announced later.

The estimated \$50 million venture, \$30 million of which will be privately funded, is expected to be completed by fall 2020.

Information from: Argus Leader, <http://www.argusleader.com>

## Pierre reviewing ordinance to address ride-hailing service

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Pierre officials are reviewing the city's taxicab ordinance with the entry of the ride-sharing service Lyft in town.

Finance officer Twila Hight tells the Capital Journal that Lyft drivers are operating without a license. But the city's taxi ordinance doesn't have a penalty for someone who operates a taxi service without a license. A license costs \$10 but the fee hasn't been updated since 1957.

Information from: Pierre Capital Journal, <http://www.capjournal.com>

## Porn star's lawyer says Russian paid Trump attorney Cohen

By JILL COLVIN and CATHERINE LUCEY, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Stormy Daniels' lawyer said Tuesday he has information showing that Michael Cohen, President Donald Trump's longtime personal attorney, received \$500,000 from a company associated with a Russian billionaire within months of paying hush money to Daniels, a porn star who claims she had an affair with Trump.

Lawyer Michael Avenatti also said hundreds of thousands of dollars streamed into Cohen's account from companies, including pharmaceutical giant Novartis, AT&T and Korea Aerospace, with U.S. government business interests. AT&T confirmed its connection Tuesday evening.

Avenatti did not reveal the source of his information or release documentation. But in a seven-page memo, Avenatti detailed what he said were wire transfers going into and out of the account Cohen used to pay Daniels \$130,000 in October 2016 to stay silent about her alleged affair with the soon-to-be president. Trump denies having an affair with Daniels, whose real name is Stephanie Clifford.

Financial documents reviewed Tuesday by The Associated Press appeared to back up Avenatti's report.

The memo, containing highly specific dates and amounts, stated that Viktor Vekselberg, a Russian billionaire, and his cousin "routed" eight payments totaling approximately \$500,000 to Cohen's company, Essential Consultants, between January and August 2017. The reason for the payment was not known.

Speculating without offering proof, the Avenatti memo said, "It appears these funds may have replenished the account following the payment to Ms. Clifford."

Avenatti's memo said the deposits into the account controlled by Cohen were made by Columbus Nova, an American investment company affiliated with the Renova Group, which is controlled by Vekselberg.

Columbus Nova's attorney Richard Owens stressed in a statement that the company is "solely owned and controlled by Americans" and said that, after Trump's inauguration, the firm hired Cohen as a business consultant "regarding potential sources of capital and potential investments in real estate and other ventures," but that it had nothing to do with Vekselberg.



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Owens said any suggestion that Vekselberg used Columbus Nova as a conduit for payments to Cohen was false. "Neither Viktor Vekselberg nor anyone else, other than Columbus Nova's owners, were involved in the decision to hire Cohen or provided funding for his engagement," he said.

Cohen and his attorney did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Cohen is currently under investigation by federal prosecutors in New York, but hasn't been charged.

At the time of the payments, there was an active FBI counterintelligence investigation — which special counsel Robert Mueller took over last May — into Russian election interference and any possible coordination with Trump associates.

Vekselberg was targeted for U.S. sanctions by the Trump administration last month. He built his fortune, currently estimated by Forbes at \$14.6 billion, by investing in the aluminum and oil industries. More recently, he has expanded his assets to include industrial equipment and high technology.

Offering confirmation for more of the payments, AT&T said in a statement that Essential Consultants was one of several firms it "engaged in early 2017 to provide insights into understanding the new administration."

Avenatti alleged that the company made four \$50,000 payments to Cohen totaling \$200,000 in late 2017 and early 2018.

AT&T said Cohen's company "did no legal or lobbying work for us, and the contract ended in December 2017." Cohen is not a registered lobbyist, according to public records.

Such a confidential relationship would not violate federal lobbying laws if Cohen did not seek to influence Trump on the companies' behalf. But hiring the president's personal attorney for advice on how to woo Trump would be highly unusual, especially given that Cohen was never formally involved in the campaign or Trump's administration.

Making the arrangement even stranger, the blue-chip companies' payments to Cohen were routed to Essential Consultants LLC — the same company Cohen used to buy Stormy Daniels' silence about her alleged affair with the President.

Trump's Justice Department has sued to block AT&T from an \$85 billion merger with Time Warner, saying it would hurt competition and consumers would have to pay more to watch their favorite shows.

Korea Aerospace, which is alleged to have paid Cohen \$150,000 in November 2017, confirmed it paid Cohen's company for a business deal.

A company spokesman in Seoul, who declined to be named citing office rules, said Korea Aerospace Industries had a contract with Essential Consultants, Michael Cohen's company, for legal advice on accounting standards. The payment was made under a "legal" deal between the two, said the spokesperson, who refused to answer questions about the size or dates of any payments.

A spokesman for Novartis, a multinational pharmaceutical company, could not confirm or deny the payment, but said any agreements with Essential Consultants were entered before the company's current CEO took over in February of this year and have since expired.

The memo alleges the company paid Cohen \$399,920 in late 2017 and early 2018 in four payments — each amounting to \$99,980.

Trump had dinner with Novartis' soon-to-be CEO Vasant Narasimhan, along with other European executives, at the World Economic Forum in Davos shortly after the date of the final payment.

Larry Noble, senior director of the Campaign Legal Center, said there's nothing technically wrong with companies like Novartis and AT&T hiring people like Cohen to provide insight into the president's thinking. But he said the arrangement described by Avenatti "certainly doesn't look good."

"Why would you go to the president's private fixer?" he asked. "He's not known for policy and he's not in the administration. You're going to someone who can get you access and tell you about the person of the president. That's unusual."

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Associated Press writers Chad Day and Jeff Horwitz in Washington, Jake Pearson in New York and Mike Balsamo in Los Angeles and Youkyung Lee in Seoul, South Korea, contributed to this report.

## Kim breaks with his flight-phobic father, travels by plane

By HYUNG-JIN KIM, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Unlike his dictator father, who famously shunned air travel, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un jetted off to the northeastern Chinese city of Dalian this week, becoming the first North Korean ruler to fly abroad in 32 years.

Since taking office in late 2011, Kim has occasionally flown inside North Korea. The recent foreign trip, albeit not far from the North Korean border, comes ahead of his expected summit with U.S. President Donald Trump aimed at ending the North Korean nuclear problem.

Was Kim trying to test his jet's flight capacity because his summit with Trump could happen in Singapore? Did he simply want to show that he's different from his flight-averse father? Or perhaps he had urgent matters to discuss with Chinese President Xi Jinping that precluded the time-consuming train he took in March to Beijing to meet Xi.

Here are several things to know about the Kim family's travel habits:

### THE GOSHAWK

Kim's official plane is a remodeled version of the Soviet-made IL-62. North Korea calls it "Chammae-1," named after the goshawk, North Korea's national bird.

South Korean media say the plane can fly at a maximum speed of 900 kilometers (560 miles) per hour and carry about 200 people. Its maximum flight range is about 9,200 kilometers (5,720 miles) but it has reportedly never flown that far.

Some experts say one reason why North Korea apparently wants to have a Kim-Trump summit in Pyongyang, the North's capital, is that Kim's plane might not be able to fly to faraway places like Switzerland, Sweden or Washington.

Kim's younger sister, Kim Yo Jong, used "Chammae-2," the same kind of aircraft as her brother's, when she visited South Korea in February to attend the opening ceremony of the Pyeongchang Winter Olympics. She became the first member of North Korea's ruling Kim family to visit South Korea since the end of the 1950-53 Korean War.

### PREVIOUS AIR TRAVEL

Schooled for several years in Switzerland, Kim is believed to have traveled by air many times during his teenage years.

After he became North Korea's leader, state media said he was aboard Chammae-1 when he reviewed air force planes taking part in combat aeronautics contests and inspected construction work in Pyongyang. North Korean media photos also showed Kim looking out the windows of his plane; walking down the stairs from the plane, and walking with his wife, Ri Sol Ju, on a red carpet placed on an airstrip.

Other photos showed Kim in the cockpit of a fighter jet.

### DIFFERENT FROM HIS FATHER

Before Kim's Dalian trip, no North Korean leader had publicly gone abroad by air since Kim's grandfather, North Korea founder Kim Il Sung, flew to the Soviet Union in 1986.

Kim Jong Il flew by plane to a conference in Indonesia with Kim Il Sung, his father, in 1965. But after that he reportedly never flew because of a fear of heights. During his 1994-2011 rule, Kim Jong Il made about a dozen known overseas trips, mostly to China, and conducted countless inspections of military posts, factories and other places — all by train.

Analysts say Kim Jong Un's air travel may be aimed at showing he's a confident, normal leader who meets international standards.

South Korean media say Kim Jong Il had several luxurious trains equipped with reception halls, conference rooms and high-tech communication facilities. To guard against possible attacks, his train reportedly traveled with two other trains, with one running ahead of his to check the safety of the rail line while

another carried security agents and followed behind. According to state media, Kim Jong Il died of a heart attack during a train trip.

When Kim Jong Un visited Beijing, which is much farther than Dalian, in March for talks with Xi in his first overseas trip since his inauguration, he took a deep green special train reminiscent of his father's. Last month, he took a black Mercedes limousine to return home after a meeting with South Korean President Moon Jae-in at a village along the Koreas' border.

## Attorney general beats ex-con in W. Va. GOP Senate primary

By STEVE PEOPLES and JOHN RABY, Associated Press

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — Republican voters rejected ex-convict Don Blankenship in a West Virginia Senate primary in which he sold himself as “Trumpier than Trump” but was vigorously opposed by the president. GOP voters in Indiana, meanwhile, chose wealthy businessman Mike Braun over two sitting congressmen to lead the party's charge against a vulnerable Democratic senator in the fall.

President Donald Trump and his allies cheered the West Virginia result Tuesday night, which helped avert a potential political disaster for a GOP already bracing for major losses in the November midterm elections.

In both cases, Trump's party appears to have avoided the missteps that doomed candidates in high-profile Senate races in the past. Clinging to a 2-seat Senate majority, Republicans are well positioned to challenge at least two Senate Democrats this fall — West Virginia's Joe Manchin and Indiana's Joe Donnelly — who are facing re-election in the heart of Trump country.

