

## WORLD IN BRIEF

Associated Press

## Blast on Russian subway kills 10; 2nd bomb is defused

ST. PETERSBURG, Russia — A bomb blast tore through a subway train in Russia's second-largest city today, killing 10 people and injuring about 40 as President Vladimir Putin visited the city, authorities said. Hours later, police found an unexploded device in one of St. Petersburg's busiest subway stations, sending a wave of anguish and fear through Putin's hometown.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack today, but Russian trains and planes have been targeted repeatedly by Islamic militants, mostly connected to the insurgency in Chechnya and other Caucasus republics. The last confirmed attack was in October 2015 when Islamic State militants downed a Russian airliner heading from an Egyptian resort, killing all 224 people on board.

The Dec. 25 crash of a Russian plane carrying Red Army Choir members near the southern city of Sochi is widely believed to have been due to a bomb, but no official cause has been stated for the crash that killed 92 people.

The blast today hit the St. Petersburg train it traveled between stations about 2:20 p.m. The driver chose to continue on to the next station, Technological Institute, a decision praised by Russia's Investigative Committee as aiding evacuation efforts and reducing the danger that passengers would die by trying to walk along the subway's electrified tracks.

After a few hours of differing casualty tolls, Health Minister Veronika Skvortsova said 10 people died from the blast. City health authorities said 43 others were hospitalized.

## Senate panel to vote on Trump's Supreme Court nominee

WASHINGTON — A Senate panel is opening a weeklong partisan showdown over President Donald Trump's Supreme Court nominee with Democrats steadily amassing the votes to block Neil Gorsuch and force Republicans to unilaterally change long-standing rules to confirm him.

The Republican-led Judiciary Committee meets today and is expected to back Gorsuch and send his nomination to the full Senate, most likely on a near-party line vote. Intent on getting Trump's pick on the high court, Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., is likely to change Senate rules so that Gorsuch can be confirmed with a simple majority in the 100-seat chamber, instead of the 60-voter threshold.

"Neil Gorsuch will be confirmed this week," McConnell said on CNN's "State of the Union" on Sunday, adding, "how that happens really depends on our Democratic friends. How many of them are willing to oppose cloture on a partisan basis to kill a Supreme Court nominee?"

So far, 41 senators have announced they will vote to block the nomination on a procedural cloture vote — a parliamentary step to advance a legislative issue — and oppose the choice. Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont., who faces a tough re-election in a state Trump won handily, announced his opposition on Sunday.

"With Judge Gorsuch on the bench, I am deeply concerned that dark money will continue to drown out the voices and votes of citizens, the Court will stand between women and their doctors, and the government will reach into the private lives of law-abiding Americans. These are not Montana values, which is why I cannot support this nomination," Tester said.

## Nine Oregon hotels accused of false advertising, marketing

PORTLAND — Officials are investigating nine Oregon hotels who travelers claim cancelled their room reservations and inflated prices ahead of a summer solar eclipse.

The Oregonian/reports more than a dozen people filled complaints against nine hotels to the Oregon Department of Justice.

Consumers said on TripAdvisor they had made advanced reservations at the Stafford Inn in Prineville, east of Portland, for about \$170. The reservations were later canceled because of new ownership or rebranding claims. The rooms' price was updated to \$600 to \$635.

Stafford Inn manager Laurie Romine says the very same thing is going on all over the place.

Department spokeswoman Ellen Klem says hotels are allowed to charge any price, but should not be deceptive in their advertising or marketing.

Klem says the hotels could face a \$25,000 fine.

## Fines for pesticide use violations quadrupled in Oregon

SALEM — As the Oregon Legislature considers four bills that would tighten regulations around pesticides, the state's Agriculture Department says the dollar amount of fines it issued for improper pesticide use quadrupled last year — thanks largely to one big penalty.

The Statesman Journal reports that the department levied 37 fines totaling nearly \$86,000, up from 23 fines totaling less than \$19,000 in 2015.

In one significant case last year, an aerial spraying company, Applebee Aviation, and its owner, Michael L. Applebee, were fined nearly \$54,000. Investigators said they failed to take any health or safety precautions for workers, and continued spraying after its license was suspended.

Other cases that generated fines last year included a Gresham nursery that allowed pesticide spray to drift onto a nearby home, sickening its occupants.

Among the measures the Legislature is considering is one that would make it easier for people sickened by pesticides to sue and another that would require the state to maintain an electronic reporting and notification system for pesticide applications, with free public access.

## Lawsuit over sidewalks could cost Seattle millions

SEATTLE — The city of Seattle is headed toward a federal court settlement that could cost millions of dollars to make sidewalks and curb ramps more usable for people with wheelchairs and other mobility issues.

