

Friday, May 30, 2014



The University of Texas at Austin

Dow Jones News Fund Center for Editing Excellence



US: Russia backing off Ukraine border

LOLITA C. BALDOR
Associated Press

ABOARD A U.S. MILITARY AIRCRAFT — U.S. defense officials said Thursday that Russia has pulled most of its forces away from the Ukraine border, a withdrawal the U.S. has been demanding for weeks.

They said about seven battalions remained, amounting to a couple of thousand troops. U.S.

officials estimated that as many as 40,000 Russian forces had massed along the border with eastern Ukraine that has been wracked with violence between government security forces and pro-Russian separatists.

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel told reporters traveling with him at the start of an overseas trip that thousands of Russian troops are moving away from the border but

that others remained.

“They are not where they need to be and won’t be until all of their troops that they positioned along that border a couple of months ago are gone,” he said.

The U.S. has called on Russia repeatedly to help de-escalate tensions in Ukraine, including withdrawing troops stationed near the border.

Hagel was among Obama ad-

ministration officials who expressed new concerns Thursday about rising violence in eastern Ukraine, including the destruction of a military helicopter by pro-Russian rebels in Slovyansk that killed 12.

The White House and State Department both said a de-escalation of the crisis was imperative and called on Russia to exert pressure on the separatists to get them

to end the fighting and release a group of international monitors who have been detained in eastern Ukraine since earlier this week.

Before the incident, Secretary of State John Kerry spoke to his Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov, on Wednesday to reiterate concerns about the deteriorating situation in Ukraine, the State Department said.

Egyptians elect new president



AMR NABIL / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Supporters of newly elected President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi celebrate on Thursday at Tahrir Square in Cairo. El-Sissi easily triumphed over his opponent Hamdeen Sabahi, winning more than 92 percent of the vote, according to his campaign. But low turnout and public skepticism cast a shadow on what el-Sissi had hoped would be a more resounding victory.

Tepid turnout makes for bittersweet victory

HAMZA HENDAWI
Associated Press

CAIRO — The election of Egypt’s former military chief to the presidency may be remembered for its central irony: He won in a historic landslide, only to shatter his image of invulnerability in the process.

Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi’s win was never in doubt, but what the retired 59-year-old field marshal wanted was an overwhelming turnout that would give legitimacy to his July ouster of Egypt’s first freely elected president, Mohamed Morsi, and show critics at home and abroad that his action reflected the will of the people. In his last interview before polls opened, he told Egyptians he wanted more than 40 million of the nearly 54 million registered voters to turn out.



AMR NABIL / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Defeated presidential hopeful Hamdeen Sabahi, center, is cheered on by his supporters during a press conference.

The reality was more tepid. According to unofficial results announced by his campaign early Thursday, el-Sissi won more than 92 percent of the vote, resoundingly beat-

ing his sole rival, leftist politician Hamdeen Sabahi.

However, turnout nationwide was around 46 percent, according to Adly Mansour, interim president — not the

worst of the multiple elections held the past three years, but below the nearly 52 percent turnout in the 2012 election that Morsi won.

The victory was tainted by the extraordinary means used by the military-backed government to get even that many voters to the polls. After signs that the turnout Monday, the first of two scheduled days of voting, was as low as 15 percent, the government declared the next day a national holiday to free people to go to polls.

The election commission threatened to slap fines of \$70, a hefty sum for most Egyptians, on those who did not vote.

When Tuesday polling still seemed low, the commission abruptly extended the elec-

Please see EGYPT, Page 2

Rocket site in South Texas nears approval

Federal review determines wildlife will not be harmed

CHRISTOPHER SHERMAN
Associated Press

MCALLEN — Building and operating a private rocket launch site along the coast in the southernmost tip of Texas is unlikely to jeopardize the existence of protected animal species and would create few unavoidable impacts, according to a final federal environmental review.

The Federal Aviation Administration released the statement for California-based SpaceX on Thursday. It does not guarantee that the FAA would issue launch licenses there, but it is an essential step in that direction.

SpaceX has proposed launching 12 rockets a year from the site but did not make any promises Thursday. If built, it would be the first commercial orbital launch site.

SpaceX spokeswoman Hannah Post said several more steps have to be cleared.

“While the timing of some of these critical steps is not within SpaceX’s control, we are hopeful that these will be complete in the near future,” she said.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service raised concerns about possible impact on habitat for some endangered species, but concluded “the project is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any listed or proposed-to-be-listed species nor adversely modify piping plover critical habitat.”

But wildlife officials don’t expect the project to be harmless. They anticipate that several miles of beachfront used by nesting sea turtles could be disturbed by security vehicles.

SpaceX has agreed to a list of measures aimed at minimizing the environmental impact including educating workers about threatened and endangered animals. It also plans to adopt a 3-mile section of the beach and participate in beach cleanups and educational programs.

The Texas launches would create unavoidable noise in a nearby neighborhood and alter the landscape of sand dunes, wetlands and grasses, but other environmental impacts can be mitigated, the report said.

Deal reached in Clippers sale, insider says

ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES — An individual with knowledge of negotiations to sell the Los Angeles Clippers said Shelly Sterling has reached an agreement to sell the team to former Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer for \$2 billion.

The individual, who was not authorized to speak publicly, told The Associated Press on Thursday that Ballmer and the Sterling Family Trust have a binding agreement. The deal must be presented to the NBA.

Shelly Sterling negotiated the sale after her husband, Donald, made racist remarks that were made public. Donald Sterling must also approve the final agreement as a 50 percent owner. His attorneys said that will not happen.

Ballmer is said to have beat out bids by Guggenheim Partners and a group including former NBA All-Star Grant Hill.

It is unclear if the deal will go through. The individual said that though Donald Sterling was not involved in the negotiations, “at the end of the day, he has to sign off on the final process. They’re not going to sell his 50 percent without him agreeing to it.”

That is despite a May 22 letter obtained by The Associated Press and written by another one of Sterling’s attorneys that said “Donald T. Sterling authorizes Rochelle Sterling to negotiate with the National Basketball Association regarding all issues in connection with a sale of the Los Angeles Clippers team.”

It included the line “read and approved” and Don-

Please see CLIPPERS, Page 2

Google not up to par on diversity

Of 26,600 Google employees, 61 percent are white and 70 percent are male.

MARTHA MENDOZA
Associated Press

SAN JOSE, Calif. — Google has had more trouble diversifying its workforce than its computer scientists have had writing programs that respond to search requests in the blink of an eye or designing cars that can navigate traffic without a human behind the wheel.

That seemed to be the conclusion when the Silicon Valley giant issued a gender and ethnic breakdown of its workforce this week that showed that of its 26,600 U.S. employees nearly two-thirds were white and only one-third were women. Blacks and Hispanics make up about 30 percent of the nation’s population.

“Google is miles from where we want to be,” said Laszlo Bock, head of personnel at Google.

He said the biggest factor in the diversity disparity is a shortage of students majoring in computer science or other technical fields in college.

“There is an absolute pipeline problem,” he said in an interview Wednes-

day with “PBS NewsHour.”

Google said that in one year there were just two black people with new doctorates in computer science on the job market. The company hired one of them, and Microsoft hired the other, Bock said.

