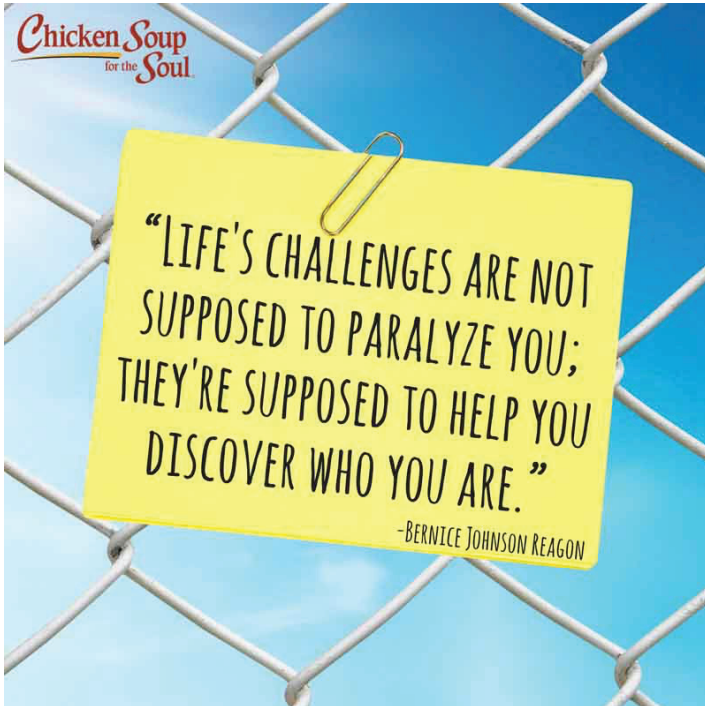


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## Midwest Masonry & concrete Pumping

Greg Heilman, owner

405 E 1st Ave., Groton

Greg: 253/929-9137

Mike: 605/492-7041

midwestmasonry1@yahoo.com



## Carlson Thank You

THANK YOU TO all who contributed to the gift box at Lori's Pharmacy. I received 2 cutting boards, potholders, serving bowl with spoons, picture frame, 2 mugs, 2 glass pans and a pot holder/towel set. Thank you again so much for thinking of me at this special time in my life.

Holly Carlson

## Lewandowski Bridal Shower

Come and Go Bridal Shower honoring Bride to Be, Sarah Lewandowski, Saturday, June 2, 2018 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church – Groton. Lance Dennert and Sarah are registered at Bed, Bath and Beyond and Target.

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

## ABERDEEN AREA MENS CHORUS

The annual spring concert of the Aberdeen Area Mens Chorus will be at 3 p.m., Mother's Day, at the Aberdeen Presbyterian Church. Lee Schinkel is a member of that chorus.

## Service Notice: Orville Schaller

Services for Orville Schaller, 89, of Groton will be 10:00 a.m., Monday, May 14th at St. John's Lutheran Church, Groton. Rev. Craig Grams will officiate. Burial will follow at Sunset Memorial Gardens, Aberdeen.

Visitation will be held at the church on Sunday from 5-7 p.m. with a prayer service at 6:00 p.m.

Orville passed away May 10, 2018 at Groton Care and Rehabilitation Center.

## Fun Facts: Mother's Day - May 13

### History - How It All Started



- The first Mother's Day was organized by Anna Jarvis on May 10, 1908, in Grafton, West Virginia, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
- It was such a success across the country that Jarvis asked Congress to set aside a day to honor mothers.
- In 1914, Congress made the second Sunday in May Mother's Day!

What did the mother rope say to her child?  
Don't be knotty.

### The Masterminds-Education

- **More than 3 out of 10 (33%)** The percentage of women giving birth in the last year who had a bachelor's degree or higher.
- **Almost 9 out of 10 (87%)** The percentage of women giving birth in the last year who had completed high school or higher.



### Celebrating Mom With...

**Flowers—13,419** The number of florists nationwide in 2015.

**A Special Card—14,162** The number of employees of greeting card publishers in 2015.

**Perfume—16,345** The number of cosmetics, beauty supplies, and perfume stores nationwide in 2015. Perfume is a popular gift given on Mother's Day.

**A Piece of Jewelry—22,160** The number of jewelry stores nationwide in 2015—the place to purchase necklaces, earrings, and other timeless pieces for mom.



### Number of Children

For all females age 15 and over:

- 31% - No children
- 16% - One child
- 26% - Two children
- 27% - Three or more children



### First-Time Mothers

Age at first birth for females age 15 and over in 2014:

- 22% - Under age 20
- 37% - Age 20-24
- 24% - Age 25-29
- 12% - Age 30-34
- 4% - Age 35-39
- 1% - Age 40 and over



Sources: Data on this page come from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2016 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, 2015 County Business Patterns, and 2014 Survey of Income and Program Participation, Fertility Research Brief.

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## Be culturally adventurous this summer By Jim Speirs, Executive Director, Arts South Dakota

Summer is a great season to discover something new in the arts, to get away from your normal routine and be culturally adventurous. One of the great things about living in South Dakota is that we have so many ways to explore new artistic and cultural pathways.

My aunt decided that her school clarinet had gathered dust long enough, so she got it back into working order, starting playing and wound up joining the community band. It was challenging at first, but now she loves making music as a part of her life again. It was a bold, fun thing for her to do—and you can do it, too.

If you've always wanted to experiment with painting, there are plein air outdoor events all over the state this summer. You don't have to be a professional artist, you just need paints, a brush and the enthusiasm to get out there and see nature in a whole new way. You'll be welcomed by a group of people who love making art together—and sharing our state's natural beauty.

If your adventurous side longs to taste new foods, kick up your heels in ethnic dances and learn more about a different culture, South Dakota in the summer is the place to be. The rhythmic excitement of our state's many wacipis, or powwows and the small town charm of heritage festivals celebrating Scandinavian, German or Czech traditions enliven the warm weather months and welcome visitors throughout the state.

For a day filled with a wide variety of arts experiences, take in an arts in the park event. From Spearfish to Brookings and Sisseton to Custer, you'll find gatherings of artists, musicians and food for the whole family. Take in a play, check out an art exhibit, live it up at a street dance—it's all there waiting for you this summer in South Dakota!

For a calendar of arts events or to learn more about the arts in South Dakota, join us online at [www.Arts-SouthDakota.org](http://www.Arts-SouthDakota.org).



### 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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## Stange, Doeden win at NEC Track Meet

Groton won in three divisions at the Northeast Conference Track Meet held Friday, May 11, at Webster. Stange won the triple jump with a 32-10.5 distance. Jonathan Doeden won two events. After placing second in the prelims of the 110m Hurdles, he shed half a second off of his prelim time to win the event, 14.87; He also won the 300m hurdles with a time of 42.20.

Seniors on the team are Harleigh Stange, Gia Gengerke, Alex Stange, Jessica Bjerke and Luke Thorson.

### Girl's Division

**Team Points:** 1, Milbank, 156; 2, Aberdeen Roncalli, 154.83; 3, Hamlin, 137; 4, Groton Area, 79.66; 5, Webster Area, 69.5; 6, Redfield-Doland, 52; 7, Deuel, 44; 8, Sisseton, 24; 9, Clark/Willow Lake, 21; 10, Britton-Hecla, 1.

**100m Hurdles:** Cassandra Townsend, 19.74.

**300m Hurdles:** Cassandra Townsend, 1:00.14.

**100m Dash:** Prelims: 5, Harleigh Stange, 12.88; Tiara DeHoet, 15.06. Finals: 3, Harleigh Stange, 13.12.

**200m Dash:** 6, Gia Gengerke, 28.16; Tiara DeHoet, 32.76.

**400m Dash:** 8, Eliza Wanner, 1:08.24; Payton Maine, 1:10.02.

**800m Run:** 8, Amelie Hartwig, 2:44.62; Desiree Blevins, 3:35.73.

**1600m Run:** Alex Stange, 6:43.64; Desiree Blevins, 7:25.69.

**400m Relay:** 6, Groton (Kenzie McInerney, Lina-Marie Suhr, Nicole Marzahn, Amelie Hartwig), 56.86.

**800m Relay:** 3, Groton (Harleigh Stange, Payton Maine, Eliza Wanner, Gia Gengerke), 1:55.97.

**1600m Relay:** 6, Groton (Eliza Wanner, Kenzie McInerney, Lina-Marie Suhr, Amelie Hartwig), 4:42.94.

**3200m Relay:** 5, Groton (Amelie Hartwig, Lina-Marie Suhr, Riley Gengerke, Alex Stange), 11:34.31.

**1600m Sprint Medley:** 7, Groton (Eliza Wanner, Kenzie McInerney, Lina-Marie Suhr, Gia Gengerke), 5:25.35.

**High Jump:** 8 (tie), Nicole Marzahn, 4-4; 8 (tie), Gia Gengerke, 4-4; Alex Stange, 4-0.

**Long Jump:** 2, Harleigh Stange, 15-7.75; 4, Gia Gengerke, 15-02; 8, Nicole Marzahn, 15-2.5.

**Triple Jump:** 1, Harleigh Stange, 32-10.5; Nicole Marzahn, 29-2.5; Tiara DeHoet, 26-1.25.

**Discus:** 2, Jennie Doeden, 111-5; 3, Jessica Bjerke, 109-11; 8, Kaycie Hawkins, 85-10.

**Shot Put:** 3, Jessica Bjerke, 32-3; 4, Jennie Doeden, 31-11; Kaycie Hawkins, 28-7.5.

### Boy's Division

**Team Points:** 1, Milbank, 147.5; 2 (tie), Aberdeen Roncalli and Webster Area, 101; 4, Hamlin, 97; 5, Clark/Willow Lake, 84; 6, Britton-Hecla, 50; 7, Deuel, 47.5; 8 (tie), Groton Area and Sisseton, 40; 10, Redfield-Doland, 33.

**110m Hurdles:** Prelims: 2, Jonathan Doeden, 15.27; Finals: 1, Jonathan Doeden, 14.87.

**300m Hurdles:** 1, Jonathan Doeden, 42.20.

**100m Dash:** Prelims: Thomas Cranford, 11.83; Darien Shabazz, 12.55.

**200m Dash:** Thomas Cranford, 24.18.

**400m Dash:** Douglas Heminger, 1:05.45.

**800m Run:** Isaac Smith, 2:23.49; Mitchell Koens, 2:24.05; Douglas Heminger, 2:48.55.

**1600m Run:** Isaac Smith, 5:26.84; Douglas Heminger, 6:11.63.

**400m Relay:** 5, Groton (Jonathan Doeden, Lucas Hinman, Austin Jones, Thomas Cranford), 46.95.

**800m Relay:** 7, Groton (Trevor Harry, Darien Shabazz, Austin Jones, Thomas Cranford), 1:43.61.

**3200m Relay:** 7, Groton (Isaac Smith, Jackson Cogley, Jacob Lewandowski, Mitchell Koens), 9:47.35.

**1600m Sprint Relay:** 7, Groton (Trevor Harry, Darien Shabazz, Jackson Cogley, Jacob Lewandowski), 4:40.85.

**High Jump:** Austin Jones, 5-2; Jackson Cogley, 5-0.

**Long Jump:** 6, Jonathan Doeden, 18-9.5; Trevor Harry, 17:04; Paxton Bonn, 15-7.

**Triple Jump:** Trevor Harry, 32-10.5; Austin Jones, 32-3; Paxton Bonn, 32-0.5.

**Discus:** 4, Luke Thorson, 116-3; Caleb Ferney, 95-0.

**Shot Put:** 7, Luke Thorson, 38-7.25; Caleb Ferney, 35-8.

## Emma and Liam Top Social Security's 2017 Most Popular Baby Names

### Liam is Number One for the First Time, Michael Out of Top 10

Emma and Liam are America's most popular baby names for 2017. This marks the first time Liam has bested the boys, beating Noah for the top spot, and the fourth straight year for Emma. Liam first crawled into the top 10 in 2012 and has been reaching for the highest honor ever since. In other huge baby name news, Michael has been bumped from the top 10 for the first time since World War II, landing at number 12 this year. Emily also fell out of the top 10 for the first time since 1990. There are several new names in the top 10--Amelia and Evelyn make the list--Amelia for the first time and Evelyn for the first time since 1915. These traditional names show parents are keeping up the trend of naming daughters after grandmothers. Logan and Oliver are new for the boys, both making their first appearance on the list.

Here are the top 10 boys and girls names for 2017:

Boys:	1) Liam	Girls:	1) Emma
	2) Noah		2) Olivia
	3) William		3) Ava
	4) James		4) Isabella
	5) Logan		5) Sophia
	6) Benjamin		6) Mia
	7) Mason		7) Charlotte
	8) Elijah		8) Amelia
	9) Oliver		9) Evelyn
	10) Jacob		10) Abigail

For all the top baby names of 2017, and to find where your own name ranks, go to Social Security's website, [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov).

Acting Commissioner Nancy A. Berryhill encourages everyone to visit the agency's website to enjoy the baby names list and create a my Social Security account at [www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount). my Social Security is a personalized online account that people can use beginning in their working years and continuing through to the time they receive Social Security benefits.

Social Security beneficiaries can have instant access to their benefit verification letter, payment history, and complete earnings record by establishing a my Social Security account. Beneficiaries also can change their address, start or change direct deposit information, and print a replacement SSA-1099 online. People receiving benefits can request a replacement Medicare card online.

Individuals age 18 and older who are not receiving benefits can also sign up for a my Social Security account to get their personalized online Social Security Statement. The online Statement provides workers with secure and convenient access to their Social Security earnings and benefit information, and estimates of future benefits they can use to plan for their retirement.

The agency began compiling the baby name list in 1997, with names dating back to 1880. At the time of a child's birth, parents supply the name to the agency when applying for a child's Social Security card, thus making Social Security America's source for the most popular baby names.

Each year, the list reveals the effect of pop-culture on naming trends. This year reality television seems to have influenced Mom and Dad.

Ensley was the fastest riser on the girls' list, moving 1,461 spots to number 965, from number 2,426 in 2016. Spring has sprung, and Wells (meaning "spring") had the biggest bloom in popularity for the boys, moving over 500 spots in 2017 from number 1,419 to 915. Perhaps his parents are fans of the hit TV show "The Bachelorette" where one of the popular contestants was named Wells. Does this mean more bachelors named Wells at future rose ceremonies?

In a clear nod to the popularity of the First Lady of the United States, new parents chose the name Melania at an increasing rate in 2017.

It looks like new parents are "Keeping up with the Kardashians" as the name Dream rose 840 spots in 2017. Fan or not, many people know Rob Kardashian and Angela White, aka Blac Chyna, named their daughter Dream in late 2016. For the boys, another fast riser was Nova, who may have gotten his popularity from all those Villanova Wildcats basketball fans naming their sons in celebration of the 2016 NCAA Men's Basketball Champions.



## No Matter the Call

I am incredibly grateful for the work of South Dakota's law enforcement officers. The job has never been easy, but with violent crime on the rise, a growing drug epidemic, and a looming mental health crisis, more is being asked of our men and women in blue than ever before.

Between 2005 and 2015, South Dakota's violent crime rate doubled. Drug arrests are up. Aggravated assault and domestic violence is increasing. Sioux Falls has become more dangerous than Fargo, North Dakota, or Omaha, Nebraska. And people are feeling the impact. I hear all the time how our communities just don't feel like they did 15 years ago; they feel less safe.

When President Trump was sworn in last year, he brought his profound respect for law enforcement into the Oval Office. Together, we've increased support for those in blue. For instance, we expanded Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) grants, which are used for hiring and training police officers and have provided \$13 million in funding to South Dakota law enforcement in the last five years.

In South Dakota, much of the drain on our resources comes from a growing drug epidemic. In recent months, Governor Daugaard declared that meth use in South Dakota was at epidemic levels. Opioid abuse is on the rise as well. While I believe prevention is key, I introduced a set of bills to strengthen families during drug addiction treatment and amplify efforts to prevent the child abuse and neglect that can result from drug use.

Additionally, I'm working to cut off drugs at their source. President Trump's border wall is critical to stemming illegal drug trafficking, and I've voted to fully fund his proposal. I'm also working on legislation to crack down on Mexican drug traffickers and those who help facilitate their illicit activities at the border.

Moreover, we need to fix the quirks in the law that make law enforcement jobs harder, which is what my CUFF Act intends to do. The bill is commonsense: it prohibits individuals with outstanding felony warrants or parole violations from receiving certain Social Security benefits. It's not only unfair to ask taxpayers to pay people who are fleeing the law, but it's self-defeating to subsidize someone's attempt to shirk law enforcement. As Staci Ackerman, Executive Director of the South Dakota Sheriffs' Association said, the bill would "limit [a wanted felon or parole violator's] ability to avoid justice using taxpayer dollars to evade capture." This bill was passed in the House and is awaiting a vote in the Senate.

Each of these tools aim to help law enforcement do their job better and more safely. This, in turn, keeps our communities safer. As we mark National Police Week on May 13 through 19, I ask that you find a way to thank the heroes who protect us every day as well as their families, who often wait anxiously for their loved one to return home each shift, not knowing what situations they faced that day.

Finally, on behalf of my family and I, please know that we're praying for you and for your safety. I admire the work of our law enforcement officers and the courage required to respond no matter the call.

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## Today in Weather History

May 12, 1984: An F3 tornado wiped out seven farms, crippled fifteen others, killed livestock and scattered several cars and machinery in its path. The tornado first touched down seven miles north and one mile east of Clark and moved southeast through the southwestern sections of Henry until it dissipated at Grover in Codrington County. The path of destruction began on a farm where two barns, a steel grain bin, and a pole barn were demolished, and machinery was damaged. As the tornado moved further southeast, it struck the southwest sections of Henry and split into two tornadoes that moved in two different directions. One went to the northeast that inflicted no damaged and dissipated while the other went southeast that continued its destruction path to Grover. Small hail, accumulation to fifteen inches deep, was experienced at Henry and tornado damage included broken windows, numerous homes, and three trailer homes were demolished. Along the path, 80 power poles and several miles of power lines were lost, affecting the power to over 1,000 people. A small plane, southwest of Garden City, was wrapped around a pole.

1760: Ben Franklin was the first person to identify nor'easters. In a letter on this date to Alexander Small of London, Franklin described an experience that happened to him in November 1743 when storm clouds in Philadelphia blocked his view of an eclipse. Franklin assumed that the storm had blown in from the northeast because the surface winds at his location were from that direction. He was puzzled to find out later that his brother had viewed the eclipse with no problems and that the storm had arrived in Boston four hours later. The information caused Franklin to surmise correctly that the storm had moved from southwest to northeast.