The day's slate of early season elections tested the limits of the anti-establishment fervor that has defined the Trump era.

Hopelessly behind in West Virginia, Blankenship conceded defeat in the contest to determine Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin's general election challenger. The Republican president fought in the campaign's final days to defeat Blankenship, a retired coal executive, who remained popular among some West Virginia Republicans despite having served a year in prison for his role in a deadly mine disaster and attacked the Asian heritage of the top Senate Republican's wife.

State Attorney General Patrick Morrisey claimed the nomination instead, promoting his record of challenging policies of the administration of former President Barack Obama and deflecting criticism of his roots in New Jersey, where he lost a 2000 congressional race.

“Mr. President, if you're watching right now, let me tell you, your tweet was huge,” Morrisey said in his nomination address, referring to Trump's election eve call for voters to shun Blankenship's candidacy. “You've been to the state now four times. I'd like you to come back as many times as you can between now and November.”

Vice President Mike Pence congratulated Morrisey on Twitter, saying, “The great people of WV need a senator who supports the #MAGA agenda.”

The key Senate contests headlined primary elections across four states on Tuesday that will help shape the political landscape in this fall's midterm elections. Control of Congress is at stake in addition to state governments across the nation.

In a possible sign of party unrest, however, Rep. Robert Pittenger lost in North Carolina to the Rev. Mark Harris, a Baptist pastor he narrowly beat two years ago. Pittenger is the first incumbent to lose his seat this primary season.

In most cases, the Republican candidates on the ballot had competed to be seen as the most conservative, the most anti-Washington and the most loyal to the Republican president.

In Indiana, Democratic Sen. Joe Donnelly will face off in November against Braun, a multimillionaire owner of a national auto parts distribution business who loaned more than \$5.4 million of his own money to his campaign. Braun credited his victory to voter disenchantment with “business as usual” and said he hoped to join other Republican senators who came from outside politics.

Another Indiana contest was less contentious: Greg Pence won the primary for the congressional seat his younger brother, Vice President Mike Pence, once held. Greg Pence is a Marine veteran and owner of



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two antique malls who once ran the now-bankrupt chain of Tobacco Road convenience stores. He'll be the favorite to win the seat in November.

In Ohio's high-profile governor's race, Democrats nominated Obama-era consumer watchdog Richard Cordray while Republicans selected state Attorney General Mike DeWine.

An Ohio state senator won the Republican primary to succeed retiring Rep. Pat Tiberi. The race had become a proxy fight between Tiberi, a GOP moderate, and conservative Republican Rep. Jim Jordan. Tiberi's candidate, Troy Balderson of Zanesville pulled out a win.

And on the local level, a woman who accused Trump of sexually harassing her more than a decade ago claimed the Democratic nomination in a race to represent an area southeast of Toledo in the state House of Representatives. Democrat Rachel Crooks, a 35-year-old university administrator, ran unopposed, but must next win a November general election to become the first Trump accuser to hold elected office.

A bright spot for Republicans in swing-state Ohio: GOP turnout was considerably stronger than Democratic voting in the open governor's race. With nearly two-thirds of the vote counted, 567,000 Republicans cast votes, to 412,000 Democrats.

U.S. Rep. Jim Renacci, with Trump's support, won the Republican primary to challenge Democratic Sen. Sherrod Brown in November.

Yet none of Tuesday's other contests was expected to have more impact on the midterm landscape than West Virginia, where Blankenship had embraced Trump's tactics — casting himself as a victim of government persecution and seizing on xenophobia, if not racism — to stand out in a crowded Republican field that included Attorney General Morrisey and Congressman Evan Jenkins.

Before his loss was official, Blankenship promised to explore his options in the general election — including whether state election law might allow him to launch a third-party bid that could undermine Morrisey's candidacy. State officials noted that West Virginia's "sore loser" law leaves Blankenship with virtually no option to run in the general election.

No matter Tuesday's winner, Trump's team was keeping pressure on Manchin. A pro-Trump political action committee America First was airing ads promoting Gina Haspel, Trump's nominee to be CIA director, and urging residents to call Manchin to support her confirmation.

Manchin coasted to the Democratic nomination, but he remains a top Republican target this fall.

Speaking Tuesday night at his Charleston headquarters, he said he expects Trump to get involved in the contest, despite Manchin's "good relationship" with the president. The Democrat said he would campaign as he always has: a bipartisan problem solver who works "for West Virginians."

Trump and his party invested significant time and resources to attack Blankenship in recent weeks. The head of the Senate Republican campaign arm highlighted Blankenship's criminal history. And a group allied with the national GOP, known as Mountain Families PAC, spent more than \$1.2 million in attack ads against Blankenship.

The retired businessman was released less than a year ago from a prison term for a 2010 mine explosion that left 29 men dead. Blankenship led the company that owned the mine and was sentenced to a year in prison for conspiring to break safety laws, a misdemeanor.

He repeatedly blamed government regulators for the disaster, casting himself as the victim of an overzealous Obama-era Justice Department — an argument Trump regularly uses to dismiss federal agents investigating his campaign's ties to Russia.

Even as Blankenship rebuffed Trump's criticism this week, he described himself as "Trumpier than Trump" and played up his outsider credentials.

"We just started from so far behind with the hangover of the explosion we couldn't make it up," Blankenship said late Tuesday, noting that the probation stemming from his prison term would formally end in a matter of minutes.

"I haven't really thought about what I'm going to do tomorrow," he continued. "Probation ends at 12:01 a.m. tonight. Tomorrow, I may be in Aruba before sunset. I don't know."

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Peoples reported from New York. Associated Press writers Bill Barrow in Charleston, West Virginia, and John Seewer in Toledo, Ohio, contributed to this report.

## Volcanic gases prompt door-to-door evacuation in Hawaii

By **CALEB JONES** and **SOPHIA YAN**, Associated Press

PAHOA, Hawaii (AP) — Police went door-to-door in Hawaii to roust residents near two new vents emitting dangerous gases in areas where lava has been pouring into streets and backyards for the past week.

Authorities ordered nearly 2,000 residents to leave two communities in the mostly rural district of Puna on Hawaii's Big Island last Thursday. Some ignored the order and stayed to watch over their property.

But on Tuesday, the emergence of the two new vents prompted Hawaii County to issue a cellphone alert ordering stragglers in Lanipuna Gardens to get out immediately. Police followed up with personal visits.

"There were a number of people at their residences," Talmadge Magno, the administrator for Hawaii County Civil Defense, said at a news briefing. There was no sign of holdouts in Lanipuna afterward, he said.

Edwin Montoya, 76, had planned to stay to care for animals and keep looters away from his family's property in neighboring Leilani Estates. But he was forced to evacuate after the new fissures emerged, including one just a mile away.

"I'm in my truck right now on my way up the road," he said. "The police came down here and made me."

Both communities are in a forested, remote part of the Big Island on the eastern flank of Kilauea volcano, which has been erupting continuously since 1983.

In recent years the volcano has mostly released lava in hard-to-reach areas inside a national park or along the coastline. But last week, vents popped open and released lava, gas and steam inside residential neighborhoods.

There's no indication when the eruption might stop, or how far the lava might spread.

There were about 1,700 residents in Leilani Estates and a few hundred in Lanipuna Gardens before last week.

Andrew Nisbet evacuated last week and has no idea what has happened since.

"My home is right in the line of the major breakouts so maybe, maybe not," he said Monday during a community meeting.

Authorities urged Scott Wiggers to evacuate, but he refused.

"I'm in the safest part in the subdivision. There's no threat to my house whatsoever," said Wiggers, a tour guide.

Wiggers said he wasn't leaving his home on the outskirts of the evacuation zone because he worried that if he did, he wouldn't be able to get back in. But he's prepared in case the situation takes a turn.

"I am packed. My truck is loaded. I'm not a dumb-dumb. If I see a threat, I'm out of here," he said.

Officials warn that lava could flow downhill and burn areas that are not currently in danger, and toxic volcanic gas could kill people, especially the elderly and those with breathing problems.

Hawaii Gov. David Ige told evacuees he has called the White House and the Federal Emergency Management Agency to tell officials that he believes the state will need help to deal with the volcano on the Big Island.

There are 14 lava-and-gas producing fissures in Leilani Estates, after the two new ones formed Tuesday. But the flow of lava is not constant.

A total of 36 structures, including 26 confirmed homes, have been destroyed. Aerial surveys cannot make out whether some of the structures are homes or other types of buildings.

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Associated Press journalists Jennifer Sinco Kelleher and Audrey McAvoy contributed to this report.

## Iran's top leader, lawmakers lash out at US on nuclear deal

By **NASSER KARIMI** and **AMIR VAHDAT**, Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Iran's supreme leader chastised President Donald Trump on Wednesday over his decision to pull America out of the 2015 nuclear deal, while lawmakers lit a paper U.S. flag on fire inside parliament, shouting, "Death to America!"

The government backlash reflected broad public anger in Iran over Trump's decision, which threatens to destroy the landmark agreement. While Iranian officials, including the parliament speaker, say they hope Europe will work with them to preserve the deal, many are pessimistic.

In comments before school teachers, Khamenei told Trump: "You cannot do a damn thing!" The exhortation from Khamenei, who has final say on all state matters, follows a pattern of Iranian leaders declaring their nation's ability to resist foreign pressure or interference.

Khamenei described Trump's speech as having "over 10 lies," without elaborating on them. He also said Trump's remarks threatened both Iran's people and its theocratic government.

Earlier Wednesday, the lawmakers, including a Shiite cleric, held the flaming flag alight as their colleagues joined their chants. They also burned a piece of paper representing the nuclear deal and stomped on the papers' ashes.

While U.S. flag-burning is common in Iran and harsh criticism of America has been a staple of Iranian parliamentary politics for years, it was the first time political observers could remember anything being burned inside the parliament itself.

The 2015 agreement imposed restrictions on Iran's nuclear program in return for the lifting of most U.S. and international sanctions.

However, the deal came with time limits and did not address Iran's ballistic missile program or its regional policies in Syria and elsewhere. Trump has repeatedly pointed to those omissions in referring to the accord as the "worst deal ever." Proponents of the deal have said those time limits were meant to encourage more discussion with Iran in the future that could eventually address other concerns.