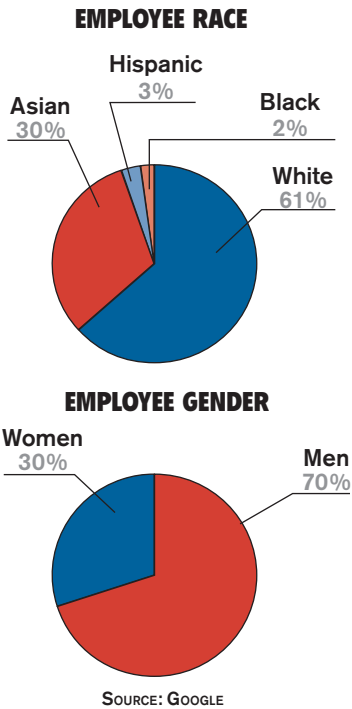
But the educational choices of some minorities do not entirely account for the lack of diversity at technology companies.

Google sells \$50 billion in advertising annually, a task that required more than 2,900 salespeople in the U.S. as of August. Just 79 of them, or less than 3 percent, were black. A total of 127, about 4 percent, were Hispanic. More than 2,000, or nearly 70 percent, were white.

Google attributes the racial gap to “unconscious biases” that have historically favored white people.

To address the issue, Google has put more than 20,000 employees through 90-minute training sessions during the past year to help them become more aware of biases.

Please see GOOGLE, Page 2



Dow Jones interns head for newsrooms

Thirteen college students and recent college graduates are headed to paid copy editing internships on daily newspapers after completing 10 days of intensive preparation at The University of Texas at Austin.

The interns are among a select group of undergraduate and graduate students placed in internships in copy editing, sports copy editing, business reporting and digital journalism.

The highly competitive national program is funded by the News Fund, a foundation of the Dow Jones Co.; and participating newspapers and digital media services. More than 700 students applied for the program. Applicants were required to take a test and complete an extensive application before being considered.

The School of Journalism at UT Austin, one of five pre-internship training sites for newspaper print and online copy editors and designers, has been part of the News Fund program since 1998.

Participants in the UT workshop were involved in newspaper copy editing, design and production assignments and operated a parallel online news operation.

Newspaper professionals, visiting faculty and UT journalism faculty moderated the sessions in this 17th residency program at UT Austin.

In the latter half of the pre-internship training, participants produced three issues of a live, model newspaper, the Southwest Journalist, as well as a companion online product, swjournalist.com.

The UT-News Fund interns serve internships of 10 to 14 weeks.

Participants in the UT Austin workshop, including their universities and host news organizations, are as follows:

- Alicia Balog, Kent State University, The (Portland) Oregonian.
- Katie V. Bast, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, The Sacramento Bee.
- Tara Bryant, University of Kansas, Bay Area News Group-East Bay, Pleasanton, California.
- Chloe McCall Gonzales, University of Texas at Arlington, Austin American-Statesman.
- Casey Hutchins, University of Kansas, Corpus Christi Scripps newspapers production center.
- Ethan Metcalf, Midwestern State University, Corpus Christi Scripps newspapers production center.
- Lyndsey Ruble Nuckols, Harding University, Orange County Register.
- Elizabeth Robinson, University of Texas at Austin, The Beaumont Enterprise.
- Jordan Shapiro, University of Missouri, The Los Angeles Times.
- Zane S. Sparling, Willamette University, Houston Chronicle.
- Frannie Sprouls, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, The Denver Post.
- Bill Hall, Cal State University-Chico, San Francisco Chronicle.
- Rebekah Wahlberg, California Baptist University, Alabama Media Group, Birmingham.

Grants from the News Fund and contributions from participating newspapers cover the participants' pre-internship training, including housing, meals, transportation and instruction.

Participating newspapers also pay interns a weekly wage for their internship work. Students returning to their universities af-



BRADLEY WILSON / SOUTHWEST JOURNALIST

Dow Jones News Fund interns spent 10 days sharpening their skills at the University of Texas workshop. Seated: Katie Bast. Ethan Metcalf, Frannie Sprouls, Elizabeth Robinson and Bradley Wilson (faculty). Standing: Zane Sparling, Lyndsey Nuckols, Rebekah Wahlberg, Bill Hall, Tara Bryant, Jordan Shapiro, Casey Hutchins, Alicia Balog, Chloe Gonzales, Griff Singer (faculty), Beth Butler (faculty) and Amy Zerba (faculty).

ter the internships are eligible for a \$1,000 scholarship provided by the News Fund.

Directing the UT workshop were S. Griffin Singer, director; George Sylvie, assistant director; and Lourdes Jones, senior administrative associate of the UT School of Journalism.

Faculty included Beth Butler, assistant workshop director, from Kent State University; Bradley Wilson, assistant professor of journalism at Midwestern State University; Amy Zerba, a senior staff editor of The New York Times; Linda Shockley, deputy director of the News Fund, Princeton, New Jersey;

and Dan Cunningham, deputy managing editor of the Houston Chronicle.

Kathy Blackwell, a senior editor of the Austin American-Statesman, coordinated the interns' visit to that newspaper.

Other newspaper training centers were at Temple University, the University of Missouri, Pennsylvania State University and the University of Nebraska. A digital journalism workshop was held at Arizona State, and a business reporting workshop was conducted at New York University.

LAST BOAT FLOATING



TORIN HALSEY / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Andy Lopez, left, and Josh Cook prepare to go down with their ship during the annual Zundy Junior High Cardboard Boat Float at Plum Lake in Wichita Falls on Thursday. The eighth-grade class studied a variety of principles on how to construct boats using only cardboard, masking tape, caulk and paint before piloting them across a section of the lake.

EGYPT: Lukewarm voter turnout at polls taints landslide victory

—Continued from Page 1

tion to a third day. The state made bus and train travel free to allow migrants to return to home districts to vote. To many, it was clear the state was trying to help its favored candidate, reminiscent of machinations during the 29-year-rule of autocrat Hosni Mubarak, toppled in a 2011 pro-democracy uprising.

And el-Sissi was not supposed to need a boost.

For the past 10 months, the government and the media have made him the object of relentless adulation, describing him as efficient, empathetic, manly and handsome, insisting he is the sole figure able to lead.

"The popular hero didn't find the masses marching to the ballot boxes to lift him to the palace," Egyptian columnist Wael Abdel-Fattah wrote in the Lebanese daily As-Safir. "The shock here is in the state's need to use its old tools to defend its nominee."

"The popular hero didn't find the masses marching to the ballot boxes to lift him to the palace. The shock here is the state's need to use its old tools to defend its nominee."

Wael Abdel-Fattah

El-Sissi can genuinely claim he comes into office with an impressive tally of votes. His campaign said he won 23.38 million votes. Official results are expected in early June.

That is more than the 13 million that Morsi won, and even more than the around 18 million votes that went to Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood and allied parties in the first post-Mubarak parliamentary elections, the Islamists' most resounding electoral showing.

But the puncturing of his image is no small blow.

The boycott by the Brotherhood, which has the country's strongest get-out-the-vote machine, heavily gouged the turnout numbers.

Many others who declined to vote, and even some who voted for el-Sissi, said he seemed to take Egyptians for granted and lacked solutions for millions living in poverty. They were struck by how he showed little tolerance for dissent, was dismissive of freedoms and rights and was backed by former members of Mubarak's ruling party, all fueling concerns that he would bring back Mubarak's autocratic ways.

