

## Menacing Harvey reaches Texas coast

CORPUS CHRISTI, Texas (AP) — Hurricane Harvey was on the verge of reaching Texas on Friday, bringing fierce winds and torrential rain to a wide swath of the state's Gulf Coast and prompting tens of thousands of residents fleeing inland in hopes of escaping its wrath.

The National Hurricane Center said the eyewall of the dangerous Category 4 storm reached the Texas coast Friday evening, suggesting that the eye of the storm would soon make landfall.

With time running out, residents fled Friday from the path of the increasingly menacing-looking hurricane as it took aim at an area of Texas that includes oil refineries, chemical plants and dangerously flood-prone Houston, the nation's fourth-largest city.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott warned that the monster system would be "a very major disaster," and the forecasts drew fearful comparisons to Hurricane Katrina, one of the deadliest ever to strike the U.S.

As night fell, punishing winds had already begun to cause damage in downtown Corpus Christi, the city closest to the center of the storm. A trash can lid skipped across a parking lot behind hotels on the seawall. In the city of 325,000 residents, a traffic light post was toppled but still lit, its wires unearthed.

Fueled by warm Gulf of Mexico waters, Harvey grew rapidly, accelerating from a Category 1 early in the morning to a Category 4 by evening. Its transformation from an unnamed storm to a life-threatening behemoth took only 56 hours, an incredibly fast intensification.

## North Korea fires three short-range missiles; U.S. says tests fail

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Three North Korea short-range ballistic missiles failed on Saturday, U.S. military officials said, which, if true, would be a temporary setback to Pyongyang's rapid nuclear and missile expansion.

The U.S. Pacific Command said in a statement that two of the North's missiles failed in flight after an unspecified distance, and another appeared to have blown up immediately. It added that the missile posed no threat to the U.S. territory of Guam, which the North had previously warned it would fire missiles toward.

Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff said that the projectiles fired from the North's eastern coast flew about 155 miles, though it did not mention any failures. It said South Korea and U.S. militaries were analyzing the launch and didn't immediately provide more details.

## Trump setting records for low approval

WASHINGTON (AP) — Donald Trump started as the most unpopular new president in the history of modern polling. After seven months, things have only gotten worse.

Plunging into undesirably uncharted territory, Trump is setting records with his dimly low approval ratings, including the lowest mark ever for a president in his first year. In fact, with four months left in the year, Trump has already spent more time under 40 percent than any other first-year president.

At 34 percent, his current approval rating is worse than former President Barack



A power generator tips in front of Texas' CHRISTUS Spohn Hospital in Corpus Christi, Texas, as Hurricane Harvey hits Friday.

Obama's ever was.

Trump's early descent in the polls defies some longstanding patterns about how Americans view their president. Such plunges are often tied to external forces that the president only partially controls, such as a sluggish economy or an all-consuming international crisis. In Trump's case, the economy is humming and the foreign crises have been kept to a minimum.

## National security aide Sebastian Gorka leaves White House

WASHINGTON (AP) — Controversial White House national security aide Sebastian Gorka tells The Associated Press he has resigned from his position.

A White House official, however, says Gorka did not resign but "no longer works at the White House."

That official was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Gorka is declining to discuss the reasons he has left the White House, but is pointing toward excerpts from his resignation letter that were posted Friday evening by The Federalist website.

Gorka wrote that "the individuals who most embodied and represented the policies that will 'Make America Great Again,' have been internally countered, systematically removed, or undermined in recent months."

Gorka's departure comes a week after the exit of chief strategist Steve Bannon from the White House.

## Upset with Trump's response, economic aide mulled quitting

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's top economic adviser sharply denounced the president's response to the racial violence in Charlottesville, saying in an interview that he felt "compelled" to speak out. Gary Cohn, who is Jewish, was so upset by Trump's comments that he wrote a letter of resignation but never submitted it.

"Citizens standing up for equality and freedom can never be equated with white supremacists, neo-Nazis, and the KKK," Cohn told *The Financial Times* in an

interview published Friday. "I believe this administration can and must do better in consistently and unequivocally condemning these groups and do everything we can to heal the deep divisions that exist in our communities."

It was an extraordinary public rebuke of the president by a senior adviser, and came just as Cohn will be a key figure in the administration's fall push for sweeping tax reforms. It also played out as Cohn emerged as a candidate to replace Janet Yellen as chairman of the Federal Reserve when her term ends in February.

Cohn told associates he expressed his unhappiness to Trump in a conversation a week ago at the president's New Jersey golf club and considered stepping down, according to a person familiar with the conversations but not authorized to speak publicly about private talks. Two people familiar with his thinking said he'd written a resignation letter but then pocketed it.

## Trump tells Mattis to indefinitely ban transgender recruits

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Friday directed the Pentagon to extend indefinitely a ban on transgender individuals joining the military, but he appeared to leave open the possibility of allowing some in uniform to remain.

Trump gave Defense Secretary Jim Mattis authority to decide the matter of openly transgender individuals already serving, and he said that until the Pentagon chief makes that decision, "no action may be taken against" them.

The Obama administration in June 2016 had changed longstanding policy, declaring that troops could serve openly as transgender individuals. And it set a July 2017 deadline

for determining whether transgender people could be allowed to enter the military. Mattis delayed that to Jan. 1, 2018, and Trump has now instructed Mattis to extend it indefinitely.

But on the question of what will happen to those transgender individuals who already are serving openly — estimated to number in the low hundreds — Trump seemed to leave wiggle room for exceptions. A White House official who briefed reporters on the presidential order would not say whether Trump would permit any exceptions.

## RNC votes to condemn white supremacists over groans of some

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — The Republican National Committee walked the tightrope Friday in carefully but resolutely denouncing white supremacist groups without criticizing President Donald Trump, who waffled in his own statements in the wake of the deadly clash in Virginia this month.

Meeting in Nashville, Tennessee, the RNC approved a raft of resolutions, including one asserting "Nazis, the KKK, white supremacists and others are repulsive, evil and have no fruitful place in the United States."

And while the vote was unanimous, some members had grumbled the resolution was unnecessary and reflected unnecessary defensiveness.

## Right-wing groups cancel rallies in San Francisco Bay Area

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Two right-wing rallies planned for the weekend in the San Francisco Bay Area were canceled Friday, with organizers citing threats from left-wing agitators, but local officials said they remained concerned about the potential for violence.

A Saturday "freedom rally" planned near the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco was canceled by the group Patriot Prayer, which said it would hold a news conference at a city park instead.

Patriot Prayer leader Joey Gibson said his followers would instead attend an anti-Marxist rally in nearby Berkeley on Sunday, but a short time later the organizer of that rally called it off.

"I am asking that no one come to my event," Andrea Cummings said in a lengthy statement issued via Facebook. She said she had "grave concerns for the safety of the people attending my event."

Cummings said her rally was "to speak out against the political violence happening to people who do not agree" with left-wing ideology, and that the meaning was being lost as rhetoric around the rally escalated. However, she said she "alone" would still show up Sunday.



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