1886: An estimated F4 tornado touched down in Vermilion County near Armstrong, Illinois, and passed between Alvin and Rossville before moving into Indiana. At least five houses were destroyed, two of which were entirely swept away. Three people were killed. Five other strong tornadoes occurred across Illinois that day: two near Mt. Carroll, one near Odell, one near Jacksonville, and one in Iroquois County.

1997: A towering F1 tornado ripped its way through the middle of Miami, Biscayne Bay, and Miami Beach right after lunch Monday, smashing cars and windows, tossing trees skyward and scaring the dickens out of thousands of people.

1934 - A dust storm darkened skies from Oklahoma to the Atlantic coast. (David Ludlum)

1971 - Duststorms suddenly reduced visibilities to near zero on Interstate Highway 10 near Casa Grande AZ. Chain reaction accidents involving cars and trucks resulted, killing seven persons. (The Weather Channel)

1972 - In Texas, A cloudburst dumped sixteen inches of rain north of New Braunfels sending a thirty foot wall of water down Blueders Creek into the Comal and Guadalupe Rivers washing away people, houses and automobiles. The flood claimed 18 lives and caused more than twenty million dollars damage. (The Weather Channel)



**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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Sat May 12	Sun May 13	Mon May 14	Tue May 15	Wed May 16	Thu May 17	Fri May 18
62°F	71°F	77°F	80°F	79°F	75°F	75°F
43°F	50°F	52°F	53°F	50°F	50°F	43°F
NE 10 MPH Precip 30%	WSW 7 MPH	WSW 5 MPH	SSW 7 MPH	N 10 MPH	ENE 13 MPH	ESE 14 MPH Precip 30%



National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD  
5/12/2018 4:30 AM

**Today**  
  
52-66°

**Another Cool, Cloudy Day -- Light Rain Showers Off And On**

**3 Day Forecast**

<b>Sunday</b>  61-72°	<b>Monday</b>  71-79°	<b>Tuesday</b>  75-82°
-----------------------------	-----------------------------	------------------------------

Published on: 05/12/2018 at 4:34AM

Another cool, cloudy day is in store across the region. Expect off and on rain showers. Accumulations will be light. Starting with Mother's Day, a warm up to more seasonal values is expected right on through most of this upcoming week.



# Groton Daily Independent

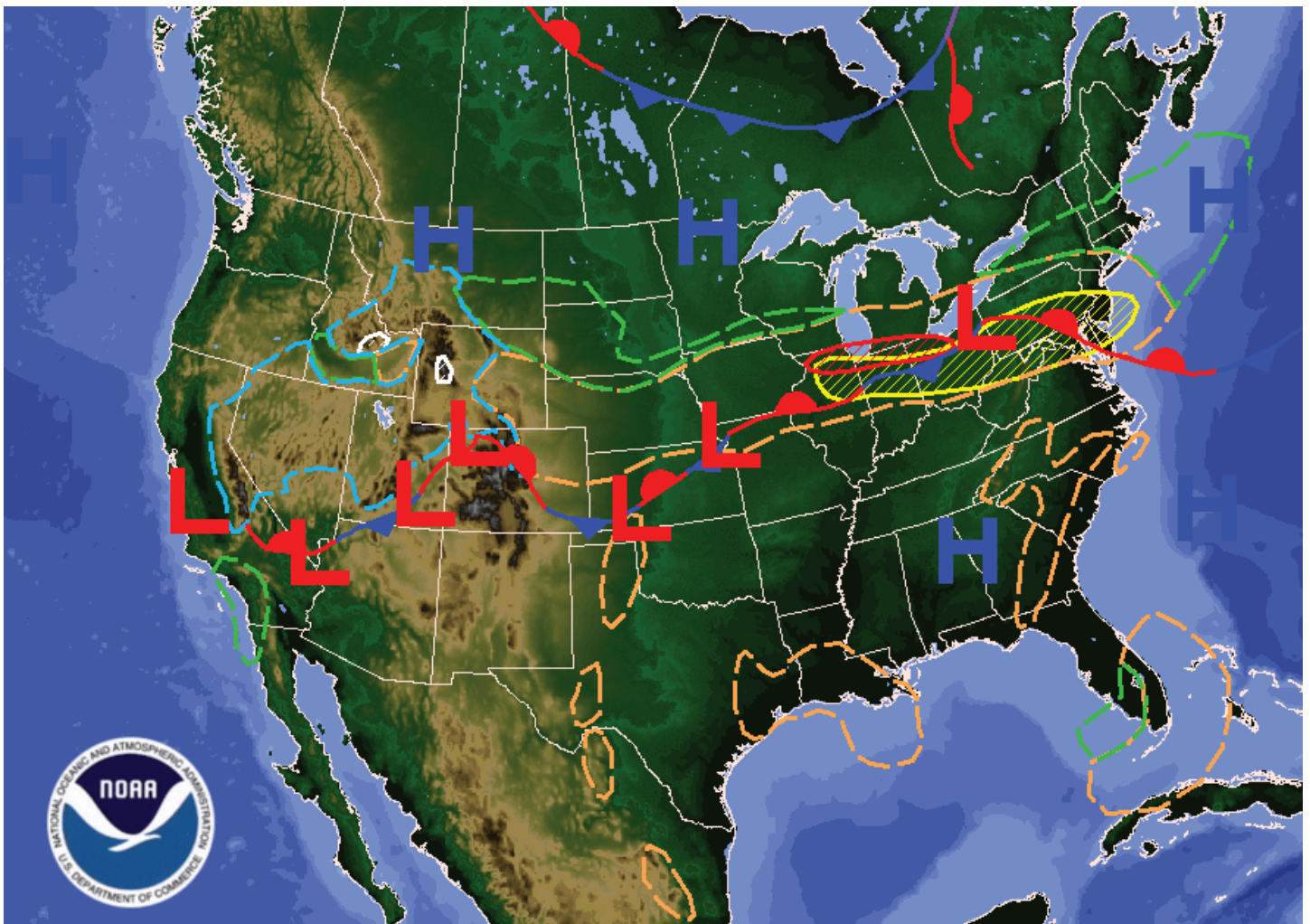
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## Yesterday's Weather

**High Outside Temp: 52.8 F at 6:57 PM**  
**Low Outside Temp: 42.5 F at 4:06 AM**  
**Wind Chill:**  
**High Gust: 18.0 Mph at 2:33 PM**  
**Precip: 0.05**

## Today's Info

**Record High: 90° in 1900**  
**Record Low: 17° in 1946**  
**Average High: 68°F**  
**Average Low: 43°F**  
**Average Precip in May: 1.23**  
**Precip to date in May: 0.71**  
**Average Precip to date: 5.26**  
**Precip Year to Date: 3.39**  
**Sunset Tonight: 8:54 p.m.**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:05 a.m.**



### Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Sat, May 12, 2018, issued 4:35 AM EDT  
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center  
Prepared by Kong 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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## A HEART THAT DOES KIND THINGS

It was the final set in a tennis match. One of the players had demonstrated his strength and skill as his opponent struggled to stay competitive. Suddenly the player who had been doing so well began to hit the ball outside of the lines, into the net and even miss the ball completely. It seemed as though he had lost his focus.

His father approached him during a break and asked, "Keller, what's going on? You were doing so good and now you may lose the match and not go to the state finals. What's going on?" he demanded.

"It's O.K., Dad. Let me alone. I know I can win. I've been missing the balls on purpose. I don't want him to feel bad about losing. I want to encourage him."

Keller did go on to win. But in the process he not only thought of "doing a kindness" but actually showed what kindness "looked like" to someone who was struggling to defeat him and win the match.

Life gives us many opportunities to "do kindness." In fact, God "makes them available" each day. For example, we can open a door for a senior citizen; or be gracious and express our gratitude to a cashier during the rush hour at a grocery store; or give a smile to someone who looks like they need encouragement; or give a compliment to one who is guiding us when we place an order on the phone or take care to explain something that is unfamiliar to us.

"Doing kindness" is one of the most important things we Christians can do. It represents what God's grace is all about. If an opportunity to "do kindness" appears, seize it!

Prayer: Help us to be alert, Lord, for opportunities to show Your grace through acts of kindness and love. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 109:16 For he never thought of doing a kindness, but hounded to death the poor and the needy and the brokenhearted.

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## 2018 Groton SD Community Events

- Groton Lion's Club Bingo- Wednesday Nights 6:30pm at the Groton Legion (Year Round)
- 11/18/2017-3/31/2018 Groton Lion's Club Wheel of Meat- Saturday Nights 7pm at the Groton Legion (Fall/Winter Months)
- 1/27/2019 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm
- 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

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## News from the Associated Press

### SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Mega Millions

14-38-40-53-70, Mega Ball: 22, Megaplier: 3

(fourteen, thirty-eight, forty, fifty-three, seventy; Mega Ball: twenty-two; Megaplier: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$45 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$257 million

### Replanting a forest, with 'hoedads' and hard work

By SETH TUPPER, Rapid City Journal

CUSTER, S.D. (AP) — The people involved in reforesting the Jasper Fire area have patience in spades — and in "hoedads."

A hoedad is the ax-like tool that members of tree-planting crews wield as they punch holes to plant pine seedlings within the 130-square-mile area of the fire. The massive blaze, set by an arsonist in 2000, remains the largest forest fire in the recorded history of the Black Hills.

Beginning about 10 miles west of Custer, a sudden scarcity of trees still clearly marks the fire's footprint. But here and there on the vast and open landscape, clusters of ponderosa pines have been taking root since 2003.

That was when Timothy Gilg, a contracting officer representative for the Black Hills National Forest, began administering the effort to plant trees in the burned area. He's still at it 15 years later, and although the reforestation project has become a primary focus of the 52-year-old's career, he will probably never see the full payoff.

"It's slowly coming back and making pockets of green trees," Gilg said. "But it'll be a hundred years, maybe 50 years, to get back to the way it was."

The Rapid City Journal reports that this year's planting began April 9 with a crew consisting of about a dozen planters, plus a foreman and an inspector. Working by hand at a pace of 1,000 trees per planter, per day — give or take, depending on the weather — the crew expected to finish by the end of last week with a total of 160,000 trees planted. They concentrated on an especially barren 400-acre area 4 miles northwest of Jewel Cave.

In the 15 years since the reforestation project began, Gilg said there have been 1.7 million trees planted at a cost of about \$1.5 million to the Black Hills National Forest.

The current contractor for the work is OC Forestry of Medford, Ore. Mexican immigrant Mario Ordonez said he started the company in 2012 after working as a crew member for a similar company. His own crews consist of fellow immigrants and migrant workers.

Members of the crew at the Jasper Fire area carried seedlings in large pouches around their waists. While walking, they swiftly punched holes in the ground with their hoedads, bent over to plant seedlings in the holes, and stamped dirt back into the holes with their feet. Some of the workers were capable of planting trees at a rate of one every 10 seconds.

Although some forested areas of the Black Hills regenerate quickly after logging or wildfires, regeneration is slower in the drier and rockier soil of the southern Hills, Gilg said. Additionally, Forest Service forester Nancy Bayne said it can take ponderosa pine trees 60 years to produce reliably viable seeds, and the

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relatively heavy seeds fall close to the tree; therefore, it could take centuries for nature to significantly reforest areas of the Jasper Fire.

The Forest Service hopes that human-aided reforestation will counteract soil erosion, restore cover and nesting sites for wildlife, and provide opportunities for logging.

Seeds for the project are taken from pine cones that are collected in the Black Hills under the terms of another contract administered by Gilg. Roughly every five years, or as the availability of pine cones in the broader forest allows, contracted workers gather up to 1,500 bushels of pine cones by hand.

The pine cones are taken to the U.S. Forest Service's Charles E. Bessey Tree Nursery in Halsey, Neb., where the cones are dried to extract the seeds. The seeds are grown into 6-inch seedlings at the nursery and transported back to the Black Hills for planting.

Gilg monitors representative clusters of planted trees to estimate the survival rate of each year's crop. The rate was as low as 40 percent in some drought years, Gilg said, and an early effort to spread seeds from the air proved ineffective. In recent years, the survival rate has improved to 95 percent thanks to a sharpened focus on effective planting methods, and because of protective measures including biodegradable tubing that is installed around some of the trees to prevent damage from wildlife.

The trees grow slowly. Those that have survived since the first planting 15 years ago are now about 6 to 7 feet tall, Gilg said.

Since 2003, trees have been planted on a total of about 4,400 acres, which is less than 1 percent of the entire area of the Jasper Fire. That may sound insignificant, but Gilg said it's part of a strategy.

"We're trying to put pockets of pine back in there," Gilg said, "and hopefully Mother Nature will fill in the rest of it over the years."

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

## Judge pushes back trial of man indicted in GEAR UP scandal

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A judge has pushed back a jury trial for one of three people accused in an embezzlement scheme that helped spark South Dakota's GEAR UP scandal.

Attorney General Marty Jackley says trial for former Mid-Central Educational Cooperative Director Dan Guericke that was scheduled for July 9 has been moved to Oct. 1, over Jackley's objection. Jackley had argued that "justice requires a resolution" in the case.

A jury trial for former Assistant Business Manager Stephanie Hubers is scheduled for July 25, which will be followed by trial for former GEAR UP consultant Stacy Phelps.

Former Mid-Central Business Manager Scott Westerhuis in 2015 shot his wife and their four children, then set fire to their home and killed himself. Authorities believe the couple stole more than \$1 million before their deaths.

## South Dakota Army Guard unit returning from duty in Romania

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A small South Dakota Army National Guard unit that served overseas will be welcomed home next week.

The Rapid City-based 216th Engineer Detachment is a three-member firefighting team. The soldiers served nine months in Romania, supporting U.S. and international operations in Europe.

They returned to the U.S. earlier this month and are going through the demobilization process at Fort Bliss in Texas.

A welcome-home ceremony is scheduled for 3 p.m. Wednesday at Camp Rapid in Rapid City.

It was the second mobilization since 9/11 for the 216th, which served in Iraq from December 2003 to June 2005.

## Winter wheat production in the Dakotas forecast to jump

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Winter wheat production in the Dakotas is expected to be up dramatically this year from 2017.

The crop that's planted in the fall and harvested the next summer is subject to big swings, especially in North Dakota.

The Agriculture Department's latest forecast is for an increase in South Dakota of 97 percent, to 40.9 million bushels, and an increase in North Dakota of 138 percent, to 3.1 million bushels.

Acres for harvest and average yield are forecast to be up in both states.

## Jury clears 2 state correctional officials of wrongdoing

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Attorney General Marty Jackley says a federal jury has cleared two South Dakota corrections officials accused of deliberate indifference to an inmate's medical needs and retaliation.

James Shaw is serving time at the State Penitentiary for attempted murder and aggravated assault. Last fall he sued Associate Warden Troy Ponto and Unit Manager Al Madsen, alleging cruel and unusual punishment.

Shaw alleged he spent days in disciplinary segregation after a 2015 knee surgery because he requested a handicapped-accessible cell. He said he also was investigated for allegedly stealing his medical records after announcing plans to sue.

Jackley says the jury "saw through the inmate's spurious accusations."

## Brown County solves email glitch with Google's help

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — Brown County appears to have solved an email glitch.

County officials and employees had been unable to receive the bulk of email sent from Google accounts, despite months of troubleshooting.

The American News reports that County Chief Information Officer Paul Sivertsen recently told county commissioners that a Google engineer helped fix the problem that had affected nearly all county departments.

Information from: Aberdeen American News, <http://www.aberdeennews.com>

## Federal probe critical of South Dakota mental hospital

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Federal investigators have concluded that several problems at a state-run psychiatric hospital in Yankton caused the death of a patient who succumbed to alcohol withdrawal.

Issues identified in a report from the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services include a failure to respect patients' rights and a crippling shortage of providers at the Human Services Center, the Argus Leader reported. The center has been plagued by worker shortages and rapid leadership turnover.

Anne White, 37, of Yankton, died at the facility on Dec. 20 after her request to go to an emergency room was ignored.

"Nobody should ever have to die when they're asking for help," said Sara Lindquist, executive director of Sioux Falls' office for the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

The federal government investigated in January and eventually threatened to pull the facility's Medicare funding.

The hospital has since made improvements and in April was found to be in compliance with federal standards, according to state Department of Social Services.

"HSC took quick action to correct the areas of non-compliance identified in the survey, which included expanding on already existing policies and procedures, and is in full compliance," spokeswoman Tia Kafka said in a statement.

State officials declined to comment on White's death.

There are still 72 unfilled positions at the center. Recently hired administrator Ken Cole will be the fourth person to lead the facility in less than a year when he starts at the end of May.

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

## Suspect in shooting of reservation school custodian arrested

WAUBAY, S.D. (AP) — Authorities have a suspect in custody in the late-night shooting of a school custodian on the Lake Traverse Reservation.

A 19-year-old custodial worker was checking the perimeter of the Enemy Swim Day School near Waubay in northeastern South Dakota on May 3 when he was struck in the chest by a bullet just before 10 p.m.

Day County Sheriff Barry Hillestad tells the American News that a suspect was arrested without incident Wednesday evening in Waubay. The person wasn't immediately identified.

Authorities believe the incident to be isolated and say there is no danger to school staff or students.

Information from: Aberdeen American News, <http://www.aberdeennews.com>

## N. Korea to hold 'ceremony' for dismantling nuke test site

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea says it will hold a "ceremony" for the dismantling of its nuclear test site on May 23-25 in what would be a dramatic but symbolic event to set up leader Kim Jong Un's summit with President Donald Trump next month.

North Korea's Foreign Ministry said Saturday that all of the tunnels at the country's northeastern testing ground will be destroyed by explosion, and that observation and research facilities and ground-based guard units will also be removed.

The North said it plans to invite journalists from the United States, South Korea, China, Russia and Britain to inspect the process.

Kim had revealed plans to shut down the nuclear test site during his summit with South Korean President Moon Jae-in last month.

## Malaysia bars scandal-ridden ex-leader from leaving country

By EILEEN NG, Associated Press

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP) — Malaysia's new leader, Mahathir Mohamad, said Saturday that defeated scandal-tainted Prime Minister Najib Razak and his wife have been barred from leaving the country to prevent them from fleeing from possible prosecution over a massive corruption scandal.

A leaked flight manifesto showed that Najib and his wife, Rosmah Mansor, were due to leave on a private jet Saturday to Indonesia's capital, Jakarta, fueling rumors that he was bolting the country days after a shocking electoral defeat that ended his coalition's 60-year grip on power.

Najib had said on social media earlier in the day that he was planning to take a short vacation to spend time with his family. The immigration department, which initially said there was no travel ban, later issued a statement to say Najib and his wife had been blacklisted from leaving the country.