"This man will seal the gates of democracy behind him with a lock and chain. It will be our last elections and it is a farce," said Ramadan Salem, a 57-year-old boycotter who was sitting among fellow taxi drivers.

"When he fails, it will be us failing, not him," he said.

GOOGLE: Firm looks for more minority hires

—Continued from Page 1

The firm is also trying to do more recruiting at colleges with large minority enrollments. During the past year, Google has dispatched a specialist to work with historically black Howard University on a curriculum that will give its graduates a better chance of competing for technology jobs. The program will be extended to five other campuses this fall.

Google is one of many high-tech companies pledging to diversify their workforces this spring under pressure from the Rev. Jesse Jackson, who made a similar effort 15 years ago.

"I'm disappointed. For the most part they have not improved," Jackson said Thursday. "Look at their board of directors and their c-suites. There's a culture of exclusion."

Google's attempts come amid a renewed bout of advocacy from Jackson and Rainbow PUSH Coalition, which have been leading delegations to shareholder meetings this spring at such companies as Google, Facebook, eBay Inc. and Hewlett-Packard.

In 1999, when Jackson launched his first Silicon Valley initiative, 89 percent of Silicon Valley chairmen and CEOs were white, while the white-collar workforce was about 60 percent white and 31 percent Asian. Those figures have barely budged.

"Silicon Valley moves at a pace that is unbelievable. It is a breakneck marketplace. So when you're adding people, you don't take time to cast a wider net," said Russell Hancock, president of Joint Venture Silicon Valley, an organization focused on the local economy.

CLIPPERS: Bid will not be OK'd, attorney says

—Continued from Page 1

ald Sterling's signature.

Donald Sterling's attorney, Bobby Samini, said Sterling has had a change of heart primarily because of "the conduct of the NBA." He said NBA Commissioner Adam Silver acted as a "judge, jury and executioner" when he decided to ban Sterling for life, fine him \$2.5 million and try to oust him as an owner.

"They're telling me he should stand back and let them take his team because his opinion on that particular day was not good, was not popular?" Samini said. "That his team should be stripped from him? It doesn't make sense. He's going to fight."

The person with knowledge of the deal said that any buyer would have to ensure the team remains in Los Angeles and be someone with whom Shelly Sterling could work if she decides to retain a small stake. An attorney representing Shelly Sterling declined to comment.



SOUTHWEST JOURNALIST

Volume 17 – May 21-30, 2014

Center for Editing Excellence
School of Journalism
The University of Texas at Austin

S. GRIFFIN SINGER
Workshop Director
UT Austin School of Journalism

BETH BUTLER
Assistant Workshop Director
Kent State University

GEORGE SYLVIE
Assistant Workshop Director
UT Austin School of Journalism

KATHY BLACKWELL
Workshop Faculty
Senior Editor, Austin American-Statesman

LINDA SHOCKLEY
Dow Jones News Fund

BRADLEY WILSON
Workshop Faculty
Midwestern State University

AMY ZERBA
Workshop Faculty
The New York Times

2014 DOW JONES NEWS FUND INTERNS

ALICIA BALOG Kent State University The Oregonian, Portland	CASEY HUTCHINS University of Kansas Scripps Production Center Corpus Christi	JORDAN SHAPIRO University of Missouri The Los Angeles Times
KATIE BAST University of Wisconsin Eau Claire The Sacramento Bee	ETHAN METCALF Midwestern State University Scripps Production Center Corpus Christi	ZANE S. SPARLING Willamette University Houston Chronicle
TARA BRYANT University of Kansas Bay Area News Group-East	LYNDESE RUBLE NUCKOLS Harding University Orange County Register	FRANNIE SPROULS University of Nebraska The Denver Post
CHLOE M. GONZALES University of Texas-Arlington Austin American-Statesman	ELIZABETH ROBINSON University of Texas-Austin The Beaumont Enterprise	REBEKAH WALBERG California Baptist University Alabama Media Group, Birmingham
BILL HALL Cal State University-Chico San Francisco Chronicle		

The Southwest Journalist is a teaching publication of the Dow Jones News Fund and the Center for Editing Excellence at The University of Texas at Austin. The Southwest Journalist is edited and designed by students attending the 2014 pre-internship training program funded by a grant from the News Fund and news organizations hosting the interns.

INTERNATIONAL

Turkish court: YouTube ban violates rights

ANKARA, Turkey — Turkey’s highest court on Thursday ruled that the country’s two month-old ban on YouTube violates constitutional rights to freedom of expression, a setback for Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who wanted the website shut down.

The Constitutional Court said it would order telecommunications authorities to ensure that the rights violation is removed, the state-run Anadolu Agency reported.

Restrictions on YouTube were imposed in late March after the leak of an audio recording of a government security meeting. In the recording, senior officials appeared to be discussing a possible military intervention in Syria.

A lawyer representing YouTube, the Turkish Bar Association and legislators from Turkey’s main opposition party appealed to the high court, seeking to overturn the ban.

Erdogan said his government would comply, even though it did not respect the decision.

CIA winds down drone strike program in Pakistan

WASHINGTON — The CIA’s targeted killing program in Pakistan is winding down.

American officials say opportunities for drone attacks will dwindle further as the CIA and the military leave Afghanistan. Obama announced this week a plan to pull nearly all American troops out of Afghanistan by the end of 2016.

The targeted killing program in Pakistan relies on drones flown from, and intelligence gathered in, U.S. bases in Afghanistan that would then be closed.

In a major foreign policy speech at the U.S. Military Academy, Obama said the U.S. would continue to carry out occasional drone strikes against terrorist targets. Armed drones are still flying over Pakistan’s tribal areas, and CIA targeting officers are still nominating militants to the kill list, according to anonymous U.S. officials.

For as long as they are able to fly over Pakistan, CIA drones will hunt for senior al-Qaida figures, U.S. officials say.

China preps for more babies after one-child plan change

BEIJING — China is preparing for 2 million extra babies a year as a result of a loosening of its one child birth limits, health officials said Thursday.

The party in power announced in November that couples in which one parent was an only child would be allowed to have a second baby in some areas. Previously, both parents had to be an only child to qualify for this exemption.

Local authorities have been told to build more health facilities for women and children and add maternity beds, said Zhang Shikun, an official with the commission in charge of women and children’s health.

The ruling Communist Party introduced birth limits in 1980 to curb population growth and demand for resources. China had 18.5 million births in 2013, according to UNICEF. The forecast increase would be almost 11 percent of that.

The figure of 2 million additional births is at the top end of forecasts by experts based on the less restrictive policy. Some say the figure might be lower due to the growing acceptance in China of smaller families.

Thailand's junta bans all anti-coup protests

BANGKOK — More than 1,000 Thai troops and police sealed off one of Bangkok’s busiest intersections Thursday to prevent a planned protest, as authorities said they would no longer allow any demonstrations against last week’s military coup.

The anti-coup demonstrations have been generally small and mostly leaderless, but protesters had planned to gather Thursday and called for a mass rally on Sunday.

Gen. Somyot Poompanmoung, the deputy national police chief, said the small protests would no longer be allowed.

“We know their rally is mainly for symbolic reasons, but it’s against the law,” he said.

Last week, the army seized power, overthrowing a government that won a landslide election victory three years earlier. The army says it had to act to restore order after seven months of increasingly violent political turbulence.