Three men with disabilities sued the city in 2015 to force the city to make upgrades. They alleged the city was violating federal law because many sidewalks didn't have curb ramps that were accessible.

The Seattle Times reports that many other cities have settled similar lawsuits and committed to spending more to upgrade their sidewalks and curb ramps to make them more accessible.

In court filings, the city of Seattle denied virtually all of the allegations in the lawsuit. But Mayor Ed Murray has said he is committed to spending more money to make upgrades.

Attorneys for all sides declined to comment on specifics of a settlement, citing the ongoing negotiations.

The city hired a consultant to study more than 28,000 curb ramps in the Seattle.

## Cleanup: Much of the debris washed in from the Pacific

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Because of a strong winter storm season, much of the debris washed in from the ocean. Items ranged from large fishing rope, dozens of crates and buoys to glass and plastic bottles from other countries.

Other common items found during the event were tiny bits of plastic, cigarette butts and bottle caps, harmful to both marine life and shorebirds. Unique items found by volunteers included a 25-foot mooring rope in Newport, an old rocking horse, 100 feet of steel cable, sections from a dock in Manzanita and 40 toothbrushes in Netarts.

Trash wasn't the only thing found on the beach. A few lucky volunteers found custom glass floats donated by local artisans along the central and south coast.

SOLVE, an Oregon-based nonprofit aimed at keeping the state clean and healthy, has been organizing biannual cleanups along the Oregon Coast since 1984. In the last 33 years, nearly 260,000 SOLVE volunteers have removed an estimated 3.5 million pounds of debris from the coastline, organizers said.



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

Astoria resident David Reid gathers trash during SOLVE's Spring Oregon Beach Cleanup Saturday at Fort Stevens State Park in Hammond.



Beach cleanup volunteers in Cannon Beach.

SOLVE Submitted Photo



Photos by Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

ABOVE: Volunteers scavenge the beach for trash North of the Peter Iredale Shipwreck during SOLVE's Spring Oregon Beach Cleanup Saturday at Fort Stevens State Park in Hammond. BELOW: Volunteers collect trash on the beach near the Peter Iredale Shipwreck during SOLVE's Spring Oregon Beach Cleanup Saturday at Fort Stevens State Park in Hammond. The scheduled cleanup was one of many taking place along the Oregon Coast on Saturday.

SOLVE/Submitted Photo  
Debris collected off the beach at Seaside.

## Ghost fest: Smith anticipates the tour to become a permanent installment in Seaside

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## Gathering ghosts

Due to the fact this conference has only been held in Seaside for two years, Smith said he still works on gathering and confirming more ghost stories from residents and local businesses. He originally started doing tours in Oregon City in 2012, where he has had more time to curate the experiences.

But feelings of paranormal activity in Seaside exist, and are even documented in a book written by Seaside locals Dave Oester and Sharon Gill. "Twilight Visitors: Ghost Tales Vol. 1." details their account living in an allegedly haunted house on 12th Avenue.

Along the tour, Smith

pointed to some historical reasons that could play a factor into Seaside's ghostly presence.

He cited Ben Holladay, the man responsible for building the first railroad out to Seaside over the sites of multiple Native American burial grounds. The memorial for the three anonymous sailors on the Promenade, who washed ashore after a lethal storm and marked only by a stone inscribed with "Found on the beach. April 25, 1865." Terrible Tilly, the lighthouse built in 1881 associated with a number of shipwrecks along the coast, as well as an old site where people used to distribute ashes of the dead.

"You build buildings on

sites like these, and then they get demolished, and you start hearing accounts of people seeing things," Smith said.

But for now, the tour stopped at places along the Promenade with unconfirmed rumors of ghostly activity: sounds of footsteps, appliances starting on their own, or even just a "general sense of dread," as Smith put it. Rumor has it a room in the WorldMark is haunted, Smith said, as well as The Ebb Tide, The Shilo Inn and the Seaside Aquarium.

## Ghostly vibes

Even the Seaside Civic and Convention Center, where the conference is held, people report feeling paranormal activity, Smith said.

Danielle Stearer, who is from Salem, attended the tour and enjoyed the history of Seaside. It puts the paranormal experiences she has — like when she said she heard her grandfather whisper her nickname to her in the convention center — into context.

"I've always been interested in the paranormal and a history buff. It's the unknown," Stearer said. "We all wonder what continues in our life after we are gone. Something has to carry on after I pass, which is why it's important to connect with the spirits who are with you."

Smith said he anticipates the ghost tour to become a permanent installment in Seaside.