Mahathir confirmed that he prevented Najib from leaving. He said there was sufficient evidence for an investigation into Najib regarding the massive corruption scandal involving the 1MDB state fund that Najib set up and is being investigated in the United States and other countries.

U.S. investigators say Najib's associates stole and laundered \$4.5 billion from the fund, with some \$700 million landing in Najib's bank account and around \$30 million used to buy jewelry for his wife. Najib has denied any wrongdoing.

"There are a lot of complaints against him, all of which have to be investigated," Mahathir told a news conference. "We have to act quickly because we don't want to be saddled with extradition from other countries."

Mahathir said the investigations would take some time because investigators need to contact authorities

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in other countries and gather evidence. He has said Najib will “face the consequences” if any wrongdoing is found.

Najib responded swiftly, saying he respects the immigration department’s ruling and will remain in the country with his family. He also said he was committed to “facilitating a smooth transfer of power.”

Later Saturday, Najib said at a news conference that he was stepping down as president of the United Malays National Organization and as chairman of the National Front coalition to take responsibility for Wednesday’s election defeat. The announcement came after strong calls emerged from the UMNO, the linchpin of the coalition, for Najib to resign.

Najib, 64, said his deputy, Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, would take over as UMNO president.

“We accept the people’s verdict with an open heart,” Najib said. “Maybe this will be an opportunity for us to fix our weaknesses and shortcomings, although these are more a matter of perception than reality. God willing, UMNO will continue to live.”

The National Front, which has ruled Malaysia since independence from Britain, won only 79 of the 222 parliamentary seats, losing power to Mahathir’s four-party alliance amid public anger over the 1MDB scandal and a rising cost of living.

It was a remarkable comeback for the 92-year-old Mahathir, who was prime minister for 22 years until his retirement in 2003. Angered over the 1MDB scandal, Mahathir had teamed up with former foes, including jailed opposition icon Anwar Ibrahim, to oust Najib.

Mahathir said Malaysia’s king had agreed to pardon Anwar, who was jailed in 2015 for sodomy in a conviction that he said was politically motivated. Anwar’s daughter Nurul Izzah told The Associated Press that her father, whose sentence ends June 8, would be released on Tuesday.

Also Saturday, Mahathir appointed Lim Guan Eng, an ethnic Chinese, as finance minister, the first ethnic minority to be appointed to the powerful post in 44 years.

Since 1974, the finance minister had been an ethnic Muslim Malay. The appointment of Lim, a chartered accountant who led the wealthy northern state of Penang since 2008, reflects reforms pledged by Mahathir’s alliance to heal racial divisions in the country blamed on decades-old preferential policies.

Mahathir also named former Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin as home affairs minister and Mohamad Sabu as defense minister. All three appointees are party leaders in his alliance.

Mahathir said he would name the rest of his 25-member Cabinet this coming week.

## Low turnout in first vote for Iraqis since victory over IS

By QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA and PHILIP ISSA, Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — Low turnout and voting irregularities marked the initial hours of voting Saturday in Iraq’s first elections since the country declared victory over the Islamic State group.

Voting began early Saturday morning in a contest that has no clear front-runner after weeks of official campaigning. Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi is facing stiff competition from political parties with closer ties to Iran.

After hours of reports of low turnout in Baghdad, al-Abadi partially lifted a security curfew banning most civilian vehicles from the streets of the Iraqi capital in an effort to improve turnout.

The curfew had been in place since midnight the night before and many voters complained of having to walk more than 4 kilometers (2.5 miles) to reach polling stations.

Iraq’s most senior Shiite cleric spoke out on the issue of voter participation Saturday afternoon, encouraging Iraqis to vote “to prevent the arrival of a corrupt parliament.”

“The lack of participation will give the opportunity for others to reach parliament and they will be very far from the aspirations of the people,” said Sheikh Abdul-Mahdi al-Karbalai, the representative of Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, on local Iraqi television from Karbala. Sistani has repeatedly encouraged Iraqis to vote into power Saturday a new political class to combat corruption.

For those who did attempt to vote, some in Baghdad complained of voting irregularities at polling stations linked to a new electronic voting system implemented for the first time this year in an effort to reduce fraud.



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Thamer Aref, 45, along with his wife and daughter were turned away from a polling station north of central Baghdad.

Aref had turned in his old voter ID card months ago for the biometric identification card required by the new system. However, Aref's biometric card wasn't ready ahead of Saturday and, with neither card, the polling station did not allow him to cast a ballot.

"I lost my right to vote," he said.

Associated Press journalists documented several similar cases at a number of different polling stations across Baghdad Saturday morning.

Amira Muhammed, the supervisor of a polling station in Azamiyah, Baghdad, said some people couldn't vote because they did not pick up their new biometric ID cards in time.

"The problem is not with us," she said.

In central Baghdad, voters supporting al-Abadi said they are doing so because they give him credit for Iraq's military victory over IS.

Al-Abadi "took revenge" for civilians killed in insurgent attacks in Iraq "with the victory over Daesh," said 71-year-old Felihah Hassan, using the Arabic acronym for IS.

After IS overran nearly a third of Iraq in the summer of 2014, the group launched waves of suicide bombings targeting civilians in Baghdad and other pockets of government-controlled territory.

With support from the U.S.-led coalition and Iran, al-Abadi oversaw a grueling war against the extremists and declared victory over the group in December.

Despite al-Abadi's military achievements, Iraq continues to struggle with an economic downturn sparked in part by a drop in global oil prices, entrenched corruption and years of political gridlock.

The prime minister's most powerful opponents are his predecessor, Nouri al-Maliki, and an alliance of candidates with close ties to the country's powerful, mostly Shiite paramilitary forces.

Jassim Mohsen, 58, who fought against IS with the paramilitary forces, said he's casting his vote for the alliance with paramilitary ties because of their personal sacrifices.

"I elected the Fatah list because they are the only ones who fought Daesh and gave blood," he said.

Some Sunnis voting Saturday said they are hopeful this election will help Iraq move beyond sectarian politics and become more inclusive.

Marginalization of Iraq's Sunnis under al-Maliki is seen as a factor that allowed IS to rise in power in Iraq. Al-Abadi has led a more cross-sectarian government marked by his ability to balance the interests of his two allies often at odds: the U.S. and Iran.

The war left more than 2 million Iraqis, mostly Sunnis, displaced from their homes, with cities, towns and villages suffering heavy destruction. Repairing infrastructure across Anbar and Nineveh provinces, both majority Sunni areas, will cost tens of billions of dollars.

Abdulrazaq Kubi and his wife Suheila Mahdi, both Sunnis from Baghdad, said they would not be voting for al-Abadi, casting their votes instead for a Sunni-led political alliance.

"The victory is not 100 percent, there is still Daesh here," said Mahdi. The government "is neglecting the refugees because they are Sunni. They left them in the camps, in the winter it floods, in the summers, they go hungry," she added.

In total there are 329 parliament seats at stake, with nearly 7,000 candidates from dozens of political alliances.

The results of Saturday's election are expected within 48 hours of the vote, according to the independent body overseeing the election.

Government formation negotiations are expected to drag on for months following that as the dozens of political parties attempt to cobble together a political bloc large enough to hold a majority of seats in parliament.

## Dinner diplomacy: Netanyahu's unusual run-in with UAE envoy

By JOSH LEDERMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Officially, their governments don't speak. The United Arab Emirates doesn't even formally recognize that Israel exists.

But an impromptu bit of dinner diplomacy between Israel's prime minister and a prominent Emirati ambassador sheds light on one of the worst kept secrets in the Arab world: the quiet ties between Israel and some of its Arab neighbors that are increasingly coming out in the open as they find common cause against mutual foe Iran.

The venue back in March was Cafe Milano, the upscale Georgetown restaurant often frequented by powerful Washingtonians, from Barack Obama to Trump Cabinet members. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, in town for an annual pro-Israel policy conference, was midway through dinner with his wife, Sara, when an unexpected request came his way.

By coincidence, the Emirati ambassador to the U.S., Yousef al-Otaiba, was at the restaurant hosting Brian Hook, the State Department's policy planning chief, and a group of U.S. journalists, along with Bahrain's ambassador, Sheikh Abdullah bin Rashed bin Abdullah Al Khalifa.

The Americans dining with Otaiba got wind that Netanyahu was nearby. Word was sent to see if the Israeli would mind making an appearance at their dinner. That request first passed through the restaurant's owner, then one of the journalists, who had walked by Netanyahu's table while on the way to the restroom.

It wasn't long before Netanyahu and his wife came over to say hello on their way out. They lingered, answering a few questions from the group about Iran and other issues. There were smiles, a few laughs about the oddity of the situation, and Netanyahu shook hands with the two ambassadors before leaving the restaurant.

Neither the Israelis nor the Emiratis publicly disclosed the encounter, but it was described to The Associated Press by six people who either attended the dinner or were briefed on it. The individuals who attended spoke on condition of anonymity because the dinner's ground rules were that it be considered off the record. The AP did not attend the dinner.

The Israeli and Emirati embassies in Washington declined to comment.

In and of itself, the interaction does not signal any historic establishment of ties between Israel and the UAE or any other country. Yet it casts light on how friendly cooperation between the Jewish state and the Arab Gulf nations, until recently kept behind the scenes, are creeping into public view.

"It's become an open secret, even not a secret at all, demonstrated in public ways that are taboo-breaking and important in beginning a process of preparing Arab publics to share the Arab leadership's view that Israel is a strategic partner," said Dan Shapiro, a former U.S. ambassador to Israel. "But there is a danger in irrational exuberance. This is a very fragile process."

Driving the shift — until recently unimaginable in the Arab world — is a growing alignment between Israel and the Sunni Arab nations against Iran, the Shiite-led nation that Israel considers an existential threat. Saudi Arabia and its allies in the region, including the UAE, share a view that Iran now presents more of a threat to the region than Israel, whose thriving economy and prosperous tech sector have become attractive models for other Middle East nations to try to replicate.

Yet there are risks for the Arab nations in moving too fast. After all, Arab leaders have spent much of the past 70 years teaching their populations that Israel must not be allowed to exist and championing the cause of the Palestinians.

Those leaders may have some common ground with the Israelis, but the Palestinian issue remains a deeply emotional cause throughout the Arab world and would constrain them from going too far in their relations with Israel unless there is a resolution. While Israel and the U.S. have sidelined the Palestinian issue, these behind-the-scenes ties are likely to continue, and may be enough for Israel's own strategic needs.

Netanyahu frequently boasts of growing, discreet cooperation with moderate Arab countries. Though he doesn't identify them by name, they've long believed to be Sunni Gulf countries such as the UAE and

Saudi Arabia.

The Saudis, for instance, recently broke a decades-old practice and agreed to allow Indian flights to Israel to pass through Saudi airspace, cutting the trip by several hours. The Saudi crown prince, Mohammad Bin Salman, even met with pro-Israel Jewish American leaders during his recent high-profile trip to the U.S., during which he was quoted as criticizing the Palestinians.

Israeli businessmen quietly operate in the UAE. The Emirati Embassy in Washington is planning an interfaith Iftar — the meal eaten by Muslims to break the Ramadan fast — that will include a U.S. rabbi.

Qatar allows an ambassador to stay in Israel and to work with Israeli military officials while overseeing Qatari-funded construction projects in Gaza. The tiny, wealthy nation also recently hosted prominent Jewish-American leaders for a visit to Doha where they met with the country's ruling emir.

Bahrain late last year sent an interfaith delegation including Muslims, Buddhists, Christians, Hindus and Jews to Israel, in what was perceived as testing the waters for what might happen if the nation were to recognize Israel. And its foreign minister, Khalid bin Ahmed Al Khalifa, stunned Israelis and Arabs this past week when he tweeted support for Israel's self-defense after Israel retaliated for an Iranian rocket barrage by attacking suspected Iranian targets in Syria,

"As long as Iran has breached the status quo in the region and has evacuated its troops and missiles, any state in the region, including Israel, is entitled to defend itself by destroying the sources of danger," the foreign minister wrote.

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Associated Press writer Josef Federman in Jerusalem contributed to this report.

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Reach Josh Lederman on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/joshledermanAP>

## Malaysia bars scandal-ridden ex-leader from leaving country

By EILEEN NG, Associated Press

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP) — Malaysia's new leader, Mahathir Mohamad, said Saturday that defeated scandal-tainted Prime Minister Najib Razak and his wife have been barred from leaving the country to prevent them from fleeing from possible prosecution over a massive corruption scandal.

A leaked flight manifesto showed that Najib and his wife, Rosmah Mansor, were due to leave on a private jet on Saturday to Indonesia's capital, Jakarta, fueling rumors that he was bolting the country after a shocking electoral defeat earlier in the week that ended his coalition's 60-year grip on power.

Najib had said in a statement on social media on Saturday that he was planning to take a short vacation to spend time with his family. The immigration department, which initially said there was no travel ban, later issued a statement to say Najib and his wife had been blacklisted from leaving the country.

Mahathir confirmed that he prevented Najib from leaving. He said there was sufficient evidence for an investigation into Najib, in reference to the massive corruption scandal involving the 1MDB state fund that Najib set up and is being investigated in the United States and other countries.

U.S. investigators say Najib's associates stole and looted \$4.5 billion from the fund, with some \$700 million landing in Najib's bank account and around \$30 million used to buy jewelry for his wife. Najib has denied any wrongdoing.

"There are a lot of complaints against him, all of which have to be investigated," Mahathir told a news conference. "We have to act quickly because we don't want to be saddled with extradition from other countries."

Mahathir said the investigations would take some time because investigators need to contact authorities in other countries and gather evidence. He has said Najib will have to face a court if any wrongdoing is found.

Najib responded swiftly, saying he respects the immigration department's ruling and will remain in the country with his family. He also said he was committed to "facilitating a smooth transfer of power."

Later Saturday, Najib said at a news conference that he was stepping down as president of the United Malays National Organization and as chairman of the National Front coalition to take responsibility for

Wednesday's election defeat. The announcement came after strong calls emerged from the UMNO, the linchpin of the coalition, for Najib to resign.

The National Front, which has ruled Malaysia since independence from Britain, won only 79 of the 222 parliamentary seats, losing power to Mahathir's four-party alliance amid public anger over the 1MDB scandal and a rising cost of living.

It was a remarkable comeback for the 92-year-old Mahathir, who was prime minister for 22 years until his retirement in 2003.

Najib, 64, said his deputy, Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, would take over as UMNO president.

"We accept the people's verdict with an open heart," Najib said. "Maybe this will be an opportunity for us to fix our weaknesses and shortcomings, although these are more a matter of perception than reality. God willing, UMNO will continue to live."

Amid the 1MDB scandal, Najib sacked critics in his government, including an attorney general and a deputy prime minister, and muzzled the media. The subsequent attorney general, Mohamed Apandi Ali, cleared Najib in 2016, saying that the money was a donation from the Saudi royal family and that most of it was returned.

Mahathir has indicated that Mohamad Apandi could be dismissed for hiding evidence of wrongdoing.

Also Saturday, Mahathir appointed Lim Guan Eng, an ethnic Chinese, as finance minister, the first ethnic minority to be appointed to the powerful post in 44 years. He also named former Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin as home affairs minister and Mohamad Sabu as defense minister. The three are party leaders in his alliance.

Mahathir said he would name the rest of his 25-member Cabinet this coming week.

## McCain still up for a fight, even in illness

By LISA MASCARO, AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — John McCain is not signing off quietly.

As in so much of the senator's extraordinary life, the rebellious Republican is facing this challenging chapter — battling brain cancer — in his own rule-breaking way, stirring up old fights and starting new ones. Rarely has the sickbed been so lively.

McCain is promoting a new book, delivering a counterpunch of ideals contrary to President Donald Trump's running of the White House. McCain's long-distance rejection of CIA director nominee Gina Haspel's history with torture goaded former Vice President Dick Cheney into a fresh debate over waterboarding and other now-banned interrogation techniques. On Friday, friends rallied to defend McCain against a White House official's cruel joke that his positions don't matter because "he's dying anyway."

If this is Washington's long goodbye to a sometimes favorite son, it's also a reemergence of old resentments and political fault lines that continue to split the nation.

Perhaps no one should have expected anything less from the 81-year-old senator, who can be crotchety and cantankerous but is also seen by many, both in and out of politics, as an American hero, flaws and all.

Former Vice President Joe Biden said Friday as McCain "fights for his life, he deserves better — so much better."

"Our children learn from our example," Biden said. "The lingering question is: Whose example will it be? I am certain it will be John's."

Said House Speaker Paul Ryan, "His legacy is so long that John McCain is a hero to us all."

McCain was diagnosed in July with glioblastoma, an aggressive brain cancer. He left Washington in December and few expect him to return. Up-and-down reports of his health shift every few days.

A steady stream of visitors have stopped by the McCain family ranch in Arizona — including Michael Bloomberg, the former mayor of New York, on Friday.

Close friend and political ally Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., visited McCain this week, and the two watched an old movie and talked about McCain's imprint on politics.

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Graham said he told McCain he will leave behind a long list of Republicans — and Democrats — he has mentored, Graham included.

"Your legacy is the people you affected," Graham said he told his friend. "John McCain's going to have a hell of a legacy."

Not everyone, though, is so keen to listen to McCain these days.

Most Republican senators are not heeding his advice to reject Haspel, who was chief of base of a detention site where terror suspects were waterboarded. McCain lived through years of captivity during the Vietnam War.

Trump has suggested reviving the now-banned brutal interrogation techniques. And Cheney, who was an architect of the post-Sept. 11, 2001, strategy, said he would keep the program active and ready for deployment, and doesn't think it amounted to torture.

"People want to go back and try to rewrite history, but if it were my call, I'd do it again," Cheney told Fox Business.

One retired Air Force general, Tom McInerney, called McCain "songbird John" on the same station this week for allegedly providing information to the North Vietnamese while he was a prisoner of war. McCain has said he gave inaccurate information after being tortured. Fox said McInerney would not be invited back on its business or news channels.

Still, one of McCain's longtime sparring partners, Sen. Rand Paul R-Ky., re-affirmed his opposition to Haspel on Friday.

In explaining his opposition, Paul said, "We shouldn't reward somebody who participated in torture, really still has trouble saying and articulating that it's an immoral thing."

Just a few years ago, McCain called Paul and fellow Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, "wacko birds" for their filibuster blocking then-CIA nominee John Brennan. McCain later apologized.

After McCain's recent hospitalization for an intestinal infection, Graham said he was worried about his old friend's health. But after seeing him this week, he decided McCain will "be with us for a while."

The two weren't quite yet saying their goodbyes. In fact, "there's not talk of funerals, there's talk of the future," Graham said.

They watched a classic Western, "The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance" — with McCain narrating along the way in words that cannot be repeated — and talked about McCain's book, which Graham says couldn't have come at a better time. "I told him it should be required reading," he said.

