

WORLD IN BRIEF

Associated Press

Trump confirms CIA chief secretly met with Kim Jong Un

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump today confirmed that his CIA chief secretly met with Kim Jong Un in North Korea and said “a good relationship was formed” heading into the adversaries’ anticipated summit.

Mike Pompeo’s highly unusual talks took place “last week,” Trump tweeted, and “went smoothly,” with details about the presidential meeting within the next few months “being worked out now.”

“Denuclearization will be a great thing for World, but also for North Korea!” Trump wrote while at his Florida estate, where he was hosting Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.

Trump had disclosed on Tuesday that the U.S. and North Korea were holding direct talks at “extremely high levels” in preparation for a possible summit. He said five locations were under consideration for the meeting, which could take place by early June.

It would be the first-ever summit between the U.S. and North Korea during more than six decades of hostility since the Korean War. North Korea’s nuclear weapons and its capability to deliver them by ballistic missile pose a growing threat to the U.S. mainland.

Southwest probing engine failure that killed passenger

PHILADELPHIA — The investigation into a deadly engine failure on a Southwest jet is focusing on whether wear and tear caused a fan blade to snap off, triggering a catastrophic chain of events that killed a passenger and broke a string of eight years without a fatal accident involving a U.S. airliner.

From investigators’ initial findings, the accident appears remarkably similar to a failure on another Southwest plane two years ago — an event that led the engine manufacturer and regulators to push for ultrasonic inspections of fan blades on engines like the one that blew apart at 32,500 feet over Pennsylvania on Tuesday.

When investigators from the National Transportation Safety Board examined the broken engine in Philadelphia just hours after it made an emergency landing, they immediately saw that one of the left engine’s 24 fan blades was missing.

Investigators will focus on whether the fan blade broke off at cruising speed — around 500 mph — and started an “uncontained” engine



A port side turret on the light cruiser USS Helena.

USS Helena found 75 years after WWII sinking

HELENA, Mont. — A Microsoft co-founder’s mission to locate sunken warships in the South Pacific has chalked up another victory with the discovery of the USS Helena nearly 75 years after it was sunk by Japanese torpedoes in the waters off the Solomon Islands, reviving stories of the battle-tested ship’s endurance and the nearly unbelievable survival of 165 of the crewmen.

Paul Allen’s team found the wreckage of the Helena on March 23, about a half mile below the surface of the New Georgia Sound. The team identified the light cruiser by the number 50 on its side and by comparing the wreck to the USS Helena’s schematics.

In all, more than 730 of the Helena’s crew of 900 survived the July 5, 1943, sinking during the Battle of Kula Gulf.

Most of the crew was rescued out of the water and another group was picked up nearby the next day. But a third group spent nearly five days adrift in life rafts, during which some of the injured died, before taking shelter on a Japanese-occupied island. They were found by native islanders and Coastwatchers, and rescued 12 days later.

The USS Helena was the third World War II discovery in less than three weeks by Allen’s R/V Petrel team. The aircraft carrier USS Lexington was discovered March 4 and the USS Juneau, another light cruiser, was located March 17.

failure that sent debris flying like shrapnel into the plane, where it broke a window.

A woman sitting near the window was sucked partially out of the plane before other passengers managed to pull her back in.

Cuba chooses successor to Raul Castro as sole candidate, president

HAVANA — Cuba today selected 57-year-old First Vice President Miguel Mario Diaz-Canel Bermudez as sole candidate to succeed Raul Castro as president of Cuba, the centerpiece of an effort to ensure that the country’s single-party system outlasts the aging revolutionaries who created it.

The virtually certain unanimous approval of the National Assembly will install someone from outside the Castro family in the country’s highest government office for the first time in nearly six decades.

The 86-year-old Castro will remain head of the Communist Party, designated by the constitution as “the superior guiding force of society and the state.” As a result, Castro is almost certain to remain the most powerful person in Cuba for the time being. His departure from the presidency is nonetheless a symbolically charged moment for a country accustomed to 60 years of absolute rule first by revolutionary leader Fidel Castro and, for the last decade, his younger brother.

Facing biological reality, Raul Castro is working to ensure a smooth transition from

him and his small group of former guerrillas to a new generation that can maintain the government’s grip on power in the face of economic stagnation, an aging population and waning revolutionary fervor among Cuban youth attuned more to global consumer culture than the anti-capitalist, nationalist messaging of the state-run media.

Former first lady, first mother, Barbara Bush dies at age 92

HOUSTON — Barbara Bush didn’t hesitate to tell people that her trademark pearl necklaces were fake. Americans liked that everything else about the snowy-haired first lady was real.

The wife of the nation’s 41st president and mother of the 43rd brought a plainspoken, grandmotherly style to buttoned-down Washington, displaying an utter lack of vanity about her white hair and wrinkles.

Mrs. Bush died Tuesday, according to a statement from family spokesman Jim McGrath. She was 92.

A funeral is planned Saturday at St. Martin’s Episcopal Church in Houston, which Mrs. Bush and her husband, former President George H.W. Bush, regularly attended. Mrs. Bush will lie in repose Friday at the church for members of the public who want to pay respects. Saturday’s service will be by invitation only, according to the George Bush Presidential Library Foundation.

Island-wide blackout hits Puerto Rico; officials probe cause

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — An island-wide blackout hit Puerto Rico today as the U.S. territory struggles to repair an increasingly unstable power grid nearly seven months after Hurricane Maria.

Officials said it could take 24 to 36 hours to fully restore power to more than 1.4 million customers as outrage grew across the island about the state of Puerto Rico’s Electric Power Authority. It is the second major outage in less than a week, with the previous one affecting some 840,000 customers.

Several large power outages have hit Puerto Rico in recent months, but today was the first time since the Category 4 storm struck on Sept. 20 that the U.S. territory has experienced a full island-wide blackout. It snarled traffic across the island, interrupted classes and work and forced dozens of businesses to temporarily close, including the island’s largest mall and popular tourist attractions like a 16th-century fort in the historic part of Puerto Rico’s capital.

IRS: Gives another extra day to file, delay should not impact refunds

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Day last year — April 18, 2017 — the state received about 68,000 2016 tax returns; the day before the due date, about 54,000.

Acting IRS Commissioner David

Kautter apologized on behalf of the agency late Tuesday. “This is the busiest tax day of the year, and the IRS apologizes for the inconvenience this system issue caused for taxpayers,” he said in a statement. “The IRS appreciates everyone’s patience

during this period. The extra time will help taxpayers affected by this situation.”

The agency said Tuesday that the cause was likely a hardware issue.

On Tuesday morning, U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden criticized what he says

is a lack of funding from Congress for the nation’s tax collecting agency. “While we don’t yet know what has caused this systems failure, the lack of Republican funding for the IRS to serve taxpayers will only compound the issue,” the Oregon Democrat said

in a statement. “Americans should not be punished for being unable to file their tax returns or pay their tax bills today.”

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TV SCHEDULE WEDNESDAY APRIL 18. THE DAILY ASTORIAN. Evening listings WEDNESDAY. Channel logos and program titles for various stations.

Table with columns for channels (A, L) and times (6 PM, 6:30, 7 PM, 7:30, 8 PM, 8:30, 9 PM, 9:30, 10 PM, 10:30, 11 PM, 11:30). Lists various TV programs like Jeopardy!, Wheel of Fortune, The Goldbergs, etc.

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