— ASSOCIATED PRESS

Peru ghost town fights to survive



RODRIGO ABD/ ASSOCIATED PRESS

A miner arrives for work in Huepetuhe after the Peruvian government’s crackdown on illegal mining in the Madre de Dios region. The government pledged to find work for the affected miners, but the town’s mayor said no such assistance has arrived. Those who remain now mine using rudimentary gold extraction including buckets, shovels and pickaxes.



Before being reduced to working with shovels, the miners were able to extract \$7 billion in gold over the last decade, a total of 159 million metric tons.



Mining equipment stands idle after it was destroyed as part of the mining restrictions. More than 22,000 have fled the area as a result.

RODRIGO ABD
Associated Press

HUEPETUHE, Peru — This nearly half-century-old Amazon boomtown has gone bust with the government’s recent restriction on illegal gold mining.

Mayor Marco Ortega estimates more than 22,000 people have left Huepetuhe since the government halted gasoline shipments in April and sent troops to destroy heavy machinery used in mining that it deemed illegal.

He said only about 3,000 people remain.

“The gold buyers, the hardware stores, hostels and all kinds of businesses have shut down. We are nearly a town without people,” Ortega said.

The government officials overseeing the crackdown has said authorities plan to provide work for miners rendered jobless, but Ortega said no assistance has arrived.

According to official figures, illegal miners have extracted 159 million metric tons of gold worth \$7 billion over the past decade from the Madre de Dios in southeastern Peru region that includes Huepetuhe.

The environmental cost of the mining has been high, with scars gouged out of the rainforest that are visible from outer space and tons of mercury , a toxin used to bind mined gold flecks, released into the environment that contaminated the food supply.

SEE MORE ONLINE
For an expanded photo gallery of the Madre de Dios region and Peruvian mining towns visit swjournalist.com.

Aches won’t deter royal D-Day trip

GREGORY KATZ
Associated Press

LONDON — The queen’s joints are creaky and her husband has recently battled serious illness, but the royal couple won’t let aches and pains keep them away from a grand overseas commemoration: the 70th anniversary of the D-Day invasion.

Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip have for the most part stopped traveling abroad, but next week they intend to be in Normandy for ceremonies to honor those who sacrificed their lives to liberate Europe from the Nazi grip.

The perils of World War II directly shaped the lives of Elizabeth, 88, and Philip, 92.

Historian Anthony Beevor, a renowned chronicler of World War II, said Elizabeth and Philip want to show their solidarity with the remaining veterans, including those still strong enough to attend the events next week.

“I think it will mean a huge amount to the veterans,” Beevor said. “The queen and Philip are both well aware that this is the last time a reasonable number of veterans will be able to attend. So it’s very important to both of them.”

The queen was a teenager during the war. She joined the Women’s Auxiliary Territorial Service, serving as a driver and mechanic. Philip was on active duty in the Royal Navy.



ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE PHOTO

A younger Queen visits the British Cemetery in Bayeux, France, on D-Day’s 50th anniversary in 1994.

Many believe that this may be the final overseas trip for the queen, whose stamina and mobility have lately been affected by joint pain, Beevor said.

The monarch has recently ceded more of her duties to Prince Charles in what has been characterized as a partial transition.

The queen is also relying increasingly on the younger generation of royals, led by Prince William and his wife Kate.

The queen does plan, however, to attend a remembrance service and to meet personally with veterans in addition to taking part in the main ceremony at Sword Beach, one of the landing spots where Allied Forces faced fire from entrenched German troops and tanks.

After events in Normandy, the queen and Philip will attend a state banquet Friday at the Elysee Palace hosted by French President Francois Hollande.

The next morning she and Philip plan to fly home in time to attend the Derby at Epsom Downs Racecourse.

Rape, killing of girls stirs Indian protest

BISWAJEET BANERJEE
Associated Press

LUCKNOW, India — Two teenage sisters in rural India were raped and killed by attackers who hung their bodies from a mango tree, which became the scene of a silent protest by villagers angry about alleged police inaction in the case.

Two of the four men arrested so far are police officers.

Villagers found the girls’ bodies hanging from the tree early Wednesday, hours after they disappeared from fields near their home in Katra village in Uttar Pradesh state, police Superintendent Atul Saxena said.

The girls, who were 14 and 15, had gone into the fields because there was no toilet in their home.

Hundreds of angry villagers stayed next to the tree throughout Wednesday.

Indian TV footage showed the villagers sitting under the girls’ bodies as they swung in the wind, and preventing authorities from taking them down until the suspects were arrested.

Police arrested two police officers and two men from the village later Wednesday and were searching for three more suspects.

Autopsies confirmed the girls had been raped and strangled before being hanged, Saxena said.

The villagers accused the chief of the local police station of ignoring a report by the girls’ father on Tuesday night that the girls were missing.

The station chief in Katra, 180 miles southwest of the state capital, Lucknow, has since been suspended.

The family belongs to the Dalit

community, also called “untouchables” and considered the lowest rung in India’s age-old caste system.

Records show a rape is committed every 22 minutes in India, a nation of 1.2 billion people.

Activists say that number is low because of an entrenched culture of tolerance for sexual violence, which leads many cases to go unreported.

Women are often pressed by family or police to stay quiet about sexual assault, and those who do report it are often subjected to public ridicule or social stigma.

India tightened its anti-rape laws last year, making gang rape punishable by the death penalty, even when the victim survives. The new laws came after the fatal gang rape of a 23-year-old woman on a bus in New Delhi that triggered nationwide protests.

Health workers, police and women’s rights activists say women and girls face the risk of rape and harassment when they go out into fields or bushes because of the lack of toilets in their homes.

More than a half-billion Indians lack access to toilets. A recent study said about 30 percent of women from poor families faced violent sexual assaults every year because they did not have access to a safe toilet.

Last month, the head of Uttar Pradesh state’s governing party, the regionally prominent Samajwadi Party, told an election rally the party opposes the law calling for gang rapists to be executed.

“Boys will be boys,” Mulayam Singh Yadav said. “They make mistakes.”

Earth on verge of 6th extinction, study says

SETH BORENSTEIN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Species of plants and animals are becoming extinct at least 1,000 times faster than they did before humans arrived on the scene, and the world is on the brink of a sixth great extinction, a new study says.

The study, published by the journal Science on Thursday, looks at past and present rates of extinction and finds a lower rate in the past than scientists had thought. Species are now disappearing from Earth about 10 times faster than biologists had believed, said study lead author noted biologist Stuart Pimm of Duke University.

“We are on the verge of the sixth extinction,” Pimm said from research at the Dry Tortugas, a small group of islands at the end of the Florida Keys. “Whether we avoid it or not will depend on our actions.”

Pimm’s study focused on the rate, not the number, of species



STUART PIMM / ASSOCIATED PRESS

The buffy-tufted-ear marmoset’s habitat is shrinking because of development in Brazil and a competing marmoset species. Habitat loss is the No. 1 factor contributing to species disappearing.

disappearing, and found a death rate of how many species out of 1 million species become extinct annually. The death rate is about 100 to 1,000, Pimm said.

Numerous factors are combining to make species disappear much faster than before, said Pimm and co-author Clinton Jenkins of the Institute of Ecological

Research in Brazil. The No. 1 issue is habitat loss as more places are built up and altered by humans. Other factors are invasive species crowding out native species, climate change affecting where species can survive, and overfishing, Pimm said.

