

HONG KONG DEMOCRACY STALEMATE • NOW OLD NEWS

"We are ready to roll with this convoy, there has been a last-minute delay. We are hopeful that it will be resolved shortly," ICRC spokesman Ewan Watson told Reuters.

"Last-minute decisions from the Ukrainian side have delayed the process," he said, declining to elaborate.

The ICRC has begun delivering aid donated by the Ukrainian government to a number of towns in eastern Ukraine, including Starobilsk, Lysychansk and Syevyerodonetsk, with the help of the Ukrainian Red Cross.

"The distribution of goods such as fruit and vegetables has already reached over 20,000 displaced people in shelters and hospitals," the ICRC said, referring to the aid sent by Kiev.

The United Nations has put the death toll in the conflict at over 2,000, including civilians and combatants. That figure has nearly doubled since late July, when Ukrainian forces stepped up their offensive and the conflict spread to major urban areas.

Landslides hit Japan's Hiroshima, killing at least 36

(Reuters) - At least 36 people, including several children, were killed in Japan on Wednesday, when landslides triggered by torrential rain slammed into the outskirts of the western city of Hiroshima, and the toll could rise further, police said.

Seven people were missing after a month's worth of rain fell overnight, loosening slopes already saturated by heavy rain over the past few weeks.

"There was rain and thunder all night, beating down so hard I was scared to go outside," a resident told Fuji TV. "Great big drops. I've never seen anything like this."

Helicopters clattered overhead, lifting out survivors, as rescue workers searched through mud and piles of stones in residential areas about 5 km (3 miles) from the city centre.

Among those dug out of the debris were two brothers, aged eleven and two, whose house was struck as they slept.

A child's red school bag, covered in mud, lay in the debris. Houses had been pushed 100 metres (yards) by the landslide in the worst-hit area, where thick, knee-high mud hampered rescue efforts.

"The rain was just pouring down and the street in front of my house turned into a river," a man in his 70s told national television NHK.

Hiroshima city authorities issued an evacuation advisory notice about an hour after the first landslide on Wednesday.

"Something went wrong in our analysis (of the situation) ... We failed to issue an

evacuation advisory ahead of the disaster. Looking back, I believe this is something we need to amend," an official at the city's fire department said.

The soil in the area was of a kind that absorbed water until it suddenly loosened and slid, increasing the danger, disaster management experts told NHK.

Cities in land-scarce Japan often expand into mountainous areas, leaving such development vulnerable to landslides.

About 240 mm (9 inches) of rain fell in the area in the 24 hours up to Wednesday morning, a record-breaking level equivalent to a month's worth of rain in a usual August, the Meteorological Agency said. Roughly half of that rain fell in one hour on Wednesday.

The force of the landslide crumbled asphalt roads, while streams of mud tore through neighbourhoods, turning houses into piles of twisted wreckage. Boulders with a diameter of as much as three metres (yards) lay scattered around.

More rain was likely in western Japan later on Wednesday.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe cut short his summer vacation to head back to Tokyo. He said he would dispatch several hundred military personnel to help with rescue efforts. By Wednesday evening, about 500 such troops had been sent in.

Landslides killed 31 people in Hiroshima in 1999, including six in the same area hit this time.

Hong Kong democracy stalemate sets stage for possible financial district shutdown

SHENZHEN China (Reuters) - Chinese officials and Hong Kong democrats failed on Thursday to resolve a standoff over political reforms in the freewheeling former British colony, a deadlock that could end up shutting down the city's financial district next month.

Hong Kong, which returned to Chinese rule in 1997, has been roiled over the past year over how its next leader is chosen in 2017 - by universal suffrage, as the democrats would like, or from a list of pro-Beijing candidates.

A so-called Occupy Central campaign of civil disobedience has threatened to blockade Hong Kong's Central business district if Beijing doesn't allow open nominations, rather than pre-screening candidates and restricting the poll to pro-Beijing "patriots" and those who "love China".

Thursday's meeting just over the Hong Kong border in Shenzhen was seen as a last chance to narrow differences ahead of a parliamentary meeting in Beijing next week

that will formally lay out Beijing's position on the 2017 poll.

While both sides said the dialogue was sincere and encouraging, there was little sign of compromise.

Li Fei, the chairman of China's Basic Law Committee who met the Hong Kong lawmakers, reiterated the Basic Law, or Hong Kong's mini-constitution, made no allowance for open nominations.

"We will also not allow public nomination of chief executive candidates, occupying central and other related crimes. This remains one of the biggest arguments in Hong Kong today," he told reporters in a luxury hotel where the talks were held.

Hong Kong returned to China's rule under a principle of "one country, two systems" allowing it broad autonomy and far more freedom of speech, assembly and religion than exists on the mainland. But China has made it plain that Beijing's sovereignty cannot be questioned.

Helena Wong, a democratic party lawmaker, said Beijing must allow "true full democracy, not fake democracy". The democrats also handed out copies of a report reflecting public demands for a fair election including opposition candidates, after an unofficial referendum last month that drew more than 800,000 votes.

Some 26 pro-democracy lawmakers recently pledged in a declaration to veto any "unfair" reform plan that does not meet international standards. Any electoral reform proposal must garner the support of at least two-thirds of the city's 70-member legislature in order to pass, as well as being ultimately approved by Beijing.

"Time is already running short and the opportunity for discussion is precious and hard to come by. This is the last chance for open communication," Rita Fan, a Hong Kong delegate to China's parliament, said after meeting the Chinese officials.

Chinese officials and Hong Kong businesses have warned any shutdown of the city's financial district could damage Hong Kong's economy and reputation.

Lexus may make another supercar

As it turns out, Toyota's Lexus may not be so quick to be getting out of the supercar business.

The Lexus LFA, a \$375,000 552-horsepower car meant to burnish the brand's image, may have finished its production run, but Lexus may have a successor in mind.

So says Bloomberg News, which reports Executive Vice President Mark Templin is dropping broad hints at the possibility. Templin cites President Akio Toyoda as being supportive of the idea.

BY: LEON

IRBY 20fZ DATED: MARCH 3, 2015

"Akio believes that every generation deserves to have a car like an LFA, so we're building an LFA for the generation we have today," Bloomberg quotes Templin as having said in Kyushu, Japan. "At some point, there may be another special car for another generation."

Templin's handlers, however, caution about reading too much into his views. There has been no announcement about a supercar, and the next generation comment could mean another 30 years.

Still, supercars raise morale among automakers, let imaginations run wild and show the potential of a brand. The demand is probably there, since the limited-run LFA ended production in 2012.

Google car goes wrong way on a one-way, crashes

(NEWSER) — Google Street View is probably going to have to redo Tyler Street in Little Rock. The driver of a Street View car in the Arkansas city crashed into another vehicle after going the wrong way down the one-way street, making a U-turn, then hitting a car on an adjacent street, according to a police report obtained by the Smoking Gun.

The Google driver, who was seen trying to take apart the car's camera equipment after the crash, was cited for "careless prohibited driving." The crash caused an estimated \$1,500 in damages to the company-owned car and \$2,000 in damages to the other vehicle.

The other driver—who claims the Google driver also ran a red light—says that after the Google car "came out of nowhere" and smashed into the side of his car, the Google driver "basically said he was sorry and that he was gonna lose his job." The non-Google driver says he suffered whiplash and may miss a few weeks of work.