It's a story about the country, and "even though we make our share of mistakes, we're always trying to make it a more perfect union," Graham said.

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Associated Press writers Deb Riechmann in Washington, Bruce Schreiner in Louisville, Ky., and Steve Peoples and Dave Bauder in New York contributed to this report.

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Follow Mascaro on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/LisaMascaro>

## Trump wants negotiations with California on auto gas mileage

By TOM KRISHER and KEN THOMAS, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Addressing a key concern for manufacturers, President Donald Trump has instructed his administration to explore negotiations with California on achieving a single fuel economy standard for the nation during a meeting with auto industry executives.

The president met with top auto executives Friday to discuss the standards and tasked Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao and Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Scott Pruitt to handle the talks with California officials, according to two people briefed on the meeting. The people spoke on condition of anonymity to describe the private discussions.

The auto industry wants to relax the federal fuel economy standards, but not so much that they provoke a legal fight with California, which has power to impose its own stricter tailpipe pollution limits. Such a fight

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could create two different mileage standards in the U.S., forcing automakers to engineer and produce two versions of each of their vehicle models and driving up costs.

A Trump administration official said the two agencies have had meetings and discussions with California officials on the issue for several months.

Two auto industry trade groups confirmed in a statement that Trump was willing to talk with California, but they provided no specifics. The Alliance for Automotive Manufacturers and Global Automakers said they appreciated Trump's "openness to a discussion with California on an expedited basis."

During the meeting, one executive brought up how it would be better for the industry to have one standard instead of two, and Trump instructed Pruitt and Chao to go to California for talks, the people said.

White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said the president and the automakers discussed "how best to move forward" on the fuel economy standards.

The EPA under Trump has proposed freezing the standards at 2020 levels for the next five years, according to a draft of the proposal obtained by Sen. Tom Carper, D-Del. Under the proposal, the fleet of new vehicles would have to average roughly 30 miles per gallon in real-world driving, and that wouldn't change through at least 2025.

The EPA under Obama proposed standards that gradually would become tougher during that period, rising to 36 mpg in 2025, 10 mpg higher than the current requirement. California and automakers agreed to the rules in 2012, setting a single national fuel economy standard.

If California splits from the federal rule under consideration by the Trump administration, it likely would be joined by 12 states that follow its standards. Together they make up about 40 percent of U.S. new-vehicle sales.

Any big change by Trump certainly would bring lawsuits from environmental groups as well as California. Leaks about the Trump EPA plan already have provoked a suit from California and 16 other states.

In testimony to Congress this month, Mitch Bainwol, CEO of the manufacturers' alliance, said the trade group urged the administration to find a solution that increases mileage requirements from 2022 to 2025 and includes California to keep one national standard.

"The resulting regulatory nightmare would ultimately harm consumers by increasing vehicle costs and restricting consumer choice," Bainwol said.

Trump said during the meeting in the Roosevelt Room of the White House that he wanted to discuss the "manufacturing of millions of more cars within the United States, for Michigan, for Ohio, for Pennsylvania" and states like South Carolina and North Carolina.

As the auto executives introduced themselves, the president joked to Sergio Marchionne, CEO of Fiat Chrysler, that "right now he's my favorite man in the room" because he's moving a plant from Mexico to Michigan.

Trump won the presidency in 2016 in part on his strength in the industrial Midwest states of Michigan and Ohio, which employ thousands of people in auto and parts manufacturing. The meeting came as the administration has been holding extensive negotiations with Mexico and Canada on a rewrite of the North American Free Trade Agreement, which the auto industry is watching warily.

Asked if the deal might adversely affect the industry, Trump said, "NAFTA has been a terrible deal, we're renegotiating it now, we'll see what happens."

"Mexico and Canada, look, they don't like to lose the golden goose. But I'm representing the United States. I'm not representing Mexico and I'm not representing Canada," he said. "We'll see if we can make it reasonable."

Automakers have been lobbying the Trump administration to revisit the fuel economy requirements, saying they'll have trouble reaching them because people are buying bigger vehicles due to low gas prices.

When the single national standard was adopted six years ago, cars, which get better mileage than trucks and SUVs, made up just under half of U.S. new vehicle sales. By the end of last year, however, trucks and SUVs were close to two-thirds of all sales.

Some environmental groups oppose any reduction in the standards, saying that the ones developed in

2012 allow for changes in consumer buying habits. Reducing the standards, they say, will increase pollution and raise gasoline prices at the pump.

Requirements now are lower for bigger vehicles such as trucks and SUVs, said Luke Tonachel, director of clean vehicles for the Natural Resources Defense Council. "The standards automatically adjust to the sales mix of vehicles," he said.

Environmental groups also say the industry marketed trucks and SUVs to the public because they make bring higher profits than cars.

Auto executives attending the meeting included Marchionne, General Motors CEO Mary Barra, Ford CEO Jim Hackett and Bob Carter, executive vice president of North America for Toyota.

Krisher reported from Detroit.

On Twitter follow Tom Krisher at <http://twitter.com/TKrisher> and Ken Thomas at <http://twitter.com/KThomasDC>

## Trump's prescription to reduce drug prices takes small steps

By **MATTHEW PERRONE** and **JILL COLVIN**, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's long-promised plan to bring down drug prices would mostly spare the pharmaceutical industry he previously accused of "getting away with murder." Instead he focuses on private competition and more openness to reduce America's prescription pain.

In Rose Garden remarks at the White House Friday, Trump called his plan the "most sweeping action in history to lower the price of prescription drugs for the American people." But it does not include his campaign pledge to use the massive buying power of the government's Medicare program to directly negotiate lower prices for seniors.

That idea has long been supported by Democrats but is a non-starter for drugmakers and most Republicans in Congress. Democratic Rep. Lloyd Doggett of Texas dismissed Trump's plan as "a sugar-coated nothing pill."

The administration will pursue a raft of old and new measures intended to improve competition and transparency in the notoriously complex drug pricing system. But most of the measures could take months or years to implement, and none would stop drugmakers from setting sky-high initial prices.

"There are some things in this set of proposals that can move us in the direction of lower prices for some people," said David Mitchell, founder of Patients for Affordable Drugs. "At the same time, it is not clear at all how they are going to lower list prices."

Drugmakers generally can charge as much as the market will bear because the U.S. government doesn't regulate medicine prices, unlike most other developed countries.

Trump's list of 50 proposals, dubbed American Patients First, includes:

— A potential requirement for drugmakers to disclose the cost of their medicines in television advertisements.

— Banning a pharmacist "gag rule," which prevents druggists from telling customers when they can save money by paying cash instead of using their insurance.

— Speeding up the approval process for over-the-counter medications so people can buy more drugs without prescriptions.

— Reconsidering how Medicare pays for some high-priced drugs administered at doctors' offices.

Those ideas avoid a direct confrontation with the powerful pharmaceutical lobby, but they may also overwhelm Americans seeking relief from escalating prescription costs.

Democrats pounced on Trump for not pursuing direct Medicare negotiations, an idea he championed before reaching the White House.

"This weak plan abandons the millions of hard-working families struggling with the crisis of surging drug prices," said Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi, in a statement.

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Pharmaceutical investors and analysts expressed relief after the announcement, and shares of most top drugmakers rose Friday afternoon, including Pfizer, Johnson & Johnson and Eli Lilly.

"Trump had a choice today: to seek disruptive fundamental reform or to embrace more incremental steps," wrote Terry Haines, a financial analyst, in an investment note. "Trump chose the incremental over the disruptive."

Some parts of the plan were previously proposed in the president's budget proposal sent to Congress, including providing free generic drugs to low-income seniors and sharing rebates from drugmakers with Medicare patients. Other parts could be implemented directly by the administration.

A majority of Americans say passing laws to bring down prescription drug prices should be a top priority for Trump and Congress, according to recent polling by the Kaiser Family Foundation.

As a candidate, Trump railed against the pharmaceutical industry. But as president he has shied away from major changes and has staffed his administration with appointees who have deep ties to the industry. They include Health Secretary Alex Azar, a former top executive at Eli Lilly and Co., who joined Trump for Friday's announcement.

Azar and other Trump officials have hinted for weeks that the plan would, in part, "dismantle" the convoluted system of rebates between drugmakers and the health care middlemen known as pharmacy benefit managers, which negotiate price concessions for insurers, employers and other large customers.

Trump called out those companies in his speech: "Our plan will end the dishonest double-dealing that allows the middleman to pocket rebates and discounts that should be passed onto consumers and patients," Trump said.

Azar later told reporters that the administration would "seek input" on doing away with drug rebates in the Medicare system to encourage more direct discounts. He gave no timeframe for more concrete steps.

"It took decades to erect this very complex, interwoven system," Azar said in a briefing following the speech. "I don't want to overpromise that somehow by Monday there's going to be a radical change, but there's a deep commitment to structural change."

Public outrage over drug costs has been growing for years as Americans face pricing pressure from multiple sources: New medicines for life-threatening diseases often launch with prices exceeding \$100,000 per year. And older drugs for common ailments like diabetes and asthma routinely see price hikes around 10 percent annually. Meanwhile Americans are paying more at the pharmacy counter due to health insurance plans that require them to shoulder more of their prescription costs.

America has the highest drug prices in the world.

The U.S. spent \$1,162 per person on prescription drugs in 2015, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. That's more than twice the \$497 per person spent in the United Kingdom, which has a nationalized health care system.

Trump's speech singled out foreign governments that "extort unreasonably low prices from U.S. drugmakers" using price controls and said U.S. trade representatives would prioritize the issue in trade deals.

But experts are skeptical the U.S. can pressure foreign governments to pay more for drugs.

"It's hard to know why Germany or France or Australia would agree to something like that," said Professor Jack Hoadley of Georgetown University's Health Policy Institute.

In the U.S., Medicare is the largest purchaser of prescription drugs, covering 60 million seniors and Americans with disabilities, but it is barred by law from directly negotiating lower prices with drugmakers.

Allowing Medicare to negotiate prices is unacceptable to the powerful drug lobby, which has spent tens of millions of dollars since Trump's inauguration to influence the Washington conversation around drug prices, including a high-profile TV advertising campaign portraying its scientists as medical trailblazers.

The drug industry's top lobbying arm, Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, spent nearly \$26 million to sway federal decision makers last year, according to records tallied by Center for Responsive Politics. The annual total was the group's highest since the 2009 congressional fight that led to Obamacare.

The group's chief executive, Stephen Ubl, said in a statement that some Trump proposals could help



patients afford their medicines, but "others would disrupt coverage and limit patients' access to innovative treatments."

Associated Press writers Ken Thomas, Catherine Lucey, Tom Murphy and Linda A. Johnson contributed to this report.

Matthew Perrone can be followed on Twitter: @AP\_FDWriter

## Traveling with Pompeo on secret mission to North Korea

By MATTHEW LEE, AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — It began with quiet words from State Department officials: Apply for a new passport immediately. You may soon be going to a country for which ordinary U.S. passports are not valid for travel.

Vague as it was, the instruction to two reporters last Friday left little doubt about our mystery destination: North Korea.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo had visited the capital, Pyongyang, in complete secrecy while he was still CIA chief in early April to set the stage for an unprecedented summit between President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

Now, Washington was abuzz with rumors that he would be heading back soon to finalize details for the summit and bring back three U.S. citizens who had been held by North Korea for more than a year for alleged anti-state activities.

It would turn out to be my second visit to the isolated, authoritarian nation. Eighteen years ago, I had accompanied Madeleine Albright on her historic trip to North Korea, the first-ever by a sitting secretary of state — a highly choreographed and publicized two-day affair covered by some 80 journalists.

But this was something completely different: an under-the-radar, secret mission with only two American reporters as independent witnesses.

Since the death last year of Otto Warmbier, the American college student who suffered brain damage while in North Korean custody, U.S. nationals have been prohibited from traveling to North Korea without special passport validation.

An hour after handing over our passports, Carol Morello of The Washington Post and I were in possession of new ones and an extraordinary letter.

"Dear Mr. Lee," mine read, "The Department of State grants your May 4, 2018 request for a special validation permitting travel to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea ... Based on the information provided, we determined that the validation is in the national interest of the United States."

The "national interest of the United States." Hmm, I pondered, had I ever done anything before that would qualify?

Carol and I, who cover the State Department, were told to pack a bag and be on stand-by, but given no departure time, let alone a date. We were sworn to secrecy and advised that any leak of a potential Pompeo return to Pyongyang would be grounds for the two press seats on his plane to go empty.

Rumors of the trip intensified through the weekend as European diplomats who wanted to meet with Pompeo to discuss the administration's imminent decision on the Iran deal — which Trump was preparing to withdraw from — were being told he would be out of the country on North Korea-related travel.

Still, Saturday and Sunday passed with no word.

Then, late on Monday afternoon, we were told we'd depart from the department's Foggy Bottom headquarters at 7:45 that night. We would fly overnight with refueling stops in Alaska and Japan, and go on to North Korea, returning in reverse order at some undetermined point. The State Department had allotted 10 hours of time on the ground. Officials cautioned though that it could be as many as 24 hours depending on the unpredictable North Koreans.

We left in a two-van motorcade from the department's underground parking garage with spokeswoman Heather Nauert, a translator and other Pompeo aides for Joint Base Andrews outside Washington. A staffer's

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forgotten bag caused a brief bit of alarm amid concern that our brief return to the Harry S. Truman building could attract unwanted attention. Once at Andrews, we waited for Pompeo to arrive and soon the U.S. Air Force C-32, a converted Boeing 757, its fuselage emblazoned with "United States of America" with tail number 80001, was airborne. Destination: Pyongyang, capital of the most reclusive nation on Earth.

So began a four-day journey with no confirmed schedule on the ground in North Korea, no guarantee of the prisoners' release or on progress for the summit and little to no sleep.

When I'd visited in 2000 as a reporter for the French news agency Agence France-Presse to cover Albright, circumstances were very different. For one, no special passport was needed. Dozens of journalists had either flown with the secretary of state or taken charter flights from Beijing to Pyongyang to cover the events. There were organized press tours of the capital and a mass stadium show hosted by the current leader's late father, Kim Jong Il.

The dynamics between Washington and Pyongyang, still long-time adversaries, had changed, too, and in unpredictable ways. Trump and the younger Kim had traded threats and insults during 2017 as North Korea conducted atomic and ballistic missile tests, fueling fears of war. Then this year, the rhetoric had cooled significantly and Kim had made an extraordinary offer to meet with Trump, an invitation the president accepted with startling alacrity.

Notwithstanding the secret arrangements for Pompeo's return trip, we wouldn't be the first to report it. As our plane descended Tuesday into the U.S. air base in Yokota, Japan, for its second refueling stop, Trump announced that his top diplomat was on his way to Pyongyang.

It came during his highly anticipated declaration that he was withdrawing the U.S. from the Iran nuclear deal. Trump would use the fact of Pompeo's visit to counter criticism that the Iran decision meant he was not interested in negotiating with adversaries.

After a quick cold shower, which would be the only bathing opportunity in four days, we left Japan for the two-and-a-half-hour flight north and arrived at the Pyongyang airport early Wednesday morning. All normal communications were effectively shut down with staffers carrying "burn phones" on which they could text and a limited number of satellite phones for emergency use only.

Pompeo was greeted by North Korean dignitaries and boarded a Mercedes limousine. We climbed aboard a Chevy van, identified by logos on the spare tire and driver's console as "The American Road." The driver, whether or not he spoke or understood English, was non-communicative, so our questions about "The American Road" went unanswered.

Pyongyang had changed a lot in two decades. There were more tall buildings and more vehicles, but certainly still far fewer than in other world capitals. Also different were the smartly uniformed female traffic cops who had once directed a minuscule number of cars with precision gestures. They had moved from the middle of intersections to the corners, apparently due to the installation of stoplights.

After a winding drive past grandiose memorials, museums, government offices and revolutionary billboards, we arrived at the city's main hotel for foreign visitors, the Koryo International, where many of us had stayed when Albright visited in 2000. The hotel re-opened last year after a renovation aimed at ridding it of its Soviet-style appearance, with gleaming marble floors and walls. The elevators, however, remained as slow as they had been 18 years earlier.

With Pompeo's uncertain schedule, the Koryo lobby, bookstore, luxury goods market, coffee shop and traditional Korean restaurant were Carol's and my base for the next nearly 13 hours while he met and lunched with North Korean officials and finally left for closed-door talks with Kim, just an hour after receiving confirmation that the meeting was, in fact, on. We waited for news over endless cups of coffee.

The bookstore offered some respite. It sold treatises by Kim Il Sung, North Korea's founder and the current leader's grandfather, and by Kim Jong Il on their life and politics. There was also a book of anecdotes about Kim Jong Un that had a chapter on the importance of well-fed dolphins. Postcards depicting North Korea's military might — missiles raining down on a geographic feature adorned with the Stars and Stripes and the Statue of Liberty under siege — were big sellers, according to the clerk. Dollars, euros, yen, Chinese yuan all happily accepted, she said.

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But essentially we had a long, boring wait.

Still, the Koryo can offer up surprises.

Eighteen years ago, it was the appearance of a German aid worker, Norbert Vollertson, who seized on the rare presence of foreign correspondents to risk expulsion by illegally driving one of them out of town to show him squalid living conditions and human rights abuses. He was later deported.

On Wednesday, it was when hotel staffers suddenly began to stare in rapt attention at televisions tuned to North Korean state television. It was a special report, breaking news to North Koreans about Kim's two-day trip earlier that week to Dalian, China, to meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping. He'd traveled by plane not train: the first trip abroad by air by a North Korean leader in decades. The trip was treated as an epic and historic event that analysts said could have been a test flight to prepare for Kim's upcoming summit with Trump.

After Pompeo finally returned from his 90-minute meeting with Kim, he gave a "fingers-crossed" response when asked if the American prisoners would be released. About 10 minutes later, a North Korean emissary arrived to give him the good news: They would be released. We would be heading home soon.

A small team of medical personnel and officials were dispatched to collect the three detainees. The rest of us, including Pompeo, drove to the airport to board the plane for the long journey back to Washington.

As the prisoners arrived, we caught a glimpse of them leaving their vehicle and walking up stairs to the plane. Unlike Warmbier, they were ambulatory and appeared in good spirits as they boarded. They were sequestered in the middle section of the plane with curtains closed.

They were transferred to another, smaller government jet in Japan, and we would not see them again until they arrived at Andrews and emerged from their aircraft with Trump. We watched online on our cell phones from a distance as we and our plane were held far from the event, too far to make out faces or any details.

In 2000, I had written a story comparing Pyongyang to a real-life version of "The Truman Show," the 1998 film about a man living in a reality created for television. Standing on the tarmac in the wee hours of Thursday morning and staring at a live feed of the prisoners' return on my iPhone while Trump greeted them hundreds of yards away, that sense returned.