The buffy-tufted-ear marmoset is a good example, Jenkins said. Its habitat has shrunk because of development in Brazil, and a competing marmoset has taken over where it lives. Now, it is on the international vulnerable list.

Pimm and Jenkins said there is hope. Both said the use of smartphones and applications such as iNaturalist will help ordinary people and biologists find species in trouble. Once biologists know where endangered species are they can try to save habitats and use captive breeding and other techniques to save the species, they said.

Pressure mounts on VA head after report

Lawmakers facing re-election urge Shinseki to resign

MATTHEW DALY
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Support for Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki eroded quickly Thursday, especially among congressional Democrats facing tough re-election campaigns.

Shinseki spoke privately with lawmakers and met with nearly two dozen veterans groups, assuring them that he takes the reports of improper care seriously and is moving swiftly to fix problems. On Friday, he will address the National Coalition on Homeless Veterans, outlining his plan for corrections.

A federal investigation earlier this week of operations in the troubled Phoenix VA Health Care System found that about 1,700 veterans in need of care were at risk of being lost or forgotten after being kept off an official waiting list. While initially focused on Phoenix, the investigation found broad problems in the sprawling health care system, which provides medical care to about 6.5 million veterans annually.

A VA representative said Shinseki told the veterans groups that the findings in the report were reprehensible, and that he has directed the agency to immediately contact each of the veterans waiting for primary care appointments in Phoenix.

The report confirmed earlier allegations of excessive waiting times for care in Phoenix, with an

average 115-day wait for a first appointment for those on the waiting list — nearly five times as long as the 24-day average the hospital had reported.

House Speaker John Boehner and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi said they were reserving judgment about Shinseki. But with the situation threatening to affect congressional elections in November, the chorus of lawmakers calling for his departure grew by the hour.

Democratic Sens. Mark Warner and Tim Kaine of Virginia, Mary Landrieu of Louisiana, Jeff Merkley of Oregon and New Mexico's Tom Udall and Martin Heinrich all urged Shinseki to step aside. Eleven Senate Democrats have called for Shinseki's resignation since the inspector general report came out. All but Heinrich are on

the ballot this fall.

White House press secretary Jay Carney declined to say whether President Barack Obama still has full confidence in Shinseki, who has led the VA since the start of the Obama administration. The president is waiting for a full investigation before deciding who should be held accountable, Carney said.

The American Legion and dozens of Republicans have called for Shinseki to resign, including Jeff Miller of Florida, chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, and Richard Burr of North Carolina, the senior Republican on the Senate veterans panel. Arizona's two Republican senators also have called for Shinseki to step down.

Shinseki is expected to release results Friday of a system-wide audit of scheduling practices.

Altered portraits ignite backlash

Utah high school modifies clothing in yearbook photos

ASSOCIATED PRESS

SALT LAKE CITY — A group of Utah high school students said they were stunned and upset to discover their school yearbook photos were digitally altered, with sleeves and higher necklines drawn on to cover up bare skin.

Several students at Wasatch High School in Heber City, about 45 miles east of Salt Lake City, say their outfits followed the public school's dress code and they have worn them on campus many times.



RICK BOWMER / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Wasatch High School sophomore Kimberly Montoya, 16, who found her sleeveless top changed to a short-sleeved shirt, is among a group of high school students upset to discover alterations to their original yearbook photos.

"I feel like they're trying to shame you of your body," said sophomore Shelby Baum, who discovered that a high, square neckline had been drawn on her black, V-neck T-shirt.

Baum told the Salt Lake Tribune she was upset to learn that a tattoo on her collarbone had been erased from her photo. She said she consulted the school dress code before getting the tattoo, a line of script that reads "I am enough the way I am."

"I was shocked," said Kimberly Montoya, a sophomore who found that her sleeveless top had been converted into a short-sleeved shirt. Students said the standards were not uniformly applied.

The Wasatch County School District said in a statement that students were warned when yearbook photos were taken last fall that images might be altered if

students violated dress standards.

"When the yearbook comes out in the spring, students are always excited to see their pictures and are concerned with how they look in the yearbook, so it is understandable that students in violation of the dress code could forget that they received warnings about inappropriate dress," the statement said. The district plans to evaluate the policy of altering photos in the future.

Superintendent Terry Shoemaker declined to comment further.

An estimated two-thirds of Utah

residents belong to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, which encourages its members to practice modesty in their dress. For women, that includes covering shoulders and avoiding low-cut shirts and short skirts and shorts.

"The fashions of the world will change, but the Lord's standards will not change," reads a pamphlet distributed to youth members of the faith.

The Wasatch School District dress code says: "Clothing will be modest, neat, clean, in good repair. Modesty includes covering

shoulders, midriff, back, underwear and cleavage at all times."

Most of the eight high schools in the Granite School District, one of the largest in the state, also ban bare shoulders, district spokesman Ben Horsley said.

Legally, schools have a lot of leeway with dress codes, and legal challenges usually are unsuccessful, said John Mejia, legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Utah. Schools open themselves up to problems when the policy is not being implemented uniformly or when students are not given proper notice, he said.



ELAINE THOMPSON / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Yeni Sleidi, known as the "Weed Fairy," right, buys marijuana in Seattle's Capitol Hill neighborhood on Wednesday. Sleidi began distributing free marijuana in New York during the government shutdown as a way to distract people from stress.

Spirits fly high in Seattle after visit from 'Weed Fairy'

MANUEL VALDES
Associated Press

SEATTLE — A woman who calls herself the "Weed Fairy" distributed free nuggets of marijuana to people in Seattle over Memorial Day weekend, taping the free pot on 50 fliers around a city neighborhood.

The woman, 23-year-old Yeni Sleidi, said she does it to give people a break from everyday stress.

"People mostly laughed," Sleidi said.

The woman said she first came up with the idea in New York, where she lived during the government shutdown, because several of her friends were affected by it.

She wanted to distract them from the stress. Passing out the pot in the Big Apple drew plenty of coverage from the media.

"I'm not sure what the thought process

was, but I thought people would be amused by it," she said.

The fliers posted in Seattle came with the message: "These are tough times. Take this weed. And keep your spirits high."

Sleidi posted her free marijuana in Capitol Hill, a Seattle neighborhood known for its nightlife and counterculture.

Washington and Colorado legalized recreational marijuana in 2012.

Sleidi said it was the first time she felt comfortable with attaching her name to her deeds.

"I felt so relaxed about it ... I wouldn't feel comfortable doing it elsewhere in the country," she said.

A call to the Seattle Police Department to ask about the pot distribution effort was not immediately returned.

WEED FAIRY'S FLIER

"These are tough times. Take this weed. And keep your spirits high."

Guard in cell death formerly punished for similar offense

IAKE PEARSON
Associated Press

NEWYORK — A Rikers Island jail guard who left her post without permission before a mentally ill inmate died in his 101-degree cell in February had been disciplined four years earlier for similar misconduct, according to public records.

Carol Lackner was accused in 2010 of leaving the prison entirely without permission while working, according to the documents.

That charge was settled, her attorney says, when Lackner gave up five vacation days. More recently, Lackner was suspended for 30 days following the Feb. 15 death of Jerome Murdough. An investigation found she abandoned her post 20 minutes before he was discovered unresponsive.