"Something better come out of Google's pocket for this," he tells Arkansas Online. But at least the Google driver stayed at the scene. Last year, another Google Street View driver hit a bus—then hit another bus and a truck as he tried to flee.

24 stuck, then rescued on Six Flags ride in Maryland

Two dozen people were rescued from a roller coaster ride at the Six Flags America amusement park in Maryland, according to Prince George's County Fire Department.

Fire officials responded as a train on the Joker's Jinx roller coaster at the park in Upper Marlboro, Md., stopped on the track Sunday afternoon, about 45 feet from the ground, said a spokesperson for Six Flags.

All 24 people on the ride were safe and uninjured, a spokesperson for Six Flags said. Seven children and 17 adults were among those stuck on the ride, the fire department said.

A Six Flags America spokesman said in a statement that it is not yet clear what caused the ride to stop but that it has a computerized safety system that "performed as it is designed to."

Assistant Fire Chief Paul Gomez said Sunday afternoon the car the riders were stuck in was sitting upright near the top of the ride. He predicted it would take a few hours to get the riders off the coaster. By 7 p.m. Eastern Time, the riders were on the ground, removed one by one by firefighters using a bucket lift.

The Six Flags website says the ride goes 60 mph and goes upside down four times.

Michael Wolff: What lies ahead for newspapers?

Should we feel bad about ourselves?

Virtually every public company that holds substantial print assets — including the one that owns this paper — is pushing them, and us, out the door into a separate, stand-alone enterprise. Time Warner cut its ties to Time Inc., the once-great magazine publisher. The Tribune Co., keeping its television stations, has created a separately traded entity called Tribune Publishing for its newspapers. News Corp. now holds Rupert Murdoch's newspapers, while 21st Century Fox has his entertainment properties. E. W. Scripps sent its papers packing. *The Washington Post* was pushed out by the public entity, controlled by the Graham family, that owned it. (In a reverse move, but arguably to the same effect, *The New York Times* has sold all its other businesses and reduced itself to a stand-alone paper.) And now Gannett has announced that it will create two companies, one with its television and digital assets, the other with USA TODAY and its 81 community newspapers.

We are the spun-off people.

In large part, it's a Wall Street thing. Print gets a lower multiple than other media assets, hence dragging down the share price of a company with faster-growing properties. In fact, Wall Street tends to reward companies that do such a spinoff with a price bounce, meaning shareholders get a stake in a new company pretty much for free. What's not to like — at least if you're a shareholder?

But if you are a beat reporter or copy editor or columnist or editor in chief, we descendants of ink-stained wretches — my own mother went to work for the *Paterson Evening News*, a paper in New Jersey, in 1942 — it is hard not to wonder: What is to become of us?

Print, many people argue, is dead — or quickly dying. Ken Doctor, an analyst who has covered the industry's fall, puts newspaper revenue decline at more than 50% in the past few years.

Still, many newspapers and magazines are profitable. Such profits continue to derive more from print than from digital — which, almost everyone believes, somewhat paradoxically, is the future of print. *The New York Times* has been as aggressive and as adept in its digital ambitions as any paper, but it is still supported by its print business. The future may be desktop and mobile, but if print dies before that future arrives, it is quite unclear what will happen to the *Times* and, as well, the rest of us. Curiously, or alarmingly, print companies — as Wall Street will realize when it turns to evaluating these new print-focused stocks — could be even more profitable, albeit with fewer people.

While this is not to argue that any of us (or more of us) should be fired, it is to acknowledge our quite extraordinary existential predicament: It really is sink or swim. And, increasing the existential confusion, we might wisely wonder just exactly what business we're trying to survive in.

Throughout my mother's career and for a good part of my own, we were really in the manufacturing business. The most vital and valuable aspect of what we did was to print. *The New York Times* building on West 43rd Street, where I first went to work in the 1970s, was a factory, with heavy machinery making a product with a great roar and thud starting every day around 6 p.m.

Then, newspapers were more directly and openly in the advertising business, with papers often called *The Such-and-Such Advertiser*. People who wanted to place ads called up newspapers, which had operators waiting to take their orders — something like the more or less automatic process that now happens at Google.

Nowadays, it's much less clear what an organization of people broadly curious about the world and eager to collect facts about it is supposed to primarily do or be. We're journalists, of course, trying to address the common good — perhaps more squarely part of a newspaper's mission than at anytime in the past (this is disputed only by people who don't remember how low newspaper ambitions could be when they didn't have to try very hard). And then there's the information business — that is, being able to provide data and analysis that people will actually pay a lot for, Bloomberg being something like the ultimate example of this. And there's the content business, which, in the new vernacular, with sponsored content, or content marketing, is another way to say advertising — Vice has mastered this business. And there is a broader idea of the news business, cross-platform, on demand, and more and more about ceaseless hunter-gatherer-type aggregation. And, of course, there is a digital/social/mobile strategy — think BuzzFeed here.

"VA SECRETARY APOLOGIZES AGAIN FOR SERVICE MISSTATEMENT"

VA secretary apologizes again for service 'misstatement'

WASHINGTON — For the second time in 24 hours, Veterans Affairs Secretary Robert McDonald issued a mea culpa for telling a homeless veteran in Los Angeles last month he had been in Special Forces when he had not.

Addressing reporters in front of VA headquarters Tuesday, McDonald said he had no intention of stepping down for the mistake, saying he made the error in an effort to connect with the veteran, not to embellish his record.

"In my 61 years, integrity has been the foundation of my character. ... It is a part of who I am and I will do better to not make a mistake like I made in L.A. again," said McDonald.

During an overnight count of homeless veterans in Los Angeles last month, McDonald spoke with a veteran who said he had been in Army Special Forces, telling him he'd also been in Special Forces.

McDonald graduated from West Point in 1975 and spent five years in the Army, having graduated jump school and Army Ranger training and earning his Ranger tab. He was assigned primarily to the 82nd Airborne Division and left service in 1980 at the rank of captain.

But he never served in a special operations unit.

After the conversation was reported late Monday by the *Huffington Post*, McDonald issued an apology.

"I apologize to anyone that was offended by my misstatement," he said in statement. "I have great respect for those who have served our nation in Special Forces. They, and all veterans, deserve a Department of Veterans Affairs that provides them the care and benefits they have earned."

"In my 61 years, integrity has been the foundation of my character. ... It is a part of who I am and I will do better to not make a mistake like I made in L.A. again."

VA Secretary Robert McDonald

On Tuesday, he again said he was sorry and wanted to apologize to anyone "who may have been hurt by my misstatements."

Leaders at the Veterans of Foreign Wars quickly dismissed the burgeoning scandal, noting that McDonald was "trying to make a connection" with the homeless vet and is Special Forces-qualified.

However, he never served in a Ranger unit or as part of any U.S. commando force, and false claims of "Special Forces" service routinely rile veterans groups that see the résumé lies as a form of stolen valor.

During the American Legion's Washington conference Tuesday, group national commander Michael Helm said he was shocked that an official as senior as McDonald could be that careless with such a claim.

"A lie is a lie," he said. "What a disappointment from the leader of a

department whose No. 1 issue right now is the restoration of trust. He should be held to a higher standard."

House Veterans' Affairs Chairman Jeff Miller, R-Fla., a frequent critic of VA leaders but a supporter of McDonald in recent weeks, noted the secretary has faced "a rough couple of weeks" and said he needs to "redouble his efforts to ensure his statements — and those of all VA officials — are completely accurate."