Late Tuesday night, President Hassan Rouhani said he'd be sending Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif to the countries still in the deal — China, France, Germany, Russia and the United Kingdom.

Iran hopes the European Union will pass laws to protect European firms from any potential U.S. sanctions. EU officials have suggested they'll do what they can to salvage the agreement.

Still, Rouhani made a point of stressing that Iran, at any time, could resume its nuclear program.

"So if necessary, we can begin our industrial enrichment without any limitations," the Iranian leader said. "Until implementation of this decision, we will wait for some weeks and will talk with our friends and allies and other signatories of the nuclear deal, who signed it and who will remain loyal to it. Everything depends on our national interests."

Wednesday morning after the flag burning, parliament speaker Ali Larijani said responsibility for saving the deal fell on the EU and other world powers still in the accord.

"The period is only a window in which the EU can prove if it has enough weight for settling down international issues or not?" he said.

Larijani also urged the country's nuclear department to prepare for "resumption of all aspects of nuclear activities."

Many Iranians are worried about what Trump's decision could mean for their country.

The Iranian rial is already trading on the black market at 66,000 to the dollar, despite a government-set rate of 42,000 rials. Many say they have not seen any benefits from the nuclear deal.

Iran's poor economy and unemployment sparked nationwide protests in December and January that saw at least 25 people killed and, reportedly, nearly 5,000 arrested.

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Associated Press writer Jon Gambrell in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, contributed to this report.

## Trump's pull out from Iran deal deepens US isolation

By CATHERINE LUCEY and JOSH LEDERMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump withdrew the U.S. from the landmark nuclear accord with Iran, abruptly restoring harsh sanctions in the most consequential foreign policy action of his presidency. He declared he was making the world safer, but he also deepened his isolation on the world stage and revived doubts about American credibility.

The 2015 agreement, which was negotiated by the Obama administration and included Germany, France and Britain, had lifted most U.S. and international economic sanctions against Iran. In exchange, Iran agreed to restrictions on its nuclear program, making it impossible to produce a bomb and establishing rigorous inspections.

But Trump, a severe critic of the deal dating back to his presidential campaign, said Tuesday in a televised address from the White House that it was "defective at its core."

U.S. allies in Europe had tried to keep him in and lamented his move to abandon it. Iran's leader ominously warned his country might "start enriching uranium more than before."

The sanctions seek to punish Iran for its nuclear program by limiting its ability to sell oil or do business overseas, affecting a wide range of Iranian economic sectors and individuals.

Major companies in the U.S. and Europe could be hurt, too. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said that licenses held by Boeing and its European competitor Airbus to sell billions of dollars in commercial jetliners to Iran will be revoked. Certain exemptions are to be negotiated, but Mnuchin refused to discuss what products might qualify.

He said the sanctions will sharply curtail sales of oil by Iran, which is currently the world's fifth largest oil producer. Mnuchin said he didn't expect oil prices to rise sharply, forecasting that other producers will step up production.

Iran's government must now decide whether to follow the U.S. and withdraw or try to salvage what's left with the Europeans. Iranian President Hassan Rouhani said he was sending his foreign minister to the remaining countries but warned there was only a short time to negotiate with them.

Laying out his case, Trump contended, "If we do nothing, we know exactly what will happen. In just a short period of time, the world's leading state sponsor of terror will be on the cusp of acquiring the world's most dangerous weapons."

The administration said it would re-impose sanctions on Iran immediately but allow grace periods for businesses to wind down activity. Companies and banks doing business with Iran will have to scramble to extricate themselves or run afoul of the U.S. government.

Meanwhile, for nations contemplating striking their own sensitive deals with Trump, such as North Korea, the withdrawal will increase suspicions that they cannot expect lasting U.S. fidelity to international agreements it signs.

Former President Barack Obama, whose administration negotiated the deal, called Trump's action "misguided" and said, "The consistent flouting of agreements that our country is a party to risks eroding America's credibility and puts us at odds with the world's major powers."

Yet nations like Israel and Saudi Arabia that loathed the deal saw the action as a sign the United States is returning to a more skeptical, less trusting approach to dealing with adversaries.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu welcomed Trump's announcement as a "historic move."

Trump, who repeatedly criticized the accord during his presidential campaign, said Tuesday that documents recently released by Netanyahu showed Iran had attempted to develop a nuclear bomb in the previous decade, especially before 2003. Although Trump gave no explicit evidence that Iran violated the deal, he said Iran had clearly lied in the past and could not be trusted.

Iran has denied ever pursuing nuclear arms.

There was a predictably mixed reaction from Congress. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, a Kentucky Republican, said the Iran deal "was flawed from the beginning," and he looked forward to working with Trump on next steps. House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, a California Democrat, slammed Trump



in a statement, saying this "rash decision isolates America, not Iran."

In a burst of last-minute diplomacy, punctuated by a visit by Britain's top diplomat, the deal's European members had given ground on many of Trump's demands for reworking the accord, according to officials, diplomats and others briefed on the negotiations. Yet the Europeans realized he was unpersuaded.

Trump spoke with French President Emmanuel Macron and Chinese leader Xi Jinping about his decision Tuesday. Hours before the announcement, European countries met in Brussels with Iran's deputy foreign minister for political affairs, Abbas Araghchi.

In Iran, many are deeply concerned about how Trump's decision could affect the already struggling economy. In Tehran, Rouhani sought to calm nerves, smiling as he appeared at a petroleum expo. He didn't name Trump directly, but emphasized that Iran continued to seek "engagement with the world."

The first 15 months of Trump's presidency have been filled with many "last chances" for the Iran deal in which he's punted the decision for another few months, and then another. As he left his announcement Tuesday, he predicted that Iranians would someday "want to make a new and lasting deal" and that "when they do, I am ready, willing and able."

Even Trump's secretary of state and the U.N. agency that monitors nuclear compliance agree that Iran, so far, has lived up to its side of the deal. But the deal's critics, such as Israel, the Gulf Arab states and many Republicans, say it's a giveaway to Tehran that ultimately would pave the way to a nuclear-armed Iran.

For the Europeans, Trump's withdrawal constitutes dispiriting proof that trying to appease him is futile.

Although the U.S. and Europeans made progress on ballistic missiles and inspections, there were disagreements over extending the life of the deal and how to trigger additional penalties if Iran were found in violation, U.S. officials and European diplomats have said.

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Associated Press writers Matthew Lee, Jill Colvin, Zeke Miller and Ken Thomas in Washington and Amir Vahdat and Nasser Karimi in Tehran, Iran, contributed to this report.

## **Pompeo in NKorea to finalize summit, seek Americans' release**

**By MATTHEW LEE, AP Diplomatic Writer**

PYONGYANG, North Korea (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo traveled to North Korea on Wednesday to finalize plans for a historic summit between President Donald Trump and the North's leader, Kim Jong Un.

U.S. officials said Pompeo will also press North Korea for the release of three detained American citizens, whose imminent release Trump has been hinting at.

Pompeo discussed the agenda for a potential summit in a meeting with Kim Yong Chol, vice chairman of the central committee of North Korea's ruling party.

Later, at a lunch of poached fish and duck hosted by Kim Yong Chol, Pompeo said the senior official had been a great partner in working to make the summit a success.

"For decades, we have been adversaries. Now we are hopeful that we can work together to resolve this conflict," Pompeo said, adding that "there are many challenges along the way."

Kim noted the improved relations between the Koreas, as well as the North's policy to "concentrate all efforts into economic progress" in the country.

"This is not a result of sanctions that have been imposed from outside," he added, citing the will of the Korean people. Trump has said that his pressure tactics brought North Korea to the negotiating table.

The trip, Pompeo's second to North Korea this year, had not been publicly disclosed when he flew out of Washington under cover of darkness late Monday aboard an Air Force 757. Trump announced the mission Tuesday afternoon as he laid out the case for withdrawing from a landmark nuclear deal with Iran, another bitter U.S. adversary.

Minutes later, Pompeo arrived in Japan to refuel before flying on to Pyongyang. Accompanying him were a handful of senior aides, a security detail and two journalists — one from The Associated Press and one from The Washington Post, both given roughly four hours' notice of his departure.

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When the flight arrived Wednesday morning in Pyongyang, North Korean officials were on hand to greet Pompeo. A motorcade took Pompeo and his delegation to the Koryo Hotel, the main hotel for foreigners in Pyongyang.

The trip came just days after North Korea expressed displeasure with Washington for comments suggesting that massive U.S. pressure had pushed Kim Jong Un to the negotiating table.

Pompeo, who first traveled to North Korea as CIA chief in early April, is only the second sitting secretary of state to visit the reclusive nation with which the U.S. is still technically at war. The first was Madeleine Albright, who went in 2000 as part of an unsuccessful bid to arrange a meeting between then-President Bill Clinton and Kim Jong Un's father, Kim Jong Il.

"Plans are being made, relationships are building, hopefully a deal will happen and with the help of China, South Korea and Japan a future of great prosperity and security can be achieved for everyone," Trump said at the White House as he announced Pompeo's visit.

Pompeo's first trip to Pyongyang, over Easter weekend before he was confirmed as secretary of state, was a closely held secret. News of it did not emerge until just before his Senate confirmation vote less than two weeks ago. Shortly afterward, the White House released photographs of Pompeo and Kim. It was not clear whether Kim would meet Pompeo on this trip.

Pompeo told reporters aboard his plane that his first visit was to test the North Korean's seriousness of pledges to South Korea on easing tensions. This trip is "to put in place a framework for a successful summit," he said.

Although there were no guarantees that the American prisoners would be freed during Pompeo's visit, U.S. officials said their release would be a significant goodwill gesture ahead of the Trump-Kim summit that is expected later this month or in early June.

"I think it would be a great gesture if they would agree to do so," Pompeo said, adding that it would be difficult to hold a leaders' summit if the prisoners remained captive. The three Korean-Americans — Kim Dong Chul, Kim Hak Song and Tony Kim — are all accused by the North of anti-state activities.

Trump has said that a time and place for the summit have been decided, but has not said where and when it will be. Pompeo's visit to Pyongyang aims to lock down the date and venue for a formal announcement to be made. It came just a day after Kim returned from China, his second trip to the neighboring country in six weeks to meet with President Xi Jinping.

