

Mountie Murder Suspect Caught

MONCTON, New Brunswick (AP) — A man suspected of gunning down three Royal Canadian Mounted Police was caught and charged Friday, ending a 30-hour manhunt that closed schools and forced residents to hide inside their homes of this eastern Canadian city. "I'm done," a witness heard him tell police.

Police said at a press conference that they received a tip that led them to a wooded residential part of Moncton, New Brunswick, where they found 24-year-old Justin Bourque, suspected in the deadliest attack on Canada's national police force in nearly a decade.

Armed with high-powered long firearms, Bourque was spotted three times Thursday as he evaded the manhunt that all but shut down the normally tranquil city about of about 60,000 people east of the Maine border. Nearly 300 police officers searched for Bourque, who was seen going in and out of a wooded area.

RCMP Supt. Marlene Snowman said Bourque was arrested at 12:10 a.m. She said he wasn't carrying any weapons, but some were found nearby. Prosecutors and police declined to comment when asked if the guns were acquired legally.

Michelle Thibodeau said she saw the man in the front yard of her home and heard him say, "I'm done," before his arrest by officers with guns drawn.

Texas Gay Conservatives Fear Backlash

FORT WORTH, Texas (AP) — Gay Republicans in Texas say they may stop fighting their party's proposed endorsement of "reparative therapy" over worries that even tougher anti-gay language could be added to the party platform.

Jeff Davis is chairman of the Texas Log Cabin Republicans, a gay conservative group. He says a fight to remove the therapy language during the state party convention on Saturday could backfire.

Davis said Friday that gay delegates haven't settled on a strategy, but that it may be better to adopt a longer-term strategy to educate conservatives on the harms of psychological treatments that seek to turn gay people straight.

The new anti-gay language passed through a key committee late Thursday.

New Jersey Republican Gov. Chris Christie signed a law prohibiting so-called "gay conversion therapy" on minors last year. California has a similar ban.

Gibson: VA Reprisals Intolerable

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Investigators said they are examining allegations that supervisors in the veterans' health system retaliated against 37 employees who complained about practices such as months-long delays in scheduling of appointments, and the acting head of the sprawling system responded Friday that such reprisals would not be tolerated.

"I think that is wrong. It is absolutely unacceptable," Acting Veterans Affairs Secretary Sloan Gibson said at a news conference Friday following a visit to a San Antonio VA facility.

"There have been questions raised about intimidation or even retaliation. There is a law that forbids that, and we'll follow the law," Gibson said.

His comments came after the Office of Special Counsel said it was looking into possible retaliation against 37 employees of the VA who filed so-called "whistleblower" complaints. The office is an independent watchdog separate from the VA which looks into whistleblower complaints from across the federal government.

The office said it had blocked disciplinary actions against three VA employees so far, including one who was suspended for seven days after complaining to the VA's inspector general about improper scheduling.

North Korea Detains American

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea says it has detained an American tourist for committing an unspecified crime, the third U.S. citizen being held there.

The state Korean Central News Agency said authorities were investigating him for committing acts inconsistent with the purpose of a tourist visit. It did not give details.

"American citizen Jeffrey Edward Fowle entered the DPRK as a tourist on April 29 and acted in violation of the DPRK law, contrary to the purpose of tourism during his stay," KCNA reported, referring to the country's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The U.S. State Department confirmed an American was detained, but did not identify the person or provide details for privacy reasons.

"We are aware that a U.S. citizen has been detained in North Korea. This is the third U.S. citizen that has been detained in North Korea," spokeswoman Marie Harf told reporters in Washington. She added there's "no greater priority for us than the welfare and safety of U.S. citizens abroad."

Horse Takes Aim At Triple Crown Sweep

NEW YORK (AP) — California Chrome is 1 1/2 miles away from ending the longest drought in racing history — 36 years without a Triple Crown winner.

Eleven horses as good or better than him have tried to complete the sweep in the Belmont Stakes and failed since 1978. The chestnut colt with the modest pedigree and self-described "dumb ass" owners can either make history Saturday or become just another near-miss.

"I've watched the other horses where they failed," California Chrome trainer Art Sherman said. "I don't know if they just got flat outrun or got tired from the Triple Crown races."

California Chrome and 10 rivals will run the longest race of their lives on Belmont Park's deep, sandy track with its sweeping turns. No other Triple Crown winner faced more than seven rivals.

"I feel more confident coming into this race than I did any race," said Sherman, who at 77 is overseeing the best horse of his career. "I'm getting pumped up."

US Employers Add Jobs At Pace Not Seen Since 1999

BY CHRISTOPHER S. RUGABER
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — For the first time since 1999, American employers have added more than 200,000 jobs a month for four straight months, offering more evidence that the U.S. economy is steadily growing while much of Europe and Asia struggle.

Last month's gain of 217,000 jobs means the economy has finally recovered all the jobs lost to the Great Recession. And it coincides with indications that American consumers have grown more confident. Auto sales have surged. Manufacturers and service companies are expanding.

"I don't think we have a boom, but we have a good economy growing at about 3 percent," said John Silvia, chief economist at Wells Fargo. "We're pulling away from the rest of the world."

Still, Friday's report from the Labor Department showed that pay remains subpar for many workers, millions who want full-time work are still stuck in part-time jobs and the number of people out of work for more than six months remains historically high.

Monthly job growth has averaged 234,000 for the past three months, up sharply from 150,000 in the previous three. The unemployment rate, which is derived from a separate survey, matched April's 6.3 percent, the lowest in more than five years.

Investors seemed pleased. The Dow Jones industrial average closed up 88 points.