The apology is the second major correction for McDonald in the last week and the third verbal controversy involving the secretary in a month.

In a Feb. 15 appearance on *Meet the Press*, he claimed that 60 department workers had been fired in recent months for problems related to the VA's wait time scandal, but later backtracked to say only eight had lost their jobs.

Lawmakers and veterans groups criticized that mistake as carelessness at best, and possibly intentional misleading about the strength of VA accountability efforts — a frequent topic of criticism since more than 100 department facilities were found to be manipulating patient wait time data last year. "A lie is a lie. What a disappointment from the leader of a department whose No. 1 issue right now is the restoration of trust. He should be held to a higher standard."

Michael Helm, group national commander American Legion

During a hearing Feb. 11, McDonald sparred with Rep. Mike Coffman, R-Colo., over the construction of a VA medical facility in his state.

At one point, the visibly frustrated secretary said Coffman shouldered more blame for VA construction problems in his state and ended their exchange with: "I've run a large company, sir. What have you done?"

Coffman, who served in both Iraq wars and as Colorado's secretary of state before being elected to Congress, defended McDonald on Tuesday on the Special Forces claims.

"The secretary's misstatement was an error, but it doesn't dim the fact that he served honorably," the congressman said in a statement. "We should all take him at his word and Washington shouldn't spend the next two weeks arguing about it."

"The secretary has a job to do — clean up the scandal-plagued VA. This latest controversy shouldn't shift one iota of focus away from that long overdue task."

Lasting effect

McDonald's Special Forces claims come on the heels of high-profile military exaggerations by *NBC News* anchor Brian Williams about his time in Iraq and and *Fox News* host Bill O'Reilly about his proximity to fighting in Argentina during the Falklands War.

Military analyst Michael Lyons said that there's no question McDonald's comment about Special Forces service was wrong, but

it shouldn't be taken out of context of the video.

"Before we get the pitchforks out, and try to say it's the same as Brian Williams saying he almost got shot — it's not even close," he said.

"It was a miscommunication, but in fact at West Point this would be considered a 'pop-off answer,'" Lyons, an Army vet who provides analysis on national security and military tactics for CBS News Radio, told *Military Times*. "In the moment, it was an attempt at empathetic leadership" misconstrued by social media, he said.

But it shouldn't sideline all the work McDonald has done thus far within the VA. "The veterans administration hasn't had someone like him in a long time," Lyons said. The generational divide within the VA has been bridged by McDonald's willingness to reach out and work with service members to "tremendously manage generational fault lines."

McDonald has earned high marks from most veterans groups in recent months for his efforts to reform the department, and for his outreach to both VA employees and lawmakers.

But members of Congress also have made it clear to McDonald in recent months that public trust with the department was significantly damaged by last year's scandals, which forced the resignation of former VA Secretary Eric Shinseki.

Helm said he hopes this latest gaffe not only reopens those wounds, but calls into question McDonald's work going ahead.

"The secretary has apologized, as he certainly should," he said. "We hope that he can restore the trust that he lost."

McDonald has made integrity and transparency one of the pillars of his efforts to overhaul VA. When asked whether his recent statements had damaged that effort, McDonald pledged to continue to work toward restoring trust in the department, which has faced troubles in the last several years over delayed claims, health care access and accountability.

"The common ground I have is my veteran experience. ... Trust is something I build with veterans one veteran at a time," he said.

"I want to serve veterans. I'm here to try to prove ... to make VA work," McDonald said.

Former Marine guilty of murder in 'American Sniper' trial

A former Marine was found guilty late Tuesday of the 2013 shooting deaths of former Navy SEAL Chris Kyle, the author of "American Sniper," and his friend Chad Littlefield.

It took an Erath County, Texas jury less than two hours to convict Eddie Ray Routh of capital murder. State District Judge Jason Cashion sentenced Routh to life in prison without the possibility of parole. Prosecutors had not sought the death penalty in the case. Routh's defense team said they would appeal the conviction.

Light

BY: LEON IRBY

3 of 3 DATED: MARCH 3, 2015

"We have waited two years for God to get justice on behalf of our son," Littlefield's mother, Judy, told reporters outside the courthouse. "And as always, God has proven to be faithful, and we're so thrilled that we have the verdict that we have tonight." Chris Kyle's widow, Taya, was not in the courtroom when the verdict was read. Earlier in the day, she had stormed out of the courtroom in the middle of the defense's closing arguments, whispering an expletive and slamming her hand on the wall as she walked out the door. At the time, attorneys were discussing how useful it would have been for Routh's mother to have told Chris Kyle about her son's history of violence. Routh showed no visible emotion as the verdict was read, while Kyle's brother and parents were among a group of the victims' families and friends who cried and held hands. They did not issue a statement. Jerry Richardson, Littlefield's half-brother, told Routh that he "took the lives of two heroes, men who tried to be a friend to you, and you became an American disgrace." Routh had no reaction. Texas Gov. Greg Abbott tweeted "JUSTICE!" in response to the verdict. Routh, 27, had admitted to killing Kyle and Littlefield at a gun range on Feb. 2, 2013 but pleaded not guilty. His attorneys and family members asserted that he suffers from psychotic episodes caused by post-traumatic stress disorder and other factors. But prosecutors said Tuesday that whatever episodes Routh suffers are self-induced through alcohol and marijuana abuse. In front of a packed courtroom, Erath County assistant District Attorney Jane Starnes and three defense attorneys made their case. "That is not insanity. That is just cold, calculated capital murder," Starnes said. "(Routh) is guilty of capital murder and he was not by any means insane." But defense attorneys contended that Routh could not have realized what he was doing. "He didn't kill those men because of who he wanted to be, he killed those men because he had a delusion," Warren St. John said. "He thought that they were going to kill him." Kyle and Littlefield took Routh, who had deployed to Iraq and earthquake-ravaged Haiti, to a shooting range after Routh's mother asked Kyle to help her son cope with PTSD and other personal demons. Interest in the trial had been partially driven by the blockbuster Oscar-nominated film based on Kyle's life. Routh's attorneys also pointed to the gunman's use of Kyle's pickup truck after the shooting to purchase tacos at a drive-through window and run assorted errands as evidence of delusional behavior. Had Routh been found not guilty by reason of insanity, the state could have moved to have him committed. Routh's attorneys pointed out that they needed only a preponderance of evidence for jurors to conclude Routh was insane at the

time of the shootings and therefore not guilty, a standard of proof well below what would be required to convict him of capital murder. But prosecutors also noted that Routh had apologized to Kyle's family -- evidence, they said, of a guilty mind.

"This defendant gunned down two men in cold blood, in the back, in our county. Find him guilty," Erath County District Attorney Alan Nash said.

Kyle made more than 300 kills as a sniper for SEAL Team 3, according to his own count. After leaving the military, he volunteered with veterans facing mental health problems, often taking them shooting.

Net neutrality wins

The FCC says that online we're all equal Net neutrality is happening. The Federal Communications Commission voted today to implement new net neutrality rules to make sure Internet service providers treat all legal content equally. Net neutrality is that thing you know is important because you keep hearing about it, but you can never figure out how to feel about it because it really is that complicated. It's OK, that's why we're here. The basic idea behind net neutrality is that all content on the Internet should be treated equally. So that means content providers (like Amazon and Netflix) can't pay Internet service providers (like Verizon) to deliver their content faster than that of others. Those would be those so-called "fast lanes" you hear about. Also, ISPs can't charge tolls for content to flow freely. The proposal reclassifies Internet service providers as public utilities, like phone companies, so they're subject to a set of regulations that ensure all consumers get fair access to their services. Technology companies and consumer groups are cheering. Internet service providers are not.