A Trump-Kim meeting seemed a remote possibility just a few months ago when the two leaders were trading threats and insults over North Korea's development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missile tests. But momentum for diplomacy built this year as North and South Korea have moved to ease tensions, including with their own leaders' summit late last month.

In March, Trump unexpectedly accepted an offer of talks from Kim after the North Korean dictator agreed to suspend nuclear and missile tests and discuss "denuclearization." According to South Korea, Kim says he's willing to give up his nukes if the United States commits to a formal end to the Korean War and pledges not to attack the North.

Kim was quoted as saying Monday by China's official news agency Xinhua, "I hope to build mutual trust with the U.S. through dialogue." He added that a political resolution of tensions on the Korean Peninsula and denuclearization should proceed in stages, with all sides moving in concert.

But his exact demands for relinquishing weapons that his nation spent decades building remain unclear. Previous U.S. efforts to negotiate an end to the North's nuclear weapons program failed under Presidents Clinton and George W. Bush.

Pompeo and officials traveling with him said the Trump administration would not repeat mistakes of the past, which they described as accepting gradual, incremental and long-term disarmament in exchange for immediate benefits. One senior official said Trump and Pompeo were looking for "a bold approach" that would fundamentally alter the security situation.

"We are not going to head back down the path that we headed down before," Pompeo said. "We will not relieve sanctions until such time as we have achieved our objectives. We're not going to do this in small increments where the world is essentially coerced into relieving economic pressure."

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Trump has said that withdrawing U.S. forces from South Korea is "not on the table." Some 28,500 U.S. forces are based in the allied nation, a military presence that has been preserved to deter North Korea since the war ended in 1953 without a peace treaty.

After weeks of positive signals, though, North Korea on Sunday dismissed what it called "misleading" claims that Trump's policy of maximum political pressure and sanctions are what drove the North to talks. A North Korean foreign ministry spokesman warned the claims are a "dangerous attempt" to ruin a budding detente on the Korean Peninsula after the summit between Kim and South Korean President Moon Jae-in.

"The U.S. is deliberately provoking the DPRK at the time when the situation on the Korean Peninsula is moving toward peace and reconciliation," the spokesman was quoted as saying. DPRK is short for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the North's formal name.

The statement seemed aimed at strengthening Kim's position going into his meeting with Trump. Pyongyang claims Kim himself is the driver of the current situation and the spokesman said the U.S. should not to interpret Pyongyang's willingness to talk as a sign of weakness.

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Associated Press writers Jill Colvin and Ken Thomas in Washington contributed to this report.

## **GOP outsiders in \_ and out \_ as primary season kicks off**

**By STEVE PEOPLES and JOHN RABY, Associated Press**

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP) — Republican voters rejected ex-convict Don Blankenship Tuesday in a West Virginia Senate primary in which he sold himself as "Trumpier than Trump" but was vigorously opposed by the president. GOP voters in Indiana, meanwhile, chose wealthy businessman Mike Braun over two sitting congressmen to lead the party's charge against a vulnerable Democratic senator in the fall.

President Donald Trump and his allies cheered the West Virginia result, which helped avert a potential political disaster for a GOP already bracing for major losses in the November midterm elections. In a possible sign of party unrest, however, Rep. Robert Pittenger lost in North Carolina to the Rev. Mark Harris, a Baptist pastor he narrowly beat two years ago. Pittenger is the first incumbent to lose his seat this primary season.

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In most cases, the Republican candidates on the ballot had competed to be seen as the most conservative, the most anti-Washington and the most loyal to the Republican president.

In Indiana, Democratic Sen. Joe Donnelly will face off in November against Braun, a multimillionaire

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owner of a national auto parts distribution business who loaned more than \$5.4 million of his own money to his campaign. Braun credited his victory to voter disenchantment with "business as usual" and said he hoped to join other Republican senators who came from outside politics.

Another Indiana contest was less contentious: Greg Pence won the primary for the congressional seat his younger brother, Vice President Mike Pence, once held. Greg Pence is a Marine veteran and owner of two antique malls who once ran the now-bankrupt chain of Tobacco Road convenience stores. He'll be the favorite to win the seat in November.

In Ohio's high-profile governor's race, Democrats nominated Obama-era consumer watchdog Richard Cordray while Republicans selected state Attorney General Mike DeWine.

An Ohio state senator won the Republican primary to succeed retiring Rep. Pat Tiberi. The race had become a proxy fight between Tiberi, a GOP moderate, and conservative Republican Rep. Jim Jordan. Tiberi's candidate, Troy Balderson of Zanesville pulled out a win.

And on the local level, a woman who accused Trump of sexually harassing her more than a decade ago claimed the Democratic nomination in a race to represent an area southeast of Toledo in the state House of Representatives. Democrat Rachel Crooks, a 35-year-old university administrator, ran unopposed, but must next win a November general election to become the first Trump accuser to hold elected office.

A bright spot for Republicans in swing-state Ohio: GOP turnout was considerably stronger than Democratic voting in the open governor's race. With nearly two-thirds of the vote counted, 567,000 Republicans cast votes, to 412,000 Democrats.

U.S. Rep. Jim Renacci, with Trump's support, won the Republican primary to challenge Democratic Sen. Sherrod Brown in November.

Yet none of Tuesday's other contests was expected to have more impact on the midterm landscape than West Virginia, where Blankenship had embraced Trump's tactics — casting himself as a victim of government persecution and seizing on xenophobia, if not racism — to stand out in a crowded Republican field that included Attorney General Morrisey and Congressman Evan Jenkins.

Before his loss was official, Blankenship promised to explore his options in the general election — including whether state election law might allow him to launch a third-party bid that could undermine Morrisey's candidacy. State officials noted that West Virginia's "sore loser" law leaves Blankenship with virtually no option to run in the general election.

No matter Tuesday's winner, Trump's team was keeping pressure on Manchin. A pro-Trump political action committee America First was airing ads promoting Gina Haspel, Trump's nominee to be CIA director, and urging residents to call Manchin to support her confirmation.

Manchin coasted to the Democratic nomination, but he remains a top Republican target this fall.

Speaking Tuesday night at his Charleston headquarters, he said he expects Trump to get involved in the contest, despite Manchin's "good relationship" with the president. The Democrat said he would campaign as he always has: a bipartisan problem solver who works "for West Virginians."

Trump and his party invested significant time and resources to attack Blankenship in recent weeks. The head of the Senate Republican campaign arm highlighted Blankenship's criminal history. And a group allied with the national GOP, known as Mountain Families PAC, spent more than \$1.2 million in attack ads against Blankenship.

The retired businessman was released less than a year ago from a prison term for a 2010 mine explosion that left 29 men dead. Blankenship led the company that owned the mine and was sentenced to a year in prison for conspiring to break safety laws, a misdemeanor.

He repeatedly blamed government regulators for the disaster, casting himself as the victim of an overzealous Obama-era Justice Department — an argument Trump regularly uses to dismiss federal agents investigating his campaign's ties to Russia.

Even as Blankenship rebuffed Trump's criticism this week, he described himself as "Trumpier than Trump" and played up his outsider credentials.

"We just started from so far behind with the hangover of the explosion we couldn't make it up," Blankenship said late Tuesday, noting that the probation stemming from his prison term would formally end



in a matter of minutes.

"I haven't really thought about what I'm going to do tomorrow," he continued. "Probation ends at 12:01 a.m. tonight. Tomorrow, I may be in Aruba before sunset. I don't know."

Peoples reported from New York. Associated Press writers Bill Barrow in Charleston, West Virginia, and John Seewer in Toledo, Ohio contributed to this report.

This story has been corrected by deleting references to Indiana Republican Mike Braun being highly critical of Trump; that and references to "coming around" and saying Trump should be nominated for a Nobel were erroneously attributed to Braun.

## CIA nominee says she wouldn't restart interrogation program

By DEB RIECHMANN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's nominee to be the next CIA director says that if she is confirmed by the Senate, the spy agency will not undertake a detention and harsh interrogation program like the one used after 9/11.

The CIA released excerpts of the opening remarks Gina Haspel will make at her confirmation hearing Wednesday before the Senate intelligence committee. Haspel's fate hinges on how well she fields tough questions from senators who want details of her time running a covert detention site where terror suspects were brutally interrogated and seek an explanation for why she wanted videos of the sessions destroyed.

"I understand that what many people around the country want to know about me are my views on CIA's former detention and interrogation program," Haspel says in the excerpts. "Having served in that tumultuous time, I can offer you my personal commitment, clearly and without reservation, that under my leadership, CIA will not restart such a detention and interrogation program."

Haspel's vow to fight any attempt to resurrect the program could put her at odds with Trump, who spoke in the campaign about toughening the U.S. approach to fighting extremists and vowed to authorize waterboarding and a "hell of a lot worse."

Trump, however, has made no move to implement that vow since he has taken office. He has praised Haspel's three decades of intelligence experience and has said Democrats are wary of her because she has been tough on terrorists.

"This is a woman who has been a leader wherever she has gone. The CIA wants her to lead them into America's bright and glorious future!" Trump tweeted Tuesday.

In other excerpts, Haspel pledges to work closely with the Senate oversight committee. She said she would fight to put more intelligence officers in the field abroad, emphasize foreign language proficiency and work to strengthen partnerships with U.S. allies. She also says there has been an outpouring of support from young women at the CIA who hope she becomes the first female CIA director.

"It is not my way to trumpet the fact that I am a woman up for the top job, but I would be remiss in not remarking on it — not least because of the outpouring of support from young women at CIA who consider it a good sign for their own prospects," Haspel says.

Haspel, a 61-year-old career undercover spy who has been acting CIA director since Mike Pompeo was nominated as secretary of state, has been practicing her answers at mock confirmation hearings with former top intelligence officials. Many of them praise her 33-year tenure at the agency in foreign and domestic assignments, and she received glowing endorsements from Republican senators.

A GOP colleague on the committee, Sen. John Cornyn of Texas, lamented how Haspel's nomination fueled a "toxic political environment." He said Democrats and other opponents have engaged in "character assassination" before giving her the opportunity to answer questions and defend herself.

Democrats have complained repeatedly that the CIA has failed to declassify enough information on her career, leaving the public in the dark about the person who might end up leading the CIA.

Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., and three of his Democratic colleagues recently wrote a letter to Dan Coats,

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the director of national intelligence, asking that his office, which oversees all U.S. intelligence agencies, declassify the documents. He cited a provision of an executive order that prohibits information from being classified "in order to conceal violations of law, inefficiency or administrative error" or "to prevent embarrassment to a person, organization or agency."

"This is really a high-stakes hearing," Wyden said. He warned it would set a damaging precedent "if this administration is allowed to get away with what I consider to be a secret confirmation" for the most visible official in U.S. intelligence.

Sen. Richard Burr of North Carolina, the Republican chairman of the intelligence committee said the documents will not be made public or declassified.

"That has never happened in the history of the CIA, and it's not going to happen with Gina Haspel's nomination," he said.

It's unclear when the committee will vote on Haspel's nomination. After that, it will go to the full Senate for a vote. Without Sen. John McCain of Arizona, who is battling brain cancer, the Republicans hold a 50-49 majority in the Senate. Most Republicans, except Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky, are expected to vote for Haspel, though support is not certain, which means she would need at least one Democratic vote to be confirmed. Vice President Mike Pence, as president of the Senate, can be called on to break a tie vote.

As the hearing neared, Haspel's critics outside Congress stepped up their opposition, arguing that anyone who willingly participated in one of the CIA's darkest chapters should not be at the helm of the spy agency. They argue that having Haspel as the face of U.S. intelligence will undercut America's effort to champion human rights.

Robert Ford, former U.S. ambassador to Syria and fellow at the Middle East Institute in Washington, said that while U.S. military personnel had been punished for human rights abuses such as at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, few intelligence professionals were reprimanded for their activities with the detention and interrogation program that had been approved by the White House and reviewed and approved by the Justice Department.

A confirmation of Haspel would be interpreted overseas as implicit approval of a program of harsh detention and interrogation, Ford said.

Ali Soufan, a former FBI agent who interrogated high-value terror detainees, said he has concerns about how Haspel drafted a cable ordering the destruction of 92 videotapes made at the Thailand site. Haspel's boss, Jose Rodriguez, actually dispatched the order in 2005 to have the tapes shredded.

Soufan, who now heads a private risk-assessment firm, asked whether Haspel wanted them destroyed to protect the identities of CIA personnel who worked there or because they would discredit the agency.

Last month, the CIA released a memo showing Haspel was cleared of wrongdoing in the destruction of the videotapes. The memo, written in 2011, summarizes a disciplinary review conducted by then-CIA Deputy Director Mike Morell. He said that while Haspel was one of the two officers "directly involved in the decision to destroy the tapes," he "found no fault" with what she did.

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Associated Press writers Mary Clare Jalonick and Lisa Mascaro contributed to this report.

## How Google aims to simplify your life with AI

By RYAN NAKASHIMA and MAE ANDERSON, AP Technology Writers

MOUNTAIN VIEW, Calif. (AP) — Google put the spotlight on its artificial intelligence smarts at its annual developers conference Tuesday, announcing new consumer features aimed at simplifying your life.

Many of the updates have a practical bent, designed to ease tasks such as composing emails, making lists, navigating city streets and lessening the digital distractions that have increasingly addled people's lives as a result of previous tech industry innovations.

One of the biggest crowd-pleasers for the thousands of software developers who gathered at the outdoor conference was an augmented reality feature on Google Maps that helps people get walking directions. Users will be able to follow arrows — or possibly a cartoon-like creature — that appear on a camera view

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showing the actual street in front of them.

Some new features for Android phones also aim to improve people's digital well-being, including a new "shush" mode that automatically puts a phone in "do not disturb" mode if you flip it face down on a table. And a "wind down" mode will fade the screen to grey at a designated time to help you disconnect before bed.

The company's digital concierge, known only as the Google Assistant, is getting new voices — including one based on that of musician John Legend — later this year. It will also encourage kids to be polite by thanking them when they say please, similar to a feature Amazon is bringing to its Alexa voice assistant.

The assistant may also soon be talking with ordinary people at businesses for tasks such as restaurant reservations, although the feature is still in development.

"Hi, I'm calling to book a hair appointment for a client," said a realistic-sounding automated voice in a demo from the conference stage. The AI assistant deployed pauses and "ums" and "mmm-hmms" to sound more human in conversation with real people.

Google said it will roll out the technology, called Duplex, as an experiment in coming weeks. "We really want to work hard to get this right," said Google CEO Sundar Pichai, who kicked off the conference, known as Google I/O.

Other changes are more immediate. Gmail is getting an autocomplete feature that uses machine learning to offer suggestions for finishing half-completed sentences. For example, "I haven't seen you" might be auto-completed to "I haven't seen you in a while and I hope you're doing well." You can accept the completion by hitting the tab key.

The Google Photos app aims to get smarter about suggesting who you might want to share photos with. Whenever it recognizes a photo of one of your Google contacts, it can suggest sharing the photo with that person. It will also convert photos to PDFs and automatically add color to black-and-white photos or make part of a color photo black and white. The changes are coming in the next two months.

The search giant aims to make its assistant and other services so useful that people can't live without them — or the search results that drive its advertising business. But it also wants to play up the social benefits of AI and how it's being used to improve health care, preserve the environment and make scientific discoveries.

Pichai didn't emphasize the privacy and data security concerns that have put companies like Facebook, Twitter and Google in the crosshairs of regulators. But he did say the company "can't just be wide eyed about the innovations technology creates."

"We know the path ahead needs to be navigated carefully and deliberately," he said. "Our core mission is to make information more useful, accessible and beneficial to all of society."

Google's latest version of its Android phone software, for now known as Android P, will offer other smart features. It will teach the battery to adapt to how you use apps in order to conserve energy. Phones using Android P will also learn how to set your screen brightness by studying your manual adjustments, a change from automatic adjustments based on ambient light levels.

But not everyone will see the new Android features soon — if at all. Android P won't be released until later this year, and even then, phone manufacturers and carriers frequently limit Android updates to their newest phones. Owners of Google's own Pixel phones will get the updates most quickly.

Samsung is getting snubbed on some of these new features, at least for now. It has been challenging Google more frequently by launching that services duplicate what Google already offers on Android.

For instance, Samsung users won't have access to an early "beta" version of Android P. Samsung's camera app also won't get a built-in Lens feature that lets Google offer information after taking a photo of a building or sign. Samsung has been developing its own similar feature called Bixby Vision.

It wasn't immediately clear which company made the call to withhold the features announced Tuesday.

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Anderson reported from New York. AP Technology Writers Matt O'Brien in Providence, Rhode Island and Anick Jesdanun in New York contributed to this report.

## Digging for remains of up to 7 Michigan girls ends for day

MACOMB TOWNSHIP, Mich. (AP) — Excavation for the remains of up to seven girls reported missing decades ago has ended for the day in a wooded area northeast of Detroit.

The FBI, Warren police and other agencies spent Tuesday digging through dirt and vegetation at the site in Macomb Township for the remains of 12-year-old Kimberly King and expect to resume their search Wednesday.

King was last seen in 1979.

"We have probable cause to believe that (Kimberly) is buried there," said Warren Police Commissioner Bill Dwyer. "We also believe that there's maybe four to six other girls that have been reported missing that are buried there. We certainly are convinced we have the right area. It's just a sad type of situation."

Dwyer did not give the names of the other missing girls.

The search for King's remains started Monday about 30 miles (50 kilometers) from downtown Detroit.

It came after police interviewed a man serving life in prison for the slaying of a 13-year-old girl who disappeared in 1986 and whose remains were found in 2008 near the wooded area targeted for this week's search.

Cindy Zarzycki was last seen after being lured to a Dairy Queen in Eastpointe, just north of Detroit.

Arthur Ream was convicted of first-degree murder in her slaying. He was temporarily released from prison in 2008 to lead police to Zarzycki's body. He told investigators that Zarzycki's body was buried near a creek. He also drew a map of the site and spent about an hour at the search scene with authorities before being returned to prison.

Zarzycki had been dating Ream's son at the time of her disappearance. Authorities said Ream, now 68, tricked her by telling her that he was planning a surprise party for his son.

At the time of his conviction for Zarzycki's killing, he already was serving a 15-year sentence on an unrelated molestation charge involving a 14-year-old girl.

## New York AG's fall: From women's defender to alleged abuser

By COLLEEN LONG and JENNIFER PELTZ, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Less than three months ago, New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman went before the news cameras to announce a lawsuit accusing movie mogul Harvey Weinstein and his former studio of abusing and intimidating a multitude of women.

"We have never seen anything as despicable as what we've seen here," Schneiderman declared.

Now, in a stunning turn rife with seeming hypocrisy, Schneiderman's own career has imploded, collapsing just three hours after the 63-year-old Democrat was accused of choking, slapping, threatening or otherwise abusing four women during intimate encounters.

The allegations, which Schneiderman contests but which led him to resign, emerged Monday in an article in *The New Yorker*, a publication he hailed just last month for reporting on Weinstein and starting a "critical national reckoning" on sexual misconduct by powerful men.

It was a dizzying fall for a politician who put himself at the fore of the #MeToo movement and had cast himself as a defender of women ever since he worked at an abortion clinic at 17.

He is now facing a criminal investigation by a special prosecutor appointed by the governor.

Schneiderman's disgrace stunned women's groups, which suddenly found themselves deploring a man they had embraced as a proven and powerful ally.

"This was someone who many of us held up as a supporter and champion of the fight against gender violence," said Judy Harris Kluger, executive director of Sanctuary for Families, which aids domestic violence victims. She stood beside Schneiderman when he announced a settlement last year with a hospital that had been billing rape victims for exams.

"A tremendous betrayal. There's no other way to put it," Kluger said.

Sonia Ossorio, president of the New York chapter of the National Organization for Women, said she was



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"shell-shocked" at the news. "When you have so few (male leaders) that prioritize women's rights," she said, "it hits like a ton of bricks."

The National Institute for Reproductive Health, an abortion-rights group, said it was "appalled and horrified" at the alleged behavior of a man it honored as a "champion of choice" just last week at a luncheon.

The accusations rocked the state and added another chapter to its history of political sex shockers, including the prostitution scandal that felled Democratic Gov. Eliot Spitzer in 2008 and the serial sexting that ultimately put former Democratic Rep. Anthony Weiner in prison last fall.

