

WORLD IN BRIEF

Associated Press

Police: 2 dead after shooting at Central Michigan University

MOUNT PLEASANT, Mich. — Two people who weren’t students were fatally shot at a Central Michigan University residence hall today, prompting officials to put the campus on lockdown as police searched for a 19-year-old suspect described as armed and dangerous.

Campus police believe the shooting “started from a domestic situation,” the university said in a statement. No other injuries were immediately reported. The university, which has about 23,000 students, urged students to take shelter.

The school posted an alert around 9:30 a.m. on social media about shots being fired at Campbell Hall, a dorm on the campus in Mount Pleasant, which is about 70 miles north of Lansing. An automated phone message from the school also was sent to students.

The shooting occurred on the last day of classes before spring break. Parents who were trying to pick up students were told to stay off campus and go to a local hotel where staff would assist them.

In the surrounding community, students and staff in the Mount Pleasant school district were told not to leave nine buildings. Visitors also weren’t being allowed to enter.

Global stocks keep dropping as Trump talks up ‘trade war’

NEW YORK — A global sell-off in stocks came back around to the United States today after President Donald Trump doubled down on “trade war” talk. The Standard & Poor’s 500 fell sharply at the start of trading, before paring its losses by midday, and the index is now down for the year even though it just had its best January in two decades.

Trump took to Twitter to defend his promise from Thursday to impose stiff tariffs on imports of steel and aluminum, which has investors worried about escalating retaliation by other countries. He said that the United States is losing on trade with virtually every country and that “trade wars are good” and “easy to win.”

Investors have a different impression. Markets tumbled in Asia, where China expressed “grave concern,” and the weakness spread to Europe, where the president of the European Union’s governing body promised retaliation if Trump follows through. In the United States, the S&P 500 dropped as much as 1.1 percent before paring its decline.



AP Photo/David Goldman
A nurse prepares a flu shot at the Salvation Army in Atlanta.

Worst of bad US flu season is over as illnesses decline

NEW YORK — The worst of the nation’s nasty flu season is finally over.

U.S. health officials said today that the flu season apparently peaked in early February and has been falling since then.

The number of people going to the doctor with symptoms of the flu has continued to decline. Deaths from the flu or pneumonia are going down, too. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said 32 states reported heavy patient flu traffic last week, down from 43 a month ago.

This flu season started early and the intensity level was among the highest seen in a decade. The flu vaccine didn’t work very well this season and health officials are still trying to figure out why.

A trade war would threaten one of the key reasons investors were optimistic about stocks coming into 2018: The global economy was finally strengthening in sync, which should lead to higher corporate profits. Big U.S. companies are heavily reliant on global trade, which means investors in U.S. stocks have only recently begun feeling the full benefit.

Companies in the S&P 500 got 43 percent of their sales from outside the United States in 2016, according to the most recent data from S&P Dow Jones Indices. That means Apple and other big U.S. companies are dependent on customers not only in Peoria but also Paris and Peru.

Trump’s gun stance a struggle for Congress, NRA

WASHINGTON — Action on gun legislation has skidded to a halt in Congress — not for a lack of bipartisan proposals, but because President Donald Trump’s stunning shift on gun policy left some in his party confused, irritated and scrambling to figure out what to do next.

Republicans squirmed over Trump’s call for stricter gun laws after the assault on a Florida high school, while Democrats seized on the opening to reach beyond a modest measure gaining traction in Congress. They unveiled a more ambitious priority list, with expanded background checks and even a politically risky ban on assault weapons.

The tug of war over the appropriate response on the school shooting remains far from settled.

Late Thursday, Trump tweeted that he’d had a “Good (Great) meeting in the Oval Office tonight with the NRA!”

The executive director of the National Rifle Association, Chris Cox, also tweeted about the meeting, saying Trump, Vice President Mike Pence and the NRA “want safe schools, mental health reform and to keep guns away from dangerous people.” Cox added that Trump and Pence “support the Second Amendment, support strong due process and don’t want gun control.”

The NRA has called the bulk of the proposals discussed at the White House this week “bad policy” that would not keep people safe.

White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders said today that she believed Trump had arranged the NRA meeting. She said Trump’s thinking on guns had not changed since Wednesday.

Asked if Trump had made any specific promises, Sanders said “only that he’ll continue to support the Second Amendment.”

Delta CEO insists ‘we are not taking sides’ in gun debate

ATLANTA — After Delta Air Lines withstood swift political retribution in its home state of Georgia for cutting ties with the National Rifle Association, the airline’s chief executive insisted today “we are not taking sides” in the national debate over guns.

Atlanta-based Delta released an internal memo CEO Ed Bastian sent to employees as GOP Gov. Nathan Deal swiftly signed into law a broad tax bill Republican lawmakers amended to kill a proposed tax break on jet fuel that would have saved Delta millions of dollars.

Republican leaders running to succeed Deal as governor vowed to punish Delta after it stopped offering fare discounts to NRA members. Deal bemoaned the “unbecoming squabble,” but signed the altered tax bill anyway.

“Our people and our customers have a wide range of views on how to increase safety in our schools and public places, and we are not taking sides,” Bastian’s memo said. “Our objective in removing any implied affiliation with the NRA was to remove Delta from this debate.”

The move backfired. Republican Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle, who is running for governor, tweeted that conservatives would “fight back” against a perceived corporate attack on their pro-gun values. The state House and Senate voted Thursday to pass a broad tax bill after GOP lawmakers eliminated language that would have exempted jet fuel from sales taxes.

Delta isn’t the only company to take action since the Feb. 14 slayings of 17 students and educators in Parkland, Florida, by a gunman armed with an AR-15 assault-style rifle. Walmart, Kroger and Dick’s Sporting Goods have tightened their gun sales policies. Meanwhile, MetLife, Hertz and others have joined Delta in ending business ties with the NRA.

Extremists stage deadly attacks in Burkina Faso capital

OUAGADOUGOU, Burkina Faso — Islamic extremists opened fire on the French Embassy and army headquarters in separate attacks in Burkina Faso’s capital today, killing at least seven soldiers, while eight of the militants were slain, a government official said.

Many others were wounded among the security forces, and it was feared the death toll could rise, said the official, Communications Minister Remy Danjuinou. Five emergency centers were set up in Ouagadougou to treat the high number of casualties in the former French colony.

It was not clear if more militants were involved in the violence, which was called a terrorist attack by Jean Bosco Kienou, director general of Burkina Faso’s police, and French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe. There was no claim of responsibility.

Gunfire and explosions resounded for hours but subsided by midday. Workers fled offices near the site of the violence, and helicopters were seen above the embassy.

Defense and security forces responded to the attacks, police said, and barricades were set up.

Witnesses at the state television offices that face the embassy said five attackers arrived in a pickup truck and started shooting after shouting, “Allahu Akhbar.” They then set fire to the truck and continued shooting.



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