U.S. casts doubt on secret Iran nuke facility

The State Department on Thursday cast doubt on claims by an Iranian dissident group that it has discovered a secret underground Iranian nuclear facility.

"We'll look into the reports," State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki told reporters, using the Persian initials of the group, also known as the National Council of Resistance of Iran (NCRI). "We don't have any information at this point in time to suggest the (NCRI) conclusions are accurate."

Secretary of State John Kerry on Wednesday told the House Foreign Affairs Committee that the U.S. government knows of the site, but not its purpose.

"We're well aware of the allegations regarding that facility," Kerry said.

"Obviously any questions will have to be answered to have any kind of an agreement" with Iran on its nuclear program, which the U.S. is trying to curb.

NCRI alleged at a news conference Tuesday that its network of dissidents within the Iranian regime reported on a complex of

tunnels where Iran is conducting research and development on advanced machines for the production of fuel for nuclear weapons. The doors were built to prevent radiation leaks, according to NCRI's spokesman, Alireza Jafarzadeh.

A new secret site would be important because Iran and world powers — the United States, Britain, France, Russia, China and Germany — are attempting to negotiate an agreement to limit Iran's nuclear program in return for the lifting of international sanctions that have crippled Iran's economy. They face a March 24 deadline to reach a framework agreement and a June deadline for a final accord.

Iran denies it has a nuclear weapons program and has not officially responded to NCRI's allegations. However, the Iranian government pointed to an anonymous website post that questioned an altered photograph provided by NCRI to reporters during its presentation about the site Tuesday.

NCRI said the photo showed one of four vault-like doors used to prevent radiation leaks at the entrances of four underground halls where the Iranian military is conducting research and development on nuclear fuel production.

An uncropped version of that photo was posted Feb. 12 to the website of GMP Safes, an Iranian vault-door manufacturer, which shows the door sitting in a large room above ground, with sunlight streaming in from windows.

David Albright, a nuclear expert who is president of the Institute for Science and International Security, said the cropped photo adds to legitimate questions about NCRI's allegations.

Such heavy vault doors are no better at minimizing radiation than thinner doors, but the task would require a more complicated system that prevents air from passing through a single set of doors when they're open, he said.

"The basic story raises questions about its authenticity. They may have answers but the questions raise further doubts," Albright said. "The claims are so controversial that any manipulated evidence casts doubt on the whole story."

Jafarzadeh on Thursday said NCRI stands behind its report, which he said is buttressed by details, such as identifying the involvement of Morteza Behzad, an engineer who worked at the underground nuclear fuel facility at Fordow, another once-secret site. The photo was taken in the workshop where the door was built, before it was moved and installed underground, Jafarzadeh told USA TODAY. It was cropped, he said, to avoid identifying the facility and protect NCRI's sources.

If NCRI knew the photo had been posted to GMP Safe's website, "we wouldn't have used it, because it casts doubt," he said.

Rare disease could turn boy into 'mannequin'

Meanwhile Friday, three other prosecutors and a coordinator were named to take over Nisman's general investigation into the bombing itself, which he had led for 10 years. No one has been convicted in the case. Even before Pollicita's decision, amid rumors that it was coming, the administration was moving to both reject and minimize it. Cabinet chief Jorge Capitanich called the move a "judicial coup" during his daily press briefing.

"The Argentine people should know that we're talking about a vulgar lie, of an enormous media operation, of a strategy of political destabilization and the biggest judicial coup d'etat in the history of Argentina to cover the real perpetrators of the crime," he said. Similarly, Presidential spokesman Anibal Fernandez said moving the case forward was a "clear maneuver to destabilize democracy" but that ultimately "it has no legal value. It does not matter."

The strength of Nisman's 289-page investigation, presented to a judge a few days after his death, has been hot topic of debate within the legal community.

The basis of his case are wiretaps of administration officials allegedly talking about a secret deal around the time of a 2013 "Memorandum of Understanding" that Argentina reached with Iran. The agreement, which is being challenged in Argentine courts, on its face sets the conditions for the two countries to investigate the bombing. Juan Jose Avila, a criminal lawyer, said arguing that Nisman's case wasn't strong enough misses the point, because at this stage, no investigation is ready to be tried in court. "No accusation, when it's first made, is proven," he said.

U.S. Coast Guard tows fishing boat stuck in Antarctic ice

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — A U.S. Coast Guard icebreaker was towing a fishing boat out of heavy ice in Antarctica on Saturday after the vessel was stuck there for three days with 26 people aboard.

New Zealand authorities, who were helping coordinate the rescue effort, said the Coast Guard had earlier broken up the ice around the fishing boat and sent down an unmanned underwater vehicle to take a look at the boat's propeller blades.

The Coast Guard determined that the blades were too badly damaged for the boat, the Australian-registered Antarctic Chieftan, to try to power out under its own steam, according to the Rescue Coordination Centre.

Authorities said the fishing boat suffered damage to three of its four propeller blades and lost its ability to maneuver after becoming stuck in the ice Wednesday.

The icebreaker Polar Star traveled several hundred nautical miles through heavy ice to reach it.

Polar Star Commanding Officer Capt. Matthew Walker said in a statement that the conditions were more formidable than expected, with heavy snow and large icebergs. The plan is for the boat to be towed away from the ice field, and for a New Zealand fishing

boat, the Janas, to then escort or tow it to the nearest safe harbor. The Janas expects to reach the area on Monday.

The 63-meter (207-foot) Antarctic Chieftan became stuck about 900 nautical miles (1,666 kilometers) northeast of McMurdo Sound. It's licensed to catch Antarctic toothfish, a prized delicacy often marketed in North America as Chilean sea bass.

Mike Hill, the manager of New Zealand's Rescue Coordination Centre, said the hull of the boat remained undamaged and the crew were well provisioned and didn't face any immediate danger.

Chinese calendars' days are numbered

BEIJING — The Chinese New Year starts this week. So it's time for people here to get a new calendar — and a dose of propaganda, ranging from the importance of the government's "one child" policy to the virtues of President Xi Jinping.

Giving a colorful calendar, with dates marked for both the lunar and Gregorian systems, remains a common New Year tradition in China. The year of the sheep starts Thursday. This year, the government is handing out calendars preaching "anti-extremism" in the far northwestern city of Urumqi, in the restive region that is home to the Muslim minority Uighur population.

In Tibetan Garze prefecture, where protesters have burned themselves to death, the official calendar tells residents to study the law. And couples are reminded to follow China's "one child" policy in calendars given out in southern Guizhou province.

But the practice of giving or buying a new calendar is dwindling as the government curbs official spending and more people rely on smartphones and computers. The collapse in sales hurts vendors on "Calendar Street," a shrinking collection of stores that specialize in selling calendars in south Beijing.

The boom time for calendars, a decade ago, has faded "because everybody checks the date easily on their mobiles, so fewer and fewer people buy calendars," said store owner Lin Honggang, 60.

"Buying calendars is a culture, a tradition. It's a pity fewer and fewer people have interest in it, as well as all paper formats," said Rao Zhengbiao, 29, another store owner. "I think city people live life too fast. I enjoy tearing away the paper of calendars each day or month. It's like a ritual."