"It's a moment of reckoning — and now that reckoning has come to him," said New York Mayor Bill de Blasio, a fellow Democrat.

Powerful fellow Democrats, including Gov. Andrew Cuomo and Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, quickly called for Schneiderman's resignation. Cuomo on Tuesday praised Schneiderman's accusers for having the "courage" to "take on an attorney general they believe threatened them not to go public."

The developments brought a tart tweet from President Donald Trump's eldest son. Schneiderman had positioned himself as a leader of the liberal resistance to Trump and had warned in a tweet last year that no one was above the law.

"You were saying???" Donald Trump Jr. tweeted.

Late-night comedian Samantha Bee, whose "Full Frontal" show last year created images of Schneiderman as a comic-book superhero taking on Trump, distanced herself from him, demanding on Twitter that he take down a recent tweet of the pictures.

Schneiderman denied assaulting anyone or engaging in non-consensual sex — "a line I would not cross," said the divorced father of a daughter. Contradicting his accusers, he characterized his behavior as "role-playing and other consensual sexual activity."

In an interview with CNN, Ronan Farrow, co-author of the New Yorker story, disputed Schneiderman's account. The women, Farrow said, made clear "that this was not role-playing, that this was not 'Fifty Shades of Grey.' It wasn't in a gray area at all."

"This was activity that happened, in many cases, fully clothed, outside of a sexual context, during arguments," Farrow said. "In one case, a woman wasn't even in a relationship at all with him."

On Monday night, Schneiderman said he would resign at the close of business Tuesday because the claims will "effectively prevent me from leading the office's work at this critical time."

Among that work: investigating, at the governor's request, how the Manhattan district attorney's office handled a 2015 sexual assault complaint against Weinstein that resulted in no charges. Weinstein denies any non-consensual sex.

Tuesday evening, Cuomo appointed Nassau District Attorney Madeline Singas as a special prosecutor "to investigate, and if warranted, prosecute, any and all matters concerning the public allegations against Mr. Schneiderman."

Cuomo also directed Singas to investigate whether Schneiderman may have used his staff and office resources to "facilitate alleged abusive liaisons referenced in the article."

Cuomo said the special prosecutor will work with the other district attorneys, including the district attorney in Suffolk County on Long Island, where one of the women detailed alleged abuse by Schneiderman after a party in the Hamptons.

Cuomo said he appointed the special prosecutor in part to avoid any appearance of a conflict of interest with the attorney general's office, which is currently investigating the actions of the Manhattan district attorney's office and the New York Police Department in their handling of the Weinstein sex allegations.

Singas is the former head of the Special Victims Bureau at the Nassau district attorney's office.

Some of the alleged behavior took place in 2016 and earlier, according to The New Yorker story. One of the women said her ear was bloodied, while another said Schneiderman slapped her so hard she had a mark the next day.

The statute of limitations in New York for prosecuting someone is five years for a serious assault, two years for a lower-level one.

Before the scandal, Schneiderman had been running for a third four-year term in the fall.

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As a state senator before getting elected attorney general, Schneiderman chaired an inquiry that led to a colleague's expulsion over a domestic-violence conviction.

"The Senate cannot turn a blind eye to an act of domestic violence," declared Schneiderman, who went on to co-author a law that made choking someone a crime of its own.

During his tenure as attorney general, his office has touted pamphlets about anti-discrimination protections for domestic-violence victims, whom he has called "some of the most vulnerable residents of our state."

And in marking the 20th anniversary of the federal Violence Against Women Act in 2014, he noted that "violence against women remains a prevalent and dangerous problem across our nation.

"Protecting all Americans from harm, regardless of their relationship to their abuser or their gender," he added, "is and will remain one of the most important aspects of our ongoing pursuit of equal justice under law."

Associated Press writers Karen Matthews and Kiley Armstrong contributed to this report.

## **AP source: NASCAR memo: France family 'dedicated' to sport**

**By JENNA FRYER, AP Auto Racing Writer**

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — If NASCAR is for sale, the France family isn't saying.

An attempt to calm employees about the future of the struggling, family owned racing series came Tuesday from NASCAR President Brent Dewar, but his memo said only that there would be no comment on "industry rumors."

It's long whispered that NASCAR could be on the selling block and Chairman Brian France has become dramatically less visible since the end of last season. Most public duties are now handled by Dewar, who addressed employees about a report a day earlier that Goldman Sachs had been retained to explore a potential sale for the France family.

The France family, which owns a majority stake in the nation's top auto racing series, "remains dedicated to the long term growth of our sport," Dewar wrote in the memo obtained by The Associated Press from a person who shared it on condition of anonymity due to the sensitive nature of the topic.

The memo did not specifically address any possible deal by the France family.

"For over 70 years, the France family has worked hard to invest in the sport of NASCAR, including our recent acquisitions of ARCA," Dewar wrote, referring to the recent purchase of the Automobile Racing Series of America, a lower-tier stock car series that sometimes races in conjunction with NASCAR events.

NASCAR has seen ratings and attendance decline in recent seasons and several big-name sponsors have scaled back or pulled out. Lowe's, the only sponsor seven-time champion Jimmie Johnson has had in his 18-year career, is leaving at the end of the season. Home Depot, Target, Subway, Dollar General and scores of other sponsors have already exited racing.

Title sponsor Monster Energy signed just a one-year extension through 2019 and NASCAR has said it is re-evaluating its sponsorship structure.

Team owners seemed surprised by Monday's report from Reuters citing unidentified sources that the family wished to explore a sale. One owner, who spoke to AP only on condition of anonymity, said France firmly told owners in recent months the series was not for sale. Two weeks earlier, at Talladega Superspeedway, a different team owner told AP he believed the family would listen to offers for NASCAR.

Television ratings have continued to drop over the past decade and the retirements of Jeff Gordon, Dale Earnhardt Jr., Tony Stewart, Danica Patrick and Carl Edwards may have contributed to fans tuning out. But at-track attendance has also suffered and the three public companies that own tracks where NASCAR races are held have all reported attendance revenue declines.

Despite its woes, NASCAR remains "one of the strongest brand franchises in America," said Larry Chiagouris, a marketing professor at Pace University in New York. "Seeking to get a measure of its value now is a smart idea because we are witnessing the merging of entertainment and advertising assets at a pace not seen in several years. There could be many potential buyers, particularly media conglomerates

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and, yes, even some of the tech titans that could incorporate NASCAR into larger marketing and media programs and initiatives.”

Greg Portell, lead partner at global consulting firm A.T. Kearney, based in Chicago, said it was possible NASCAR’s owners are simply getting feedback on its value. He agreed that private firms or big entertainment companies would make the most sense as a buyer, “an AEG or an IMG.”

“From an outsider’s view looking at NASCAR, their value proposition to marketers for a long time was, we have great visibility, we have great enthusiastic fans and that’s why you should spend money,” he said.

“But in today’s world, the value is much more around the potential to really create lifestyle marketing. So those drivers and those athletes are no different than movie entertainers or musicians, rock stars, really, and if you look at the way those businesses have gone, companies are really trying to lock up those talents in 360-degree deals. So you can start seeing how they can monetize a driver’s likeness on social media, on product merchandise, not just on the brand that goes on the car.”

He added: “It would be interesting to someone who knows how to monetize stars, celebrity. ... It doesn’t come along very often that you can buy a business that has scale in a very competitive world. It’s not like they’re buying pro bowling or the darts league or lacrosse. Even Major League Soccer, you have to build that followership. Here, they already have a followership. They reach millions of consumers. And so the question is how do you shine that up a bit and take advantage of it in a new marketing environment that really hasn’t been tested by the current ownership.”

NASCAR was founded in 1948 by Bill France Sr., and handed down to his sons, Bill France Jr., and Jim. The current structure has Bill France Jr.’s son, Brian, running NASCAR, while his daughter, Lesa, controls International Speedway Corp., the sister company that owns many of the venues. Jim France runs the IMSA sports car series. Lesa France and Jim France remain largely behind the scenes, while Brian France has been the face of the family. The exact ownership stake has never been revealed.

Because of changes made under Brian France’s leadership— to the cars, the championship structure, the schedule, the rules, a television package that places some races on cable, and many other updates — the hardcore fan base views him as a polarizing figure.

Brian France has taken a progressive position on diversity and widening it in NASCAR, and he wanted to ban the Confederate flag from race tracks. But he also took a handful of drivers to a rally for President Donald Trump, and later sent employees a memo separating his views from company views.

Corbin Bridge, an associate at InvestmentBank.com, said the timing could be good for a sale with private equity funds eager to invest. Noting that many details are unknown, Bridge suggested a sale of NASCAR would fetch billions but fall short of the \$8 billion acquisition of Formula One by Liberty Media in 2016.

The impact of a sale could depend on whether the France family pulls out of NASCAR altogether, Bridge said.

“If it’s a complete 100 percent sale to another party and the family walks away, that could have some interesting ramifications that aren’t so positive,” he said. “If it’s a sale where the family stays on for a transition period or if select members stay on to help guide the company and the new owner, kind of helps take the company in new and exciting directions to grow the brand while staying loyal to its mission and current fan base, then it could be a pretty good play for the company and help them in the long run.”

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AP Sports Writers Eric Olson and John Zenor contributed to this report.

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More AP auto racing: <https://racing.ap.org>

## London calling: Yankees, Red Sox to play where soccer’s king

By **ROB HARRIS, AP Sports Writer**

LONDON (AP) — Taking in the London landmarks, Hal Steinbrenner turned his eyes from statues to more familiar sights.

“I walked through Trafalgar Square yesterday and saw a lot of Yankees hats,” the team owner told The

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Associated Press. "I don't think it had anything to do with today."

Tuesday was launch day for Major League Baseball's foray into Europe, with two games between the New York Yankees and Boston Red Sox set for June 2019 at London's Olympic Stadium.

The Yankees caps spotted by Steinbrenner as he wandered by Nelson's Column was a reminder that in so many parts of the world his team is more of a fashion brand than a 27-time champion.

The aim is to change that with regular-season games in London, moving baseball closer to its European fans and a new audience.

"It's about introducing the sport by bringing the players," Steinbrenner said, "by bringing the greatest rivalry in baseball here."