Though the economy has regained the nearly 9 million jobs lost to the recession, more hiring is needed, because the working-age U.S. population has grown nearly 7 percent since the recession began.

Economists at the liberal Economic Policy Institute estimate that 7 million more jobs would have been needed to keep up with population growth.

In addition, average wages have grown

only about 2 percent a year since the recession ended, well below the long-run average annual growth of about 3.5 percent.

And unemployment has fallen from a 10 percent peak in 2009 partly for an unfortunate reason: Fewer people are working or seeking work. The percentage of adults who either have a job or are looking for one remained at a 35-year low in May.

Yet the United States is faring far better than most other major industrial nations.

Overall unemployment for the 18 countries that use the euro, for example, was 11.7 percent in April, though some European nations, such as Germany and Denmark, have much lower rates. On Thursday, Europe's central bank cut interest rates and took other extraordinary steps to try to boost ultra-low inflation, encourage more lending and jump-start growth.

Japan is struggling to emerge from more than a decade of sluggish growth and deflation. And China has been undergoing a prolonged slowdown from explosive expansion and is at risk of slowing too sharply.

"The U.S. was incredibly aggressive after the financial crisis and Great Recession," said Daniel Drezner, a professor of international politics at Tufts University. "Compared to Europe in particular, we did much more."

The U.S. government approved stimulus spending and tax cuts, Drezner noted, while many European nations cut spending. The Federal Reserve slashed rates further than the European Central Bank did and launched bond purchases to ease long-term loan rates. Central banks in Japan and Europe have only recently considered the types of unconventional steps the Fed launched in 2008.

The solid U.S. hiring gains in May might be expected to lower the unemployment rate. But the two figures come from separate surveys. The job gains are derived from a survey of businesses, the

unemployment rate from a survey of households.

The two surveys sometimes diverge but usually paint a similar picture over time. For May, the survey of businesses found a bigger job gain than the survey of households did.

Average hourly pay rose 5 cents in May to \$24.38. That's up 2.1 percent from 12 months ago and barely ahead of inflation, which was 2 percent.

Weak pay gains have limited Americans' ability to spend and held back growth, because consumer spending drives about 70 percent of the economy.

"The sluggishness in wages is the weak link that is preventing the U.S. economy from fully expanding its wings," said Gregory Daco, U.S. economist at Oxford Economics.

One reason pay has lagged: The jobs added since the recession have been more likely to be part time and in lower-paying industries. That pattern was evident in May: Hotels, restaurants and entertainment companies added 39,000 jobs. Retailers gained 12,500, temporary services 14,300.

By contrast, construction firms added just 6,000, manufacturers 10,000. Those industries tend to be higher-paying.

There are still 2.9 million fewer people working in full-time jobs than when the recession began. And nearly 2.5 million more are working in part-time positions. Those trends have eased somewhat in the past year or so. The number of part-time workers has fallen 500,000 in the last 12 months.

Many economists say unemployment has not fallen far enough yet for wages to rise significantly across the economy. But there are some signs that wage pressures might soon emerge. One measure that Fed Chair Janet Yellen has cited as reflective of the job market's health is the number of people out of work for more than six months. This figure reached record highs after the recession and has declined slowly.

Russian, Ukrainian Leaders Talk Amid D-Day Pomp

BY LORI HINNANT AND VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV
Associated Press

OUISTREHAM, France (AP) — Russian President Vladimir Putin spoke face-to-face with Ukraine's incoming president about ending the violence in the former Soviet state, and Kiev's new leader said talks could begin in earnest as soon as Sunday — a diplomatic breakthrough playing out along the battlefield beaches of Normandy.

Friday's 15-minute meeting was followed by a brief exchange between Putin and President Barack Obama, who had been keeping the Russian at arm's length over the Ukrainian crisis. Tensions between the two were played out on giant televisions on Ouistreham's Sword Beach, with Putin and Obama shown divided by a split screens as they commemorated the 70th anniversary of D-Day.

Speaking after his meeting with Petro Poroshenko — who is to be sworn in Saturday as Ukraine's president — Putin called for an immediate cease-fire in eastern Ukraine before any further talks, and said he expected Poroshenko to show "state wisdom" and "good will." Poroshenko later said talks could begin in earnest on his first full day in office.

"All the questions were difficult," Poroshenko said in a statement to The Associated Press before returning to Ukraine, "but we will make every effort to achieve the goals we have set ourselves and begin negotiations on Sunday."

Putin said he welcomed Poroshenko's call for an end to the bloodshed and liked his approach to settling the crisis but wanted to wait until the Ukrainian leader could deliver it in detail to the nation.

"If it continues like that, then conditions will be created for developing our rela-

tions in other areas, including the economy," Putin said. He specified that Moscow is ready to lower gas price for Ukraine if it pays off its debt for previous supplies, easing fears of a gas shutdown to Europe dependent upon gas pipelines that cross Ukraine.

French President Francois Hollande, who orchestrated the meeting along with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, said Putin and Poroshenko also discussed how Russia could recognize the Ukrainian elections as

well as measures to de-escalate the fighting.

"It didn't last a long time but long enough for the message to be passed on," Hollande told the French network TF1.

Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that Putin and Poroshenko also "confirmed that there is no alternative to settling the situation by peaceful political means."

Frozen out of G-7 talks Thursday in Brussels, Putin appeared to be moving incre-

mentally back into the fold of the West following his first direct talks with Poroshenko since the billionaire was elected to lead Ukraine. The previous pro-Kremlin president, Viktor Yanukovich, was ousted in what Putin said was a coup.

Russia, which had recalled its ambassador from Ukraine, said he will return to Kiev to attend Poroshenko's inauguration. That appeared to be a recognition of Ukraine's election, Hollande said.

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