The biggest sellers this year are calendars showing President Xi, head of China's ruling Communist Party the past two years. Xi's popular anti-graft campaign wins praise, even as his crackdown on government waste has slashed orders for new calendars by governmental departments and state-run firms. Xi's picture appears on several calendars produced by private companies, colored with lucky red and gold that cost \$3 to \$5 at one Beijing store. They include Xi's signature slogan about the "Chinese Dream" and show him alongside China's first aircraft carrier and rockets.

"No calendar sells as well as Chairman Xi," said Jin Anguang, 69, from his store near the

Communist Party's central compound. "People love Chairman Xi and his anti-corruption movement, so they buy the calendars."

Xi's glamorous wife Peng Liyuan, a former army singer and unusually public first lady, also appears on several calendars.

"People like both of them, as they're good leaders, go around the world and win glory for China," said Feng Xiaolan, 43, who sells calendars and other New Year decorations at a wholesale market in Naixi village, in northeast Beijing. Her top seller? A calendar featuring both Xi and Peng called "Build Chinese Dream."

Some older calendars are prized as collectibles. Those from the 1950s and '60s with slogans from Chairman Mao Zedong can fetch high prices. In the 1970s, calendars featured model Communist workers, until those gave way to more aspiring scenes of foreign houses, cars and furniture in the 1980s and '90s.

Today, calendars on Confucianism and the folk religion Daoism prove popular, as people look into China's past for answers, Jin said. Seniors still find comfort in a paper calendar. "I serve the old people, as their eyes are not good and cellphones are too small, but calendars are easy to read. And they can write (on them) when next to take medicine and see the doctor," Jin explained.

Zhang Shuqin, 65, of Beijing keeps several old edition calendars, including some showing Mao, foreign scenery and movie stars.

"I am going to buy a new calendar with cute babies for my home and for my daughter's family," Zhang said. "I wish my daughter could give birth to a baby this year."

People in Copenhagen in shock over terror shootings

Denmark continued to reel Sunday over its first double terrorist attack, trying to make sense of killings in a country that rarely sees deadly violence and where the queen and officials walk around with light security. "We are a nation that is completely unused to such drama," said Kirsten Stubbe-Teglbjaerg, a resident of the Danish capital.

A gunman fired multiple shots Saturday through the window of a cafe in a tony part of Copenhagen during a free speech debate, killing one man.

By late Saturday night, the gunman stood on a cafe-filled street parallel to the city's famous mile-long pedestrian shopping street, killing a male guard at a synagogue. By early Sunday morning, a massive manhunt resulted in a shootout near a downtown subway station and the gunman's death.

Five police officers were also wounded in the attacks.

Police haven't released the identity of the attacker but said at a news conference Sunday that the 22-year-old suspect was born in Denmark, was involved in gang criminal activity and had an interest in militant Islam. The suspect has not traveled abroad to the Middle East, police said. Police also said they suspect he was attempting to copycat last month's Paris shootings on the *Charlie Hebdo* office and a kosher grocery store.

2 of 3

monitors," Stoltenberg told reporters in the Latvian capital where he was attending a meeting of European Union defense ministers. He also said Russian forces, artillery and air defense units were still active in Ukraine. Elsewhere, rebel commanders said Wednesday they had begun withdrawing heavy weaponry from parts of the front line where the cease-fire was holding.

Cease-fire terms

Under the terms of the cease-fire, both sides were to begin withdrawing heavy weapons from the frontal areas Tuesday. Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday called on pro-Russian rebels to allow besieged Ukrainian troops safe passage out of Debaltseve. Speaking in the Hungarian capital, Putin also urged the Kyiv government to allow its troops to surrender.

"Obviously it's always bad to lose," Putin said, according to the French news agency AFP. "But life is life and it still goes on."

In the news conference, broadcast on Moscow television, Putin noted that Ukrainian troops were encircled at Debaltseve "about a week before" the truce deal was reached on February 12. He also said that he predicted last week the encirclement at Debaltseve meant "one way or another, for some time, that these clashes will continue."

The United Nations Security Council on Tuesday unanimously adopted a resolution drafted by Russia that supports the Minsk cease-fire deal, while calling on rebels to respect the territorial integrity of Ukraine. The vote in New York took place as witnesses reported some of the heaviest fighting of the weeks-long battle for Debaltseve.

Ukraine and a host of Western governments accuse Russia of stoking the rebellion in Ukraine's Russian-speaking east with arms and fighters, while the Kremlin denies providing direct support.

Meanwhile, Ukraine is approaching the first anniversary on February 20 of the Maidan uprising, when over a hundred protesters were shot dead in central Kyiv that led to the ousting of then-President, Viktor Yanukovich.

Islamic State attack on U.S. base in Iraq fails

Islamic State militants launched a suicide attack against a base in western Iraq where U.S. forces are stationed, but were defeated by Iraqi soldiers defending the facility, the Pentagon said Friday.

The attack came as the militants over the past several days have seized the nearby town of al-Baghadi, placing them within miles of al-Rasad, a sprawling military compound in western Iraq.

A contingent of U.S. trainers are at the base, but were miles away from the failed attack, the U.S. military said.

At no time were U.S. troops anywhere near the fight," said Rear Adm. John Kirby, the Pentagon press secretary.

Early Friday, militants used a small force of suicide bombers in an effort to breach the base's perimeter. Another team of about 15

fighters was prepared to get through the opening and into the base, the U.S. military said.

The base in the Euphrates River Valley west of Baghdad is a major training facility where teams of Americans are training about 800 Iraqi soldiers.

All the militants were either killed by Iraqi forces or died when they detonated suicide vests, Kirby said.

Kirby said the Islamic State, which has seized large swaths of territory in Iraq, remains in a defensive posture despite the gains in al-Baghadi.

"This is arguably the first in at least a couple of months, if not more, where they have had any success at all in taking any new ground," Kirby said.

U.S. aircraft joined in the fighting in the area, launching five airstrikes around the base, according to a statement from the U.S. military.

Iraqi forces at odds as ISIL attacks intensify Islamic State militants are intensifying their brutal attacks in western Iraq amid signs of disunity among Iraqi forces that could repel the extremists.

Militants have seized a police station in Baghdadi, a town about five miles from a major Iraqi base where U.S. advisers are helping to train Iraqi security forces. Militants burned to death 45 people in the town, the BBC reported.

Efforts to combat the militants have been hampered by the failure of Iraq's central government to coordinate military plans with tribal leaders in the west, Kurdish fighters in the north and Shiite militias who all are opposed to the Islamic State.

The tribal leaders--who, like the militants, are Sunnis--complain they aren't getting the help they need to defend the region. "The tribes need weapons and support," said Najim Abed al-Jabouri, the former mayor of Tal Afar in northern Iraq. "Without tribes, without support from people in this area, it is very difficult to win the battle."

The Pentagon has allocated about \$24 million in weapons, ammunition and other aid to tribal forces, but it wants all assistance to tribal leaders and the Kurds to go through Iraq's central government to avoid creating rival militias outside Baghdad's control.

Political divisions in Baghdad have hindered that support from getting to the tribes in Anbar province, the largely Sunni area that extends from the outskirts of Baghdad to the Syrian border.

In 2006-07, tribal leaders joined with American forces to drive al-Qaeda militants from most of the province.

Ahmed abu Risha, a tribal leader from Ramadi whose brother was murdered in 2007 after publicly supporting American forces, visited Washington with other tribal leaders last month to ask for help. The delegation met with Vice President Biden and other U.S. officials, but came away frustrated, said Sterling Jensen, an assistant professor at the United Arab Emirates' National Defense College in Abu Dhabi.