It won't be a one-off excursion into London for MLB. The intention is to emulate the NFL and NBA and send fixtures every year to the British capital.

After the trial run next year — the Red Sox and Yankees will play on June 29 and 30 — MLB is also committed to playing in London in 2020 as part of a long-term strategy to establish a footprint in the city.

"We hope this series will be the beginning of a relationship with London that persists and a continuation of increasing exposure for Major League Baseball in Europe," Commissioner Rob Manfred said Tuesday.

The NFL is so entrenched in London now that Shahid Khan has lodged a bid with the English Football Association to buy Wembley Stadium, where his Jacksonville Jaguars have been playing annually since 2013.

MLB is heading to a stadium that has been a drain on the British taxpayer since it was built for the 2012 Olympics and then reconstructed to accommodate English Premier League club West Ham as a tenant. The running track around the field that makes the venue seem ill-suited for soccer allows MLB to configure it for baseball.

"It's very important when it's not the football season we try to generate revenues that will balance the books," London Mayor Sadiq Khan said.

The stadium will have a capacity of 55,000 for baseball.

"It's going to be a different crowd," Red Sox manager Alex Cora said before the teams played each other Tuesday night in New York. "It should be fun. The family is going to go and we're going to have a blast and the players, they're going to experience something different.

"Everybody knows about the rivalry and how much it means over here, so they're going to have a taste of the rivalry over there in London."

England is already a second home to John Henry, the owner of the Red Sox and Liverpool of the Premier League. Talks between Henry and Steinbrenner began more than two years ago about taking the Red Sox-Yankees rivalry across the Atlantic.

"All of us here today look forward to hearing the cry 'Play Ball' in London," Henry said at the MLB launch at a London cinema off Regent Street. Boston will be the home team for both games.

By playing in London in June during the Premier League offseason, baseball is muscling into cricket territory.

"We think there is an affinity with cricket," Manfred said. "There's a lot of carry-over of that fan base into baseball."

After all, the 2014 MLB season began at the Sydney Cricket Ground in front of Australian fans.

"I think particularly they liked the fact that our foul balls get to stay in the stands and hopefully that will be popular here as well," Manfred said. "Usurping cricket is a real challenge, but we would like to think of it as a complimentary effort. The same sort of fans might be attracted."

The bane of the British summer, as cricket fans experience too often, is rain wiping out play. And rain would certainly spell trouble for the MLB games in London.

"We will pray we actually get the games in," Manfred said. "Because of the scheduling, rain will be difficult for us in the event we get bad weather. ... If we lose a game it would have to be made up in the United States."

Still, Manfred sees London as a "permanent home" for a franchise one day.

"When you play 162 times in 187 days, travel is an issue," he said. "The world continues to get smaller. As travel gets better, we hope it's a possibility."



The NFL appears no closer to basing a team in Britain despite so much chatter since regular-season games were brought to London in 2007. There have been 18 games at Wembley and three at Twickenham. Three more NFL games are scheduled for this year, including one at the new stadium of Premier League club Tottenham.

The NBA and NHL have also held regular-season games in London, and now MLB is getting in on the act. "I've never been to London, so I think it's pretty cool that we're going across the pond. I like that," Yankees manager Aaron Boone said. "A chance to spread our game. I think that's awesome."

More AP baseball: <https://apnews.com/tag/MLBbaseball>

## Syrian media report Israeli attack near capital Damascus

By ZEINA KARAM, Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Syrian state-run media said Israel struck a military outpost near the capital Damascus on Tuesday, saying its air defenses intercepted and destroyed two of the incoming missiles. The reported attack came an hour after President Donald Trump announced he was withdrawing from the Iran nuclear deal, calling Tehran a main exporter of terrorism in the region.

The official news agency SANA said without elaborating that the attack occurred in the countryside in Kisweh, just south of Damascus, an area known to have numerous Syrian army bases. Syrian TV earlier reported large explosions in the area.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the missiles targeted depots and rocket launchers that likely belonged to Iran's elite Revolutionary Guards in Kisweh, killing nine people. The group, which closely monitors the Syria war through a network of activists on the ground, said it was not clear whether those killed were Revolutionary Guard members or members of a pro-Iranian militia. The report could not be independently confirmed.

An official with the Iran-led regional alliance supporting Syrian President Bashar Assad said the strike targeted a Syrian army position but killed a Syrian man and his wife who happened to be passing by in their car. He said there were jets in the sky but it was likely the position was targeted by surface-to-surface missiles from the Golan Heights.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to give official statements.

There was no immediate comment from Israel, which almost never confirms or denies airstrikes in Syria. Such strikes have become more frequent recently, amid soaring tensions between regional archenemies Israel and Iran.

Iran has vowed to retaliate to recent Israeli strikes in Syria targeting Iranian outposts in the country. They include an attack last month on Syria's T4 air base in Homs province that killed seven Iranian military personnel, for which Tehran has vowed to retaliate. On April 30, Israel was said to have struck government outposts in northern Syria, killing more than a dozen pro-government fighters, many of them Iranians.

Israel's military, however, said Tuesday its forces were on high alert near its border with Syria after spotting Iranian activity and was urging civilians in the Golan Heights near Syria to prepare bomb shelters.

Later, the Israeli military said in a statement it had called up some reservists but did not elaborate.

The military directive Tuesday came "following the identification of irregular activity of Iranian forces in Syria." It said defense systems have been deployed.

The military said it is prepared for "various scenarios" and warned "any aggression against Israel will be met with a severe response."

Israel has warned it will not tolerate Tehran establishing itself militarily on its doorstep in Syria.

Associated Press writers Albert Aji in Damascus, Syria, Bassem Mroue in Beirut and Ian Deitch in Jerusalem contributed to this report.

## Congress wants review of military child-on-child sex abuse

By **JUSTIN PRITCHARD** and **REESE DUNKLIN**, Associated Press

Congress has asked its watchdog agency to investigate the Pentagon's handling of child-on-child sex assaults on U.S. military bases following reporting by The Associated Press that detailed how failures of justice leave victims with little support and offenders little consequence.

The AP's investigation, which documented nearly 700 cases worldwide over 10 years, has prompted legislation and demands for answers by members of Congress. But the recent request that the Government Accountability Office get involved means a more transparent review of an opaque system is likely.

The top Republican and a top Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee asked the GAO to review the handling of child-on-child sexual assault reports at Pentagon-run schools that educate about 70,000 military kids, as well as how military investigators and lawyers seek justice for cases they cannot prosecute.

Reps. Mac Thornberry of Texas and Jackie Speier of California wrote in an April 25 letter that they worried "the investigation and adjudication" of student sex assaults at Pentagon-run schools "may not be consistent across the department."

The AP found that even though students at Pentagon schools have fewer legal protections than their public school peers, the system hasn't had a specific policy for responding to child-on-child sexual violence and hasn't accurately tracked incidents.

House committee members are considering requiring that the Pentagon's school system improve its tracking of juvenile misconduct as part of the National Defense Authorization Act, which the committee is scheduled to revise Wednesday. Their Senate counterparts are drafting more expansive legislation.

The House letter also requested information about how the military handles reports of other types of child abuse. The accountability office is not required to accept requests and is still reviewing this one, but spokesman Chuck Young wrote in an email Tuesday it was "likely" GAO would take it up. Thornberry and Speier requested a preliminary briefing by Feb. 1, 2019.

With at least four potential legislative fixes being drafted, military officials who have briefed members of Congress and their staffs in recent weeks have made clear that they want to handle the issue on their own and do not desire any new legislation.

The Pentagon has not responded to repeated questions from the AP asking whether its schools, criminal investigators or lawyers have made any changes since AP's investigation published in March. On Tuesday, a spokesman at the Office of the Secretary of Defense declined comment.

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If you have a tip, comment or story to share about child-on-child sexual assault on U.S. military bases, please email: [schoolhousesexassault@ap.org](mailto:schoolhousesexassault@ap.org). See AP's entire package of stories here: <https://www.ap-news.com/tag/HiddenVictims>

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Contact the reporters on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/lalanewsman> or <https://twitter.com/ReeseDunklin>

## China cutting US soybean purchases in face of tariffs threat

By **CHRISTOPHER RUGABER** and **DAKE KANG**, Associated Press Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) — With the threat of tariffs and counter-tariffs between Washington and Beijing looming, Chinese buyers are canceling orders for U.S. soybeans, a trend that could deal a blow to American farmers if it continues.

At the same time, farmers in China are being encouraged to plant more soy, apparently to help offset any shortfall from the United States.

Beijing has included soybeans on a list of \$50 billion of U.S. exports on which it has said it would impose 25 percent tariffs if the United States follows through on its threats to impose the same level of tariffs on the same value of Chinese goods. The U.S. tariffs could kick in later this month; China would likely

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retaliate soon after.

It can take a month or more for soybean shipments to travel from the U.S. to China. Any soybeans on their way to China now could be hit by the tariff by the time they arrive.

"The Chinese aren't willing to buy US soybeans with a 25 percent tax hanging over their head," said Dan Basse, president of AgResource, an agricultural research and advisory firm. "You just don't want the risk."

China typically buys most of its soybeans from South American nations such as Brazil and Argentina during spring and early summer. It shifts to U.S. soybeans in the fall. As a result, for now, the cutbacks from the United States are relatively small.

But should they persist, it could cause real pain to U.S. farmers. Roughly 60 percent of U.S. soybeans are shipped to China.

There might also be a political impact: Three of the top five soybean-exporting states — Iowa, Indiana and Nebraska — voted for President Donald Trump in 2016.

Illinois, the top soybean exporter, and Minnesota, the third-largest, backed Hillary Clinton.

Basse said that it has been roughly three weeks since China has made any major soybean purchases, an unusually long delay.

Some Chinese buyers might be showing support for their government in the trade dispute by turning away U.S. soybeans, Basse said. The dispute may also make it seem too risky to buy from the United States over the long run.

"The United States could lose the reliable supplier label that we've had these many years," Basse said.

Data from the U.S. government data show that sales of soybeans have fallen from about 255,000 metric tons in the first week of April, when the trade dispute began, to just 7,900 in the week that ended April 26.

Cancellations have also jumped, to more than 140,000 metric tons in the week ending April 26. In the same week last year, there were no canceled sales at all.