## As lava oozes, Hawaii officials say rest of island is open

By **AUDREY McAVOY** and **JAE C. HONG**, Associated Press

VOLCANO, Hawaii (AP) — Warnings that Hawaii's Kilauea volcano could shoot boulders and ash out of its summit crater are prompting people to rethink their plans to visit the Big Island.

But most of the rest of the island is free of volcanic hazards, and local tourism officials are hoping travelers will recognize the Big Island is ready to welcome them.

Rachel Smigelski-Theiss is among those who have shifted gears. She had intended to visit Kilauea's summit with her husband and 5-year-old daughter and stay in Volcano, a town a few miles from the crater. Now they've cancelled their trip. She's worried potential flight disruptions would strand them on the island.

"My equivalent of this — and I'm from South Florida where we have hurricanes — is driving quite literally into a hurricane," she said.

Hawaii officials have had a busy month pleading with travelers to keep their plans even as dramatic images of natural disasters afflicting the islands have bombarded televisions and social media feeds.

In April, floods on Kauai Island made travelers nervous. Then last week, it was Kilauea volcano sending 2,200 degree (1,200 degree Celsius) lava bursting through cracks into people's backyards in the Leilani Estates neighborhood. Then as Kilauea's magma shifted underground, a magnitude-6.9 earthquake rocked the Big Island.

Since the quake, there have been frequent aftershocks. More than a dozen fissures oozing lava have opened in the ground. Adding to the distress, of the 36 structures destroyed, 26 were homes.

And now, scientists are warning that an explosive eruption may occur at the summit crater within weeks.

Tina Neal, the scientist-in-charge of the U.S. Geological Survey's Hawaiian Volcanoes Observatory, said

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geologists don't expect the summit eruption to be life-threatening so long as people stay out of the national park. Volcano and other nearby communities may be showered by pea-sized fragments or dusted with nontoxic ash but they aren't expected to get hit by large boulders, she said.

Robert Hughes, the owner of Aloha Junction Bed and Breakfast in Volcano, said he's had "tons" of cancellations since Wednesday when geologists first warned of the explosive eruption.

But Hughes, a 45-year resident of the village of some 2,500 people, suspects he'll soon hear from adventurers and photographers who want to see the eruption up close.

"I'm not too worried about it because I've lived here so long and I've seen it go through lots of different episodes," Hughes said.

The town, which is nestled in a lush rainforest a few miles from the crater, is a popular overnight spot for park visitors.

Hawaii Volcanoes National Park's decision to close Friday due to the risk of an explosive eruption will discourage travelers, said Janet Coney, the office manager at Kilauea Lodge, an inn in Volcano. The lodge, which has 12 rooms and 4 cottages, has had a handful of cancellations. Coney is anticipating more depending on what happens.

There are also further potential risks where lava has been erupting 25 miles (40 kilometers) east of the crater in Leilani Estates. Scientists said the molten rock there could start moving faster if fresher, hotter magma emerges from the ground.

Neal said a chemical analysis of the lava that's erupted since last week indicated it's from magma that had been stored in the ground since a 1955 eruption. It's been sluggish and somewhat cooler as a result, she said. But Kilauea could release hotter, faster-moving and more voluminous lava because magma has moving into the area from further up the volcano, she said.

The CEO of the Hawaii Tourism Authority, the agency that markets Hawaii to the world, said Kilauea is being monitored around the clock to provide the public with the best information. But George Szigeti noted that the Big Island is "immense" and there are large parts of the island unaffected by the volcano.

Like the town of Kamuela which is home to vast cattle ranches and Hawaii's own cowboys, called paniolo. The coffee farms on the Kona side of the island, which is more than 100 miles (160 kilometers) away from where lava is erupting. There's also the night sky visible from the 13,803-foot (4207-meter) summit of Mauna Kea, the island's tallest peak and the location of some of the world's most advanced telescopes.

Ross Birch, the executive director of the Island of Hawaii Visitors Bureau, said officials "walk the fine line."

"We know what people are going through in Leilani Estates. And we don't want to seem callous and inconsiderate in our messaging and our promotion of the island," he said. At the same time, tourism is the island's biggest industry and people's livelihoods are dependent on visitors coming, he said.

"We want to make sure that everybody is still working and people have jobs to go back to," Birch said.

On Friday, President Donald Trump declared a major disaster existed on the Big Island.

The move will make federal financial assistance available to state and local governments as they repair roads, public parks, schools and water pipes damaged by the eruption. It will also help cover costs for geologists and security personnel at roadblocks.

McAvoy reported from Honolulu. Associated Press journalist Jennifer Sinco Kelleher contributed to this report.

## Protesters: Black people should hold R. Kelly accountable

By TOM FOREMAN Jr., Associated Press

GREENSBORO, N.C. (AP) — A defiant R. Kelly took the stage Friday night in North Carolina, in spite of efforts to silence him over his treatment of women, and had barely begun performing when the bone-rattling background beat stopped playing.

"I've been through a lot of (expletive)" this week, he said. He thanked his fans, "for y'all to fight for me all these years." He said someone had asked him to tone down his act.

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And then he launched into his sexually suggestive repertoire. At one point, he rubbed a fan's cell phone between his legs. He persuaded another to wipe his face and crotch with a towel.

Women's groups had urged the Greensboro Coliseum to cancel, days after Kelly was disinvited from a concert in Chicago. Spotify announced it would no longer stream his music in its curated playlists. Other streaming services appeared to be demoting his music as well.

Kelly denies abusing anyone and faces no current criminal charges, and his fans weren't giving up on their R&B superstar.

"Everybody has some skeletons in the closet. I'm not going to tear him down, every good thing he does, because of something negative in his life," said Clarissa Kelley of Lancaster, South Carolina.

The Greensboro concert was among the R&B singer's first performances since the #MuteRKelly movement accelerated boycott efforts in recent weeks, with help from the Time's Up campaign against sexual harassment and assault.

Protesters gathered outside the Greensboro Coliseum and criticized arena officials for declining to meet with a coalition of women's groups that signed a letter citing a "long term history of sexual misconduct" by Kelly.

"It's important for the black community to stand up and hold him accountable for his actions," said Omisade Burney-Scott, with the Sistersong, a reproductive rights group.

R. Kelly is one of pop music's best-selling artists, with hits including "Ignition," "I Believe I Can Fly," "Step in the Name of Love," "Same Girl" and "Bump N' Grind." He's also written hits for Celene Dion, Michael Jackson and Lady Gaga.

He's written classic love songs and even gospel music, but he's defined by sexually explicit songs such as "Feelin' on Yo Booty," "Your Body's Calling Me," and "Sex Me."

He was acquitted in 2008 of child pornography after a video circulated appearing to show him having sex with a teenage girl. But as he continued to score hits and sell out stadiums, more women have come forward in recent years accusing him of sexual misconduct.

Kelly had been scheduled to be among the performers at a May 5 concert in Chicago, but was dropped as efforts by organizers of #MuteRKelly gained attention with support from Hollywood's Time's Up campaign.

Spotify, citing its new policy against hateful content and conduct, announced Thursday that Kelly's music is no longer available on the service's owned and operated playlists and algorithmic recommendations. His music can still be found by those who search for it, but Spotify will not promote it.

Kelly's management protested the move in a statement to The Associated Press.

"R. Kelly never has been accused of hate, and the lyrics he writes express love and desire," the statement read. "Mr. Kelly for 30 years has sung songs about his love and passion for women. He is innocent of the false and hurtful accusations in the ongoing smear campaign against him, waged by enemies seeking a payoff. He never has been convicted of a crime, nor does he have any pending criminal charges against him."

## Few teeth in Trump's prescription to reduce drug prices

By MATTHEW PERRONE and JILL COLVIN, Associated Press

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Trump called out those companies in his speech: "Our plan will end the dishonest double-dealing that allows the middleman to pocket rebates and discounts that should be passed onto consumers and patients," Trump said.

Azar later told reporters that the administration would "seek input" on doing away with drug rebates in the Medicare system to encourage more direct discounts. He gave no timeframe for more concrete steps.

"It took decades to erect this very complex, interwoven system," Azar said in a briefing following the speech. "I don't want to overpromise that somehow by Monday there's going to be a radical change, but there's a deep commitment to structural change."

Public outrage over drug costs has been growing for years as Americans face pricing pressure from multiple sources: New medicines for life-threatening diseases often launch with prices exceeding \$100,000 per year. And older drugs for common ailments like diabetes and asthma routinely see price hikes around

10 percent annually. Meanwhile Americans are paying more at the pharmacy counter due to health insurance plans that require them to shoulder more of their prescription costs.

America has the highest drug prices in the world.

The U.S. spent \$1,162 per person on prescription drugs in 2015, according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. That's more than twice the \$497 per person spent in the United Kingdom, which has a nationalized health care system.

Trump's speech singled out foreign governments that "extort unreasonably low prices from U.S. drug-makers" using price controls and said U.S. trade representatives would prioritize the issue in trade deals.

But experts are skeptical the U.S. can pressure foreign governments to pay more for drugs.

"It's hard to know why Germany or France or Australia would agree to something like that," said Professor Jack Hoadley of Georgetown University's Health Policy Institute.

In the U.S., Medicare is the largest purchaser of prescription drugs, covering 60 million seniors and Americans with disabilities, but it is barred by law from directly negotiating lower prices with drugmakers.

Allowing Medicare to negotiate prices is unacceptable to the powerful drug lobby, which has spent tens of millions of dollars since Trump's inauguration to influence the Washington conversation around drug prices, including a high-profile TV advertising campaign portraying its scientists as medical trailblazers.

The drug industry's top lobbying arm, Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, spent nearly \$26 million to sway federal decision makers last year, according to records tallied by Center for Responsive Politics. The annual total was the group's highest since the 2009 congressional fight that led to President Barack Obama's Affordable Care Act.

The group's chief executive, Stephen Uhl, said in a statement that some Trump proposals could help patients afford their medicines, but "others would disrupt coverage and limit patients' access to innovative treatments."

Associated Press writers Ken Thomas, Catherine Lucey, Tom Murphy and Linda A. Johnson contributed to this report.

Matthew Perrone can be followed on Twitter: @AP\_FDWriter

This story corrects that Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America's 2017 spending to influence federal decision makers was its most since 2009. An earlier version said PhARMA's 2017 spending was a record.

## Giuliani: Don't expect Trump-Russia interview decision soon

By JONATHAN LEMIRE, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — President Donald Trump and his lawyers likely won't decide whether he will answer questions from Russia probe investigators until after his summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un next month, according to the president's legal team.

Rudy Giuliani, the president's new attorney, said in an interview with The Associated Press on Friday that any preparation with Trump for a possible interview with federal investigators would likely be delayed until after the June 12 summit in Singapore because "I wouldn't want to take his concentration off something far, far more important."

Giuliani, who also suggested that special counsel Robert Mueller's team had indicated it would not attempt to indict Trump, said he had hoped to resolve the question of a possible interview by May 17, the one-year anniversary of Mueller's appointment, but that was no longer feasible.

"Several things delayed us, with the primary one being the whole situation with North Korea," Giuliani said. "The president has been very busy. It really would be pretty close to impossible to spend the amount of time on it we would need."

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The president's lawyers have not decided whether it would be in Trump's best interest to sit for an interview. Giuliani warned that it could be a "perjury trap" and suggested that "lies told by others" could land the president in legal trouble, though he said that Trump himself would not close the door entirely on an interview.

"The president would probably like the resolution," the former New York City mayor said. "If we were convinced it would speed up the process, we may do it. If we believed they would go into it honestly and with an open mind, we would be inclined to do it. But right now, we're not there."

Mueller's investigation has operated largely in secrecy, with the public getting only glimpses into its operation through witnesses who are questioned or when indictments and guilty pleas are unsealed. But Giuliani suggested that a recent conversation with Mueller's team led him to believe that the special counsel, citing a Justice Department opinion, had ruled out the possibility of trying to indict a sitting president.

Mueller has floated the idea of issuing a grand jury subpoena for Trump to answer questions, former Trump attorney John Dowd has said, though it is unclear how serious prosecutors were about such a move. Even if Mueller's team decided to subpoena Trump as part of the investigation, the president could still fight it in court or refuse to answer questions by invoking his Fifth Amendment protection from self-incrimination.

Giuliani said Friday that if a subpoena were issued to get Trump to appear, the president's legal team would oppose it unless they could "reach agreement on the ground rules." He argued that Trump could invoke executive privilege, and the team would point to Justice Department opinions in fighting a subpoena and "on both law and the facts, we would have the strongest case you could imagine." He noted the handover of 1.2 million documents as evidence of cooperation.

He also indicated that the president's lawyers may be "more likely" to agree to an interview if Mueller's team narrowed the scope of what it was investigating. Though Giuliani would not provide an exact date for when a determination would be made about the interview, he said it probably "would be silly to make a decision" much before the highly anticipated summit. He said that the demands on Trump's time meant that his legal team had "not done a lot" in terms of preparing the president for a possible in-person interview.

"It would take a while and he's focused on North Korea," said Giuliani.

A number of Trump allies, including Vice President Mike Pence this week, have stepped up calls for Mueller's investigation to wrap up, suggesting it was interfering in the president's ability to do the country's business. Mueller's team is investigating Russian interference in the 2016 election and possible coordination with Trump associates as well as whether the president obstructed justice. So far, the special counsel's office has charged 19 people — including four Trump campaign advisers — and three Russian companies.

Both Trump's former national security adviser, Michael Flynn, and his deputy campaign chairman, Rick Gates, have pleaded guilty and are now cooperating with the probe. A number of other former White House and campaign staffers, including Reince Priebus and Steve Bannon, as well as Inauguration Day committee chairman Tom Barrack, have been interviewed.

Trump's longtime personal attorney, Michael Cohen, had his office and home raided by federal agents and, this week, was revealed to have been selling his insight into Trump to corporations. Giuliani said the arrangement "looks bad" but insisted there was no crime.

Giuliani demurred when asked if Trump would consider it a "red line" for his children to be interviewed. Ivanka Trump and her husband, Jared, Kushner, both worked on the campaign and are senior advisers at the White House, while Trump's adult sons, Don Jr. and Eric, were also leading figures on the campaign. Giuliani said he did not expect those interviews with Mueller to take place.

"Our understanding is that he's pretty much finished," Giuliani said. "As far we know, we're basically the last witness."

The special counsel's office has not outlined the duration of the probe.

Some of Trump's recent tweets revealed the president's anxiety about how the investigation could sway voters as they decide whether to keep congressional Republicans in power or force him to face an aggressive Democratic majority. Giuliani repeated his call for the probe to end soon but suggested that if it lasted until November's midterms, "it would be helping Republicans."



"It makes the campaign feel it it's about impeachment," the former mayor said. "I think the Democrats would be making the same mistake we did back during Clinton."

In 1998, amid the furor of President Bill Clinton's impeachment, voter backlash cost the Republicans the chance to pick up seats in both Houses of Congress.

Associated Press writers Chad Day and Eric Tucker contributed reporting from Washington.

Follow Lemire on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/@JonLemire>

## Stevie Wonder says Kanye slavery comments are 'foolishness'

WEST HOLLYWOOD, Calif. (AP) — Stevie Wonder has called out Kanye West for saying slavery is a choice, calling the idea "foolishness" and likening it to Holocaust denial.

Wonder brought up West without prompting during an interview Thursday after a show at a West Hollywood club.

"There's been a lot of talk about what was said by Kanye," Wonder said. "I want people to understand that the truth is the truth and a lie is a lie.

"We all know that slavery was not a choice," he went on. "So I just think that people need to understand that if you know your history, if you know the truth, you know that's just foolishness."

Wonder said saying slavery is a choice is like saying the Holocaust is not real.

West made the remarks May 1 in an interview with TMZ.

"When you hear about slavery for 400 years, for 400 years, that sounds like choice," West said.

He defended his statements and did not back down from them on Twitter after widespread criticism.

An email to his representatives seeking a response to Wonder's comments was not immediately returned.

Wonder spoke softly, not angrily, and said he also felt sympathy for West, especially over the rapper losing his mother, who died after having cosmetic surgery procedures in 2007.

"You know he lost his mother, the horrible thing that happened," Wonder said. "I don't know if he had a chance to really mourn about all that."

## Al-Abadi defeated IS. Why won't he sweep Iraq's elections?

By PHILIP ISSA and QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA

BAGHDAD (AP) — During four years in office, Iraqi Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi has racked up a list of achievements that would make most politicians envious. He prevailed over an Islamic State insurgency that at its peak controlled one-third of the country. He steered Iraq's economy through a collapse in global oil prices. And he foiled a Kurdish bid for independence.

And yet, despite that record, a second term is far from assured when Iraqis go to the polls in national elections on Saturday.

With the conventional war against IS concluded, Baghdad is experiencing a relative lull in insurgent-style attacks and many Iraqis are expressing cautious hope for the future.

But the country continues to struggle with an economic downturn sparked in part by a drop in global oil prices, and the country's most powerful political block is deeply fractured.

The unified Shiite parliamentary block that gave its votes to al-Abadi in 2014 elections is now in pieces, with five factions competing for the popular vote on Saturday.

Al-Abadi has named his list al-Nasr — Arabic for "Victory" — in a clear reference to his military achievements against IS. But another list, headed by the leader of the country's most powerful Shiite paramilitary group, which fought alongside the Iraqi forces in the war on IS, is also trying to claim the mantle of victory, calling itself al-Fatah — Arabic for "Conquest."

Still, the victory over IS is far from voters' minds, while the country's grim employment situation is at the forefront.

"If you have a job today, you might not have one tomorrow," said Abdelhadi Mohammed, an upholsterer

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who left a job last month because he wasn't receiving his wages.

With two adult daughters still living at home, the 60-year-old Mohammed moved to another workshop an hour and a half away. Thin, soft-spoken, and losing his teeth, he said he would vote "for change."

"The security is OK," he said. "The economy needs to improve."

Under al-Abadi, the government cut public wages as oil prices plunged in 2014; the prime minister avoided mass layoffs and kept the currency afloat by securing support from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

In an address to the nation on the eve of the election, al-Abadi sought to reassure a dispirited electorate that a better future was in store.

"We have passed our ordeals," he said. "The economy is improving. Oil prices are rising. Investment is coming."

But voters fault him for failing to reform the country's vast patronage networks that have drained the private sector of its vitality. Iraq sits near the bottom of global governance indicators.

During his time in office al-Abadi faced waves of anti-government protests. In the summer of 2015, anti-corruption protests mobilized millions of Iraqis in Baghdad and the country's southern Shiite heartland, parts of the country that would traditionally be al-Abadi's base. In the summer of 2016 another wave of protests, largely led by influential Iraqi cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, stormed Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone.