Murdough "basically baked to death" when he was left unchecked for at least four hours in a part of the jail with a malfunctioning heater, a city official said.

Murdough suffered from bipolar disorder and schizophrenia, according to his family. He was on psychotropic medication, which experts say can make people more sensitive to heat. The medical examiner's office said more tests are needed to determine exactly how he died, but said he appeared to have died from hyperthermia.

The logbook indicates Lackner toured the area every half-hour as required, but she is not seen on video doing so, according to another city official. Lackner's attorney denied the accusations. He said she was brought in as a relief guard after effectively working three straight shifts and was not given any information about complaints of excessive heat.

He said multiple factors contributed to Murdough's death, including his sentence to Rikers in the first place.

Murdough's mother is planning to sue the city.

"Had the city properly supervised this officer, who had a history of abandoning her post, Jerome might still be alive," lawyer Derek Sells said.

The documents also reveal that correction officials brought charges against Lackner in 2011 for failing to report that she had been arrested.

NATIONAL

Sergeant faces sexual assault accusations

ST. LOUIS — A Missouri-based Army drill sergeant has been accused of sexually assaulting 12 female soldiers during the past three years, including several while he was deployed in Afghanistan.

Staff Sgt. Angel M. Sanchez appeared at a pretrial hearing at Fort Leonard Wood this week.

He is accused of sexually assaulting four women and inappropriately touching eight others, said Tiffany Wood, a Fort Leonard Wood spokeswoman.

Military court records indicate that Sanchez is accused of using his supervisory position as a drill sergeant with the 14th Military Police Brigade to threaten some of the women he is accused of assaulting.

The Pentagon's first formal report on sex assaults in its ranks shows that in the vast majority of the cases, the victim was a young, lower-ranking woman and the offender a senior enlisted male service member, often in the same unit.

Sanchez has been assigned an office job with his unit as his legal case unfolds.

Britain's delayed Iraq report due at end of 2014

LONDON — British Prime Minister David Cameron said a long-delayed report on the Iraq war should be published by the end of 2014 — five years after the inquiry began.

Cameron told Sky News that the delay was frustrating, and the public was eager to see the answers.

The inquiry, led by retired civil servant John Chilcot, was set up to examine mistakes made before and after the 2003 U.S.-led invasion of Iraq. It held public hearings between 2009 and 2011.

Its report has been delayed by negotiations with top civil servants over the inclusion of classified material including conversations between then-Prime Minister Tony Blair and then-President George W. Bush.

On Friday, the House of Commons Public Administration Committee said the long delay was very serious.

Police officer on trial for killing town's favorite elk

BOULDER, Colo. — When Mapleton Hill residents learned a police officer killed a bull elk named "Big Boy," they led marches, wrote songs, held prayer vigils and hatched plans for a permanent memorial.

Now jurors must decide whether to convict the former officer on felony charges that could send him to prison.

Sam Carter was charged with attempting to influence a public official, forgery and tampering with evidence after he shot the elk while on duty Jan. 1, 2013.

Carter's attorney, Marc Colin, said the elk had become dangerously domesticated and aggressive, frightening local dogs.

Prosecutors said Carter called another officer, Brent Cumow, to come cart away the body in his pickup truck, and together they butchered the animal for its meat. Cumow pleaded guilty last year to tampering with evidence and other charges and is expected to testify against Carter.

"He was not a pet, but he was a fixture of Mapleton," Withers said about the elk. "He had been there for years."

Brad Pitt assailant has history of getting too close

LOS ANGELES — A man who was arrested after police said he rushed and touched Brad Pitt at the premiere of the movie "Maleficent" is no stranger in Hollywood.

Vitalii Sediuk was jailed Wednesday on suspicion of misdemeanor battery and was held on \$20,000 bail, police said.

Sediuk has previously crossed the line with celebrities, most recently rushing America Ferrara on a red carpet and crawling under her dress.

He crashed the 2013 Grammys and was arrested after he went onstage and grabbed a microphone before Adele accepted an award. He remains on probation for the incident. In 2012, Will Smith slapped Sediuk after he tried to kiss Smith, and he drew Madonna's anger a year earlier by presenting her with flowers.

Attorney Anthony Willoughby, who represented Sediuk in the Grammy trespassing case, said he will likely represent the former journalist if new charges are filed.

The latest incident might constitute a violation of Sediuk's probation, the lawyer said.

— ASSOCIATED PRESS

TEXAS/SOUTHWEST

Man entering school with gun arrested

ABILENE — Abilene police arrested a man after he was reported carrying a gun and walking into an elementary school. Police received a 911 call Thursday morning that a man with a gun in his waistband had entered Jane Long Elementary School. The school was placed on lockdown but police were not able to find the intruder. Police Sgt. Lynn Beard said a man was arrested in the incident and was also involved in a child custody disagreement. District Superintendent Heath Burns said he is confident there was no immediate threat to students or staff on the campus. School officials also allowed parents to retrieve their children if they felt it was necessary.

Lawyer: Stealing Wendy Davis’ car cost client

The attorney of a man who broke into the house of Texas gubernatorial hopeful Wendy Davis said Thursday she believes her client would have gotten a lighter sentence if the homeowner was not a public figure. Davis was at her Fort Worth home in April 2013 when an intruder entered and stole her car. Donnell Dickerson pleaded guilty to the charges and was sentenced to eight years in prison. Davis testified during a short sentencing trial in January, three months after launching her campaign.

Fort Worth attorney Mamie Johnson said Dickerson had no idea last spring whose home he was breaking into, but that ultimately the owner’s status affected how much time her client will serve. “When it was all said and done, he ended up with an extra year or two because it’s a public official,” Johnson said. “Not because it was Wendy Davis, but because it was a public official.” Dickerson had a past criminal record that jurors were allowed to consider, she said, and although she couldn’t recall his previous arrests she said none were felonies. A Davis spokesman said the Democrat was grateful to police but referred questions about Dickerson’s sentence to prosecutors. Tarrant County District Attorney Joe Shannon said his office handled the case like any other burglary.

Despite being sentenced to eight years, Dickerson could be eligible for parole much sooner, Johnson said. She described her client as being satisfied with the sentence even though she believes it could have been shorter.

Sex offender accused in plot to kill judge

WACO — A convicted sex offender was indicted on attempted capital murder charges for what prosecutors said was a \$30,000 offer to have a Waco judge killed. William Ray Phillips was indicted Wednesday by a McLennan County grand jury. Prosecutors said the 63-year-old Phillips was plotting the murder-for-hire scheme against State District Judge Matt Johnson. Phillips has been in custody since February and Johnson presided over two of his previous trials. A 10-month investigation showed Phillips also had McLennan County District Attorney Abel Reyna and U.S. District Judge Walter Smith on his hit list but was willing to pay only for Johnson to be killed. Conviction on the attempted capital murder charge could get Phillips a life sentence.

3 relatives ousted from South Texas school board

PROGRESO — Two brothers and the wife of one were removed from the school board in a small South Texas town in a fallout over conspiracy and bribery schemes. Omar and Orlando Vela and Orlando Vela’s wife, Ana, were all unanimously voted off the Progreso school board. Omar Vela was Progreso’s mayor and the school district head of truancy. He is awaiting sentencing after pleading guilty to federal conspiracy and bribery charges. Orlando Vela was school district risk manager and former city mayor pro tem. He has pleaded guilty to stealing money for buying supplies that were not sold. Ana Vela has not been charged but was the school district’s business manager. Trustee Juan Garcia said she should not have signed off on fraudulent payments.