The tribal leaders are convinced that direct U.S. aid is the only way to get arms to the tribes quickly, but the State Department resists the idea, said Jensen, who served as a political adviser to U.S. forces in Anbar and keeps in touch with officials in the province.

Iraq's government, which has pledged support for the Sunni tribes, wants to create a force like a national guard for local defenses. But legislation to create the force has become bogged down.

The Kurds worry that the legislation would require them to place their fighters, an effective force against the militants, under central Baghdad's control, said former mayor al-Jabouri, now an analyst at the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies. And the Sunnis worry that the legislation could legitimize Shiite militias, which have targeted Sunnis in regions where they have pushed out Islamic State militants.

During the tribal revolt against al-Qaeda nearly a decade ago, thousands of combat troops teamed up with tribal leaders, convincing Iraq's Shiite-dominated government to support the Sunni tribes. Today, the U.S. presence in Iraq is limited to hundreds of advisers not directly involved in combat. "The U.S. has not just rolled this thing out over Iraqi objections as we did" previously, said Michael Knights, an analyst at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

Case against Argentine president moves forward

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP) — The prosecutor who inherited a high-profile case against Argentine President Cristina Fernandez on Friday reaffirmed the accusations, formally renewing the investigation into whether the president helped Iranian officials cover up their alleged role in the 1994 bombing of a Jewish community center.

A top government official called the move a "judicial coup."

Prosecutor Gerardo Pollicita's decision to go forward with the case was significant because it sets the stage for a close examination of the investigation that prosecutor Alberto Nisman was building before he was found dead Jan. 18. The next day, Nisman was scheduled to elaborate his accusations to Congress.

Nisman accused Fernandez, Foreign Minister Hector Timerman and others in her administration of brokering the cover-up in exchange for favorable deals on oil and other goods from Iran. Fernandez and Timerman have strongly denied the accusations, and Iran has repeatedly denied involvement in the bombing, which killed 85 people.

In his statement released Friday afternoon, Pollicita recounted Nisman's accusations without providing analysis of them. He concluded that an investigation is necessary to "achieve a degree of understanding to prove or disprove the factual and dogmatic extremes expressed in the preceding paragraphs." Pollicita will present his findings to judge Daniel Rafecas, the federal magistrate assigned to the case who will ultimately decide whether to dismiss it or send it on to trial.

Police originally thought the gunman was working alone, but officers raided a local Internet cafe, close to where the shootout occurred, and said they handcuffed one suspect.

The two people killed were Finn Noergaard, 55, a filmmaker shot in the cafe, and Dan Uzan, 37, a volunteer security guard at the synagogue.

"It feels surrealistic that this happened in Denmark, just around the corner from where I live," said Uffe Alici Pedersen of Copenhagen, who is Muslim. "I think everyone is thinking of the dead and wounded and their families with the deepest compassion and respect."

Denmark, who rescued its Jewish population during World War II by sending them to neutral Sweden, expressed solidarity with the murdered guard. Three Muslim organizations quickly condemned the killings.

Prime Minister Helle-Thorning-Schmidt stood in front of the synagogue Sunday and said, "In Denmark, everyone is free to practice their religion." Queen Margrethe II also sent a message of solidarity: "My thoughts are with the slain filmmaker and the young guard from the Jewish community."

The cafe attack took place during a debate on free speech and blasphemy featuring Swedish cartoonist Lars Vilks, who has received death threats since he drew a cartoon of the Prophet Muhammad in 2007, two years after a Danish newspaper drew the prophet and set off riots in the Muslim world, some deadly. Police said the gunman had wanted to shoot Vilks.

Minister of Justice Mette Frederiksen said Sunday, "We should all be able to practice freedom of speech here."

U.S. State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki offered Washington's help to Danish authorities and said Americans "stand united with the people of Denmark and all others who defend the universal right of freedom of speech and stand against anti-Semitism and bigotry in all its forms."

After the shooting near the synagogue and rising anti-Semitism, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday called for the massive immigration of European Jews to Israel, saying it's the only place where Jews can truly feel safe, the Associated Press reported. His comments triggered an angry response from Copenhagen's chief rabbi, Jair Melchior.

"People from Denmark move to Israel because they love Israel, because of Zionism. But not because of terrorism," Melchior told the AP. "The way we deal with terror is to run somewhere else, we should all run to a deserted island."

Early 200 pilot whales stranded on New Zealand beach

SYDNEY (AP) — Nearly 200 pilot whales stranded themselves on New Zealand's South Island on Friday, and hordes of rescuers rushed to the remote area in a bid to guide them back to sea.

Two dozen of the 198 whales had already died despite efforts to save the creatures, which were found stranded on Farewell Spit, a famous spot for whale beachings, Department

of Conservation area manager Andrew Lamason said.

About 80 conservation workers and volunteers were trying to refloat the whales as high tide rolled in, Lamason said. But with such a vast number of animals stranded, workers were bracing for days of arduous work to move the whales back into the water.

And even if the whales were refloated, that was no guarantee they would survive, Lamason said.

"We've had plenty times in the past where the pods have gone out to sea and turned around and come back again," Lamason said. "We're preparing for a big few days."

Pilot whales grow to about 20 feet (6 meters), and large strandings are common during the New Zealand summer. Experts describe Farewell Spit, located on the northwest corner of South Island, as a whale trap due to the way its shallow waters seem to confuse whales and diminish their ability to navigate.

'Calamity' warning as cyclones hit Australia coastline

A powerful cyclone has hit the coast of central Queensland in Australia.

Cyclone Marcia made landfall near the tourist town of Yeppoon, where it tore roofs off houses.

The cyclone has since been downgraded but was expected to cause massive seas with abnormally high tides, flash flooding and winds gusting up to nearly 300 kilometres per hour.

Separately, Tropical Cyclone Lam hit the Northern Territory, effectively "sandwiching" the country.

With new model on the way, Goodyear blimp makes final flights

NEW SMYRNA BEACH, Fla. — David Bowling has been a Goodyear blimp pilot for three years.

This week, along the east coast of Florida, he and others who sit in the pilot seat of the world-famous blue and yellow blimps are marking a landmark of sorts. The Spirit of Innovation blimp, one of three blimps currently active in the Goodyear fleet, is making its final flights before being retired to the Goodyear flight operation's California headquarters.

The innovation has flown for 14 years, "old age" in the blimp business. It will be replaced this year by Wingfoot One, a newly designed blimp that advances the airship technology significantly.

"It's emotional in some ways because there are a lot of memories and experiences attached to this ship," said Bowling as he angled the blimp over the Indian River and out to the Atlantic shoreline, where dolphins could be seen leaping outside the surf line. "But it's fun to bring something new online with all the new technology — something new to learn."

Across the wide landscape of North American sports, there are few mainstays more recognizable than Goodyear's airship, its huge

lettering visible both day and night above speedways, football stadiums, golf courses and a laundry list of other sporting venues. The Goodyear blimps have been some of the most enduring "billboards" in the history of American advertising.

In the long run, it's all about selling tires, but for the pilots and passengers on non-broadcast excursions, the ride is about the fun. "It never gets old," said Bowling, watching the Innovation take flight after a pilot transfer Wednesday morning.