In both instances al-Abadi appeased his followers by promising sweeping reforms. But al-Sadr — who also commanded fighters in the war against IS and headed a powerful militia that fought U.S. forces in Iraq before that — is now running against him in a campaign focused on eliminating government corruption and other social issues.

Al-Sadr is heading his own list that is likely to capture a considerable share of the Shiite vote, especially in Baghdad's poorer slums.

Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, who is one of Iraq's most widely respected voices and holds immense sway over the country's majority Shiite population, has pointedly declined to endorse a political alliance, instead urging Iraqis to withhold their votes from "failed and corrupt" politicians, and especially those that "held positions of responsibility previously."

Al-Abadi hardly seemed destined for high office when Iraqis went to the polls four years ago. The biggest winner was then-Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, a famously cynical leader who stoked sectarianism to build a Shiite voter base. Al-Abadi, a member of al-Maliki's Dawa party, won his seat in parliament on al-Maliki's coattails.

But the fall of Mosul to IS and the security and political crisis that followed forced Maliki to give up his post, and his party offered al-Abadi the position.

With the backing of both al-Sistani and the United States — a key Iraqi ally — al-Abadi inherited a country in desperate crisis.

Steadily, and with support from the U.S. and Iran, who flooded the country with munitions, supplies and advisers to support ground forces in the war against IS, al-Abadi rebuilt the country's security forces, stabilized the fronts and pushed back against the militant group.

Then, with Mosul recaptured last year, he faced down a bid for independence led by the country's Kurdish region's then-President Maasoud Barzani. Instead of recognizing the results of Barzani's referendum, Abadi ordered Iraqi forces to take back territory it disputes with the autonomous region, including the oil-city of Kirkuk.

But with his focus on governing, he made little time for campaigning, said analyst Ahmad al-Abyad, leaving him at a disadvantage as elections approached.

"He must change his style from employer to leader," al-Abyad said.

Holding a Ph.D. in electric engineering, al-Abadi has the charisma of a technocrat, and he has struggled to translate his achievements into enthusiasm in the polls.

This has left him vulnerable in a race that is less about substance and more about "brands," said Harith

al-Qarawee, a senior fellow at the Atlantic Council.

His chief opponents among the country's Shia parties are charismatic leaders with large voter bases built on years of loyalty and patronage.

Former Prime Minister al-Maliki is heading his own State of Law list that enjoys a close relationship with Iran. If al-Maliki's State of Law joins forces with al-Fatah, which also enjoys considerable support from Iran, to take more seats in parliament than al-Abadi's list, al-Abadi is unlikely to be named to the premiership again.

"Iran refuses to support al-Abadi for a second term," said a senior member of the State of Law list, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media.

In total there are 329 parliament seats at stake, with nearly 7,000 candidates from dozens of political alliances.

But even if al-Abadi forms the largest coalition, likely with al-Sadr's list, it is not certain he will be named prime minister.

"We want a strong prime minister, a prime minister who can take decisions," said Sabah Mohsin, a candidate on al-Sadr's list.

## 2 trips to North Korea with top US diplomat, 18 years apart

By MATTHEW LEE, AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — It began with quiet words from State Department officials: Apply for a new passport immediately. You may soon be going to a country for which ordinary U.S. passports are not valid for travel.

Vague as it was, the instruction to two reporters last Friday left little doubt about our mystery destination: North Korea.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo had visited the capital, Pyongyang, in complete secrecy while he was still CIA chief in early April to set the stage for an unprecedented summit between President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

Now, Washington was abuzz with rumors that he would be heading back soon to finalize details for the summit and bring back three U.S. citizens who had been held by North Korea for more than a year for alleged anti-state activities.

It would turn out to be my second visit to the isolated, authoritarian nation. Eighteen years ago, I had accompanied Madeleine Albright on her historic trip to North Korea, the first-ever by a sitting secretary of state — a highly choreographed and publicized two-day affair covered by some 80 journalists.

But this was something completely different: an under-the-radar, secret mission with only two American reporters as independent witnesses.

Since the death last year of Otto Warmbier, the American college student who suffered brain damage while in North Korean custody, U.S. nationals have been prohibited from traveling to North Korea without special passport validation.

An hour after handing over our passports, Carol Morello of The Washington Post and I were in possession of new ones and an extraordinary letter.

"Dear Mr. Lee," mine read, "The Department of State grants your May 4, 2018 request for a special validation permitting travel to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea ... Based on the information provided, we determined that the validation is in the national interest of the United States."

The "national interest of the United States." Hmm, I pondered, had I ever done anything before that would qualify?

Carol and I, who cover the State Department, were told to pack a bag and be on stand-by, but given no departure time, let alone a date. We were sworn to secrecy and advised that any leak of a potential Pompeo return to Pyongyang would be grounds for the two press seats on his plane to go empty.

Rumors of the trip intensified through the weekend as European diplomats who wanted to meet with Pompeo to discuss the administration's imminent decision on the Iran deal — which Trump was preparing to withdraw from — were being told he would be out of the country on North Korea-related travel.

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Still, Saturday and Sunday passed with no word.

Then, late on Monday afternoon, we were told we'd depart from the department's Foggy Bottom headquarters at 7:45 that night. We would fly overnight with refueling stops in Alaska and Japan, and go on to North Korea, returning in reverse order at some undetermined point. The State Department had allotted 10 hours of time on the ground. Officials cautioned though that it could be as many as 24 hours depending on the unpredictable North Koreans.

We left in a two-van motorcade from the department's underground parking garage with spokeswoman Heather Nauert, a translator and other Pompeo aides for Joint Base Andrews outside Washington. A staffer's forgotten bag caused a brief bit of alarm amid concern that our brief return to the Harry S. Truman building could attract unwanted attention. Once at Andrews, we waited for Pompeo to arrive and soon the U.S. Air Force C-32, a converted Boeing 757, its fuselage emblazoned with "United States of America" with tail number 80001, was airborne. Destination: Pyongyang, capital of the most reclusive nation on Earth.

So began a four-day journey with no confirmed schedule on the ground in North Korea, no guarantee of the prisoners' release or on progress for the summit and little to no sleep.

When I'd visited in 2000 as a reporter for the French news agency Agence France-Presse to cover Albright, circumstances were very different. For one, no special passport was needed. Dozens of journalists had either flown with the secretary of state or taken charter flights from Beijing to Pyongyang to cover the events. There were organized press tours of the capital and a mass stadium show hosted by the current leader's late father, Kim Jong Il.

The dynamics between Washington and Pyongyang, still long-time adversaries, had changed, too, and in unpredictable ways. Trump and the younger Kim had traded threats and insults during 2017 as North Korea conducted atomic and ballistic missile tests, fueling fears of war. Then this year, the rhetoric had cooled significantly and Kim had made an extraordinary offer to meet with Trump, an invitation the president accepted with startling alacrity.

Notwithstanding the secret arrangements for Pompeo's return trip, we wouldn't be the first to report it.

As our plane descended Tuesday into the U.S. air base in Yokota, Japan, for its second refueling stop, Trump announced that his top diplomat was on his way to Pyongyang.

It came during his highly anticipated declaration that he was withdrawing the U.S. from the Iran nuclear deal. Trump would use the fact of Pompeo's visit to counter criticism that the Iran decision meant he was not interested in negotiating with adversaries.

After a quick cold shower, which would be the only bathing opportunity in four days, we left Japan for the two-and-a-half-hour flight north and arrived at the Pyongyang airport early Wednesday morning. All normal communications were effectively shut down with staffers carrying "burn phones" on which they could text and a limited number of satellite phones for emergency use only.

Pompeo was greeted by North Korean dignitaries and boarded a Mercedes limousine. We climbed aboard a Chevy van, identified by logos on the spare tire and driver's console as "The American Road." The driver, whether or not he spoke or understood English, was non-communicative, so our questions about "The American Road" went unanswered.

Pyongyang had changed a lot in two decades. There were more tall buildings and more vehicles, but certainly still far fewer than in other world capitals. Also different were the smartly uniformed female traffic cops who had once directed a minuscule number of cars with precision gestures. They had moved from the middle of intersections to the corners, apparently due to the installation of stoplights.

After a winding drive past grandiose memorials, museums, government offices and revolutionary billboards, we arrived at the city's main hotel for foreign visitors, the Koryo International, where many of us had stayed when Albright visited in 2000. The hotel re-opened last year after a renovation aimed at ridding it of its Soviet-style appearance, with gleaming marble floors and walls. The elevators, however, remained as slow as they had been 18 years earlier.

With Pompeo's uncertain schedule, the Koryo lobby, bookstore, luxury goods market, coffee shop and traditional Korean restaurant were Carol's and my base for the next nearly 13 hours while he met and lunched with North Korean officials and finally left for closed-door talks with Kim, just an hour after re-

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ceiving confirmation that the meeting was, in fact, on. We waited for news over endless cups of coffee. The bookstore offered some respite. It sold treatises by Kim Il Sung, North Korea's founder and the current leader's grandfather, and by Kim Jong Il on their life and politics. There was also a book of anecdotes about Kim Jong Un that had a chapter on the importance of well-fed dolphins. Postcards depicting North Korea's military might — missiles raining down on a geographic feature adorned with the Stars and Stripes and the Statue of Liberty under siege — were big sellers, according to the clerk. Dollars, euros, yen, Chinese yuan all happily accepted, she said.

But essentially we had a long, boring wait.

Still, the Koryo can offer up surprises.

Eighteen years ago, it was the appearance of a German aid worker, Norbert Vollertson, who seized on the rare presence of foreign correspondents to risk expulsion by illegally driving one of them out of town to show him squalid living conditions and human rights abuses. He was later deported.

On Wednesday, it was when hotel staffers suddenly began to stare in rapt attention at televisions tuned to North Korean state television. It was a special report, breaking news to North Koreans about Kim's two-day trip earlier that week to Dalian, China, to meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping. He'd traveled by plane not train: the first trip abroad by air by a North Korean leader in decades. The trip was treated as an epic and historic event that analysts said could have been a test flight to prepare for Kim's upcoming summit with Trump.

After Pompeo finally returned from his 90-minute meeting with Kim, he gave a "fingers-crossed" response when asked if the American prisoners would be released. About 10 minutes later, a North Korean emissary arrived to give him the good news: They would be released. We would be heading home soon.

A small team of medical personnel and officials were dispatched to collect the three detainees. The rest of us, including Pompeo, drove to the airport to board the plane for the long journey back to Washington.

As the prisoners arrived, we caught a glimpse of them leaving their vehicle and walking up stairs to the plane. Unlike Warmbier, they were ambulatory and appeared in good spirits as they boarded. They were sequestered in the middle section of the plane with curtains closed.

They were transferred to another, smaller government jet in Japan, and we would not see them again until they arrived at Andrews and emerged from their aircraft with Trump. We watched online on our cell phones from a distance as we and our plane were held far from the event, too far to make out faces or any details.

In 2000, I had written a story comparing Pyongyang to a real-life version of "The Truman Show," the 1998 film about a man living in a reality created for television. Standing on the tarmac in the wee hours of Thursday morning and staring at a live feed of the prisoners' return on my iPhone while Trump greeted them hundreds of yards away, that sense returned.

## 4 troopers hurt, suspect dead in Oklahoma shootout

TALIHINA, Okla. (AP) — Four Oklahoma troopers were struck by gunfire or shrapnel while serving a warrant early Friday at a man's home that may have been booby-trapped to spark a large fire, authorities said.

The blaze consumed several buildings in downtown Talihina, a town of about 1,100 people that's about 150 miles (240 kilometers) southeast of Oklahoma City.

The suspect was shot and has been pronounced dead, Oklahoma Highway Patrol Capt. Paul Timmons said. He was not immediately identified, and a body had not been recovered.

Timmons said the four injured troopers were treated and released from a local hospital and are expected to recover.

Local authorities had requested help from state troopers to execute a drug-related warrant because the man had a "violent criminal history," Timmons said.

"As soon as they made entry, they were met by gunfire," Timmons said.

He said authorities are "fairly certain" the man had surveillance cameras set up.

A fifth trooper who was wearing a protective vest was also struck in the chest area by gunfire, but es-

caped any injury because of the vest, Timmons said.

Authorities don't yet know what caused the fire, but Timmons said the blaze broke out instantly after the law enforcement officers tried to execute the warrant.

"Right now we suspect that the building may have been booby-trapped with some type of explosive device that maybe started the fire," Timmons said.

Firefighters appeared to have the blaze contained Friday afternoon.

It destroyed two historic buildings that were about 100 years old, Talihina Police Chief Rodney Faulkenberry said.

Talihina is stopping point for visitors to the Ouachita Mountains and is on the eastern end of the scenic Talimena Drive connecting with Mena, Arkansas.

## AP Explains: Unprecedented tension between Iran and Israel

By SARAH EL DEEB, Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — In the escalating confrontation between Israel and Iran, Israel's defense minister called on Syria's President Bashar Assad on Friday to rid his country of Iranian forces based there — warning their presence will only cause more trouble to the already war-ravaged country.

Avigdor Lieberman's comments were followed by threats from an Iranian cleric that Tel Aviv or Haifa would be in danger if Israel did "anything foolish."

The war of words followed the worst face-off to date between Israel and Iran. Israel fired dozens of missiles at what it said were Iranian positions in Syria on Thursday, hours after it said its forces in the occupied Golan Heights were targeted by Iranian rockets.

The brief but intense confrontation raised fears the region may be sliding into an unprecedented direct conflict between the two archenemies.

Here is a look at why the two countries are at each's other throats and why Syria could be the ground for a showdown.

### WHY SYRIA?

Iran sent massive military help to its ally, Syrian President Bashar Assad, to rescue his rule against armed rebellion during that country's 7-year-old civil war. With the war winding down in favor of Assad, Israel — which saw him as the lesser of two evils compared to Islamic hard-liners among rebels — is now finding that his victory has brought Iran closer to its borders.

Israel has increasingly warned that it sees Iranian influence in Syria as a threat, pointing to Iran's military presence inside the country as well as that of Iranian-backed militiamen. Israeli officials have said that 80,000 Shiite fighters in Syria are under Iranian control, including forces of Lebanon's Hezbollah and Iraqi and Afghan fighters.

Iranian officials and their allies have spoken of securing a corridor from Iran to Lebanon, through Syria and Iraq. Israel fears that will allow Iran to more easily transfer weapons to Hezbollah, Lebanon's powerful Shiite guerrilla force, and reinforce the militant group's influence over the region. During the civil war, Israel is believed to have carried out hundreds of strikes in Syria, mainly hitting weapons shipments.

Tension has been building. An airstrike on a military base in Syria last month, which Iran and Russia blamed on Israel, killed seven Iranians. In February, Israel shot down an Iranian drone that entered its airspace, triggering a clash in which an Israeli warplane crashed after being struck by Syrian anti-aircraft fire.

### WHAT DOES THE NUCLEAR DEAL HAVE TO DO WITH RISING TENSIONS?

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was a sharp critic of the Iran nuclear deal. Now, with President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw from it, Netanyahu may be emboldened to pursue his confrontation with Iran.

Tehran, meanwhile, is under pressure from the U.S. and Western allies to negotiate a new deal, one that goes beyond restricting the nuclear program to curb Iran's military power in the region. Iranian officials

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have rejected any new accord.

Tehran has not completely walked away from the nuclear deal, since the Europeans are still participating. But if it completely collapses and the U.S. imposes heavy new sanctions on Iran, prospects for major fallout with Israel are higher.

## HAVE ISRAEL AND IRAN ALWAYS BEEN MORTAL ENEMIES?

During the rule of Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, Iran had close relations with Israel starting in the 1950s, including diplomatic representations and direct flights. The two countries were the main allies of the United States in the region, and Iranian oil was shipped to Israel during the 1973 war.

But the 1979 Islamic Revolution ousting the shah ended that. The revolution's leader, Ayatollah Khomeini, declared Israel an "enemy of Islam" and cut all ties. Hostile rhetoric has escalated over the decades since. Israel considers the government in Iran an existential threat.

But unlike Israel and its Arab neighbors, the two countries have never had a direct confrontation. Instead, Israel has fought Iran's ally, Hezbollah, the last time in a 2006 war that saw massive destruction in southern Lebanon and concentrated rocket fire on Israeli cities.

## IS THE MIDEAST SLIDING TO AN ALL-ENCOMPASSING, RUINOUS WAR?

The reported Iranian attack on Israeli positions in the Golan and Israel's bombardment of suspected Iranian posts in Syria appeared to be warnings by each side that it is willing to respond — but not necessarily that they want to plunge into war.

But if they do escalate, the region could face one of its worst cross-border conflicts in decades, one that could potentially drag in the United States, a major ally of Israel, and Russia, which is Syria's mightiest ally.

Although Iran may not be a match for Israel's military power, it has a variety of allies and ways to hit back if cornered by the U.S., Israel and Saudi Arabia, Iran's regional rival.

Iran has an ally in Hamas, the Palestinian militant group in Gaza. In Lebanon, Hezbollah would stand ready to support its patron Iran. In Iraq, Iran sponsors a range of Shiite militias and has close ties to the political leadership.

In Yemen, the war in its fourth year is seen as a proxy between Saudi Arabia and Iran and can be a place for Tehran to retaliate and increase pressure. Saudi Arabia already accuses Iran of providing missiles that Yemeni rebels have fired toward Riyadh.

## Aide who said McCain is 'dying' still works at White House

By JILL COLVIN and ZEKE MILLER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House on Friday declined to condemn comments made by a special assistant to President Donald Trump dismissing Sen. John McCain's opinion during a closed-door meeting because, she said, "he's dying anyway."

White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders told reporters she would not comment on an internal staff meeting, but said that Kelly Sadler, the aide in question, remains a White House staffer.

"I'm not going to validate a leak out of an internal staff meeting one way or the other," she said.

Sadler was discussing McCain's opposition to Trump's pick for CIA director, Gina Haspel, at a communications staff meeting on Thursday when she said that, "it doesn't matter" because "he's dying anyway," two people in the room confirmed to The Associated Press.

The people, who were not authorized to discuss internal deliberations and spoke to AP on condition of anonymity, described feeling shocked and stunned by the remark. The comment was first reported by The Hill newspaper.

The White House had released a more supportive statement Thursday evening that said, "We respect Senator McCain's service to our nation and he and his family are in our prayers during this difficult time."

The 81-year-old Arizona Republican, who has spent three decades in the Senate, was diagnosed in July with glioblastoma, an aggressive brain cancer. He left Washington in December and underwent surgery

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last month for an infection.

Sadler is a special assistant to the president. She did not respond to requests for comment Thursday evening or Friday.