— ASSOCIATED PRESS

Texas shields execution drug origin, maker

NOMAAN MERCHANT
Associated Press

DALLAS — Texas’ prison system does not have to reveal where it gets its execution drugs, the attorney general said Thursday. Attorney General Greg Abbott, the Republican nominee for governor in the nation’s busiest death penalty state, rebuffed three previous attempts by Texas prison officials to shield the source of the drug. But he switched course Thursday after state prison officials said their supplier would be in danger if identified.

Texas is among a group of execution states that contend compounding pharmacies that provide them with drugs should remain secret to protect the suppliers from threats of violence. Lawyers for death row inmates said they need the information to verify the drugs’ potency and protect inmates from cruel and unusual punishment.

The U.S. Supreme Court has yet to halt an execution based on a state’s refusal to reveal its drug supplier. The secrecy argument also was used ahead of a bungled execution last month in Oklahoma, though that inmate’s faulty veins, not the execution drug, were cited as the likely culprit.

The opinion from Abbott’s office cites a threat assessment that prison officials submitted from the Texas Department of Public Safety that said drug suppliers face a substantial threat of physical harm. However, state agencies did not make the assessment available publicly Thursday.

It said that “in this instance and when analyzing the probability of harm, this office must defer to the representations of DPS, the law enforcement experts charged with assessing threats to public safety.”

A Houston-area compounding pharmacy was previously identified as the state’s execution supplier. State and local law enforcement said last month that they were not investigating any threats against that pharmacy, although the pharmacy’s owner complained of “constant inquiries from the press, the hate mail and messages.”

Unlike some states, Texas law does not specifically say whether prison officials must disclose where they get their lethal injection drugs.

Abbott’s latest decision stems from an open records request filed before the April executions of serial killer Tommy Lynn Sells and convicted murderer Ramiro Hernandez-Llanas. Texas prison officials used a new supply of pentobarbital, a powerful sedative, but refused to name the supplier. The inmates’ attorneys said that violated their rights.

Defense attorney Maurie Levin, called Abbott’s decision deeply disturbing and said serious questions surround his change of heart.

SPUR DOWN FOR WHAT?



ERIC GAY / ASSOCIATED PRESS

San Antonio Spurs’ Manu Ginobili (20) shoots over Oklahoma City Thunder’s Kevin Durant (35) during the first half of Game 5 of the Western Conference finals NBA basketball playoff series yesterday in San Antonio. The Spurs defeated the Thunder 117 to 89. For full coverage of the game, visit swjournalist.com.

Explosion levels house; baby survives



KATHLEEN DUNCAN / ASSOCIATED PRESS

A ranger from the Department of Public Safety navigates through the debris after an explosion destroyed a two-story home in Victoria, Texas. Officials are investigating to find the cause of the May 28 blast.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

VICTORIA, Texas — A woman was killed but her 4-month-old infant appears to have escaped serious injury in an explosion that leveled their home.

Officials are investigating to find the cause of the blast Wednesday that killed 26-year-old Haley Singer, Victoria County Sheriff T. Michael O’Connor said. Firefighters found her daughter, Parker, alive in the debris. The child was being treated at a hospital in San Antonio, about 100 miles to the northwest.

Authorities said firefighters found Singer’s body in what had been the kitchen area. Her infant was recovered between two mattresses that were buried under lumber and other wreckage. “When we arrived on there and

just saw rubble, I mean literally rubble, there was no remnants of a house whatsoever,” O’Connor said.

Firefighters heard cries and began digging, then brought in air bags and jacks to assist in removing the debris.

“The fact that the child survived is incredible,” O’Connor said.

Fire Marshal Ron Pray said Singer’s husband had left for work shortly before the explosion ripped their two-story home.

The explosion damaged nearly a dozen homes in the area. A woman in the house next door was buried under broken drywall, but authorities said she was not seriously hurt.

Propane gas was an energy source in the home but officials would not immediately say if it was a source for the explosion.

Restored water supply to slake North Texas’ thirst

ASSOCIATED PRESS

DALLAS — A water district in North Texas is turning once again to a critical water source to serve 1.6 million thirsty customers living north and east of Dallas.

Lake Texoma was an important source of water for the North Texas Municipal Water District for nearly two decades before invasive zebra mussels were discovered in the lake in 2009.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers cut the flow of water from Texoma, which borders Oklahoma, in an effort to prevent the mussels from spreading south into the Trinity River basin. That meant more than 27.3 billion gallons of Texoma water could no longer be delivered to customers, The Dallas Morning News reports.

The district undertook a \$300 million project to build treatment plants and a delivery system that sends Texoma water to Lavon Lake in Collin County.

The mussels later made it into the Trinity River

Weekend rains ease drought

Rains that fell across much of Texas over the Memorial Day weekend have improved drought conditions in some of the driest parts of the state.

The U.S. Drought Monitor map released Thursday shows the driest designations in West and Southwest Texas improved one stage to extreme drought.

The rains provided short-term relief to the Panhandle and South Plains regions, which are in their fourth year of drought.

The most rain fell around San Angelo, where some locations got as much as 11 inches, according to the National Weather Service.

anyway, probably as stowaways on a boat taken from Texoma to Lake Ray Roberts without proper cleaning.

District officials said Texoma water could once again be serving customers within the next week, and the supply should gradually grow over the next month or two.

“Once we get our blending facilities up and running, we’ll use about 75 million gallons a day on average,” Mike Rickman, deputy director of the district, told the Morning News. “The range is 30 million to 40 million gallons a day in

the winter to 120 million gallons a day in the summer.”

Restoring the Texoma supply comes at an important time. Lake levels in the region are dropping precipitously because of the lingering drought and hotter-than-normal summers.

The water district, which includes some of the fastest-growing cities in the country, has imposed tough water restrictions.

Rickman cautions that the flow of water from Texoma will not change those restrictions anytime soon.

Southwest Airlines fined for airing false advertisement

ASSOCIATED PRESS

DALLAS — Southwest Airlines is being fined \$200,000 for advertising a fare sale too good to be true.

The U.S. Department of Transportation said Thursday that in television commercials last October the airline promised flights from Atlanta to New York, Chicago and Los Angeles for just \$59 — but did not make any seats available at that price.

The government said that Southwest’s ads were deceptive and violated advertising rules.

It added that airlines have long known that rules governing fare advertising stipulate that they must have a “reasonable number” of seats available at the advertised price.

In October, Southwest ran ads in Atlanta which told viewers, “Discover amazing low sale fares” of \$59 “to places like New York, Los Angeles and Chicago.”

The department said it checked and found that Southwest had no seats for \$59 to those three cities on any of the travel dates listed in the ad.

The Dallas-based air carrier was also required to pay an extra \$100,000 that had been suspended after a similar offense last year.

Southwest said that those three cities were never intended to be part of the Atlanta fare sale but wound up in the advertisement after a flawed review of the ad copy.

“As soon as we became aware of our mistake, we pulled all incorrect advertisements off the air,” said spokesman Brad Hawkins.

The airline added that it honored the \$59 fare to the three cities for consumers who called its reservations center and asked for that price.