Some analysts argue that the shifts aren't yet particularly significant. China buys most of its soybeans from the United States in the late summer and fall, and then switches to South American sources, mainly Brazil and Argentina, in the spring. So the current market activity doesn't necessarily reflect the pattern that would occur during the main buying season.

"These numbers we're talking about are pretty minor," said John Baize, an economist for the U.S. Soybean Export Council.

The U.S. ships about 35 million metric tons of soybeans to China a year, Baize said. China usually imports about 100 million tons a year and can't import enough from other countries, he said, to abandon the United States as a source.

"Where's China going to buy its beans?" Baize asked.

That may be true in the short run. But Basse suggests that Brazil has enough land that could be used for soybean cultivation that it could soon mostly replace the United States as a supplier to China.

And if the Chinese market were to be closed to U.S. farmers, they might be able to sell some portion of their soybeans to other markets. Baize said that huge multinational companies, such as Cargill and ADM, might, for example, sell more U.S. soybeans to Europe, where they wouldn't face any tariffs, though this likely wouldn't make up for the loss of the Chinese market.

At the same time, China is looking more to its own farmers. Since China announced its potential tariffs on U.S. soy in April, the government has encouraged farmers to cultivate more soybeans. Beginning this month, Chinese farmers say, Beijing reduced corn subsidies and raised annual soybean subsidies from 2550 yuan (\$400) per hectare to 3000 yuan (\$470) or more per hectare in major soybean-producing provinces in northeast China.

An adjustment had already been planned to help draw down China's substantial corn stockpiles, so the change wasn't necessarily aimed at U.S. soy growers, analysts say.

But the subsidy adjustment did come with political undertones. Officials in major soybean-producing provinces were describing the promotion of local soybeans as "the most important political task in agricultural production at present." Heilongjiang in northeast China announced a pilot project to plant soybeans

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on over 100,000 new hectares, with an extra 2,250 yuan (\$353) subsidy per hectare.

The moves are prompting farmers like Liu Cong to focus more on growing soy. Liu says he used most of his land to grow corn last year but this year is planting more soybeans.

"This is encouraging for farmers," he said in a phone interview. "We're more motivated."

Zhang Xiaoping, China director for the U.S. Soybean Export Council, says that Chinese buyers have been canceling soybean purchases of last year's U.S. soybean harvest because of the threat of tariffs.

"The buyers literally stopped buying from the U.S.," Zhang said. "Exporters cannot find any buyers in China."

Kang reported from Beijing. AP researchers Shanshan Wang in Beijing and Fu Ting in Shanghai and Staff Writer Paul Wiseman in Washington also contributed to this report.

## Oil jumps, Asian shares mixed after US leaves Iran deal

By **YOUKYUNG LEE, AP Business Writer**

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Oil prices surged while Asian stock markets traded mixed after President Donald Trump announced the United States will withdraw from a 2015 nuclear accord with Iran and re-impose sanctions. Resulting rising oil prices would have a mixed impact across the region, driving prices higher for some countries that rely heavily on imports, such as Japan, while boosting revenues for exporters such as Indonesia.

KEEPING SCORE: Japan's Nikkei 225 dropped 0.4 percent to 22,412.96 and South Korea's Kospi retreated 0.1 percent to 2,447.02. Hong Kong's Hang Seng index added 0.5 percent to 30,552.57 while the Shanghai Composite Index dipped 0.1 percent to 3,159.22. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 was unchanged at 6,092.60. Stocks rose in Taiwan and Thailand but fell in Singapore and Indonesia, they were lower.

IRAN DEAL: The U.S. decision to leave the Iran nuclear deal, which required Iran to curb its nuclear enrichment program in exchange for relief from international sanctions, will be followed by a restoration of harsh sanctions aimed at limiting Iran's ability to sell oil or conduct other overseas business. Now Iran, the world's fifth-largest oil producer, will have to decide whether to follow the U.S. and withdraw or try to salvage what's left with the European countries.

ANALYST'S TAKE: "Geopolitical risks are heightened especially if Iran retaliates, but it could wait and see if the deal is completely undone or if there is scope for it to continue without the U.S.," Mizuho Bank said in a daily commentary. With Germany, France and Britain saying they are committed to the accord, the European countries will "continue importing oil from Iran, albeit having to side-step the U.S. banking system for trade purposes," it said.

OIL: Prices of oil fell sharply before Trump's announcement but rebounded, with benchmark U.S. crude oil jumping \$1.58 to \$70.64 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract fell \$1.67, or 2.4 percent, to \$69.06 per barrel on Tuesday. Brent crude, which is used to price international oils, gained \$1.85 to \$76.70 per barrel in London. It lost \$1.32, or 1.7 percent, to close at \$74.85 per barrel on Tuesday.

WALL STREET: Amid uncertainty over Iran, U.S. stocks finished flat on Tuesday. The S&P 500 index dipped 0.03 percent to 2,671.92. The Dow Jones industrial average gained 0.01 percent to 24,360.21. The Nasdaq was flat at 7,266.90.

CURRENCIES: The dollar rose to 109.47 yen from 109.13 yen while the euro fell to \$1.1857 from \$1.1864.



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## Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, May 9, the 129th day of 2018. There are 236 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On May 9, 1958, "Vertigo," Alfred Hitchcock's eerie thriller starring James Stewart and Kim Novak, premiered in San Francisco, the movie's setting.

On this date:

In 1754, a political cartoon in Benjamin Franklin's Pennsylvania Gazette depicted a snake cut into eight pieces, each section representing a part of the American colonies; the caption read, "JOIN, or DIE."

In 1814, the Jane Austen novel "Mansfield Park" was first published in London.

In 1914, President Woodrow Wilson, acting on a joint congressional resolution, signed a proclamation designating the second Sunday in May as Mother's Day.

In 1918, CBS newsman Mike Wallace was born Myron Leon Wallace in Brookline, Massachusetts.

In 1926, Americans Richard Byrd and Floyd Bennett supposedly became the first men to fly over the North Pole. (However, U.S. scholars announced in 1996 that their examination of Byrd's flight diary suggested he had turned back 150 miles short of his goal.)

In 1936, Italy annexed Ethiopia.

In 1945, with World War II in Europe at an end, Soviet forces liberated Czechoslovakia from Nazi occupation. U.S. officials announced that a midnight entertainment curfew was being lifted immediately.

In 1961, in a speech to the National Association of Broadcasters, Federal Communications Commission Chairman Newton N. Minow decried the majority of television programming as a "vast wasteland."

In 1978, the bullet-riddled body of former Italian prime minister Aldo Moro, who had been abducted by the Red Brigades, was found in an automobile in the center of Rome.

In 1980, 35 people were killed when a freighter rammed the Sunshine Skyway Bridge over Tampa Bay in Florida, causing a 1,400-foot section of the southbound span to collapse.

In 1994, South Africa's newly elected parliament chose Nelson Mandela to be the country's first black president.

In 2012, President Barack Obama declared his unequivocal support for same-sex marriage in a historic announcement that came three days after Vice President Joe Biden spoke in favor of such unions on NBC's "Meet the Press."

Ten years ago: Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama picked up the backing of nine superdelegates, all but erasing Hillary Rodham Clinton's once-imposing lead. Jury selection began in the Chicago trial of R&B superstar R. Kelly, accused of videotaping himself having sex with a girl as young as 13. (Kelly was later acquitted on all counts.) Journalist-feminist Nuala O'Faolain, who gained international fame with her outspoken memoir "Are You Somebody?" in 1966, died in Dublin, Ireland, at age 68.

Five years ago: Afghan President Hamid Karzai (HAH'-mihd KAHR'-zeye), who had irked Washington with his frequent criticism of U.S. military operations in his country, said his government was ready to let the U.S. have nine bases across Afghanistan after the withdrawal of most foreign forces in 2014. A 72-foot-long, high-tech catamaran sailboat capsized in San Francisco Bay while practicing for the America's Cup races, killing English Olympic gold medalist Andrew "Bart" Simpson. Malcolm Shabazz, 28, grandson of civil rights activist Malcolm X, died in Mexico City of blunt trauma injuries sustained in a bar dispute.

One year ago: President Donald Trump abruptly fired FBI Director James Comey, ousting the nation's top law enforcement official in the midst of an FBI investigation into whether Trump's campaign had ties to Russia's meddling in the election that sent him to the White House. The Senate confirmed Dr. Scott Gottlieb as commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration, 57-42. Moon Jae-in declared victory in South Korea's presidential election after his two main rivals conceded. Actor Michael Parks ("Then Came Bronson") died in Los Angeles at age 77.

Today's Birthdays: Actor-writer Alan Bennett is 84. Actor Albert Finney is 82. Actress-turned-politician

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Glenda Jackson is 82. Producer-director James L. Brooks is 81. Musician Sonny Curtis (Buddy Holly and the Crickets) is 81. Singer Tommy Roe is 76. Singer-musician Richie Furay (Buffalo Springfield and Poco) is 74. Actress Candice Bergen is 72. Pop singer Clint Holmes is 72. Actor Anthony Higgins is 71. Singer Billy Joel is 69. Blues singer-musician Bob Margolin is 69. Rock singer-musician Tom Petersson (Cheap Trick) is 68. Actress Alley Mills is 67. Actress Amy Hill is 65. Actress Wendy Crewson is 62. Actor John Corbett is 57. Singer Dave Gahan (GAHN) (Depeche Mode) is 56. Actress Sonja Sohn is 54. EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt is 50. Rapper Ghostface Killah is 48. Country musician Mike Myerson (Heartland) is 47. Actor Chris Diamantopoulos (dy-uh-MAN'toh-POO'lehs) is 43. Rhythm-and-blues singer Tamia (tuh-MEE'ah) is 43. Rock musician Dan Regan (Reel Big Fish) is 41. Actor Daniel Franzese is 40. Rock singer Pierre Bouvier (Simple Plan) is 39. Actress Rosario Dawson is 39. Rock singer Andrew W.K. is 39. Figure skater Angela Nikodinov is 38. Actress Rachel Boston is 36. TV personality Audrina Patridge is 33. Actress Grace Gummer is 32.

Thought for Today: "A watch is always too fast or too slow. I cannot be dictated to by a watch." — From "Mansfield Park" by Jane Austen (1775-1817).