The incident came the same day a retired Air Force general called McCain "songbird John" during an appearance on Fox Business Network for allegedly providing information to the North Vietnamese while he was a prisoner of war. A Fox spokeswoman said Friday that retired Lt. Gen. Thomas McInerney will no longer be allowed on the network.

McCain's wife, Cindy, responded with a tweet tagged to Sadler, "May I remind you my husband has a family, 7 children and 5 grandchildren."

And McCain's daughter, Meghan McCain, weighed in on "The View." Addressing the statements from both McInerney and Sadler, she said: "I don't understand the kind of environment you're working in where that would be acceptable and you can come to work the next day and still have a job."

"My father's legacy is going to be talked about for hundreds and hundreds of years," she added. "These people? Nothingburgers."

Sen. McCain, a Navy pilot who was beaten in captivity during the Vietnam War, has urged his fellow senators to reject Haspel. He said Wednesday that he believes she's a patriot who loves the country but "her refusal to acknowledge torture's immorality is disqualifying."

Haspel faced grilling Wednesday by the Senate Intelligence Committee about her role overseeing some CIA operations after the Sept. 11 attacks. She told senators that she doesn't believe torture works as an interrogation technique.

As for the president, he and McCain have had a troubled relationship.

As a GOP presidential candidate in 2015, Trump said McCain was "not a war hero" because he was captured in Vietnam, adding, "I like people who weren't captured."

Last July, McCain became the deciding vote against the GOP health care repeal with a dramatic thumbs-down. Trump later told the Conservative Political Action Conference that "except for one Senator, who came into a room at three o'clock in the morning and went like that" —Trump gave a thumbs-down — "we would have had health care (reform), too."

The crowd booed, and Trump added, "I won't use his name."

Spokeswoman Sanders, however, disputed the idea that the president had set a tone at the top that encouraged derogatory comments like Sadler's.

"We have a respect for all Americans and that is what we try to put forward in everything we do both in word and in action," Sanders said.

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Associated Press writer David Bauder contributed to this report.

## **Pompeo: US hopes to have NKorea as 'close partner' not enemy**

**By JOSH LEDERMAN and MATTHEW LEE, Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States aspires to have North Korea as a "close partner" and not an enemy, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Friday, noting that the U.S. has often in history become good friends with former adversaries.

Pompeo said he had told North Korean leader Kim Jong Un of that hope during his brief visit to Pyongyang earlier this week, during which he finalized details of the upcoming June 12 summit between Kim and President Donald Trump and secured the release of three Americans imprisoned in the country.

He said his talks with Kim on Wednesday had been "warm," "constructive," and "good" and that he made clear that if North Korea gets rid of its nuclear weapons in a permanent and verifiable way, the U.S. is willing to help the impoverished nation boost its economy and living standards to levels like those in prosperous South Korea.

"We had good conversations about the histories of our two nations, the challenges that we have had between us," Pompeo told reporters at a news conference with South Korea's visiting foreign minister



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Kang Kyung-wha. "We talked about the fact that America has often in history had adversaries who we are now close partners with and our hope that we could achieve the same with respect to North Korea."

He did not mention other adversaries by name, but Pompeo and others have often noted that the U.S. played a major role in rebuilding Japan and the European axis powers in the wake of the Second World War. With U.S. help, those countries recovered from the devastation of conflict.

"If North Korea takes bold action to quickly denuclearize, the United States is prepared to work with North Korea to achieve prosperity on the par with our South Korean friends," he said.

Kang praised the upcoming meeting between Trump and Kim in Singapore as an "historic" opportunity, but added a few notes of skepticism as well. Amid concerns that North Korea will demand the U.S. withdraw its troops from neighboring South Korea, Kang emphasized that the U.S. military presence there must be "a matter for the U.S.-ROK alliance first and foremost," using an acronym for South Korea's official name, the Republic of Korea.

She said the U.S. troop presence in the South for the past 65 years has played a "crucial role for deterrence," peace and stability on the Korean peninsula. Therefore, she said, any change in the size of the U.S. forces in the South Korea should not be on the table at the summit.

"The next few weeks will be critical, requiring air-tight coordination between our two countries," Kang said, noting that South Korean President Moon Jae-in would be in Washington to see Trump later this month.

Since Trump announced plans to hold a summit with Kim, questions have been raised continually about whether the two leaders have the same objective in mind when they speak about "denuclearization." To the U.S., that means the North giving up the nuclear weapons it has already built. But North Korea has said it's willing to talk now because it's already succeeded in becoming a nuclear-armed state, fueling skepticism that the North would truly be willing to give those weapons up.

Pompeo said there would need to be "complete" and "verifiable" denuclearization that would remove North Korea as a threat to the South, the United States and the rest of the world. He said a massive inspection and monitoring regime would be required to ensure the North's compliance.

"I think there is complete agreement about what the ultimate objectives are," Pompeo said, though he declined to offer more detail.

## Iran cleric threatens destruction of Israeli cities

By AMIR VAHDAT, Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — A prominent Iranian cleric on Friday threatened two Israeli cities with destruction if the Jewish state "acts foolishly" and attacks its interests again, while thousands of protesters demonstrated against President Donald Trump's withdrawal from the Iranian nuclear deal with world powers.

The comments by Ayatollah Ahmad Khatami followed a week of escalating tensions that threaten to spill over into a wider conflict between the two bitter enemies, who have long fought each other through proxies in Syria and Lebanon.

Israeli airstrikes struck Iranian military installations inside Syria on Thursday — its biggest coordinated assault on Syria since the 1973 Mideast war — in retaliation for an Iranian rocket barrage on Israeli positions in the occupied Golan Heights. It was the most serious military confrontation between the two rivals to date.

Khatami, who has echoed sentiments of Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei who says Israel will not exist in 25 years, said the Jewish state could face destruction if it continues to challenge Iran.

"The holy system of the Islamic Republic will step up its missile capabilities day by day so that Israel, this occupying regime, will become sleepless and the nightmare will constantly haunt it that if it does anything foolish, we will raze Tel Aviv and Haifa to the ground," he said, according to state television.

His remarks drew chants of "Death to America!" from those gathered for Friday prayers in Tehran.

Thousands later demonstrated across the country to protest Trump's withdrawal from the nuclear deal. The protests resembled other aggressive but orderly gatherings typical under President Hassan Rouhani, who has portrayed himself as seeking rapprochement with the West and is simultaneously trying to save

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the nuclear deal with world powers while attempting to appease hard-liners seeking revenge for Israeli attacks.

In a lengthy government statement on Friday, the Iranian government warned that it would take "whatever reciprocal measures it deems expedient" if it is not fully compensated for the U.S. withdrawal from the nuclear agreement as provided for in the accord.

It called on the other parties to the agreement — especially Britain, France and Germany — to safeguard the accord, adding that no provisions or timeframes in the 2015 agreement "are negotiable in any manner."

At the same time, the government said it has tasked the president of the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran with "taking all necessary steps in preparation for Iran to pursue industrial-scale enrichment without any restrictions."

After Trump announced the U.S. withdrawal from the deal on Tuesday, Rouhani warned that Iran would resume uranium enrichment at an even higher rate if the accord collapses. He ordered Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif to negotiate with the countries still in the deal to try to save it, and Friday's statement reiterated that Zarif was seeking "required guarantees" from the five other parties to the agreement.

The 2015 nuclear deal imposed restrictions on the Islamic Republic's nuclear program in return for the lifting of most of the U.S. and international sanctions against Tehran.

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

On Friday, France urged Europeans to stand up to Trump over the nuclear deal and not act as "vassals," as the EU scrambles to find ways to save the accord and the billions of dollars in trade it unleashed.

French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said on Europe-1 radio that Europe should not accept that the U.S. is the "world's economic policeman."

"Do we want to be vassals who obey decisions taken by the United States while clinging to the hem of their trousers?" Le Maire asked. "Or do we want to say we have our economic interests, we consider we will continue to do trade with Iran?"

European governments tried for months to persuade Trump to stick with the deal but failed, and now fear it will raise the risk of conflict in the region. Aside from the mounting military tensions between Iran and Israel, oil prices are rising on the uncertainty.

Russian President Vladimir Putin and German Chancellor Angela Merkel spoke Friday and underlined their aim of preserving the deal and peace in the Mideast. And European Union foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini insisted that it's not up to the U.S. to determine the deal's future anyway.

"This deal is not a bilateral treaty. It's a UN Security Council Resolution and it belongs to the entire world," said Mogherini, who will chair talks Tuesday with the British, French, German and Iranian foreign ministers in Brussels.

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Associated Press writers Angela Charlton in Paris, Lorne Cook in Brussels, Geir Moulson in Berlin and Edith M. Lederer at the United Nations contributed to this report.

## AT&T chief lobbyist out after hiring of Trump attorney Cohen

NEW YORK (AP) — The chief lobbyist for AT&T is leaving the company after overseeing a \$50,000-per-month contract for President Donald Trump's attorney Michael Cohen to serve as a political consultant.

In a memo to employees, AT&T CEO Randall Stephenson said the company made a "big mistake" in hiring Cohen as a political consultant. While everything the company did was legal, Stephenson said that the association with Cohen was "a serious misjudgment."

Stephenson noted that the company's reputation has been damaged and that the vetting process used by its team in Washington "clearly failed." The Washington team had hired Cohen under a one-year contract that paid \$50,000 a month.

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Stephenson said Bob Quinn, senior executive vice president of the external and legislative affairs group, "will be retiring."

The Justice Department is seeking to block AT&T's \$85 billion purchase of Time Warner on the grounds that it would stifle competition. AT&T disagreed, sending the battle into a federal trial. U.S. District Judge Richard Leon is expected to rule next month.

AT&T said Cohen approached the company after the 2016 presidential election and said he was leaving the Trump organization to do consulting for a "select few" companies that wanted his opinion on Trump and the administration. AT&T said it had been looking for consultants who could help it understand the president's approach to regulatory reform at the Federal Communications Commission, tax reform and antitrust enforcement — "specifically our Time Warner deal."

AT&T has said it needs to buy Time Warner to compete with the likes of Amazon, Netflix and Google in the rapidly evolving world of video entertainment. The Justice Department's antitrust lawyers worry that consumers will end up paying more to watch their favorite shows, whether on a TV screen, smartphone or tablet.

The company said it was contacted by investigators with special counsel Robert Mueller and provided "all information requested in November and December of 2017." There has been no communication with Mueller's office since then, the company said.

## 1 dead, dozens hurt by Israeli fire in Gaza border protest

By FARES AKRAM and KARIN LAUB, Associated Press

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP) — A Palestinian was killed and 176 were wounded by Israeli army fire Friday as thousands of Gaza residents protested near their sealed border — part of a weeks-long campaign to end a decade-old blockade of the territory.

Later Friday, vandals burned a fuel complex and a conveyor belt on the Palestinian side of Gaza's main cargo crossing with Israel, causing more than \$9 million in damages and disrupting the import of diesel fuel and building materials, the military said.

Friday's clashes offered a preview of what will likely be a much larger protest — and possibly a border breach — on Monday when the United States relocates its embassy in Israel to contested Jerusalem amid Palestinian outrage.

President Donald Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital and move the embassy there "is causing the volcano to spew," said 25-year-old protester Ahmed Deifallah as he stood near the Gaza border, a Palestinian flag draped around his head.

Deifallah, who is unemployed like almost half the Gaza labor force, said he would also join Monday's protest and is not afraid to die.

"We are used to confronting the (Israeli) occupation with our bare chests," he said. "We are used to wars and no one with us but Allah."

Friday marked the seventh weekly border protest since late March. The demonstrations have been organized by Gaza's Hamas rulers, but are fueled by despair among the territory's 2 million people. The vast majority are barred from travel and trade, while the blockade has gutted the economy.

As in previous weeks, thousands flocked to five tent camps near the border — some 15,000 people, according to the Israeli military.

From the camps, smaller groups moved closer to the fence. They threw stones, burned tires and flew kites with burning rags attached to them, hoping to steer them into Israel to set fields on fire.

The area was quickly engulfed in thick black smoke from the burning tires.

Israeli soldiers, some crouching behind sand berms, fired live bullets and tear gas volleys from the other side of the fence.

The Israeli military said protesters also threw pipe bombs and grenades toward Israeli soldiers and damaged the fence.

Later Friday, Palestinians vandalized a fuel complex and conveyor belt on the Palestinian side of Gaza's

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main cargo crossing, Kerem Shalom, the army said. It said the fuel installation is the only way to bring diesel fuel into Gaza for operating generators for hospitals and other key facilities.

The military distributed a video showing Palestinians cheering as a fire was set. It was the second such attack on the facility in a week. " Hamas continues to lead the residents of Gaza to destroy the only assistance they receive," the army said.

Nissim Jan, the director of an Israeli company that operates Kerem Shalom in partnership with private Palestinian companies, said he spent large sums to repair last week's damage. " This time I can't repair and will not repair it. Where shall I bring money from?" he said.

The Gaza Health Ministry said a 40-year-old protester was killed and 176 were wounded by Israeli fire Friday. Ten of the wounded were in serious condition, including a 16-year-old boy who was shot in the head. Nearly 800 others were overcome by tear gas or suffered other types of injuries.

Friday's death brought to 41 the number of protesters killed since March 30. In the same period, more than 1,800 were wounded by Israeli fire.

Despite such risks, Gaza's Hamas leader, Yehiyeh Sinwar, has said he expects tens of thousands to participate in Monday's protest. He has raised the possibility of a mass border breach, comparing protesters to a "starving tiger," unpredictable and full of pent-up anger.

Israel has said it will prevent any border breach and has stuck to its open-fire policies, including targeting "main instigators" and those approaching the fence, despite growing international criticism.

Israel says it has a right to defend its border and has accused Hamas of using the protests as a cover for attacking the border. Rights groups say the use of potentially lethal force against unarmed protesters is unlawful.

There are growing concerns that if Israel and Hamas dig in, a widespread border breach could lead to large numbers of casualties.

The protests are part of a campaign to break the blockade imposed by Israel and Egypt after the Islamic militant Hamas overran Gaza in 2007.

On Monday, they are also aimed at the inauguration of the U.S. Embassy, which comes five months after Trump recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital — a decision that outraged Palestinians as blatantly pro-Israel.

The Israeli-annexed eastern sector of Jerusalem is sought as a future Palestinian capital — at least by those supporting Hamas' political rival, West Bank-based Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. Hamas seeks an Islamic state in the entire historic Palestine, including what is now Israel, but has said it is ready for a long-term truce.

Another large-scale protest is planned for Tuesday, when Palestinians mark their "nakba," or catastrophe, referring to their mass uprooting during the Mideast war over Israel's 1948 creation. Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were driven out or fled homes in what is now Israel. More than two-thirds of Gaza residents are descendants of refugees.

Meanwhile, Gaza government officials announced that Egypt will open its border with Gaza for four days starting Saturday. Helping reinforce the Israeli blockade, Egypt has kept the Rafah crossing point, Gaza's main gate to the outside world, closed most of the time since the Hamas takeover.

Egypt opens the crossing from time to time, mainly to allow people in special categories, including medical patients and Gaza residents studying abroad, to leave the territory or return to it. The upcoming opening was framed as a humanitarian gesture ahead of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, which begins next week.

In Jordan, about 7,000 people participated in a "nakba" rally in an area close to the Israeli-occupied West Bank. Palestinian refugees and their descendants now number several million people in the region, including more than 2 million in Jordan.

Friday's rally took place before a large stage with a view of the Dead Sea and the West Bank. One man walked onto the stage with an effigy of Trump dangling from a noose.

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Laub reported from Amman, Jordan. Associated Press writers Ian Deitch in Jerusalem and Alice Su in

Sweimeh, Jordan, contributed to this report.

## Flynn stumps for GOP candidates while awaiting sentencing

By MICHELLE R. SMITH and JENNIFER McDERMOTT, Associated Press

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP) — Former national security adviser Michael Flynn is campaigning for Republican candidates around the country as he awaits sentencing for lying to the FBI, an unusual and risky course that has set off speculation and head-scratching over what he hopes to accomplish.

Flynn, the retired general who led the GOP convention in 2016 in a "Lock her up!" chant against Hillary Clinton, released a video endorsement last weekend of one of Democratic Sen. Jon Tester's opponents in Montana and said in a radio interview that he wants to do what he can for others running for office.

In March, Flynn appeared in California with Republican Omar Navarro in his primary bid for the seat held by Democratic Rep. Maxine Waters.

Many defense attorneys wouldn't advise a client convicted of a felony to make speeches and endorsements before going in front of a judge for sentencing.

"Judges like defendants to show a little remorse and be a little penitent about things, so it's risky," said Robert S. Bennett, Bill Clinton's personal lawyer during the Monica Lewinsky scandal.

Flynn's lawyer, Rob Kelner, did not return a message seeking comment.

Some of those close to Flynn, who has a home in Middletown, Rhode Island, say he is simply going about his life, staying involved in politics, as special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation of the Trump camp grinds on.

Justin Dillon, a former assistant U.S. attorney in Washington who specializes in white-collar crime, theorized that Flynn may be angling for a pardon from President Donald Trump.

"And making his case in public could be one way to help accomplish that," Dillon said. "I think President Trump has shown that he is willing to pardon people that he believes were wrongly treated."

But Bennett cast doubt on the angling-for-a-pardon theory. Flynn is cooperating with Mueller's investigation.

The White House has denied that any pardons have been discussed in connection with the Russia investigation. But Trump recently made a supportive comment about Flynn, tweeting on April 20 that he questioned why Flynn's life "can be totally destroyed" while fired FBI Director James Comey can profit from a new book.

Flynn, 59, served as Trump's national security adviser for 24 days. He pleaded guilty in December to making false statements about reaching out to the Russians on behalf of President-elect Trump.

His sentencing has been put on hold as he cooperates. He faces up to six months behind bars.

In endorsing Republican Troy Downing in Montana, Flynn said it was important to beat Tester in November. Trump has attacked Tester over his role in the failed nomination of White House doctor Ronny Jackson for Veterans Affairs secretary.

Tester "should have just kept his mouth shut. Instead he didn't, and it ruined the career of a great military officer," Flynn said in the video.

Asked by a Montana radio station if he had anything he wanted to say to supporters who believe he was unfairly targeted, Flynn declined and said he was there to talk about Downing.

Downing, who faces a primary in June, said during a candidate forum that he was flattered when Flynn offered his help.

"I think that he's been a casualty in what's going on in D.C., and we need to stand up for our own and we need to fight back," Downing said. "I've seen that across the state, people excited to meet this American patriot."

During Flynn's appearance in California, he told the crowd he wasn't there "to complain about who has done me wrong or how unfair I've been treated or how unfair the entire process has been."

In mid-April, his travels took him to New York City, where he spoke at a think tank.