Wingfoot One, the first of what will be a series of new Goodyear blimps, marks a radical change for those in the group's flight operations, although the image seen by spectators at events and television viewers will change only marginally.

The new ship is 246 feet long, 52 feet longer than the current model. The envelope, the large part of the ship, is slimmer on the new model. The top speed on the new ship is 70 miles per hour versus 50 for the old. And the passenger gondola seats 12 versus seven, and, perhaps most importantly for longer flights, has a bathroom.

Goodyear sends blimps to the majority of Sprint Cup races for both television coverage and spectator exposure. Televised images from the new ship will be better because of improved stability and the ability to hover longer in one area, Goodyear officials said. Goodyear blimps have been flying over sports events and other outdoor events since the 1955 Rose Parade in California.

Under Armour shares gain punch with Ali signing

Under Armour shares jumped more than 1% on Wednesday after the company announced it was bringing boxing legend Muhammad Ali inside its celebrity house.

Under Armour and Authentic Brands have signed Ali into a multiyear partnership, but terms were not disclosed.

"It wasn't a big, financially-driven conversation," said Glenn Silbert, vice president of men's products at Under Armour, in a phone interview. But beginning March 1, the brand will launch a "cool, graphic-driven program with Ali as the face of it," he says.

Ali's image from his historic past will appear on T-shirts, in advertisements and even in internal messaging, Silbert says. "He adds dimension to our brand story."

A full collection of Ali-branded performance apparel, footwear and accessories will debut in fall 2015, according to the company.

Under Armour shares are up 12.5% over the past month, 8.5% so far this year and 37.4% over the past 12 months.

John Horan, publisher of *Sporting Goods Intelligence* newsletter, says the combo could result in a line of holiday T-shirts with iconic Ali sayings like "Float like a butterfly, sting like a bee" and "The Greatest."

At first blush, Ali might not seem a match for some of the young-and-hungry athletes, such

BY LEON ZRBX

3 of 3 DATED MARCH 3, 2015

as Cam Newton and Bryce Harper, that Under Armour has in its stable. But last year, Under Armour featured Bruce Lee's image on some product and in some marketing, notes Silbert. "These were the real innovators," he says. "It's their legacy. What's old is new."

Producer prices plunged in January because of cheaper gas and oil. The average prices businesses received for goods and services plunged last month because of sharply cheaper gasoline and other oil products, the Labor Department said Wednesday.

The producer price index declined 0.8% in January from the previous month, signaling overall inflation continues to remain low. The drop was the largest one-month decline since the Labor Department revised its methodology in 2009.

The index had fallen 0.2% in both November and December. Economists had expected a 0.5% decrease in January.

For the 12-month period ended Jan. 31, producer prices were flat compared with a 1.1% increase for the year ended Dec. 31. January's decline was fueled in large part by a 24% drop in the gasoline index. The index had fallen 13.5% in December.

Prices for energy were down 10.3% last month, the seventh straight monthly decline. Food prices fell 1.1% in January.

Excluding volatile food and energy costs, producer prices were down 0.2% last month after a 0.1% increase in December.

Low inflation could lead Federal Reserve policymakers to wait longer to start raising the central bank's benchmark short-term interest rate.

Fed officials want annual inflation of 2%.

Various inflation gauges are running well below that level, but Fed policymakers said they expect the downward pressure from oil prices to be short term.

The corrosive impact of America's growing wealth gap
The idea that everyone has a chance to get ahead in life is a defining belief of American life. But the more complicated reality is that a family's wealth has a huge impact on how far people get.

Unfortunately for many Americans, the wealth gap -- or the difference between the assets of the poor and the rich -- has been growing over the past several decades, making it harder than ever for certain groups to climb the economic ladder. Families near the bottom of the wealth distribution actually ended up in debt in 2013, a backward step from having no wealth in 1963, according to a new analysis from the Urban Institute. Blacks and Hispanics are also falling behind, the think tank said in a report on Wednesday.

While income inequality has become a buzzword among economists and policy makers, tracking the divide in wealth -- what people own or that generates income -- may be more important. A family's assets, after all, are what enable social mobility, ranging from paying for a college degree to buying a house.

What are the causes of inequality?

In *Monkey Business*, filmmaker Shola Lynch chats with economists from across the political spectrum to help explain the causes of economic inequality.

America faces some troubling trends with the widening wealth gap, especially given that families of color will soon make up a majority of the population yet are falling behind white families in creating those wealth cushions.

"Wealth inequality is high in the U.S., and higher than in many other developed countries," Signe-Mary McKernan, a senior fellow and economist at the Urban Institute, told CBS MoneyWatch. "Wealth is where economic opportunity lies. It can be a college education, or a downpayment on a house or business."

By that measure, many Americans are falling short. Families at the bottom ended up \$2,000 in debt over the course of the past 40 years, while the wealthiest households saw their wealth grow sixfold over the same period, the Urban Institute noted.

The findings come at a time when researchers and economists are increasingly considering the impact of the widening wealth gap. The richest 1 percent will control more than half of the world's wealth by 2016, the charity Oxfam said earlier this year. It warned that growing inequality threatens to undermine global economic growth.

In the U.S., black and Hispanic families have been particularly hard hit by wealth inequality. By 2013, white families had an average of \$500,000 more in wealth than nonwhite households, compared with a difference of \$117,000 in 1963, adjusted for 2013 dollars, according to the analysis.

Lower incomes for blacks and Hispanics are part of what's causing the wealth gap, given that the typical white person earns \$2 million over a lifetime, while blacks earn just \$1.5 million and Hispanics earn \$1 million. That gives minorities less leeway to sock money away or pay their kids' college tuition. That impact shows up in the higher average level of student debt carried by minorities, as well as lower homeownership rates. Black families on average have carried more student loan debt than white families, the study found. While the amount of student debt carried by white and black families wasn't too different in 1989, the gap widened considerably during the next 24 years. By 2013, black families held an average of about \$10,300 in student debt, compared with \$8,000 for white families. Because black students have a lower graduation rate than whites, that means some black families are carrying student debt for a degree that was never earned.

"That's especially burdensome if you have debt but not the degree," McKernan said. "College is still a good investment, and it's important for moving up the economic ladder."

In a magical land inhabited by long lashed, multi-colored Alpacas who love lollipops, rainbows and friendship, there's a yawning divide in wealth...

Federal policies could be tweaked to help poor and minority families gain access to the basic

building-blocks of wealth: homeownership, retirement savings and college, the Urban Institute notes. For instance, federal programs often have "asset tests," or asset or savings thresholds that need to be low enough to in order to access welfare or other programs. But many states have an asset limit of \$2,000 to \$3,000, which means that families can't have savings or other assets that exceed that level in order to receive the benefit.

Those caps end up being a disincentive to save, McKernan noted. Maintaining less than \$2,000 in savings isn't enough to tide families over in tough times, and potentially makes families more likely to end up in the government safety net, she said.

Other policy changes could also help reduce the wealth gap, such as establishing automatic savings in retirement plans, and promoting emergency savings by establishing incentives linked to savings at tax times. A credit for first-time homebuyers could also encourage more poor and minority families to buy a home.

"Wealth inequality matters for everyone," McKernan said. "Inequality can weaken the economy, increase crime, and can lead to more people needing help from the safety net."

Ford's GT, American supercar, to be built in Canada

CHICAGO -- Ford has tapped a Canadian company to build the GT, an iconic American super car.