Feuil·le·ton

n., a part of a European newspaper or magazine devoted to material designed to entertain the general reader. The last word the co-champion had to spell.



EVAN VUCCI / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ansun Sujoe, 13, of Fort Worth and Sriram Hathwar, 14, of Painted Post, New York, were named co-champions of the National Spelling Bee, on Thursday in Oxon Hill, Maryland. Ansun correctly spelled feuil·le·ton, which drained the list of championship words and earned him the co-title.

CO-CHAMPION



ANSUN SUJOE, 13

School: Bethesda Christian School
Hometown: Fort Worth
Finals word: **Augenphilologie**
n. (aw-jen-phil-ol-o-gy): linguistics that misrepresents the realities of speech because of overemphasis on writing.

TEXAS FINALIST



KATE MILLER, 14

School: Big Country Home Educators
Hometown: Abilene
Last word: **Exochorion**
n. (ex-o-kor-e-on): the outer of the two layers that form the hardened covering of an insect egg.

SOURCES: SPELLINGBEE.COM AND MERRIAM-WEBSTER.COM

Texas teen co-champ at Scripps National Spelling Bee

BEN NUCKOLS
Associated Press

OXON HILL, Md. — For the first time in 52 years, two spellers were declared co-champions of the Scripps National Spelling Bee on Thursday.

Sriram Hathwar of Painted Post, New York, and Ansun Sujoe of Fort Worth, Texas, shared the title after a riveting final-round duel in which they nearly exhausted the 25 designated championship words. After they spelled a dozen words correctly in a row, they both were named champions.

Earlier, 14-year-old Sriram opened the door to an upset by 13-year-old Ansun after he misspelled “corps-bruder,” a close comrade. But Ansun was unable to take the title because he got “antegropelos,” which means waterproof leggings, wrong.

Sriram entered the final round as the favorite after finishing in third place last year. Ansun just missed the semifinals last year.

They become the fourth co-champions in the bee’s 89-year history and the first since 1962.

“The competition was against the dictionary, not against each other,” Sriram said after both were showered with confetti onstage. “I’m happy to share this trophy with him.”

Sriram bucked up his status as the favorite by rarely looking flustered on stage, nodding confidently as he outlasted 10 other spellers to set up the one-on-one duel with Ansun. The younger boy was more nervous and demonstrative, no more so than on the word that gave him a share of the title: “feuil·le·ton,” the features section of a European newspaper or magazine.

“Ah, whatever!” Ansun said before beginning to spell the word as the stage lights turned red, signaling that he had 30 seconds left.

Although they hoisted a single trophy together onstage, each will get one to take home, and each gets the champion’s haul of more than \$33,000 in cash and prizes.

Both champions are Indian-American. The past eight winners and 13 of the past 17 have been of Indian descent, a run that began in 1999 after Nupur Lala’s victory, which was later featured in the documentary “Spellbound.”

FOUR MEMORABLE MOMENTS:

Jae Canetti of Falls Church, Virginia, making his third appearance in the bee, was eliminated from the semifinals immediately after ESPN2 profiled him and his family. His mother was diagnosed with cancer just two months before last year’s bee, which he said affected his preparation and concentration, and he missed the semifinals by one point. She has since recovered and was in the audience Thursday.

Jae received a standing ovation after he misspelled “parseval,” a non-rigid airship.

“That show of support really has comforted me,” Jae said afterward in a televised interview.

Normally calm onstage, Jae squinted and fidgeted as he tried to guess the word. The 12-year-old seventh-grader has one year of eligibility remaining.

“The one word I didn’t know, pretty much,” Jae said. “I’ve just got to study more German.”

Meghana Kamineni of Lockport, Illinois, correctly spelled “cachinnate,” which means to laugh loudly. Two spellers later, given the word “epixylous,” Lucas Urbanski of Crystal Lake, Illinois, got the biggest laugh of the semifinal round with a question for pronouncer Jacques Bailly.

“Can you make me cachinnate with a sentence?” Lucas said.

At 5-foot-10, finalist **Kate Miller** of Abilene, Texas, is accustomed to towering over her fellow spellers. She also has the longest hair, which reaches below her waist. A dancer and an aspiring writer, her hobbies include film analysis, knitting Rodentia and “crafting irreverent travesties of pop songs,” according to her official spelling bee biography.

“I’m not the tallest speller, but I’m the tallest finalist,” Kate said. “When I competed in sixth grade, I was 5-8, and when I competed in seventh grade, I was 5-9, and in eighth grade, fittingly, I’m 5-10.”

Kate smiled throughout her time onstage and leaned over to speak into the microphone. She said she enjoys being nervous, and she admitted her first semifinal word, “duello,” was “a complete guess.”

“I feel more alive when I’m nervous. I think that a bit of nervous energy, not debilitating to the point where you can’t remember what you’ve learned, but a certain amount of nervousness really does help you,” she said. “It helps you remember why you’re there.”

It rarely happens in the semifinal round of the National Spelling Bee, but sometimes, a word is spelled exactly like it sounds.

Finalist **Ansun Sujoe** of Fort Worth, Texas, was momentarily flummoxed when asked to spell “laulau,” a Hawaiian-derived word for meat or fish wrapped in leaves and baked or steamed.

“What does this mean?” he asked incredulously.

After getting the definition and other context from Bailly, he was resigned to guess.



Jennifer M. Tennant, 13, of Father Andrew White S.J. School, Leonardtown, Maryland

PAST TEXAS WINNERS

- 1942: Richard Earnhart, El Paso
Sacrilegious
- 1962: Nettie Crawford*, El Paso
Esquamulose
- 1966: Robert A Wake, Houston
Ratoon
- 1969: Susan Yoachum, Dallas
Interlocutory
- 1972: Robin Kral, Lubbock
Macerate
- 1973: Barrie Trinkle, Fort Worth
Vouchsafe
- 1981: Paige Pipkin, El Paso
Sarcophagus
- 1983: Blake Giddens, El Paso
Purim
- 2003: Sai R. Gunturi, Dallas
Pocourante

*Co-champion

THE PROCESS

- Preliminaries round 1:** Spellers complete a computer-based test.
- A. Spell 24 words
 - B. Answer 24 multiple-choice vocabulary questions
 - C. One vocabulary word
 - D. One vocabulary word
- Preliminaries rounds 2 and 3:** Spellers verbally spell words and are rewarded points in each round. The top 50 move to the semifinals.
- Semifinals round 4:** Spellers complete another computer-based test.
- A. Spell 12 words
 - B. Answer 12 multiple-choice vocabulary questions
 - C. One vocabulary word
 - D. One vocabulary word
- Semifinals rounds 5 and 6:** The top 12 advance to the finals.
- Championship finals:** Spellers are eliminated as they misspell words. The final speller must correctly spell his or her word and a championship word.

ORIGIN OF “BEE”

The word bee, as used in spelling bee, is one of those language puzzles that has never been satisfactorily accounted for. A fairly old and widely-used word, it refers to a community social gathering at which friends and neighbors join together in a single activity (sewing, quilting, barn raising, etc.) usually to help one person or family.

SOURCE: SPELLINGBEE.COM

WHERE THEY WENT WRONG



Mary Horton Misspelled *shibuichi*



Alia Abiad Misspelled *irbis*



Jacob Williamson Misspelled *kabaragoya*



Tajau Gibbison Misspelled *chartula*