Also last month, two of Flynn's siblings wrote an open letter in which they said they believe Flynn was

the subject of a "political assassination" by the intelligence community that resulted in his being "diabolically spied on, ambushed and framed."

Friends said Flynn is just continuing the kind of political activity he engaged in during the Trump campaign. "One of the biggest things about the Mueller investigation and having these charges held over his head is he was not allowed to move on," said Thomas A. Heaney Jr., a retired Army colonel who has been close with Flynn since childhood in Rhode Island. "That was part of his motivation for making the deal he made in the first place."

Associated Press writer Matt Volz in Helena, Montana, contributed to this report.

## Family of 7 dead with gunshot wounds in rural Australia

By ROD McGUIRK, Associated Press

CANBERRA, Australia (AP) — A family of seven including four children was found dead with gunshot wounds Friday at a rural property in southwest Australia in what could be the country's worst mass shooting in 22 years, police and news media said.

The children died with their mother and grandparents. The three generations had moved in 2015 to Osmington, a village of fewer than 700 people near the tourist town of Margaret River, to grow fruit, media reported.

Police would not comment on the possibility of murder-suicide, but said they are not looking for a suspect.

After being alerted by a phone call before dawn, police found the bodies and two guns at the property, Western Australia state Police Commissioner Chris Dawson said. Police wouldn't say who made the call.

The bodies of two adults were found outside a house and the others were found inside. They all resided at the property, he said.

Police said they have no information that would raise concerns about wider public safety, suggesting a shooter is not at large.

"Police are currently responding to what I can only describe as a horrific incident," Dawson told reporters.

"This devastating tragedy will no doubt have a lasting impact on the families concerned, the whole community and, in particular, the local communities in our southwest," he added.

Police were attempting to make contact with the victims' relatives, Dawson said. He declined to release the names or ages of the dead.

Philip Alpers, a Sydney University gun policy analyst, said the tragedy appeared to be the worst mass shooting in Australia since a lone gunman killed 35 people in Tasmania state in 1996, prompting the nation to introduce tough gun controls.

Australia's gun laws are widely acclaimed as a success, with supporters including former U.S. President Barack Obama saying Australia has not had a single mass shooting since they were implemented.

The generally accepted definition of a mass shooting — four deaths excluding the shooter in a single event — has been met only once in Australia since then. In 2014, a farmer shot his wife and three children before killing himself.

Police have revealed few details about the recent killings, and it is not clear whether there was more than one shooter.

Farmers are allowed to own guns under Australian law because they have a legitimate need to use them to kill feral pests and predators or sick or injured livestock. But automatic and semi-automatic rifles and shotguns are banned from public ownership.

Osmington is a collection of a few streets, farms, vacation accommodations and vineyards supplying the premium winemaking district known as Margaret River.

Samantha Lee, chair of the Gun Control Australia lobby group, said rural areas were over-represented in Australian gun deaths, including suicides.

"Regional and rural areas are particularly vulnerable to these sorts of tragedies, because of the combination of isolation, sometimes mental or financial hardship and easy access to firearms," Less said in a

statement.

"Although the details of this tragedy are yet to come to light, Australia has a tragic history of higher rate of gun deaths in rural areas," she added.

## Singapore ties with US, NKorea make city-state summit site

By ANNABELLE LIANG, Associated Press

SINGAPORE (AP) — Singapore's diplomatic ties with North Korea and its relative proximity made the Southeast Asian city-state a natural choice for the historic summit between President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

Trump announced in a tweet Thursday the two leaders will meet in Singapore on June 12.

The city is "a great location" for the summit, said Tom Plant, who specializes in nuclear and proliferation issues at London's Royal United Services Institute. "Kim will be on friendly territory, not hostile territory. But he wouldn't be on home turf."

Among the factors: It's closer for Kim than possible Europe venues, the experience of Singapore's security forces, and the fact that Pyongyang has had diplomatic relations with the country since 1975.

Singapore is familiar ground for the reclusive communist country, which has its embassy in Singapore's central business district.

Single-party rule since Singapore gained independence in 1965 has ensured stability and fostered a security state that is among the world's most efficient. Located between two Muslim majority nations — Malaysia and Indonesia — with Islamic State group sympathizers, it has effectively checked terrorist threats.

It's also a perfect venue for top security meetings — protests are not allowed without permission, movement is strictly controlled and media are kept under control.

Singapore is sometimes decried by civil libertarians as repressive. Among the most common complaints: preventive detention without warrants or charges; monitoring of private electronic or telephone communications also without warrants; the use of defamation laws to discourage government criticism and strict laws limiting freedom of association, according to the annual U.S. State Department human rights report.

North Korea's state companies have, in the past, conducted legal and illegal business dealings with Singaporean companies. The city-state, under pressure from the U.S. and a leaked U.N. report, officially cut off trade relations with North Korea in 2017 to abide by sanctions.

Singapore also is welcome ground for the United States.

It is a large trading partner, the second-largest Asian investor, and a longtime supporter of its military presence in the Asia-Pacific region. It's also the regional headquarters of large U.S. companies including Google, Facebook and Airbnb. Diplomatic relations between the two countries were established in 1966.

"The North Korean side will likely have a very large number of logistical and protocol issues it wants addressed by the summit venue, so having a (North Korean) embassy in the country where the summit is to be held is likely a requirement," said Malcolm Cook, a senior fellow at the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute in Singapore.

Located just over 3,000 miles (4,800 kilometers) from North Korea, Singapore is comfortably within the flying range of its aircraft. Flying to western Europe would require a stop or two to refuel.

"Singapore is neither too far away as European nations are, allowing Kim Jong Un's private jet to make it here without refueling, nor too close that Trump might be seen as 'giving way' to Kim by having to travel a longer distance than the latter," said Nah Liang Tuang, a research fellow at the Institute of Defence and Strategic Studies.

Former U.S. Ambassador to Singapore David Adelman said Singapore was ideal because it has been "an honest broker between East and West."

"Singapore has been a great friend to the U.S. but also Singapore has carefully worked to be a friend to all, which has earned it trust in capitals around the world," he said.

Its free enterprise philosophy welcomes trading partners from everywhere, regardless of politics.

"We hope this meeting will advance prospects for peace in the Korean Peninsula," Singapore's Ministry

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of Foreign Affairs said in a statement.

In 2015, Singapore was the site of another unprecedented summit between two leaders burdened with a legacy of mutual distrust: Chinese President Xi Jinping and rival Taiwan's then-President Ma Ying-jeou, the first such meeting since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949.

It also has hosted regional meetings, including the summits of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in 2007 and 2018. Since 2002, an annual security conference has been held there, featuring defense chiefs and officials from countries including the U.S., China and South Korea.

For such gatherings, roadblocks are set up around the summit venues, where armed Nepalese Gurkhas stand guard.

In 2015, Gurkha officers fired at a car that breached four roadblocks and crashed into a concrete barrier. The driver was killed and two passengers arrested in what turned out to be a drug-related crash, rather than an attack.

Valued foreign guests won't be troubled by protesters, either. Demonstrations in Singapore can only be held in a designated area, the 2.4-acre (0.9-hectare) Hong Lim Park.

Amnesty International says amendments to the country's Public Order Act have given authorities more power to restrict public assembly, and participants in peaceful protests have been arrested.

## Starbucks tells employees: Let anyone use the restroom

NEW YORK (AP) — Starbucks has told employees to let anyone use the restroom, even if they haven't bought anything, as it reviews its policies and tries to restore its reputation after the arrest of two black men at a coffee shop in Philadelphia.

The coffee chain said it wants all customers who come in "to feel welcome" and it's conducting a three-month review of its guidelines. That follows comments from Starbucks Chairman Howard Schultz said he didn't want people to feel "less than" if they were refused access.

"We don't want to become a public bathroom," said Schultz, "but we're going to make the right decision a hundred percent of the time and give people the key."

The arrests in Philadelphia were a major embarrassment for Starbucks, which has long projected itself as a socially conscious company and has promoted its stores as a place for people to gather outside of their homes and offices.

Schultz said Starbucks had maintained a "loose policy" on bathroom access, though decisions were ultimately left up to store managers on whether someone could use them. At the Philadelphia store where the two men were arrested April 12, it was policy to ask people who hadn't bought anything to leave.

The men, Rashon Nelson and Donte Robinson, who were asked to leave after one was denied access to the bathroom. They were arrested by police minutes after they sat down to await a business meeting they had scheduled. The incident was captured by people using cellphones and went viral, leading to protests.

Nelson and Robinson settled with Starbucks earlier this month for an undisclosed sum and an offer of a free college education. Separately, they reached a deal with Philadelphia for a symbolic \$1 each and a promise from city officials to set up a \$200,000 program for young entrepreneurs.

The company plans to close more than 8,000 of its U.S. stores on the afternoon of May 29 for racial-bias training for its employees.

## S&P 500 index has its best weekly gain since early March

By ALEX VEIGA, AP Business Writer

U.S. stock indexes ended mostly higher Friday as the market closed out its biggest weekly gain since March.

Drug makers and other health companies climbed after investors sized up President Donald Trump's latest plans to rein in drug prices and concluded any policy changes didn't pose immediate threats to health care company profits.

"All of this will have to go through a year-plus regulatory process, and none of it will have immediate



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impact," Terry Haines, macro research analyst at Evercore ISI, wrote in a research note Friday. "Thus our market positive view today."

The health sector's gains outweighed losses in technology stocks, phone companies and banks.

All told, the S&P 500 index added 4.65 points, or 0.2 percent, to 2,727.72. The benchmark index had its best weekly gain since early March with an increase of 2.4 percent.

The Dow Jones industrial average climbed 91.64 points, or 0.4 percent, to 24,831.17. The Nasdaq composite fell 2.09 points, or 0.03 percent, to 7,402.88. The Russell 2000 index of smaller-company stocks rose 3.08 points, or 0.2 percent, to 1,606.79.

For the week, the Dow notched a gain of 2.3 percent, while the Nasdaq finished 2.7 percent higher. The Russell 2000 picked up a gain of 2.6 percent.

Trading was choppy for much of the day as investors waited for the Trump administration to release details of its plan to control drug prices. After Trump began discussing the broad goals of his plan Friday afternoon, health care sector stocks mostly moved higher.

Regeneron Pharmaceuticals jumped 6.2 percent to \$306.94 and CVS Health gained 3.2 percent to \$64.41. Biogen added 3.1 percent to \$282.39.

"Trump had a choice today: To seek disruptive fundamental reform or to embrace more incremental steps," Haines wrote. "Trump chose the incremental over the disruptive, which is the decisive factor for markets today."

Technology stocks, which are up 10.8 percent this year, outgaining all other sectors in the S&P 500, were among the biggest decliners Friday.

Symantec slumped 33.1 percent to \$19.52 after the security software company revealed an internal investigation that could delay its annual report. The company also said the matter has been referred to the Securities and Exchange Commission. Symantec also gave weak profit forecasts.

Chipmaker Nvidia reported solid quarterly results, but shed some of its recent gains, sliding 2.2 percent to \$254.53.

Investors continued to key in on the latest corporate earnings and outlooks.

Trade Desk vaulted 43.4 percent to \$75.61 after the digital advertising platform company raised its annual forecasts after a strong first quarter.

Yelp fell 7.8 percent to \$44.02 after the online review portal gave an outlook for its current quarter fell short of analysts' expectations.

TiVo slid 1.2 percent to \$13.88 after the digital video recording company took a bigger-than-expected loss and reported weak revenue.

Despite the rash of disappointing company report cards, corporate earnings have been a source of good news for investors in recent weeks.

Roughly 90 percent of the companies in the S&P 500 have reported results so far this earnings season, and some 62 percent of those have delivered both earnings and revenue that exceeded financial analysts' expectations, according to S&P Global Market Intelligence.

Walmart, Home Depot and other retailers are due to report quarterly results next week.

"The market is looking forward to the next ingredient that's going to push it up or down as you get through earnings," Jeff Zipper, managing director at U.S. Bank Private Wealth Management.

Benchmark U.S. crude oil fell 66 cents to settle at \$70.70 a barrel in New York. Brent crude, used to price international oils, lost 35 cents to close at \$77.12. Oil futures have remained near their highest level since 2014 this week following the Trump administration's decision to re-impose sanctions Iran, the world's fifth-biggest oil producer.

Bond prices fell. The yield on the 10-year Treasury rose 2.97 percent from 2.96 percent late Thursday.

The dollar fell to 109.30 yen from 109.37 yen on Thursday. The euro strengthened to \$1.1945 from \$1.1927.

Gold fell \$1.60 to \$1,320.70 an ounce. Silver dropped 1 cent to \$16.75 an ounce. Copper was little changed at \$3.11 a pound.

In other energy futures trading, heating oil was little changed at \$2.22 a gallon. Wholesale gasoline also

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held steady at \$2.19 a gallon. Natural gas slipped a penny to \$2.80 per 1,000 cubic feet.

European stock indexes finished mostly lower Friday after a strong rally saw many indexes strike multi-week highs. Germany's DAX fell 0.2 percent and France's CAC 40 slid 0.1 percent. Britain's FTSE 100 gained 0.3 percent. Earlier in Asia, Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 rose 1.2 percent and South Korea's Kospi added 0.6 percent. Hong Kong's Hang Seng jumped 1.0 percent.

## Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Saturday, May 12, the 132nd day of 2018. There are 233 days left in the year.

Today's Highlights in History:

On May 12, 1943, during World War II, Axis forces in North Africa surrendered. The two-week Trident Conference, headed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, opened in Washington.

On this date:

In 1012, Pope Sergius IV died, ending a nearly three-year papacy; he was succeeded by Pope Benedict VIII.

In 1780, during the Revolutionary War, the besieged city of Charleston, South Carolina, surrendered to British forces.

In 1870, an act creating the Canadian province of Manitoba was given royal assent, to take effect in July.

In 1932, the body of Charles Lindbergh Jr., the 20-month-old kidnapped son of Charles and Anne Lindbergh, was found in a wooded area near Hopewell, New Jersey.

In 1937, Britain's King George VI was crowned at Westminster Abbey; his wife, Elizabeth, was crowned as queen consort.

In 1949, the Soviet Union lifted the Berlin Blockade, which the Western powers had succeeded in circumventing with their Berlin Airlift.

In 1958, the United States and Canada signed an agreement to create the North American Air Defense Command (later the North American Aerospace Defense Command, or NORAD).

In 1967, "Are You Experienced," the debut album of the Jimi Hendrix Experience, was released in Britain by Track Records. Procol Harum's debut single "A Whiter Shade of Pale" was released in the United Kingdom on the Deram label. English poet laureate John Masefield died in Abingdon at age 88.

In 1978, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said that hurricanes would no longer be given only female names.

In 1982, in Fatima, Portugal, security guards overpowered a Spanish priest armed with a bayonet who attacked Pope John Paul II. (In 2008, the pope's longtime private secretary revealed that the pontiff was slightly wounded in the assault.)

In 1997, Australian Susie Maroney became the first woman to swim from Cuba to Florida, covering the 118-mile distance in 24 1/2 hours.

In 2003, the Texas House ground to a standstill after 51 Democratic lawmakers left the state in a dispute over a Republican congressional redistricting plan. (The Democrats returned four days later from Oklahoma, having succeeded in killing the bill.)

Ten years ago: A devastating 7.9 magnitude earthquake in China's Sichuan province left more than 87,000 people dead or missing. Irena Sendler, credited with saving some 2,500 Jewish children from the Holocaust, died in Warsaw, Poland, at age 98. Pop artist Robert Rauschenberg died on Captiva Island, Florida, at age 82. Indians second baseman Asdrubal Cabrera turned the 14th unassisted triple play in major league history during the second game of a doubleheader against Toronto, which won the match, 3-0, in 10 innings. NBC announced that Jimmy Fallon would succeed Conan O'Brien as host of "Late Night."

Five years ago: Pope Francis gave the Catholic Church new saints, including hundreds of 15th-century martyrs who were beheaded for refusing to convert to Islam, as he led his first canonization ceremony

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before tens of thousands of people in St. Peter's Square. Nineteen people were wounded in a gang-related shooting during a Mother's Day parade in New Orleans. Serena Williams kept her No. 1 ranking and added career title No. 50 as she beat Maria Sharapova 6-1, 6-4 in the final of the Madrid Open; Rafael Nadal won his fifth title since returning from a knee injury by beating Stanislas Wawrinka (vah-VRINK'-ah) 6-2, 6-4.

One year ago: Dozens of countries were hit with a huge cyberextortion attack that locked up computers and held users' files for ransom at a multitude of hospitals, companies and government agencies. A gunman killed Kirkersville, Ohio, Police Chief Steven Eric DiSario as well as two employees at a nearby nursing home before taking his own life; authorities said one of the employees was the gunman's ex-girlfriend. Pope Francis urged Catholics to "tear down all walls" and spread peace during a visit to Fatima, Portugal, as he marked the 100th anniversary of one of the most unique events of the 20th-century Catholic Church: the visions of the Virgin Mary reported by three illiterate shepherd children.

Today's Birthdays: Critic John Simon is 93. Composer Burt Bacharach is 90. Actress Millie Perkins is 80. Rhythm-and-blues singer Jayotis Washington is 77. Country singer Billy Swan is 76. Actress Linda Dano is 75. Actress Lindsay Crouse is 70. Singer-musician Steve Winwood is 70. Actor Gabriel Byrne is 68. Actor Bruce Boxleitner is 68. Singer Billy Squier is 68. Blues singer-musician Guy Davis is 66. Country singer Kix Brooks is 63. Actress Kim Greist is 60. Rock musician Eric Singer (KISS) is 60. Actor Ving Rhames is 59. Rock musician Billy Duffy is 57. Actor Emilio Estevez is 56. Actress April Grace is 56. Actress Vanessa A. Williams is 55. TV personality/chef Carla Hall is 54. Country musician Eddie Kilgallon is 53. Actor Stephen Baldwin is 52. Actor Scott Schwartz is 50. Actress Kim Fields is 49. Actress Samantha Mathis is 48. Actress Jamie Luner is 47. Actor Christian Campbell is 46. Actress Rhea Seehorn is 46. Actor Mackenzie Astin is 45. Country musician Matt Mangano (The Zac Brown Band) is 42. Actress Rebecca Herbst is 41. Actress Malin (MAH'-lin) Akerman is 40. Actor Jason Biggs is 40. Actor Rami Malek (RAH'-mee MA'-lihk) is 37. Actress-singer Clare Bowen is 34. Actress Emily VanCamp is 32. Actor Malcolm David Kelley is 26. Actor Sullivan Sweeten is 23.

Thought for Today: "Dissent is not sacred; the right of dissent is." — Thurman Arnold, American lawyer (1891-1969).