Because the car will have a carbon fiber body, Ford is turning to Multimatic Inc. which is based in Markham, Ontario, outside Toronto, to make the two-door, mid-engined car that will have at least 600 horsepower.

The announcement was made today at the Canadian International Auto Show in Toronto. But word quickly spread to the Chicago Auto Show, where Ford was having another major showing of the car. Instead of the blue paint job for its debut last month in Detroit, this time it was decked out in silver. When the GT made its surprise appearance at the North American International Auto Show, Executive Chairman Bill Ford said a limited number will be built for sale in the second half of 2016. Pricing has not been released.

Multimatic is a private contract manufacturer that has worked with Ford's performance division for 30 years, said Dianne Craig, president of Ford Canada.

Where a vehicle is made is no longer relevant, especially for a low-volume, niche vehicle, said analyst Dave Sullivan of AutoPacific.

"Ford was looking for a skill set and went where the expertise was," Sullivan said. "If it were in Michigan, they would have done it in Michigan. But carbon fiber bodies are still an immature technology and there is not a lot of selection of available vendors."

Sullivan said Ford is also relying on a long-standing and trusted relationship with Multimatic.

Nissan tests reaction to 370Z Nismo roadster

CHICAGO -- One by one, Nissan has gone through its lineup looking for candidates for

would need to be cut out of their seats in some crash situations, Millhouse said.

"They are essentially the safest rail cars in the country," he said. "I believe they probably prevented more serious injuries."

The National Transportation Safety Board sent a team to investigate the crash in Oxnard, about 75 miles west of downtown Los Angeles. The Federal Railroad Administration said its investigators would "conduct a thorough investigation to determine the factors that contributed to this accident."

"Safety must be every railroad's absolute top priority," the administration said in a statement. "We will establish what lapses, if any, occurred and order any necessary corrective actions."

Metrolink operates a rail network of almost 400 miles on seven regional lines: Ventura County, Antelope Valley, San Bernardino, Riverside, Orange County, Inland Empire-Orange County and 91 Line. Trains can travel at speeds of up to 90 mph.

On Sept. 12, 2008, a Union Pacific freight train and a Metrolink commuter train collided head-on, killing 25 people. That crash was the deadliest accident in Metrolink history.

Last year, Metrolink unveiled a safety program that introduced "positive train control" technology. The technology uses GPS and other systems to determine when it should override the train engineer and slow or stop a train to avoid an accident. The system had not yet been deployed on the line that runs through Oxnard, officials said.

Maya Angelou gets (forever) stamp of approval

Maya Angelou, the late poet and best-selling author, will be honored with a Forever Stamp, the U.S. Postal Service announced Monday.

Angelou, best known for *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, her searing memoir about life in the Jim Crow South, died May 28, 2014, at age 86.

The Postal Service said it will unveil the stamp at a later date.

"Maya Angelou inspired our nation through a life of advocacy and through her many contributions to the written and spoken word," Postmaster General Megan Brennan said in a statement. "Her wide-ranging achievements as a playwright, poet, memoirist, educator, and advocate for justice and equality enhanced our culture."

Her many achievements include delivering a poem at President Clinton's first inauguration in 1993. In 2010, she was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Obama, the country's highest civilian honor. Her friends in the civil rights movement included Malcolm X and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

On March 31, Random House will publish Angelou's *The Complete Poetry*.

World Trade Center name rights were sold for \$10

What's the market value of the rights to the iconic name of the World Trade Center, site of the world-famed twin towers destroyed in the Sept. 11 terrorists attacks?

Just \$10, according to a deal the site's owner, the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey, approved in 1986 with a private firm linked to one of the bi-state agency's top executives.

Port Authority officials "exercised lax oversight" and "performed virtually no due diligence" in selling the rights to the non-profit called The World Trade Centers Association, according to investigation results and a settlement announced Friday by New York State Attorney General Eric Schneiderman.

Moreover, an outside attorney who advised the Port Authority on the deal worked for the private company at the same time, the investigation concluded, characterizing the dual role "a clear conflict of interest." As a result, the bi-state agency paid the private firm approximately \$184,000 in "membership fees" between 1991 and 2011 to be affiliated with the company that bought the rights to the World Trade Center name, the investigation found.

The deal proved lucrative for The World Trade Centers Association, which promotes the concept of world trade centers established in other cities around the world. The company's net assets in 2012 totaled nearly \$12 million, its tax filing for that year shows. "We found that the Port Authority sold this association its rights to the 'World Trade Center' name for pennies on the dollar," said Schneiderman, who announced a settlement he termed "a reasonable and fair way to compensate the people of New York State for the use of a cherished symbol."

Schneiderman's investigation found no "unlawful conduct" by present or former Port Authority officials. But a summary of the investigation findings noted that several key participants in the deal have since died. The deceased include Guy Tozzoli, the former Port Authority executive who became president of The World Trade Centers Association — a post that paid him millions of dollars in addition to his retirement benefits from the bi-state agency before his death in February 2013. Tozzoli's 2011 compensation from the company totaled \$626,573, according to the non-profit firm's tax filing for that year.

Lee Robinson, the outside attorney involved in the deal, has also died, according to the settlement. Robinson "maintained close personal ties with the Port Authority's General Counsel, who was a law school roommate, and Tozzoli," the investigation found.

Additionally, potential evidence that "could further clarify the issues" had "undoubtedly been lost" when the towers collapsed in the devastating 2001 attack watched around the world, the settlement concluded.

The World Trade Centers Association denied any legal violations and neither admitted nor denied the investigation findings. The firm nonetheless agreed to pay New York \$184,000 to cover the previously paid membership fees. The firm also will pay up to \$300,000 over the next 20 years from revenue from the use of the World Trade Center name in New York and New Jersey. "We look forward to putting this matter behind us so we can again focus on maintaining the integrity of the World Trade Center on behalf of the Port Authority and our other members around the world, said Bella Heule, the firm's executive vice president.

While accepting the investigation outcome, Port Authority Chairman agency Chairman John Degnan said officials of the bi-state agency "remain deeply concerned about the possibility of ethical lapses on the part of both former Port Authority officials as well as the World Trade Center Association in connection with the 1986 agreement and the subsequent employment of a retired Port Authority executive."

"We have directed a review by outside counsel of the possibility of a civil action against the World Trade Center Association, are reviewing what, if any, continuing relationship the Port Authority should have with the WTCA in light of these findings and are asking the Attorney General of New Jersey to consider seeking the same relief for the citizens of that state that the New York Attorney General has secured for citizens of New York."

Nineteen Manatees Rescued From Storm Drain in Florida

Manatees cannot swim backwards. And that's the likely reason a herd of 19 "sea cows" found themselves trapped in a storm drain in Satellite, Florida.

Late Monday afternoon, news broke that a group of the gentle, warm water-loving manatees had become stuck in a storm drain. The manatees were attempting to find warmer waters during the recent cold snap and swam into the storm drain.

With rain in the forecast, quick action was needed. Should the storm drains fill with water from the rain, the trapped manatees would drown.

Utility workers needed heavy construction equipment to give access to a group of rescuers comprised of the local fire department, members of the Florida Fish and Wildlife and a crew from Sea World.

Crowds gathered to watch as the rescuers worked in concert to get access to the trapped mammals, lift them from the drain system and ultimately return them to the water. Just after 2 a.m. Tuesday morning, the rescue mission was completed and all of the trapped manatees, including a mother and her calf, were released back into the water.

ABC News reports the city is installing grates at the mouth of all drains in the region to